

Housing & Community Safety Select Committee

A meeting of Housing & Community Safety Select Committee was held on Thursday, 7th January, 2010.

Present: Cllr Julia Cherrett(Chairman), Cllr Jackie Earl, Cllr Robert Gibson, Cllr Mohammed Javed, Cllr Bill Noble

Officers: Andy Bryson(RES), Ian Short(CESC), Mike Batty, Melanie Howard, Barry Jackson, Carol Straughan, Ray Sullivan (DNS), Sarah Whaley, Peter Mennear (LD)

Also in attendance:

Apologies: Cllr Jean Kirby, Cllr Liz Nesbitt, Cllr Allison Trainer, Cllr Bill Woodhead

HCS 34/09 **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Jackie Earl declared a personal prejudicial interest in relation to item no. 5, Efficiency, Improvement & Transformation Review of Regulatory Services in particular Houses with Multiple Occupancy (HMO's) as Cllr Earl was herself a Landlord of an HMO. Cllr Earl left the room during the discussion of this item.

HCS 35/09 **Draft Minutes of the Housing and Community Safety Select Committee dated 25th November 2009**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 25th November 2009.

CONCLUDED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 25th November 2009 be agreed as a true record.

HCS 36/09 **Draft Minutes from the Housing and Community Safety Select Committee dated 30th November 2009**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on the 30th November 2009.

CONCLUDED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 30th November 2009 be agreed as a true record.

HCS 37/09 **Draft Minutes of the Meeting of the Housing & Community Safety Select Committee held on 8th December 2009**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on the 8th December 2009.

CONCLUDED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 8th December 2009 be agreed as a true record.

HCS **Efficiency, Improvement & Transformation Review of Regulatory Services**

38/09

Members were asked to consider the information provided, and consider making draft recommendations to be included in the final report on the review of Regulatory Services contained within the attached report.

The Scrutiny Officer presented the report to the Committee highlighting the following areas:

1) Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). The Private Sector Housing Manager provided members with additional information regarding the new proposed cost of HMO licences, and these included charges for assistance with completing application forms and penalties for late or incomplete application submission. It was discussed that there would be a reduction of fees for accredited landlords to encourage them to join the Accreditation Scheme. The Committee heard that all fees had been compared with other authorities and the current proposals were comparable. Under the new proposals it is hard to determine the exact amount of extra income that would be made as it is difficult to know how many new applications would be received and of those, which would be requiring assistance or be incomplete etc. However based on the current amount of licences the recommendation to increase mandatory fees per licence to £250 per unit would potentially generate extra revenue up to £18,000 in 2012-2012 and £74,000 in 2012-2013.

2) Review of the arrangements for the River Tees Authority. The Head of Community Protection informed the Committee that there was a possible saving which could be made but not until 2012/13. Although this was not a guarantee the Head of Community Protection informed members that he was confident that a minimum saving of £15,000 would be attained.

3) Partnering/shared services to be examined for all regulatory functions. Members heard that work had commenced however it was too early to determine what savings would be made.

4) Closer working between Building Control and Planning Enforcement. The Committee discussed the Generic Enforcement Service which Gateshead Council had adopted as a possible recommendation however members heard from the Head of Community Protection that Gateshead had never reached its ultimate goal. In addition Gateshead was paying higher rates of pay for similar roles which were carried out in Stockton.

Members recommended that further exploration be carried out with reference to working with neighbouring authorities.

CONCLUDED that the draft recommendations as detailed in the report and above would be included in the Committee's draft report that would be considered at the next Housing and Community Safety meeting to be held on 25th february 2010 prior to submission to Cabinet.

**HCS
39/09**

Work Programme

CONCLUDED that the Work Programme be noted.

