

Statement by the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning

24 July 2012

New Affordable Homes

New affordable homes have been delivered in the last 3 months at Quaker Lane, Northallerton with Broadacres and at Swainby with Endeavour. The Quaker Lane homes also delivered improvements to the highway junction in the town. The Swainby scheme has all been let to local people in housing need, and was a result of a collaboration between the council – who purchased the site using S106 monies from a nearby development – Endeavour Housing Association and the Homes and Communities Agency. Another rural exception site at Osmotherley got underway recently, and the Council agreed to grant planning permission for more affordable homes at Scruton, Work is ongoing to promote affordable housing schemes at Linton on Ouse and Hackforth, We continue to work closely with developers and Housing Associations to deliver much needed affordable homes on market sites too, it has recently been confirmed that Broadacres will deliver the affordable homes at Dalton with Shepherd Homes. We are building a portfolio for the delivery of new affordable units on sites across Hambleton, as work continues to promote the sites allocated in the Council's Local Development Framework.

Homelessness

Homelessness continues to increase, with applications for homelessness assistance increasing by 23% last year. As the impacts of the recession continue to be felt across Hambleton we are dealing with and preparing for the impact of welfare reform on some of Communities. The introduction of Universal Credit last year is predicted to increase the levels of applications for Council help and advice, and agencies are gearing up independently for the first time. Social landlords across the District are preparing for the introduction of a "bedroom tax" which will see Housing benefit payments restricted to the number of rooms a household needs, regardless of the size of the home currently occupied. There is a potential mismatch between the size of property needed by people and the supply of accommodation meaning that policies about the allocation of affordable homes need to be reviewed in light of this, and other reforms introduced by the Government. Work is underway to plan for this, and this will be the subject of further reports to this Council.

Rural Housing Week

The first week in October this year is to be North Yorkshire Rural Housing Week. A range of events and meetings are planned to promote the work of enablers across the County, and highlight the importance of rural affordable housing delivery including an event in Osmotherley on the Friday to close the week. More information about the tours and events will be circulated soon.

Shared Services

A prioritised list for the review of all shared services has been produced. This list was considered by Cabinet on the 12 June 2012. Planning Policy and Development Management have been placed in the first category meaning it will be reviewed and repatriated by September 2012.

A new Planning Manager focused on managing the Planning Service to provide greater management support and leadership for the Service.

Bringing Development Management and Planning Policy under a single manager to strengthen the links between Planning Policy and implementation.

Communications

Measures have been introduced to improve communications with Ward Members on planning matters by informing them of pre application discussions on proposals which are likely to be of particular local interest.

The purpose of this is to ensure that Members are well informed about proposals in their Wards. This is **NOT** intended as consultation, it is merely for **INFORMATION** and this point needs to be got across to Members.

Refuse Vehicles

Cabinet agreed in June 2012 to the replacement of upto 11 refuse vehicles. It is hoped that space on these vehicles will be used to advertise and promote Hambleton.

Dog Fouling

A new pilot scheme is being tried out in parts of Thirsk and Sowerby in an attempt to deter dog owners from allowing their pets to foul the footpaths. This involves stencilling "No Fouling" on to the paths. Hopefully this will be extended throughout the District.

Councillor Mark Robson

Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning