

## **Housing General Fund Service Plan – Monitor 1 update 2008-9**

### **Critical Success Factors**

The service plan identified three critical success factors for 2008-9 and progress with these is summarised below:

#### **1. Ensure that the supply of affordable housing in York meets needs identified in the 2007 Housing Market Assessment**

47 homes have been completed up to the end of June 2008:

- 31 homes for rent by Home Housing Association at the Forum (former gas works site at Heworth Green)
- 2 homes for rent at Thanet Road (Tees Valley)
- 4 homes at Northfield School site (3 rent and 1 discounted sale) Tees Valley
- 2 discounted sale homes at Dixon's yard (Yorkshire Housing)
- 8 Housing corporation funded 'Homebuy' loans enabling purchase on the open market

#### **2. Analyse results of the Private Sector Stock Condition Survey**

This information is being used to inform the development of the Private Sector Renewal Strategy, this is currently at the stage of consultation with representative organisations and individuals with completion date of Autumn 2008

#### **3. Development and Delivery of a new homelessness strategy**

The 200Homeless Strategy is now completed and has been submitted to Government Office by the end of July. The strategy has been published on the council website and copies have been distributed to key stakeholders. A steering group is in place to monitor delivery of the action plan.

### **Other Achievements**

#### **Housing Strategy**

- Housing issues included in the **LAA** (Local Area Agreement) affordable homes delivered, number of households in temporary accommodation and fuel poverty – all targets have been agreed
- A draft timetable and project plan for the **2009-12 Housing Strategy** for York has been prepared
- An assessment of **Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation needs** in North Yorkshire has been completed and presented to the North Yorkshire Strategic Housing Board. An action plan is being developed for a strategic approach to developing services across York and North Yorkshire and bids submitted to CLG for refurbishment and upgrade of sites in North Yorkshire.

## Access to Housing

- A partnership has been established to develop a **choice based lettings scheme (CBL)** for the North Yorkshire sub-region. Recruitment for a Project Manager is underway, once the partners have examined the options for how this might work in practice a report will be brought to EMAP with recommendations for the way forward.
- Implement systems for monitoring outcomes of **nominations to RSLs (Registered Social Landlords)** in order to maximise level of need met through nominations have been implemented and are being monitored on a quarterly basis both by the RSL landlord group, and at individual meetings with RSLs. The implications of Choice Based Lettings will need to be considered as the project progresses
- Work is underway on refining our approach to **Housing Advice** and setting up a dedicated team.

## Homelessness

- The new **Peasholme Centre** building at Fishergate is due for completion in January 2009, and a multi agency plan is being developed for the Resettlement Service.
- The new **Arc Light** centre is due for completion by August. Work has been ongoing to ensure that the new service complements work of other projects to maximise the success of the resettlement process
- **RSLs** in York are developing **action plans** setting out their contribution to tackling homelessness in York, these are monitored via a quarterly meeting between RSL landlords with stock in York, and the Council's housing service.
- An options appraisal is being developed for the future of the **Ordnance Lane** site. This will include consideration of proposals for a young persons foyer type scheme. This work will be concluded in January 2009

## Staff and Management

- Clear standards have been developed for staff to follow in dealing with customers and colleagues. A staff group has been established to monitor and develop the standards, and the information has been embedded into the induction process for new staff
- Work has begun on planning housing staff conferences, which will take place over 3 days in October 2008
- All senior managers in Housing are involved in the IDEA Future Leadership training with a view to developing a joint learning and development programme once everyone has been through the training.

To date 3 Service & Group Managers in housing have completed the course, a further 5 are part way through the course and 3 managers are booked to start the course later this year

## Housing Standards

- Following changes to the administration of the **Disabled Facilities Grant** (DFG) from government which have been reported to Members in June a further report in October will seek approval for policy changes
- Options for the future contracting of **Home Improvement Agency** (HIA) services are being appraised.
- Work to complete **process mapping of all elements of the Housing Standards and Adaptations service** and identify IT solutions within the FLARE system to enable paperless working and service improvements has progressed but is dependent on additional resources
- Work continues to market the option of **Home Appreciation Loans (HALs)** for owner-occupiers and we have progressed 1 application to conclusion, four have been submitted to date

## Housing Development

- Eight meetings with private developers held in June 2008. These will contribute to an evaluation and review of the **50% affordable housing target**
- The York **Rural Housing Enabler** post has been integrated into the Housing Development team and a workplan agreed. The immediate priority includes work with City Strategy on revising population levels that define rural settlement and bringing forward sites at Knapton and Strensall
- The New **Growth Point submission** for York has not been approved by Government; the implications of this will need to be assessed for the future development
- The planning applications for the **Discus Bungalows** sites have been submitted and will hopefully be approved by November. Different management models for extra care housing for older people are being examined for potential development on the St Anne's Court site.

