

Report to Full Council from the Executive Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods

Despite the challenges and difficulties posed by the pandemic, a considerable amount of work continues to take place across the portfolio in order to progress the objectives outlined in the Council plan and support our recovery from Covid-19. I would like to begin my report by thanking all the Council officers for their hard work over the past 6 months, particularly in supporting residents, businesses and communities across the city.

Housing Monitoring - Planning

A total of 560 net new homes have been completed between 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020, with significant contributions resulting from the Hungate Development Site (101), the Former Terry's Factory Site (97), Germany Beck (55) and the Derwenthorpe Development Site (30).

In addition to this, a total of 3,466 net additional homes have been granted approval between the 1st April 2019 and the 31st March 2020. Major contributors to this total included the outline consent for up to 2,500 new homes at the York Central site, 425 new homes approved at The Cocoa Works (Nestle Phase II) site and approval for 266 homes at the Former Civil Service Sports Club, Boroughbridge Road site

During our recent monitoring and discussions with developers, it has been noted that there is a delay in relation to completions as a result of the pandemic. This is largely down to the implications of lockdown, particularly the inability to initially work under restrictions, as well as materials being delayed. Some of our largest developments by David Wilson Homes and Persimmon Homes (Germany Beck, Terry's and Del Monte) were halted entirely during lockdown, along with SME builders. We understand that they are implementing new working practices and working through building supply delays (roof trusses and plaster being given as reasons for delays). Most sites however, are now operational and are seeking to deliver the sites as normal, albeit to a delayed timetable.

The completion figures for Q1/2 2020 are the lowest recorded half yearly figures since 2013/14 at 159 dwellings. It is anticipated that completions will continue and may now improve to the end of the monitoring year (31st March 2021), subject to the pandemic restrictions allowing works to continue.

Self and Custom Build Register

The Council has continued interest in its self build register. As of 16th October 2020, we have had 426 registrations for individuals interested in self build opportunities within the city.

Housing Delivery Action Plan

A new Housing Delivery Action Plan is currently being drafted, primarily in response to the results of MHCLG's Housing Delivery Test. The HDT Action Plan is required by MHCLG to provide details of our current housing market position and future housing delivery.

The Housing Delivery Test (HDT) was introduced into the planning system as part of the new National Planning Policy Framework (2019). It helps in providing an indicator for housing delivery and sets out a series of requirements should a Local Authority fall below certain housing delivery thresholds. The latest published results indicates that York achieved 81% of its housing requirement over a three year monitoring period (2016/17 to 2018/19).

Housing Delivery Programme

Our Housing Delivery programme continues to make really strong progress in delivering against the ambitions agreed by Executive last year.

Lowfield Green:

- The Lowfield Green build is progressing successfully. The show village comprising 3 properties will be completed in November 20 and the show homes will be furnished and open to prospective purchasers in December 2020.
- Lowfield Green comprises 140 mixed tenure homes and a large village green area with play space. The homes range from 1 bed flats to 4 bed townhouses also including bungalows and accessible flats, meeting the housing need for downsizers in York.
- The first phase of homes (31 in total) are due to be completed by March 21 – with almost 50% already reserved.

Burnholme / Duncombe Barracks:

- Planning applications for these next two housing sites have now been submitted. All homes are designed to be net zero carbon and certified Passivhaus, with a wider focus on car free streets, low parking and shared public space to encourage interaction between

residents. The Burnholme application includes 80 homes and 5 self-build plots. The Duncombe Barracks application includes 34 homes and a commercial/community building.

- Significant community engagement has been undertaken in developing these proposals and will continue. The latest phase of engagement is a showcase of the designs and how they have been shaped with the help of the local community. Timber display boards have been installed at both sites to give people an opportunity to learn and input into the applications. The same information is also provided as a survey online which can be accessed via the council website. All feedback from the surveys will be shared with the Planning Authority.

Ordnance Lane:

- Design of the Ordnance Lane scheme is progressing well, with the detailed planning submission due early 2021.
- Three open consultation events for stakeholders have been undertaken - which have been very successful in informing how the scheme has developed. There is a further online survey planned for early November and another event planned for the point at which planning is submitted. Works on site are currently planned for 2022 – 24.
- The scheme will comprise approximately 89 homes with between 1 and 5 bedrooms, with some mixed-use space. Homes will be designed to achieve a certified Passivhaus standard (being zero carbon in use) serving to address both the climate emergency and also the issue of fuel poverty for residents.
- The design will also directly address loneliness and isolation by including an intergenerational area and a multi-generational house type with an integrated studio flat to cater for families with an older family member or younger adult saving for a deposit, ensuring they retain their independence whilst also benefiting from connectivity to the wider family.
- The existing marital quarter building on site, which is of highest architectural merit, is proposed to be retained and restored.

