

Local Government North Yorkshire and York

18 October 2019

General Updates

Report of Richard Flinton (LGNYY Honorary Secretary)

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To provide a brief update on issues which do not require a full paper.

2.0 Sub-Regional Housing Board – Report of Mary Weastell (City of York Council, Chief Executive)

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) The Community Led Housing Hub was formally launched on 5 March 2018 with a new “REACH” website. The key aim of the Hub 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 previously approved the direction of travel for the Hub which, in essence, revolves around moving towards an independent Hub with its own community led management body – keeping the Hub sustainable in the medium to long term. A report was submitted to the Housing Board on 24 June 2019 proposing a route map to an independent governing body. The Board approved the move to a new independent governing arrangement, subject to a competitive procurement exercise. The outcome of this exercise will be reported to the Housing Board and a subsequent update given via this report.
- (b) The Housing Board has received reports previously on Syrian Refugee Resettlement and the Asylum Seeker Dispersal Scheme. In terms of the asylum seeker dispersal, further negotiations were put on hold due to a change of contractor (G4S to Mears) and staffing changes at the Home Office. Home Office officials have been in contact wishing to re-open discussions on asylum dispersal. A Home Office representative has been invited to a meeting of the Chief Housing Officers Group with a view to submitting an update report to the Housing Board either in late 2019 or early 2020.
- (c) With regards to a future Syrian Refugee Resettlement Programme, a draft proposal has been submitted to the Chief Housing Officers’ Group and gained broad in principle support, subject to the submission of a report to the December 2019 Housing Board.

- (d) Work 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 has concluded. The outcome will be the transfer of staffing / services to individual districts / boroughs which will facilitate a financial saving for the County Council. The transfer process is currently underway and will be completed by the end of October 2019.
- (e) Sarah Hall, Housing Strategy Manager for the Housing Partnership has left for pastures new with our thanks for all the hard work undertaken. Sarah's replacement, Sharon Graham, started in her new role during September and will be introduced to the Housing Board at its December meeting.
- (f) A project group has been established as part of the County Council's review of a county wide young people's pathway – a joint working programme between County Council and boroughs / districts to assist homeless and potentially homeless young people. The pathway has been held up as a national exemplar and has the full support of the boroughs and the districts.
- (g) Links have been developed between the Housing Partnership and York University in order to facilitate a new working relationship between the Housing Research Team at the university and the Housing Board. In essence, the new relationship will give the Housing Board access to housing related research and give the university an opportunity to work with housing practitioners across the patch.

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.

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

- 3.1 There is nothing to report.

4.0 Yorkshire and Humber Strategic Migration Group – Report of Neil Irving (NYCC, Assistant Director - Policy, Partnerships and Communities) on behalf of himself and Ann-Marie Douglas (City of York Council, Temporary Accommodation Manager)

4.1 The Strategic Migration Group meet on 3 July 2019. The key issues discussed were:-

- (a) The need for additional support for vulnerable EU citizens applying to the EU citizen settlement scheme.
- (b) Welcoming New Refugees – a new regional project funded by the Controlling Migration Fund to recruit new foster carers for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC), and to support local authorities to provide high quality support to the young asylum seekers and refugees in their care.
- (c) The future of refugee resettlement post-2020 including the incorporation of the current resettlement programmes into one new ‘global resettlement scheme’.

5.0 York, North Yorkshire and East Riding ESI Funds Sub-Committee – Report of Councillor Darryl Smalley (City of York Council), County Councillor Andrew Lee (NYCC) and Councillor Steve Arnold (Ryedale District Council)

5.1 No report was supplied as at 4 October 2019.

6.0 Recommendation

6.1 That the report be noted.

Richard Flinton
Honorary Secretary to Local Government North Yorkshire and York