

Place Select Committee
Review of Consolidation of Thirteen Housing Group
Outline Scope

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Which of our strategic corporate objectives does this topic address?	
<p>This review could potentially support aspects of all 4 policy principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect the vulnerable • Create economic prosperity • Tackle inequality • Help people to be healthier 	
What are the main issues and overall aim of this review?	
<p>Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) completed a large-scale stock transfer to Tristar Homes Ltd in December 2010 which facilitated a multi-million pound investment programme of upgrading existing stock, funding environmental improvements and the delivery of much-needed new affordable homes in the Borough.</p> <p>In July 2017, Tristar Homes, along with Erimus Housing, Housing Hartlepool, Tees Valley Housing and Thirteen Care and Support joined in partnership to create one strong social purpose business called <i>Thirteen</i> (the single landlord). This consolidation would enable Thirteen to deliver an internal efficiency programme and give greater flexibility for the single landlord to lever in additional financial resources to support future investment programmes across the Tees Valley. Thirteen remain committed to working in collaboration with SBC and want to be the Council's <i>'partner of choice'</i>.</p> <p>As a landlord and housing developer, Thirteen manages 34,000 properties from North Tyneside to York, with the majority of homes for rent and sale in Teesside. In addition, Thirteen is a social purpose business that uses commercial skills to meet its priorities, and its care and support services offer help for vulnerable people facing a range of challenges. A range of housing support services is also offered including money advice, extra care schemes to help people live independently for longer, adaptations to homes, and help with anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>The operating environment for Registered Housing Providers has changed significantly over recent years - financial pressures due to (a) a cut in social rents by 1% per year for the next four years, (b) the proposed introduction of 'voluntary right to buy' for all housing association</p>	

tenants, and (c) the proposal to limit the amount of rent payable to the Local Housing Allowance Cap (NB. Government has recently announced this element of proposed rent changes will now not be implemented). In response to these financial pressures, Thirteen (like other RPs) has undertaken a programme of efficiency savings to mitigate lost income and unlock financial capacity within the Group to be able to both continue to deliver quality services to its tenants, and deliver additional affordable housing units.

The aim of this review will be to explore the impact (if any) of the consolidation of Thirteen Housing Group in relation to:

- the delivery of services to tenants within the Borough.
- ongoing liaison and contact with SBC at both an operational level (including appropriate Ward Members) and at strategic level.
- their commitment post-consolidation to continue to be the Council's 'partner of choice' (i.e. how their significant forward investment programme aligns and supports the Council's broader economic and regeneration priorities).

The Committee will undertake the following key lines of enquiry:

What was the rationale for the consolidation of Thirteen Housing Group, and how did this effect tenants / leaseholders in Stockton-on-Tees?

What have been the key issues / challenges post-consolidation in terms of the delivery of services, and how are these being addressed?

How does Thirteen engage with tenants / leaseholders (including communication of services and addressing concerns raised)?

What arrangements are in place regarding operational and strategic engagement with the Council? Are they effective?

What are the key features of Thirteen's investment programme, and how is this aligned with Council priorities?

How will the recent internal re-organisation within Thirteen effect the partnership with the Council and tenants / leaseholders?

Who will the Committee be trying to influence as part of its work?

Cabinet, Thirteen Group, Residents, Homes England.

Expected duration of review and key milestones:

4 months

What information do we need?

Existing information (background information, existing reports, legislation, central government documents, etc.):

- Cabinet Report – Strengthening our Joint Working / Developing a Joint Investment Plan (Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council and Thirteen) (July 2017)
- Thirteen Strategic Plan 2018-23
- Thirteen Annual Report 2016-17

- Thirteen Value for Money Self-Assessment 2017
- Thirteen Performance Report – April to December 2017

New information:

- Recent internal re-organisation of Thirteen
- Customer satisfaction information
- Investment programme (short/ medium and long-term)

Who can provide us with further relevant evidence? (Cabinet Member, officer, service user, general public, expert witness, etc.)

What specific areas do we want them to cover when they give evidence?

Thirteen Housing Group

- Rationale for consolidation and issues / challenges since July 2017.
- Customer engagement / satisfaction.
- Strategic and operational engagement with SBC (inc. Councillors).
- Investment programme (property and neighbourhood improvement, community, new builds).

Local Authority

- Thirteen's engagement with the Council (strategic / operational).
- Council's social (including health and well-being), economic and regeneration priorities, and how Thirteen's investment programme support this.

How will this information be gathered? (eg. financial baselining and analysis, benchmarking, site visits, face-to-face questioning, telephone survey, survey)

Committee meetings, reports, site visits, Ward Member survey.

How will key partners and the public be involved in the review?

Committee meetings, review of existing customer satisfaction information, resident engagement during site visits, tenant / leaseholder survey.

How will the review help the Council meet the Public Sector Equality Duty?

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. This review will be mindful of these factors.

How will the review contribute towards the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, or the implementation of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy?

Stockton JSNA: Housing has an important impact on health and well-being: good quality, appropriate housing in places where people want to live has a positive influence on reducing deprivation and health inequalities by facilitating stable/secure family lives.

Stockton-on-Tees Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2012-2018 ('Create and develop healthy

and sustainable places and communities’): ‘Have healthy places to live, work and play’ and ‘Have vibrant and cohesive communities’.

Provide an initial view as to how this review could lead to efficiencies, improvements and/or transformation:

Thirteen Housing Group, through both their day-to-day delivery of housing services and their broader investment plans, will play a significant role in supporting the Council in delivering its social, economic and regeneration activities. This review can provide reassurance that following consolidation:

- Both operational (including Ward Member contact) and strategic relationships with the Council have been maintained and continue to be effective.
- Opportunities for Thirteen’s significant investment potential within the Borough continue.
- That the Council fully understand the financial investment power that Thirteen Housing Group have available, and fully capitalises on this within the Borough.

Project Plan

Key Task	Details/Activities	Date	Responsibility
Scoping of Review	Information gathering	April 2018	Scrutiny Officer Link Officer
Tri-Partite Meeting	Meeting to discuss aims and objectives of review	30.04.18	Select Committee Chair and Vice Chair, Cabinet Member(s), Director(s), Scrutiny Officer, Link Officer
Agree Project Plan	Scope and Project Plan agreed by Committee	14.05.18	Select Committee
Publicity of Review	Determine whether Communications Plan needed		Link Officer, Scrutiny Officer
Obtaining Evidence	Thirteen Local Authority	11.06.18	Select Committee
Members decide recommendations and findings	Review summary of findings and formulate draft recommendations	09.07.18	Select Committee
Circulate Draft Report to Stakeholders	Circulation of Report	July 2018	Scrutiny Officer

Tri-Partite Meeting	Meeting to discuss findings of review and draft recommendations	TBC	Select Committee Chair and Vice Chair, Cabinet Member(s), Director(s), Scrutiny Officer, Link Officer
Final Agreement of Report	Approval of final report by Committee	10.09.18	Select Committee, Cabinet Member, Director
Consideration of Report by Executive Scrutiny Committee	Consideration of report	18.09.18	Executive Scrutiny Committee
Report to Cabinet/Approving Body	Presentation of final report with recommendations for approval to Cabinet	18.10.18	Cabinet/ Approving Body