

Housing Strategy: Year 1 Delivery Plan, 2011/12

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Councillor Clements
LEAD OFFICER: Julie Betteridge
REPORT AUTHOR: Laurie Priebe/Kate Skillicorn

Summary and Recommendation:

On 23 June 2011 Full Council adopted the Copeland Housing Strategy, 2011 – 2015. Production of future annual Delivery Plans was part of the Council's approval.

The Panel are requested to note the consultation process leading to the Year 1 Delivery Plan, attached as Appendix A. Members' comments are invited and they are requested to approve the resultant document.

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Housing Strategy is to be reviewed annually in light of the government's present and proposed changes to affordable housing that will unfold over the next few years. We are now in a political and economic environment that is changing so rapidly that it would be naïve to publish a single Delivery Plan for the next 4 years.
- 1.2 We shall therefore produce annual Delivery Plans beginning with 2011/12, attached as Appendix A.

2 CONSULTATION

- 2.1 The first consultation was held on 24 January 2011 to which 32 stakeholding organisations were invited and a total of 28 people attended. The development of housing strategies is a process in which consultation and interaction rarely cease even while actions to give effect to the strategy are being taken.
- 2.2 The latest consultation was over the attached Delivery Plan and 10 organisations were invited to comment on the draft by the week ending 5 August 2011. 7 responded. A list of respondents and a summary of their views is captured in paragraphs 3.1 to 3.7 below.

3 IMPACT ON DELIVERY PLAN

- 3.1 **Regen North East Copeland's** emphasis on improving existing stock supports actions 2.1.1 to 2.2.1 so no amendment was necessary. Their reference to "smaller first time buyer property" begs the question, what are these properties and where are they. This is something that can be examined in light of the stock condition survey referred to in 2.2.1 and considered in the Year 2 Plan, 2012/13. There are no rural affordable housing developments for completion in Year 1 but one has been bid for and rural needs can be addressed in subsequent years.
- 3.2 **Impact Housing Association's** emphasis on realism is very good advice but, in the example they gave, it is realistic to predict 63 completions of affordable homes in 2011/12 (with some slippage on handovers into April/May 2012). This is because they have been funded from the last allocations of the Homes & Communities Agency's (HCAs) 2008/11 programme. This had a higher grant funding rate than the new programme, 2011/15. It would be unrealistic to expect anywhere near this number of completions in any of Years 2, 3 or 4 of our strategy to 2015, which our future plans will show. Impact Housing Association provided the text for action 3.4.2
- 3.3 **Cumbria Rural Housing Trust (CRHT)** suggested that we define what we mean by "housing partners " and "partnership" but we feel it is sufficient to say that partners are those organisations with whom we work to achieve shared objectives and partnership is the process by which this is done. CRHT also ask us to define "community." We feel this simply refers to interacting people often living in geographical proximity with some common values and an element of social cohesion.
- 3.4 CRHT refer to substantial detail implied in the Delivery Plan and ask for explanation. We feel that the plan itself should not contain such detail or it would become a lengthy manual. The detail to which they refer is best addressed in the work we do and they will be invited to participate, which will add value. An indicative list of current and potential partners is in Appendix B but this does not prevent others from joining.
- 3.5 **The Copeland Disability Forum** was especially pleased to see the inclusion of actions 3.4.3 and 3.4.5 and it clearly will be helpful to invite their participation in these and other actions. **Whitehaven Community Trust** reported progress on action 3.4.1, which has now been written into the text on that item. We may be able to help them bid for renovation

funding for the property they have purchased and they should be congratulated for their progress to date.

3.6 **The Lake District National Park Authority** made suggestions that have been written into actions 1.1.1 and 1.2.1. They made other suggestions which we feel are not specific to Year 1 but should be considered in the annual review of the whole Housing Strategy Document, which will come next year.

3.7 The Council's Sustainability Officer contributed the text in actions 2.1.1, 2.1.2 and 2.1.3. to which the **Project Development Officer of Cumbria Warm Homes** concurred.

