

# Housing & Community Safety Select Committee

A meeting of Housing & Community Safety Select Committee was held on Monday, 30th November, 2009.

**Present:** Cllr Julia Cherrett (Chairman), Cllr Robert Gibson, Cllr Jean Kirby, Cllr Bill Woodhead

**Officers:** Julie Nixon, Julie Higgins (DNS), Sarah Whaley, Peter Mennear, Judith Trainer (LD)

**Also in attendance:** Cllr Steve Nelson

**Apologies:** Cllr Jackie Earl, Cllr Liz Nesbitt, Cllr Allison Trainer

## **HCS 28/09**      **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Mrs Cherrett declared a personal/non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item no.3 Appendix 1 – Choice Based Lettings as she was a member of the Tristar Management Board.

Councillor Gibson declared a personal/non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item no.3 Appendix 1 – Choice Based Lettings as he was a member of the Tristar Management Board.

Councillor Woodhead declared a personal/non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item no.3 Appendix 1 – Choice Based Lettings as he was a member of the Tristar Management Board.

## **HCS 29/09**      **Quarterly Progress Update on Previously Agreed Recommendations**

Members were asked to consider the assessments of progress contained within the attached progress updates on the implementation of previously agreed recommendations from the reviews of Registered Social Landlords(RSL) and Choice Based Lettings(CBL).

In addition to the progress reports, the Committee were presented with additional information in relation to the Council's relationship with locally based RSL's and joint training, as part of annual updates that were requested by the Committee as part of the review of RSL's. The Housing Strategy Team Leader presented the reports to the Committee highlighting the following areas:

- 1) RSL's were working better as partners with Stockton Borough Council, a number of which had already signed up to Members Communication Protocol and understanding Members roles.
- 2) Housing and Planning services working more closely together creating a better understanding of each others roles and sharing in joint training sessions.

CONCLUDED that the Committee agreed with the assessments of progress contained within the report and that further updates be received as appropriate.

## **HCS**      **Overview Meeting for Housing Services**

Members were asked to receive a presentation in relation to the performance of Housing Services within the Borough.

The Head of Housing presented Members with a presentation which detailed Housing Services performance and included an overview of the services, that had been achieved so far this year and any emerging issues. The highlights were as follows:

- 1) Housing Services service area responsibilities
- 2) Key Achievements in the following areas
  - a) Housing Strategy
  - b) Housing Regeneration
  - c) Benefit Services
  - d) Housing Options
  - e) Private Sector Housing
  - f) Community Development
- 3) Current Performance (Q2 2009 - 10)
- 4) Emerging issues and Priorities.

The Committee heard that the Benefit service had experienced significant year on year increases in workload however standards had not fallen and in addition the team had excelled in helping with debt prevention through joint working with partners such as District Advice and Information Services.

The Head of Housing informed Members that a Landlord Accreditation was to be introduced which would give the authority a list of landlords which were in effect kite marked and this would be used with confidence when helping residents find necessary accommodation.

It was explained that the authority were still working in partnership with Catalyst, holding events which were helping people tackle issues resulting from the Credit Crunch.

Members were updated on the proposals for Swainby Road and learned that approx. 180 houses were to be cleared and there was to be a full regeneration of the area. The Committee were also updated on Victoria Estate however proposals at this stage were not detailed as the consultation process was still underway.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Safety commented Stockton Borough Council spent a high amount on residential care which conflicted with central governments objective for increased numbers using independent living. Members discussed the need for an increase in supported independent living with less people living in residential care. The Head of Housing explained that there would be joint working between Housing and Social Care to develop additional independent living accommodation with care.

CONCLUDED that the information be noted.

