

## **Housing Asset Management Strategy**

### **Introduction**

The Housing Asset Plan sets out the work we do in relation to maintaining, investing and improving our housing stock and a clear picture of what we need to do in order to meet the challenges that face us over the next few years, not least the Climate Change Agenda. It builds on the previous Strategic Asset Plan 2015 – 2018, taking in new innovations and thinking, in order to develop a clear plan for decision-making over the next five years.

City of York Council's ability to deliver good services for people now and in the future is dependent on our ability to make the most of the homes we own - not only as nice places to live but also as assets we improve and invest in. It is important to understand the finance which flows through the landlord function and how it is connected to our homes. Most of the money comes directly from rent, and expenditure can be apportioned to housing management, maintenance and investment.

### **Vision**

The Asset Plan vision is to keep homes in good condition and residents safe and comfortable. The Plan will also identify priorities for repair and maintenance and opportunities to reduce the carbon footprint and increase the energy efficiency of our housing stock. This will reduce running cost for residents.

### **Strategic objectives**

This plan and the actions that arise from it will help to achieve the following outcomes of the ***Council Plan 2019 – 23 Making History, Building Communities*** :-

- A Greener and Cleaner City
- Good Health and Wellbeing
- A better start for Children and Young People
- Well-paid jobs and an inclusive economy
- Creating homes and world class infrastructure

For further information follow the links below;

[Council Plan 2019 -2023](#)

### **Stock Profile**

The Council provides housing services across a range of different tenures and assets. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) currently holds approximately 7,500 tenanted units, together with over 540 leasehold properties and in excess of 900 garages which are managed by the housing team. The majority of the properties are general needs houses and flats.

In addition to general needs housing we provide specialist accommodation made up of Independent Living Communities, some with Extra Care and hostels which provide temporary accommodation for homeless families and individuals.

### **HRA Land**

In addition to property assets the HRA has land assets. Most of the sites available are small and not viable for housing development. In some circumstances it would be beneficial to sell smaller site. Prior to land being sold individual sites will be assessed on a wider strategic level. Assessment option for use would include;

1. Community use e.g. energy scheme or public open space

2. Regeneration opportunities now or in the future
3. Self Build
4. Affordable housing scheme with a Registered Provider
5. Specialist housing scheme
6. Land swap

Where land is valued below £500k a paper will be taken to Senior Management Team outlining options and implication for approval. This will result in an Officer Decision by the Assistant Director in consultation with the Director for Customer and Corporate Services. For Assets above £500k a report would go to Executive for approval.

Prior to any decision being taken there will be consultation with ward councillors, followed by local public consultation and resident involvement.

### **Non Traditional Housing Stock**

Amongst the general needs housing stock there are a number of non-traditional dwellings constructed in the periods 1921 to 1927 (Dennis Wild steel framed housing) and 1946 to 1951 (other non-traditional construction).

Non-traditional housing stock pose particular issues. Initially identified as having poor thermal efficiency and some potential structural issues, there has been significant investment since 1990 to ensure the properties remain fit for purpose. Some of these remedies have permanently resolved the defects, whilst others remain temporary solutions.

The stock condition survey provides an up to date assessment of our non-traditional properties.

### **Non-dwellings and communal spaces**

There are over 1000 non-dwelling properties held within the HRA portfolio, with CYC Building Services responsible for the maintenance of the communal spaces and fabric of the buildings. The non-dwellings funded by the HRA are referred to as blocks. A block includes housing units (usually flats and/or maisonettes) and communal areas. These are typically contained within one roof, there may be some shared facilities such as walkways or gardens. The council has a duty to manage these spaces even where the dwellings within a block are all leasehold.

The responsibilities for these assets include ensuring regulatory compliance with fire, asbestos and electrical testing regimes as well as property management and services such as cleaning services and legionella monitoring.

### **Understanding and Involving People**

We are committed to listening to people's views and acting on their feedback. We commission a tenant satisfaction survey every year. A statistically significant number of people who live in our homes are randomly selected to receive the survey.

We understand that we need to explore new ways of involving the people who live in our homes. A series of events will be held with people to find out how people would like us to involve them in 2020.

### **Climate Change**

In July 2019 the City of York Council declared a Climate Emergency, aiming to make York carbon neutral by 2030. As the largest single landlord in the city the Council is uniquely placed to take a lead role in reducing fuel costs and further exploring less fossil-fuelled based solutions - making homes greener, healthier and places where people want to stay.

