

**Please note that these minutes are draft, subject to confirmation at the next meeting**

## **Housing Sub-Committee**

**26 September 2016**

Present: Councillor S Cox (Chair)  
Councillors A Arkle, K Bolger, L Darke, D  
Drummond, John Hunter, P Mason, A  
Newman, M Rankin and M Thirlaway

### **HO14/09/16 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Madden.

### **HO15/09/16 Substitute Members**

There were no substitute members appointed.

### **HO16/09/16 Declarations of Interest**

Cllr K Bolger declared a registerable personal interest in relation to Minute HO18/09/16 Housing Strategy 2016-21, as she worked frontline for partner ENGIE serving customers on housing related issues.

### **HO17/09/16 Minutes**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2016 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

### **HO18/09/16 Housing Strategy 2016-21**

The sub-committee received a report and presentation in relation to the draft Housing Strategy 2016-21. The Strategy was due to go to Cabinet in December 2016 and Members were invited to make comments as part of the consultation process.

The Housing Act 1985 established that all local authorities had a duty to periodically assess housing needs and the housing conditions of the area, formulating plans to address any identified issues. The Housing Strategy 2016-21: 'A Great Place to Live' sought to fulfil this duty and establish the Authority's vision and ambitions for housing in the Borough over the next five years. An action plan had been developed alongside the proposed Strategy to enable the Authority to deliver its objectives for housing, including major development projects and programmes, over the lifetime of the strategy.

Members were informed that development of the proposed Housing Strategy had commenced with a review of existing housing legislation and policy. A review of various documents that formed a robust evidence base of local housing need was also undertaken. This initial process had highlighted three prominent themes that formed objectives for the emerging strategy: 1) Providing well managed and well maintained places to live; 2) Increasing housing supply and housing choice to meet housing need across all tenures; and 3) Promoting independent living for vulnerable people.

The themes that had been identified were used as the basis for consultation with a range of stakeholders including partners, residents, Registered Providers, developers, Council officers and Elected Members. During this consultation a fourth theme was identified: Reduce the impact of poor housing on health and wellbeing. The themes had led to the creation of four distinctive objectives that reflected the wider ambitions of the Council: 1) More and Better Homes; 2) Great Places to Live; 3) Better Housing, Better Health and Wellbeing and 4) Better Housing, More Independence.

In relation to the objective 'More and Better Homes', Members were informed that this would seek to ensure that the authority supported and enabled the sustainable development of new homes and the improvement of existing housing stock to meet the assessed housing need. The objective also sought to develop the links between the proposed Housing Strategy and the emerging Local Plan, in particular the development of the key strategic sites of Killingworth Moor and Murton Gap and the role that the authority will play in steering those developments. Members discussed the process of developing derelict properties and converting empty shops in to residential flats. It was noted that any identified building would go through an options appraisal process and the best possible outcome for that building would be pursued.

With reference to the 'A Great Place to Live' objective, it was noted that this explores the need to review the provision of housing services to ensure that they continue to be modern, sustainable and efficient. The draft Strategy set out how the authority will seek to improve its online service offer to ensure that its customers can, where possible, help themselves.

The objective 'Better Housing, Better Health and Wellbeing' focused on enhancing the links between health and housing to improve residents' health and wellbeing. This would recognise the potential savings generated by preventing, reducing or delaying any resident care needs. The objective also established the aspiration to efficiently use resources to tackle poor housing environments which can cause or contribute to poor health. This would be addressed through proactive engagement with communities and through initiatives with partners from across the public, private and voluntary sectors based upon prevention and early intervention. It was noted that the objective also included the development of a Fuel Poverty Plan and initiatives to reduce fuel poverty in North Tyneside. Members discussed solar panel schemes and heat networks as potential ways of reducing fuel bills for residents.

In relation to 'Better Housing, More Independence' it was recognised that vulnerable people face inequalities in society and that the authority has a duty to support them, with housing playing a role in meeting this duty. The objective would explore the ways in which the Authority can support the development of established specialist housing models, as well as exploring new models for housing and care. The proposed Strategy would also support the delivery of the North Tyneside Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2013-18.

In order to ensure the effective delivery of all the objectives set out above, four working groups would be established. These would be comprised of Council officers and where possible, partners would be engaged to contribute to the delivery of actions. Each group would be responsible for the delivery of the actions relating to each strategic objective. The performance of each working group and the overall progress towards achieving the objectives of the strategy would be monitored by an overarching Monitoring Group. A progress report would also be presented to Cabinet and Housing Sub-committee on an annual basis. Members sought and received assurance that new leaflets would be created for customers that explain the new strategy and its associated plans.

The sub-committee was informed that the proposed Housing Strategy 2016-21 would be considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 12 December. Members were urged to contact the

relevant officers if they had any further questions or comments to make in relation to the proposed Strategy.

It was **agreed** to note the content of the proposed Housing Strategy 2016-21.

### **HO19/09/16 Five Year Housing Land Supply Position**

The Sub-committee received a report which informed of the conclusions arising from the Authority's latest assessment of its five year housing land supply (2016/17 to 2020/21). This report was in response to the sub-committee requesting a better understanding of housing supply and need, plus building rates and housing delivery.

