

AGENDA

General Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date: **Tuesday 19 January 2016**

Time: **2.00 pm**

Place: **The Council Chamber - The Shire Hall, St. Peter's
Square, Hereford, HR1 2HX**

Notes: Please note the **time, date** and **venue** of the meeting.

For any further information please contact:

Sam Tweedale, Governance Services

Tel: 01432 260272

Email: Sam.Tweedale@herefordshire.gov.uk

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Agenda for the Meeting of the General Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Membership

Chairman

Councillor WLS Bowen

Vice-Chairman

Councillor CA Gandy

Councillor JM Bartlett
Councillor MJK Cooper
Councillor J Hardwick
Councillor DG Harlow
Councillor EPJ Harvey
Councillor JF Johnson
Councillor AJW Powers
Councillor NE Shaw
Councillor EJ Swinglehurst
Councillor A Warmington
Councillor SD Williams

Co-optees

(education items)

Mr P Burbidge

Mrs A Fisher

Mr RJ Fuller

Mr P Sell

Roman Catholic Church

Parent Governor Representative: Primary
Schools

Parent Governor Representative:
Secondary Schools

Church of England

AGENDA

	Pages
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE To receive apologies for absence.	
2. NAMED SUBSTITUTES To receive details of members nominated to attend the meeting in place of a member of the committee.	
3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest by members.	
4. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC To note questions received from the public and the items to which they relate. (Questions are welcomed for consideration at a scrutiny committee meeting subject to the question being directly relevant to an item listed on the agenda below. If you have a question you would like to ask then please submit it no later than 4.00 PM on Thursday 14 January 2016 to sam.tweedale@herefordshire.gov.uk)	
5. HEREFORDSHIRE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY AND RELATED PERFORMANCE To review the work and activity of the Herefordshire community safety partnership (CSP)	7 - 30
6. OVERVIEW OF STRATEGIC HOUSING DOCUMENTS To seek the views of the committee of engagement undertaken with the housing sector and of proposed new strategic housing documents for Herefordshire, including homelessness review and strategy, allocations policy and housing strategy, in order to inform the recommendations to cabinet.	31 - 48
7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING The next scheduled meeting is Tuesday 8 March 2016 at 10.00 am.	

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- Inspect minutes of the Council and all committees and sub-committees and written statements of decisions taken by the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members for up to six years following a meeting.
- Inspect background papers used in the preparation of public reports for a period of up to four years from the date of the meeting. (A list of the background papers to a report is given at the end of each report). A background paper is a document on which the officer has relied in writing the report and which otherwise is not available to the public.
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Meeting:	General overview and scrutiny committee
Meeting date:	19 January 2016
Title of report:	Herefordshire community safety partnership strategy and related performance.
Report by:	Learning and development officer

Classification:

Open

Key decision

This is not an executive decision.

Wards affected

Countywide

Purpose

To review the work and activity of the Herefordshire community safety partnership (CSP)

Recommendation(s)

THAT:

- (a) **the committee review performance of the partnership against its strategic priorities and identify any further actions it may wish to recommend to the partnership for consideration.**

Alternative options

1. The report provides a factual overview of priorities and performance. It is open to the committee to identify alternative or additional actions to improve performance; such recommendations will need to be referred to the partnership for consideration having regard to the availability of resources and in light of available evidence of need.

Reasons for recommendations

2. To scrutinise the work and activity of the Herefordshire community safety partnership (CSP) in accordance with the statutory requirement for the CSP to ensure effective mechanisms for scrutiny of crime & disorder are in place. (Statutory requirements of the CSP are listed in appendix 2.)

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Adrian Turton, Learning & Development Officer (HSCB/ HSAB/ HCSP) on Tel (01432) 383522

Key considerations

3. Councillor Graham Powell, the chair of the CSP (along with council officers and Partnership colleagues) will give a presentation (appendix 1) to this report to the committee on the activity of the CSP including key findings from the annual CSP strategic assessment refresh 2015 (appendix 3) The refresh document has focussed on the four strategic priority issues identified by the CSP which are to:
 - Reduce re-offending/bring offenders to account (adults and youths)
 - Address the harm caused by alcohol and drugs
 - Address domestic violence and abuse
 - Promote community cohesion and reduce anti-social behaviour
4. In summary, overall reported crime in Herefordshire has increased during 2015 compared to 2014. The four strategic priorities identified by the CSP remain key issues to be addressed by the partnership. (See appendix 4).
5. The CSP is committed to reduce re-offending for both adults and young offenders. Adult reoffending rates remain around 22%, the rate of first time youth offenders continues to drop in Herefordshire, but remains higher than the West Midlands and national rates.
6. Harm from alcohol and drugs misuse remains an issue for Herefordshire. However, the procurement of a new contractor, Addaction, to provide specialist drug and alcohol abuse interventions in Herefordshire will enable one provider to be responsible for the full client journey, including transition from young peoples to adults, hospital settings to community and criminal justice to community. There will be a much greater emphasis on recovery from substance misuse, targeting diversionary activity in the community and offering positive challenge with the service user. A stronger prevention and early intervention service should reduce, through informed decision making, exposure to risky behaviours and the complete range of substances.
7. Domestic violence & abuse in Herefordshire continues to stretch multi agency resources. Domestic violence crimes continue to increase through proactive policing and demand on specialist domestic abuse support services, provided by West Mercia Womens Aid, continues to grow with a 20% increase in referrals during 2015.
8. To promote community cohesion and reduce anti-social behaviour is the fourth priority for the CSP. In the year to October 2015, West Mercia Police in Herefordshire recorded 6,612 incidents of anti-social behaviour (ASB) (an 8% reduction on last year). In same period 1,745 ASB calls were made to the Herefordshire Council environmental health team.
9. Herefordshire has seen an increase in reported hate crime during 2015 and whilst numbers are low, they are closely monitored. In addition, the CSP and partner organisations are embracing the responsibility to prevent, identify and tackle radicalisation, and educate people in Herefordshire of the dangers of radicalisation.
10. The CSP is a statutory partnership to oversee crime and disorder in Herefordshire and promote multi agency working. Representatives from the Herefordshire Health and Wellbeing Board, the Herefordshire Children and Young People Partnership, the

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Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board, the Herefordshire Safeguarding Adults Board and Herefordshire Council all sit on the Community Safety Partnership to ensure strategic coordination and collaboration. All the Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership strategic priorities are cross cutting issues to be tackled on a cross partnership basis. For example the priorities to reduce the harm from domestic violence, substance misuse, reoffending, anti-social behaviour and to address community cohesion are all cross partnership issues.

Community impact

11. Community safety is essential to the quality of life of people in Herefordshire. It is an outcome rather than a service, and strongly influenced by the quality of services and efficiency of service delivery.
12. Community safety relates to people's sense of personal security in the places that they live, grow up in, work or where they spend their leisure time. One's view of community safety therefore affects how people value their neighbourhoods, and what factors make a neighbourhood a good or bad place to live and grow up in. Feeling unsafe in one's own neighbourhood or community can have devastating effects on individuals and neighbourhoods, impacting on health and wellbeing. It can lead to social isolation and contribute to people feeling even more vulnerable. The Community Safety Annual Assessment (2015) found that Herefordshire is generally a safe place to live with low levels of crime although there are still some challenges to reducing crime in urban areas and in domestic abuse settings.
13. Crime has a high health and social cost to individuals and communities, as well as associated costs to the NHS and wider health economy. The overall rate of recorded crimes has steadily decreased since 2010, although 2015 has seen an increase. In 2013-14 there were 45 crimes recorded in Herefordshire for every 1,000 people in the county compared to 66 for every 1,000 people across England and Wales.

Equality duty

14. The Equality Duty 2010 has 3 aims (general duty)
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the act
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those that who do not.
15. The Public Sector Equality Duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying "due regard" in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.
16. The community safety strategy and the work of the partnership supports these aims in much of the work that it carries out particularly around its community cohesion work, by working with communities, fostering those good relations and building an awareness and understanding. The work the partnership does around anti-social behaviour, hate crime, raising awareness and eliminating unlawful discrimination,

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harassment and victimisation is very important. The community safety work demonstrates that the council and its partners take the Equality Duty seriously.

Financial implications

17. The support function for the CSP is delivered by the business unit (hosted by the council) that also supports both the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children's Board and the Herefordshire Safeguarding Adults Board. The business unit is funded by the council and other partners. Currently, there are no financial risks associated with this support function.
18. CSP interventions are financed by grants obtained from the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner. The grant allocations are subject to PCC policy and budget restrictions. There is an annual risk to this funding stream, although currently the CSP has a positive relationship with the PCC. The election of a new PCC for West Mercia takes place in May 2016.
19. Other CSP activity is funded as part of individual agency responsibilities, whilst working together in partnership to achieve agreed outcomes.

