

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING:	Climate Emergency & Sustainability Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel	
MEETING DATE:	22nd January 2025	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 3591
TITLE:	Bath and North East Somerset Housing Plan 2025-2030	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report:		
1. Bath and North East Somerset Housing Plan 2025- 2030		
2. Domestic Abuse Accommodation Strategy		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 To provide focus and visibility across all housing related work being undertaken by the council, and to increase delivery of affordable housing, a Housing Plan for Bath and North East Somerset has been developed. The draft Housing Plan for 2025-2030 outlines the council's commitment to providing affordable, safe, suitable, and high-quality homes for residents. It also aligns and supports the broader goals of the Corporate Strategy, Economic Strategy, and Health & Wellbeing Strategies.
- 1.2 Sitting below the Housing Plan are a plethora of additional strategies and plans. An example of such a plan is the draft statutory Domestic Abuse Accommodation Plan, and which is attached at Appendix 2.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Panel is asked to:

- 2.1 Note and provide feedback in respect of the contents of the draft B&NES Housing Plan and the accompanying draft Domestic Abuse Accommodation Plan.

3 THE REPORT

- 3.1 The attached draft Housing Plan for 2025-2030 outlines the council's commitment to ensuring residents have access to affordable, safe, suitable, and high-quality homes. This plan supports the broader ambitions detailed in the Corporate Strategy, Economic Strategy, and Health & Wellbeing Strategies.
- 3.2 The council's housing responsibilities are wide-ranging, encompassing not only the development of new homes to meet local needs but also ensuring that existing homes are safe and meet residents' needs. Additionally, the council allocates social housing, provides housing advice, and works to prevent homelessness.
- 3.3 The Housing Plan identifies five key themes which support the above responsibilities and outlines the actions the council will take using a five-pillar approach. Each pillar has a clearly defined objective supported by a series of necessary actions to meet that objective. The five pillars are: releasing land for housing, B&NES Homes & Affordable Housing; affordability across the housing market; housing support, and housing suitability.
- 3.4 The Housing Plan is divided into several sections:
- (1) **Foreword:** An introduction to the plan, signed by Cllr Kevin Guy and Will Godfrey.
 - (2) **Housing Plan & Local Context:** This section provides an overview of the plan and the local housing situation, highlighting relevant and interesting local housing facts such as tenure splits, housing affordability issues, demand data, and information on housing conditions.
 - (3) **Pillars:** This section introduces the five key themes and the actions the council will take to achieve these, using a 5 Pillar approach. Each pillar has its own section within the plan, providing context along with defined objectives, actions, and detailed next steps necessary to meet those objectives.
 - (4) **Delivery & Implementation:** This final section explains how the plan will be implemented, including details of external partnerships and the establishment of a new internal Housing Steering Group, which will report to the B&NES Place Group as needed. An Officer Housing Group will be set up to ensure ongoing focus on delivery of the individual Action Plans.
- 3.5 Throughout the plan, we have aimed to highlight key topics, best practices, and achievements, notably around B&NES Homes, Net Zero Commitments, Damp & Mould, and Houses in Multiple Occupation.

THE 5 HOUSING PLAN PILLARS

Release land for Housing

Objective: Release land to deliver homes sustainably, at pace, to respond to need

Action:

1. Intervene to address market failures in the type, mix and availability of housing
2. Ensure a pipeline of available land for homes prioritising council assets appropriate for housing delivery
3. Deliver strategically providing high quality and sustainable housing fit for future generations

B&NES Homes & Affordable Housing

Objective: Working to unlock and deliver affordable housing

Action:

1. Scale up B&NES Homes ensuring programme meets the needs of local residents
2. Work with RPs, Aequus, and other partners to maximise the delivery of affordable homes
3. Ensure the new Local Plan policy framework supports delivery & economic need
4. Provide and enable specialist supported housing products to address needs in Adult and Children's Services

