

---

REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF HOUSING AND PLANNING

---

TO THE LEAD MEMBER FOR HOUSING  
ON 1<sup>st</sup> February 2007

---

TITLE: Housing Strategy for 2007-2010

---

RECOMMENDATIONS: That Lead Member notes the progress on the development of the Housing Strategy for 2007-2010

---

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The housing strategy is an overarching document that presents a comprehensive picture of local housing needs, issues and priorities for action over the next 3 years. As the period covered by our last fit for purpose housing strategy for the period 2004-2006 has now ended we are currently working on the development of the next housing strategy for 2007-2010. This place-shaping strategy will set out our intentions to create a future where people see Salford as a great place to live. This report outlines the progress made to date and outlines a process that will see the completion of a draft housing strategy by March 2007.

---

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

DCLG Fit for purpose criteria [Housing strategies: fit for purpose - Communities and Local Government](#)

Making the future happen: Housing Strategy 2004-2006  
<http://www.salford.gov.uk/living/housing/housingstrategy.htm>

Housing Strategy Review  
<http://www.salford.gov.uk/living/housing/housingstrategy.htm>

Housing Conference Report 2006  
[Housing Strategy Conference](#)

---

ASSESSMENT OF RISK:

High – Although there will at this stage be no further formal fit for purpose assessment by Government Office North West the delivery of the housing strategy is key in order to prioritise our work and resources.

We are however open to assessment from the Audit Commission and our Housing Strategy will be central to any future inspection of our strategic service and is likely to impact on the Comprehensive Performance Assessment [Audit Commission - Housing](#).

The Lyons report (2006) extends a challenge to us to promote effective local choice and energetic 'place-shaping'. Through our strategy we can set out how we intend to do this by ensuring that housing in Salford has strong leadership, closer engagement with local residents, effective partnership working with other services and the business community, and a consistent commitment to efficiency and cost effectiveness.

---

#### SOURCE OF FUNDING:

Business Support team central marketing budget  
Strategy & Partnerships team budget

---

#### LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

No advice sought at this stage

---

#### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

No advice sought at this stage.

---

#### COMMUNICATION IMPLICATIONS:

In order to communicate with staff, items about the development of the housing strategy have been included in Houseplan brief on a regular basis and on our intranet pages and this approach will continue throughout the development of the project.

We have communicated to our partners in a number of ways. Firstly we have delivered progress reports to the Salford Housing Partnership who will shortly be feeding back to us about how they would like to be involved in the development, and approval of, this project. We have also communicated with our partners and colleagues at last year's annual Housing Strategy Conference (May 2006) and set out initial indications of how and when we expect the strategy to be developed.

There has been a continuing dialogue with customers about the development of the strategy through a consultation newsletter and feedback through an

article in the Salford Advertiser, through an article in Life in Salford and through workshop sessions at the Annual Tenants' Conference.

We are currently developing a communication and marketing plan for the strategy, which will set out how we hope to raise awareness of the new strategy with residents, partners and other stakeholders and how we hope to make this accessible for all.

---

#### VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:

The strategy will outline the way we expect to direct resources. This will include how we will use our resources effectively – by making savings and sharing information and resources between teams, departments and partners.

---

#### CLIENT IMPLICATIONS:

The strategy when complete will inform residents what we will be working on over the next 3 years. A summary document will be provided to make the strategy more accessible to clients. The team are currently working on a marketing and communication plan that will identify options for increasing client accessibility to, and awareness of, the document.

---

#### PROPERTY:

Not applicable.

---

#### HUMAN RESOURCES:

Not applicable.

CONTACT OFFICER: Nina Bertenshaw, Principal Officer: Strategy & Partnerships

---

WARD(S) TO WHICH REPORT RELATE(S): All wards

---

#### KEY COUNCIL POLICIES:

Housing Strategy 2007-2010

---

## DETAILS:

### 1. Salford's Housing Strategy for 2007-2010

The housing strategy is an overarching document that presents a comprehensive picture of local housing needs, issues and priorities for action over the next 3 years. Our place-shaping strategy will set out our intentions to create a future where people see Salford as a great place to live. As the period covered by our last fit for purpose housing strategy for the period 2004-2006 has now ended we are currently working on the development of the next housing strategy for 2007-2010. This report outlines the progress made to date and outlines a process which will see the completion of a draft housing strategy by March 2007.

- 1.1 Following a meeting with Government Office North West (GONW), they have now confirmed that as yet our housing strategy will not have to be formally assessed by them. We have built good networks and relationships with GONW and they will continue to work with us as we shape our strategy. As we have already achieved fit for purpose status their advice was that any subsequent strategies should still be based on the fit for purpose criteria. We are however open to assessment from the Audit Commission and our Housing Strategy will be central to any future inspection of our strategic service.

