

Report of the Chief Executive

NEIGHBOURHOOD STRATEGY UPDATE1. Purpose of report

To update the Committee on the progress of the Neighbourhood Strategy and the year one actions and to outline the actions planned for year two.

2. Background

The Neighbourhood Strategy was approved by Committee in 2019 and is a strategy that runs until 2022. Within the Strategy, there is an action plan for the years that the strategy runs, and these actions were split into year one actions with the rest to be completed throughout the Strategy.

3. Detail

The key purpose of the strategy is to change the way the Council engages with its tenants over neighbourhood issues and to create a series of Priority Neighbourhoods, where resources are concentrated to try to tackle the identified neighbourhood issues within the area.

The report details the progress that has been made on the actions that were agreed by Committee to be completed in year one and outlines the actions from the Strategy that have been identified for inclusion in the year two action plan.

The year one action plan and update is appendix 1 and the year two action plan is appendix 2.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to note progress on the Neighbourhood Strategy and RESOLVE to approve the year 2 action plan.

Background papers

Nil

Neighbourhood Strategy Year One Action Plan Update**To Improve Neighbourhoods, but Understand that Each Neighbourhood is Different**

Strategy Action	To be achieved in Year 1 of the Strategy	Update on Strategy Action
Create and agree a minimum standard of what is expected to be achieved in each neighbourhood, regardless of whether it has a priority status or not.	Agree minimum standard as a Council through the Housing Performance Group, based around health, safety and environmental factors.	A report is planned for the upcoming Housing Performance Group in January 2021
Identify a series of Priority Neighbourhoods	Identify first Priority Neighbourhood within the Strategy and begin to deliver services accordingly	The measures have been defined and the data gathered. An update will be provided to the Housing Performance Group, along with the minimum standards, to outline the first priority neighbourhood and give an overview of the measures.

Integrate Housing Services at a Neighbourhood Level

Strategy Action	To be achieved in Year 1 of the Strategy	Update on Strategy Action
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Relaunch the Tenancy and Estates service to reflect a neighbourhood management and tenancy sustainment focus.	Introduce a new management approach to neighbourhoods. This will enable the delivery of the necessary improvements to neighbourhoods, particularly priority neighbourhoods.	Progress has been made and a report covering this item is due to be received at the Personnel Committee in December
Increase the presence of staff in neighbourhoods, particularly priority neighbourhoods	Establish at least three weekly housing surgeries where housing staff will be present	These were planned to start in April 2020. COVID-19 restrictions have made the implementation of these at this time impractical. There are no current timescale for these to be started.
Increase the presence of staff in neighbourhoods, particularly priority neighbourhoods	Review the work of the caretaking service and the cleaning service within neighbourhoods to ensure maximum effectiveness	<p>Blocks in general housing are not routinely cleaned. The caretaking service help to tackle matters that are of immediate health and safety concern, such as items fly tipped in communal areas.</p> <p>A schedule of block inspections, based on a triaged approach, has been developed to ensure the planned and repeated inspection of blocks.</p> <p>A structural change to the Cleaning Team has been approved by the Personnel Committee to recruit new Mobile Cleaners. Moving forward, it is planned that these staff will have a role in cleaning general housing blocks. A report separately will be produced to the</p>

		Housing Committee regarding a future meeting.
To work proactively and Intervene Early		
Strategy Action	To be achieved in Year 1 of the Strategy	Update on Strategy Action
Ensure that priority neighbourhoods are being identified correctly and tackling issues in the correct locations	Design a methodology for evaluating priority neighbourhoods and their effectiveness	The methodology has been defined for identifying priority neighbourhoods, the effectiveness of them will be evaluated in Year 3 of the strategy, once they have been implemented and other actions in the strategy are in place.
Assess and evaluate current approaches to resolving common neighbourhood issues	Complete a review and produce recommendations	<p>Procedures have been amended by the teams to change approaches to tackling some neighbourhood issues.</p> <p>The effectiveness of these changes has been difficult to gauge. Many of the new approaches include more engagement with residents about common neighbourhood issues, and this has been difficult to do face to face because of the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>The evaluation of the effectiveness of these will be part of the Year 3 evaluation.</p>

<p>Ensure the effective management of communal areas, putting the health and safety of residents at the forefront</p>	<p>Introduce a new approach and procedure to block inspections and tackling issues in communal areas</p>	<p>Management of communal areas policy has been approved by the Housing Committee.</p> <p>Block inspection procedure has been implemented and schedule and regularity of inspections has been defined</p>
<p>Reviewing lettings arrangements in priority neighbourhoods to improve tenancy sustainment</p>	<p>Consider the usage of sensitive lettings or local lettings policies where necessary to assist in the management of neighbourhoods</p>	<p>Sensitive lets and local lettings policies are within the Housing Allocations Policy and an approval process is in place where required.</p> <p>A review of whether these will be required in order to tackle issues within priority neighbourhoods will be ongoing</p>

