

TITLE OF REPORT: Review of the role of housing in improving health and wellbeing

REPORT OF: Director of Public Health

SUMMARY

Care, Health & Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee have agreed that the focus of its review in 2016-17 will be the role of housing in improving health and wellbeing. During the course of the review it is proposed that the Committee will consider evidence of the relationship between housing, health and wellbeing in the context of current and projected local needs and activity on both housing and health, with the aim of recommending key housing actions that will have the greatest impact on improving health and wellbeing.

This report sets out the proposed scope of the review and the process for taking it forward.

Background

Vision 2030 sets out the 6 Big Ideas for Gateshead. Of these, “Sustainable Gateshead” commits to improving living conditions, and “Active Gateshead” resolves to provide support to encourage people to improve their health and lifestyle. The five year Council Plan sets out how Gateshead will be a healthy, inclusive and nurturing place for all, and a destination of choice for families with excellent, affordable housing.

The Council’s Housing Strategy 2013-18 sets out the objectives and priorities for addressing key housing challenges covering three themes:

- Housing standards
- Housing supply
- Housing support

Scope of the Review

Housing is a basic human need and good quality homes are essential to ensuring the best physical and mental health possible. A warm, affordable and dry home, that is safe, and has sufficient space, is a positive contributor to health and wellbeing.

The relationship between poor housing and ill health is very clear, and acknowledged. Evidence suggests that living in poor housing can lead to an increased risk of cardiovascular and respiratory disease, as well as mental health problems such as anxiety and depression. Problems such as damp, excess cold, disrepair and structural defects, can present serious hazards to health.

The location of one's home, its environment and the amenity that both provide also contribute to individual and population level health. An individual or household's ability to exercise choice over where they live, and control over the condition of the property they live in, is largely determined by social and economic circumstances. The location and tenure of one's home provides the household with differing sets of circumstances - social, economic, environmental, infrastructural etc.

Some of these circumstances will be advantageous, others will be disadvantageous. People's personal, social and economic attributes provide them with varying degrees of ability to flourish or languish within these places. The Council has a significant role as a "place shaper" - creatively using the full scope of its influence to make places where people can flourish.

The suggested scope of this review includes a consideration of factors influencing the ability of individuals and households to access and sustain a good quality home, suitable to their needs, and factors that impact upon the quality and suitability of homes. These factors include:

- availability, affordability and choice
- security of tenure
- property maintenance and management
- energy efficiency of properties (linked also to fuel poverty)
- design that helps meet the requirements of those with specialist needs
- the location and infrastructure of the neighbourhood
- the provision of supported accommodation and/or housing support services

The review would consider existing service activity and Council interventions aimed at: improving housing standards; increasing the supply of good quality homes that will meet the Borough's changing needs; and providing support to residents to enable them to access and sustain a safe and healthy home that meets their needs.

It is proposed that the above is considered in the context of:

- reaffirming the relationship between housing, health and health inequalities
- existing and anticipated demand for housing
- existing and anticipated demand for health and social care services
- demographic changes (especially the proportional increase in numbers of older people)
- national and local housing, health and social care policies

The Process

The process and timescale for the review in this paragraph is set out in Appendix 1. It is proposed that the review will take place over an eleven month period from 21 June 2016 to 25 April 2017. It will involve the presentation of expert evidence, research and site visits.

Who will be involved?

It is proposed that the first evidence gathering session will provide an overview of the relationship between health, housing and wellbeing and further refine an understanding of the issues to be addressed. Subsequent evidence gathering sessions will include presentations from internal services, external organisations and experts in their respective disciplines.

Evidence will be sought from Economic and Housing Growth, Development and Public Protection, Commissioning and Quality Assurance, Gateshead Public Health Team, Public Health England, NEA (National Energy Action) and leading academics. There will also be a number of site visits, including extra care housing, supported accommodation for people with learning disabilities, Dunston Staiths and other local housing developments.

Recommendation

Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to agree:

- The scope, process and timescale as set out in this report

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Progress of the Review

This appendix sets out the standard framework for Overview and Scrutiny Committees to agree and conduct policy reviews and includes proposals specific for this review.

Stage 1

The scope, purpose and intended outputs of the Review should firstly be agreed by the Cabinet and the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The recommendations of Advisory Groups may also be considered if appropriate.

Proposal

- 1st July 2016 - Scoping report to Scrutiny Committee

Stage 2

Evidence may be gathered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee making visits as necessary or inviting persons and organisations to give evidence before it. Relevant Group or Strategic Directors and the Chief Executive will assist the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as necessary. The evidence gathered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be written up by officers.

Proposal

- 13 September, 1 November, 6 December 2016 - To have evidence-gathering events that will involve research, presentations by relevant officers, outside organisations and site visits if appropriate (details to be confirmed).

Stage 3

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will then meet (as many times as is necessary) to analyse the information gathered and prepare its conclusions.

Proposal

- 7 March 2017 - Committees to consider an interim report, prepared by the Lead Officers, and to analyse the evidence presented.

Stage 4

Officers will then prepare a report on the issue based on the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Officers will submit this report to the next practicable meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to secure agreement that the report is a fair, accurate and complete reflection of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's conclusions.

Proposal

- 25 April 2017 - Draft final report to be considered by the Committee.

Stage 5

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will then present this report to the Cabinet. The Cabinet may take note of the report, approve all or some of the report's recommendations or refer the report to full Council or to an Advisory Group for further consultation.