Joint report of the Head of Strategic Regeneration, Housing and Development and Service Director Neighbourhood and Environment

Decision to be Taken After: 22 July 2009

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

HOUSING AND STRATEGIC PLANNING CABINET MEMBER

HOUSING STRATEGY ACTION PLAN UPDATE 2008/09

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

To update the Cabinet Member on progress during 2008/09 towards achieving the priorities of the North and North East Lincolnshire Joint Housing Strategy 2007 – 2010.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 The North and North East Lincolnshire Joint Housing Strategy was adopted in April 2007 and was deemed to be 'Fit for Purpose' in an assessment carried out by Government Office.

2.2 The strategy outlines priorities for housing in the area between the years 2007 – 2010 across all tenures and for all client groups. The strategy has four key inter-related priorities:

- Creating quality homes;
- Securing affordability and choice;
- Reaching out to everyone in housing need; and,
- Creating safe and strong communities.

2.3 Although the strategy has been written in partnership with North East Lincolnshire Council, each council has an individual action plan to guide and monitor delivery of the priorities.

2.4 The action plan is updated on a quarterly basis and progress is reported to the North Lincolnshire Housing Investment Board.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

3.2 Key areas of achievement include:

- Several research and information documents were produced to provide evidence to support affordable housing: Strategic Housing Market Assessment update 2008; Guide to Affordable Housing in North Lincolnshire; North Lincolnshire Local Housing Market Report; three rural housing surveys; and, a Financial Viability Assessment.

- NI 155 target of 70 affordable homes achieved. 33 homes were secured through the planning system and 37 were completed with funding from the National Affordable Housing Programme. 16 of the 37 homes were completed on NLC land and 26 were built on rural exception sites.
- 39 affordable rural homes were delivered in total and six of these contained assisted technology to increase independent living.
- The Build Your Future (BYF) project resulted in 6 affordable homes for young people and work started on site in Brigg and Barton for a further 10 units. A bid was submitted for teenage parent scheme as part of next stage of the BYF project.
- The Keylincs scheme was developed and assisted 20 young people with furnished, supported accommodation.
- Design and Access Statements are now required for all residential planning applications for outline and full planning permission except for changes of use.
- Target for referrals to Warm Front was 600 for the year and 1,183 referrals were achieved.
- Contracts were secured for continuation of the handyman scheme and 2152 handyman jobs were completed.
- The North Lincolnshire Housing Investment Board was established and quarterly meetings were held throughout 08/09.
- Debt and Housing Advice Network set up co-ordinating the work of debt and other advice agencies in the area in response to the recession.
- 703 households prevented from becoming homeless in 08/09. This is 378 more households than in 07/08.
- The revised target for number of households accepted as homeless was 162, final figure for 08/09 was 137.
- Ashby Meadows Extra Care Housing Scheme well underway, due for completion August 2009, being constructed on land leased to the Housing Association by the council.
- Some 2390 North Lincs Homes were made decent in 08/09, making 67.5% of NLH stock classed as meeting the Decent Homes standard.
- Some 453 households were able to access the private rented sector due to the council's Bond scheme.
- Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment completed and findings accepted. Two potential sites chosen. Successfully secured bid for Gypsy and Traveller grant for Manifold Road and project underway.
- Housing related support service for Black and Minority Ethnic communities established provided by York Housing Association.
- Acorns Neighbourhood Management scheme fully established and many actions have taken place to aid the regeneration of the area.

