

COPELAND HOUSING STRATEGY

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Councillor George Clements
LEAD OFFICER: Julie Betteridge, Head of Regeneration & Communities
REPORT AUTHOR: Laurie Priebe

WHAT BENEFITS WILL THESE PROPOSALS BRING TO COPELAND RESIDENTS

Last year we completed a Strategic Housing Market Assessment of the borough which has provided a range of data on the market and local residents' housing requirements and aspirations. The Copeland Housing Strategy, developed with our partners, sets out our policy and priorities for the next four years to improve the housing offer and maintain and build our settlements, towns and villages as sustainable places for our communities.

The Housing Strategy 2011-2015 was adopted by Full Council on 23 June 2011. In the week ending 22 July our partners were sent the draft Year 1 Delivery Plan for comment prior to it being reported to the Strategic Housing Panel on 16 August.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Committee are asked to note the draft Year 1 Housing Strategy Delivery Plan attached as Appendix A and their comments are invited.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In November 2010 the government published its consultation document, "A Fairer Future for Social Housing." In February 2011 we received the new "Framework for the Affordable Homes Programme" published by the Homes & Communities Agency (HCA). Both documents introduce profound change, which forms the landscape into which we are launching our Housing Strategy.
- 1.2 "A Fairer Future for Social Housing" includes the government's plans for changing rental valuations for affordable housing and introduces fixed term tenancies for new tenants. It also promises more flexibility in allocations and lettings.
- 1.3 The Localism Bill currently in Parliament captures some of these and additional changes, most notably:

- the duty on all housing authorities to adopt a tenancy strategy for their districts. It is presently unclear whether this must be adopted by 31 March 2012 or later next year;
- alterations to the duties and powers in relation to rights of succession to secure and assured tenancies;
- amendments to the homelessness legislation to enable duty to be discharged into the private rented sector;
- reform of social housing regulation.

- 1.4 The government's reform of welfare benefits is restricting housing benefit payments in both the private and public sectors. The Welfare Reform Bill, introduced to Parliament this year, will abolish Housing Benefit, which will be subsumed into the new universal credit from 2013.
- 1.5 The HCA's document on the new framework for affordable housing reduces the grant rate the agency provides for housing development. This, coupled with the new, higher, "affordable rent" (80% of open market rents) introduces a radically different model. New supply will be funded from:
- the additional borrowing capacity generated from the affordable rent model;
 - existing sources of cross subsidy including provider surpluses, s106 agreements (i.e. planning obligations under the Town & Country Planning Act, 1990), recycled capital grant and disposal proceeds funds;
 - other sources such as free or discounted local authority or other publicly owned land and local authority contributions (i.e. from the new homes bonus);
 - HCA grant where the development would be unviable without it.

2. Delivery Plan

- 2.1 In light of all the challenges inherent in the above paragraphs the only present certainty is that nothing in affordable housing will be the same again.
- 2.3 Neither the Localism Bill nor the Welfare Reform Bill have completed their Parliamentary passage. The effect of the new funding regime for housing development has not yet been felt. It would therefore be naïve to publish a Delivery Plan that covers the full four-year lifetime of the Housing Strategy. We have therefore chosen an annual delivery model which will provide ample opportunity for review as externally driven change unfolds.
- 2.4 The draft Year 1 Delivery Plan attached as Appendix A has been sent to all partners in the social housing and voluntary sectors plus representatives of the 6

Copeland Localities. In the County Council, Adult Social Care and Children's Services have also been invited to comment.

- 2.5 Comments will enable us to revise the document before reporting to Strategic Housing Panel on 16 August. The draft is deliberately ambitious and is likely to be amended to achieve a realistic balance.
- 2.6 However, the affordable housing target for 2011/12 is already realistic because it has been funded from the last tranche of the HCA's 2008/11 programme. Providers are already working on site with planning permission, capital funding, and signed contracts.

