



COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Panel Report

Public/Private*

Date of Meeting: 13th JANUARY 2011

Title: HOUSING STRATEGY ACTION PLAN UPDATE

Report of: ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT)

Report reference: CD.26/10

Summary:

This report provides an update on the Housing Strategy Action Plan and the current work being taken forward regarding the Housing Strategy. Current performance data is included relating to strategic, operational and project work done. The Action Plan is attached as *Appendix 1*.

Questions for / input required from Scrutiny:

Questions relating to the performance information provided, or updates on any of the housing strategic, operational or project work.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Panel considers the updated Action Plan and provide relevant feedback or guidance.

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Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: None
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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 A number of the older completed actions and milestones have been removed from the Action plan. Some areas of work are being reviewed, re-visited and re-launched.

2. ACTION PLAN PROGRESS

- 2.1 Significant areas worthy of further comment are listed below – the reference numbers relate to the appropriate section in the Action Plan (*appendix 1*).

2.2 Actions relating to Theme 1 – Supporting Vulnerable People

- Community training and Resource Centre – new build centre next to the John Street hostel providing training facilities and healthy lifestyle opportunities for residents of our temporary accommodation and the local community. Building work started on site in Summer 2010 with completion estimated to be in July 2011. A tender exercise has started to seek an 'external management agent' for the centre (1.1).
- Replacement Family Homelessness Accommodation – An options process was undertaken to identify a site in the summer of 2010. This site was approved by Executive and the next stage of the process is to tender for the design team, develop the scheme design and to seek planning permission (1.2).
- Gypsy and traveller Site – providing 15 pitches of secure accommodation together with good communal facilities for the travelling community. The site has been completed and is now fully occupied. Interim management has been in place since March 2010 and a tender process is being started to lease the site together with a management arrangement (1.3).
- Choice Based Lettings – this is a scheme for the letting of social housing which gives people a greater choice in where they want to live. The Cumbrian scheme is a partnership involving Local Authorities and Housing Associations and has been set up using a Government grant and contributions from each of the partners. The project has been running since 2009 and the system is due to go 'live' in April 2011 (1.4).

- Extra Care Scheme – Work started on site in August 2009 and is scheduled to finish in February 2011. This scheme is mixed tenure and will primarily house residents over 55, although also some physically disabled people. The development comprises 60 housing units (made up of 40 apartments – all two bedroomed, 16 bungalows and 4 houses incorporating a disability suite) 1.6.
- Homelessness / Homeless Prevention – Dealing with homelessness is a statutory responsibility of the Council. Government funding has been made available on an annual basis for the development of services to prevent homelessness – an example being the rent deposit scheme called ‘DiGs’ that operates across the county.

2.3 Actions relating to Theme 2 – Decent Homes including Empty Properties

- Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) – These are mandatory grants that have to be approved within set time limits. In the first 8 months of this financial year £974,979 has been paid out on grant works completed with a further approved commitment of £610,257. Riverside Carlisle have approved funding of £300,000 for DFG applications relating to their own tenants for this financial year. They are processing payments once any grants have been approved, works done and inspected (2.1).
- Empty Property Scheme – Statistics relating to the performance regarding empty properties in the area since extra staff resource has been placed into the service (2.3).
- HECA / Fuel Poverty – An officer has been in place since May 2010 funded from monies held from work done by the Energy Efficiency Advice centre (EEAC). A programme of works has been put in place relating to energy efficiency improvements in properties. The benefits of such measures should help reduce the levels of fuel poverty (2.6).

2.4 Actions relating to Theme 3 – Affordability and Balancing the Housing Market

- Carlisle Strategic Housing Partnership – This key partnership was re-launched in November 2010 and will provide a process for the development and delivery of housing priorities within the Carlisle district.

- Affordable Housing Funding – Funding and delivery mechanisms for affordable housing provision are changing.

3. RECOOMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Panel considers the updated Action Plan and provide relevant feedback or guidance.