Positively engage with the Community within Neighbourhoods

<p>Strategy Action</p>	<p>To be achieved in Year 1 of the Strategy</p>	<p>Update on Strategy Action</p>
<p>Work with the engagement team to increase Housing’s attendance at community events to promote the work of the team and seek feedback about services</p>	<p>Minimum of five community events attended</p>	<p>Community events have not been possible due to the COVID-19 pandemic</p>
<p>Review procedures to see where there may be more opportunities to engage with residents over neighbourhood management issues</p>	<p>Introduce more informal methods of tackling neighbourhood problems and issues and embed these as part of procedural review</p>	<p>Procedures have been changed as previously outlined</p> <p>Usage of Housing Facebook group, along with other new channels of</p>

		communication, will have their utilisation considered as part of this process to ensure the effective engagement with communities.
To Work in and Strengthen Partnerships		
Strategy Action	To be achieved in Year 1 of the Strategy	Update on Strategy Action
Raise the profile of priority neighbourhoods to with partner agencies and departments to try and achieve wider engagement and wider solutions where possible	Once priority neighbourhoods have been identified, ensure that all appropriate departments and agencies are consulted, action plans distributed and teams involved further where necessary.	<p>The neighbourhoods, the measures and standards are yet to be formally agreed and implemented as outlined above.</p> <p>The pressure on local services, stakeholders and departments of the Council as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic has made some partnership work in these areas impractical.</p> <p>The partnership element of the Neighbourhood Strategy will move to Year 3 of the strategy.</p>

Neighbourhood Strategy Year Two Action Plan

To Improve Neighbourhoods, but Understand that Each Neighbourhood is Different	
Strategy Action	To be achieved in Year 2 of the Strategy
Ensure that residents are aware of what is expected of them and what they can expect of the Council within their neighbourhood	Use noticeboards in neighbourhoods and other media to publicise positive behaviours and minimum standards agreed by residents and members across neighbourhoods
Programme of training for officers working in neighbourhoods to ensure that agreed standards are understood	All staff to be training in accordance with agreed standards
Allow officers to make improvements to neighbourhoods based on concerns of residents, using capital investment where necessary	Invest to improve areas where an improvement has been identified, a rationale developed and a community benefit has been identified. Officers will identify areas and issues based on their discussions with residents. However, applications from the Community Fund, which is operated in partnership with the Engagement Team, will also be considered and promoted.
Integrate Housing Services at a Neighbourhood Level	

Strategy Action	To be achieved in Year 2 of the Strategy
Align Housing services more closely, particularly in priority neighbourhoods.	Use priority neighbourhoods to create cross team objectives to be achieved in partnership
Increase support for vulnerable tenants to maximise tenancy sustainment	Increase in resources focussed on tenancy sustainment case management. This is reflected in a report for upcoming Personnel Committee
To work proactively and Intervene Early	
Strategy Action	To be achieved in Year 2 of the Strategy
Ensure information on our performance is provided to customers	<p>Provide performance information using a range of Housing communications.</p> <p>These will be in Housing Communications online and in Newsletters and by targeted communications in the newly defined Priority Neighbourhoods. The new noticeboards will also be used where appropriate so they appear visually around neighbourhoods</p>
Improve communication with residents in neighbourhoods, particularly in priority neighbourhoods	<p>Review communication methods with residents to ensure maximum effectiveness and impact, consulting with residents.</p> <p>Review and implement new ways in which tenants are communicated with around all neighbourhood issues and concerns.</p>

	<p>Consideration of usage of bespoke communication methods for issues to be raised within Priority Neighbourhoods.</p> <p>Customer Portal also being considered as part of the Capita Open Housing system, by which issues can be reported, tracked and messages can be put out by the Council.</p>
Positively engage with the Community within Neighbourhoods	
Strategy Action	To be achieved in Year 2 of the Strategy
Use a variety of communication methods to reach communities within neighbourhoods who have been historically difficult to reach	Develop a targeted marketing campaign around neighbourhood management and positive behaviour in neighbourhoods
Work with the engagement team to embed the use of informal engagement methods throughout the Housing Department	Training provided to Housing Managers on informal methods of engagement and the benefit of this approach to services
To Work in and Strengthen Partnerships	
Strategy Action	To be achieved in Year 2 of the Strategy
Ensure that the Council's objective around the environment and sustainability are promoted and improvements in neighbourhoods are made	Work with the Environment section to boost recycling and reduce negative environmental factors in neighbourhoods