

Local Government North Yorkshire and York

2 October 2015

General Updates

Report of the Honorary Secretary

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To provide a brief update on issues which do not require a full paper.
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2.0 Sub-Regional Housing Board – Report of Mary Weastell (Chief Executive, Selby District Council)

Progress report as at 9 September 2015

Enhanced two tier project title:
Affordable Housing

Project Description:
Working Together to Increase the Number of Affordable Housing Units

Project Lead:
Colin Dales, Corporate Director (Operations), Richmondshire District Council
Tel: 01748 901002 Email: colin.dales@richmondshire.gov.uk

2.0 Progress to date/update:

- (a) The Housing Board has received a performance update for quarters 3 and 4 of 2014/15 (full year outturn) and a summary was provided to LGNYY via the last quarterly briefing. An annual report for 2014/15 will be published during October via the Housing Partnership website.
- (b) The Housing Board is closely monitoring national policy developments, particularly around the extension of the Right to Buy to Housing Associations and annual rent changes for social landlords being set at -1% each year for the next 4 years. The details of how and when these key policies will be rolled out is not clear as yet but it is very likely that they will have a significant impact on the housing sector and the associated delivery of the new Housing Strategy.
- (c) A new York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Housing Strategy with a new set of key priorities is currently in the process of being adopted by partners. A formal launch event was held on 14 September.
- (d) The Housing Partnership has been tasked with formulating a series of high level housing “asks” as part of any agreed devolution deal. A workshop has been held to develop this piece of work which has been forwarded to the Directors of Development Group for final sign-off.

- (e) The Rural Housing Enabler network is holding an event at Duncombe Park, Helmsley on 23 September to promote affordable rural housing. All stakeholders are welcome with more details available from Sarah Hall, York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Housing Strategy Manager.

2.2 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. However, housing market conditions and associated confidence are continuing to improve and this barrier continues to lower as housing market confidence grows.
- (b) Lack of suitable land continues to be a barrier to the delivery of affordable housing although Local Authority planning frameworks are continuing to develop with a growing number receiving or anticipating Planning Inspectorate approval. This progress should ease housing land supply in the medium term. The Growth Deal makes specific reference to the need to have up to date local plans and associated land supply.
- (c) Private sector housing improvement funding ceased from 1 April 2011 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 reduced significantly with Disabled Facilities Grants being the core business.
- (d) Local opposition to housing (including affordable housing) is also hindering progress in boosting housing supply. The Housing Board has written to the Housing Minister to request that more supportive key messages come out of Government, supporting new housing and the key role it plays in boosting local economies and sustaining communities. The Chair of the Board has also met with the Housing Minister when he visited the region in July in order to reinforce this message.
- (e) Funding the infrastructure needed to bring housing sites forward is also a barrier which has, at least in part, been resolved via the allocation of Local Growth Funding. However, this is likely to be an on-going pressure as further key sites come forward.
- (f) Selby District Council has also had a further barrier raised by developers and agents within its area which relates to delays in statutory agency consultee responses to planning applications.

3.0 Sub-Regional Spatial Planning and Transport Board – Report of Ian Stokes (Development Officer (Transport Strategy), City of York Council)

3.1 A meeting of the LGNYY Spatial Planning and Transport Board took place on Thursday 10 September 2015. The following issues were discussed at this meeting:

- (a) **Harrogate BC, Harrogate District Local Plan Issues and Options consultation** – Cllr Rebecca Burnett (HBC) introduced a paper presented to the Board prior to the meeting and gave a brief oral update, as follows, principally regarding feedback received to the consultation which closed on 28 August 2015:

- There are approximately 5000 individual contributors
- Approximately 4000 comments have been received
- Comments have been received from neighbouring authorities and 'Key consultees'
- House-builder and agent responses have, typically, suggested the Plan has insufficient growth
- Resident responses in the main related to where residents live
- HBC is currently considering the responses
- The next stage of consultation is expected in summer 2016

The Board noted the report and update.