### 2. The Process of Reviewing our Housing Strategy

The Annual Housing Strategy Conference in May 2006 saw the launch of the review of the 2004-2006 'Making the future happen' housing strategy. Our review document 'Rethinking Housing' provided information on what we had achieved towards our overarching priorities since the launch of our strategy (2004) and sought to identify new influences and drivers. A key element of this review was that it gave readers an opportunity to feed back what they thought our priorities for 2007-2010 should be. Our Strategic Housing Partnership influenced and framed the review document from the workshop session held in April 2006. The Partnership was asked to determine their priorities for the 2007-2010 housing strategy. The main priorities that were agreed were:

- Continue to transform the housing market in Central Salford
- Help Salford residents aspiring to home ownership to get on the housing ladder
- Increase the number of our vulnerable customers in the private sector who live in a decent home
- Improve our partnership approach to preventing homelessness
- Join up housing services provided by a range of organisations to improve services for customers
- Influence the health, education and youth agendas
- Influence national, regional and sub-regional agendas

- 2.1. Our review 'Rethinking Housing' is an essential reference document and has helped shaped the development of our strategy for 2007-2010.
- 2.2. Our report from our Housing Strategy Conference also contains the wealth of information we drew from delegates at the conference about their priorities for housing in Salford. The outcomes and actions from the day are shaping our new strategy.
3. Consultation on priorities

Following the Strategy Conference a consultation plan for engaging with residents and other stakeholders was developed so we could effectively plan and establish customers priorities for housing for 2007-2010.

- 3.1. The key outcome of the plan was to give the opportunity for people to tell us what they felt the housing priorities should be. An engagement flyer/newsletter was widely distributed, plus an on-line form was developed and accessible (copy attached as appendix 1 - Rethinking housing: Increasing opportunities newsletter). An article in the Life in Salford preceded this, which encouraged people to take part and respond. The newsletter detailed our achievements since 2004 and included a reply slip for people to give feedback on their priorities for housing in Salford. Feedback from the responses received indicates that the priorities for residents were:
  - Work with residents to make people feel safe in their neighbourhoods
  - Bring all council-owned homes in Salford to the Decent Homes standard
  - Concentrate on improving the housing services we offer to vulnerable groups
  - Involve our customers more when we think about improving the housing services we offer
  - Look at how different housing organisations can work together to improve services for tenants and residents.

In line with good practice, feedback on these responses was given to residents through an article in the Salford Advertiser.

- 3.2. A lunchtime learning session about the development of the housing strategy was held for members of the Salford Involvement Network so that other officers doing consultation and involvement work were aware and had an understanding of the work we were carrying out
- 3.3. A workshop session was held on the development of our housing strategy at the annual tenants conference in November 2006. This again gave the opportunity for people to help shape our priorities for the new strategy.
4. Our approach to development of the strategy for 2007-2010

After consideration of all the consultation and involvement work that has been done thus far, all indications highlights that our five overarching priorities are still as relevant and important as they were when they were developed in 2004.

- 4.1. To take account of the consultation feedback and to evidence how our strategy has been shaped by consultation and involvement so far, new/emerging actions will sit under these existing priorities. It is somewhat encouraging that our 2004 priorities still encompass everything that we want to achieve as a service, what are customers are telling us and what are partners are working towards.

On this basis we are working on the premise that the five priorities will remain the same, with the caveat that we are still awaiting information from the Housing Market Need and Demand Survey and both the Public and Private Sector Stock Condition surveys.

- 4.2. To ensure that the strategy is delivered a detailed Project Plan has been developed and is being utilised (a copy of the detailed plan is available from Nina Bertenshaw). A number of component strategies and reviews are currently being worked up across Housing Services; these will feed into, inform and complement the Housing Strategy. To ensure that this happens effectively we have had a Housing Strategy Development Group in place for some time, whose main purpose is to co-ordinate activity and utilise existing information, knowledge and research to enable a consistent approach to all of our strategies and reviews.
- 4.3. The conclusion of the draft is driven from a desire to have it in place for the Supporting People inspection (there are no other date requirements other than those we have 'self imposed' and they are moveable). It is envisaged that the conclusion of the strategy will be the primary project that the Strategy and Partnerships team will be carrying out over the next 3 months. The team will be coordinating, completing and collating the different elements of the housing strategy for 2007-2010, with a draft being the end result planned for the end of March 2007. However, it has to be noted that we are in the final phase of Supporting People Inspection preparation and we may have to review the strategy deadline and activity. It may well be better to re-organise resources so we able to achieve what is needed following the self-assessment process. At that stage we be better placed to plan out or best position i.e. it may well be beneficial to meet the self-assessment test rather than have the entire strategy document, in draft, in place. This will be reflected within the detailed project plan.

