

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT NORTH YORKSHIRE AND YORK

20 JANUARY 2012

### GENERAL UPDATES

#### **Purpose of the Report**

- 1 To provide a brief update for information on issues which do not require a full paper.

#### **Sub Regional Housing Board – Report of Wallace Sampson, Chief Executive, Harrogate Borough Council**

Enhanced two tier project title: Affordable Housing  
Project Description: Working together to increase the number of affordable housing units.  
Project Lead: Colin Dales, Hambleton and Richmondshire District Councils 01748 827007. E-mail [Colin.dales@richmondshire.gov.uk](mailto:Colin.dales@richmondshire.gov.uk)

#### 2. Progress to date/update:-

- (a) 108 new affordable homes have been delivered in the first two quarters of 2011/12 as part of the Local Investment Plans (York and North Yorkshire) against a forecast of 135. Of these new affordable homes, 40 have been delivered via the Rural Housing Enabler Programme and 39 are extra care housing.

A further 269 new affordable homes have been delivered in quarters 1 and 2, not planned in the LIPs.

In terms of private sector housing investment, 351 homes benefitted from improvements, representing a spend of just over £1 million in quarters 1 and 2.

- (b) The Local Government York and North Yorkshire Housing Board have approved a business plan to sustain the Rural Housing Enabler Programme for a further three years beyond 31 March 2012 when the current funding streams run out. This represents very good news for this high profile programme. The key funding elements can be summarised as follows :

Local Authority contributions = £40k per year  
Housing Association contributions = £80k per year  
LAA reward grant (one off / not repayable) = £45k  
Leeds City Region contribution = £50k

The programme will be subject to annual reviews (as some partners cannot commit beyond one year at a time) and Hambleton DC will continue to be the lead employer.

- (c) A county-wide strategic housing market assessment has been completed and signed off by the Local Government York and North Yorkshire Housing Board on 12 December 2011. The information will now be rolled out in each Local Authority area and a general report will be available on the NY Housing Partnership website.
  - (d) The Housing Board have also approved a joint piece of work to develop a Tenancy Strategy for Local Authorities – a new statutory requirement introduced by the Localism Act. The aim of this piece of work is for Local Authority partners to work together, share information / good practice and avoid the re-inventing of wheels. It may become evident that a sub regional Tenancy Framework is possible as a result of this work.
  - (e) The Housing Board has also approved a sub regional piece of work to maximise new affordable housing opportunities created by the Government's recently launched national housing strategy and the new funding streams available. Work will be undertaken in close consultation with Homes & Community Agency colleagues.
3. Barriers to progressing the project over the next period:-
- (a) The main barrier continues to relate to current housing market conditions which are hindering the contribution that the planning system can make to affordable homes delivery.
  - (b) Lack of suitable land continues to be a barrier to the delivery of affordable housing.
  - (c) Homes and Communities Agency funding has been cut as part of CSR by approximately 70% which has created a great deal of uncertainty in terms of future outputs. The impact on North Yorkshire is that, in essence, no new development money will be available during 2011/12. Future funding will be based on a new affordable housing model whereby rents will be up to 80% of market levels. This will impact differently across the county depending on housing benefit levels and the strength of the private rental market. Housing Associations have submitted their development "offers" to the Homes and Communities Agency based on the new regime which have been signed off.
  - (d) Private sector housing improvement funding ceased from 1 April 2011, again as a direct result of CSR. Local Authorities still have the freedom to fund private sector housing renewal from their own funds, but current feedback from Local Authority colleagues is that this area of activity has stopped with Disabled Facilities Grants being the core business.

**Sub-Regional Transport and Strategic Planning Board –  
Report of David Bowe (Corporate Director – Business and Environmental Services,  
North Yorkshire County Council)**

- 4. The City of York Council is providing the Secretariat for this Board. The Chair will rotate between the County Council, the City of York Council, and a District Council on a three year rolling basis. To date, the Board has not yet met.