3. HOW WILL THE PROPOSALS BE PROJECT MANAGED AND HOW ARE THE RISKS GOING TO BE MANAGED?

- 3.1 The Housing Strategy will be project managed by the service manager supported on specific elements by other staff including Head of Regeneration and Community and Corporate Director, People and Places. Existing project management systems will be used alongside reporting regularly to the Strategic Housing Panel and our internal Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.2 The strategy sets out our strategic direction and priorities. This has been produced within a rapidly changing policy environment nationally and we anticipate a regular review of the risk assessment on the strategy and the annual implementation arrangements.

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Housing Strategy Delivery Plan: Year 1, 2011/12 (draft)

List of Background Documents:

Copeland Strategic Housing Market Assessment, 2011.
Copeland Housing Strategy, 2011-2015.

Housing Strategy Delivery Plan, 2011/2015

Year 1: 2011/12

Tasks	Milestones	Due dates	How measured	Lead partner
Copeland Housing Strategy Objective One: Facilitating the right housing offer to support economic growth and community sustainability				
Sub-objective 1.1: Facilitating the right supply of new homes				
1.1.1 To ensure Copeland's input to the housing element of the Homes & Communities Agency's (HCA) Cumbria Local Investment Plan (Cumbria LIP) for 2011 onwards	Copeland's priorities for market and affordable housing are written into the Cumbria Local Investment Plan	Unknown at 6/7/2011. Awaiting HCA timescale.	By cross-referencing the priorities in the Cumbria LIP and in Copeland's Housing Strategy	Copeland Borough Council in association with the HCA
1.1.2 Establish a Copeland policy framework for the use of the New Homes Bonus (NHB)	Copeland Housing Partnership meet to establish priorities for the use of the NHB in Copeland Policy framework drafted, consulted upon and agreed with communities	Autumn 2011	Framework agreed upon by all partners	Copeland Borough Council
1.1.3 Publish the Preferred Options Draft Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) for consultation	Completion of Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Economic Blueprint in place Consultation Draft DPD complete	Sept/ October 2011 March 2012 March 2012	Draft DPD published for consultation	Copeland Borough Council
Sub-objective 1.2: Improving the quality of our places				
1.2.1 Investigate opportunities for neighbourhood planning pilots			Pilot areas identified	Copeland Borough Council
1.2.2 Work with locality projects to identify common ground between community, parish and locality plans and the overarching housing strategy	Identify housing needs, supply and development or renewal opportunities in each of the 6 localities	March 2012	By cross referencing the priorities in community, parish and locality plans with the objectives in the Copeland housing strategy	Copeland Borough Council and Lake District National Park Authority

Housing Strategy Delivery Plan, 2011/2015

Year 1: 2011/12

Tasks	Milestones	Due dates	How measured	Lead partner
Sub-objective 1.3: Ensuring sufficient affordable housing				
1.3.1 Complete 63 new affordable homes in 2011-12	Planned new affordable homes completed	April/May 2012	Number of practical completions and lettings achieved	Registered Providers
1.3.2 Via the Copeland Housing Partnership, support the new Affordable Housing Programme (AHP) bid programme for 2011-12	Support registered providers bids for HCA funding	May 2011	Bids submitted to HCA supported by Copeland Housing Partnership	Copeland Housing Partnership
1.3.3 Support the AHP for 2012- 13	Discussions held with partners in order to identify support required	As per AHP timeframe	Bids submitted to HCA supported by Copeland Housing Partnership	Copeland Housing Partnership
1.3.4 Investigate the potential for the use of local lettings policies in rural parishes	Potential for use of local lettings policies investigated in three parishes	April 2012	Progress in investigating use of local lettings policies in number of parishes	Copeland Borough Council, Parish representatives, Cumbria Rural Housing Trust and Registered Providers
1.3.5 Quarterly monitoring of the housing market and access to housing through the Council's Economic Impact report	Report to Copeland Borough Council each quarter	End of each quarter 2011-12 (End June, September, December, March)	Report to Copeland Borough Council each quarter	Copeland Borough Council
Sub-objective 1.4: Developing the role of the private rented sector				
1.4.1 Training with landlords according to identified training needs	Discussion at landlord forum in October to identify training needs of landlords First training session for landlords	October 2011 March 2012	Number of homeless preventions achieved by access to and securing private rented homes. Number of privately rented homes from which Category 1 Hazards are removed	Copeland Borough Council Private landlords
1.4.2 Raising awareness of rent deposits via landlords forum	Session on rent deposits with landlords	April 2012		

