

Minutes

The Housing and Neighbourhood Partnership

Tuesday, 18th September, 2012, 02.00 p.m. at River Tees Watersports Centre, Dugdale Street, Stockton on Tees, TS18 2NL

Chair:

David Pickard (Vela Homes)

Members:

Emma Gordon (SDAIS), Stewart Tagg (Fabrck Housing Group), Steve Simpson (National Landlords Association), Michelle Street (Stockton Flats), Sue Thompson (Teesside Landlords Association), Joanne French (CC87), Suzanne Fletcher (Central Area Partnership), Val Scollen (Northern Area Partnership), Jim Scollen (Northern Area Partnership), Paul Thomas (Central Area Partnership), Cllr Steve Nelson (Stockton Council).

Advisors:

Simon Rogalski (Stockton Council), Linda Stephenson (Stockton Council), Caroline Wood (Stockton Council)

Apologies

Members:

Andrea Ainsley (Places for People), Sara Herrington (Endeavour HA), Janet Stubbs (Job Centre Plus), Cllr Julia Cherrett (Stockton Council)

Advisors/ Observers:

Jane Edmends (Stockton Council)

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ITEM/ISSUE	ACTION
HNP 18/12. Welcome and apologies	
HNP 19/12. Minutes Comments and Decisions Agreed as a true record	Add Jim Scollen to apologies list for May meeting. Add Stewart Tagg to attendance list for May meeting.
HNP 20/12. Election of Partnership Chair and Vice-Chair The chair and vice-chair of the partnership is elected on an annual basis. It was noted that a nomination was received for chair by Dave Pickard and for vice-chair by Stewart Tagg. Comments and Decisions Agree to elect Dave Pickard as chair of the partnership and Stewart Tagg as vice-chair of the partnership for the next 12 months. Contact: Simon Rogalski Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council 01642 528359 simon.rogalski@stockton.gov.uk	
HNP 21/12. Agreement of Partnership Terms of Reference Comments and Decisions The terms of reference were agreed for the following 12 months.	Circulate updated Terms of Reference to the partnership.

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<p>Contact: Simon Rogalski Stockton-on-Tees Council 01642 528359 simon.rogalski@stockton.gov.uk</p>	
<p>HNP 22/12. Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) Delivery Plan</p> <p>Stockton Renaissance has now agreed the refreshed Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) 2011 - 2021 for the borough. The partnership was made aware of its role in monitoring the Housing element of the SCS delivery plan.</p> <p>It was noted that the target for the 'number of households assisted to live independently through new housing schemes' reduces in 2012/13 compared to the 2011/12 outturn as it is based on funding secured to develop independent living schemes. It is projected to increase again in 2013/14.</p> <p>An additional target had been included to monitor the measure around reducing fuel poverty.</p> <p>It was suggested that information is presented at a future meeting to show what affordable homes have been developed over the past few years and their location in the borough. This would then give the partnership more detail than simply an outturn number of affordable homes developed.</p> <p>Contact: Simon Rogalski Stockton-on-Tees Council 01642 528359 simon.rogalski@stockton.gov.uk</p>	<p>Bring information on location of affordable housing developed over the past few years to a future meeting.</p>
<p>HNP 23/12. Draft 'Local Council Tax Support' scheme consultation</p>	<p>Partnership members to forward any comments on the</p>

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<p>The Council must introduce a Local Council Tax Support Scheme to help local people of working age, on low incomes, to pay their council tax. Linda Stephenson, Benefits Manager, Stockton-on-Tees Council presented the proposed scheme to the partnership.</p> <p>It was noted that 900 responses had been received as part of the consultation. The final scheme will be presented to the Council's cabinet on the 29th November 2012. It will also be presented to a full Council meeting in January 2013.</p> <p>If the Council does not implement a scheme within the prescribed timescale it will have to implement the government's default scheme.</p> <p>Questions included: Whether residents would move if a neighbouring Local Authority offered a better scheme. This is unlikely but could happen. The Councils in the Tees Valley have been working together to ensure there is some consistency in their schemes. What the definition of 'working age' is. It is not always easily understood what this refers to.</p> <p>The partnership expressed the view that many of the changes as part of Welfare Reform are worrying from a poverty perspective. Landlords will be chasing up more late and non-payments from tenants, which could also give landlords cash flow problems. One implication might be having to balance eviction costs with chasing debt costs.</p> <p>It was noted that it will be increasingly important for Local Authorities, Registered Providers and Private Landlords to work together closely to ensure people are getting appropriate money advice.</p> <p>Contact: Linda Stephenson Benefit Manager Stockton-on-Tees Council 01642 526245 linda.stephenson@stockton.gov.uk</p>	<p>proposed scheme to Linda Stephenson by Friday 19th October.</p>

