

3. PEAK HOUSING MARKET AREA INVESTMENT PLAN (A.6101/JBD)

Purpose of the report

- 1 To provide an update to members on the development and agreement of a 4 year investment plan shared between local authorities in the Peak Sub Area (all of High Peak, all of the Derbyshire Dales and all of the National Park within those two areas) and the Home and Communities Agency. It is the basis of Government funding for all affordable housing whose completion is dependent on such grants. Whilst the National Park Authority is a partner in this Plan, there are no specific commitments falling on the Authority. This report is brought to you to give members the opportunity to show support for a Plan that is largely the responsibility of the two District Council partners.

Recommendations

- 2
1. **The Peak Housing Market Area Investment Plan is supported**
 2. **The governance arrangements for the Partnership which oversees this plan be agreed as at paragraph 7.**

How does this contribute to our policies and legal obligations?

- 3 The National Park Authority is not a statutory housing authority, although as a planning authority we must have an understanding of the need for local needs affordable housing in the Peak District and work in partnership to achieve the targets and strategies shared with other bodies so long as this is compatible with the purposes of the National Park. Our duty to consider the socio-economic interests of people who live in the National Park, and also our commitment to support relevant Local Area Agreement targets, also add weight to our involvement in strategic planning for the provision of local needs affordable housing.

Background

- 4 In 2008, the Government merged the then Housing Corporation with a range of other bodies to form the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). The HCA set out to develop a 'Single Conversation' and partner agencies in a local area to develop Local Investment Plans to guide investment by the HCA and partners. It proposed largely using Housing Market Areas (HMA). The National Park lies within the Peak Housing Market Area. For the purposes of Local Investment Plans, those areas outside of the Derbyshire Dales and High Peak are covered by the plans led by other Constituent Councils. Collectively, these areas add a relatively small amount to the potential for grant-aid for affordable housing within the National Park which is why we have focused on the Peak HMA. In the normal course of planning casework, planning officers are engaged in identifying suitable sites for housing across the National park, including in areas outside this current HMA Plan.
- 5 The Peak HMA Investment Plan is one of the most advanced plans within the East Midlands and, indeed, it is the first wholly rural plan to be approved within the region. In this sense, the Peak HMA Investment Plan is very much a trailblazer for how HCA proposes to work to support rural affordable housing. The Homes and Communities Agency has a formal Rural Housing Advisory Group which is chaired by its Rural Champion, Candy Atherton. The English National Park Authorities Association is represented on the group by your Chief Executive.

- 6 The Peak HMA Investment Plan has been prepared by officers of the key local authority partners, including:

- High Peak Borough Council
- Derbyshire Dales District Council
- Derbyshire County Council
- Peak District National Park Authority

Your Chief Executive has chaired the officer group in his capacity as Chair of the Local Strategic Partnership Affordable Homes Theme Group. In preparing the plan, officers have worked with the East Midlands regional office of the Homes and Communities Agency, local stakeholders including the Derbyshire Dales and High Peak Local Strategic Partnership and the East Midlands Development Agency, emda. The involvement of emda and Derbyshire County Council reflect the holistic approach being sought for the development of multi-use sites that have, for example, the potential of providing homes, economic development and environmental enhancement.

- 7 The Investment Plan is overseen by the Peak Housing Market Area Investment Plan Partnership which is composed of:

- The Leaders of the 2 District councils and the Cabinet Member for regeneration at Derbyshire County Council
- The Chair of this Authority
- The Chair of the Derbyshire Dales and High Peak Local Strategic Partnership.
- Officers in support

The group agreed to the plan in outline at its recent meeting (22 February) and this was endorsed by the Local Strategic Partnership Board (10 March). Each of the individual councils will be agreeing the plan and, for the 2 Districts, this will also entail agreeing an Investment Agreement with the Homes and Communities Agency. As there is no financial or contractual commitment on this Authority resulting from the Plan, there is no need for us to agree to such an agreement.

Proposals

- 8 The Peak HMA Investment Plan will cover the period April 2010 to March 2014, and much of this falls within the next Spending Review period. The HCA plans to complete its own Business Plan with Ministers later in 2010 and wishes to have several complete Investment Plans to input into this process.

- 9 The Plan covers the following elements:

- Executive Summary
- Vision, drawing on the LSP and National Park Management Plan visions
- Economic and housing market profile
- Key issues (see paragraph 10 below)
- Our approach to safeguarding rural communities
- Strategic Objectives
- Community Engagement
- Governance
- Spatial portraits of the sub areas within the plan
- Sub area investment plans
- Appendices

Within the National Park, the sub areas include the Dark Peak and White Peak areas. The plan includes a variety of schemes identified that are at various stages of planning approval, from villages where there is an accepted need and precise sites must be determined through to schemes that are ready to progress and have all consents. The plan takes as its starting point the adopted planning policies of this Authority within the National Park, including any future policies of the Local Development Framework, and that of the East Midlands Regional Plan. Planning officers have considered all of the proposed schemes within the draft investment plan as being realistic to progress towards approval. It is recognised, however, that several of the schemes may be controversial and also that legitimate debate within detailed planning applications will amend important details. The Plan accommodates this and is flexible accordingly. In supporting this Investment Plans, members are not, therefore, tied to supporting any particular housing planning application.

10 The 6 key issues are:

- Lack of affordable homes and the need for up to 60% of new homes to be affordable
- The need to accommodate a changing population structure within the housing stock
- The importance of sustaining communities in an area of high prices and demand for housing
- The need to raise the quality of the existing stock to decent homes standard
- Lack of affordable provision for vulnerable households
- A broader approach to sustainability of rural communities.

11 The plan includes a list of potential schemes which in the National Park add up to over 110 units. However, it is also prioritised so that schemes of highest value for money and relationship to need are supported most. It must also be recognised that the funding will be limited and so it is unlikely that all schemes will be completely funded. The detailed plan is not included within this report as it is a long and technical document. This report seeks in principle support to the involvement of the Authority in the Plan.

Are there any corporate implications members should be concerned about?

12 **Financial:**

None

13 **Risk Management:**

None that have not been included within the Investment Plan

14 **Sustainability:**

All homes will be built to at least Code Level 3 and as the Authority's own policies are amended this will increase in line with our own planning decisions.

15 **Background papers**

None

16 **Appendices**

None

Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date

17 Jim Dixon, Chief Executive, 18 March 2010