

Housing & Community Safety Select Committee

A meeting of Housing & Community Safety Select Committee was held on Thursday, 14th September, 2006.

Present: Cllr Trainer(Chairman), Cllr D T Brown, Cllr D Cains, Cllr Mrs S Fletcher, Cllr M Frankland, Cllr T Laing, Cllr Mrs E A Nesbitt, Cllr W Noble, Cllr J M Roberts, Cllr S F Walmsley.

Officers: P K Bell, P Mennear, A Mudd, J Trainer(LD); J Allport, C Wood(DNS).

Also in attendance: Cllr Lynch; T Monkhouse(Tristar Homes Ltd).

Apologies: Cllr Jones, Cllr Rix, Cllr Teasdale and Cllr Woodhead.

584 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Brown declared a personal/non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item no.4 and no.5 – The Development of Choice Based Lettings as he is a member of the Tristar Management Board.

Councillor Mrs Trainer declared a personal/non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item no.4 and no.5 – The Development of Choice Based Lettings as she is a member of the Tristar Management Board.

Councillor Mrs Roberts declared a personal/non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item no.4 and no.5 – The Development of Choice Based Lettings as she is a member of the Tristar Management Board.

585 Minutes of the meetings held on 6th and 20th July 2006 to be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

The Minutes of the meetings held on 6th and 20th July 2006 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

586 The Development of Choice Based Lettings:- Presentation by Housing Options Manager (Caroline Wood SBC) and Housing Services Manager (Tim Monkhouse - Tristar Homes Ltd).

Members had previously agreed to review the development of Choice Based Lettings. Members had agreed that they should receive a presentation on Choice Based Lettings as they felt this would give them a good grounding for the review.

C.Wood (The Housing Options Manager - SBC) and T.Monkhouse (Housing Services Manager - Tristar Homes Ltd) were in attendance at the meeting to give the presentation. Also in attendance to help answer any questions and give further background to Choice Based Lettings were J.Allport (Head of Housing Services) and A.Mudd (Legal Services).

The presentation covered the following keys areas:-

1. The Governments Vision.

2. Why the Government wanted change.
3. What is Choice Based Lettings?
4. The advantages of Choice Based Lettings.
5. The Tees Valley Choice Based Lettings agenda.
6. How Choice Based Lettings works and how it is different to the current system.
7. Basics of current system and examples of the current register.
8. How customers can access the Service and the expectations of the new scheme.

Following the presentation Members were given the opportunity to ask questions of the Officers and to make statements.

The questions and statements focused around the detail of how the Choice Based Lettings would work and what the benefits would be to Tristar Homes Ltd tenants, Officers of the Council and Tristar Homes Ltd Officers.

Discussions took place on the Mutual Housing Exchange Scheme and how this could be developed to help tenants who need to move to be closer to family or nearer to a school. It was also felt that this would reduce the number of appeals that are lodged.

It was felt by Members that one of the main reasons why tenants ask for a move is because of anti social behaviour. It was also felt that people do not want to move to areas that have a higher rate of anti social behaviour. In the discussions that followed it was agreed that the Choice Based Lettings Scheme would not solve all the anti social behaviour problems but it was felt that there could be provision to build in a sensitive lettings. Members felt that looking at a process that would help develop more sustainable communities could be a key focus of the review.

Discussions took place on the Choice Based Lettings bidding process and how it would work for the Stockton area. It was felt by Members that this could be another key area of the review.

It was asked if there was a requirement for the Authority to consult before Choice Based Lettings could be put in place. In reply it was outlined that there was a requirement to consult and that it was quite comprehensive.

Members thanked the officers for the presentation and for their attendance at the meeting.

CONCLUDED that the presentation be received and that the evidence from Officers be noted.

a. Scoping and Developing the Scrutiny Review

b. Project Plan

The Scrutiny Officers presented Members with the Scope and Project Plan for the review of the development of Choice Based Lettings.

CONCLUDED that the Scope and Project Plan be agreed.