

REPORT TITLE: Housing Growth Update

Meeting:	Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel
Date:	10 th March 2025
Cabinet Member (if applicable)	Cllr Graham Turner
Key Decision Eligible for Call In	Yes/No Yes/No – If no give reason
Purpose of Report To provide an update on the programme of Housing Growth work	
Recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To note the content of the report as part of the regular updates to Scrutiny Panel 	
Resource Implications: None	
Date signed off by <u>Executive Director</u> & name	Joanne Bartholomew on behalf of David Shepherd – 21/02/25
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?	Kevin Mulvaney
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning (Monitoring Officer)?	Samantha Lawton

Electoral wards affected: All

Ward councillors consulted: Not applicable

Public or private: Public

Has GDPR been considered? Yes there are no GDPR implications

1. Executive Summary

This report provides an update on the Housing Growth programme of work since the last update to Scrutiny in March 2024.

The report sets out the strategic background of central government's emphasis on housing delivery, alongside the West Yorkshire position, and sets the context of local housing need, and Council priorities.

It then goes on to update on all key areas of Housing Growth activity, and look forward to key areas of work over the next year.

2. Information required to take a decision

2.0 Strategic Context

Since coming to power in July 2024, the government has placed a significant emphasis on building new homes. It has made an overall commitment to deliver 1.5 million new homes in the next five years, supported by the reintroduction of mandatory housing targets, reform of the planning system and plans for a number of new towns.

The commitment to housing delivery is reflected at a regional level, with one of the Mayoral pledges being to build 5,000 affordable homes by 2028.

In Kirklees, the current Strategic Housing Market Assessment set out that 1,730 homes a year are needed in the district, of which 1,049 need to be affordable (note that the Strategic Housing Market Assessment is currently in the process of being updated and these figures will likely increase, but these are the existing figures). A housing waiting list of in excess of 19,000 people/families waiting for a home demonstrates the acute need for housing across Kirklees.

To respond to this need, the Housing Growth team is delivering a programme of work. The key elements of this work are as follows:

2.1 Housing Strategy

The existing Kirklees Housing Strategy covers the period 2018-2023 and requires updating. Officers in the Housing Growth Team have started the process of updating the Housing Strategy for the period 2024-2030, in consultation with colleagues from across the Council. The revised Housing Strategy will be shared with Portfolio Holders and potentially brought to Cabinet during 2025.

2.2 Strategic Sites

a) Dewsbury Riverside

Dewsbury Riverside is the largest housing allocation in the Local Plan. Over the past twelve months, significant progress has been made in working with Homes England on the overall strategic approach, including the approach to acquisitions, funding, and procurement of a master developer. Soft market testing has been undertaken with potential developers, and work has progressed to secure relevant legal agreements with key landowners.

Looking forward, for 2025/26 the focus of the project will be on securing a master developer partner and progressing the strategic property acquisitions required to deliver the scheme.

b) Bradley Park

Bradley Park is a council owned strategic housing allocation in the Local Plan and will deliver around 2,000 homes. Over the last twelve months, work has focussed on completing technical work on highways and progressing negotiations on strategic acquisitions required to support access to the site, including a number of properties.

The focus on this site is on delivering a Phase 1 of development of around 500 homes. Preparation of procurement documents to secure a partner for Phase 1 are well advanced, alongside work to prepare accompanying legal documentation. The target is to commence procurement in mid 2025, however the strategic issues relating to access need to be resolved prior to a procurement commencing, in order to provide certainty for prospective bidders.

2.3 Town Centre Living

An important part of the Blueprint Visions for both Huddersfield and Dewsbury town centres is to increase the number of people living in the town centres to increase footfall and help support and sustain other uses, such as retail and leisure.

a) Huddersfield

In 2022, Cabinet approved a Town Centre Living Plan for Huddersfield.

It has been agreed by Cabinet that proposals for residential development in Huddersfield Town Centre would focus on Council owned assets. Utilising existing buildings provides an opportunity for the Council to use its own assets to create high quality homes with excellent space standards. This will start to create a residential market that will support the wider Blueprint vision and provide an exemplar to the wider development market of the quality which can be achieved using Huddersfield's heritage assets.

Estate Buildings has been identified as a Council asset which can deliver housing and help to create a new housing offer which would appeal to a new and different market from those currently living in the town centre, such as graduates from the University wishing to remain in this area.

The Housing Growth team have been successful in securing £1.25 million of One Public Estate (OPE) Brownfield Land Release Funding. This provides grant funding for enabling works for surplus land and buildings that will ultimately deliver housing. The enabling works will start in the summer of 2025.

At the same time as progressing the enabling works, the team are progressing strategic discussions about funding for the construction work to create new homes, and will bring a report to Cabinet about proposed next steps, including a proposed delivery route, in the summer of 2025.

b) Dewsbury

In Dewsbury the focus for residential development is on the Daisy Hill area, located between the town centre and the railway station.

A number of acquisitions have been made in this area, and an overall delivery approach is being developed as part of the wider Dewsbury Long Term plan. Work to market one key property for housing development is currently underway.

2.4 Specialist Homes

The team are delivering a number of sites for specialist housing:

a) Ash View, Huddersfield

In October 2024, the development of a 50 unit Council Extra Care scheme was completed. This development provides Council homes for people with a range of care and support needs, allowing them to live independently for longer. Communal facilities encourage residents to be actively involved with the community they create at the scheme and reduce social isolation.

b) Kenmore Drive, Cleckheaton

On this site, the council is working in partnership with Housing Association Housing 21 to deliver an 80 unit Extra Care scheme, all of which will be let at an affordable rent. Work started on site in February 2024 and has progressed steadily over the course of the year, with the focus being on ground works, and works to facilitate the relocation of public rights of way. The scheme is expected to complete in Spring 2026.

c) St Paul's Road, Mirfield

On this site, the Council is working with Connect Housing to deliver 13 homes for adults with a social care need. Legal work is currently in progress to dispose of the site to Connect, with a view to them starting on site in Spring 2025.

