

8 January 2016

Housing Strategy - Update

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

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on the development of the Housing Strategy prior to a presentation by Graeme Smith, Principal Policy Officer.

Background

- 2 Members will recall that, at the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 8th January 2015, an overview report and presentation was provided on the development of the County Durham Housing Strategy (2015 – 2020).
- 3 The report and presentation provided at the meeting on the 8th January 2015 set out:
 - the context to the development of the Housing Strategy;
 - the policy context in which the Housing Strategy is being developed;
 - an overview of the evidence base underpinning the Strategy;
 - the proposed structure and scope of the Strategy; and
 - the project plan.
- 4 At the Committee members highlighted concerns in respect of the need to ensure that tenure and housing type/mix was appropriate in order to meet the needs of residents throughout the County. Members suggested that the Council should reinforce the principle that sufficient numbers of affordable homes within the County needed to be delivered. These matters will be considered as part of the presentation on the 8th January 2016.
- 5 Within the report and presentation it was highlighted that a further update would be provided to the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the meeting on the 20th February 2015. The report prepared for this meeting provided an overview of feedback from the Partnership engagement sessions undertaken on January 2015. However, the corresponding presentation was not provided in order to enable sufficient time to understand the implications of the Inspector's Interim Findings on the

County Durham Plan¹ on the Housing Strategy and related evidence base. The presentation on the 8 January 2016 will focus on:

- An overview of the impact of the Inspector's Interim Findings in relation to the County Durham Plan on the Housing Strategy.
- The Housing Strategy and tenure, type and mix and affordable housing in County Durham.
- An update on the development of the Strategy, the Action Plan and Partnerships.

Housing Strategy Development Update

- 6 There are three components to the County Durham Housing Strategy:
- Part A: The Strategy;
 - Part B: The Action Plan; and
 - Part C: The delivery Partnerships.

Part A: The Strategy

- 7 The Strategy is structured around a series of aims, objectives and issues. This structure has been agreed through discussion with the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny, the Housing Forum and partners. The structure provides a framework to collate evidence and to develop content across the identified issues in order to develop the Strategy. However, the Inspector's Interim Findings on the County Durham Plan suggested that some parts of the evidence and related policy approaches associated with the County Durham Plan were unsound. This evidence was also underpinning elements of the Housing Strategy; therefore the Inspectors Interim Findings have had an impact upon the development of the Strategy. The Strategy content will also be required to reflect the most up to date evidence base and recent Government policy changes.

Part B: The Action Plan

- 8 The performance against the delivery of the Housing Strategy actions is reported to the Housing Forum on a quarterly basis. The 2015/16 Action Plan presently consists of actions that have been carried over from the previous Action Plan. In total, 13 actions were carried over from the previous Action Plan. The actions in the current Action Plan relate to the activities of 6 separate partnerships. This Action Plan will, been supplemented by new actions that are agreed through the partnerships. This will include the actions from the Affordable Warmth Action Plan and the Homelessness Partnership Action Plan. Further actions are emerging through the partnerships. These will be subject to approval by the Housing Forum.

Part C: Partnerships

¹ The Council received the Inspector's Interim Findings on the County Durham Plan on the 18th February 2015

- 9 The Housing Strategy will be a strategy for County Durham. The Strategy is being developed with the input from stakeholders and will be delivered in partnership. The development of the new Housing Strategy provides an opportunity to consider a future partnership structure which best reflects the content of the Strategy and associated issues.

Recommendations

- 10 Members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to note and comment upon the information provided during the presentation.
- 11 That the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive a further progress update on the strategy as part of the future work programme.

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

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 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