Shared ownership scheme

- The Shared ownership scheme grant funded by Homes England is on target to achieve the delivery of 65 shared ownership properties for residents by the end of March 2021.
 - Completions to date: 43
 - Properties currently with legal: 12
 - Further customers currently accepted following financial assessment and looking for a property to take up the remaining opportunities

The Self-build programme has also achieved a number of milestones. All 6 self-build plots at Lowfield have an agreement for sale, with the first planning applications submitted by the buyers being approved. It is anticipated that the first self-build homes on site will be completed in 2021.

At the upcoming meeting of the Executive (22nd October), an update will be provided on the Housing Delivery Programme and will recommend to the Executive to procure a contractor to deliver the Burnholme and Duncombe Barracks schemes, and drawdown the budget to deliver them.

The report also identifies a number of small underutilised council sites in the city which can be brought forward for self-build. These will allow new homes to be built that respond to people's needs, create a capital receipt for the HRA and help support local construction sector SMEs, who are generally overlooked by larger developments.

Older Person Accommodation programme

The Council took handover of the refurbished and extended Lincoln Court from the contractor last week. This 35 apartment, £3.4million scheme includes 15 apartments specifically designed for wheelchair users, 20 fully refurbished modernised, energy efficient apartments, communal lounges, meeting spaces, laundries, kitchen and a hair and beauty salon. These facilities will be available for the wider community to use and engage with each other and the residents at Lincoln Court. Residents will be supported to move into the apartments from the end of the month.

Work at Marjorie Waite Court is progressing well. The project is on schedule for completion in July 2021. The current focus of the work is on

the design of the communal facilities and commercial kitchen and planning the operation of the community hall, and catering facilities.

There continues to be great interest in the development of older people's accommodation from partners and the commercial sector. There are currently 3 developments of extra care and independent living apartments in planning. The Care Home at Burnholme is due for completion in November. The care home on the former Fordlands site opened over the summer. We continue to receive enquiries about demand and opportunities for appropriate older person's accommodation in the city.

Building Services

Building Services have recently recruited six apprentices, with a further apprentice due to start in November.

In February 2020, a growth bid was agreed for a five year Apprenticeship Programme; with a total of 15 apprentices to be recruited over the five year period. We had therefore commenced the recruitment process for the first cohort, just as the pandemic started, and were due to go live with adverts in March 2020. However, this was put on hold due to lockdown, but has recommenced in recognition of the importance of apprentices to the team and also how important these opportunities are for the young people of York at a time when such opportunities are very limited.

We have had a tremendous response to our adverts with a total of 225 applications received in order to have 6 apprentices appointed in time for the start of the college term.

Responding to Covid-19 and keeping residents safe

Many of the services provided by Building Services have carried on throughout the lockdown period – carrying out essential repairs to our tenant's properties; carrying out gas services and preparing empty properties for letting have never stopped and we are now back to a position of providing all services that were provided pre-lockdown.

Pre-lockdown, the service that had numerous paper processes in place for exchange of information; teams had to react overnight to replace these processes, all at the same time as putting in safe working procedures to ensure that we were always working in a Covid secure

manner. For example, our heating engineers carried on with our gas servicing programme throughout the crisis.

The Housing Options team have been utilising rooms at Ordnance lane, which are being managed on an 'in-reach' basis by our rough sleeper and resettlement service to triage rough sleepers into emergency accommodation, and can also be used for self-isolation purposes. This is likely to form some of our emergency winter provision. The intention is to ultimately re-develop this site.

Housing officers successfully prioritised moving people on from temporary accommodation and those that needed emergency moves throughout the pandemic and have resumed letting properties as normal.

During lockdown, Housing Management:

- Redeployed 30 members of staff, who made welfare calls to 5,600 tenants
- Contacted 68% of all tenants (4,915 tenants out of a total of 7267)
- Utilised 39 volunteers to knock on the doors of 344 tenants (over 65 years old), as we had been unable to contact them via the telephone
- Deployed 65 volunteers to undertake weekly social calls to 102 tenants

James House

In April, the new temporary homeless accommodation scheme opened at James House, James Street. The building provides a modern, safe and welcoming environment for households who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

It consolidates temporary homeless accommodation into a single building of 57 one, two and three-bedroom apartments together with meeting and interview rooms, a training kitchen, outdoor play area, staff offices and reception area.

