

Report of the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods

Report to Scrutiny Board (Housing and Regeneration)

Date: 26 March 2013

Subject: Scrutiny Inquiry – Strategic Partnership Boards

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

This report sets out the background, membership, purpose and performance of the Housing and Regeneration Board

Recommendations

Members are asked to note the report and offer comment on the issues raised.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To assist Scrutiny Board to act as a “critical friend” to the Housing and Regeneration Board, this report sets out the background, membership, purpose and performance of the Housing and Regeneration Board.
- 1.2 The report responds to the questions set by the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Board :
 - What contribution is the Board making to tackle poverty and inequality and what progress is being made against this ?
 - How successfully the Board’s partnership arrangements are working.
 - To what extent are significant benefits being seen from partnership working? How has partnership working ensured increased pace of change to address the issue in hand?

- 1.3 The report provides background information to enable Scrutiny to support the Housing and Regeneration Board to continue to develop as an effective partnership in delivering the objectives of the City Priority Plan.

2. Background information and membership

- 2.1 The development of the Housing and Regeneration Board originates from the strategic direction set by Executive Board on 15th December 2010. Following the approval of the Vision for Leeds by Council in September 2011 the board was set up and met for the first time on 15th September 2011.
- 2.2 Membership of the Board is representational of all sectors across the housing and development industry consisting of elected members, senior officers of the Council, registered housing providers, other public bodies (such as the Housing and Communities Agency) and private sector representatives. While there is a need to refresh the board from time to time there are no missing partners. The current list of members is attached list at Appendix 1
- 2.3 Representatives from the Housing and Regeneration Board have attended the Cross-Board Coordination Group to discuss priorities and good practice. Topics which may be of interest to other Boards have been picked up at these meetings, and a presentation on the Children's Strategy (Child Friendly Leeds) was presented to the Housing and Regeneration Board as a result of this channel of communication.
- 2.4 The Terms of Reference set out the overall responsibility for the partnership approach to the agreed City Priority Plans. In the case of this Board, the TOR focuses on the development of new homes, delivering affordable options and securing the return of empty homes to productive use. The TOR for this Board is attached at appendix 2.
- 2.5 The sub structure to the Board consists of two sub Boards at present:-
- The East Leeds Regeneration Board which considers development strategy and delivery in that area.
 - The Housing Forum which acts as a network for leaders and practitioners involved in a wide range of partners focusing on housing standards and quality, affordable housing growth and housing needs.

3. Partnership Arrangements

- 3.1 Since the establishment of the Board in September 2011 all meetings have been well attended. Members have prompted informative discussion and debate covering a wide variety of housing and regeneration related topics in line with the City Priorities including planning, land supply, the housing market (including affordable housing) and the issue of empty homes in housing supply. The main objectives of the partnership are to facilitate information sharing across all sectors so that investment decisions can be made in the light of current and accurate intelligence and to develop a shared view and understanding of the housing and regeneration needs of the city.
- 3.2 The collaborative working of the Board and the sharing of cross sector intelligence has enabled strategic decisions to be taken. Evidence of the effectiveness of this

achievement can be taken from the work undertaken with the 3rd sector landlords to support the empty homes agenda.

- 3.3 The Board has also collectively reviewed and revised the Housing & Regeneration City Priority Plan (CPP). The plan sets out shared targets and objectives to support housing growth and proposed solutions to the priority actions. Further details on the CPP and performance monitoring are covered under point 4.
- 3.4 The Housing and Regeneration Board is a relatively new board in comparison to the other City Priority Boards. At this stage, the majority of the actions within the CPP tend to be expressed as Council responsibilities and assigned to officers. It is anticipated that through the annual review of the CPP by Board (spring 2013) that the plan will become more representative of the different sectors and new actions will be put forward by Board members. Responsibility for delivering these actions will therefore then be adopted by the relevant partners. A key challenge for the Board is to achieve consensus on shared priorities and agree actions however a strong collaborative approach is developing.
- 3.5 One of the main benefits of partnership working is that it has provided all members with an insight into the priorities and needs of the private, public and third sectors. It is crucial that all partners are aware of the drivers and market demands of each of the sectors in relation to housing growth when setting future targets and strategies. Being aware of the 'bigger picture' has created a cohesive and holistic environment for discussion and an understanding of the different sectors needs and priorities in supporting the delivery of the housing and regeneration City Priorities. This has been a key benefit of the Board.
- 3.6 A recent example is the presentation at the December 2012 meeting from the Leeds Building Society Representative (Private Sector Board Member) providing an overview of the lending market in relation to housing growth. The presentation addressed a number of generalisations which members may have had about the lending market and offered guidance to assist housing growth. This information sharing and knowledge exchange helps to support delivery of the city priorities.

4. Performance Management

- 4.1 The Housing and Regeneration CPP covers the following priorities:
 - Maximise regeneration investment to increase housing choice and affordability
 - Enable the growth of the City whilst minimising the impact on the environment and protecting the distinctive green character of Leeds
 - Improve housing conditions and energy efficiency
- 4.2 The original delivery plan was developed by the Regeneration Service and Housing Services Teams and guided by the Housing & Regeneration Board. The plan has since been revised in conjunction with and approved by the Housing & Regeneration Board in September 2012.
- 4.3 Performance reports are produced quarterly providing an update on how the Board is progressing towards meeting the overarching priorities of the Board. Performance information is presented to and considered by the board. Performance is a shared responsibility and each of the members of the Board are responsible for identifying

how they can contribute to maximise outcomes. The current delivery plan is attached at Appendix 3.

5. Tackling poverty and inequality

- 5.1 Three of the Board's priorities specifically relate to tackling poverty and inequality – the affordability of housing, ensuring supply meets needs and the challenge of welfare reform. Progress is measured and understood through the delivery plan and through the contribution of members based on their experience of housing provision.
- 5.2 To continue to support the issue of tackling poverty, the looks at specific issues in depth and an example is the recent presentation by the Alliance of Leeds housing associations on affordability in social housing and impact of welfare reform.

6. Corporate Considerations

6.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 6.1.1 There has been no specific consultation on this report, which presents information for discussion by the Scrutiny Board.

6.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 6.2.1 There has been no Equality Impact screening undertaken for this report, which presents information for discussion by the Scrutiny Board.

6.3 Council Policies and City Priorities

- 6.3.1 The Housing and Regeneration Board supports the delivery of the objectives within the City Priority Plans, supporting neighbourhood regeneration and housing growth.

6.4 Resources and Value for Money

- 6.4.1 There are no specific resource implications related to this report.

6.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 6.5.1 There are no specific legal implications related to this report.

6.6 Risk Management

- 6.6.1 There are no specific risks related to this report, which presents information for discussion by the Scrutiny Board.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 The Housing and Regeneration Board brings together representatives of the housing and development industry to agree priorities for the city and deliver an action plan to meet shared objectives.

8. Recommendations

9.1 Members are asked to note the report and offer comment on the issues raised.

9. Background documents¹

9.1 There are no background documents

Appendix 1 – Current list of members

Appendix 2 - Terms of Reference

Appendix 3 – City Priority Plan

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available for inspection on request for a period of four years following the date of the relevant meeting. Accordingly this list does not include documents containing exempt or confidential information, or any published works. Requests to inspect any background documents should be submitted to the report author.