Legal implications

20. The overview and scrutiny committee has the power under section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 (as amended) to (a) review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge by the responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions; and (b) to make reports or recommendations to cabinet with respect to the discharge of those functions.

Risk management

21. There is little risk to the CSP delivering its statutory requirement. But as highlighted in financial implications (section 12) above, the impact of the CSP will be dependent on the availability of resources to deliver and complete agreed action plans.

Consultees

22. None.

Appendices

Appendix 1. - Presentation

Appendix 2 - HCSP Roles & Responsibilities

Appendix 3. – Executive Summary Strategic Assessment

Appendix 4. – HCSP Strategy on a Page 14/17

Background papers

None identified.

Community Safety Update

GOSC – 19th January 2016

- **Update the General Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the Herefordshire Community Safety Strategy & Related Performance.**



Community Safety Update

GOSC – 19th January 2016

Present:

- Cllr Graham Powell (Chair of HCSP)
- Supt Sue Thomas – West Mercia Police (Vice Chair HCSP)
- Jo Davidson – Director, Lead for Community Safety, Herefordshire Council
- Adrian Turton – Learning & Development Officer, HCSP/ HSCB/HSAB



Role of General, Overview & Scrutiny Committee (see Appendix 2)

- To carry out the scrutiny role for Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership

“The Community Safety Partnership has a statutory requirement to ensure effective mechanisms for scrutiny of crime & disorder in connection to the discharge of the responsible authorities functions around crime and disorder.”

- Responsible Authorities:
 - Herefordshire Council
 - West Mercia Police
 - National Probation Service
 - Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC)
 - Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
 - Hereford & Worcester Fire & Rescue



West Mercia Police & Crime Commissioner

- Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership has a responsibility to work with the PCC & OPCC.
- OPCC Funding into Herefordshire June 2015
 - Core Community Safety Partnership Grant - £79,711
 - Additional CSP grant - £65,000
 - Drug Intervention Programme - £43,360
 - Superintendent Fund - £30,000
 - Business, Cyber, Rural - £164,096
 - Community Safety Grants - £113,850 (community grants)

= £496,017



Priorities for Strategic Plan 2014/17

The 2013 Strategic Assessment led to the following priorities being agreed in the HCSP Strategic Plan 2014/17 (see Appendix 3 for executive summary)

- 1.Reduce re-offending / bring offenders to account (adults and youths)
 - 2.Address the harm caused by alcohol and drugs
 - 3.Address domestic violence and abuse
 - 4.Promote community cohesion and reduce anti-social behaviour
- Plus a joint priority with HSCB - Child Sexual Exploitation & Adult Sexual Violence and Abuse.*
 - Also being asked to support PCC priorities of Reducing Rural Crime and Business Crime*

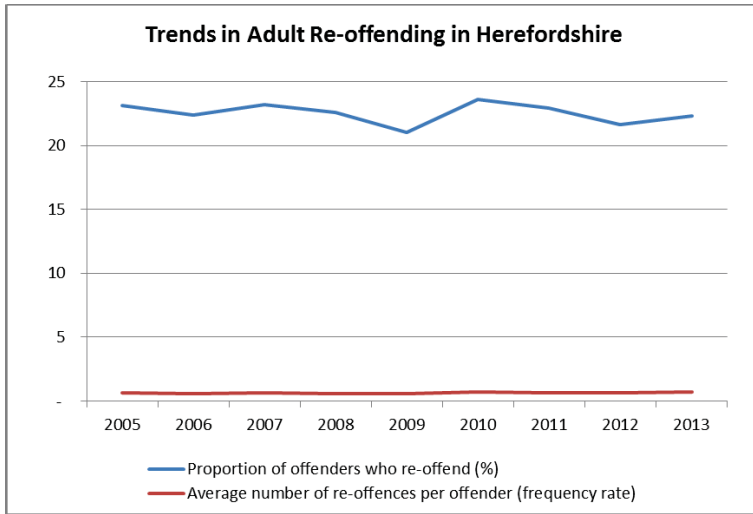


1. Reduce re-offending – Key Points

- Progress Transforming Rehabilitation
- Adult Reoffending in Herefordshire decreased since 2010
- Local tracking tool in place to track young re-offenders
- Activity for 2016: Investigate & Challenge
 - Housing & Accommodation Provision for Offenders
 - Mental Health Provision for Offenders



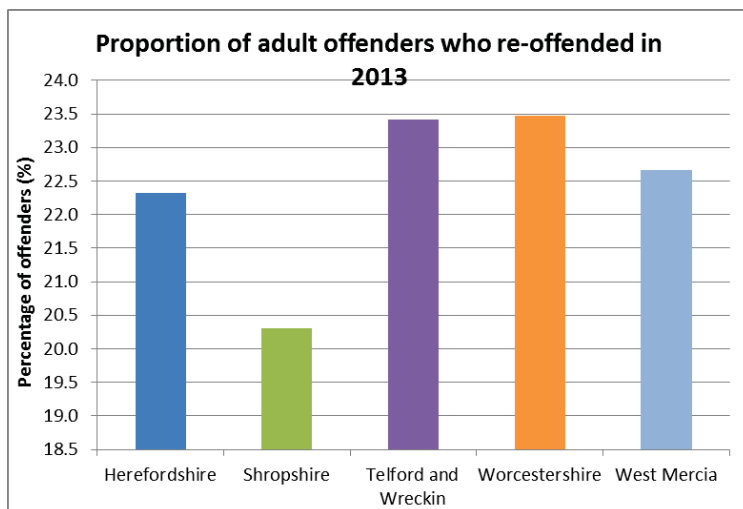
Reduce re-offending



- Delay in Re-offending data.
- 22% of adult offenders re-offended in 2013 (321 people from a cohort of 1,438).
- On average those re-offenders committed around 3 crimes.



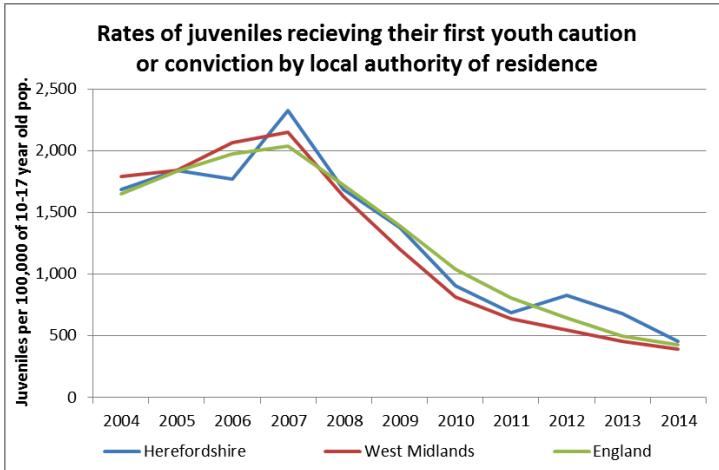
Reduce re-offending



- 2013 Re-offending rate England & Wales 25%
- 2013 re-offending rate West Midlands 24%
- Action for 2016: understand why Shropshire's re-offending rate so low compared to rest of West Mercia.



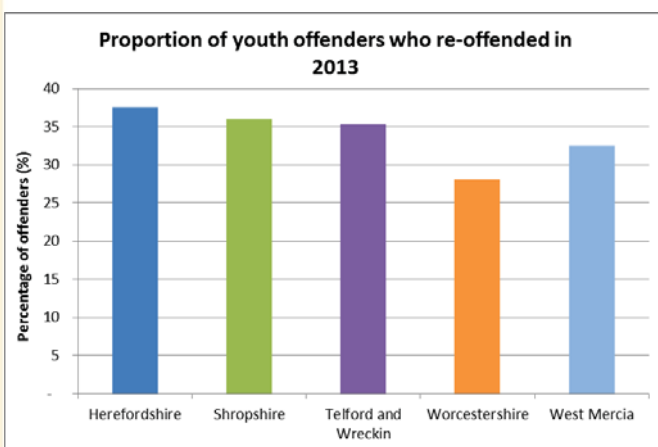
Reduce re-offending – Key Points



- Youth Justice System:
- Number of youth offenders decreasing in Herefordshire
- First time entrant rate higher than West Mercia and national figures.



