

**8 January 2015**

## **Housing Strategy - Overview**

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### **Joint Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive and Ian Thompson, Corporate Director, Regeneration and Economic Development**

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#### **Purpose of the Report**

- 1 To provide Members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee with background information on the Housing Strategy prior to an overview presentation by Graeme Smith, Principal Policy Officer.

#### **Background**

- 2 Members will recall that at the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 23 June, 2014 the work programme for 2014/15 was agreed. One of the areas identified for inclusion under the 'Altogether Wealthier' priority theme within the Council Plan was the development of the Housing Strategy for County Durham.
- 3 Arrangements have therefore been made for Graeme Smith, Principal Policy Officer to attend the committee meeting on the 8 January 2015 to provide an overview presentation focusing on:
  - The policy context in which the Housing Strategy is being developed;
  - The evidence base underpinning the Housing Strategy; and
  - The proposed structure and scope of the Housing Strategy.

#### **Housing Strategy**

- 4 The Council is responsible for producing and enabling the delivery of Durham's Housing Strategy which will set out the key priorities for the County. The Strategy will highlight how the Council and partners will deliver the ambition of 'creating sustainable places where people want to live, work, visit and invest'.
- 5 The Strategy captures the key issues which need to be addressed and the key activities that will be taking place to address them. The Council has put housing, regeneration and economic development at the forefront of the priorities for creating an 'Altogether Better', Durham. The County Durham Regeneration Statement has been refreshed setting out the ambition to create sustainable places where people want to live, work, invest and visit.

## The Current Housing Strategy

- 6 The current Housing Strategy, *Building Altogether Better Lives: A Housing Strategy for County Durham* was developed to set out the housing expression of the County's Sustainable Community Strategy and the Regeneration Statement. The current Housing Strategy covers the period 2010 - 2015. The Strategy was developed around three objectives with ten related issues and was supplemented by four cross cutting issues. Table 1 sets out the structure of the current Housing Strategy.

*Table 1: Structure of Housing Strategy 2010 - 2015*

Thematic Aims	Issues
<i>Altogether Better</i> Housing Market	Housing Growth – More Homes
	New Affordable Housing – tackling affordability hotspots
	Rural Affordable housing
	Executive Housing
	Better Balanced Housing Markets – Regeneration and Renewal
<i>Altogether Better</i> Housing Standards	Better Existing Homes
	Better New Homes
<i>Altogether Better</i> at Housing People	Better Housing Management
	Better at Housing Vulnerable Groups
	Better Access to Affordable Housing
Cross cutting issues	Health Impact
	Equality and Diversity
	Social Inclusion
	Value for Money

- 7 The current Housing Strategy is supplemented by an Action Plan which is owned and managed by the County Durham Housing Forum.

## The Housing Strategy 2015 -2020

- 8 The new Housing Strategy is being developed to cover the period 2015 – 2020. This document seeks to build upon the current Housing Strategy, making use of the most up to date evidence base and policy context. The Housing Strategy will be based on a refreshed set of strategic aims and objectives and a range of more detailed and up to date housing issues. The Housing Strategy will be supplemented by an Action Plan to be updated annually.
- 9 The Housing Strategy will be developed to support the delivery of the Council's responsibilities as a Strategic Housing Authority. The Strategy will reflect the impact of the Large Scale Voluntary Transfer upon the Council's future role and activities. Importantly, the new Housing Strategy will provide a means to influence and align housing delivery in partnership with Registered Providers.

## Policy Context

- 10 The Housing Strategy will seek to reflect existing policy content where ever relevant to provide an overarching strategy for housing related activity. This will serve to ensure that the Housing Strategy and related Action Plan reflect all relevant housing related activities. It is noted therefore, that in relation to a number of issues the Housing Strategy will reflect existing strategies and related actions and will supplement existing activities. The Housing Strategy sits below the overarching policy context as set out in Table 2

*Table 2: Policy Framework for the development of the Housing Strategy*

<b>Policy Tier</b>	<b>Document</b>
National	Laying the Foundation: A Housing Strategy for England
	Other policy statements
Sub national	North East Local Enterprise Partnership Strategic Economic Plan
	North East Combined Authority Planning & Housing
Durham County Council	Sustainable Communities Strategy
	County Durham Regeneration Statement
	County Durham Plan

## Evidence Base

- 11 There is a wealth of evidence in place to develop the Housing Strategy. Much of this has been developed and brought up to date to support the Examination in Public on the County Durham Plan. Through discussions with other teams across the Council the development of the Housing Strategy has also served to bring together other relevant evidence and data.
- 12 In seeking to ensure that the Housing Strategy captures the range of housing related policy, evidence and activities being undertaken by Durham County Council, 'Issue Development Groups' were formed to identify contextual information, evidence gaps and to scope the potential content of the strategy. These groups contain representatives from a range of teams across the Council, including:
- Spatial Policy;
  - Housing Solutions;
  - Housing Regeneration;
  - Planning Development;
  - Environment and Design;
  - Research and Consultation;
  - Commissioning;
  - Employability;
  - Resources;
  - Assets; and
  - Public Health.
- 13 Members of these teams have fed into discussions in order develop the evidence base for the Housing Strategy.

