

Local Government North Yorkshire and York

5 October 2018

**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, City of York Council

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

2.1 Progress to date/update:-

(a) Work around the Community Housing Fund continues. The Community Led Housing hub was formally launched on the 5th 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. The Housing Board has approved the direction of travel for the Hub which, in essence, revolves around moving towards a semi-independent Hub with its own community led management body – keeping the Hub sustainable in the medium to long term.

(b) The Housing Board has received reports previously on Syrian Refugee Resettlement and the Asylum Seeker Dispersal Scheme. A request has been made by the Home Office for the Housing Partnership to assist with further refugee resettlement up to 2020. The Housing Board has rejected this request on the basis that North Yorkshire has already fulfilled its original commitment in full. However, the Board has also indicated that it would be willing to have further dialogue regarding any resettlement post 2020, a key factor being the level of support funding. City of York Council and the East Riding will be establishing their own positions as unitary authorities.

As previously reported, the Housing Board has also been in negotiation with the Home Office regarding participation in the Asylum Seeker Dispersal Scheme. Reported difficulties with the Home Office appointing a suitable contractor to manage the scheme in the North (including North Yorkshire) has prompted the Board to cease any further dialogue until the position is clarified. Particular concerns were raised as it appears that Local Authority influence in the scheme has been “watered down” as part of the re-procurement process e.g. influence around numbers, timing, governance and quality of accommodation.

- (c) The Housing Board and Directors of Development have previously 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 “hit squad” of required specialists was established to home in on key problematic housing developments which are not converting into completions. A prioritised list was established and outcomes were reported to the Directors of Development. A report will also be submitted to the next Housing Board in November.
- (d) Work is to commence shortly between North Yorkshire County Council and the lower tier Local Authorities to look at transforming County Council funded homeless prevention services in order to secure further efficiencies / savings.
- (e) 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. Further meetings are planned along with associated work streams. No further meetings have been held to date and this is being chased up.
- (f) A “housing deal” with Homes England has been 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 draft deal has been approved by the Directors of Development and dialogue has commenced with Homes England and local MPs.
- (g) A Health and Wellbeing Workshop held in September focused on developing the links between housing and health and wellbeing. Outcomes and further agreed actions will be reported in the next update.

2.2 Barriers to progressing the project over the next period:-

- (a) 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.
- (b) 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.
- (c) 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.
- (d) 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 reducing as time moves on and updates will continue to be provided in this respect.

3.0 York, North Yorkshire and East Riding ESI Funds Sub-Committee – Report of Councillors Andrew Lee (NYCC), Peter Dew (CYC) and Steve Arnold (Ryedale District Council)

3.1 *Report not available as at 25 September 2018.*

4.0 Sub-Regional Spatial Planning and Transport Board (Secretariat: City of York Council)

4.1 *Report not available as at 25 September 2018.*

5.0 Yorkshire and Humber Strategic Migration Group – Report of Councillor Derek Bastiman (Scarborough Borough Council) on behalf of himself and Neil Irving (NYCC)

5.1 I was unable to attend the last meeting and therefore have no report to submit.

6.0 Recommendation

6.1 That the report be noted.

Richard Flinton
Honorary Secretary to Local Government North Yorkshire and York