

# ***Report to the Council***

**Committee:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 29 July 2021  
**Subject:** Housing Services Portfolio  
**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Holly Whitbread

---

## **Recommending:**

**That the report of the Housing Services Portfolio Holder be noted.**

---

## **Executive Summary**

The following report provides an update on progress in the following areas:

### **Housing Information, Strategy and Policy**

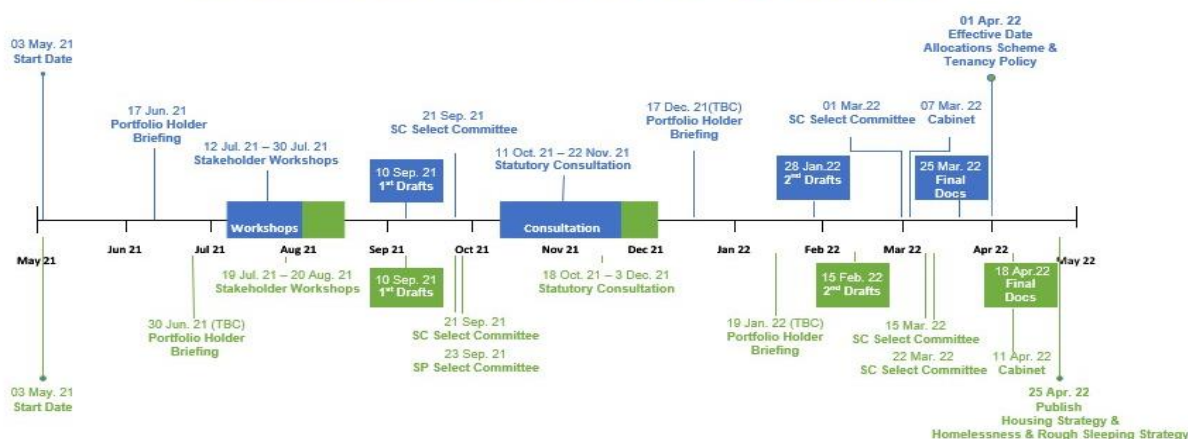
We have commenced the review of our four key housing documents which we collectively refer to as 'The Big 4'. These are:

- the Allocations Scheme,
- the Tenancy Policy,
- the Overarching Housing Strategy; and
- the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

Whilst there are major interdependencies linking all four reviews, the resulting publications will also be considered independently as standalone documents - by the widest range of stakeholders with an interest in housing and housing related issues across EFDC.

We will undertake comprehensive consultation and complete all four reviews by April 2022 subject to Cabinet approval. For ease of communication we have grouped together the review of the Allocations Scheme with the Tenancy Policy, and the review of the Housing Strategy with the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy in the following timeline:

## Allocations Scheme Review and Tenancy Policy Review



## Housing Strategy Review & Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Review

### The Social Housing Lettings Report 2020/21

The attached Social Housing Lettings Report 2020/21 provides details of the number, size, and type of social rented properties that Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) let to qualifying households in 2020/21.

Supplementary information is also provided on; the number of applicants on the housing register, the number of mutual exchanges that have taken place and the number of properties that former tenants have purchased from the Council under the Right to Buy.

The report will be published on the Council's website.

### Housing Needs

#### Homelessness

Through the rough sleeping initiative grant, we have secured a Mental Health Navigator whose role works primarily to prevent rough sleeping and support clients presenting with mental health issues – both diagnosed and undiagnosed. This role also sets out to link up housing and health highlighting any gaps which need filling by establishing relationships between services and developing pathway plans to achieve better outcomes for people who sleep rough or are at risk of sleeping rough. This role also has the flexibility to work across the Directorate a bit more generally and provide guidance on cases where there are health concerns. The Homelessness Team are already feeding back on how invaluable this is.

#### Norway House (Temporary Accommodation)

We do not currently have any applicants in bed and breakfast accommodation thanks to the hard work of the Temporary Accommodation Team and the Homelessness Team. It is our aim that this will continue for as long as possible, as we know that bed and breakfast accommodation is both costly and largely unsuitable for our applicants.

St Johns Church in Epping have volunteered to help facilitate a number of activities for the children at Norway House during the summer holidays. We are also currently holding a sunflower growing competition for the children, the winner of which will receive a £20 gift voucher donated by the North Weald Parish Councillors.

## Rehousing Team

We have recently completed our Lettings Report for 2020-21, which shows that there has been a 20% increase in applicants on the housing register compared to last year.

We have begun work on the Housing Allocations Scheme review, which is being led by the Housing Strategy team. We will be attending the Housing Residents' Webinar on 21<sup>st</sup> July to speak about the review and will be engaging with all of our key stakeholders throughout July.