



PART A:	MATTERS DEALT WITH UNDER DELEGATED POWERS
REPORT TO:	COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE
DATE:	25 MARCH 2010
REPORT OF THE:	HEAD OF ECONOMY AND HOUSING JULIAN RUDD
TITLE OF REPORT:	DRAFT NORTH YORKSHIRE HOUSING STRATEGY
WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Following earlier consultations the final draft of the proposed North Yorkshire Housing Strategy has now been produced. The sub-regional Strategy replaces housing strategies produced at District Council level although District-based action plans will be produced to assist implementation of the North Yorkshire Housing Strategy. The consultation period officially ends on the 19 March 2010 however the planned timeframe for finalisation of the Strategy has been extended in reflection of some of the comments received. To assist Members a presentation about the Draft Strategy was given at a Briefing on 23 February 2010. This report outlines comments about the Draft Strategy, including issues raised at the 23 February briefing and proposes that these be submitted as the formal response of the Council.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

That the comments outlined in Section 8 of this Report be submitted as the formal response of Ryedale District Council to the Draft North Yorkshire Housing Strategy.

3.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 This is the last significant opportunity to submit comments on the Draft Strategy and to ensure that it makes the necessary strategic links across the sub-region and reflects key Ryedale concerns.

4.0 SIGNIFICANT RISKS

- 4.1 The need to increase joint working and the pooling of resources has been a key strategic aim following the Audit Commissions report into the provision of affordable housing in North Yorkshire in 2008. The development of a sub-regional Housing Strategy will be used to obtain and direct future housing investment across North

Yorkshire and will provide a common framework for the participating authorities to develop their housing policies and initiatives. Unless the Strategy clearly identifies the key issues and challenges facing the sub-region and makes the linkages with planning, economic and transport strategies for the area then this may compromise its ability to attract the necessary financial investment which is essential in meeting the housing challenges facing the sub-region.

- 4.2 Given the importance of the Strategy in identifying future housing initiatives and projects to meet local housing needs in Ryedale and elsewhere in North Yorkshire, and in particular in seeking investment from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), it is vital that the risk of failure in these respects is minimised. The comments set out within Section 8 of this Report seek to minimise the risk that the final version of the Strategy fails to meet HCA requirements and to link with other key strategies - and so potentially disadvantages the sub-region - and / or that it fails to identify key issues and housing needs to be addressed within Ryedale.

REPORT

5.0 BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

- 5.1 This report introduces the final draft of the first North Yorkshire Housing Strategy and seeks affirmation of the proposed response. This response takes account of comments from Members at the Briefing on the 23 February 2010.
- 5.2 The Audit Commission undertook an inspection of affordable housing in North Yorkshire in 2006 and in their report identified their proposals for enhanced joint working and the development of a single Housing Strategy. In order that their findings could be implemented it was necessary to implement new political governance arrangements in relation to strategic housing issues within the sub-region. A report was submitted to a meeting of this Committee on the 25 January 2007 at which the new governance arrangements, namely the creation of the North Yorkshire Strategic Housing Board, now renamed the Local Government North Yorkshire and York Housing Board, were agreed. It was further agreed that a Member be nominated as the Council's appointed representative on the Board together with arrangements to vote on issues which fell within the remit of the Board. The decision was then taken to proceed with the development of a single housing strategy to cover the North Yorkshire sub-region together with other joint working initiatives.
- 5.3 Since that time the Board and housing officers across North Yorkshire have been collaborating on the development of a strategy. The Board considered the first draft on 3 December 2009 and agreed that it would be subject to further public and partner consultation from 25 January 2010 to 5 March 2010. This date was subsequently extended to 19 March 2010, however it has been agreed that the Ryedale response can be submitted following the 25 March meeting of this Committee.

6.0 POLICY CONTEXT

- 6.1 The Strategy will impact upon the Council aims of meeting housing need in the District and creating the conditions to create economic success. It offers an opportunity for strategic alignment with the Council's own housing priorities to enable our objectives to be met. This alignment requires amendment of the Draft Strategy to take account of the comments within this report.

7.0 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The consultation period on the strategy has operated at two levels, namely the local level and the strategic/sub-regional level. This has included local forums, specialist sub-regional groups such as the NY Private Sector Group, the Rural Housing Enabler Network, the County Homelessness Group, key stakeholders including the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber, the National Park Authorities and the County Council. Wider stakeholders have been consulted through a dedicated web site, which included an on-line questionnaire, and forums such as the North Yorkshire Gypsy and Traveller Forum.

8.0 REPORT DETAILS

The Purpose of the Strategy

- 8.1 The draft strategy aims to set out how York and North Yorkshire will contribute towards delivery of the Regional Housing Strategy and the Sustainable Community Strategies for North Yorkshire and the City of York Council. To provide more detail at a local level, the final strategy will be underpinned by local action plans produced by each of the participating authorities. These will be tailored to balance each authority's own local circumstances and priorities against the challenges and opportunities to deliver against wider strategic targets.
- 8.2 This is essentially a six year strategy, covering priorities identified in the current 2008/2011 investment period and the following investment period, which it is anticipated will run from 2011 to 2014. It will be subject to regular review by partners responsible for its development. The Draft Strategy can be viewed online at www.northyorkshirehousingstrategy.co.uk and a copy of the Executive Summary is at Annex B.

