

District Council CPA Self-assessment Pro-Forma for Balancing Housing Markets

1. How well does the council understand its housing market and from its understanding has the council developed the right proposals to help balance its housing markets?

SUB BHM QUESTIONS	COUNCIL STATEMENT
<p>1.1 Does the council have the right research base to understand its housing market?</p>	<p>1.1In order to understand the local housing market and demand for affordable housing in the Borough, we have undertaken the following activities in recent years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Borough wide housing needs survey (and also a number of locally based surveys). The Borough wide needs survey was carried out on our behalf by independent consultants, the Northern Housing Consortium (NHC), and was completed in September 2001. • A private sector stock condition survey. This was carried out on our behalf by independent consultants, David Adamsons and was completed in December 2002; • Developed our Local Plan. This will be reviewed during 2004; • Carried out a comprehensive review of our housing waiting list in addition to the annual review of individual applicants on the waiting list for council housing; • Completed our review of Homelessness Services in the Borough in preparation for the development of our Homelessness Strategy. <p>1.2From the above activities we are able to identify the following as being key elements and dynamics of our local housing market:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy demand for housing in the Borough across all tenures (Berwick Borough does not have low demand problems that other areas in the north east region have); • There are some areas where affordability of housing is an issue, this being in coastal areas such as Seahouses; • House prices have risen by almost 40% over the last 12 months and there is rapid turnover of property; • Owner occupation is increasing; • There is an increasingly older population with more younger households being inclined to leave the area; • Demand for affordable housing is strongest in Berwick town; and

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<p>1.2 How well does the council develop and evolve its strategies and plans?</p> <p>1.3 Does the council have the right strategies and plans to help it balance the housing market</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower than national average levels of unfit and disrepair within the housing stock. <p>1.3The Council has developed its Housing Strategy in close consultation with a range of statutory and non-statutory agencies in the Borough that are involved in housing and the delivery of housing and support related services. The Council's Local Plan was developed in 1999 following extensive public consultation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public meetings, mobile exhibition throughout borough, parish council meetings, leaflet to all households, press releases. • One-to-one meetings with statutory and non- statutory organisations. • Consultation responses report to sub-groups and committee for modifications to document before deposit version prepared. <p><u>Local Plan</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Plan adopted 1999 • Time period 1991 – 2006. Review underway following LDS/LDD proposed format. Time period 2006-2016 • Current local plan has sufficient land allocated to meet the existing annualised housing rates and those proposed within the RSS/SP Review. • Objections submitted to SP review, seeking to increase annualised housing rates • Affordable Housing Policy S6, generic policy adaptable to demand. Utilises land and dwelling number thresholds to seek inclusion of affordable housing as development opportunities arise. Will be updated as part of review having regard to PPG3 and HNS, may include specific land allocations • Policy S6 in accord with Circular 13/96, requires revision to reflect more recent policy guidance. • LDS will identify the need for a new SPG on Design Guidance in residential development, existing SPG refers to extensions and alterations. • Existing Local Plan identifies that affordable housing and open space provision (which needs updating) may be sought as a S106. Review will offer guidance on priorities and which policies take precedence. • AS part of Review process existing LP will undergo a sustainability appraisal, as will each key stage of the review process incorporating sustainability issues through the process and in the end product. • SPG for design identified in emerging LDS, S106 will be referred to within LDD document, No: of S106 in 2002/3??? • Local Plan identifies a variety of sites to meet a range of housing needs, issues of sustainability and community safety are considered as material considerations, more details guidance will be incorporated into review of LP • Exceptions site consideration included in LP Policy S6

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2. What are the council's actions and what outcomes has it achieved in helping to balance housing markets?

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<p>2.1 How well is the council working corporately to help balance the housing market?</p>	<p><u>2.1 Housing Strategy Development</u> Although there is no structured internal liaison between Housing and Planning Departments with regard to policy development and delivery of plans, there is informal interaction on an as required basis. Progress with regard to the development and review of key strategies and plans are reported to our Corporate Team. Progress against targets and key milestones within the Action Plan of the Housing Strategy are reported on an annual basis to the Council's Policy (Environment) Committee. With regard to enabling the provision of affordable housing, we meet on a quarterly basis with our development partners, Nomad Housing Group and Johnie Johnson Housing Trust. Planning staff and external agencies are also represented at these meetings where appropriate. The purpose of these meetings have been to monitor progress with new development (housing needs research, funding arrangements in the case of supported housing schemes, planning permissions) and assess need for future provision. Meetings with the Housing Corporation take place on a bi-annual basis to plan priorities for future development and monitor progress.</p> <p>2.2 From 1999 we have sought to maximise ADP resources for the Borough for affordable housing development based on identified need. New development has made a real difference by providing modern housing in line with new regulations and requirements and resident expectations.</p>
<p>2.2 Is the council pursuing the right actions and initiatives to help balance the housing market and</p>	<p><u>Community Leadership, Equalities and Social Inclusion</u> Officer advice occasionally overturned at Committee on issues of public concern – e.g. Governor's Garden, Seahouses., More recently adoption of Interim Housing Policy Statement (06/03) signals a strategic approach to land use in accord with PPG3 Housing.</p> <p><u>Housing Development</u> Local Plan 1999</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - hierarchical approach to land allocation, process of primary, secondary and service centres villages as locations for development taking into account issues of sustainability. - Policy S2 maintains a five year land supply, implemented throughout plan period.

