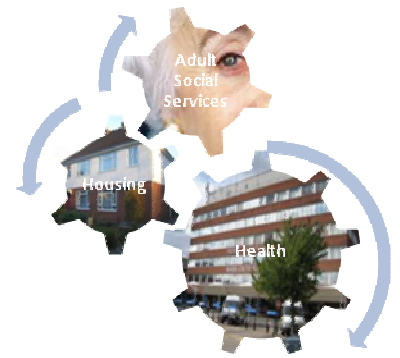


**Cabinet Member for Health Housing & Adult Social Annual Report on Housing.**



Since my last report, in 2011, I have continued to undertaken briefing with Directors, Assistant Directors, Lead Officers and met with local partners.

The current financial climate is challenging in creating a City that is fair, more equal and where vulnerable residents achieve a better life outcome. However, even with financial and legislative ‘barriers’, the City of York Council continues to seek to make a difference where and when it can and will continue to do so in the coming years.

This report will outline the work taking place in Housing which is linked to the Councils priorities to:

- Create jobs and grow the economy
- Get York moving
- Build strong communities
- Protect vulnerable people
- Protect the environment

The City of York Council, like Councils of all political colours, is finding work more difficult due to decreasing central funding. Budgetary constraints will continue to hamper what we would like to do, not only as a result of cuts to central funding but due to the added debt that the Council had to take on as a result of the Government changing the criteria for taking control of our Housing Stock.

**CYC Council House Waiting List Numbers**

CYC waiting list – **4651** (as at 26.09.12) 3972 as at 31/3/12. **330 increase since July**

Local Authority	Emergency	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
York	0	309	1913	2429	<b>4651</b>

This figure continues to rise across all age Groups as private sector rents outstrip income and benefits. I am working with Officers to re-launch the

down-sizing programme to help with the need of those needing larger accommodation.

**Rent arrears and Voids** - Current Total Rent Arrears as at 19.08.12 are **£645,713**, compared with the same week in 2011/12 the figure was **£646,759**.

**Former Arrears** as at 19.08.12 are **£337,446** and for the same week in 2011/12 **£530,048**.

Cumulative average re-let 2012/13 (including Temporary Accommodation) as at 19.08.12: **244** lets, average re-let time **2.85** weeks, **19.95** days.

**Homelessness Year End Figures** - Rough Sleepers. Last official submission (Nov 2011) – next due Nov / Dec 2012. Beginning to see an increase but it fluctuates – majority known to services but not all working with services.

<b>Total Homeless Preventions</b>	<b>2008/9</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13 Q1</b>
	645	1076	632	993	210

<b>Homelessness acceptance cases</b>	<b>2005/6</b>	<b>2006/7</b>	<b>2007/8</b>	<b>2008/9</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13 Q1</b>
Presentations	619	505	406	326	207	247	215	62
Total Accepted Homeless	433	213	258	208	130	183	151	40

<b>No. in temporary accommodation</b>	<b>31.03.09</b>	<b>31.3.10</b>	<b>31.03.11</b>	<b>31.3.12</b>	<b>30/6/12</b>
<b>TOTALS in all temp accom</b>	167	79	94	<b>96</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>Temp targets</b>	160	121	75	90	85 (by 31/3/13)

**Subletting** - The Gas Servicing Department is providing information about customers, the condition of property's and if there is any suspicion of subletting and abandonment they refer to Veritau. Officers have commissioned a training course for several staff members on different ways to deal with subletting and non occupation, this is being rolled out to staff. There has been a pilot in the Groves area and leaflets have been delivered detailing a hot line to report subletting. 6 properties were recovered due to their

investigations in 2010/2011 and since January 2011 we have recovered 16 abandoned/sublet properties either through action taken due to non occupation or other tenancy breaches. The team currently have 24 cases under investigation – (7 abandonment, 12 subletting, 2 homelessness applications, and 3 housing allocation applications)

**Windows Programme** - Although the previous administration announced the UPVc window's programme only £750k was put in to the budget. Since taking office I have worked with officers to ensure continued funding of the original 6 years of the announced 7 year programme and have been able to change the scheme to being a 4 year one rather than 7 years. This has been done by putting a further £4.1m into the capital programme.

**Solar Panels** – after the confusion of the Government changing the 'goal posts' to the scheme the Council has installed panels on 430 roofs and is working with the provider Empower Community to see if any further work can be done. There have been a few problems with installation with regard to the way that homes have been linked to the local electricity grid and this has meant in some occasions that neighbours have not both been able to have panels or 4 out of 6 homes on a circuit link.