The Housing Strategy Action Plan for Carlisle 2010 – 2014



Updated Jan 2011

Theme 1: Supporting Vulnerable People

Project	Time Scale	Progress to Date	Outcome	Resources
<p>1.1 Community Training & Resource Centre</p> <p>Develop new build centre at John Street, providing training facilities for homeless people and the local community.</p>	<p>July 2011</p> <p>Mar/Apr 2011</p> <p>Dec 2010</p> <p>June 2010</p>	<p>Anticipated completion date of scheme</p> <p>Tender process completed</p> <p>Tender process starts for 'external management agent'</p> <p>Start on site</p>	<p>Reduction of repeat homelessness cases</p> <p>Scheme will provide learning opportunities and healthy lifestyle initiatives for residents of our temporary accommodation as well as the local community.</p>	<p>£1.89m CLG 'Places of Change' funding grant with the balance funded by Council using Regional Housing Grant (total budget £3.2 million)</p> <p>'External managing agent' being sought through a tender process</p>
<p>1.2 Replacement Family Homelessness Accommodation</p> <p>Current facility no longer fit for purpose</p>	<p>Summer 2012</p> <p>Autumn 2011</p> <p>April 2011</p> <p>Oct 2010</p>	<p>Open</p> <p>Start on site (subject to planning)</p> <p>Seek planning approval</p> <p>Site selected and approved by Executive</p>	<p>Provide modern en-suite accommodation for homeless families, as well as communal facilities, including play area for children, and office facility.</p>	<p>Estimated cost £1.8 million Internal Housing Capital Programme/ Regional Housing Board grant</p> <p>Existing staff resource</p>

Project	Time Scale	Progress to Date	Outcome	Resources
<u>1.3 Gypsy & Traveller Site</u> Providing 15 new pitches at Ghyll Bank (Harker).	Mar / Apr 2011 Dec 2010 April - June 2010 Mar 2010	Site leased Tender for leasing / management arrangement Residents start to move on site / site established Site completed and interim management in place	Provide secure accommodation with good communal facilities for the travelling community. This will include facilities for children and young people to access education and participate in other activities.	£1.96m from CLG Site to be self funded through leasing / management arrangement

Project	Time Scale	Progress to Date	Outcome	Resources
<u>1.4 Choice Based Lettings</u> Develop a district wide approach to allocations and lettings	Apr 2011 Feb / Mar 2011	Scheme goes live (partnership between all District Councils except Allerdale + most of the larger RSLs) Computer system testing	Cross-district Choice Based Lettings scheme Reduce number and time spent in temporary accommodation Improved access and choice to Housing throughout the district	£100k CLG funding Match funded by partners on a pro rata basis (based on stock levels of each partner/ in LA area) – Carlisle contribution £17k Existing staffing resources

Project	Time Scale	Progress to Date	Outcome	Resources
Homelessness /Homeless Prevention	<p>1/4/10 – 30/11/10</p> <p>1/4/09 – 31/3/10</p>	<p>251 decisions made 85 households accepted for rehousing</p> <p>372 decisions made 115 households accepted for rehousing 740 applicants given housing advice 112 successful prevention cases</p>	<p>Provision of services to those households the authority provides temporary and permanent re housing to as well as preventing homelessness through a number of measures.</p>	<p>Homelessness Prevention Grant (£40K for 09/10) and council funded staff resources</p>

Theme 2: Decent Homes including Empty Properties

Project	Time Scale	Progress to Date	Outcome	Resources
<p>2.1 Grants Programme</p> <p>Statutory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) – required operational programme</p>	<p>Statutory grants must be processed within 6 months of receipt of full application</p> <p>There is a time delay in works being carried out & grant expenditure due to a shortage of interested contractors in the area</p>	<p>100% compliance with statutory time scales</p>	<p>Works completed and adaptations provided for residents where needed in private sector housing</p>	<p>2010/11 budget - £1,473,000</p> <p>Paid - £974,979</p> <p>Approved grant commitment - £610,257 (as at 30/11/10)</p> <p>Number of DFGs (as at 30/11/10) completed – 189 approved – 214</p> <p>Approved grants will involve the commitment of future budget, as there is a time delay between works being carried out and grant expenditure.</p>

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Project	Time Scale	Progress to Date	Outcome	Resources
2.2 Home Improvements a) Renovation Grants – operational programme	These are discretionary grants & are processed within 6 months of the application	100% of applications are processed within set time scales	Renovation works completed for residents where needed in privately owned housing	Due to the ever increasing call on DFGs, we do not now provide Renovation Grants. We still have 1 outstanding approved grants, which should be completed in the current financial year. Commitment - £2,500 No. of grants (end Nov 10) Completed – 0 Approved – 5
b) Minor Works Grants – operational programme	There may be a time delay in grant approval, works being carried out, and grant expenditure	As above	Minor works completed for residents where needed in privately owned housing	Revised current budget - £11,300 Paid - £7,451 Approved grant - £3,849