Affordability Across the Housing Market

Objective: Develop a housing offer that is accessible and attractive to all

Action:

1. Work with anchor organisations to release housing land to support the economy
2. Diversify tenure and type of housing to support economically active households
3. Locate housing in areas of economic demand reducing in-out commuting pressure
4. Continue to bring empty properties back into use to expand housing offer
5. Using influence with Government to shape national policy

Housing Support

Objective: Reduce homelessness & ensure supported housing meets local needs

Action:

1. Refresh and enhance Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy
2. Reduce use of expensive and inappropriate temporary accommodation
3. Ensure appropriate accommodation for those with long-term care needs
4. Ensure housing and support contracts are strategic and relevant

Housing Suitability

Objective: Ensure residents have access to housing that is safe, warm & accessible

Action:

1. Tackle fuel poverty for the most vulnerable households
2. Promote affordable warmth and healthy housing across B&NES
3. Maintain & develop an effective enforcement role
4. Develop comprehensive home adaptations and equipment service which responds to community needs

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 The Housing Plan includes reference to the delivery and management of housing, which is supported by the following:

- Local Authorities (Land) Act 1963 which allows Councils to develop land for the benefit or improvement of their area.
- Local Government Act 2000 (section 2) which allows Councils to act to promote or improve the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of their area.
- Localism Act 2011 (sections 1) which provides the local authority's general power of competence.
- Housing Act 1985 (Part IV) and Housing Act 1996 (Part V) which sets out how Council tenancies operate.
- The Council is registered with the Regulator of Social Housing as a Local Authority Registered Provider of Social Housing.

4.2 A Housing Plan is not required by statute, however many of the plans feeding into the Housing Plan are required under statute, for example, Homelessness Strategy; Domestic Abuse Accommodation Strategy; Homeseach Policy etc.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

5.1 The plan is designed to be delivered within the existing revenue framework. However, it should be noted that in relation to the delivery of Affordable Housing it typically requires significant subsidy. This can be in the form of free land and/or additional financial subsidy. As such any capital scheme will be subject to individual business case and sign-off through existing corporate governance procedures.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

6.2 The following key risks have been identified:

Risk Area	Comment & Mitigation
Capacity – Insufficient staff capacity to deliver Housing Plan ambitions.	Currently reviewing structure within existing financial framework to ensure capacity.
Financial – current approach to the housing delivery element of plan is financially unsustainable as programme scales.	The focus on smaller and challenging sites, day 1 annuity cover, and social rent makes schemes financially challenging. Consider focusing on simpler sites and more financially efficient delivery models.
Regulatory/Legal – Evolving Government policy changes presenting opportunities and risks.	Housing targets, Right to Buy and Renter reform present opportunities. Changes are in the right direction, although time will be needed to better understand implications.

7 EQUALITIES

7.1 A formal EIA on the Housing Plan is currently being drafted. However, ensuring residents have access to affordable, safe, suitable, and high-quality homes is crucial for promoting equality. Having such homes significantly enhances equality. Nationally, poorer quality and unsuitable housing is disproportionately occupied by residents from minority ethnic groups, particularly Black households; low-income individuals, including carers and those with disabilities; and single parents.

8 CLIMATE CHANGE

8.1 The plan addresses the suitability of existing housing through affordable warmth initiatives and ensures that B&NES Homes developments are constructed to high energy efficiency standards. This includes adherence to AEBE standards for new builds, while refurbishments will be carried out to the highest practicable standards. This commitment ensures that both new and existing housing stock contribute to meeting our climate emergency goals by reducing energy consumption and promoting sustainability.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 None

10 CONSULTATION

10.1 There has been extensive consultation on the development of the Housing Plan, including:

- (1) Informal Cabinet
- (2) Sustainable Places Board
- (3) Health & Wellbeing Board Members

Contact person	Graham Sabourn Tel: 01225 477 949
Background papers	None
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	