

East Midlands Councils Where are we now?

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Appendix A

Overview of the day

- Welcome - Chair Cllr Roger Begy, Leader Rutland CC
- Welfare Reform
 - Rose Doran, LGA
 - Karen Wenlock, Leicester CC
 - Sarah Short EMC
- Housing
 - Gary Porter, South Holland DC, Deputy Chair LGA
 - Charlotte Hill, HCA
- Planning Reform
 - Andrew Pritchard, EMC and Chair of EMRTPI
 - John Hollister and Ian Campbell, URS Infrastructure & Environmental UK Ltd

Welfare Reform

- **Changes to Housing Benefit (HB) for renters in the private sector – Local Housing Allowance (LHA)**
- **The removal of the “spare room subsidy” for most HB recipients in social housing**
- **The introduction of a cap on total benefit receipt**
- **Changes to tax credits**
- **Tightening of eligibility and the restriction of contributory Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) to one year**
- **The replacement of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) with Personal Independence Payment (PIP)**
- **The uprating of benefits and tax credits by 1% instead of the CPI**
- **The replacement of Council Tax Benefit with locally-determined Council Tax Support schemes**
- **The replacement of the Social Fund with Local Welfare Support**
- **The introduction of Universal Credit**

Leicester City Council Summary

- The combination of the welfare reforms has had a significant effect
- The council, social landlords and advice agencies in the city have worked together to identify those affected and in need of support.

We have found that:-

- For most of the welfare reform changes over half of the households affected have children
- There has been a disproportionate affect on lone parent households
- The impacts are being felt in areas already identified as financially deprived

Leicester City Council Summary 2

- Council Tax collection has been better than anticipated – but at a cost
- The number of households facing under-occupancy are decreasing
- The impacts from benefit cap are not as great as first envisaged
- Social housing transfers are up
- Applications for support through DHP have increased significantly

Key areas of concern continue to be:

- The financial and health impact on disabled, their carers' and other vulnerable groups (especially with other changes rolling out eg PIP)
- The financial and health impact upon children in the city
- Access to advice and support for the most in need in a sector seeing significant reductions in funding
- Access to affordable accommodation is not always available
- Growing need for emergency food aid in the city

Potential Impact on Local Delivery (LGA)

- We keep some HB – e.g. pensioners
- TUPE for council staff?
- Single Fraud Investigation Service
- Direct payments – Landlord (tenant) preparation
- Live service
- Completed IT solution – being piloted
- We will press to remain at the heart of delivery and support for local people
- Steady state – 2018

Housing (Gary Porter)

- Role of Local Authority in house building
- Crisis in Housing due to Treasury
 - Remove council housing as debt
 - Release money to build houses
- 50 year Business Plan
- Bonds

Housing (HCA)

- Continued limits on public funding
- Focus on growth
- Localism
- HCA activity focused on five key areas:
 - Affordable housing
 - Market interventions
 - Public land
 - Economic Assets Programme
 - Regulation
- HCA role is to work with people and places to help them to deliver homes, economic growth and jobs
- Investment has to be aligned with local priorities
- HCA assists local delivery with the right mix of:
 - HCA and other public land and economic assets
 - Affordable housing investment and regulation
 - Market interventions

Housing (HCA)

2015-18 Affordable Housing Programme

- Total Midlands allocation is £226.5m for 11,545 homes of which the local authorities in the East Midlands have an allocation of £91.3m for 4,641 homes

Builders Finance Fund

- Initial shortlist of sites in the Midlands totals £81.8m for 2,859 homes of which £36.1m and 1,590 homes are on sites within local authorities in the East Midlands