## Emerging Issues

### Housing market conditions

The "credit crunch" has become the catch-all phrase to describe the problems afflicting the economy including falling house prices, a marked slowdown in housebuilding, rising inflation and the withdrawal of affordable credit. For HASS the

market conditions are presenting significant challenges but some emerging opportunities too. The most immediate challenge is to maintain our affordable housing programme at a time when a large percentage of private sector new build developments are being delayed. This has meant increasing uncertainty with timetable for delivery of affordable housing that has already been negotiated for these sites as well as a slow-down on the number of new sites coming to the market. The affordable housing programme that is part funded by the Housing Corporation continues to be on target for delivering 47 homes on 6 sites in 2008/09.

A difficult private market is, however, leading to some emerging opportunities. The fall in house prices has positive effects for some purchasers in that affordability is improved. Private developers have also begun to offer additional homes to housing associations, which, if the quality, type and location of the homes are acceptable, will be a welcome boost to affordable housing supply in the city.

Other emerging effects of the credit crunch are an increased level of possession orders on mortgaged homes. In response, the Golden Triangle Partnership is working to launch a mortgage rescue scheme in the autumn and we are keeping a close watch on the development of a national mortgage rescue scheme and on other initiatives that may be launched by the Government to kick-start the housing market.

## Areas for Improvement

Sub regional research into the housing needs of Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) and migrant workers is being commissioned. At present Scarborough Council are looking into procurement issues prior to the selection of consultants. It is estimated this has delayed conclusion of study to February 2009, from the original target date of September 2008.

## Financial Summary

The table below sets out the variations in accordance with the financial regulations.

		Budget £'000	Variance £'000	Variance %
a)	<u>Private Sector Grant Fee Income</u>			
	Increased income due to providing a higher number of grants than forecast	-93	-16	-17.20

		Budget £'000	Variance £'000	Variance %
b)	<u>Howe Hill Hostel</u>			
	Saving due to employee vacancies (-£35k) and lower repair costs (-£17k) offset by increased expenditure on utilities and equipment (+£11k)	335	-41	-12.24
	Increased rental income due to higher occupancy than forecast	<u>-257</u> 78	<u>-49</u> -90	-19.07
c)	<u>Removals and Storage</u>			
	Higher levels of belongings in storage relating to corresponding high occupancy levels in temporary accommodation	38	+13	+34.21
d)	<u>Homeless Advice Team</u>			
	Mainly due to staff vacancy	427	-22	-5.15
e)	<u>Travellers Sites</u>			
	Mainly due to increased repair and utility costs	213	+31	+14.55
f)	<u>Other Minor Variations</u>	952	+12	+1.26
	Total Housing General Fund	1,402	-72	-5.14

### Performance Measures

<b>Customer Measures</b>			
<b>Description</b>	<b>2007/8 Outturn</b>	<b>2008/9</b>	
		<b>Annual Target</b>	<b>Current Performance</b>
Number of Households in York assisted into home ownership via the Golden Triangle Homebuy Scheme in partnership with Northern Counties Housing	11	11	1 Apr-June 2008(4 in pipeline for next quarter)
Number of households living in temporary accommodation NI 156	209	170 (Quarter 1 target 205)	204
Number of Affordable Homes Delivered (gross) NI 155	51	165	47
Average length of time to complete a HAL	New	New not set	1 to date
% Of external calls answered in 20 seconds (Housing Services)	96%	97%	96.15%

<b>Process Measures</b>			
<b>Description</b>	<b>2007/8 Outturn</b>	<b>2008/9</b>	
		<b>Annual Target</b>	<b>Current Performance</b>
Number of households presenting as homeless where casework resolved * Note there was a change of definition in 2008-9	278	305	33

<b>Resource Measures</b>			
<b>Description</b>	<b>2007/8 Outturn</b>	<b>2008/9</b>	
		<b>Annual Target</b>	<b>Current Performance</b>
Take up of HALs	None	6	1