Reduce re-offending – Key Points



- Youth re-offending rates in line with national figures.
- But above regional figures



2. Address the harm caused by alcohol and drugs - rationale

Alcohol

- Linked to violent crime and night time economy
- 40% all violent crimes - alcohol marker

Health & Wellbeing Concerns:

- Herefordshire alcohol and hospital admissions remain stable – 1,011 in 2015/15
- Generally better than national rates
- More than 2/3rd of admissions older than 50 years

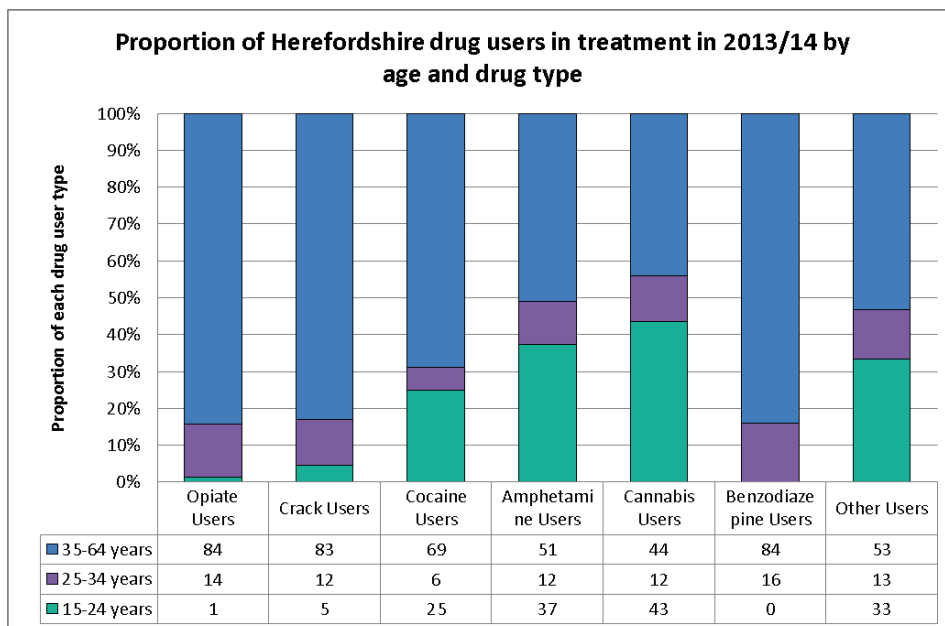


Address the harm caused by alcohol and drugs

- New Service Provider to provide specialist alcohol and drug treatment provision commenced December 2015
 - Addaction
- History of entrenched drug use:
 - 50% of drug users in treatment aged 35 to 64 years
 - 94% of 35 to 64 years cohort using opiates, cannabis, crack
- Different profile for young adults in treatment
 - 14% of drug users in treatment aged 15 to 24 years
 - 83% of 15 to 24 years cohort using cannabis, amphetamine or cocaine
- Alcohol linked to Domestic Violence/ ASB/ Violence in night time economy



Address the harm caused by alcohol and drugs



3. Address domestic violence and abuse

- Trend of increased DVA crimes and demand on specialist support services continues.
- West Mercia Police more accurate and tighter focused recording of DV cases across West Mercia
- In year up to Sept 2015 1,173 Domestic Violence offences (49% increase year on year)
- In year to September 2015 - 820 Women referred to WMWA (20% increase on same period last year)
- Number of Herefordshire calls to and from WMWA helpline 1,100 more (27% increase)



Address domestic violence and abuse

Key achievements in 2015

- Re commissioned the Specialist DVA support service (WMWA) for a further 5 years.
- Carried out 3 X Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHR's) *to be submitted to Home Office early 2016
- Voluntary Perpetrator Programme Pilot Project completed and further funding obtained to extend pilot.
- Challenges:
 - to extend and continue to rollout Healthy Relationship Education in schools.
 - to support specialist provider to meet demand



3. Promote community cohesion and reducing anti-social behaviour -

ASB

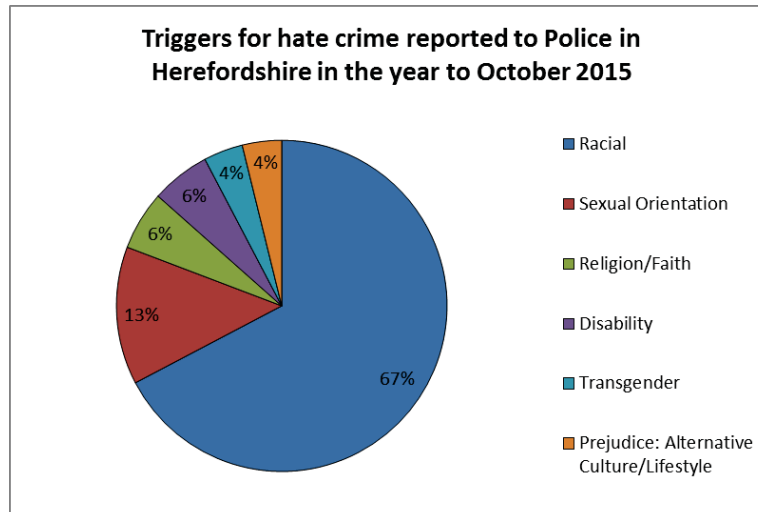
- In the year to October 2015 West Mercia Police recorded 6,612 incidents of ASB (8% reduction on last year). 83% classified as nuisance.
- In same period 1,745 ASB calls were made to Herefordshire Council Environmental Health (770 Noise reports) (Fly tipping 647 reports).

Hate Crime

- In the year to October 2015 West Mercia Police recorded 54 hate crimes (15% increase)
- Increases may be viewed as a positive due to historical under reporting
- Most likely ethnicity of a victim 45% White British, 20% White any other background, 13% Asian or Asian British – Pakistani



Promote community cohesion and reduce anti-social behaviour -



Promote community cohesion and reducing anti-social behaviour -

Achievements to date:

- Ongoing tasking approach – multi-agency monthly meeting
- Rogue Trading & Doorstep Crime Project
- Summer Months out of hours Environmental Health Team
- Roll out Prevent (anti radicalisation) statutory requirements
- Channel Panels have sat to protect individuals from radicalisation



Rural & Business Crime -



A West Mercia Police & Crime Commissioner grant funding initiative:

- Herefordshire Rural Hub Communications Project
- Out of Hours Environmental Noise Team (summer months)
- Rogue Traders Project
- Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator (inc rural watch/business watch)
- Facewatch in Hereford City Centre
- Grant for CCTV
- Nomad/ Rapid Deployment Cameras
- Mobile Police & Partnership Contact Centre
- Operations:
 - Leviathan – Fish theft poaching
 - Project Poacher
 - Nightingale – Wildlife crime



Rural & Business Crime -



Moving Forward

- Future Issues for Scrutiny to consider
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Prevent/ anti radicalisation interventions
- Election of new Police & Crime Commissioner for West Mercia May 2016
- Reduced Budgets(?)

Appendix 2 - Overview of role and responsibilities of Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership (HCSP)

INTRODUCTION

Community safety partnerships (previously called crime and disorder reduction partnerships (CDRPs) are defined in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 as: “An alliance of organisations which generate strategies and policies, implement actions and interventions concerning crime and disorder within their partnership area”. They are statutorily responsible for reducing crime and disorder, substance misuse and re-offending in each single and lower-tier local authority area.

ROLE OF HCSP

- (a) To identify ways in which the responsible authorities in the county area might more effectively implement the priorities identified in the Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership’s Strategic Assessment and three year Strategy through coordinated and joint working; and
- (b) To identify how the responsible authorities in the county might otherwise reduce crime and disorder or combat substance misuse through coordinated and joint working.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Oversee strategic analysis of current activity appropriate at county level, including strategic assessments and ensure an evidence-based approach to priority-setting.
2. Agree key priorities at county level and ensure that there is a three year Community Safety Strategy and Plan to deliver actions against those priorities.
3. Keep a strategic overview of progress against delivery of objectives and provide constructive challenge in areas of underperformance at a county level as appropriate.
4. Contribute to the development and implementation of other local strategies and plans, such as health and wellbeing, which are aligned to the community safety agenda, particularly to reduce duplication of effort and identify and implement possible efficiencies and increase effectiveness.
5. Raise the awareness of key issues and facilitate the exchange of information between all organisations involved that are appropriate at a countywide level.
6. To ensure compliance with the statutory duties and responsibilities stated in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Police and Justice Act 2006, and in subsequent Home Office regulations.
7. Consult and engage with stakeholders and communities on the priority issues to be addressed.

8. Establish Domestic Homicide Reviews as appropriate (DHR) (as set out in the Domestic Violence and Crimes Act 2004).
9. Ensure that all authorities consider section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (review 2005) showing that crime and disorder, anti social behaviour; behaviour that adversely affects the environment and substance misuse issues are considered in policy and delivery.
10. Formulate and implement a strategy to reduce reoffending by adult and young offenders.
11. Ensure effective mechanisms for scrutiny of crime and disorder (sec 19-21 Police and Justice Act 2006) in connection to the discharge of the responsible authorities functions around crime and disorder.
12. To co-operate with the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner assisting where appropriate to achieve the priorities identified in the West Mercia Police and Crime Plan and exploring opportunities for joint working.
13. To facilitate effective information sharing on behalf of all Responsible Authorities.
14. To approve the allocation of funding received as a community safety partnership and to explore coordinated use of other resources to achieve increased outcomes.
15. Review and explore developing relationships with other relevant bodies at regional and local level, such as the Local Criminal Justice Board, the Police and Crime Panel and the Health and Well Being Board.
16. Review the Terms of Reference and membership on an annual basis.

