

## **MEMBERS POLICY SEMINAR PROGRAMME**

### **SUMMARY**

This report provides Council with an overview of content from the Members Policy Seminar in May 2013, which provided updates on regeneration projects and housing in the Borough.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Council are recommended to:

1. Receive this report and note its contents.

### **BACKGROUND**

1. Members Policy Seminars are an important vehicle for both informing and consulting with Members on a variety of topics from Policy and Legislative changes, contributions to Government consultations, and providing an update on local service provision from partner organisations. They have been in place since January 2009 and are particularly useful for those issues which are of importance to the Council or partners but are in the early stages of development, or those which will be of interest to Members, out with the usual reporting arrangements.
2. A programme of seminars is set annually with events planned on a monthly basis. Topics are reviewed monthly by the Corporate Management Team to ensure issues are current and discussions and information provision is timely. Special, additional seminars are arranged as required.

### **SUMMARY OF THE TOPICS COVERED IN MAY 2013**

3. Regeneration of the Borough is a key priority and this presentation showcased the wide ranging programme of connected regeneration activity on going across the Borough. Updates were provided on business successes, Town Centre developments in Stockton, Thornaby and Billingham, a jobs and skills update including the work on Enterprise Initiatives. Progress with the key housing developments were highlighted, an update on the Local Enterprise Partnership; City Deal status, Regional Economic Growth fund and other Public Sector Investments. The update provided a comprehensive picture of the many key achievements delivered to date and the further plans and commitments in place to continue the programme of regeneration across the borough.
4. The second presentation was given by Julie Nixon, Head of Housing and focused on housing in the borough and outlined the future housing pressures. It began by setting the national context for housing which included details relating to the Government's committed to investing in affordable housing, supporting the private rented sector, helping first time buyers and making planning changes in order to speed up house building.

5. The pressures facing the housing service locally were outlined, highlighting the significant increase in the number of customers who are accessing housing options advice. Reasons for the increase in customers include the impact of welfare reform in particular the under occupation changes, coupled with other pressures such as those related to an ageing population and responded to the housing needs of vulnerable client groups.
6. The Housing service outlined their approach to responding to the pressures, this included the additional support which is being made available through libraries, working in partnership with private landlords and other agencies and securing external funding.
7. All slides, agenda and supporting material from the seminars can be accessed at <http://kyit.stockton.gov.uk/members/policyupdatesessions>
8. A regular update report on members seminar events held will be provided to Council at each meeting going forward.

## **FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

### **Financial**

11. There are no financial implications arising as a direct result of this report.

### **Legal**

12. There are no legal implications arising as a direct result from this report.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

13. This report is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

## **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

14. This report is not subject to Equality Impact Assessment as it makes no proposals for service development or policy change.

## **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS**

15. Members Policy Seminars help the Council achieve all its objectives as outlined in the Sustainable Community Strategy.

## **CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS**

16. No external consultation has taken place on this report.

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Background Papers

Slides/ Presentation from the member seminar programmes.

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

Members Policy Seminars affect all wards in the Borough.

Property

This report has no implications for the Council's Capital Programme and Asset Management Plan.