

Minutes

The Housing and Neighbourhood Partnership

Tuesday, 25th January, 2011, 02.00 p.m. at Watersports Centre Castlegate Quay, Moat Street, Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 3AZ

DRAFT: SUBJECT TO APPROVAL

Chair:

Dave Pickard (Vela Homes)

Members:

Phil Toal (Frank Haslam Milan); Michelle Street (Stockton Flats); Wanda Graham (Accent Foundation); Dave Pickard (Vela Homes); Joanne French (Community Campus); Andrea Ainsley (Places for People); Helen Dixon (SBC); Lesley Cannon (Job Centre Plus); Tracy Beadling (Endeavour HA); Val Scollen (Northern Area Partnership Board); Christine Fixter (Jomast); Susie Thompson (Fabrick); Steve Nelson (SBC).

Advisors:

Caroline Wood (SBC); Pauline Beall (Stockton LSCB); Linda Stephenson (SBC); Julie Higgins (SBC)

Apologies**Members:**

Councillor Mrs Suzanne Fletcher (SBC); Tracy Bradburn (Stonham); Julie Nixon (SBC);

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ITEM/ISSUE	ACTION
1. Welcome and Introductions	
2. Minutes Comments and Decisions Agreed as a true record	
3. Safeguarding Children and Implications for Housing Pauline Beall, Business Manager, Stockton Local Safeguarding Children's Board, gave a presentation on Serious Case Reviews and how the process for carrying these out in the borough Key points of the presentation that relate to housing organisations included the following: -Registered Providers should have joint protocols in place to share information with other organisations such as Children's Social Care. -Front line staff visiting households have an important role to play. -Housing organisations often hold significant information about families which contain a child at risk. -Staff should have appropriate training and support to ensure they can contribute to recognising child welfare issues, share information, make referrals and manage and reduce risks. Questions included: What happens if families with chaotic lifestyles don't change. If there are issues of neglect around children then action would need to be taken. If a family is intentionally homeless due to their behaviour then housing options will always refer them to the safeguarding board. Where are the problems in information sharing? Mainly around not recognising the information other organisations have. If house inspections are carried out, all rooms should be checked. Neglect of animals can also indicate neglect of	Circulate briefing on Baby P case. Circulate leaflet on 'Serious Case Reviews: Information for Professionals'

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<p>children in some cases.</p> <p>It was noted that if organisations haven't carried out safeguarding training then they should progress this. If there is a link with Stockton then there is a possibility of the Council being able to provide some training. Organisations should contact Pauline Beall if this is the case.</p> <p>If partnership members working in the borough need to report any concerns or request advice they can use the contacts below: First Contact Team - Tel: 01642 527764 Email: firstcontact@stockton.gov.uk or; Emergency Duty Team (Outside of Office Hours) - Tel: 08702 402994 Minicom: 01642 602346 or; In an emergency, contact the Police 999.</p> <p>Contact: Pauline Beall SLSCB Business Manager Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council pauline.beall@stockton.gov.uk (01642) 527632</p>	
4. Refreshment Break	
5. Housing Benefit Changes Update Linda Stephenson updated partnership members on changes to Housing Benefit, announced since the last meeting. Staff were being trained in the changes, and the changes are going to be publicised with clients and landlords. All clients will be written to. This will probably be near to the anniversary/renewal date of their claim.	

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<p>The Benefit Service is working closely with Housing Options to see what support can be offered to their clients.</p> <p>It was noted that the Discretionary Housing Payment fund is increasing however it was unclear how much of this Stockton would receive. It was suggested that might be used for more preventative work to keep households in their homes.</p> <p>There was a discussion around what landlords' response will be to the changes. Many say they will leave the private rented market and sell their property but in reality this is not an option in the current housing market for many. Landlords might review the client groups they rent to. The biggest issue here will be for 16-25 year olds. Some landlords might use the changes to end the tenancies of tenants that they do not wish to rent to any longer.</p> <p>An update on the changes will also be going to the Multi Agency Infinity Financial Inclusion Partnership.</p> <p>It was noted that from 5 January 2009, Standard Mortgage Interest (SMI) in a new claim for Jobseekers Allowance(Income Based) (JSA(IB)) and those in receipt of JSA(IB) and in their qualifying period for SMI on 4 January 2009, was payable for 2 years only in most cases. A letter is being automatically sent to affected customers 8 weeks before the change in benefit, prompting them to contact their lender. Early feedback is that customers are not contacting their lender to discuss future repayments. A process has been put in place in Tees Valley for the Benefit Delivery Centre or Jobcentre to make referrals to CAB/Moneymadeclear advisers for support and advice for customers, but it is understood that very few customers are taking up this offer.</p> <p>Contact: Linda Stephenson Benefit Manager Stockton on Tees Borough Council (01642) 526245 linda.stephenson@stockton.gov.uk</p>	

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<p>6. Local Decisions: A fairer future for Social Housing</p> <p>Julie Higgins, Housing Strategy Team Leader gave an overview of the sub-regional local authority response to the government consultation paper Local Decisions: A fairer future for housing. The response had been circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The idea of Local Authorities working together sub-regionally on issues such as flexible tenancies was welcomed especially as some registered providers worked in multiple local authority areas.</p> <p>It was asked what the view of private landlords was in respect to 12 month tenancies to Housing Options clients. It was felt that one consequence might be that if the tenant is anti-social then the landlord and neighbours might not be able to deal with the situation as well as if it was an ordinary tenancy.</p> <p>Contact: Julie Higgins Housing Strategy Team Leader Stockton on Tees Borough Council (01642) 526662 julie.higgins@stockton.gov.uk</p>	
<p>7. For information: Community Engagement Strategy</p> <p>The draft community engagement strategy had been circulated to partnership members in September 2010 for comment and the final version had now been published. A letter thanking members for their involvement and providing a link to the final version had been circulated with the agenda.</p>	
<p>8. For information: Affordable Housing Newsletter</p>	Continue to circulate the affordable housing newsletter

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<p>The Housing Strategy and Development team at the Council produce a 6 monthly newsletter detailing affordable housing developments in the borough. It has been used internally within the Council however if partnership members find it helpful, the team will continue to circulate to the partnership too.</p>	<p>to partnership members on 6 monthly basis</p>
<p>9. Stockton Renaissance Update</p> <p>Dave Pickard gave an update from recent Renaissance meetings. A copy of a presentation given at the last meeting on 'Changing Public Sector Funding and Architecture' was tabled.</p> <p>Contact: Dave Pickard Group Director of Operations Vela Homes (01642) 527083 dave.pickard@velahomes.co.uk</p>	
<p>10. Any Other Urgent Business</p> <p>It was suggested that a future item for the partnership might be how the Tees Valley Local Enterprise Partnership will affect Local Strategic Partnership structure within the borough.</p>	<p>Add LSP and LEP to partnership work programme</p>