3.3 There were some areas where progress towards the targets was made but the target was not achieved. This included:

- Work on the Local Development Framework (LDF). The timetable for adoption put back to early 2011 due to new planning legislation.
- NI 154, Net additional homes provided. Target was 500 and 337 completed. NI 159, supply of ready to develop housing sites. Target was 130 and the estimated result is 105.
- Manor Gardens, Crowle was assessed as not 'fit for purpose' and 16 flats demolished. Planning application submitted by North Lincs Homes to erect 16 apartments and four bungalows.
- Information on the council's website on the housing pages has been reviewed and out of date information removed, but further updating required. Plans to go live with updated information Summer 2009.
- 11 properties were made available for shared ownership. Intermediate housing options have become very difficult due to lending restrictions currently in place.
- Choice Based Lettings (CBL) partnership board established, Project Manager in post and detailed Project Plan agreed. Common Allocation policy consultation due to start August 09. Phased implementation to start 2010.
- Work in progress to bring two empty properties back into use as temporary accommodation for homeless families. Agreement reached for eight single people to be accommodated in two further houses as an alternative to Bed and Breakfast and negotiations underway for 11 houses for family accommodation.
- Learning Disability Housing Co-ordinator appointed. Property secured in Scunthorpe for person with a learning disability.
- Participated in Humber Improvement Partnership Study into migrant workers. Further work required.
- Baseline data gathered via the prescribed postal survey for NI 187 – Tackling fuel poverty - people receiving income based benefits living in homes with a low energy efficiency rating - 11% have a SAP rating of less than 35.
- 14 properties purchased in 08/09 as part of Advance Crosby project and event held to raise the profile of Memorial Gardens.
- Work on delivery plan for Westcliffe Precinct underway and partners involved.
- Against a target of 10% of total warm front grants to be given to private renting tenants, some 5.87% was achieved.
- The Prevention of Homelessness Strategy and action plan produced. Monitoring of the action plan needs to be programme in and a Homelessness Forum established.
- Private sector house condition survey commissioned with a 30% saving on the previous survey. Fieldwork completed during the autumn.
- Progress taken place on the scheme for people fleeing domestic violence and a support provider is in place.

3.4 There were also some areas of the action plan where no or very little progress was made. These included:

- The use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation was not reduced in 08/09 due to the lack of alternative temporary accommodation.
- Initial Place of Change bid was unsuccessful but place secured on list in case of slippage. Further work required.
- Developing rehabilitative short-term accommodation for people with physical disabilities. Looking now to integrate this accommodation onto larger general needs schemes.
- No private landlords joined the North Lincolnshire Private Landlord's Accreditation scheme in 08/09. This will be addressed as part of Private Sector Strategy development.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

4.1 The Joint Housing Strategy was produced to run between 2007-2010. In order to respond to the increased regional and sub-regional focus, work is well underway with partners in the sub-region to produce a Humber Housing Strategy. It is envisaged this will be completed by February 2010. A local action plan will be produced for North Lincolnshire to accompany the sub-regional strategy.

4.2 The establishment of the North Lincolnshire Housing Investment Board provides a robust monitoring body for the action plan. The areas of work in which little or no progress has been made have been looked at and plans are in the place for these to be addressed.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

5.1 The Housing Strategy Action Plan outlines the resources required to deliver each individual priority and objective. This was agreed at the time the strategy was assessed by Government Office. The Housing Investment Board has responsibility for approving projects for funding from the regional Housing Board, the Homes and Communities Agency and other sources as well as switching resources between years and project as necessary. Through the process of updating the action plan and reporting to the Housing Investment Board, the priorities in the action plan are monitored to ensure they remain deliverable.

5.2 The council took part in a Value for Money Assessment with four other Local Authorities in July 2008. This was conducted by the Housing Quality Network and covered five strategic housing functions. The assessment highlighted areas where the council is not as efficient compared to others and action plans are being developed to address these areas.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 - CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)

6.1 North Lincolnshire Council has a statutory duty to prepare, monitor and deliver a Housing Strategy.

6.2 The successful delivery of the Joint Housing Strategy will enhance the environment of North Lincolnshire, improve the life chances of local people and assist in the reduction of crime and anti-social behaviour.

6.3 The outcomes of the Housing Strategy contribute either directly or indirectly to the National Indicator set, and several of the National Indicators are monitored through the Housing Strategy.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION

7.1 Involvement of stakeholders, partners and consultation is a key element of many of the individual actions, particularly around the housing-led regeneration activities, and the various housing schemes.

During the development of the strategy two consultation events were held, and as a result of the consultation the four themes of the strategy emerged.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 That the Cabinet Member notes the content of the report and receives annual updates on progress in achieving the outcomes of the strategy.

8.2 That the Cabinet Member receives update reports on how the sub-regional housing strategy and local action plan are progressing.

HEAD OF STRATEGIC REGENERATION, HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT AND SERVICE DIRECTOR NEIGHBOURHOOD AND ENVIRONMENT

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report
Housing and Strategic Planning Cabinet Member report, 9 September 2008
North and North East Lincolnshire Joint Housing Strategy
Value for Money Benchmarking Assessment 2008/09