## Existing stock

It is important to recognise that about 80% of the homes that people will be living in in 2050 are already built. In the social housing sector this percentage is even higher. It is therefore crucial that we invest in the stock we already have, making it 'fit for the future' by reducing carbon emissions and improving energy efficiency, as well as ensuring that our new build homes are high quality.

Homes fit for the future are:

- Low carbon
- Resilient to climate change
- Attractive and desirable places to live
- Adaptable to the changing needs of society
- Healthy places to live
- Address fuel poverty

Bringing the existing housing stock to near zero carbon emissions would:

- Reduce fuel costs
- Reduce the direct and consequential costs of fuel poverty
- Boost economic growth by supporting larger-scale projects, skill development e.g. apprenticeships, and business opportunities
- Reduce costs and demand for health and social care in the direct costs of dealing with the impacts of poor housing quality (e.g. respiratory conditions related to damp rooms)
- Reduce the number of additional deaths from extreme weather, from winter cold and summer heat

In order to significantly improve the thermal efficiency of our existing housing stock, we need to explore the retrofit options available on the market, the cost of these options and the environmental impact and also take a lead on developing our own local expertise.

One of the main ways of achieving these targets will be by making homes more energy efficient. Another factor pushing forward this change is the need to reduce running costs for householders in order to increase their disposable income.

### **Financial Planning and Risk**

The HRA Business Plan covers a 30 year period 2020 – 50. It focuses largely on those activities relevant to the management of the Council’s housing related assets and challenges facing key service delivery areas. It includes an Investment Programme, formulated on a 5 and 30 year basis.

For further information refer to the HRA Business Plan 2020-2050 attached to this report.

### **Compliance with Standards**

Statutory compliance with Health and Safety related legislation is essential. It is our duty as a landlord to ensure the homes we provide are safe for people to live in. This strategy informs our approach to maintaining relevant safety standards for gas, electricity, asbestos, fire risk, water hygiene, and lifts.

For further information follow the links below;

[Decent Homes CLG Guidance](#)

## Repairs and Maintenance

Having an effective Repairs and Maintenance service is a top priority for the people living in our properties. It also forms a key part of our work to maximise the effective life of our housing assets. Our service standards are set out in our Responsive Repairs Policy (Repairs and Maintenance link below).

## Decent Homes Standards

The government sets a minimum standard, known as the 'decent homes standard', for all council and housing association homes, stating that they must:

- be in a reasonable state of repair
- have reasonably modern facilities and services
- provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort

Through our ongoing repairs and maintenance and our modernisation scheme Tenants' Choice, we are committed to ensuring that our homes meet the decent homes standard.

For further information follow the links below;

[Decent Homes CLG Guidance](#)  
[Repairs and Maintenance](#)  
[Our Housing Service Standards](#)  
[Modernisation Scheme](#)  
[External Painting Programme](#)  
[Council House Modernisation](#)

## **Stock Condition**

The previous Housing Asset Plan established a scoring matrix for individual properties with the view that the information within this matrix would be maintained and updated. The purpose of the Asset Rating is to score the properties within the HRA on their quality - a low risk score for a good quality asset and a high risk score for a poor asset. This scoring methodology would be applied uniformly across the portfolio so every asset is scored in the same way. Having a standardised score for each asset will help inform discussion and management decisions about properties in the HRA, by providing a point of reference and comparison between assets. It was recognised at the time that more suitable data sources and assessment criteria would emerge that would improve the overall quality and accuracy of the evidence base.

An improved asset rating and assessment tool will be developed following the implementation of the new ICT Housing System. This will enable us to maintain a detailed overview of all properties in the HRA.

We now have an up to date housing stock condition survey. The stock condition survey provides a 95% accuracy assurance levels. The final analysis of the data is underway. A programme for dealing with underperforming stock has been developed and further work will continue.

For further information follow the links below;

[Stock condition surveys](#)

## **Initial Findings**

3.9% of stock was found to be failing Decent Homes Standard. Additional resource has been allocated to speed up progress towards achieving Decent Homes Standards for all Council Homes.



A third of our stock has been identified as having an Energy Performance rating below band C. We are exploring options to improve the energy efficiency of our housing stock.

### **Future Housing Delivery**

The Council is committed to developing over 600 high quality new homes across York in 8 Council-owned locations. The Housing Delivery Programme will deliver new mixed tenure developments where:

- 60% of homes will be for sale on the open market
- Minimum of 40% of homes will be a mix of affordable homes, including shared ownership and council rented housing

For further information follow the links below;

[Housing Delivery Programme](#)

### **Shared Ownership**

We are running an open market shared ownership scheme in York, people can buy a share in a property on the open market. We have acquired over 20 properties since the scheme started. It is hoped that we will be able to help 65 people to buy their own home on this scheme.

