

Report from Cllr Sam Lisle – Portfolio Holder for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods

Strategic Overview

There are a number of strategic drivers that need to be considered when looking at the future for the housing/building services.

- Corporate review of future operating models
- Budget announcements affecting the council (HRA & GF)
- The implications of the Housing & Planning Act
- The changing political Landscape following the referendum and the calling of an early election.

Corporate review of future operating models

As part of the council's wider review of its overall future operating model, all service areas within the council have been asked to undertake a review of their operating model and to consider if there are alternative approaches that, in light of the wider changes to the local government sector, would result in improving service delivery, reducing delivery costs and transferring future risk away from the council.

In responding to this task, Housing Services have looked at this both from a overall governance perspective (proposal to undertake a full stock options appraisal) and an operational delivery perspective (reviewing service delivery looking at how we focus on the customer and how our structures support this). On the wider issue executive approved a stock options appraisal, however the changing landscape has meant that this decision has been reviewed and it is considered that this is a distraction and the councils best interests are served in exploring a vehicle to exploit the opportunities that a housing development company would bring (see executive report in March 2017).

Budget announcements affecting the council (HRA &GF)

The budget announcements in July 15 placed a number of financial pressures on the council. On the HRA it set out a requirement for local authorities to reduce rents by 1% for the next 4 years creating a funding gap (over the 4 years) of nearly £13M and £240M over the 30 year life of the HRA business plan. The ongoing impact of Welfare Reform is also likely to impact on the ability of some of our tenants to maintain their rent payments.

Wider changes to the way councils are funded and anticipated reductions in general grant to the council is expected to result in the council having to make savings in the region of £35M on General Fund services over the next 4 years. The savings required will directly impact on services delivered in housing services and services that are delivered by other departments. The department needs to adjust to the reduction in funding and the knock on effect of the contraction of other services such as Adult care and Children services.

Since the EU referendum the government under Theresa May have rolled back from some of the things that were likely to impact on the authority 'pay to stay' has been abandoned and the sale of high value stock to subsidise the sale of housing association property.

Following on from the Chancellor autumn statement in 2016 there has been a directional change in terms of housing building whereby the government have signalled that the focus on government funding has shifted and there is a recognition that the programme should look at a multi tenure approach.

Key Achievements in the last 12 months in Housing Services

Landlord Services

Tenancy agreement updated restricting the rights to succession , strengthening the enforcement of tenancy conditions, restricting the permission on keeping pets, changing the rent payment cycle from 48 to 52 weeks (ending rent free periods) and introducing the use of flexible tenancy start dates

Increasing the number of home the council manages on behalf of Tees Valley Housing Association. Generating more income for the authority

The work the team did following the floods decanting tenants and managing customer's expectations.

Review of the Landlord Services Structure proposals to radically change the service moving more resource into the frontline and supporting the

wider council's vision around prevention and early intervention. Aligned with this is a major project to replace the ICT within Building maintenance and Housing Services. The restructure will be implemented in July 2017.

Housing Options/ Homeless Services

Achieved homeless Gold standard only one of three in the country at the time.

Review of choice based lettings identifying inefficiencies and alternative approach that provides customer with a better service. Ultimately it will mean the council will change its allocation policy and move away from The partnership North Yorkshire Home Choice.

Lowest number of homeless acceptances and numbers in temporary accommodation. 97 and 62 respectively at 31/3/2017 this is a significant achievement considering having to deal with the displaced households as a consequence of the flooding. It also bucks the national trend which has seen an increase and demonstrates the benefits of taking an early interventionist approach.

Continued success of the older persons housing option worker. Offering elderly people support to either remain in their home or move to somewhere more suitable

Assisted in the tendering process for the housing related support.

Taken over the full management of the Peaseholme Centre

Housing Standards and adaptations

British Research Establishment (BRE) survey used to establish a more directed targeted interventions (High rates of Falls, excess cold and worst conditions in Private Rented Sector) including use of Better Care Fund to tackle falls. This has led to the pilot in Clifton 'Yorwellbeing' falls prevention project.

Drawing down of Leeds City Region (LCR) funding to improve energy efficiency in the five priority wards,

Private Rented Sector – third HMO licensing programme with new condition that all Landlords should be trained and enforcement of new laws introduced to improve transparency of letting agents work

Flood Recovery work across all tenures and the ongoing administration of flood resilience grants

Empty property work on behalf of Selby District council, generating additional income

Energy efficiency across the other 3 councils of NY in the LCR eg the central heating fund that has targeted fuel poor households 19 central heating systems installed at a cost of £95K.