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Project	Time Scale	Progress to Date	Outcome	Resources
<p><u>2.3 Empty Property Scheme</u></p> <p>a) To enable empty properties to be brought back into use by Housing Associations and enable empty properties to be brought back into use through grant provision. Property owners to be contacted & targeted to bring empty properties back into use</p>	Ongoing	<p>Number of empty properties brought back into use since May 09 - 250 (compared to 132 between 2001 – 2008)</p> <p>Empty Property Officer in place since May 09 and above statistics show progress made with new post.</p>	Empty properties brought back into use as per target.	<p>Annual budget of £100,000 funds empty property grants (this was from Regional Housing Grant allocation)</p> <p>Agreement in place with Riverside Carlisle for management of properties</p>

Project	Time Scale	Progress to Date	Outcome	Resources
<p>2.6 HECA</p> <p>The Energy Efficiency Advice Centre ceased work on 1st April 2009, and was superseded by the Energy Saving Trust Advice Centre (ESTAC). They provide information and advice on Transport, Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, but do not cover fuel poverty work.</p>	<p>Nov 2010</p> <p>Sept / Oct 2010</p> <p>May 2010</p>	<p>Programme starts</p> <p>Programme for efficiency measures set up</p> <p>Fuel Poverty officer in place</p>	<p>Funding accessed for measures to alleviate fuel poverty</p>	<p>Funding to be applied for from various sources.</p>

<p><u>3.4 Strategic Housing Market Assessments</u></p> <p>Analysis of 20 identified Housing Markets across Cumbria, including 3 in Carlisle District.</p>	<p>SHMAs cover period to 2011</p>	<p>Research through Cumbria Housing Group partnership into need for affordable as well as market housing across our 3 Housing Market Areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carlisle City • Rural Carlisle East • Rural Carlisle West <p>Providing intelligence on required mix of affordable housing – e.g. tenure, property size.</p>	<p>Research will contribute to the LDF process.</p>	<p>Carlisle SHMAs completed by our own staff in 2009/10</p>
<p>Housing Need / Demand information</p>	<p>April / May 2011</p> <p>Jan 2011</p>	<p>Information in place</p> <p>Proposed study approach for information to be gathered</p>	<p>Key data is required to inform the Councils strategic approach to the needs for housing in the area</p>	

Glossary

BVI – Best Value Indicator

CASS – Cumbria Action for Social Support

CHG – Cumbria Housing Group

CLG – (Department) for Communities and Local Government (formerly DCLG)

CLS – Community Legal Service

CME – Regular Market Engagement (in relation to HCA bids)

DFG – Disabled Facilities Group

DH – Decent Homes standard

DoH – Department of Health

ESTAC – Energy Saving Trust Advice Centre

GONW – Government Office North West

HA – Housing Association (also sometimes called a Registered Social Landlord)

HCA – Homes and Communities Agency (formally Housing Corporation)

HCOP – Healthy Communities and Older People

HECA – Home Energy Conservation Act

HMA – Housing Market Area

HomeBuy – the Government’s flagship shared equity scheme

HMO – House in Multiple Occupation

ICE – Improving Cumbria’s Energy

LCHO – Low cost home ownership scheme (administered by Carlisle City Council’s Housing Services)

LDNPA – Lake District National Park Authority

MRS – Mortgage Rescue Scheme

NAHP – National Affordable Housing Programme

NWHF – North West Housing Federation

PPS3 – Planning Policy Statement 3 (Housing)

PRO – Private Sector Renewal Policy (Regulation Reform Order)

PROP – Prolific and Priority Offenders

SAP – Standard Assessment Procedure

SEC – Sustainable Energy Centre

SHMA – Strategic Housing Market Assessment

SP – Supporting People

S106 (Section 106 Agreement) – part of the *Town & Country Planning Act*, 1990, covering planning obligations – including affordable housing contributions.

Zone agent – a local housing association with the responsibility for managing the *HomeBuy* scheme and Mortgage Rescue (in Cumbria this is now Riverside).