4 FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING SOURCES OF FINANCE)

4.1 There are no actions arising from this report that cannot be done within existing resources.

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 the identified housing needs of Copeland are acknowledged within 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 & invite LDNPA to participate in any in their planning area	Identify housing needs, supply and development or renewal opportunities in each of the 6 localities	March 2012	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			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

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. Completed	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 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 November to identify training needs of landlords First training session for landlords	November 2011 March 2012	Number of homeless preventions achieved by access to and securing private rented homes.	Copeland Borough Council Private landlords

Year 1: 2011/12

Tasks	Milestones	Due dates	How measured	Lead partner
1.4.2 Raising awareness of rent deposits via landlords forum	Session on rent deposits with landlords	April 2012	By landlords knowledge & understanding	Copeland Borough Council
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	Information published	Copeland Borough Council
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. Link with ill-health preventative agenda in government report, "Healthy Lives, Healthy People" (published July 2011).	Cumbria Warm Homes Project initial planning stage identify (target areas, mapping and communications).	Launch October 2011. Project to be completed by Dec 2012	Number and type of installed energy efficiency measures, improved SAP rating, carbon savings	Cumbria Warm Homes Project (All local authorities), EON and Mark Group.
2.1.2 Reduce fuel poverty. Link with "Healthy Lives, Healthy People" report as above	Identify key partners and agree a programme for a "Keep Warm, Keep Well" winter campaign. Warm Homes Project will also reduce fuel poverty	October 2011 Start in July 2011 and complete by July 2013	Uptake of advice on energy efficiency and fuel switching through key partners Number of installed measures (external and internal insulation) in 'hard to treat' properties, carbon savings.	Copeland Borough Council, CAB and Age UK West Cumbria Cumbria Housing Partners, Registered providers (Home Group)
2.1.3 Improve energy efficiency of social housing stock	Delivery of ERDF funded Cumbria Cohesion Retrofit Programme Community Energy Savings Programme (CESP) project bid.	Agree project bid by September 2011	Number of installed measures, carbon savings.	British Gas and Registered Providers

Year 1: 2011/12

Tasks	Milestones	Due dates	How measured	Lead partner
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(completed)	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
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	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

Year 1: 2011/12

Tasks	Milestones	Due dates	How measured	Lead partner
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 report on progress towards achieving 100% Decent Homes compliance. Their regulator has given them an extension to 2013. (reported to Strategic Housing Panel in February 2011 and Home Group are on target to date).	Home Housing Group outcomes 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/or Decent Homes Plus Standard	Registered Providers
2.4.2 Registered Providers to maintain properties at Decent Homes Standard and/or Decent Homes Plus Standard	According to Registered Provider programmes	Annual update required on maintenance of DHS March 2012	Progress reports	Registered Providers
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				

Year 1: 2011/12

Tasks	Milestones	Due dates	How measured	Lead partner
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 establishing agreed framework for the use of the increase in the discretionary housing payment from 2012, and the homelessness prevention fund, in preventing homelessness	Partners to meet to investigate potential uses of funding	March 2012	Framework for the use of the discretionary housing payment and homelessness prevention fund in prevention homelessness	Copeland Housing Partnership
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

Year 1: 2011/12

Tasks	Milestones	Due dates	How measured	Lead partner
Sub-objective 3.3: Respond appropriately to the opportunity of more flexible homes, tenancies and allocations (in the Localism Bill)				
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.	To be agreed at Cumbria Choice Project Board in October 2011.
	Undertake local review	February 2012	Local Review Plan. Recommendations paper.	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 opportunities for young people through the development of additional trainer flats in Whitehaven town centre by Whitehaven Community Trust	Agree objectives with providers	December 2011	Number of additional lettings to enable young people to move on from supported housing	Whitehaven Community Trust
	Identify funding for and begin work required to renovate purchased building for move-on flats	January 2012		
	Renovations complete and first young people housed at scheme	July 2012		
3.4.2 Progress the Whitehaven Foyer Project	Impact HA and Howgill Centre to establish outline capital funding strategy.	November 2011	Funding strategy in place with target date for capital acquisition	Howgill Family Centre and Impact Housing Association Partnership

Year 1: 2011/12

Tasks	Milestones	Due dates	How measured	Lead partner
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	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. Link DFGs with preventative agenda in the government report, "Healthy Lives, Healthy People (published July 2011).	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 from date referral received (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 2012 Publication of Design Guide March 2012.	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

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	Welfare Benefit reforms expected by 2013	Partnership event held and discussion paper produced	Copeland Housing Partnership To be determined
3.4.7 Determine approaches to addressing child poverty with partner agencies	Engage with partners	March 2012	By initiatives undertaken and by monitoring outcomes	To be determined
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	All Cumbria Executive meetings attended in 2011/12	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	February 2012	Partners draft produced	Copeland Borough Council
	Strategic Housing Panel	February/March 2012	Participation levels and feedback from consultation	
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

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. 4.3.2 Attend localities and Locality Together meetings as requested to discuss housing strategy and action plan.	Information to one Copeland Partnership meeting.	Nov 2011	Feedback received and influence on future action plan priorities. Respond to requests.	Copeland Borough Council Any partner leading specific actions.