Development/Strategy

- Le Tour Way completed in January 2015. Won York Civic Design Award 2016
- Council housing schemes completed at Hewley Avenue (8 flats), Lindsey Avenue (14 flats), Fenwick Street (8 flats) and Pottery Lane (6 Houses)
- Council housing developments at Newbury and Chaloners Road
- 109 affordable homes completed in 2015/16 (of which 31 council housing)
- Extension of Glen Lodge Extra Care scheme – onsite due completion in September 2017
- Bringing forward specification for extra care housing at Oakhaven (housing team doing this under commission from Adult Social Care)
- Provided support to Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust for successful £4.8m bid for *Care and Support Specialised Housing Fund* for new care/extra care scheme at New Lodge, New Earswick.
- Made successful £850k bid for *Care and Support Specialised Housing Fund* for 19 new homes at Glen Lodge Extra Care Housing Scheme.
- Successful bid for HCA funding for 65 shared ownership homes grant is £2.7m (Executive May 2017)
- Supported bids for Homes and Communities Agency grant funding for 134 new affordable homes
- Negotiated with JRHT to provide supported housing adapted homes at Derwenthorpe.
- Successful bid for HCA funding to complete a feasibility scheme on redesigning the Groves Estate (£250K)
- A bid has been submitted to the HCA for the refurbishment of James House 2.3M

Supported housing

Introduction of CCTV and the replacement of portacabin at Osbaldwick travellers site.

Decanting from Ordnance lane in preparation for redevelopment. The purchase of James House and its refurbishment (£10.5M) completion April 2018

Yorhome has taken over the management of Swan court and a further 20 homes at Stillington and Easingwold on behalf of Tees Valley. Providing additional income

Managed the liaison with the travellers following the floods at James Street.

The City has successfully accommodated seven Syrian families providing them with housing and support.

Building Services

Restructure – recently completing 3rd consultation sessions with all 107 staff – will shortly establish working group/work shops for operatives to review ways to improve productivity, service to customers and standby services – this will be run in tandem with main restructure work – Business Change Manager and been recruited – due to start 7 Aug – Draft JDs to be sent to staff and TUs within next 2-3 weeks.

Planned Programme Progress

Overall performance of TC continues to improve – since completion of improvement plan in January we have seen all properties completed within 10 day target.

Work completed to date 2017/18

- 29 homes have received a new kitchen, bathroom and rewire;
- 20 homes have received new roofs;
- 251 homes have received external decoration.

- 88 homes have received new energy efficient boilers and heating systems.

- 11 homes have had standing water remedial works completed
- 3 blocks have received new Door entry systems.

Gas Servicing

As at 23/5/17 99.68% of homes with gas have a current cert.

Sub-contractors

Sub-contractors are used where we require specialist services or where we require additional resources to deal with peaks of work.

Sub-contractor spend has fallen from over £2m in 2014/15 to £1.2m in 2016/17 with stretch targets to reduce this further to £500k in 2017/18.

Reactive repairs by sub contractors are currently part of a large ongoing procurement exercise. The various trades have been put into 21 different lots. The vast majority of the lot were awarded in 2016/17 with only the lots for small value items remaining to be completed in 2017/17.

On completion of the current procurement exercise, all reactive repair spend with sub contractors will be via compliant framework contracts.

Key achievements in the last 12 months in Community Safety Team.

Community Safety Plan

A new Community Safety Plan is in the process of being drafted to reflect Safer York Partnership's strategic priorities for the next three years, these are:

- River and Road Safety
- Making the City Centre Safe
- Protecting People from Harm
- Tackling Anti-social Behaviour
- Tackling Substance Misuse (including delivery of the community safety aspects of the York Alcohol Strategy)

The final draft plan is due to be presented to Safer York Partnership Board on 27th June

Operation Erase

Operation Erase has been revitalised for the summer with the focus of activity on increasing partnership working – undertaking a joint city centre presence with the Neighbourhood Enforcement Team, Ambulance Service and Fire Service.

Begging and Street Drinking

The Neighbourhood Enforcement Team, Police Safer Neighbourhood Team and BID rangers have adopted a joint patrolling strategy to undertake high visibility presence in the city centre over the summer. Work continues through the Begging and Rough Sleeping task group to provide support as well as enforcement activity.

Review of Community Safety Team

It is now three years since the joint North Yorkshire Police/City of York Council Community Safety Team was established. This is being reviewed over the summer to ensure that the team continues to deliver an effective, efficient and high quality service.

Dog Fouling

The Neighbourhood Enforcement Team has been working with the Neighbourhood Management Team to develop a resource pack for residents to help tackle dog fouling in communities where this is particularly problematic.

Prevent Peer Review

A Peer Review of Prevent will take place across York & North Yorkshire week commencing 11th September 2017.