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<p>HNP 24/12. The Impact of Welfare Reform in Stockton on Tees</p> <p>Linda Stephenson Benefits Manager at Stockton Council updated the partnership on ongoing work to assess the impact to the borough of Welfare reform changes.</p> <p>Linda Stephenson explained some of the changes Welfare Reform will bring and the impact it may have. Universal Credit will replace a number of different benefits although Housing Benefit claims will carry on to 2014-2017, this is paid to single householder rather than all people in household. Discretionary Social Fund will end and some grants and loans being replaced, this will bring an end to cash payments and will be funded by an unringfenced grant.</p> <p>Claimants deemed to be in under occupied housing will lose benefit - 14% for 1 bedroom and 25% for 2 bedrooms under occupied, as well as an overall cap on welfare payments. Benefit cap would impact on approx 123 claimants in Stockton costing £0.3m and under occupation would affect approx 2,100 claimants involving £1.3m.</p> <p>Employment and Support Allowance replaces several other benefits e.g. incapacity benefit, income support and severe disablement allowance, Personal Independence Payments replaces disability living allowance, there is no automatic transfer of benefits as a new test is being implemented. Impact on Stockton is expected to be £8.3m for 2,100 claimants on DLA/PIP and £12.1 affecting 2,730 on IB/ESA.</p> <p>The impact on the community will affect large numbers of people, particularly those families in under occupation; disabled people and single people. This will have further impact on the recession as it may also result in repossessions, more people going into private rented accommodation and an increase in domestic violence.</p> <p>Linda also explained that it is feared that the changes are not understood by claimants and it is feared that those 'taking the hit' by losing benefits may turn to door step loans. There is evidence of providing advice from CAB and SBC, and there are strong links between housing benefits and other services, Customer Services has facilities for accessing the internet but not sure they can cope with the extra demand in providing the information required.</p>	
<p>HNP 25/12. Refreshment Break</p>	

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<p>HNP 26/12. Choice Based Lettings allocations policy review proposals</p> <p>The partner organisation within Compass, the Choiced Based Lettings scheme in Tees Valley, are consulting on changes to how it allocates its properties. The Partnership was consulted on the proposed changes.</p> <p>Caroline Wood of Stockton Council updated the Partnership about the revised code of guidance issued by the CLG, and explained there are areas which need amending. A presentation followed and Caroline explained how the Tees Valley CBL is made up, spoke of the advised changes and advice relating to groups who should be given additional preference. These included former members of the armed forces, serving members and members of reserved forces who are or are likely to be homeless, or need to move because of serious injury, medical condition or disability as a result of their service; bereaved spouses or partners having to leave family accommodation as a result of the death of their partner would also be considered for additional preference. Caroline continued by summarising other proposed changes and detailed the reasons and what they would mean to those applying to be on the register and those already registered.</p> <p>A summary of the policy review was distributed to members of the partnership and members were asked to complete the questionnaire and return it to Caroline Wood by 24th September along with any comments they wished to make.</p> <p>Comments and Decisions</p> <p>There was a question as to why Hartlepool charge private landlords to advertise on CBL when Stockton does not. Dave Pickard to report back to Partnership on findings.</p> <p>Contact: Caroline Wood Housing Options Manager Stockton Borough Council Telephone: 01642 526639 caroline.wood@stockton.gov.uk</p>	<p>Report back to the partnership on whether some local authorities in the Tees Valley charge private landlords to advertise on CBL.</p>

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<p>HNP 27/12. Stockton Renaissance Update</p> <p>Dave Pickard gave an update on the last meeting which was held on 18th September 2012, this included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- a report on the Learning Disability review which Julie Nixon, Head of Housing, presented.- Sustainable Communities Strategy for the borough - as discussed earlier in the partnership meeting today.- Joint health and well being strategy consultation.- The Council's event diary	
<p>HNP 28/12. Any other urgent business</p> <p>Electoral reforms 2014 - 2015: Members were informed of change in the way that forms are expected to be completed in that every person will need to complete their own form rather than as is the case now when one form is completed for the whole household. The Council have asked how landlords could assist with this. Vela Homes are looking to ask tenants to report any change of circumstances.</p> <p>Asylum Seeker Multi Agency Forum - An update was provided by Suzanne Fletcher on recent forums. Hostel conditions and shared bedrooms had been discussed at the last meeting. It had been noted at the meeting that there had been an increase in the number of asylum seekers located to Stockton and Middlesbrough. It was asked whether there had been a change to the notification received when someone receives leave to remain as it seemed that recently people had been approaching their company with a short period of time to find alternative accommodation. There was not anyone at the partnership that was aware of any changes to this.</p> <p>Date and time of next meeting: Tuesday 4th December at 2pm: Dugdale Street Watersports Centre</p>	<p>More information to be sent to landlords for them to consider if changes to Electoral Reform is something they could assist with.</p>