

**Statement by the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Housing, Planning
and Waste Management**

17 September 2013

Review of LDF

The review of the LDF has commenced and in July and August 3 Member and 2 Stakeholder Workshops were held to identify which LDF Policies should be reviewed. The main changes that Members wish to see are: a relaxation of the Settlement Hierarchy, a reduction in the target percentages for affordable housing, a more balanced interpretation of sustainable development, some market housing on rural exception sites, a review of the housing phasing policies, flexibility on economic development in rural areas, more policy guidance on renewables, more support for the growth and development of businesses, guidance on the length of protection of employment allocations, and a review of the retail percentages for town centres.

The scope of the review, the programme and the resources required will be reported to Cabinet in October. This will include resources for specialist studies where evidence will be needed to support the changes. Following this, work will focus on developing options for the Policy changes and there will be further Member and Developer Workshops on this prior to consultation on the preferred options.

Housing Supply

Having regard to recent appeal decisions elsewhere, where the supply of deliverable housing sites has been an issue, it seems likely that the current District-wide, 5 year supply (about 2,080 dwellings) will not be sufficient to meet requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework, this may make the Council vulnerable to speculative housing applications and there are such proposals already at Easingwold (175 dwellings) and Great Ayton (110 dwellings).

To help counter this, proposals for the relaxation of the current LDF phasing Policy (DP11) will be reported to Cabinet in October to enable allocated sites to be released early to improve supply.

Development Management

Some actions to improve performance in Development Management have already been implemented eg separation of the service from Richmondshire (October 2012), appointment of a Planning Manager (November 2012) and more resources for enforcement (December 2012). Further improvements aimed at improving customer care, management oversight and caseload management will be implemented shortly.

Recycling

Several improvements to the recycling service have been introduced recently. The initial indications are that the enhanced paper collection introduced mid-is on target to boost paper recycling by 425 tonnes per annum. On 8 August the kerbside recycling service was extended to 440 properties at RAF Leeming, the initial participation rate is about 50%. The roll-out of 20 on-street recycling bins in the market towns is progressing and potential locations have been identified for all the bins. The new recycling/litter bins have apertures for paper/magazines, plastic bottles/cans and litter.

A plan of further improvements is being drawn-up to encourage residents to use the recycling service and to recycle more in order to improve the recycling rate and gain the maximum financial benefit from the current recycling contract. There will be a Member Workshop later in the year to get Members' views on the proposals.

Street Scene Vehicles

The Council is out to tender for 6 new Street Scene vehicles including a pick-up, medium sized street sweeper, 3 caged tippers and a van. These are expected to be in service in October. Maintenance and servicing will be tendered for separately and will be designed to give local businesses the opportunity to tender.

Travellers Sites

Further investigations are being undertaken of the options for Travellers and Showperson sites presented to Cabinet in July to meet the assessed need. These cover issues such as drainage and flooding, service provision and waste management, impact on local schools, impact on highways, impact on the local settled community and meeting local needs.

Meetings with site owners and agents are taking place specifically on the issues raised by Members and on their willingness to co-operate on meeting the District need for additional pitches.

Housing Studies

An analysis of older persons housing needs and a review of the size and tenure of new homes required over the short and medium term are being undertaken. Both are scheduled to be completed by the end of November and both pieces of work will contribute to the Local Plan review.

Building Control Partnership

The Business Plan that has been put in place at the Partnership is starting to show signs of paying off. Both months of June and July have shown surpluses in the Trading Account. Hopefully this also shows a sign of more activity in the Building Industry.

The Partnership has recently commissioned a survey of stakeholders, the results of this show that the quality of work done by the Partnership Staff is well received. Hopefully the message can be spread further to increase the amount work coming in.

Councillor Brian Phillips

Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Housing, Planning and Waste Management