**LGYH Council –  
Report of Councillor Tom Fox (Vice-Chair)**

5. A summary of decisions/action points from LGNY Council meeting held on 20 October 2011 is set out below:-

(a) Ministry of Defence Armed Force Covenant - Members agreed to explore a Yorkshire and Humber wide Community Covenant Scheme to complement local authority based Covenants. This would demonstrate a commitment to Armed Service Personnel wherever they live or originate from and commit all local authorities in Yorkshire and Humber:

- To work with the Armed Forces to deliver better outcomes for local communities – both Military and Civilian.
- To encourage local communities to support the Armed Forces community in their areas.
- To nurture public understanding and awareness of issues affecting the Armed Forces community.
- To recognise and remember the sacrifices faced by the Armed Forces Community.
- To encourage activities which help to integrate the Armed Forces Community into local life.
- To encourage the Armed Forces Community to help and support the wider community.

It was agreed to explore whether there are cross Yorkshire and Humber proposals which may be eligible for the Community Covenant grant scheme. The scheme is to favour local practical projects which deliver rapid results and meet the aims of the overall Covenant Scheme.

(b) LG Group Executive - Members discussed how important it is to have a strong voice at the national level for Yorkshire and Humber and the North of England on specific issues such as the localisation of business rates and localisation of council tax, as these will have a disproportionate impact on the North. Research announced today by the TUC suggests that the North is also disproportionately impacted by the cuts in public spending.

Cllr Peter Box, Chair, LGYH reported back from the G Group Executive and informed Members that he has met with Sir Merrick Cockill the new Chair along with Chairs from other regions to discuss how the national organisation can better represent the diverse interests of different parts of the country and avoid policy positions being too dominated by a South East and London perspective.

(c) Economic Growth - Authority Representation on the HCA Stewardship Steering Committee - It was agreed to seek one nomination from each of the four sub-regions for the Homes and Communities Agency Stewardship Steering Committee and agreed the role set out appears to be more suited to a Senior Officer e.g. Chief Executive or relevant Service Director.

(d) LG Group Local Growth Campaign - Cllr Peter Box, Chair, LGYH and Chair of the LG Group Economy and Transport Programme Board will be chairing an Economic Development event on Wednesday, 25 January 2012 at the Town Hall, Wakefield as part of a national campaign to promote local growth.

- (e) European and International Working - It was highlighted that there would be a meeting held on developing public service use of electric vehicles in Rotherham on 5 December.
- (f) As part of the Interegg project the promotion of renewable energy is a priority, Scarborough BC with Kirklees MC, North East Lincolnshire Council and East Riding of Yorkshire Council sponsored a Whitehall briefing for MPs on the issue. It was reported by Cllr Tom Fox, Vice Chair (North Yorkshire), LGYH that the MPs wished to set up an all-party Parliamentary Group to support both this work and any other strategic issues for Yorkshire and Humber. It was noted that they are to organise a meeting in the next few weeks.
- (g) LGYH Next Steps on Developing the New Organisation - It was agreed to undertake a further review on the purpose of LGYH to consider opportunities for joint and integrated working with other local government organisations. The review would also need to consider streamlining the number of meetings across the local government system, not just LGYH meetings, and further reducing the costs of subscriptions. This work would be led by the Chair and Vice Chairs and reported back to the LGYH Council on 15 December.
- (h) Productivity, Improvement and Innovation - Cllr Tim Cheetham, Barnsley MBC and Member of the LG Group Improvement Board led a discussion on developing the work on sector led challenge and improvement. It was also considered that this work needed to be looked at in the light of potentially working across the North of England. It was agreed to mainstream the activity and to use existing RIEP funds to support this. It was agreed to play a full part in the national discussions with the LGA on the future organisation of this work.
- (i) Business Rates Localisation - Members agreed a response to the Government's consultation paper on the localisation of business rates growth as part of the Local Government Resource Review. A key highlight and an amendment which was put at the meeting was that we should urge the Government to formally pause the current timetable and take the time necessary to consider the full impacts and the need for fair outcomes for all local authorities. A letter and response is to be sent to all MPs in Yorkshire and Humber prior to the deadline for them to make their own representations to Government. In the further interests of ensuring a level playing field for growth, greater consideration also needs to be given by Government to:
  - (i) The impact of Enterprise Zones in particular areas and what impacts these may have on the prospects of business rates growth elsewhere.
  - (ii) The impact of additional economic powers given to Core Cities and London in the Localism Bill that would not be available to all authorities.
- (j) Police Reform - The Police and Crime Panels need to be established by October 2012 with the Election for Police and Crime Commissioners to take place in November 2012. The LGA are recommending that Panels are set up by May 2012. Cllr Mehboob Khan, Kirklees MC and Member of the LGG Safer and Stronger Communities Programme Board recommended the LGA guidance on establishing the Panels and gave an update on the West Yorkshire Panel.
- (k) Work and Skills - In the light of the ending of the Regional Work and Skills Partnership it was agreed to undertake an annual 'health check'.