North Yorkshire Strategic Priorities

- 8.3 Four key strategic priorities have been identified for York and North Yorkshire. These are:
- Enabling the provision of more affordable homes.
 - Reducing homelessness.
 - Improving access to housing services.
 - Making best use of the existing housing stock.

Member Consultation

- 8.4 A Briefing on the Draft Strategy was held for Members on 23 February 2010 and a presentation was given regarding the importance of the strategy, the strategic priorities for the sub-region and the identified actions in relation to the delivery of those strategic priorities. Members' views were sought as to the identified priorities and actions and whether further priorities and actions should be identified. Officers provided an indication of the concerns of the Homes and Community Agency (HCA) in relation to the draft strategy and the potential implications of this for Ryedale and the remainder of North Yorkshire. The HCA has indicated that it has a number of broad concerns about the Draft Strategy, including that it does not take the step from a housing strategy to a place-making / regeneration approach. There are concerns that the Draft does not provide a clear vision for the area or identify the investment priorities to form the basis of the 'single conversation' with the North Yorkshire authorities. The views of the HCA are particularly important as they are the national housing and regeneration agency and the main source of funding for the delivery of

schemes. The evaluation of future funding bids will be made in the context of their delivery of strategic objectives.

Proposed Response of Ryedale District Council

- 8.5 Whilst there is much of merit in the Draft Strategy the District Council recognises and shares a number of the concerns of the HCA, including the lack of linkages and synergies with planning, economic and transport strategies. In particular the following broad areas require improvement:
- The draft does not support a North Yorkshire 'single conversation' and puts off actions to future bids and local action plans. It is not sufficiently clear about future investment priorities.
 - Regeneration issues are missing in terms of taking the strategy from being purely housing focused to taking a place making / regeneration approach. This is particularly important in terms of strengthening the role of Malton / Norton as Ryedale's rural capital, economic development projects, and the need for investment in infrastructure to facilitate future developments of strategic importance e.g. Woolgrowers.
 - It does not highlight key strategic issues to be addressed/funded e.g. Bridge House at Malton, and extra care and facilities for the elderly across the sub region.
 - It does not reflect local housing markets and their effects on housing activities, or the RSS sub-area policies.
 - Specific Ryedale case studies and challenges are missing from the strategy.
 - Despite highlighting several valuable initiatives and projects there are no proposals to roll these out across the sub region.
 - Despite common housing challenges across North Yorkshire there are limited proposals to extend the joint working that has taken place to address these.
 - The extent of the above issues, together with those raised by the HCA, mean that additional time must be built into the process of finalising the Strategy.
- 8.6 It is vital that the final version of the Strategy addresses the above concerns and the following future priorities (which include both Ryedale issues of strategic importance and North Yorkshire-wide challenges):
- Funding to overcome infrastructure challenges that hamper major brownfield / long-term strategic sites eg. Derwent Park / Woolgrowers, Norton East;
 - Secure funding for Bridge House to facilitate it's acquisition and enhanced service provision;
 - Intervention and legal assistance to bring forward exception sites;
 - Subsidy needed to secure affordable units and address viability issues for short-term greenfield land releases in some market towns until the market recovers;
 - Support for partnership working to pilot innovative approaches to delivery of affordable rural housing;
 - Further 'Kickstart' assistance for stalled housing sites;
 - Address fuel poverty by targeting the vulnerable and elderly so as to maximise available resources;
 - Continue to secure improvements to the private sector housing stock to achieve Decent Homes standard;
 - Develop priority funding bids with partner RSL's;
 - Further progress the partnership with NYCC to further develop Telecare services;
 - Secure funding post 2011 for homeless prevention and youth homeless prevention services;
 - Secure funding to continue domestic abuse initiatives eg. Making Safe; and
 - Develop partnership working for the procurement of DFG works.

9.0 IMPLICATIONS

9.1 a) Financial

Efficiencies delivered by joint procurement of research, the joint commissioning of strategic housing resources and the value added benefits of joint working have been important drivers of the strategy's preparation. The strategy in itself does not commit any individual authority to any additional expenditure at this stage, although related funding issues will be considered as part of future budget setting decisions.

b) Legal

The Draft Strategy has regard to the legal duties and responsibilities placed on local authorities by legislation such as the Housing Acts 1985, 1996 and 2004. There are no other legal implications.

c) Equality and Diversity Issues

The Draft Strategy will be accompanied by an Equalities Impact Assessment which seeks to quantify the main equality issues addressed by the strategy and the impact of its proposals. The Draft Strategy is informed by sub regional research into the housing and housing related support needs of the BME community in North Yorkshire, and A8/EU nationals/migrant workers.

10.0 NEXT STEPS

10.1 The comments on the Draft Strategy contained within this report (and any others which Members may wish to resolve be submitted) will be considered as part of the consultation process and the Final Strategy will be subject to final approval by the Local Government North Yorkshire and York Housing Board.

Julian Rudd, Head of Economy and Housing

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Background Papers:

Draft North Yorkshire Housing Strategy