For further information follow the links below;

[Shared Ownership](#)

## **Community-led Regeneration**

The importance of community and housing-led regeneration has never been greater in providing the stimulus for connections and improvements to health and well-being. Mental and physical health awareness, loneliness, isolation, food poverty and homelessness are all high on the agenda of national and local government thinking.

### **The Groves**

We successfully bid for Estate Regeneration Grant of £265k from Homes England to carry out feasibility work on improvements to the Groves area.

A pioneering and community-led regeneration approach is being developed with people who live in the Groves area of the city. This is bringing opportunities to improve the health and wellbeing of residents, provide more homes, retrofit existing homes to high energy efficiency standards and improve the quality of the local environment for people living there.

Investment opportunities for The Groves regeneration project will be developed further through a focused Business and Investment Plan, and a rolling delivery programme of improvements will be agreed as funding opportunities emerge. The *Groves Community Plan* will be published in 2020.

Lessons learned from The Groves will be taken forward in order to explore and inform community-led area regeneration opportunities in other areas of the City.

### **Adapting homes for the future**

There are increasing numbers of older people, disabled people including children with long term illnesses and often complex conditions who are living in our existing housing stock. We need not only to ensure that we are building new

homes which are flexible but that we need also need to ensure that our existing housing stock is suitable, fit for the future, and meets their individual need. By doing so we will maximise independence and improve the quality of life for older people, people with disabilities, and their families.

### **Older Persons Provision**

We are improving, replacing and expanding the housing provision for older people in York. Our plans aim to help older people remain independent in their own home for as long as possible, while offering a choice of accommodation to meet their requirements.

We have increased independent living provision by 27 homes at Glen Lodge in Heworth. The scheme includes 24 hour support and was completed in November 2017.

A further 48 homes for older people, some of which have extra care provision, are due for completion in 2020 at Marjorie Waite Court and Lincoln Court.

We will continue to review our provision for older people for the future, as well as work to ensure that the whole stock is accessible to all.

### [Independent Living](#)

### **Acquisitions and disposals**

The Council own a number of high value properties across the city, and when one of these properties becomes vacant it is assessed using the asset management tool for repair, conversion or disposal. Approval to dispose of a property would be sought where it is determined that a property is of high value, large in proportions, expensive to heat, repair and maintain.

There are occasions when we may acquire properties on the open market. This could occur when we have the 'right of first refusal' where someone has previously exercised their Right to Buy and now want to sell their home. We may also acquire properties in areas where we are looking to regenerate or redevelop.

For further information follow the links below;

[HRA Strategic Asset Plan](#)

### **Procurement Strategy**

Building Services work closely with procurement colleagues to secure value for money and quality services for people living in York. Whilst many of the contracts procured are likely to come through frameworks provided by procurement consortia, they consistently aim to maximise the number of local contractors bidding for our work.

The Council's Plan 2019-2024 requires the development of sustainable and ethical procurement policies which promote local supply chains and support inclusive clean growth. Housing and Building Services will make a positive impact to the development and success of these policies.

For further information follow the links below;

[Procurement  
Council Plan 2019 -2023](#)

## Draft Action Plan

<b>Action</b>	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Lead</b>
Revise the existing scoring matrix	To meet the Councils commitment to Climate Change and make use of the stock condition survey. .	November 2020 then Ongoing	Housing Strategy And Policy
Establish a decision making process for assessing future use of HRA land assets.	To make best use of land assets and provide a clear framework for assessing land.	July 2020	Housing Strategy And Policy
Identify opportunities for housing development, regeneration and specialist housing.	To apply the Asset Register data generated by the scoring matrix to enable investment and re-development opportunities.	Ongoing	Housing Strategy And Policy
Establish an approach to housing led regeneration across the city.	To ensure that local people are involved in the decisions which impact on their local community, housing, health and wellbeing.	December 2020	Housing Strategy and Policy
Research wide reaching retro fit models for our existing stock including cost and environmental benefits.	To improve the energy efficiency of our existing stock, reduce running cost and contribute to meeting the Council commitment to carbon neutrality by 2030.	June 2020	Housing Strategy and Policy

Explore new ways of involving tenants in housing services	To involve more people, who are representative of the people living in our homes, in the decisions that affect them and the homes they live in.	August 2020	Housing Services
Assess suitability of current older persons provision	To ensure older person stock is fit for purpose fit for the future.	To be confirmed	To be determined
Develop a strategic approach to making our existing stock accessible to all	To make better use of our existing stock and expand the offer to older people.	September 2020	Strategy and Policy /Building Services