Appendix 3 - Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership (HCSP): Strategic Assessment to inform 2014-17 Community Safety Strategy

Herefordshire Council Strategic Intelligence Team

December 2015 Refresh

Executive summary

- The strategic assessment is an annual exercise to identify key crime, disorder, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse issues that affect Herefordshire. This assessment considers what needs to be achieved to improve or maintain community safety and how communities can feel reassured and have confidence that their concerns and fears are being addressed. The assessment is refreshed annually to ensure that priorities and strategic decisions remain relevant and effective. The completion of the Strategic Assessment involves scanning partner data, identifying where further analysis is required and identifying emerging issues, vulnerable locations and people. This exercise in 2013 informed a decision by the Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership on the priorities for the Three Year Strategy and Plan (2014-17).

The current priorities agreed for 14/17 are: Reducing Reoffending, Promoting Community Cohesion and Reducing Anti-Social Behaviour, Reducing the Harm from Domestic Violence and Abuse, and Reducing the Harm from Substance Misuse. A fourth priority was also agreed to be jointly overseen with the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board addressing Child Sexual Exploitation & Adult Sexual Violence and Abuse.

In addition the HCSP has agreed to work with the West Mercia Police & Crime Commissioner to address Rural & Business Crime.

The latest refresh is the Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership: Annual Strategic Assessment Refresh 2015/16. This document is currently in draft awaiting sign off by the CSP in February 2016.

Highlighted below are the main issues identified for 2014/17

- Herefordshire generally has a **lower rate of crime** per head of population than across England and Wales (49 per 1,000 compared to 64 per 1,000). This is reflected in the individual crime types with only 3 crime types out of 17 ('sexual offences', 'miscellaneous crimes against society' and 'non-domestic burglary') having more offences committed per head of population than across England and Wales. The last three years have seen some convergence, with crime rates in Herefordshire decreasing more slowly than across England and Wales.

Herefordshire Community Safety Strategic Assessment 2015 refresh v1

- **Total recorded crime** continues to decrease with all but ‘non-domestic burglary’, ‘miscellaneous crimes against society’, ‘shoplifting’, ‘violence without injury’, ‘domestic burglary’ and ‘drug offences’ decreasing between 2010 and 2013. The scale of decrease has not been as great as across England and Wales, but this may reflect a lower starting position.
- Crime is **concentrated in Hereford City and the market towns**, particularly Hereford City Centre. This is true for all crime types except ‘burglary other’ where the highest rate was in rural areas, particularly the Golden Valley.
- Based on the volume and **cost per crime** ‘violent crimes with injury’ and ‘sexual offences’ appear to cost the county the most in terms of preventing crime, the impact on victims and in response to the crime.
- The number of **sexual offences** in the county has increased considerably in the last two years, although this may be due to reporting of ‘non-recent offences’. The number of offences compared to other crime types is low, but the cost of these crimes to society (particularly the physical and emotional costs for victims) means that the number is not insignificant. The rate of sexual offences per head of population in the county is slightly above that nationally - one of only three offence types above the national rate. Some services have reported an increase in referrals for victims with complex mental health needs, but it is not clear whether this is due mostly to changes in the way agencies refer cases or whether it reflects a change in need.
- The **‘misuse’ of alcohol** in the county has impacts in a number of areas particularly for the police and health services. Alcohol is linked to a large proportion of violent crime and is particularly related to the night time economy. It is also implicated in domestic abuse. The health impacts of alcohol disproportionately affect deprived areas of the county. The number of violent crimes with injury and alcohol related assaults reporting to A&E have decreased over the last few years.
- The number of **domestic violence** and abuse offences and incidents is fairly comparable to other areas of the West Mercia force. However, there has been some increase in both DVA offences and incidents in the last two years, a fact which is reflected in violence against the person offenses.
- The number of **antisocial behavior** crimes and incidents in the county has seen a continual decrease in the last three years. The number of ASB incidents recorded by the police however, is still quite large (7,900 in 2012-13 - 15% of all incidents). In 2012-13 14% of people were fearful of antisocial behaviour in their area. Residents of the most deprived areas were most likely to think ASB was an issue. There is a need to further understand whether ASB is decreasing universally across the county or whether certain hot spots are bucking this trend.
- The number of **drug offences** committed in the county has increased at a far greater rate than any other type of crime, although rates remain below those nationally. Drug related admissions to hospital saw a considerable increase in 2012-13 and evidence suggests that drug related mortality is increasing. The number of problematic drugs users (per head of population) is similar to that nationally.
- The number of people **re-offending** over the last three years has been consistently higher than would be expected given the characteristics of the cohort, although not statistically significant.
- Herefordshire continues to have a significantly higher rate of first time entrants to the **youth justice system**. It is thought that this may be explained by the sustained significantly higher detection rate, coupled with a lower use of community resolutions.

- **Hate crime** has seen a considerable increase in the last two years. The total volume of crimes is still fairly small, but there is a need to understand the reasons for the increase and monitor the trend.
- Evidence indicates there are **certain groups of people and families** that make a disproportionate call upon a number of services from different providers. Further work to understand how individuals (single people and those within families) interact with these services, could bring advantages in terms of effectiveness of intervention, especially if adopting a “whole family approach”.

Addendum: Update December 2015

As an update, Herefordshire remains a safe county, however, there has been an increase in total recorded crime for Herefordshire in 2015. This has come about due to a number of factors, including a change to crime recording protocols.

APPENDIX 4 - HEREFORDSHIRE COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY 2014-17

Context	Herefordshire has low levels of crime compared to the rest of England & Wales	Total recorded crime in Herefordshire continues to decrease	Calls to Herefordshire domestic abuse help line increased by 50% (2013)	Alcohol was a factor in 39% of all violence against person crimes.	Drug and sexual assault offences increasing. Hate crime increasing.	Joint approach needed for those households which engage with a number of services
Vision	<i>Agencies and practitioners will work together to make Herefordshire an even safer place to live, work and visit.</i>					
Our Approach	<p><i>Collaborative working with</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>Joint commissioning and decommissioning</i> ✓ <i>Joint information sharing protocols</i> ✓ <i>Joint approach to operational working practice</i> ✓ <i>Agreed mechanisms for understanding needs, the effectiveness of services and measuring performance</i> 					
Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the volume of crime with an emphasis on addressing the harm caused by alcohol and drugs. • Reduce re-offending and bring offenders to account. • Address the harm caused by domestic violence and abuse (DVA). • Promote community cohesion and reduce the volume of anti-social behaviour (ASB).+ • Plus work with HSCB & HSAB to oversee Child Sexual Exploitation & Sexual Violence, Abuse and Exploitation 					
Work Programmes	<p>Reduce Re-offending/ Bring Offenders to Account (adult and young offenders.) Integrate Transforming Rehabilitation. Work alongside the Nat. Probation Service (NPS) and the Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC); Continue Integrated Offender Management (IOM) initiative. Develop community resolution/ restorative justice initiatives.</p>	<p>Address the Harm caused by Alcohol and Drugs. Raise awareness of sensible drinking; Co-ordinated action to reduce crime linked to alcohol consumption and drug use; Develop with community safety partners commissioned services to address alcohol and drug misuse.</p>	<p>Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA). Continue to deliver the DVA Action Plan and refresh in 2014. Educate and raise awareness that DVA in Herefordshire is unacceptable. In partnership - commission specialist DVA services for Herefordshire.</p>	<p>Promote Community Cohesion and Reduce ASB. Undertake multi agency tasking approach to resolve locally identified issues; Programmes of activity to promote cohesion within communities and to support communities to address ASB issues.</p>		
Outcomes	Effective management of offenders to include a full range of available interventions, including "catch and convict" and planned care pathways.	<p>Increase in responsible drinking and reduction in alcohol related crimes and incidents;</p> <p>Co-ordinated action to address drug related crime .</p>	<p>Improved services on basis of more effective commissioning and joint working.</p> <p>Increased adult and young people awareness that DVA is not acceptable.</p>	<p>To maintain the levels of people who feel safe in their local area;</p> <p>Communities are empowered to address community cohesion and ASB matters .</p>		
Horizon scanning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Government policy and legislative changes, such as the ASB Police & Crime Act 2014, Care Bill, Transforming Rehabilitation, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • * Emerging trends – increase in rural crime, hate crime, ASB, sexual assault, vulnerable victims, especially children • Continued budgetary pressures faced by all partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a relationship with the new Community Rehabilitation Company. • Jointly commission victim support services with the Police and Crime Commissioner 					
Cross Cutting Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education - to equip young people to allow them to make informed life choices. • Equality and Diversity - to make certain that those who are most vulnerable and in need of help and support, are taken into account • Certain groups of people and families with multiple issues and problems make a disproportionate call upon a number of services from different providers. 					
Strategic Performance Measures	Performance will be measured through overall rates of crime, reoffending levels, violent crime linked to alcohol and domestic abuse, alcohol related hospital admissions, levels of people feeling safe in their local area					



MEETING:	GENERAL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MEETING DATE:	19 January 2016
TITLE OF REPORT:	Overview of strategic housing documents
REPORT BY:	Joint commissioning manager

Classification

Open

Key Decision

This is not an executive decision.

