

**Report to:** Local Government North Yorkshire & York

**Date:** March 2018

**Report by:** Mary Weastell, Chief Executive, City of York Council

**Subject:** **Sub-Regional Housing Board**

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## **Progress report as at 5<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

### **Enhanced two-tier project title:**

Affordable Housing

### **Project Description:**

Working Together to Increase the Number of Affordable Housing Units

### **Project Lead:**

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## **1.0 Progress to date/update:**

- 1.1 Work around the Community Housing Fund continues to move forward with a Lead Hub Coordinator appointed – Jones Lang LaSalle in conjunction with Start Regeneration Consultants. The Community Led Housing hub was formally launched on the 5<sup>th</sup> March with a new “REACH” website. The key aim is to assist communities in developing their own housing schemes via access to advice and assistance from key professionals such as architects, project managers, funders and legal professionals.
- 1.2 The Housing Board previously received a report on an approach from the Home Office to extend the Asylum Seeker Dispersal programme into North Yorkshire. The Board’s initial view was not to participate in the programme but officers were instructed to meet with the Home Office to establish basic ground rules around additional funding, local control of dispersals and managing community cohesion issues. A further report was submitted to the Housing Board presenting a proposal developed by the Home Office and G4S. The Board (narrowly) voted in favour of participation and requested that a new proposal is developed by officers to deal with issues raised during the debate and subsequent feedback from partners. A revised proposal will be submitted to the next meeting of the Housing Board.
- 1.3 The Syrian Refugee Resettlement Programme in North Yorkshire saw the last flight arrival in January 2017 with Richmondshire and Hambleton being the remaining Local Authorities to fulfil their commitment to the programme. This last phase of the resettlement programme was successful with no issues reported. North Yorkshire has now fulfilled its commitment to the national programme.
- 1.4 The Housing Board and Directors of Development have received a report on unimplemented planning permissions – over 24,000 across North Yorkshire, York and the East Riding – with proposals on how to convert these permissions into

housing completions more quickly. A key proposal from the report is to create a “hit squad” of required specialists to home in on key housing developments, which are not converting into completions on a prioritised basis. This approach has been adopted with expressions of interest currently being sought from suitably qualified consultants.

- 1.5 A bid submitted for the Design Quality Fund element of the Planning Delivery Fund has been successful with £285,000 being allocated over 2 years. Key pieces of work to be funded by the grant are:
- Masterplans for Catterick Garrison and around 5 other key housing growth opportunities during 2018/19
  - A dedicated officer (2018/19, with potential to extend subject to funding) to secure Off Site Manufacture (OSM) and Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) on our major sites, including Catterick and other MoD sites, working between the industry and councils, developers and landowners (including the MoD) to broker deals to utilise OSM and MMC.
- 1.6 Two meetings of a Yorkshire wide Housing Working Group have been held with Leaders and senior officers to explore where closer working on common housing issues may be productive e.g. joint bids for funding, sharing of good practice and lobbying. A report has been produced outlining the next steps which will be considered at the next Yorkshire Leaders meeting. North Yorkshire, York and the East Riding are being represented by Councillor Richard Foster. Further updates will be provided.
- 1.6 A “housing deal” with Homes England is currently being drafted with the key aim of clarifying key asks and deliverables for the Housing Partnership which will form the basis of future funding opportunities with Homes England. The deal follows a meeting with the new Homes England Chief Executive who stressed the need for the sub region to have its own narrative in terms of our housing ambitions.
- 1.7 A piece of work has also started, undertaken by the Construction Industry Training Board in partnership with the LEP examining the skills gap in the house building industry and looking what actions are needed to address this in order to maximise housing supply.

## **2.0 Barriers to progressing the project over the next period**

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 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.

- 2.3 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.
  - 2.4 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.
  - 2.5 The stalling of new / proposed housing legislation is also becoming a barrier as housing providers take stock and come to terms with all the new policies and proposals and the impact on business plans. This barrier is likely to reduce as time moves on and updates will continue to be provided in this respect.
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