Housing Strategy Delivery Plan, 2011/2015

Year 1: 2011/12

Tasks	Milestones	Due dates	How measured	Lead partner
1.4.3 Publishing awareness leaflets on rent deposits and other services	Leaflet produced and information available on website regarding prevention, this will include rent deposits, enforcement action and HMO licensing.	March 2012		
Copeland Housing Strategy Objective Two: Making the best use of existing stock				
Sub-objective 2.1: Focus attention on the energy efficiency of existing stock				
2.1.1 Improve energy efficiency and SAP ratings	Implement Cumbria Affordable Warmth programme in Copeland	September 2011	Using agreed Cumbria methodology	Cumbria Affordable Warmth Officer
2.1.2 Reduce fuel poverty	Deliver "Keep Warm, Keep Well" winter campaign	March 2012	Project targets	Cumbria County Council and Copeland Borough Council
2.1.3 Improve energy efficiency of social housing stock	ERDF project delivery milestones	?	?	Registered providers
Sub-objective 2.2: Enable improvements in private sector stock condition				
2.2.1 Jointly commission Cumbria-wide private sector stock condition survey with particular reference to Housing Health and Safety Rating System in Copeland	Selection of contractor and start/completion of survey	Contractor selected by May 2011	Draft report received by March 2012	Cumbria Housing Improvement Expert Group
Sub-objective 2.3: Reduce the number of empty homes in the borough				
2.3.1 Develop a protocol for reporting empty/dilapidated residential properties via Parish/Town Councils	-Protocol published on Copeland BC website and shared with partners - Partners and residents use protocol to report dilapidated buildings	December 2012	Number of properties reported through protocol	Copeland Housing Partnership Parish and Town Councils
2.3.2 Produce Empty Homes Strategy for the Borough	First draft ready for consultation	March 2012	Draft ready for consultation by March 2012	Copeland Borough Council

Housing Strategy Delivery Plan, 2011/2015

Year 1: 2011/12

Tasks	Milestones	Due dates	How measured	Lead partner
2.3.3 Develop a procedure for prioritising dwellings on which to take action	Discussion with empty homes network, draft procedure to Strategic Housing Panel	December 2011	Procedure published and applied in prioritising planned work	Copeland Borough Council and Copeland Housing Partnership
2.3.4 Submit Cumbria partnership bid for Empty Homes funding	Partnership bid submitted according to bid timeframes	According to bid timeframes	Partnership bid submitted according to bid timeframes	Cumbria Empty Homes Network
2.3.5 Reduce number of voids in social housing stock	Monitor and report to Strategic Housing Panel the Home Housing Group's progress on reducing void and re-let times Action by RSLs to be added here	Report to Strategic Housing Panel in June 2011 and March 2012	The number and length of voids (a) of less than 6 months and (b) over 6 months. Average re-let times for properties not awaiting demolition or undergoing major works	Registered Providers
Sub-objective 2.4: Complete the programme to bring all social housing up to Decent Homes Standard (DHS)				
2.4.1 Registered Providers to complete Regeneration Programmes	Home Housing Group extended programme details needed	Home Housing Group targets for end March 2012 (All stock to meet DHS standard by 2013)	Registered providers to report on number of Registered Provider properties meeting Decent Homes Standard and Decent Homes Plus Standard	Registered Providers
2.4.2 Registered Providers to maintain properties at Decent Homes Standard and Decent Homes Plus Standard	According to Registered Provider programmes Details need to be added by each provider	Annual update required on maintenance of DHS	Progress reports	Registered Providers

