

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting13th February 2014

1. Title of Item/Report

Scrutiny Review of Housing Providers

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report that presented the Environment Select Committee findings following the Scrutiny Review of the Performance of Housing Providers.

The main issues and overall aim of the review was to determine the performance of Registered Providers (Erimus Housing and Tristar Homes Limited) following the 2007 and 2010 housing stock transfers specifically in relation to 'promises' made to tenants in the Council's pre-ballot Offer Documents. Examples of 'promises' included: repairing and improving homes, rent guarantees, housing management service improvements, enhanced tenant and resident involvement opportunities, and broader regeneration. The Committee also considered the impact of the current economic climate on the 'promises' made to tenants.

RESOLVED that:-

1. Further monitoring of the promises be undertaken by the Committee and senior officers of Tristar Homes provide regular updates of progress against the promises.
2. Work be undertaken to improve the communication arrangements between Councillors and all social housing providers.

3. Reasons for the Decision

1. The Committee has been positively reassured that the promises are either being met or are being surpassed and therefore recommendations for Tristar Homes have not yet been identified.
2. The Committee learned of the advanced discussions for a merger between the Vela Group (incorporating Tristar Homes and Housing Hartlepool) and the Fabrick Group (incorporating Tees Valley Housing

and Erimus Housing). 'Thirteen' will be the name of the new group. The establishment of the Vela Group at the time of stock transfer brought better economies of scale to deliver tenant promises including investment work, service improvement, and new build. Further economies of scale are expected with the new merger. This will however reduce the total number of staff with potential redundancies of approximately 100 across the two current groups and their four operating landlords.

3. The Committee is therefore intent to invite Cath Purdy to future meetings to monitor the promises in light of the merger to form Thirteen.

4. One area which was highlighted throughout the scrutiny review relates to general communication between councillors and all social housing providers. The Committee is keen to improve Member awareness and cover automatic invitations to walkabouts in their wards, potentially the sharing of information relating to the type of complaints received by the Registered Providers and the subsequent action they may have taken, and two-way communication between Council scrutiny and individual Registered Provider tenant scrutiny regarding reviews and findings.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

Councillor Nelson declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 5 – Scrutiny Review of Housing Providers as he was a member of the Tristar Board.

6. Details of any Dispensations

None

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Midnight on Friday, 21st February 2014

Proper Officer
17 February 2014