

Special Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee

28 July 2016



Update on the new County Durham Housing Group

Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide Members with an update on the development and performance of County Durham Housing Group (CDHG).

Background

- 2 Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee are responsible for the scrutiny of the Council Plan 'Altogether Wealthier' priority theme and associated actions. The committee's terms of reference include examining key policies and services within the sustainable neighbourhoods and rural communities' priority.
- 3 In the past, Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee has considered a number of housing related issues including:
 - Durham County Council's Housing Strategy.
 - Housing Solutions – including homelessness and Durham Key Options.
 - Housing regeneration including renewal schemes.
 - Private sector housing including empty homes, private landlord accreditation and selective licensing.
 - DCC's market housing scheme (Chapter Homes).
 - Annual Performance monitoring of Durham City Homes, Dale and Valley Homes and East Durham Homes.
 - The large scale voluntary transfer (LSVT) process which established the County Durham Housing Group.
- 4 The transfer of the County Council's homes to CDHG was completed on 13 April 2015 at which point the Council relinquished its housing landlord function. A follow up report to the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 29 October highlighted to members the housing functions retained by DCC which would need to be featured within the committee's future work programme including the performance of the LVST.

County Durham Housing Group

- 5 The transfer of homes required CDHG and the Council to enter into an agreement to ensure the “offers” the Council made to tenants would be delivered. Within the Transfer Agreement were a series of key duties, obligations and responsibilities placed upon both parties. The agreement also included 19 service level agreements through which the Council will provide services to CDHG.
- 6 Performance management arrangements to monitor the delivery of the offers and the implementation of the Transfer Agreement were developed which are monitored and reviewed through the Council’s Overview and Scrutiny procedures with the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertaking a key role in monitoring the performance of CDHG in relation to its performance against the offers.
- 7 In view of the timescales within which CDHG has been established, it was important that CDHG’s operational arrangements were allowed time to bed in including how the group are to develop performance arrangements in respect of delivery against the Transfer Agreement.

Current position

- 8 In the past Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee reviewed the performance of the Council’s housing providers in October every year. Members were provided a copy of each organisation’s annual report together with a short presentation detailing key performance information in relation to their respective organisations.
- 9 Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed on the 29 October that a similar mechanism to that outlined above should be used in relation to CDHG.
- 10 In October, and in line with other Registered Providers in England, CDHG produces an annual report which sets out performance over the past year; identifies areas for improvement and development; and provides examples of value for money. The report is made available to key stakeholders. Information used to inform the development of the report is collated and analysed by landlords during the summer.
- 11 Arrangements have been made for a special meeting of the committee to be held on 28 July 2016 where members will be updated on CDHG’s progress since transfer by Bill Fullen, Group Chief Executive of CDHG. The presentation will cover the following points:
 - Background to the offer document
 - Progress made since transfer
 - Key achievements
 - Planned work over the next year
 - Work still to progress

- 12 A copy of the CDHG's annual report will be provided to committee in October 2016.

Recommendations and reasons

- 13 That the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive a presentation on CDHG's progress since transfer.
- 14 That the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee schedule into the committee's work programme consideration of the CDHG's annual report together with an update on performance in October every year.

Contact: Stephen Gwilym, Principal Overview and Scrutiny Officer
Tel: 03000 268 140
Author: Diane Close, Overview and Scrutiny Officer
Tel: 03000 268 141

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – None

Staffing - None

Risk - None

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty - None

Accommodation - None

Crime and Disorder - None

Human Rights - None

Consultation - None

Procurement - None

Disability Issues – None

Legal Implications - None