- (l) Cohesion and Response to the 'Riots Communities and Victims' Review - Cllr Mehboob Khan, Kirklees MC has agreed to report back at the next LGYH Council meeting on 15 December following the LGA Summit 'Challenging Violence and Strengthening Communities' on 27 October 2011.
- (m) Health, Well-Being and Social Care - Cllr Jonathan Owen, East Riding of Yorkshire Council and Member lead on Health, Well-Being and Social Care highlighted the need to monitor the amount of capacity available to support Members and requested that Leaders ensure the right Portfolio Holders were informed of the health and well-being Member Leadership Group.
- (n) Welfare Reform and Affordable Housing - Cllr Steve Houghton, Barnsley MBC highlighted some of the issues of concern in respect of the combined impact of policies such as the new Homes Bonus, the localisation of council tax benefit and impact of universal credit.
- (o) Joanne Roney, Chief Executive, Wakefield Council reported on a piece of work being commissioned by the Chief Executives' Group to benchmark the impact on different localities and considered the impact of the financial settlement as part of building on the work of IPPR on the impact on the North. This would also seek to create greater impact from the individual poverty and fairness commissions being undertaken at local level.
- (p) Cllr Tracey Simpson-Laing highlighted the specific issues faced by the City of York Council on ensuring affordable housing and requested that some work be undertaken on the levels of affordable housing being secured by different authorities and on the fluctuations of land prices across Yorkshire and Humber.
- (q) Asylum and Migration - It was highlighted that eight local authorities are in competition for a commercial contract to deliver asylum on accommodation. If this tender is successful there will continue to be local authority ownership strategically on where asylum seekers live in this region. The outcome of the process would be known by the end of November 2011. If the local authority tender is unsuccessful and a private provider is successful, LGYH would need to consider how local government could hold the provider to account in respect of dispersal and cohesion issues.
- (r) Workforce - Cllr Alison Lowe, Vice Chair, Employers' Committee updated Members on the current situation regarding local government services pay and the preparations for the regional pay briefing to take place on 1 December 2011. Leaders were encouraged to consider the issues set out in the letter to Leaders from the Chair of the Employers' Committee and also ensure that their authorities were represented on 1 December.
- (s) Regional Chief Executives' Group - Joanne Roney, Chief Executive, Wakefield Council reported that the Chief Executives' Group had held discussions about the opportunities for using the Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation and a report would be brought to a future meeting of the LGYH Council. It was also reported that the group had commissioned a piece of work to benchmark the impact on different localities of the financial settlement as part of building on the work of IPPR on the impact on the North.

**Yorkshire and Humberside European Regional Development Fund Performance Management Board for North East and West Yorkshire - Report of Councillor Derek Bastiman (Scarborough)**