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<p>are the outcomes for local residents and the housing market as a whole making the right kind of difference?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approach will continue through review of LP, updated by findings of Urban Housing Capacity Study in accord with PPG3 Housing.. - Planning Applications considered against Interim Housing Policy Statement (06/03), in accord with PPG3 – Housing <p>Not proactive in takeup of Housing allocations, market forces have continued to meet and exceed targets. NCC and BCC planners attend quarterly Planning Officer Forums to discuss joint issues and share experience. No proactive promotion of development sites through planning, but do offer pre-application discussions and Section 106 agreements. e.g. John Gray – Hiveacres Development Briefs produced on ad-hoc basis Eg, Governor’s Garden, preparation on Spittal Point. Sustainable development will be fully integrated in to review of planning policy in LDD Affordable Housing integrated into Primary and Secondary settlements, Berwick – Trinity House, Bridge Street, (brownfield) not part of wider schemes, , Belford - Williams Way (greenfield) part of private sector development , Wooler Rear Tankerville – part of Private Sector Development, (Greenfield) Brownfield Sites developed for residential development 2002/03 37% target 60%, many conversions are agricultural which do not fall within brownfield calculation, need to emphasis rural contribution to meeting target. Planning Approvals generally below 30 per hectare, rural nature of Borough high density would be incongruous, need to reflect and respect character of area, whilst seeking to make best use of land.. <u>Private Sector Housing</u> Council have SPG on Environmentally Conscious Building</p>

3. How well does the council monitor its progress and impact in helping to balance housing markets and how effectively does this feed into future strategies and plans?

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<p>3.1 How well does the council monitor its progress and assess the impact of its work to help balance the housing market?</p>	<p><u>3.1 Housing Strategy</u> A comprehensive review of the Housing Strategy is undertaken on an annual basis, along with a review of the Action Plan. The Strategy will update information on housing needs and demand, house prices, local plan development and allocation of sites for housing, priorities for new affordable housing and private sector renewal. Progress with implementation of our affordable housing strategy is monitored on a quarterly basis as part of our regular liaison with RSLs. Housing Needs Surveys including local surveys are updated every 3 years. This has worked well and has provided up to date information on a range of housing issues as highlighted above under 1.1. Progress with regard to assessment of rural needs and schemes takes place on a bi-monthly basis with the Rural Housing Enabler as part of a Rural Northumberland Working Group.</p> <p><u>Local Plan Monitoring</u> Regular monitoring of planning approvals (Quarterly returns) Regular monitoring of Building Completions (P2M – Quarterly Returns) Could improve on methods of data collection. This information is shared with NCC monitoring sections and cross referenced.</p>
<p>3.2 Has the council learnt from what it is doing to help balance the housing market to</p>	<p>3.2: Our Corporate Priorities are about fixing things that have been broken and eliminating the worst excesses of economic, environmental and social deprivation, most notably the need to sustain our population and address the problems of population decline in our most remote and rural locations. We have modest resources and suffer from weak rural policy instruments. However these have failed to dampen the spirit of our area and even a small resource base serves to differentiate and unleash forces lined to local status, local economics and social success. We have developed a differentiated local regeneration strategy covering a wide range of activities including:</p> <p><u>Facilitative Element</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure – new partnerships with public, private housing landlords

<p>develop and improve its future strategies and plans?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political Lobbying – maintaining our housing development thresholds as part of RPG • Image Promotion – A campaign to promote inward investment and migration <p><u>Interventionist Elements</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment Plan – a recent resurgence of retail investors, hopefully leading to a transformation of the town centre. Also the prospect for new private sector housing with dramatic increase in house prices • Social and Welfare - closer working arrangements with RSL Development Trusts <p><u>Directive Elements</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Agreement – including designated sites for affordable housing, appropriate 106 Agreements • Environment Agreements – AONB and Countryside management, also the introduction of new agencies such as Groundwork. Good working relationships with Community Groups S.I.T and CARA
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