

Housing & Community Safety Select Committee

A meeting of Housing & Community Safety Select Committee was held on Thursday, 12th October, 2006.

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

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

Also in attendance: No other persons present.

Apologies: Cllr B Jones and Cllr N Teasdale.

700 Declarations of Interest

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

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

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

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

701 Draft minutes of the meeting held on 14th September 2006.

Consideration was given to the content of the draft minutes of the meeting on 8th June 2006 prior to their submission to Council.

CONCLUDED that the minutes of the meetings held on 8th June 2006 be submitted to Council.

702 The Development of Choice Based Lettings.

Prior to the meeting Members visited Middlesbrough Erimus Housing Home Choice - Choice Based Lettings (CBL) Scheme.

The following background papers were circulated prior to the meeting:-

1. The evidence received so far.
2. Erimus Homechoice briefing paper.
3. Sub-Regional Agenda briefing paper.

4. The Draft Sub Regional Strategic Implementation Plan.

In the discussions that followed Members outlined that they found the site visit to Erimus Homechoice very interesting and informative. Members were very impressed with Erimus Homechoice but felt that the Committee should exercise caution in making comparisons between Stockton on Tees Borough Council/Tristar Homes Ltd and Erimus Homechoice as Erimus Homechoice was the Registered Social Landlord and Tristar Homes Ltd is an Arms Length Management Organisation. This therefore meant that more resources were available to Erimus Homechoice.

Members felt that there was a lot of good practice at Erimus Homechoice and some of this could be mirrored by Stockton Council/Tristar Homes Ltd. For example:-

1. The disabled register.
2. A specific Officer trained on drug support.

With regard the actual office accommodation at Erimus Homechoice, Members were very impressed with the design, layout and the fact that it was a one stop central office. It was acknowledged that this would require a substantial capital investment and would be difficult to achieve in the Stockton Borough which was a lot more fragmented.

The Head of Housing agreed that the resources available to Erimus Homechoice could not be compared to what would be available to Stockton Council/Tristar Homes Ltd. She also reported that an Options Appraisal would be going to Cabinet for consideration in May 2007.

Members asked for clarification on the division of responsibilities for allocations with SBC/Tristar Homes. The Head of Housing explained that the allocations policy remains with SBC. They receive initial applications, assess housing need and then Tristar Homes Ltd deliver the actual allocation of the properties. So SBC set the parameters, and can enforce these through the Legal Management Agreement if necessary, however in reality SBC and Tristar Homes Ltd act in partnership.

Members requested that they receive details of the Management Agreement between SBC and Tristar Homes Ltd and also a flow chart explaining the current allocations system and the division of responsibilities between SBC Housing Service and Tristar Homes Ltd.

Members requested that further information be obtained on:-

1. Implementation costs.
2. Customer Satisfaction.

Members felt that the forthcoming site visit to Your Choice Homes at Newcastle may show a better comparison as they are also an Arms Length Management Organisation.

CONCLUDED that the evidence provided by Erimus Homechoice be noted.

703 Anti Social Behaviour - Action Plan

Members were presented with the Review of Anti Social Behaviour Action Plan. The Action Plan updated Members on all of the recommendations and the proposed actions/progress. It also included the success measures, responsibility and the dates that any action had taken place.

Mrs H Dixon (Community Safety) was in attendance at the meeting to give comment and to answer any questions.

Members discussed the Action Plan and wished the following comments to be noted:-

1. Members felt that the Directory of Services should be easier to access, be updated on a quarterly basis and a link be e-mailed to Councillors once a month when the Anti Social Behaviour Statistics are e-mailed to Members.
2. Councillor Mrs Fletcher report that a neighbourhood partnership had not been established in her ward.
3. The Scrutiny Officer advised that UNITE had accepted the invitation to give an all Member seminar.

Members thanked Mrs H Dixon for her attendance at the meeting.

CONCLUDED that:-

1. The Action Plan be noted.
2. Members comments be noted and passed to the relevant Officer for action.