**Howe Hill for Young People** - Opened in Jan 2012 and can accommodate up to twenty one 16-21 year olds. It has run a 99% capacity since Feb 2012. Service offers supported accommodation for young people who are homeless and acts as a hub for young people services. The Pathway Care Leaver Team are based on site alongside Housing Support Team, YOT, Mental Health services, and working links with substance misuse agencies. Staffing is 24 hours a day and there is an education programme that offers an opportunity to develop the skills necessary to maintain a successful tenancy in the future. After 6 months 14 young people have moved into more independent accommodation.

I recently visited Howe Hill with Hugh Bayley Mp and spoke with three young people about why they were there and how they see their lives moving forward. It was evident that housing in York is going to be difficult for them as was finding employment

**New Head of Building** – Sharon Brook, previously worked for Nottingham City Homes and NE Lincs Council has joined CYC as head of Building.

**New Social Homes** – A decision was taken not to provide homes through the *Affordable Model* - charging up to 80% of market rents, as those on the

'Waiting List' are unable to afford this. On new developments Social Housing will be 60% of market rent. I have ensured Council House re-lets will not rise to market rents, meaning York will continue to have '*Social Rent*' homes. (see VO statistics below)

**Affordable Housing Need** - Recent figures from the *Homes and Community Agency* show an ever growing need for Social Homes in York, across all age groups, due to the high costs of living in York.

The Valuation Office has estimated that York has a median annual household income in the York Private Rented Sector of the £19,500. Rental levels, which should not cost more than 25% of a persons total income, which is clearly not the case in York.

*\*\*Private Rented Property – Annual Income required and weekly rent*

- 1 bed £25800 / wkly rent £134
- 2 bed £34696/ wkly rent £162
- 3 bed £42016 / wkly rent £202

It is clear that York rent levels are exceeding income and this is perhaps why York has a higher number of working households on Housing Benefit which many residents will see reduce due to Government grant cuts in 2013.

**Housing Department** – The department has been restructured and now includes two Community Debt and Employments Workers who will be initially targeting and offering advice and assistance to those effected by welfare reform. This will include targeted work on promoting people moving to smaller accommodation where appropriate. In addition the Estate Managers roles have been adjusted to lay greater emphasis on Community development and champion initiatives in their areas. To help with this a number of new advice sessions in Acomb are taking place and we have just launched the Tang Hall Hub which is a joint initiative with CAB, Children Services and Future Prospects.

**Travellers Housing Need** - Officers are putting in a bid for funding to increase the Travellers site at Osbaldwick. Currently there are a number of the pitches which have two rather than one caravan on and also a number of families on the waiting list for pitches. Tenants Choice is now taking place on our Travellers sites

## **Development**

**Archer Close** - After detailed discussions, it was agreed to name the new development off Lilbourne Drive, Clifton, after Jack Archer. The homes are

now occupied and a street naming ceremony will be held in November. The houses have been built to a high standard and have low heating costs.

**Shipton Street** – The development has been successful in gaining an allocation of funding from the HCA under the Get Britain Building initiative. The developers Advent are in discussions with their main funder for the scheme too.

**Ouseacres** – Linden Homes are beginning construction this summer. The site has 25% Affordable Homes and Broadacres HA will take the completed homes.

**Former YWCA site** – Broadacres HA have agreed to purchase the site from Great Places and are finalising a planning application for 23 affordable homes (16 x 2 bed flats and 7 x 3 bed houses) and Officers are looking at the possibility of the apartments forming a 'Downsizing Scheme'.

**Germany Beck** – the applicants have submitted a 'Reserve Matters' application with an Affordable Housing offer of 35%.

**New Housing** – Housing Development Team have seconded a planner for several months to look at HRA sites across the City that could be developed for Social Housing.

**Housing Summit** – To take place on the 8th November. Various events will take place during the week including a Private Rented Sector Summit.

## **Private Sector**

**Private Rented Sector & Accreditation** - The new Landlord Liaison Officer is currently gathering information, views and ideas from a range of partners, stakeholders and other organisations who already operate Accreditation schemes to help shape a new scheme aimed at raising standards in the Private Rented Sector. A paper will go to Cabinet either in December.