2.5 Temporary Accommodation

As set out in 2.0 above, the Council has a significant housing waiting list, and directly linked to this is the number of individuals and families in temporary accommodation. Based on data from December 2024, there are 104 families and 80 individuals housed in bed and breakfast accommodation, alongside a further 252 in temporary accommodation waiting for a permanent home.

There is both a significant financial cost the Council and human cost to families living in temporary accommodation. The Housing Growth team is working closely colleagues in Housing Services to deliver solutions to address the need for temporary accommodation. This is a new area of work for the team, and so far work has been undertaken to analyse current provision and need for different types of temporary accommodation. Over the course of 2025/26 this will then be used develop a strategy for delivering temporary accommodation to meet these needs, and, where required, to start procurement of the appropriate accommodation.

2.6 Affordable Homes

a) RP Clusters Programme

The Council is working with Housing Association Thirteen to deliver 100% affordable homes on five sites across the district. These sites will deliver around 235 units in total, with a mix of affordable rent and shared ownership properties.

During 2024/25, a planning application was submitted for the site at Main Avenue, Cowlersley. A start on site is expected in November 2025 at Main Avenue.

In 2024, enabling works were undertaken at Highmoor Lane, Cleckheaton, using One Public Estate funding, and a planning consultation event for this site will take place in April.

b) Affordable Housing Team

In addition to direct delivery of homes, there is a specialist team within the service who provide the first point of contact for advice on affordable homes, and provide formal consultation responses on planning applications, specifically in relation to securing affordable homes through the planning section 106 process. As a direct result of the team's work, 210 affordable homes were secured through the planning process in 2023-2024 and the team continues to support delivery partners to secure further affordable housing in 2024/25.

2.7 Market and Affordable Sites

a) Soothill

This site has been supported by the Homes England Accelerated Construction Programme, and the focus is on delivering homes at pace using modern methods of construction. Overall the site will deliver 319 homes when complete, of which at least 112 will be affordable. 128 homes have been sold (privately) or transferred (to a Housing Association) on this site, and development will continue at pace during 2025/26. The overall completion date for the site is December 2026.

b) Fenay Lane

Over the course of 24/25, this site has progressed through a competitive land sale process, focussed on Strategic Partners of Homes England. An announcement about the appointed partner will be made in the near future. This site will deliver around 150 homes of mixed tenure, including market homes, discounted market sale, affordable rent and shared ownership properties. A start on site is anticipated in 2026.

c) Ash View

Whilst the team's focus has been on delivery of the Council Extra Care scheme (see 2.4) above, this site will also deliver 98 market sale, and 21 affordable homes. The overall site is due for completion in April 2025.

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Council Plan

Getting the basics right – a balanced budget and a modern organisation

As set out in section 2 above, many housing growth projects have been successful in achieving external funding – for example from Homes England, the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, and One Public Estate. Securing external funding helps to bring forward projects which might otherwise have not been deliverable, and reduces the need to call on the Council's capital plan.

In addition, delivery of housing means an increase in Council tax income for the Council.

Protecting the vulnerable and achieving inclusion

A key part of this element of the Council plan is to improve access to safe, decent, accessible accommodation. The programme of work delivered by housing growth increases housing supply, with a particular emphasis on delivering affordable homes and specialist accommodation, as well as specifically helping to deliver solutions for temporary accommodation.

Local economic growth, working with regional and national partners

Housing Growth is a key area of focus in this part of the Council plan, specifically the delivery of Dewsbury Riverside and Bradley Park. Delivering housing supports the wider economic growth of the district, both in terms of the shorter term benefits associated with construction work, and training opportunities, along with benefits to the local supply chain, and in the longer term providing infrastructure to support growth.

3.2 Financial Implications

There are no specific financial implications associated with this update on the overall housing growth programme. Financial implications on individual projects within the programme are dealt with on an individual basis and taken to Cabinet as required.

3.3 Legal Implications

There are no specific legal implications associated with this update on the overall housing growth programme. Legal implications on individual projects within the programme are dealt with on an individual basis and taken to Cabinet as required.

3.4 Climate Change and Air Quality

When developing projects and procuring partners, an emphasis is placed on achieving energy efficient homes with low running costs for occupiers and tenants.

Development in our town centres provides an opportunity to reuse existing assets, which is more carbon efficient than undertaking new build. It also provides homes in a sustainable location, close to the railway stations and the facilities of the town centre.

3.5 Other (eg Risk, Integrated Impact Assessment or Human Resources)

There are no other specific issues in relation to this update.

4. Consultation

No specific consultation has been undertaken on this update on the housing growth programme.

Consultation is undertaken on specific projects as the need arises, including formal consultation as part of the planning and development process.

5. Engagement

No specific consultation has been undertaken on this update on the housing growth programme.

Consultation is undertaken on specific projects as the need arises, including formal consultation as part of the planning and development process.

6. Options

No options have been considered in relation to this update.
Options for projects and delivery are considered on a project by project basis.

7. Next steps and timelines

Housing Growth will continue to deliver the programme of work set out in this report.
A further update will be brought to Scrutiny in twelve months time, or earlier if requested.

8. Contact officer

Liz Jefferson
liz.jefferson@kirklees.gov.uk

9. Background Papers and History of Decisions

Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel
[\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel, 25/03/2024 10:00](#)

10. Appendices

None

11. Service Director responsible

Joanne Bartholomew – Service Director - Development