



Ryedale District Council

REPORT TO: Community Services and Licensing Committee

DATE: 31 January 2008

REPORTING OFFICER: Housing Services Manager
Richard Etherington

SUBJECT: Draft Housing Strategy Action Plan

WARDS AFFECTED: All

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To present for Members consideration a draft Housing Strategy Action Plan which, subject to Members comments, will inform the Housing Strategy.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the draft Housing Strategy Action Plan be approved subject to any comments, revisions or additions by Members.

3.0 REASONS SUPPORTING DECISION

The Action Plan with its timetable for implementation encompasses the housing issues which will be addressed in the Housing Strategy. It provides an effective means of identifying the specific actions taken to address the housing needs of the district and for monitoring the effectiveness of the Strategy in meeting those needs.

4.0 BACKGROUND

As part of their strategic approach to housing, local authorities are required to prepare a three year Housing Strategy. The Strategy describes and explains the need for housing in Ryedale and how that need will be addressed. It is designed to be a working document which includes clear summaries, is well structured and written in clear simple language and provides contact details and references to other documents. The Action Plan serves as the mechanism whereby the key issues identified in the Strategy are to be addressed and provides the detail as to how this will be achieved.

5.0 POLICY CONTEXT

The Housing Strategy is an over-arching document that reviews housing related issues in the district and sets out its housing policies to address those issues. It is the key strategy document within the context of which further specific policies and strategies are identified and produced to address those issues. The Action Plan provides the detailed framework as to how the issues identified will be addressed and allows for this to be monitored and assessed.

6.0 REPORT

6.1 The Housing Strategy is subject to scrutiny by Government Office and must pass the test of being 'fit for purpose'. In making this assessment, regard is had to the following issues which form the minimum requirements of an effective, forward looking Strategy:

- **Corporate Control**
How the Strategy supports and contributes to the development of the Council's wider community objectives.
- **Wider Priorities**
The extent to which national, regional and sub-regional housing priorities have been taken into account in the Strategy.
- **Partnership Working**
How the Strategy demonstrates effective consultation and joint working with key stakeholders and engagement with residents.
- **Needs Analysis**
A sound analysis of the current and likely future position on all significant aspects of housing need in all tenures and on service performance.
- **Resources**
A realistic view of future resources including those from the Regional Housing Board and contributions from partners.
- **Priorities**
Whether the statement of priority areas for action is justified and linked to the analysis of current and likely future needs.
- **Options**
The extent to which the Strategy demonstrates a proactive consideration of alternative ways of addressing priority areas for action.
- **Action Plan**

A clear action plan with SMART objectives and milestones covering both capital works and service delivery.

- **Progress to Date**
The extent to which the Strategy reports on progress against previous targets and objectives.
- **Accessibility**
The extent to which the key messages in the Strategy can be readily understood by a non-specialist reader.

6.2 There is now a renewed emphasis on the need for enhanced two tier and partnership working across the sub-region encompassing a whole sphere of local authority activities and housing is no exception in this respect. The recent creation of the North Yorkshire Strategic Housing Board has added a new political dimension to the partnership working that is well established at officer level and has afforded the opportunity to further enhance joint working initiatives across the County in a number of key areas. One of these is the possibility of developing a North Yorkshire Housing Strategy. Such an approach is being developed in other areas in the Region and appears to be finding increased favour with Government Office. There are a common range of significant housing issues affecting all local authorities in the sub-region and the development of such a Strategy with individual action plans from the local authorities to reflect the means by which they will individually address the identified issues would seem to be the way forward.

6.3 The key areas which require to be addressed in Ryedale are well understood and documented. For the purposes of developing the Action Plan these have been included within five main objectives under the following headings:

Objective 1

To enable the provision of affordable housing for rent and low cost ownership for sale.

Objective 2

Development of services to meet the needs of homeless applicants and implementation of measures to prevent homelessness.

Objective 3

To address decency issues in the private sector and the maintenance of the private sector housing stock in general.

Objective 4

To enable independent living.

Objective 5

To contribute to social inclusion and the provision of sustainable communities.

Within each of the individual objectives specific targets have been identified with actions to be taken to meet those particular targets. The resources that need to be in place to meet those targets have also been identified and in order to monitor the effectiveness of the action plan there are details as to how the targeted achievements are to be measured. This further enables the overall Strategy to be monitored in terms of its performance in meeting the housing needs of the district.

7.0 OPTIONS

It is a statutory requirement that local authorities produce a Housing Strategy Action Plan in order to detail the process whereby housing services will be delivered to the local community and guide action to assess need and demand in the housing market and ensure that both accommodation and associated support needs are met.

8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There is currently provision within the capital and revenue budgets to implement those actions which are solely dependent upon internal funding sources. The Council's medium term financial plan requires a reduction in revenue expenditure by 2009/10 of 10% using 2007/08 as the base line for such expenditure. In order to try and meet this target a proposal to generate additional income has been submitted which, if accepted, should not impact on the ability to resource the Action Plan. Some elements of the Action Plan are dependent upon external funding sources, notably the Regional Housing Board, and confirmation of the outcome of these funding bids is still awaited.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications for the Council in that the policies, strategies and actions that will result from the implementation of the Action Plan will be consistent with the Council's strategic responsibility for the provision of housing services.

10.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The Action Plan identifies a range of proposals and initiatives to address housing issues in the district. Such implications will depend upon the actions proposed. These may vary from the provision of new housing whereby such issues will be addressed through the planning

process to the provision of financial assistance which will have little or no such implications.

11.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

The Housing Strategy Action Plan is the mechanism which will seek address the overall housing related needs in the district. The provision of a clear Action Plan with SMART objectives and milestones is a key component in ensuring that the Strategy is deemed to be 'fit for purpose'. The Housing Strategy Action Plan is a key document in the external assessment of the effectiveness of the Council's housing services. Failure to both embrace the Action Plan and ensure its effective delivery, having regard to the resource implications and any subsequent constraints this may impose on the Council, could have an adverse impact on the policies and strategies to address housing need and associated issues in the district.

12.0 CONCLUSION

The delivery of an efficient and effective housing service to meet the housing and related needs of the district is a major contributory factor when seeking to improve the quality of life for the residents of the district. The Action Plan is the mechanism whereby the aims and objectives of the Housing Strategy, and the policies and further strategies which will be developed, will be delivered. The Action Plan is of key significance when determining whether the Strategy is 'fit for purpose' and as such makes a major contribution towards ensuring that the necessary investment in housing takes place to meet those needs.

Background Papers: Housing Strategy Action Plan

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