(b) **The distribution of the provision of housing in the York housing market area** - Martin Grainger (CYC) introduced a paper, presented to the Board prior to the meeting, which sought to gauge the appetite of the Board and the constituent authorities for a sub-regional approach to delivering housing within the context of the Duty to Cooperate. The main points arising from discussion were:

- Whilst City of York's neighbouring authorities sympathised with it, there was little support at this point in time for the approach advocated by CYC and they expressed concerns in relation to:
 - CYC's apparent 'shift' in position from one of being able to meet its own (housing) need to one of asking others to take some of its need, without any evidence to support it, particularly as the local plans for all other local authorities (LAs) in the sub-region do, or will seek to, meet their own needs.
 - The timing of the sub-regional approach advocated by CYC and the impact it will have on the local plans being prepared by other LAs.
 - There was some agreement in principle for future plans (but not this current round of plans) to be more sub-regional in approach.

(c) **Amalgamation of the NY&Y SP&T TOG with the North Yorkshire Development Plans Forum** – Ian Stokes (CYC) introduced a paper, presented to the Board prior to the meeting, which recommended the Board amalgamate the two officer groups. Some Board members expressed concerns with regard to:

- The level of support provided to the Board by the TOG.
- The focus of the TOG (and Board)
- The respective roles and functionality of the TOG and the NYDPF
- The interaction with other Member / officer groups.

The Board resolved:

- To refer the paper back to the NYDPF to seek its view on it.
- To accept the offer by CYC (as the secretariat) to prepare for the next TOG / Board a report that addresses some of the concerns expressed and consider the functions of other sub-regional groups.

(d) **Planning Advisory Service Duty to Cooperate Workshop for Members** – IS advised the Board that the former package offered by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) had ended, but a new support package was available to use, if desired.

The Board resolved that before pursuing this, it should:

- Await the completion of work being undertaken by Government on strengthening the Duty to Cooperate (DtC).
 - Invite PAS to give a short presentation (similar to one it had recently given to the Leeds City Region Planning Portfolios) to the Board.
- (e) **Board and TOG work programme** – It was suggested that any work programme should be tailored to the Board’s function and for what it has been constituted to achieve and it was agreed that the report looking into the functions of the TOG and NYDPF (see above) could inform this.
- (f) **Election of new Chair** – The Board noted that CYC has chaired the Board since 2012 and that having the CYC Member as Chair has made it easier for CYC to perform the secretariat function for the Board.

The Board resolved that Cllr. Ian Gillies (CYC) shall be the Chair for the coming year.

4.0 Yorkshire and Humberside European Regional Development Fund Performance Management Board for North East and West Yorkshire – Report of Councillor Derek Bastiman (Scarborough Borough Council)

4.1 The Board has not met since my last report to LGNYY.

5.0 Enabling Closer Working between the Emergency Services

5.1 The Government is consulting on proposals to transform the way the police, fire and rescue and ambulance services work together, in particular:

- Encouraging collaboration by introducing a new statutory duty on all three emergency services to look at opportunities to work with one another better to improve efficiency and effectiveness.
- Enabling police and crime commissioners (PCCs) to take on the duties and responsibilities of fire and rescue authorities (FRAs), where a local case is made.
- Where a PCC takes on the responsibilities of a FRA, expanding the remit of the Police and Crime Panel to include scrutiny of the PCC’s fire responsibilities (including any necessary changes to membership to ensure fire and rescue expertise).
- Where a PCC takes on the responsibilities of a FRA, allowing them to create a single employer for police and fire staff so it is easier for them to share back office functions and streamline management.
- Enabling a PCC to be represented on their local FRA in areas where they do not take on the responsibility for fire and rescue services.
- Improving joint working between PCCs and NHS ambulance foundation trusts by encouraging trusts to consider PCC representation on their council of governors.

5.2 The proposals do not alter the important distinction between operational policing and firefighting. The law preventing a member of a police force from being a firefighter will remain in place and there is no intention to give firefighters the power of arrest. Similarly, central government funding for the two organisations will continue to remain separate, as will council tax precepts.

5.3 Further information at www.gov.uk/government/consultations/enabling-closer-working-between-the-emergency-services. Comments should be submitted to the Home Office. The closing date for response to this consultation is 23 October 2015.

6.0 Recommendation

6.1 That the report be noted.

Richard Flinton

Honorary Secretary to Local Government North Yorkshire and York