

**Cabinet Member Report for Health Housing and Adult Social Services – July 2011– Jan 2012. (Report on the housing element of this portfolio)**

**Attended / Attending**

- LGA Environment & Housing Board Induction event – London
- LGA Environment & Housing Board meeting – London Sept 2011, Dec 2011, Jan 2012
- York & North Yorkshire Strategic Housing Forum – Thirsk (Sept & Dec)
- Chartered Housing Institute Conference – Harrogate
- Leeds City Region Homes and Communities Agency – July, Sept, Dec
- Leeds City Region Conference
- CYC Home Grown Awards
- Peasholme
- Social Service Retirement event
- Dunnington Residents Association
- Kingsway Residents Association
- Dringhouses West Residents Association
- Chapelfields Residents Association
- Alden House Residents Association
- York Homelessness Conference - Opening Speaker
- Meetings with Private Housing Developers
- Meeting with National Private Landlords Association
- Lillbourne Drive
- Estate Manager Bell Farm
- Howe Hill

**Empty Homes Policy** - We finally have an Empty Homes Policy that will ensure that empty homes in the City are brought back in to use. I am very pleased that we got this 'on the books' so quickly after fighting for this in opposition for a number of years.

I have asked Officers to work further on the 'Living Above the Shop' policy and how best we can use Property Guardians in the City

**Council Flats Cleaning** - I have asked for a review to be undertaken at the poor quality of cleaning in the communal areas of flats which was evident during the first 4 months of the year

**Homelessness** – The first quarter of the year saw a rise of 32% in enquiry's about Homelessness. This is expected to rise, as are the numbers of those homeless as those on Housing Benefits 'review date' take place and their private rented accommodation is deemed to be unaffordable due to the reduced levels of Housing Benefit. Officers are looking at how the City will cope with any increase in Homelessness and there is concern expressed from Arclight and Peasholme about an increased number of those requiring help at a time of funding cuts.

**Ordnance Lane Young Person's Resettlement Centre** – Unfortunately the Council and Yorkshire Housing have been unsuccessful in the bid for funding from the *2012-15 Homelessness Change Programme* which was to be used to delivery of over 1,000 units of supported accommodation for rough sleepers and single homeless people.

TSL Oct 2011
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### **Update report on Housing Services – year to date**

Significant work has been undertaken in all areas of Housing Services including

#### **Policy/Strategy work**

- Completion of York & North Yorkshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment
- Refresh in Nov of Housing Strategy
- Refresh/review of Private Sector housing Strategy
- Refresh/review of Homelessness Strategy
- Responses to consultations including New Homes Bonus, Localism Bill, Affordable Homes Framework, Green Deal, Health Outcomes Framework, Housing Benefit Reform, National Planning Policy Framework, Travellers sites planning (with City Strategy) Feed in Tariffs, Tenancy Strategy, Right to Buy
- Briefings on new government initiatives around welfare benefits and reforms, affordable rent framework, tenancy strategy
- Housing Options for people with learning difficulties – an easy read booklet published
- Significant contributions fed into Fairness Commission, Council Plan

## **On development**

- Officers have led on negotiations/liaison with Homes and Community Agency and Housing Associations on bidding for 2011-15 programme
- Continuing lead on delivering Lilbourne Drive
- Search for sites and opportunities including current discussions re Shipton Street school
- Negotiations on S106 sites including Nestle, Ouseacres, Grain Stores, Former YWCA site Water Lane, Germany Beck
- Affordable housing completions: In the first two quarters of 2010/11 the outturn of Affordable Housing has been 81 homes. The current forecast is for 159 completions

## **Housing Standards & Adaptations**

- 856 minor adaptations have been installed in homeowners homes to enable residents to live safely and independently and/or be discharged from hospital
- 113 Disabled Facilities Grants completed which fund more major adaptations in homeowners and private tenanted homes
- 302 minor and major adaptations have been installed to Council homes to help tenants live safely and independently
- Since launching the 'Free Insulation Scheme' for York residents more than 600 enquires have been received so far, 538 enquiries have been forwarded to installers. Funding for the CESP scheme is to be confirmed shortly
- 'Warmer Homes Healthy People' funding (£9k from Department of Health) confirmed to help resident receive Age UK first call 50+service during cold weather. It will also help to double the number of trained snow wardens.
- 13 Home Appreciation Loans and 8 smaller Home Safety Loans have been completed to help vulnerable homeowners repair their homes
- 444 HMOs are currently licensed of which 216 have been successfully relicensed. 1 prosecution of a landlord for not licensing his HMO. Fine of £10,000 was the highest yet because of the unsafe conditions found within, with 5 more pending.

- 2 prohibition notices served closing two homes found to be unsafe for occupation. 5 improvement notices and 32 hazard awareness notices served to remedy conditions within properties found to have category 1 hazards in the homes
- Gas safety, 452 Warrants have been obtained from Court (304 for same period last year) 119 have been executed of which 37 have been forced entries. There have been 16 operation red card
- Reduction in the number of Empty homes which has enable the council to claim for 211 New Homes Bonus funding ( over £1.5million of funding )

### **Housing Landlords Service**

- Rent arrears stable and continue to be low, although slightly up on last years figures due to the current economic downturn
- The successful introduction of North Yorkshire Home Choice CBL currently more than 13,000 applicants on the waiting list across the county
- Introduced the use of the National Home-Swapper service free of charge to council tenants
- Void period reduced back to target following increase in beginning of year, latest monthly figure shows average void period under 20 days.
- The development of partnership working with RSL on Tenancy Enforcement where the council carries out enforcement work fro the RSL at a charge
- 10 homes recovered because of non occupation as a result of the work that the teams have done around ensuring best use of stock and subletting
- Started the tenant inspection regime – excellent work undertaken by the team resulted in a report to the Cabinet member
- Installed new individual electric supply to all travellers pitches

### **Tenancy Enforcement**

- Evictions 14
- Tenancy Surrender 1
- Premises Closure Orders 2
- Tenancy Demotions 10
- Injunctions 10

- Suspended and Postponed Possession Orders 13
- Deferred proceedings 6
- Pending court actions carried over from 2011- 38

### **Housing Options**

- Housing Options numbers – approximately a 30% increase – actual number for 2011 was 3450
- 87 Homeless acceptances during first 6 months of the year.
- Developed an Easy read Housing Options leaflet for people with Learning Difficulties
- About to publish easy read Tenancy Agreement
- The Young Persons Resettlement Centre will open on 23<sup>rd</sup> of January at Howe Hill
- Generic Housing Options Workers so customers wherever possible only have to see 1 member of staff
- YorHome 70 properties available via social lettings agency