Housing Strategy Delivery Plan, 2011/2015

Year 1: 2011/12

Tasks	Milestones	Due dates	How measured	Lead partner
Copeland Housing Strategy Objective Three: Enabling people to access the housing and support that they need, when they need it				
Sub-objective 3.1: Ensure the right housing provision for older people				
3.1.1 Establish Older Person's Housing Task Group	Task Group Terms of Reference (TOR) and action plan determined First meeting of Task Group held	December 2011	TOR in place and first meeting of Task Group held	Copeland Housing Partnership
3.1.2 Older People's Housing Task Group to determine how to diversify the range of housing options available to older people	Older Person's Housing Task Group to report to Strategic Housing Panel	March 2012	Housing options for older people are increased	Copeland Older People's Housing Task Group
Sub-objective 3.2: Continue to prevent and deal effectively with homelessness				
3.2.1 Produce information on rent deposits via leaflets and Copeland Borough Council website	Publish information and provide rent deposits for people who have been assessed as homeless or potentially homeless	March 2012	Number of homelessness preventions successfully made through the provision of rent deposits	Copeland Borough Council, where possible using information from other housing partners and with all partner's assistance in distributing
3.2.2 Take action against landlords who let properties that contain Category 1 Hazards	Action taken where properties with Category 1 Hazards have been identified	March 2012	Number of homelessness preventions made through removal of Category 1 Hazards/ Number of dwellings where Category 1 Hazards removed	Copeland Borough Council
3.2.3 Raise awareness of prevention services with third sector organisations – training for CAB etc, information leaflets, website	Training completed with third sector partners Information available via website and leaflets	March 2012	Third sector partners identify opportunities for making customers aware of prevention services and are able to advise on these	Copeland Housing Partnership
3.2.4 All partners to be involved in	Partners to meet to investigate	March 2012	Framework for the use of the	Copeland Housing Partnership

Housing Strategy Delivery Plan, 2011/2015

Year 1: 2011/12

Tasks	Milestones	Due dates	How measured	Lead partner
establishing agreed framework for the use of the increase in the discretionary housing payment from 2012, and the homelessness prevention fund, in preventing homelessness	potential uses of funding		discretionary housing payment and homelessness prevention fund in prevention homelessness	
3.2.5 Support tenants who are being/ have been illegally evicted	Continue to support tenants and proactively address causes of illegal evictions	Ongoing	Homelessness case work and outcomes to demonstrate support provided	Copeland Borough Council and Copeland Housing Partnership
3.2.6 Provide financial support to tenants with small amounts of rent arrears if they are being threatened with eviction	The number of arrears-based evictions is reduced	Ongoing	Number of arrears-based evictions prevented through use of financial support	Copeland Borough Council and Copeland Housing Partnership
Sub-objective 3.3: Respond appropriately to the opportunity of more flexible homes, tenancies and allocations				
3.3.1 Clarify partnership member roles in responding to developments in social housing reform	Registered Provider partners to report to Strategic Housing Panel	Providers to meet with Strategic Housing Panel between July and October 2011	Number of new homes planned and completed with new Affordable Rents	Copeland Housing Partnership
3.3.2 Establish a joint partnership approach to taking forward work	Copeland Housing Partnership to report to Strategic Housing Panel		Number of re-lets converted to affordable rents and the use to which additional revenues will be put	
3.3.3 Respond as required to developments in social housing reform	Milestones will arise from reform timetable		Planned length of fixed term tenancies	
3.3.4 Review how choice based lettings is being supported during its first year of operation with any recommendations for improvements in existing support routes in line with review outcomes.	Scope local CBL support review	October 2011	Scoping document produced.	
	Undertake local review	February 2012	Local Review Plan. Recommendations paper.	To be agreed at Housing Partnership in October 2011. To be agreed at Housing Partnership in October 2011
Sub-objective 3.4: Ensure that the housing needs of vulnerable and socially excluded people are met				
3.4.1 Improve move-on housing	Agree objectives with providers	December 2011	Number of additional lettings to	Whitehaven Community Trust