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To seek the views of the committee of engagement undertaken with the housing sector and of proposed new strategic housing documents for Herefordshire, including homelessness review and strategy, allocations policy and housing strategy, in order to inform the recommendations to cabinet.

Recommendation(s)

THAT:

- (a) **The committee notes the report and appendix report including plans for proposed key housing strategies, along with the draft interim housing strategy, draft allocations policy and draft homelessness review and prevention strategy.**

Alternative options

- 1 That the committee does not consider the report until after the key strategic documents have been decided upon by cabinet and then review the documents themselves in detail. This approach would deprive the committee of an opportunity

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Ewen Archibald, joint commissioning manager on Tel (01432) 261970

to inform cabinet's decision.

Reasons for recommendations

- 2 Housing has returned to the national policy agenda suddenly in 2015, serving to highlight the many challenges faced already in ensuring appropriate and affordable housing for Herefordshire's citizens. New legislation currently passing through Parliament brings significant new challenges to the housing sector and to the council as the county's strategic housing authority. This has coincided with all the key local strategic housing documents requiring review and revision. These include;
 - The homelessness review and prevention strategy
 - The allocations policy for Herefordshire
 - Herefordshire's housing strategy
- 3 It was decided to organise the timetable so that all of these documents would be developed together for decision in early 2016, allowing time in the summer and autumn 2015 for intensive engagement with housing partners and others. That engagement has now taken place and the key strategies are being completed for submission to cabinet in February. The appendix to this report summarises the finding of that engagement and sets out the key elements of the three main strategy documents for general overview and scrutiny committee's consideration.

Key considerations

- 4 The council no longer holds its own housing stock and its resources and direct control over housing provision have diminished and yet it retains significant responsibilities. It can discharge these responsibilities only through partnerships which a wide range of housing providers and other organisations and agencies. It has wide ranging strategic objectives relating to housing development, homelessness, allocation of social and affordable housing, provision of specialist accommodation and support of health and wellbeing. Existing challenges in Herefordshire particularly focus on balancing the housing needs of local people with the resources available and the interests of independent housing providers.
- 5 The homelessness review and prevention strategy is a statutory document focused on measures to prevent and relieve homelessness in its different forms. The council has made considerable progress in recent years in reducing homelessness, including the significantly reduced use of temporary accommodation and not resorting to bed and breakfast accommodation since 2012. This work is done by the housing solutions team in partnership with many small voluntary organisations and other statutory agencies. Many challenges remain and threatened and actual homelessness is expected to increase in the wake of new policy changes by national government.
- 6 The allocations policy sets the basis on which people are allocated social and affordable housing via the housing register. This requires a delicate balance between fairness in responding to needs and the management of demand to make best use of housing stock in the county. The policy and its accompanying procedures are implemented through the Home Point Partnership, comprising the council and eight local housing providers. Changes to the policy in 2014 resulted in

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very significant reduction in the numbers of people on the housing register with some consequences which need to be addressed. In revising the allocations policy for 2016, the focus is on ensuring those in genuine housing need are all identified and can take up housing and that the housing stock is fully utilised. The policy must also comply with complex statutory requirements and seeks to ensure that housing providers' individual policies for allocating and excluding tenants are fair and consistent with the strategic position.

- 7 The housing strategy is no longer a statutory document but is valuable in capturing the strategic overview across all housing issues countywide. It therefore reflects key elements from other key documents but also addresses important issues relating to health and wellbeing, specialist housing and housing development.
- 8 The adults and wellbeing directorate conducted wide ranging engagement with housing partners, voluntary organisations and other statutory agencies from August to December 2015. This included questionnaires and meetings with leaders of housing providers, well attended workshops on housing development, homelessness and housing allocations and a main housing engagement event with all stakeholders in October. There was an energetic and diverse response from organisations which is summarised in the report at Appendix 1 and has contributed directly to revised strategic documents. Consultation of stakeholders on the draft homelessness review and strategy and the allocations policy will conclude in early January.
- 9 New legislation on housing and welfare reform introduces very significant challenges for the housing sector including;
 - Reduction in rent for social housing over successive years and the extension of the Right to Buy
 - Removing entitlement to housing benefit for 18 to 21 year olds and criminal sanctions for landlords renting to people with no leave to remain in the UK.
 - Relaxation of obligation on housing developers to build affordable homes for rent
 - General reduction in value of benefits and reduction of the overall benefit income cap.
 - Earnings cap for social housing tenants

Community impact

- 10 Housing is central to the life of communities as a whole and to the lifestyle and wellbeing of individuals and households. In general the strategic documents seek to direct the housing resources of Herefordshire and the effort of providers and partners more effectively for the benefit of the community. This will be particularly in supporting those in housing need, older people, vulnerable young people and disabled people and others requiring specialist housing. However, the documents also promote the role of housing in the wider health and wellbeing of the population, not least through a focus on affordable warmth and fuel property, accessible homes and the quality of private sector housing.
- 11 The strategic documents will be fully consistent with the council's corporate aims, with the priorities in Herefordshire's health and wellbeing strategy and the strategic

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objectives of the adults and wellbeing directorate.

Equality and Human Rights

- 12 Increasing equality of opportunity and access, and reducing inequalities underpin the strategic housing documents. Individual elements of the strategies will undergo equality impact assessments as an integral part of their planning and implementation.

Financial implications

- 13 There are no specific financial implications for the council of this report nor of the main strategic housing documents, which focus on providing strategic context for the work of independent housing providers and linking with other strategic work of the council and its partners. Any specific initiatives which may arise from the implementation of the documents would be the subject of further decision reports, incorporating any financial implications.

Legal implications

- 14 The council has a duty to have and thereafter keep under review replacing or modifying from time to time a tenancy strategy which sets out the matters to which the registered providers of social housing operating in the district must have regard in formulating their own policies in relation to the kinds of tenancies they grant, their terms and renewal pursuant to the Localism Act 2011 s150(1) and s150(4).
- 15 The council has a duty pursuant to the Homelessness Act 2002 S(1)-(4) to carry out a homelessness review and formulate a homelessness strategy at least every five years. In formulating or modifying that strategy, authorities in England must have regard to their current allocation scheme and their current tenancy strategy.
- 16 The council has a duty pursuant to the Housing Act 1996 s166A(1) to maintain an allocation policy or scheme incorporating priorities and procedures (including all aspects of the allocation procedure, including by whom decisions may be made).
- 17 Save in relation to its duties as above there are no specific legal implications for the council of this report which informs the council of engagement undertaken with the housing sector and of proposed new strategic housing documents. Specific actions arising out of the implementation of the strategies proposed will require further.

Risk management

- 18 There are few risks arising from this report directly given its very broad strategic perspective. There will be risks arising from the allocations policy and homelessness review and prevention strategy. In summary, the main risks would be;
 - Failure to finalise a homelessness review and strategy would be a breach of statute and confer significant reputational risk on the council.
 - Homelessness prevention depends on complicated networks of statutory and

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voluntary agencies working together. With budgetary pressures facing all such bodies there is a risk that reductions in staffing or operational spending could undermine existing capacity to prevent and relieve homelessness. This would lead to escalating costs of homelessness to the whole system and reputational risk to the council.

- Delay in implementing a new allocations policy will engender risk of judicial review challenge from housing providers choosing to opt out of the current policy because properties are not being let through Home Point. This could link to wider dissatisfaction with the present arrangements and a possible breakup of the Home Point partnership. This would be damaging reputationally and would require the council to form individual nomination agreements with each provider.
- Delay in implementing the allocations policy involves risk of legal challenge around the current interpretation of “reasonable preference” categories.

19 It is intended that all these risks will be mitigated by the approval and implementation of the homelessness prevention strategy, allocations policy and housing strategy. The effective and timely implementation of the allocations policy will be particularly significant in managing risk arising from housing providers’ concerns with present arrangements.