Private Rented Sector

Staff in our private rented sector team have maintained contacts with private sector landlords throughout Covid urging them to negotiate with tenants regarding rent arrears and to be as supportive as possible. Work has continued on the licensing of houses in multiple occupation and

preparatory work has been started on the options for consultation on the extension of HMO licensing.

A £100k government grant is being used to tackle cold homes in the private rented sector and enforce the Minimum Energy Efficiency standards (MEES) to tackle the worst performing end of the Private Rented Sector (PRS). Two officers have been employed for a year to use a draft toolkit to tackle homes with Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of an F or G.

Work is ongoing look at how we can secure funding to retrofit private sector (Homeowners and PRS) homes to tackle fuel poverty, reduce carbon and tackle climate change.

Energy efficiency and retrofit

The council's Energy Efficiency Officer (a jointly funded post with Selby, Ryedale and Craven) continues to support residents who are eligible for funding support to improve energy efficiency in their homes. Until recently funding programmes have been very limited to specific criteria and circumstances, but recently the Government has started bringing forward a number of funding programmes aimed at making significant improvements to the energy efficiency of existing housing stock – both to help us meet our Climate Emergency targets and to create new jobs and stimulate the economy in the face of recession. The council is working on a number of different retrofit programmes and funding bids with the aim of developing an energy efficiency retrofit culture in York.

Community Safety

Domestic Abuse

Tactical Meetings attended by the Council, North Yorkshire County Council, North Yorkshire Police and the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, have taken place weekly since the initial lockdown on 23rd March. This group has closely monitored the domestic abuse data, ensuring that services can meet increases in demand and address any resourcing issues with our service providers.

In addition, the group has successfully accessed funding from both Ministry of Justice and the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner to increase resource where demand is high in accessing services for both

victims and perpetrators. Referrals to Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) across the North Yorkshire Police Force area have increased by 55% between January and September, when compared to same time last year.

For York this has been a 59% increase. Work has been undertaken to review and revise the MARAC referral forms and to put a multi-agency assessment panel in place to triage referrals to MARAC, in order to improve the process and ensure that the right cases are being heard.

City Centre Crime and ASB

The Community Safety Team have been working closely with colleagues in Public Protection and North Yorkshire Police to ensure that COVID regulations are being adhered to in our licensed premises and shops and that any crowds gathering are engaged with and dispersed. This includes Friday and Saturday night joint patrols, where buskers have been issued with advice about the consequences of playing amplified music after 9pm and the need to manage their crowds to maintain social distancing.

Counter Terrorism

The Counter Terrorism Task group has continued to meet monthly. The National threat level remains at 'substantial', meaning that an attack is likely. Locally, the group has engaged with all premises who have applied for pavement café licenses to offer support and training in relation to Counter Terrorism risk. This has been well received.

The group has also been working closely with York Business Against Crime to widen this support and develop a better communication system between the business community and the police that could be utilised in the event of a terrorist or other major incident.

High Risk Anti-social Behaviour

All work within the Community Safety Hub is back to normal service, with the exception of the backlog of cases proceeding to court following the recent court closures. The Neighbourhood Enforcement Team has a high workload across all areas of the service and in particular in the north and east of the city.

The ASB team continue to work closely with the police and colleagues in housing to tackle the serious cases of ASB and in particular address issues linked to County Lines activity.

Fortnightly intelligence meetings take place between the Community Safety Hub team and the police Intelligence Unit to ensure that we are sharing intelligence and supporting each other in taking action against those who are responsible for high levels of criminal and anti-social behaviour in communities.

The court closure and temporary removal of enforcement options has meant that a more holistic approach to problem solving has been applied to some of the most complex cases held within the Hub. This has involved greater partnership working with other agencies and also enabled the team to expand to include an officer from the Ways to Wellbeing (voluntary support) team to signpost victims and witnesses into voluntary sector support services.

Serious Organised Crime, Modern Slavery, County Lines and Exploitation

Work has continued at both a strategic and operational level to work in partnership across York and North Yorkshire to share intelligence and information that can assist in disrupting organised crime groups. At a strategic level, focus has been on developing joint training and communications messaging that has been widely shared across the strategic social media platforms. At an operational level, regular meetings take place between enforcement teams within Housing, Community Safety and Public Protection to share information and intelligence to target local organised crime groups operating in the city.