

Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 18 January 2024

Report number:	CAB/WS/24/005	
Report to and date:	Cabinet	6 February 2024
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Decisions Plan: This item is not required to be included in the Decisions Plan.

Wards impacted: All wards.

Recommendation: It is recommended that Report number: CAB/WS/24/005, being the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, be noted.

1. Context to this report

1.1 On 18 January 2024, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the following items:

1. Housing Update
2. Cabinet Decisions Plan: 1 February 2024 to 31 May 2024
3. Work programme update 2024.

2. Proposals within this report

2.1 Housing Update (Report number: OAS/WS/24/001)

2.1.1 The Committee received the above report from Portfolio Holder for Housing, which set out:

- Progress and challenges against the current Housing Strategy and Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy.
- The council's strategic priorities for housing for the period 2024 to 2028.
- Emerging actions and plans for the development of the new Housing, Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy for 2024 onwards. Emerging actions will be the subject of further investigation and consideration as the council moves forward with its planning the new strategy.
- The current situation regarding refugees and asylum seekers in West Suffolk and how the council is addressing issues being faced in the district.
- Responses provided to questions that the committee raised with the Portfolio Holder for Housing in advance of its meeting.

2.1.2 The report also set out a number of known challenges, including:

- An insufficient supply of some types of housing, particularly affordable housing in West Suffolk to meeting housing needs.
- Providing and retrofitting homes to reduce the impact on the environment. Providing good quality housing that is a safe place to live in and thermal comfort that will impact positively on people's lives and reduces costs to residents.
- The cost-of-living crisis is making affordability of housing more challenging for many families. This has a detrimental impact on physical and mental health and wellbeing with long-term negative impacts on the population and placing additional demand on the wider

Suffolk system. The lack of affordable housing places additional demand on the housing register with people finding it difficult to maintain a tenancy in the private rented sector.

- 2.1.3 The Committee was asked to consider the report, and in particular the emerging actions currently being considered for inclusion in the new strategy; and plans for how the new strategy should be developed, including consultation and engagement and how the committee would like to be involved.
- 2.1.4 The Committee scrutinised the report in detail and asked a number of questions to which the Portfolio Holder for Housing provided comprehensive responses. In particular discussions were held on the differentiation between affordable housing and social housing; how the council was addressing empty homes across the district; the various refugees and asylum housing schemes; Houses in Multiple Occupation; the barriers for young people accessing housing; the ageing population and appropriate housing; retrofitting heritage homes; house conditions in the private sector; disabled facilities grants; stalled housing development sites.
- 2.1.5 In response to a question raised in relation to the types and number of people in bed and breakfast accommodation, officers agreed to provide a written responses on the breakdown of the types of people in bed and breakfast, for example young people; single people; families.
- 2.1.6 In response to a question raised on shared equity to help young people to access housing, the Portfolio Holder for Housing advised he would look at the options around shared equity.
- 2.1.7 The Committee considered the development of the new strategy including the consultation and engagement plan and confirmed that it would like to be involved and would like to receive an update report following the consultation process.
- 2.1.8 At the conclusion of the discussions, the Committee thanked the Portfolio Holder for Housing for the comprehensive report, and **noted** the following:
- Noted the progress and challenges against the Housing Strategy Implementation Plan 2018 to 2024.
 - Noted the progress and challenges against the Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy Delivery Plan 2018 to 2024.
 - Noted the Council's priorities for housing as set out in the Strategic Priorities for 2024 to 2028.

- Considered and noted the emerging actions to be investigated and explored and plans for the development of the Housing, Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy for 2024 onwards.
- The Committee to be involved by way of an update report on the consultation for the Housing, Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy for 2024 when available.
- Noted the situation regarding refugees and asylum seekers in West Suffolk and how the Council is addressing the issues being faced in the district.
- Considered and noted the responses provided to questions raised by the Committee for the Portfolio Holder for Housing.

2.2 **Cabinet Decisions Plan: 1 February 2024 to 31 May 2024 (Report number: OAS/WS/24/002)**

2.2.1 The Committee reviewed the latest version of the Cabinet Decisions Plan, covering the period 1 February 2024 to 31 May 2024.

2.2.2 The Committee considered the Decisions Plan and did not request any further information on items contained in the Plan.

2.3 **Work programme update 2024 (Report number: OAS/WS/24/003)**

2.3.1 The Committee received Report number OAS/WS/24/003, which updated Members on the current status of its rolling work programme of items at attached at Appendix 1.

2.3.2 The Committee considered the rolling work programme and did not raise any specific issues.

2.3.3 The Committee **noted** the current states of its rolling work programme.

3. **Alternative options that have been considered**

3.1 Please see background papers.

4. **Consultation and engagement undertaken**

4.1 Please see background papers.

5. Risks associated with the proposals

5.1 Please see background papers.

6. Implications arising from the proposals

6.1 Financial - Please see background papers.

6.2 Equalities - Please see background papers.

7. Appendices referenced in this report

7.1 Please see background papers.

8. Background documents associated with this report

8.1 Report number: [OAS/WS/24/001](#) and [Appendix A](#), [Appendix B](#), [Annex 1 to Appendix B - Tab 1](#), [Annex 1 to Appendix B - Tab 2](#), [Annex 1 to Appendix B - Tab 3](#), [Annex 1 to Appendix B - Tab 4](#), [Annex 1 to Appendix B - Tab 5](#), [Annex 1 to Appendix B - Tab 6](#), [Annex 1 to Appendix B - Tab 7](#), and [Annex 1 to Appendix B - Tab 8](#) to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:
Housing Update

8.2 Report number: [OAS/WS/24/002](#) and [Appendix 1](#) to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Cabinet Decisions Plan 1 February 2024 to 31 May 2024

8.3 Report number: [OAS/WS/24/003](#) and [Appendix 1](#) to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Work Programme Update 2024