
Executive

30th November 2010

Report of the Director of Communities and Neighbourhoods

York Housing Strategy & Older People's Housing Strategy 2011-2015, North Yorkshire Housing Strategy 2010-2015

Summary

1. The report outlines the key priorities of the following draft strategies:
 - York Housing Strategy 2011-15 (attached at Annex 1)
 - York Older People's Housing Strategy 2011-15 (attached at Annex 2)
 - The North Yorkshire Housing Strategy 2010-15 (attached at Annex 3)
2. Members comments are sought on all of the strategies. In particular we need to be certain that the York Housing Strategy and Older People's Housing Strategy are making the strongest and most appropriate strategic links to the work of the directorate and wider council.
3. The North Yorkshire Housing Strategy has been completed and in accordance with the Terms of Reference for the North Yorkshire Strategic Housing Board, is being taken to all eight North Yorkshire councils for approval. The Executive is requested to sign off the strategy for York.

Background

4. The last York Housing Strategy and Older People's Housing Strategy ran until 2009 and since then work has been ongoing to develop strategies for the period 2011-2015. Work on the strategies was suspended for a short time during a period of uncertainty whether the North Yorkshire Housing Strategy would serve as the sole focus for strategic housing across the sub region with only local action plans agreed at a local authority level. After discussions internally and with external partners including the Homes and Communities Agency and Leeds City Region, a decision was made that York should develop it's own housing strategy that is closely aligned with the North Yorkshire Housing Strategy and the Leeds City Region Housing Investment Plan. A decision was also taken that York will benefit by having it's own Local Investment Agreement with the Homes and Communities Agency rather than the investment needs of York being considered only as part of the North Yorkshire or Leeds City Region investment agreements.

5. The York strategies include an executive summary outlining key strategic priorities and detailed action plans showing how the objectives that sit beneath them will be addressed. The completed strategies will include graphics and pictures to make them more inviting and accessible.
6. The strategies have been written and consulted on at a time of immense change in housing policy under the Coalition Government. The Comprehensive Spending Review has announced very significant changes to capital and revenue funding of affordable housing. It has signalled changes in welfare benefit rules that will affect access to housing, affordability and potentially security of tenure. At the time of writing many of the fine details of the CSR proposals are still awaited, however it is clear that the housing strategies and local investment plans will need to be reviewed at least annually to ensure they reflect policy changes and take advantage of new opportunities too.

York Housing Strategy (YHS) 2011-15

8. The draft York Housing Strategy summarises progress made to date delivering the last housing strategy, identifies the challenges that lie ahead and sets out areas that need to be prioritised to achieve the overall vision of '*creating homes, building communities*'.
9. The strategy picks up on the recent and emerging changes in national housing policy and legislation and reflects these in the strategic priorities and objectives to ensure it is adequately 'future proofed'. It makes reference to more detailed service level strategies that sit under it, such as the Homelessness Strategy, Private Sector Housing Strategy and the Local Investment Plan with the Homes and Communities Agency. These will all need to pick up on the wider strategic challenges outlined in York Housing Strategy during their regular reviews.
10. The strategy points to increased demands on housing going forward, against a backdrop of a national economic slowdown, threats to jobs and benefits and significant public spending cuts. New house building is expected to be slow and it is clear that affordable housing needs will not be met only through new build homes thus making the most efficient use of the existing housing stock ever more important. Similarly, housing advice and information services that help prevent a housing crisis, at an individual household level will be vital areas to develop if additional demands on more costly homelessness services are to be avoided.
11. The Housing Strategy therefore prioritises six areas of work:

	Strategic aim	Why
1	Improve access to housing and housing services including appropriate information, advice and support	Enabling people to make informed and planned housing choices leads to better outcomes and a better use of resources. Anticipated job losses in York may mean more households need housing advice and support linked to employment and training. The Housing Options service will be crucial and the new council HQ gives a unique opportunity to provide a comprehensive one-stop service covering all housing options before they reach a point of crisis.
2	Making the most efficient use of the existing housing stock	The number of new build homes will not fully meet affordable housing needs at a time when demand for housing is likely to increase. It is therefore essential that we keep the number of empty homes at their current low level, that households are given opportunities to downsize where appropriate and that in the social housing sector vacant homes are re-let as quickly as possible.
3	Maximising the supply of new affordable homes	New affordable homes are still vitally important in helping to meet the housing needs of the city. This includes both rent and home ownership options and seeking new opportunities for innovative delivery in the light of the Comprehensive Spending Review announcements.
4	Improving the condition, energy efficiency and suitability of homes	York has committed to reduce it's carbon emissions by 40% by 2020. Substantial emissions come from housing. Through ensuring new build homes meet exacting standards, retrofitting existing stock with, for example, insulation and solar panels and targeted investment on the least thermally efficient homes across all tenures in the city we can start to reduce carbon emissions.
5	reducing homelessness and the causes of homelessness	Preventing a housing crisis occurring in the first place gives better outcomes for households and is more cost effective than the expensive use of temporary accommodation.
6	developing effective	At a time of severe financial