Consultees

20 Officers have consulted widely with housing providers, voluntary organisations, faith organisations, other council services and statutory organisations. Consultation was conducted by questionnaire and through invitation events. Stakeholders have also been consulted on the draft allocations policy and homelessness review and strategy. The cabinet member for health and wellbeing has also been consulted.

Appendices

Appendix 1; Plans for revised key housing strategies (draft strategy documents will follow in a supplement).

Background papers

- None identified.

Appendix 1 General Overview and Scrutiny Committee report Plans for Revised Key Housing Strategies

Purpose of Report

The report is intended to

- Clarify the role and objectives of the council as strategic housing authority
- Highlight immediate and new challenges to housing strategy and provision
- Explain the role and current position of key strategic documents proposed for cabinet decision
- Report on recent engagement with the housing sector and other stakeholders

1. Overview

1.1 Herefordshire council faces a diversity of challenges in its role as strategic housing authority, in common with other councils across the country. It no longer holds its own housing stock and its resources and direct control over social and affordable rented housing provision have been diminished over the years.

1.2 The council does retain significant responsibilities for housing in relation to;

- Development of affordable housing
- Policy for the allocation of social/affordable rented housing
- The prevention and relief of homelessness
- Use and quality of private sector housing
- Provision of specialist housing with care.
- Promoting health and wellbeing through safe, appropriate housing and affordable warmth

1.3 In fulfilling its duties the council works in partnership with;

- Property developers, including Housing Associations
- Housing Associations/Registered Providers of local social and affordable housing
- Voluntary sector and statutory agencies in preventing or relieving homelessness
- Neighbouring local authorities, specifically Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin and District Housing Authorities in Worcestershire.
- There are also partnerships within Herefordshire council, between teams responsible for Housing Strategy and Development, Planning, Environmental Health, Corporate Finance and Adults Wellbeing Operations.

1.4 The council's strategic housing work is influenced by myriad legislation and regulation. It is also shaped by Herefordshire's wider policies and resources and against a backdrop of the local population's needs and demographic profile. These are reflected in a variety of council and

partnership documents. In this context, the council has succeeded over recent years in delivering change and development in affordable and social housing.

- 1.5 The re-emergence of housing in the spotlight of national political debate during 2015 heralds new challenges for Herefordshire in balancing local housing needs and resources. New Bills for Housing and Work and Welfare Reform, coupled with a succession of high profile announcements indicate several radical changes to the position of Housing providers and people's eligibility for housing and its affordability. It is timely that the council is reviewing and revising all its key strategies for housing in the next few months. In so doing, it must resolve challenges in the existing local position as well as responding to new national policy.

2. The Strategic Process

- 2.1 The council is obliged to varying degrees to publish a number of official strategies or policies in relation to housing and to review and revise them from time to time. Some of these strategies are statutory and others are not, but almost all have required revision in 2015-16. In light of the changes in national policy, it was felt appropriate both to synchronise the various strategic documents and to defer their approval by cabinet. This allowed time for meaningful engagement with the housing sector and other local stakeholders, so as to inform proposed change, new partnerships and service improvement. That engagement has now been concluded and it is summarised in this report, along with the main themes emerging.

- 2.2 There are three strategic documents of primary importance, along with a number of others.

Allocations Policy

This is a statutory requirement and authorities must work in partnership with local registered housing providers. The policy sets out how social and affordable rented housing will be allocated to people in housing need on the Housing Register, using "banding" based on priorities (or "preferences") of need. These must reflect 5 statutory reasonable preference categories, alongside any local considerations. The policy is implemented by the Homepoint Partnership with Registered Providers, and is delivered by the Homepoint Team within Adults and Wellbeing Operations

Homelessness Prevention Strategy

This statutory document sets out analysis of actual and potential homelessness in Herefordshire and the council's plans for preventing and relieving it, in partnership with voluntary sector and other agencies. A recent audit of homelessness services provided reasonable assurance as to the county's provision but stressed the need for the strategy to be completed.

The Housing Strategy

Though once the main strategic document for housing authorities, this is no longer a statutory requirement. However, it is the ideal vehicle for setting out Herefordshire's approach in the face of unprecedented change in national housing policy. It also enables proper exposition of the key themes and connections and interdependency between different policies and strategies. It is

intended to articulate clearly the council's approach to housing sector partnerships and key commissioning and development priorities.

Tenancy Strategy

This is a largely technical document which sets out the rules registered housing providers should have regard to in letting social housing units in Herefordshire. It reflects additional detail as to the implementation of the Allocations through Home point. Although it is a statutory requirement, and needs to reflect the Allocation Policy, for most authorities, it is quite brief. Therefore, it is intended to follow other areas in using it as an appendix to the Allocations Policy.

Older People's Housing Strategy

This non statutory document was approved in 2014-15 in order to shape the council's corporate economic approach to the challenges posed by Herefordshire's ageing population to local housing and infrastructure. It embraces extensive growth in both market and affordable housing, including specialist accommodation with care for older people. Work is in hand to confirm detailed action planning around the strategy's implementation. It is proposed to produce a prospectus for developers and providers, setting out the council's commissioning intentions and land strategy relating to older people's housing and housing with care.

Housing Renewal Policy

This remains a statutory requirement although it has become a relatively simple document, given local authorities greatly reduced resources and powers in this area. Now updated annually, the policy focuses on improving the quality and safety of homes, encompassing environmental health issues as well as the management of Disabled Facilities Grant.

Others

The council also develops strategic positions in seeking to meet the housing needs of particular vulnerable population groups, including gypsies and travellers, learning disabled people, people with mental health needs and young people leaving care.

3. Key Housing Objectives and Challenges

Strategic Housing Objectives

- Ensure a programme of affordable housing development consistent with local housing need and national and local targets.
- Establish new models of partnership with housing developers which deliver optimum benefit from the council's resources.
- Ensure that allocations policy meets statutory obligations, is fair and realistic in the context of the exclusions policies of Home Point partners.
- Enable the local housing sector to operate economically and optimise take up of social housing.
- Prevent and relieve homelessness, however it occurs.
- Ensure appropriate and enduring solutions for people threatened with homelessness and avoid

recurring crisis for people.

- Optimise use of good quality private sector rented housing and help landlords manage the challenges they face
- Enable improved quality and safety of private sector accommodation.
- Ensure development of sufficient market rate and affordable housing and appropriate housing with care to meet the future needs of older people.
- Offer diverse, appropriate and deliverable specialist housing with care options for disabled people, people with mental health needs and vulnerable young people, including those leaving care.

Key Existing Challenges for Strategic Housing in Herefordshire

- Understanding the county's housing need in sufficient detail to promote and negotiate the appropriate development of market and, particularly affordable homes.
- Balancing a realistic, manageable social/affordable housing register which meets local need with the housing sector's need to let properties
- Balancing fairness and support to people in housing need with housing providers' management of risk.
- Tackling homelessness in a balanced way, managing both immediate risk and developing long term solutions for people.
- Promoting take up of private sector renting, whilst addressing the concerns of landlords and any risks to tenants.
- Continuing significant development of new affordable housing in the face challenges over levels of need following the revision of Allocations Policy in 2014.
- Using the council's precious land resources and limited powers to deliver affordable and social housing along with a financial return for Herefordshire.
- Identifying population needs and available resources to deliver appropriate specialist housing with care options for learning disabled people, older people, people with mental health needs and vulnerable young people.

4. New Challenges in National Policy

The new Housing Bill contains many new policies, along with new obligations and expectations on housing providers, which present them with very significant challenges. In addition, the Work and Welfare Reform Bill brings forward many changes to benefits and the wider welfare system, which may have far reaching implications for tenants of social and affordable housing and therefore, their landlords. The council is challenged to understand and plan for the combined impact of these changes for local people and its housing partners. There remains uncertainty around the final shape of some reforms and how all the changes will be implemented in practice. The key changes include;

4.1 Statutory rent reduction by 1% annually

The Government requires a progressive reduction in social housing rents by 1% for four

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consecutive years from 2016. Whilst this may be welcomed by tenants, it will substantially affect the development and improvement plans of housing providers. This is expected to curtail new build development by many Housing Associations and greatly reduce the availability of added value services and support of various kinds, having a detrimental impact for vulnerable people. The impact on tenants is uncertain as much of the saving will go to reduce housing benefit costs.