At the York Residential Landlords Association meeting, held on 17<sup>th</sup> July, approx 55 members out of 495 attended. It appears that there is still a lot of bad feeling regarding the introduction of Article 4 and its impact on letting values. There is also a suspicion that, although Officers have said that at the present time, due to a lack of supporting evidence, there would not be a recommendation to introduce Additional or Selective Licensing, the Landlords believe they will be introduced.

**Living Above the Shop** - Project is being re-launched with funding from the Delivery & Innovation Fund and the Joseph Rowntree Trust

**Landlord Fair 2012** - Over 160 Landlords and Letting Agents attended the CYC Annual Property Landlord's Fair held on the 30<sup>th</sup> May 2012 at the Park Inn, North Street which is held in partnership with the York Residential Landlord Association. It offered delegates the opportunity to attend 5 presentations and a range of stall holders offering advice and information to those who are privately renting properties in the city. These covered:

- Finance and tax tips for landlords.
- Understanding planning and housing law when letting a HMO.
- Accreditation – looking at raising standards in the private rented sector.
- Making the green deal work for landlords
- Financial benefits of joining the York RLA

**Empty Homes Policy** - In May last year I inherited a draft Empty Homes Policy that would have continued to see this problem virtually ignored in the City as it had been since 2006. After discussion a new policy was drafted and signed off in September 2011 and has since started to make progress across the City. By having a dedicated Officer who works on Empty Homes the Council has been able to bring back in to use

The Officer has been working with empty property owners who have expressed an interest in taking out an 'Empty Property Appreciation Loan' to enable properties to be let through YorHome. A paper will be brought to Cabinet about using stronger enforcement powers to tackle properties which have an impact on the neighbourhood and cannot be brought back in to use through advice and financial assistance. Work on the Empty Property list has brought back in to use 198 homes and attracted over 6 years **£2m** of 'New Homes Bonus' money

**Green Deal** - Housing Officers have formed an internal 'task and finish' group which includes Finance/Procurement/Legal and Sustainability Officers to look at the opportunities and challenges that the Green Deal could offer to residents to improve the energy efficiency of their homes and job creation. Officers working with the Leeds City Region Secretariat have commissioned Marksman to develop a business case and will report back soon. CYC has though been successful in obtaining a grant for £123K for solid wall insulation which is a pilot prior to green deal going live. It is hoped that we will be able to help up to 50 residents insulate their homes.

**Landlord of the Year Award** – CYC was nominated for the whole of its landlord service, but with a focus on its 'Gas Warrant Service' in the Chartered Institute of Housings Awards. Unfortunately CYC did not win but came second.

**Special Planning Doc Sub-Division of Houses** – After two years of political hold-up the policy has been finally adopted. This means that Houses of four bedrooms or less will not be turned in to flats and will stop the loss of family homes.

### **Consultations**

CYC has made submissions to:

*'Putting Victims First'* white paper on tackling ASB

*Social housing fraud* (Housing February 2012)

*Allocation of accommodation: guidance for LHA's in England* – March 2012

*Homelessness* (Suitability of accommodation in private rented sector July 2012)

*National Planning Policy Framework (Planning team – October 2011)*

*Strengthening Powers of Possession for Anti-Social Behaviour (Housing October 2011)*

*Housing Benefit Reform – Supported Housing (Supporting people team - October 2011)*

*Green Deal (Sustainability team – Jan 2012)*

*Enhanced Right to Buy (Housing January 2012)*

*Pay to Stay (High income tenants will be asked to pay higher rents)*

### **Meetings attended as Cabinet Member**

York & North Yorks Strategic Housing Forum

LGA Environment & Housing Board

Leeds City Region Housing Board

Peasholme

### **Meetings and Visits**

Homelessness Conference: run by Peasholme at Askham Richard Prison -  
Speaker

BBC Breakfast interview on Housing

Dunnington Residents Ass

Fulford Residents Ass

Kingsway Residents Ass

Dringhouses Residents Ass

Foxwood Residents Ass

Chapelfield's Residents Ass

Railway Housing                                      Estate Walks with Estate Managers  
Linden Homes MD      York Housing Association      Yorkshire Housing  
Graham Bell (Newcastle Civic Trust Ltd) and Sir Ron Cooke  
Derwenthorpe Energy Centre visit                                      Derwenthorpe opening  
York Welfare Campaign – Housing Crisis  
'No Second Night Out' Conference  
Student Community Forum – Article 4  
Interview with Norwegian TV journalist Line Tomter