
Subject:	HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY
Meeting and Date:	Cabinet - 7 November 2022
Report of:	Helen Lamb, Head of Finance and Investment
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Derek Murphy, Portfolio Holder for Social Housing, Port Health, Skills and Education
Decision Type:	Executive Key Decision
Classification:	Unrestricted

Purpose of the report: To provide a Housing Needs Survey for the Dover District.

Recommendation: That a Housing Needs Survey for the Dover District be undertaken.

1. Summary

- 1.1 Housing Needs Surveys (HNS) are used by Local Authorities to provide a comprehensive and robust housing need assessment and obtain high quality primary data about current and future housing needs at a local level. The research generated by a HNS can be used to inform the type and tenure of properties needed in the district, what housing-related services are required, and used to inform the development of Housing strategies and policies.
- 1.2 The data from the HNS will support the Strategic Housing team to develop a new Affordable Housing Strategy for the district, in collaboration with other housing-related service areas.
- 1.3 A Project Overview has been attached as Appendix 1, and provides further detail on the aims, methodology, resources required, impacts, outcomes, and proposed timescales.

2. The Survey

- 2.1 The Survey is comprised of multiple choice, closed and open-ended housing-related questions that will generate a mix of quantitative and qualitative data, where residents can voice their opinions on local housing and housing related services.
- 2.2 The survey will be developed in collaboration with other housing-related service areas, and other departments such as Governance to ensure the content meets our GDPR, data protection and equality obligations.
- 2.3 Residents will be encouraged to complete the survey online via our website, but paper copies will be available on request. Draft versions of the questionnaire (online & on paper) are currently in development. A copy of draft questions has been provided as Appendix 2.
- 2.4 The expected duration of the survey will be between 8-10 weeks, with the aim to open it at the beginning of next year.

3. Identification of Options

- 3.1 Option A: Cabinet approves the Strategic Housing team to conduct a Housing Needs Survey.

3.2 Option B: Cabinet does not approve the Strategic Housing team to conduct a Housing Needs Survey.

3.3 Option C: The Housing Needs Survey is outsourced to an organisation to conduct on the Council's behalf.

4. **Evaluation of Options**

4.1 Option A is the preferred option for the following reasons:

- (a) It will provide an updated analysis of current housing need, demand, and market conditions for each locality (ward, parish, town).
- (b) It will provide the Council with a source of primary data that can be used interdepartmentally to inform service delivery, strategy, and policy.
- (c) The data will identify the needs of groups in society who's needs cannot be clearly identified through secondary data.
- (d) The research gathered could be used as evidence to support planning applications.
- (e) The data from the research will allow the Strategic Housing team to develop a new Affordable Housing Strategy.

4.2 Option B is not recommended for the following reasons:

- (a) The Council will lack primary data on current needs and demands within the district's localities.
- (b) Primary data will not be available to inform a new Affordable Housing Strategy

4.3 Option C is not the preferred option as it would incur additional costs (as stated in 5.1 of this report and 6.1 of Appendix 1) and would need to go through a procurement process and evaluation before any work could start on the survey, thereby delaying the survey.

5. **Resource Implications**

5.1 Financial

In preparation of this report, our research has indicated that if we were to conduct a Housing Needs Survey using external consultancies and on the level we are proposing, it would cost the Council between £20k - £40k. To mitigate this cost, we propose the HNS be conducted in-house, thereby reducing the cost to the Council.

We estimate that costs incurred will be minimal and limited to:

- (i) Cost to print copies of the survey where requested.
- (ii) Cost to post the survey to consultees where requested.
- (iii) Cost to hire event spaces (if required)
- (iv) Cost to produce leaflets / posters / advertisements
- (v) Diverted staff resources, primarily from the Strategic Housing team

5.2 Operational

The main implication will be staff resources and time. As indicated in Appendix 1 point 9.2, several teams have been identified who will be involved in aspects of the planning, preparation, and development of the HNS. This may have an impact to current service delivery.

6. **Climate Change and Environmental Implications**

- 6.1 In the preparation of this report, the only implications to the environment identified were
- (a) printed versions of the questionnaire for residents to complete via post
 - (b) printed versions of the questionnaire for residents to complete in-person at the proposed Housing Surgeries.
 - (c) Printed leaflets and posters for advertisement
- 6.2 To mitigate this impact, we will ensure that copies are printed by demand rather than bulk. Where we attend events, we will print as a batch.

7. **Corporate Implications**

- 7.1 Comment from the Director of Finance (linked to the MTFP): Accountancy have been consulted and have no further comments (AC).
- 7.2 Comment from the Solicitor to the Council: The Solicitor to the Council has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no further comments to make.
- 7.3 Comment from the Equalities Officer: This report on conducting a survey of housing needs does not specifically highlight any equality implications, however in discharging their duties members are required to comply with the public sector equality duty as set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149>
- 7.4 Other Officers (as appropriate): The Principal Climate Change and Sustainability Officer has been consulted and has nothing further to add.

8. **Appendices**

- 8.1 Appendix 1 – Housing Needs Survey Project Overview v0.3
- 8.2 Appendix 2 – Questionnaire draft v0.2

9. **Background Papers**

Adopted Core Strategy 2010

Dover District Corporate Plan 2020-2024

Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2010 - 2015

Strategic Market Housing Assessment Part (SHMA) 1 & 2 (Feb 2017)

SHMA – Partial update to Part 2 2017 (Dec 2019)

DLUHC 'Housing needs of different groups' (May 2021)

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