

PORTFOLIO:

HOUSING

Report of
Portfolio Holder:

COUNCILLOR
JAMES BAINBRIDGE

HOUSING

Housing Strategy – The housing team will be working over the next few months to develop a five year Housing Strategy by September 2011. A number of strands of work will feed into this process including:

- Housing Demand Study – the contract for this was let in March this year to GL Hearn consultants who will undertake survey and other background work to find out about housing needs within the Carlisle area. This data will be a key part to the development of the Housing Strategy. It is hoped that if sufficient levels of responses are received then the information provided will be of use at a specific ward level, as well as at district and sub district level.
- Carlisle Strategic Housing Partnership (CSHP) – this was re-launched in November 2010 and builds upon the three themed areas within the Housing Strategy (Supporting Vulnerable People, Decent Homes (including Empty Property) and Balancing the Housing Market).

Community Training & Resource Centre (CRTC)

Construction work on this scheme started in September 2010 and is due to be completed in October 2011.

The Council is currently seeking an external managing agent for the CTRC and started a tender process in December 2010. It is envisaged that an external agent will be in place by May 2011. The specification for this tender lays out the Council's expectations and vision regarding the development of the CRTC. This includes management of the building, development of services from the building as a resource for the community and vulnerable people in Carlisle.

Choice Based Lettings

Cumbria Choice Based Lettings (CBL) is a scheme that has been developed in partnership between 6 district councils and 8 housing providers in the county. The scheme is a new system for the allocation of social housing across the county. It is due to go 'live' on the 11th April 2011. A launch event was held on the 5th April at the Civic Centre. The event was well attended by representatives from across the Housing sector. Can I personally thank those Councillors who attended and I hope that they found the launch event of use.

Gypsy & Traveller Site

In December 2010 a tender process was started to appoint an external management agent for the site on a long leasehold basis. It is envisaged that the managing agent and contract documentation will be in place by early May 2011.

Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

On the 15th of March Carlisle City Council hosted a workshop on the elements of the 2004 Housing Act relating to the Housing Health & Safety Rating System. Representation was drawn from across the six districts and Housing Associations, with a good representation from the National Association of Private Landlords in the City. With the health effects of poor housing well established the positive partnership between councils and the private sector has been of mutual benefit, though future areas of development have been suggested.

St John's Hostel, Shaddongate

At the time of compiling this report the building works on the St John's Hostel are due to be completed, with the Contractors (Lambert-Gill Ltd) due to hand over the building to the Council on the 11th of April for IT and furniture installation. This has been a major and extensive refurbishment and has been delivered on schedule despite the poor winter weather. As a consequence thanks should go to the Housing Officers, Lambert-Gill and the Buildings Facilities Management for their work over this period.

**Councillor James Bainbridge
Housing Portfolio Holder**