6. Set out below are my notes from the Board's meeting held on 7 September 2011:-
- (a) It was agreed that the enhanced role of the PMB would include consideration of all Outline Applications and would formally accept projects into the ERDF Programme subject to any relevant conditions. PMB would also receive projects at Full Application stage to endorse appraisal recommendations.
  - (b) With the Regional Skills & Works Partnership ceasing on October 11, PMB will have to give consideration to alternative skills representation. Until such times Michelle Watson will continue to represent skills on the PMB.
  - (c) In order to speed things up and hopefully help all applicants, it was agreed that the enquiry form be removed and the forms for Outline and Full Applications be updated. PMB also agreed at Outline Application stage all deferred projects would be required to resubmit within 1 month of formal notification. Failure to do so would normally result in automatic de-selection. Following Outline Application acceptance, all projects would (normally) be required to submit a robust Full Application within 3 months of formal notification of PMB approval. Failure to meet the deadline would "normally" result in automatic de-selection from the programme.
  - (d) There was an application submitted from The Green Renewable and Environmental Associated Technologies (GREAT) project seeking to drive innovative transfer solutions within the Humber and North East Coast Districts, focusing on support for developing low carbon and renewable industry and allied supply chains. This was deferred as it was deemed that there was insufficient information provided, but rest assured I will be keeping a close eye on this when it comes back for consideration.
7. Set out below are my notes of the Board's meeting held on 10 October 2011:-
- (a) East Riding College - Environmental Technology Centre - We were presented with an outline Priority 2 application for this and it was agreed to accept the project onto the Programme and progress it for submission as a full business case subject to conditions specified.
  - (b) We were presented with the following 2 projects, both supported by a full business case. We endorsed both for approval under the heading of Priority 2 within the programme:-
    - Venture Business Parks Ltd - Haltemprice Managed Business Centre - The project will require the development of specific facilities in the form of a centre of excellence in the East Riding of Yorkshire that improves the knowledge and skills of businesses in the region allowing them to maximise opportunities within the Environmental Sector.

- Horncastle group - The Beacon - The Beacon will be Hull's new Business Park designed to accommodate SMEs in Bioscience Environmental and Healthcare Technology. The impact will be high as not only will jobs in growth sectors be made available to residents of adjacent deprived areas new supply chain opportunities should develop for local companies.
- (c) Whilst I accept that the report is more pertinent to schemes out of the area I represent, we must remember that with the proposed development of the off Shore Wind Farms these projects will have a benefit to our area.
8. Set out below are my notes of the Board's meeting held on 7 December 2011:-
- (a) I am pleased to report that an application for the Princes Trust for funding was approved and will provide for young adults aged 18-30 who have been long term unemployed, have no formal qualifications, an offending background or who face economic and social isolation with the opportunity to explore enterprise and through an intensive programme of mentor support help them to progress into self employment. Providing a region wide enterprise support service for young entrepreneurs the 3 year project will cost £1.525M, create 414 new businesses in the region of which at least 207 will still be trading after 12 months.
- (b) On another note, I am pleased to report that the programme has committed over £270M of ERDF to contracts with projects and there is still around £100M of ERDF in projects in development that have been endorsed by the Performance Management Boards. This means that there are still significant amounts of ERDF to invest in good eligible projects in with the most available in Priorities 1, 2 and 5.
- (c) The Local Management Committee for Y&H ERDF programme 2007-13 agreed at its meeting on 5 December 2011 to extend the current Call for Proposals for the programme which was scheduled to close on 31 December 2011, for a further 3 months until 31 March 2012. The strategic pause for some activities in Priority 3 and for all activities in Priority 4 is also being extended as the commitment remains level for these remain high and further applications in these areas are currently being sought.

**LGYH Work and Skills Board  
Report of County Councillor Chris Metcalfe**

9. I gave my apologies for the last meeting so have nothing to report on this occasion. There is a question on whether this organisation will continue in the light of the demise of Yorkshire Forward.

**LGYH Independent Sustainability Board  
Report of Councillor Brian Phillips (Hambleton)**

10. This Board has not met recently.

**Yorkshire and Humber Rural Affairs Forum Management Group  
Report of County Councillor Peter Sowray**

11. The Rural Affairs Forum has now ceased to exist.

**Local Government Finance –  
Report of LGNY Y Honorary Secretary**

12. Provisional Settlement Figures have been provided. They appear generally to be in line with what was anticipated. If there are any issues Leaders wish to raise, there is an opportunity to do so under this report.

**Recommendation**

It is recommended that LGNY Y notes the above updates.

RICHARD FLINTON  
Honorary Secretary  
Local Government North Yorkshire and York  
12 January 2012