- 4.2 Extension of the Right to Buy to housing association tenants with discounts in Herefordshire of up to £78,000. The scale of likely take up of this opportunity locally is the subject of debate but is of great concern to some providers. There is little confidence within the sector that the proposed replacement of properties sold with extra new development will happen at the necessary scale or speed.
- 4.3 Earnings cap for social housing tenants of £30,000. Those earning above the threshold will be required to pay a market level rent. There are significant logistical and financial implications for providers, since once housing is allocated, no means testing is carried out. In addition to the new administrative burden this will create, landlords may also have to revise thousands of tenancies to include a means testing review. It is also anticipated that the cap may provide an incentive for greater take up of the Right to Buy.
- 4.4 Relaxation of housing developers' duty to build affordable housing units. This is to be replaced, at least partially by a requirement to build starter homes for sale at 20% or more below market rate. Such homes would be well out of reach of most social housing tenants or applicants for affordable housing, given Herefordshire's housing cost to earnings ratio. The policy could theoretically significantly reduce Herefordshire's building of affordable housing for rent, which would have a very profound impact on the long term quality, safety and security of housing for people on low incomes in the county. However, it is not yet clear how the policy will be implemented and whether any discretion will remain with local authorities.
- 4.5 Removal of entitlement to housing benefit for 18-21 year olds. This could have a significant impact in Herefordshire, since the majority of tenants in this age group will depend on housing benefit, as do all of the housing related support and temporary housing provision which the council commissions to support vulnerable young people. There is provision for exceptions to the policy and those may resolve some of the risks. However, taken with other welfare changes, there will be an increased threat of homelessness for young people, some of whom are already living in "concealed families" or overcrowded conditions.
- 4.6 The extension of the LHA shared room rate for those in social/affordable housing under the age of 35, with potential impact on the viability of small housing units for registered providers.
- 4.7 General reduction in value of benefits. This will arise from a four year freeze in working age benefits and a cap on overall household benefit income reduced to £20,000. Housing Review estimates this will result in significant reductions in housing benefit available to families. There is certainly a risk of increasing numbers of families becoming homeless.
- 4.8 Criminal liability for landlords letting to tenants without a legal right to be in the UK. This has the potential to alarm private sector landlords in particular and to lead to more eastern European and other migrants being denied housing and threatened with homelessness.



5. Engagement Process

The Adults and Wellbeing Directorate undertook engagement with housing sector providers, voluntary organisations, public sector partners and other stakeholders between August and November 2015. The purpose of this work was to understand the responses of partner organisations to new policy changes, as well as to current local challenges. The extensive process was focused on a wide range of policy issues, including those emerging from proposed legislation but also developments relating to health and wellbeing and growth and economic development. There was a very full and wide ranging response from stakeholders which is now being used to inform the new homelessness strategy, allocations policy and housing strategy.

5.1 Officers wrote to housing sector stakeholders in August, seeking opinion about changes and challenges across a wide range of housing issues. There was a useful number of in depth responses.

5.2 Three workshops were held during October to engage in depth with housing professionals and others on the key areas of Housing Development, Allocations and Homelessness. They were generally well attended and there was active debate and many detailed suggestions and feedback.

5.3 Officers have held meetings with senior managers from many local housing providers to address issues in detail and these are continuing. Whilst wide ranging, discussions have focused particularly on allocations and seeking a balance between supporting vulnerable people and those in need with managing housing providers' risks.

5.4 A main housing engagement event was held on October 19th at the Kindle Centre, where the Cabinet Member and officers from across the council debated new policies and local challenges with housing providers and many other interested organisations and individuals. This was a very productive day for the council.

5.5 It is planned to continue to carry out engagement with the housing sector over the next few months and the coming years. This is likely to include some form of annual event, and the most appropriate approaches will be reviewed in the new year.

6. Feedback from Engagement with Stakeholders

6.1 Comment and feedback received has been very wide ranging and from many different perspectives. Some of the themes and common views reflected included;

- Housing providers will be operating with significantly reduced resources over the coming

years, as a result of the progressive rent reduction and the potential impact of right to buy on existing housing stock.

- Social landlords and voluntary organisations are very concerned about spiralling debt and increasing poverty for individuals threatening their housing situation, leading to escalating homelessness and risks for providers.
- There is specific concern about persistent and potentially increasing fuel poverty, especially for older people, where it has a profound impact on health and wellbeing.
- Fuel poverty is part of a wider concern about the quality of a significant proportion of social and private sector housing in the county. The limited powers and resources of the council in this respect were highlighted, along with the need to develop new partnerships in housing renewal and improvement.
- Many contributors raised concern about the pace of development of new social housing, allied to a risk that this would be slowed further by new legislation.
- Providers and local developers expressed frustration at the high prices demanded for land in Herefordshire and argued for investment of council land assets into small scale social housing developments as well as major partnerships.
- Housing providers highlighted difficulties arising from the current Allocations Policy, including problems in letting many rural properties and concerns about people with housing needs not being visible.
- There were many calls for more effective joining up of housing with social care and health services, highlighting how central housing is to preventing ill health and sustaining stable and supportive lifestyles.
- Many contributors highlighted the need for more effective crisis intervention for people with mental health, substance misuse or behaviour needs, in order to help them maintain their settled housing.
- Some voluntary organisations hoped the council could become more proactive in establishing Community Land Trusts and bringing forward initiatives under the Self Build and Custom Housing Act 2015.
- People identified the prospect of Hereford university and the new demand for student housing it would bring as both a threat and an opportunity. There was also an argument that the arrival of Syrian refugees to Hereford could have a positive impact on the county's housing economy over time.
- Many people raised the potential contribution that housing can make to wider social development and economic growth in both urban and rural areas.

7. Meeting the Challenges; New Strategies for Herefordshire

Following the recent engagement process, the following documents are being drafted for Cabinet decision in February 2016;

- Homelessness Review and Prevention Strategy
- Allocations Policy
- Herefordshire Housing Strategy

7.1 Homelessness Review and Prevent Strategy

This statutory document will cover the period 2016 to 2020 and includes a detailed review of current homelessness strategy and service provision, in the context of an analysis of population need. The strategy then sets objectives and targets for the next four years in both preventing and relieving homelessness. The council has achieved considerable advances in recent years including no use of bed and breakfast accommodation and reducing reliance on temporary accommodation, through a combination of;

- Early intervention in mortgage arrears, risk of loss of tenancy, overcrowding and family disputes.
- Highly effective street-based prevention and relief, targeting rough sleepers, offenders and those leaving prison.
- Effective housing related support services.
- A focus on durable settled housing solutions for people, looking beyond crisis.

Priorities for 2016 to 2020 will include;

- Continuation of the hospital discharge and rough sleepers support work programmes and exploration of funding sources for their further expansion.
- Further joining up and shared approaches to preventing homelessness for people with mental health needs or learning disability and chaotic lifestyles.
- Further developments in crisis intervention for people with substance misuse needs.
- Continue to make judicious use of temporary accommodation and bring down average lengths of stay.
- Continue to manage without resort to bed and breakfast accommodation
- Monitor and intervene in winter time demand for emergency accommodation, so as to continue to reduce demand and review future potential need.
- Establish a new three way partnership between strategic Housing, Children's Wellbeing and housing providers to ensure flexible and effective support to vulnerable young people in tenancies, including those leaving care.

7.2 Allocations Policy

This policy determines how people are enabled to join the housing register and bid for homes through the choice based letting system, Home Point, and how their different housing needs are prioritised. In so doing, it must balance a number of different interests and comply with the law. The operation of Home point is a partnership between the council and 8 housing providers with

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local housing stock in Herefordshire. The policy was revised and re launched in the summer of 2014, but a number of concerns in relation to its operation have led to the need for it to be revised again. The key objectives of the revisions will be to;

- Ensure that people in housing need are treated fairly and that the Home point system is simple and easy to use.
- Ensure that there is a sufficient cohort of people on the housing register to reflect the range of need and enable monitoring and analysis of that need. This is also necessary to reflect the right level of demand for new build affordable housing development in the county.
- Ensure consistency between the allocations partnership's policy and the allocations practices of individual housing providers within the partnership. This will be particularly so in relation to convicted offenders and people with a history of anti-social behaviour and people with rent arrears or wider debt.
- Enable access to social and affordable housing for "concealed families"; those people, often young adults, who are living with wider family, sometimes in overcrowded conditions.
- Ensure that social landlords have a reasonable flow of people in housing need to take up available properties in Hereford City, the market towns and rural parts of Herefordshire.
- Ensure that the allocations policy is fully compliant with housing statute and regulations.