Housing Strategy Delivery Plan, 2011/2015

Year 1: 2011/12

Tasks	Milestones	Due dates	How measured	Lead partner
opportunities for young people	WCT to detail 11/12 actions here		enable young people to move on from supported housing	
3.4.2 Progress the Whitehaven Foyer Project	Impact / Howgill to detail 11/12 milestones	?	?	Howgill Family Centre and Impact Housing Association Partnership
3.4.3 Establish task group to determine accommodation needs of the Gypsy and Traveller Community and work to establish needs	Task Group established Research methodology agreed Research and consultation carried out and needs report produced	Work with Home Space Sustainable Accommodation to determine timescales	Evidence produced on needs of communities	Accommodation Strategy Group
3.4.4 Maintain and improve where possible time taken to approve Disabled Facilities Grants	Quarterly reporting of times taken to approve Disabled Facilities Grants	Reports to Copeland Borough Council Executive Committee for the quarters ending 30/09/2011, 31/12/2011 and 31/03/2012	Average time expressed in weeks taken to approve Disabled Facilities Grants (target for 2011/12 is 14 weeks)	Housing Renewal Manager
3.4.5 Influence early discussions on borough Design Guide to ensure that new homes are built to Lifetime Homes Standards, meet higher standards for accessibility and carbon management	Input to development of Design Guide according to development timeframe	Awareness of need for standards raised through early discussions on Design Guide as these take place throughout	First preparations for Design Guide reflect aspirations for new build to meet Lifetime Homes Standard, higher accessibility standards and carbon management standards	Copeland Borough Council

Housing Strategy Delivery Plan, 2011/2015

Year 1: 2011/12

Tasks	Milestones	Due dates	How measured	Lead partner
3.4.6 Copeland Housing Partnership to produce discussion paper around welfare benefit reforms	Hold partnership event around issue in preparation for reforms taking place	2012 Publication of Design Guide expected 2013	Partnership event held and discussion paper produced	Copeland Housing Partnership
Copeland Housing Strategy Objective Four: An integrated Delivery Approach				
Sub Objective 4.1: Working with Partners				
4.1.1 Establish regular meetings of the Copeland Housing Partnership with wider sustainable community partners invited.	Quarterly meetings scheduled	October 2011 January 2012	Meetings attendance Actions delivered from meetings	Copeland Borough Council
4.1.2 Cumbria Housing Partnership working	Attendance and participation at Cumbria Housing Executive Others??		Represent Copeland and District issues within Minutes and Actions agreed.	Copeland Borough Council
4.1.3 Preparing Action Plan Yrs 2 - 4	Draft Action Plan through Copeland Housing Partnership Consultation Strategic Housing Panel	January 2012 Feb 2012 March 2012	Partners draft produced Participation levels and feedback from consultation Agreed future action plan	Copeland Borough Council
Sub Objective 4.2: Monitoring and Reporting				
4.2.1 Quarterly reporting on the Strategy Action Plan to the Copeland Borough Council Strategic Housing Panel and Copeland Housing Partnership.	Quarterly reports	October 2011 January 2012	Performance management via Red-Amber-Green on actions	All partners leading actions contributing with Copeland Borough Council co-ordinating the report

Housing Strategy Delivery Plan, 2011/2015

Year 1: 2011/12

Tasks	Milestones	Due dates	How measured	Lead partner
Sub Objective 4.3: Localities and Copeland Partnership				
4.3.1 Report to Copeland Partnership at least once a year on the progress of the Strategy and Action Plan and gather feedback on future priorities.	Information to one Copeland Partnership meeting.	Nov 2011	Feedback received and influence on future action plan priorities.	Copeland Borough Council
4.3.2 Attend localities and Locality Together meetings as requested to discuss housing strategy and action plan.			Respond to requests.	Any partner leading specific actions.