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## KIRKLEES COUNCIL

### GROWTH AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY PANEL

**Monday 10th March 2025**

Present: Councillor Zarina Amin (Chair)  
Councillor Bill Armer  
Councillor Alison Munro  
Councillor Harry McCarthy

In attendance: Cllr Graham Turner, Portfolio Holder, Finance and  
Regeneration  
Joanne Bartholomew, Service Director Development  
Liz Jefferson, Acting Head of Housing Growth  
Development  
Thomas Fish, Acting Head of Housing Growth  
Development

Apologies: Councillor Aziz Daji  
Jonathan Milner (Co-Optee)  
Chris Friend (Co-Optee)

**1 Membership of the Panel**

Apologies were received from Cllr Aziz Daji, Chris Friend and Jonathan Milner.

**2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

That the minutes of the meeting held on the 20 January 2025 be approved as a correct record.

**3 Declaration of Interests**

No interests were declared.

**4 Admission of the Public**

All agenda items were considered in public.

**5 Deputations/Petitions**

No deputations or petitions were received.

**6 Public Question Time**

No public questions were asked.

**7 Housing Growth Update**

Cllr Graham Turner, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Regeneration, introduced the agenda item advising that there is positive news within this update, and it is a pleasure to see some of the more difficult sites moving forward. While with housing

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there is always more that can be done, it is in a positive place and the future is looking bright.

Thomas Fish, Acting Head of Housing Growth, informed the Panel that the purpose of today will be to update the Panel on issues presented in March 2024. The update will include the strategic context, strategic sites, town centre living, specialist homes, temporary accommodation, affordable homes, mixed market and affordable sites, key learning and looking forward. In summary the Panel was provided with the following information:

### Strategic Context

With regard to the strategic context and what feeds into this work, since coming into power, the current government has reemphasised the need to provide homes and made a commitment to deliver 1.5 million new homes in the next five years. Some changes have come through, for example, the reintroduction of mandatory housing targets, reform of the planning system and discussions around planning for new towns.

From a regional context and West Yorkshire Combined Authority, the West Yorkshire mayor has reaffirmed her commitment to deliver 5000 affordable homes by 2028, and those homes will be delivered by the five West Yorkshire authorities. In a local context, the Strategic Housing Market Assessment for Kirklees, that feeds into the current Local Plan, sets out the need for 1,700 homes every year. Over 1,000 of those homes are based on affordable housing need and that Strategic Housing Market Assessment is being updated and refreshed to feed into the new Local Plan, which will set new targets, new policies and potentially new housing sites.

The Housing Growth Service is aware and is working with Housing Service colleagues to address the 19,000 people and families who are on the housing waiting list in Kirklees. The Housing Growth Service does numerous and different activities to deliver directly and to facilitate housing growth to meet those needs across Kirklees.

### Strategic Sites

Focusing on two of the bigger sites within the remit for Housing Growth to help deliver and facilitate, Dewsbury Riverside, is the largest housing allocation in the current Local Plan. Over the last 12 months, significant progress has been made, working with Homes England. Considering the site, and the specific technical needs to deliver it and looking at a strategic approach on how to bring landowners together, and which acquisitions are needed. Whilst also engaging with the market of master developers, who are the size and scale and have the experience to put in the infrastructure to prepare large sites for housing and then engage with specific house builders for each plot.

Soft market testing has been undertaken around the master developer market and had some positive feedback which will inform the next steps which will be to go out to procure the right master developer to bring the site forward in 2025/26. Alongside that, public funding is likely to be needed because of the significant infrastructure

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costs and therefore work is undertaken with Homes England to submit a funding bid to them to support the scheme with their own funding.

The Panel was informed that in respect of Bradley Park, the council owns a significant piece of the site which is also an important strategic housing site in the Local Plan to deliver approximately 2000 homes. Over the last 12 months, work has been focusing on the technical work and the highways work and looking at progressing strategic acquisitions to unlock the site and deliver its first phase. The first phase will be brought forward for development this year, in the form of procuring a house builder for the first 500 homes on this site.

### Town Centre Living

Another area of focus is town centre living, which is an important part of both the Huddersfield and Dewsbury Blueprints and the governments agenda as well as for increasing footfall and vibrancy of town centres. The current focus in Huddersfield is on Estate Buildings which is a key heritage asset, grade two star listed, in St George's Square to use as an exemplar of high-quality residential conversion.

The Housing Growth team have been successful in the last 12 months to secure £1.25 million from the One Public Estate Brownfield Land Release Fund. The next stage for Estate Buildings is to speak to potential further funders and delivery partners to start the construction on physically converting the site for new homes within the town centre.

As part of the Dewsbury town investment plan, the Daisy Hill area is a focus for long term housing led regeneration. The previous funding from government has been used to acquire some properties with ongoing negotiations to acquire further properties. The first catalytic development, Fieldhouse is on its way to being finalised.

Liz Jefferson, Acting Head of Housing Growth, provided an update on the site where specialist homes were being developed. The Panel was informed that in the last year 50 units have been completed at Ashview in Huddersfield, which is a council extra care scheme. The scheme provides homes for people with a range of care and support needs, to allow people to live independently for longer. Similarly at Kenmore Drive, in Cleckheaton, an extra care scheme in conjunction with a housing association, Housing 21, when complete it will be an 8-unit scheme for affordable rent.

The Panel was informed that where work is being undertaken on the specialist accommodation at St Pauls Road Mirfield, this is in conjunction with the housing association, Connect, to deliver 13 homes for adults with a social care need. Legal work is ongoing to dispose of this site to Connect, with the expectation that work will start on site in spring 2025.

### Temporary Accommodation

Joanne Bartholomew, Service Director, Development, informed the Panel that in Kirklees there is a significant waiting list and directly linked to that are the numbers of individuals and families who are living in temporary accommodation, and this has both a significant financial and human cost. This is a new area of work for the

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service and work is being undertaken with Housing Services to deliver solutions to address this need.

### Key learning and challenges:

- Housing waiting list of 19,000
- Affordability
- Challenges of infill sites
- Challenges of Kirklees geography
- Partnership working – resource pressures inside and outside of the council

### Looking forward

- Focus on delivering Strategic sites at Bradley Park and Dewsbury Riverside
- Delivering housing in town centres to support the Blueprint vision
- Delivering solutions to address the number of families living in Temporary accommodation
- Supporting the delivery of a new Local Plan

In response to the information presented, the Panel asked a number of questions and made comments including some of the following: -

- How accurate is the waiting list and is it updated regularly?
- Are you able to provide clarification and an update on the site Fenay Lane and will it be going back to Cabinet?
- With regard to temporary accommodation, it was mentioned that pilot schemes had been undertaken, are you able to provide further details on these pilot schemes?
- With regard to Estate Buildings being listed has a cost analysis been undertaken to establish how much the work will cost?

### **RESOLVED:**

That the Cabinet member and officers be thanked for providing an Housing Growth update.