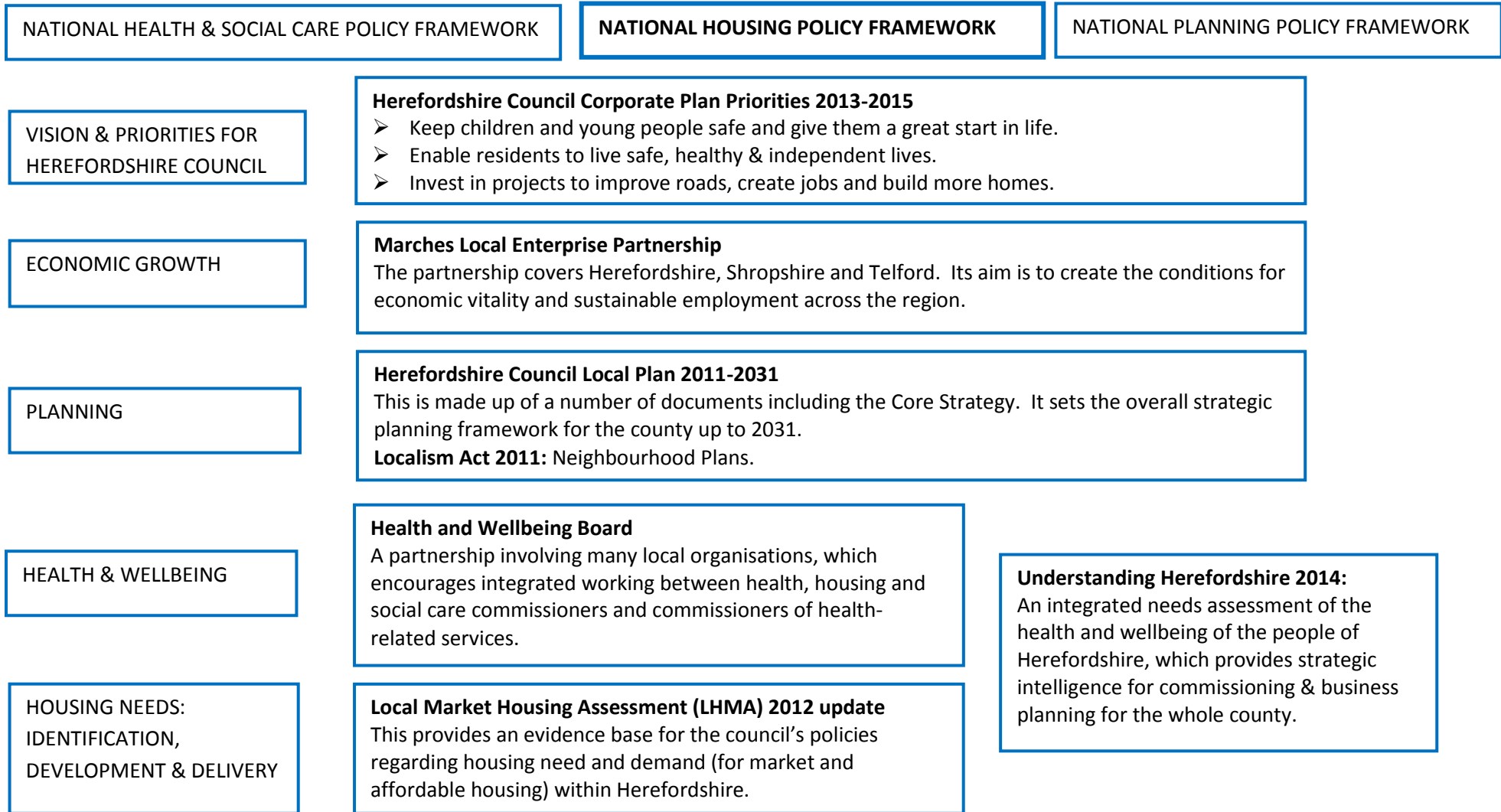
7.3 Herefordshire's Housing Strategy

The Housing Strategy for 2016 to 2020 will capture the key themes and challenges facing the council and its partners and address strategies and actions which will have the optimum impact in improving housing availability, quality and affordability. In particular, it will make links and connections between the other key strategic documents and highlight issues which do not feature in them. Key issues are likely to include;

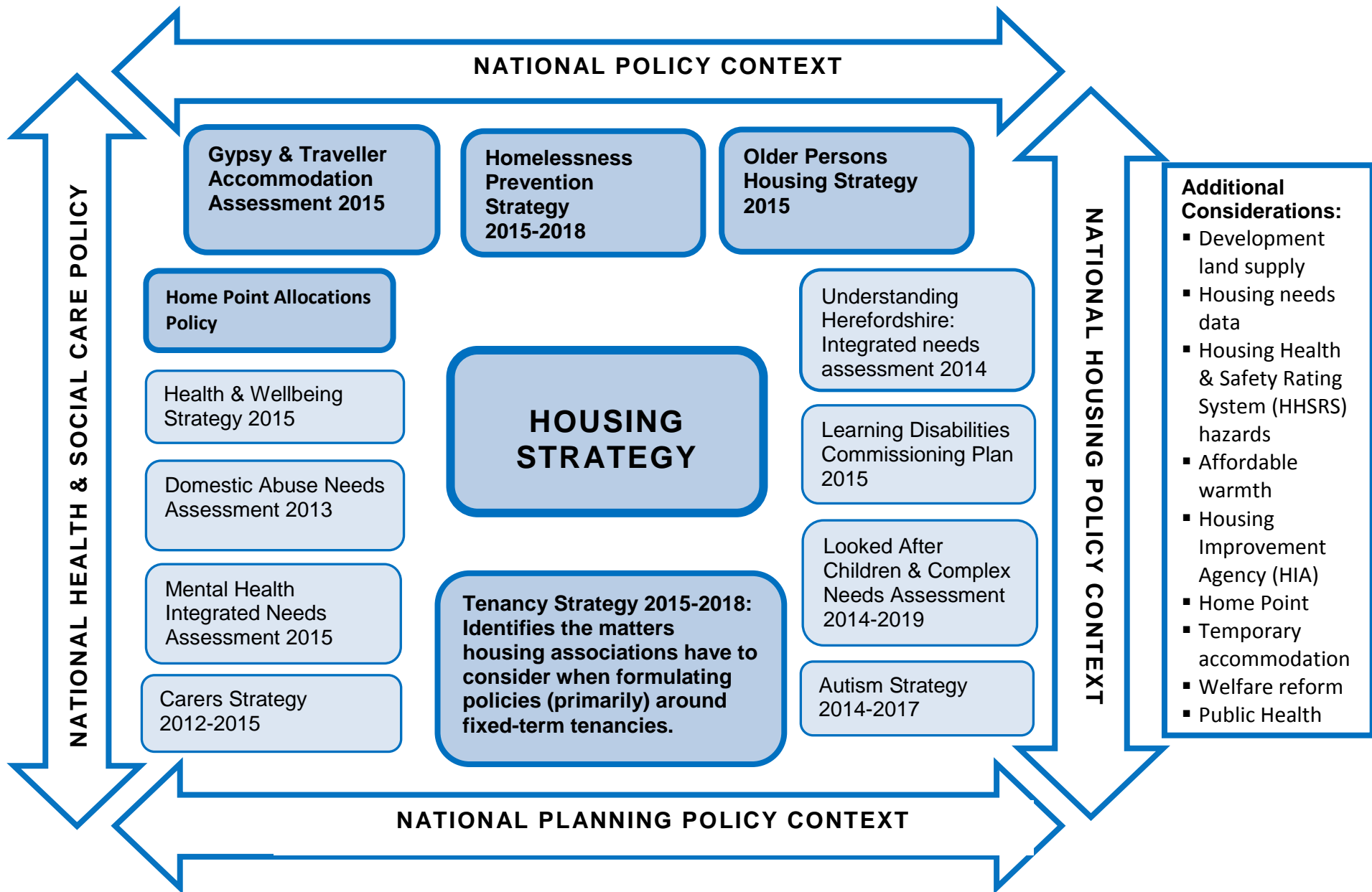
- The role of housing in promoting health and wellbeing including focus on housing quality and affordable warmth.
- Tackling fuel poverty and the safety and quality of social and private sector housing
- Flexible and comprehensive support for tenants who are vulnerable and/or represent a risk to landlords.
- New forms of partnership with developers, both as part of wider corporate growth initiatives and on a smaller scale promoting social and specialist housing
- A mixed economy of housing choices for older people, including market based, affordable and social housing.
- A fair and consistent approach to balancing the needs of tenants and landlords.

- A range of flexible and deliverable options for housing with care for learning disabled people.
- New and revised partnerships for addressing the housing needs of specific population groups, including young people leaving care and people with mental health needs.
- Exploration of community land trusts, self-build and other developments.
- Continued year on year development of affordable housing units
- Strategic response to the challenges and opportunities in ensuring housing for students of the new Hereford University.
- A partnership based and flexible response to crisis related housing needs and the needs of migrating or refugee populations.

OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR HOUSING AND HOUSING DEVELOPMENT



For further information please contact Ewen Archibald, Joint Commissioning Manager 01432 261970



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