

Housing Sub Committee

Monday, 21 March 2022

Present: Councillor A Newman (Chair)
Councillors John Hunter, A Percy, M Thirlaway, J Walker,
M Green, S Phillips and Westwater

Apologies: Councillors L Darke, E Parker-Leonard, K Barrie and
J Mole

HO24/22 Appointment of Substitute Members

There were no substitute members reported.

HO25/22 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations or dispensations reported.

HO26/22 Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting on 24 January 2022 be agreed as a correct record.

HO27/22 Progress Update on the Affordable Homes Programme

The sub-committee received a report which provided details of changes to the Affordable Homes Programme and an update on the delivery of affordable homes in 2021/22 and plans for 2022/23.

By the end of 2021/22 it was expected that 1,916 affordable homes would have been delivered so far as part of the affordable homes programme, including 573 homes directly delivered by the Authority. This represented a 135% improvement on the ten years prior to the programme starting.

The Our North Tyneside Plan 2021-25, agreed by full Council in September 2021, had increased the affordable homes delivery target from 3,000 (as set in October 2013) homes to 5,000 homes and confirmed a commitment to reduce the number of derelict properties across the borough. To meet this challenge, the homes would be delivered in two phases.

Phase one would see the delivery of a further 2,000 affordable homes bringing the phase one total to 4,000 by 2032. This would include the delivery of a ten-year Housing Revenue Account (HRA) plan what would deliver around 350 new Council homes, utilising new technology to reduce carbon emissions, supporting the Authority's work in response to the climate emergency declaration.

The sub-committee was informed that Phase two of the plan would consist of several workstreams to deliver the additional 1,000 homes, including:

- Identifying potential 'windfall' opportunities for both the Authority and private developers;
- Exploring the potential of brownfield sites that could be used to provide new affordable homes;
- Increasing the number of derelict properties that are brought back as affordable homes; and
- Further increase the delivery of affordable homes through the North Tyneside Trading Company Limited

In 2021/22, 266 new affordable homes were delivered. A full breakdown of the overall delivery programme was appended to the report. The Authority, through the HRA, had built 12 new homes and converted 11 empty homes into 7 affordable homes in 2021/22.

The Authority had continued to bring back derelict and empty homes for use as affordable homes. This included targeting long-term properties and working with owners struggling to maintain their rental properties. In 2021/22, 8 long-term empty properties were returned to use as affordable homes by the Authority.

It was highlighted that the Authority continued to work closely with Registered Providers and Care Providers to identify opportunities to meet housing need in the Borough. One of the examples of this was the completion of 50 affordable homes by Riverside Housing on the site of West Chirton industrial estate, North Shields. The homes were a mix of affordable rent and intermediate affordable housing.

The largest volume of homes within Phase one of the programme would be delivered by private developers who were subject to ever changing market conditions. The decisions on when to bring forward large sites for development was not within the Authority's direct control and the affordable homes programme was heavily reliant on the strategic sites at Murton Gap and Killingworth Moor coming forward. In 2021/22 a total of 54 new homes had been delivered across North Tyneside by private developers.

It was noted that the North Tyneside Trading Company Limited, through its subsidiary company Aurora Affordable Homes, currently had plans in place to increase its asset base to 100 affordable homes in 2022/23 as part of Phase One of the Affordable Homes Programme.

It was expected that 275 affordable homes would be delivered in 2022/23. The delivery programme for 2022/23 was appended to the report.

A member asked if the Authority was ambitious in purchasing properties to add to its own stock. It was explained that the Authority was not currently actively looking to purchase property but was committed to bringing derelict properties back into action. The North Tyneside Trading Company, which is separate from the authority, was purchasing properties. It was clarified that any property bought by the Trading Company would not be subject to Right to Buy, whereas properties owned by the Authority under the HRA were subject to Right to Buy, unless the property fell into one of the exempt categories. A question was also asked in relation to how many Right to Buy completions there were each year. The officer in attendance agreed to circulate this data to sub-committee members. It was also requested for information to be circulated on the number of empty properties in the borough and how this compared with previous years.

The Chair thanked the officer for the information provided.

It was **agreed** to note the progress of the delivery of the programme to date and the anticipated delivery going forward.

HO28/22 Community Safety

The sub-committee received a report in relation to the Safer North Tyneside Partnership's progress and plans for the year ahead, following a refresh in the context of the challenges posed by the pandemic. The Housing sub-committee had been designated as the Council's crime and disorder committee since 2014.

The Safer North Tyneside Partnership served as the local community safety partnership for the borough. There was a duty on responsible authorities to work together, with other agencies, to tackle crime, disorder, substance misuse and reoffending within the community. There was an approved strategy in place, delivered using an annual work plan, informed by a strategic assessment.

Following the unique challenges brought about by the coronavirus pandemic the partnership was taking the opportunity to reflect on a significant period of disruption and change, understanding how communities had been affected, and to refresh its approach to build back better to meet challenges ahead.

Over the last few months there had been a number of matters that had emerged that the partnership had included within its thinking, including:

- A new Our North Tyneside council plan which focussed on new themes designed to address the priorities of residents and the challenges resulting from Covid-19;
- A new Police and Crime Plan which focussed on tackling crime and supporting victims;
- The introduction of a Domestic Abuse Act and the statutory duties included within it. It was noted that domestic violence was difficult to measure and was more prevalent in lockdown;
- Heightened concern about anti-social behaviour from residents and elected members which arose during the pandemic;
- Preparing for a new Serious Violence Duty set to be introduced by new legislation;
- The safety of women and girls in public places; and
- Concerns about the potentially increasing risk of radicalisation and extremism as a consequence of measures introduced to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

Partners had agreed to develop a crime reduction plan and take a public health approach. This had been adopted as a model of best practice in other parts of the country where the link between inherent socio-economic factors and crime in an area have been made and the response to that strengthened. The council, as coordinator of the partnership, was finalising a senior management restructure within part of its business. This would see the Director of Public Health take on responsibility for community safety, to add strategic capacity and build on the work already underway in establishing a new domestic abuse board.

Whilst the partnership had taken the opportunity to embark on a period of change, work

against the priorities set out within the community safety strategy had progressed within the context of the pandemic. This included:

- An approved approach to Prevent by refreshing the Channel process in line with the introduction of new Home Office guidance;
- Addressing the spike in anti-social behaviour at the coast during Covid-19 lockdowns through the council-led multi-agency Operation Coast Watch initiative;
- Steering young people away from crime using the Project Vita initiative, instrumental in tackling youth disorder; and
- A strengthened approach to tackling serious organised crime via the police led multi-agency Operation Sentinel initiative.

The sub-committee discussed the Authority's response to the prevention of terrorism. It was explained that every local authority has identified public places of risk and that audits are put in place to assess risks when large events are hosted. It was noted that, when the masterplans for various areas of the borough were developed, public space protection was factored into the planning.

A member of the sub-committee asked if Nexus were one of the partners that sat on the North Tyneside Strategic Partnership. It was noted that Nexus attended as a non-statutory partner. Members raised the issue of anti-social behaviour and suggested that Nexus be invited to a future meeting of the sub-committee to discuss this. Reference was also made to the Safer Transport Northumbria app, launched by the Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner to allow reporting of concerning attitudes and behaviours that made people feel unsafe using public transport.

The sub-committee discussed the links between Elected Members and neighbourhood policing, highlighting the need for there to be consistency and dialogue in order to build relationships and work together within the community.

The sub-committee **agreed** to note the information provided.