Large Scale Infrastructure Programme

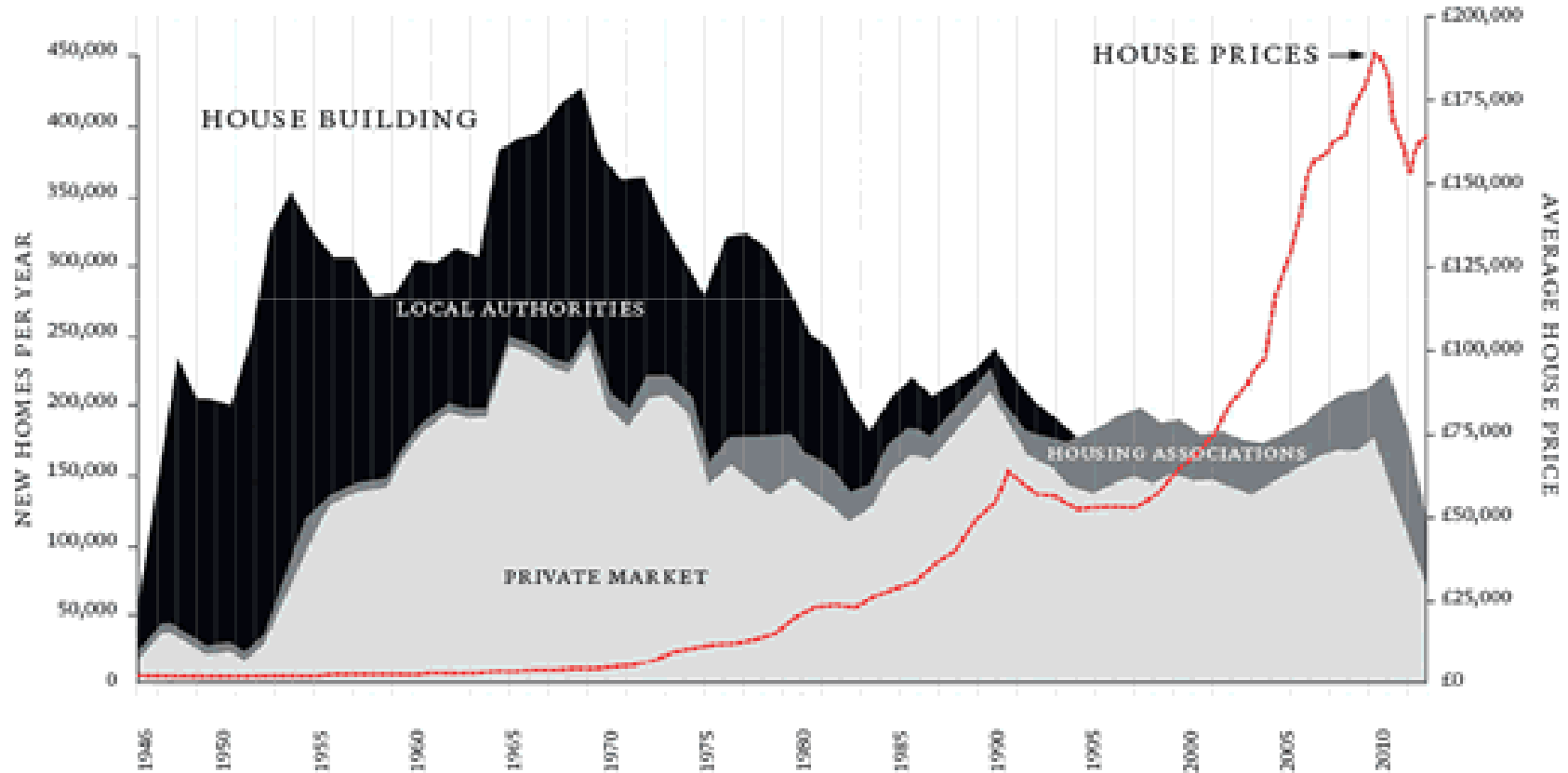
- Sites in the Midlands have been shortlisted for funding of £246.7m for 49,722 homes of which £174.2m and 31,168 homes are in the East Midlands

Planning (EMC)

Coalition Policy in Practice

- Abolition of regional planning (eventually)
- Introduction of Neighbourhood Plans – but Local Plans take precedence
- A new ‘duty to co-operate’
- Simplified statements of Government Planning Policy (NPPF) & guidance
- Deregulation of ‘change of use’ and permitted development rights – with more to come!
- Re-introduction of council planning performance targets

Challenge: Housing Supply



Challenge: Finance

- Annual Housing Benefit Bill: circa £22 billion (revenue)
- Annual affordable housing programme: circa £2 billion (capital)
- Is this balance right? - how can it be changed?

Challenge: Duty to Co-operate



Stevenage
Mid Sussex
Aylesbury Vale
Brighton
West Dorset
NW Leicestershire
Derbyshire Dales

Dealing with uncertainty



Get your plan in place!

- The Achilles Heal of the current system is the lack of plan coverage
- Without either Structure Plan or Regional Plan - the local plan is the only show in town
- Only 17 adopted plans in the EM (only 3 post NPPF)
- Councils **must get plans in place** to retain a credible system



Neighbourhood planning is here to stay!

- Neighbourhood planning is a perceived success
- Both Government & opposition have voiced support
- Councils must work with communities to support neighbourhood planning



**Neighbourhood
Planning**

Make co-operation work!

- There are no proposals from either the Government or Opposition to re-instate statutory strategic planning in the next Parliament
- Councils **must make co-operation work**
- More Joint planning arrangements?



How much a priority is planning for your council?

- On average each council in the EM has around 20 staff working on planning...
- 14 on Development Management
- 6 on plan-making
- Less than half are RTPI members
- 80% of councils do not have a planner in the Corporate Management Team...

Fracking

- Separate slide presentation is available providing
 - An overview of fracking
 - Detail of the environmental effects
 - Explanation of the planning issues

Resources

- Hard Copy
 - Welfare Reform in the East Midlands
The Story So Far February 2014
- Full Slide Presentation
- Details of Future Events