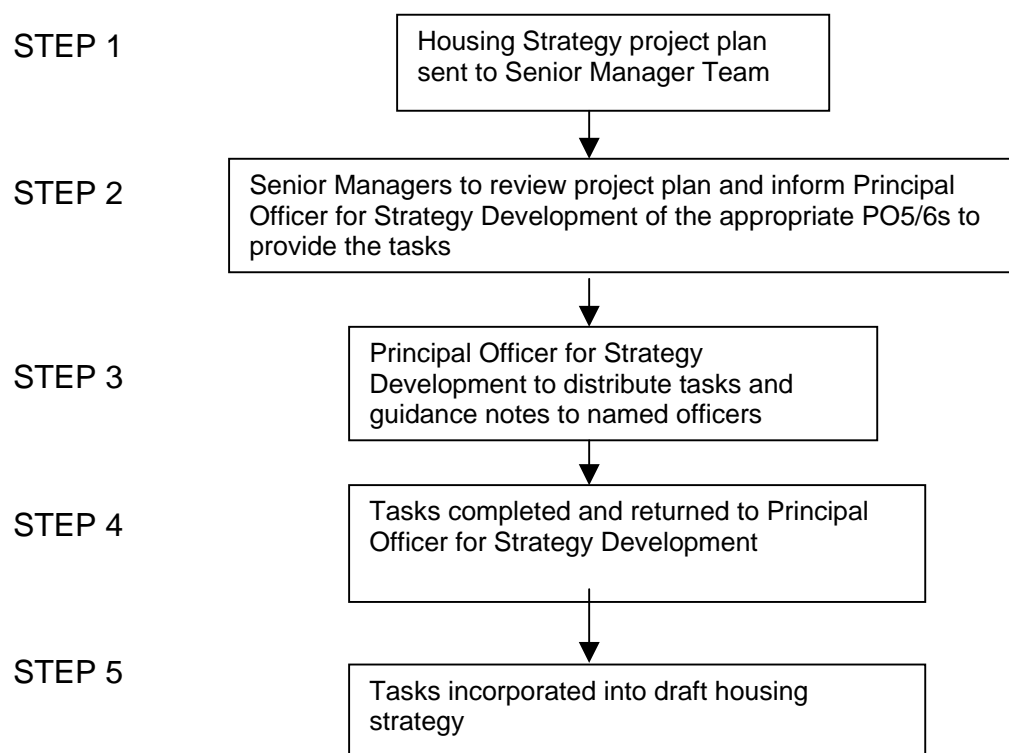
So far the team have:

- Researched good practice
- Formulated structure accounting for fit for purpose criteria and good practice.

- Broken down the project into individual tasks
- Started work on these individual tasks within the team
- Prepared briefs with guidance notes (example attached – appendix 2 – Housing Strategy Example Brief)
- Identified champions for other tasks

4.4. The team have been co-ordinating the activity of our Strategic Issues Forum (Housing Partners) who in turn have been involved and have and will shape the strategy.

4.5. In terms of the actual document, inevitably the Strategy and Partnerships team will require information and input from other teams. The team has developed a process, similar to the one used successfully as part of the Stock Options bidding stage. This should give others an early warning of the type of information required, by when (example of the information requirement brief is attached as appendix 2 – Housing Strategy Example Brief). This procedure will ensure that the strategy is delivered well and on time. In brief the stages to this process, entitled our 5 steps of strategy enlightenment are:



## 5. Next Steps

We should have to have a full draft to consult on by the end of March 2007 (see 4.3).

5.1. Following a 12 week consultation period we will put forward a final draft for consideration and approval in the Spring of 2007.

5.2. At the current time, the findings from the Housing Market Need and Demand Survey and both the public and private sector stock condition surveys are expected in February 2007. Please note that any delays in receiving these findings may mean that the dates given within this report are subject to change.

5.3. At this stage we will implement our marketing and communication plan and begin to publicise the arrival of the strategy.

Initial work to identify an appropriate timing for the housing strategy conference given the launch of the new organisations suggests that June 2007 may well be most appropriate.

5.5. At the stage of final drafting, followed by consultation (5.1) one important issue to note now is that we will not have concluded the ballot. Plus, at the time of writing, there may well be central government delays that could potentially push back the establishment of Salix Homes and the Housing Connections Partnership. Therefore we feel it maybe worthwhile to hold back on publishing any full documentation until our investment strategy is delivered and the establishment of the new organisations is certain. Comments are sought for this as this will cause some delays to the completion of the strategy, but we feel this may be necessary so that we have a more rounded document for Salford.

## 6. Recommendations

6.1 That Lead Member notes the progress on the housing strategy so far.

**Report completed by Nina Bertenshaw – 03/01/07**

**Report reviewed by Paul Longshaw – 04/01/07**