

Environment Select Committee

A meeting of Environment Select Committee was held on Monday, 15th July, 2013.

Present: Cllr Nigel Cooke (Chairman), Cllr Derrick Brown, Cllr Mrs Maureen Rigg, Cllr David Wilburn, Cllr Bill Woodhead

Officers: J Edmends, J Nixon (DNS); G Birtle, T Harrison (LD)

Also in attendance: None

Apologies: Cllr Jean Kirby and Cllr Mick Womphrey

1 Evacuation Procedure

The evacuation procedure was noted.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Minutes for Signature - 4th March 2013

The minutes of the meeting held on 4th March 2013 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4 Draft Minutes - 3rd June 2013

Consideration was given to the draft minutes of the meeting held on 3rd June 2013.

AGREED that the minutes be approved.

5 Review of the Performance of Housing Providers

Consideration was given to the Scope and Project Plan for the Review of the Performance of Housing Providers.

The main issues/services that would be covered by the review included:

- The performance of Registered Providers (Erimus Housing and Tristar Homes Limited) following the 2007 SSVT & 2010 LSVT – specifically in relation to ‘promises’ made to tenants in the Councils pre-ballot Offer Documents.
- The impact of the current economic climate on the ‘promises’ made to tenants in the Councils SSVT and LSVT Offer Documents.

A series of ‘promises’ were detailed in each of the Offer Documents (to reflect costed tenant priorities) generally covering a '5 year' period but as time passed the Offer/'promises' had less weight due to contractual changes that were agreed with tenants or because of statutory changes.

There had subsequently been occasions when due to changing circumstances the Council had agreed to re-consider an Officer Document 'promise'.

For example RP's had to take note of new national guidance on rents and fixed term tenancies, which were not in existence at the time of the transfers. If RP's wanted to apply to the Homes and Communities Agency for grants on new build properties they were required to set affordable rents. The consideration for Stockton Borough Council was how this sat with tenant's promises in the offer document.

It was noted that Welfare Reform could have a significant impact on the Registered Providers Business Plans as previous assumptions about rental income; void loss, bad debt provision etc. were subject to additional risk.

The Committee requested the further information as follows:

- Evidence that Tristar were seeking feedback from their tenants on performance and acting on this.
- Information as to what steps Tristar were taking to tackle fuel poverty including any negotiations with providers on fuel pricing.

AGREED that:

1. The draft scope and project plan of the review be approved.
2. The information presented be noted.

6 Work Programme

Consideration was given to the project plan and it was noted that the next meeting would be held in September. It was proposed that a site visit would take place and would be on the same day prior to the meeting.

AGREED that the information be noted.

7 Chair's Update

The Chair had nothing to report.