## The Proposed Structure of the Housing Strategy

- 14 In considering the structure of the current Housing Strategy, and the overarching themes of 'Markets, Standards and People'. It was considered that this framework would benefit from moving away from Housing Markets and towards Housing Delivery as a strategic aim. This better reflects the Council's housing related activity in seeking to support and influence housing delivery. In addition, 'Delivery and Standards', have been combined as an overarching place based aim. The 'People' theme is to be renamed 'Housing Support' which reflects the current and future activities within the Housing Strategy Action Plan.
- 15 Under the two strategic level Aims, the Housing Strategy will contain a series of Objectives. These objectives will be supported by more detailed issues. The proposed framework for the development of the Housing Strategy 2015 – 2020 is set out at Table 3.

*Table 3: Proposed Structure of Housing Strategy*

<b>Aims</b>	<b>Objectives</b>
<i>Altogether Better</i> Housing Delivery and Standards	Delivery of More Homes
	Improvement of Housing Stock
<i>Altogether Better</i> Housing Support	Housing Support for older and vulnerable people
	Tackle wider social and economic causes of homelessness and financial hardship – anti poverty
	Access to housing

- 16 The Housing Strategy will be delivered in partnership between Durham County Council, Registered Providers and other relevant stakeholders. Revised partnerships will be formed alongside the development of the Action Plan to ensure they are aligned to emerging delivery priorities. These Aims and Objectives may evolve as the Strategy develops and as a result of stakeholder consultation undertaken through the internal and external workshops undertaken in December 2014 and January 2015 respectively.

## Overview Project Plan

- 17 The current Housing Strategy and associated Action Plan runs until March 2015. The Housing Strategy 2015 – 2020 will be developed to provide direction from March 2015. As set out previously, the County Durham Plan will influence a substantial portion of the Housing Delivery and Standards components of the Housing Strategy. It is recognised that it would be premature to finalise the Housing Strategy prior to the Inspectors report. On this basis, it is proposed that the Housing Strategy will be held in 'Final Draft' form, until the Inspectors report is received. The overview Project Plan is set out at Table 4

*Table 4: Overview Project Plan*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Output</b>
5 <sup>th</sup> December 2014	Internal Workshop with DCC issues development groups	Bring together evidence and confirm Housing Strategy Framework
8 <sup>th</sup> January 2015	Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Discussion on Housing Strategy scope of evidence, proposed framework for development.
15 <sup>th</sup> January 2015	Partnership Workshop on Housing Strategy	Discussion on evidence base and Housing Strategy Framework and emerging content with partners
22 <sup>nd</sup> January 2015	Housing Forum Meeting	Confirm partnership support on Housing Strategy Framework and draft content
30 <sup>th</sup> January 2015	Finalise Housing Strategy Draft	Publish Draft Housing Strategy
11 <sup>th</sup> February 2015	Strategic Planning Board	Update on Housing Strategy development
20 <sup>th</sup> February 2015	Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Discussion on outputs of partnership engagement and emerging content.
February 2015	Planning and Assets Management Team	Approval for RED Management Team
March 2015	RED Management Team	Approval for Cabinet
27 <sup>th</sup> March 2015	Finalise Housing Strategy Action Plan	Publish Action Plan
May 2015	IPG	Approval for Cabinet
June 2015	Cabinet Approval	

### **Next steps**

- 18 The next step in the development of the strategy is to move towards development of the content of the Strategy alongside engagement with the partners. This will also support the development of the Action Plan and associated delivery partnerships.
- 19 It is programmed to provide a presentation to the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 20 February 2015 to set out the feedback from partners and to provide an update on the development of the Strategy.

### **Recommendations**

- 20 Members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to note and comment upon the information provided during the presentation.
- 21 That the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive a further report detailing feedback from partners and providing an update on the development of the Strategy at the meeting on the 20 February 2015.

## **Background Papers:**

The Current Housing Strategy - Building Altogether Better Lives: A Housing Strategy for County Durham 2010 – 2015. Issues & Options Paper: Consultation Version June 2010

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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**Finance** – None

**Staffing** –None

**Risk** – None

**Equality and Diversity** – Equality and Diversity is identified as an issue under the Cross Cutting Themes as part of the existing Housing Strategy. It is proposed that Equality and Diversity will be retained as an issue within the new Housing Strategy.

**Accommodation** - None

**Crime and Disorder** – None

**Human Rights** – None

**Consultation** – The Housing Strategy in part, reflects existing Plans. These plans have been subject to publicity and consultation as part of production. The Housing Strategy will be developed within input from partners and will be delivered in partnership with key stakeholders.

**Procurement** – None

**Disability Discrimination Act** –None

**Legal Implications** – None