Members of the sub-committee were made aware of the national requirements regarding housing land supply and delivery. It was noted that the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012) required local planning authorities to significantly boost the supply of new housing. The primary mechanism to meet this requirement fell to the Local Plan, which sets the long term housing requirement and allocates sufficient land accordingly.

National policy had long required authorities to prepare and update Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments (SHLAA). These technical studies look over a rolling fifteen year period and assess:

- What land has potential for housing development when considered against a range of criteria and restraints;
- The potential capacity for new homes on each site; and
- The potential timeframes for when a site is likely to start and the number of homes likely to be delivered annually.

It was noted that the NPPF required authorities to ensure a rolling supply of specific deliverable sites that are sufficient to provide five years worth of housing. The Five Year Housing Land Supply Assessment should be prepared annually. The NPPF required these assessments include an additional 5% buffer to ensure choice and competition in the market for land. Authorities who persistently under-deliver must identify a 20% buffer. Members were informed that failure to demonstrate a five-year supply means that the relevant housing policies within an adopted plan should not then be considered up-to-date when determining planning applications for new housing.

The sub-committee was informed that the Authority had developed robust mechanisms to plan for, monitor and respond to the delivery of new homes for the Borough. The Local Plan was at a highly advanced stage and would provide a long term strategy for the supply of new homes to 2032. However, in the short term, the Authority was unable to demonstrate that it had a five year housing land supply. It was highlighted that the Borough was a marketable area for new house building and there had been an upward trend in the delivery of new homes over the recent years. This rise was mirrored in the Borough's five year housing land supply, rising from 3.06 (2014/15) to 3.40 (2015/16) to 4.32 in 2016/17. It was anticipated that North Tyneside would have a stronger five year land supply by 2020/21, as a number of the larger Local Plan allocations would have come on stream.

The report explained that the North Tyneside Local Plan was submitted for Examination in June 2016. The Examination was scheduled to commence in October with adoption anticipated in Spring 2017. It proposed some 17,388 new homes between 2011/12 and 2031/32 (equating to an annual average rate of 823 homes) and allocates a range of sites to meet this requirement.

The North Tyneside SHLAA 2016/17 provided a comprehensive review of the potential housing land supply across the Borough. Having assessed over 470 sites, it concluded the Borough had a total site-specific potential capacity for some 18,452 homes. These would be supplemented by additional, currently unidentified, delivery from small sites and windfall. It was noted that the potential long term capacity for homes that could be delivered on brownfield land is 5,416 (29%). However, whilst there are a number of larger brownfield sites, it was highlighted that the SHLAA considers theoretical capacity.

The sub-committee was made aware of new and emerging initiatives to deliver more homes nationally. The report also detailed how North Tyneside Council would maintain housing delivery rates. It was explained that the delivery of new homes was a partnership between authorities and the house building industry. Whilst authorities have their part to play in quickly discharging their own planning functions the house building industry must then ultimately build the homes. The speed at which house builders can start on site from the granting of a permission and their capacity to deliver new homes will vary, some can be on site relatively quickly whilst other sites may not come on stream for up to two years. The availability of resources and labour, as well as how many sites developers were working on simultaneously would impact on the delivery rate. Members stressed frustration at the perceived slow rate at which some developments were built. It was highlighted that 50/60 houses on one site per year was an average number, with this being the delivery rate even at the peak of the housing market.

It was noted that a range of measures will be in place to monitor the delivery of the Local Plan and allow the authority to respond accordingly. These included undertaking quarterly monitoring of planning permissions granted alongside the actual on-site progress of all sites delivering more than 5 homes and having all Local Plan policies supported by a comprehensive 'Implementation and Monitoring Framework' that sets out the specific indicators that will be monitored to measure the effectiveness of each policy.

The North Tyneside Housing Implementation Strategy 2016 considers the risks to the delivery of the sites in the Local Plan and sets out a range of contingency processes and measures that could be introduced should monitoring reveal that sites are not being delivered as anticipated. These measures included reviewing the Authority's development management procedures, for instance the way in which residential planning applications are processed and prioritised and pursuing opportunities for additional funding or grant to deliver new homes, or assisting partners in identifying options that could help speed up site delivery. It was noted that where there were severe shortfalls and existing measures had not delivered the necessary outcomes, the Authority could then consider the need to undertake a full or partial review of the Local Plan to release additional land.

It was **agreed** to note the five year housing land supply 2016/17 report.

### **HO20/09/16 Cabinet Response to Future Constructions Options**

The sub-committee received a report which informed Members of Cabinet's response to the recommendations received as part of the Future Construction Options Sub-group report.

At its meeting on 11 July 2016, Cabinet received the report of the Future Construction Options Sub-group. This group had been established by Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee to consider the long term construction requirements of North Tyneside Council and what delivery options should be considered post 2019, as well as those issues which would be important for Cabinet to consider when it weighted those options.

A further report was submitted to Cabinet at its meeting on 12 September 2016, which contained a response to the recommendations of the sub-group (which were accepted) and the future actions proposed. The report had been included in the agenda as Appendix A. At a meeting of scrutiny chairs and deputies in July 2016, it was highlighted that Housing Sub-committee should be kept informed of the response to the recommendations of the Future Construction Options Sub-group and monitor future developments in this area.

It was **agreed** to note the contents of the report.