	partnership working	constraints, pooling resources around shared objectives with partners in housing, health and other services makes sense. Research shows that for every £1 spent on housing saves £4 for other services like health
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12. Beneath these strategic aims there are action plans that will deliver key outcomes. In the current financial climate these will be reviewed regularly working closely with the Executive Member(s) for Housing and the council's partners and stakeholders.

Older People's Housing Strategy (OPHS) 2011-15

13. The draft OPHS builds upon progress made delivering the last strategy and aims to reflect emerging challenges in delivering appropriate housing options for an ageing population.

14. The strategy has the following strategic aims and objectives:

- Ensure older people can make informed housing choices and plan ahead by providing accessible and clear information on their housing options
- Enable older households to remain independent in their own homes for longer
- Where there is a need for specialist housing for older people ensure that it is designed to promote and enable maximum independence and choice.

15. There are clear links to the priorities of the wider housing strategy particularly in relation to advice about housing options that can avoid the need for costly interventions at the point of crisis.

16. Services increasingly need to reflect the growing wish to remain independent within one's own home as opposed to entering residential care or similar. Building new homes that are flexible for a range of needs, adapting existing homes and effective and expanded 'stay at home' services are key priorities that not only meet the aspirations of older people but also achieve better value for money on hard-pressed social care budgets.

North Yorkshire Housing Strategy 2010-15

17. In 2009 the North Yorkshire and York Housing Board commissioned a sub-regional North Yorkshire Housing Strategy. This has now been completed and is due to be signed off by all the North Yorkshire Housing authorities, including York, in October and November.

18. The North Yorkshire Housing Strategy has five strategic priorities that closely mirror those identified in the York housing strategy;

- Enabling the provision of more affordable homes

- Maintaining and improving the existing housing stock
 - Delivering community renaissance
 - Improving access to housing services
 - Reducing homelessness
19. The strategy provides a strong evidence base and broad action plan to address the particular housing issues faced by North Yorkshire and complements the strategies we have written at a local level including York's Sustainable Community Strategy and the York Housing Strategy. It is of necessity a 'high level' strategy with each local authority setting its own local action plan to address the strategic priorities.
20. For York, an alignment with our neighbouring authorities in North Yorkshire makes good sense and the strategy forms an important link in the same way that the strong connections with the Leeds City Region are pressing York's case for housing investment and economic development.

Consultation

21. The York Housing Strategy and Older People's Housing Strategy strategies have both been developed in close cooperation with local stakeholders.

Options

Option 1

22. To approve the refreshed Housing Strategy, Older People's Housing Strategy and the North Yorkshire and York sub-regional Housing Strategy. This recognises the focus of the housing strategies being on priorities and actions that make the best use of existing homes, the prevention of homelessness, timely and comprehensive housing advice as well as making the strongest possible case for capital investment to build new affordable homes.

Option 2

23. To approve the refreshed Housing Strategy, Older People's Housing Strategy and the North Yorkshire and York sub-regional Housing Strategy subject to amendments made by the Executive

Option 3

28. Not to approve the refreshed Housing Strategy, Older People's Housing Strategy and the North Yorkshire and York sub-regional Housing Strategy.

Implications

Financial / Human resources (HR) / Equalities / Legal / Crime and Disorder
Information Technology (IT) / Other

29. There are no implications arising directly from this report.

Risk Management

30. There are no direct risks associated with the content of this report.

Recommendations

31. That the Executive:

- Notes the content of the draft housing strategies.
- Agrees with or makes amendments to the draft strategic aims objectives and priorities.
- Approves the draft strategies.

Reason: So that the draft strategies can be implemented together with the action plans that support them.

Contact Details

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Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Steve Waddington

Assistant Director – Housing & Public Protection

Report Approved

Date 9th November 2010

Report Approved

Date *Insert Date*

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes:

- 1: York Housing Strategy 2011-15
- 2: Older People's Housing Strategy 2011-15
3. North Yorkshire Housing Strategy 2010-2015