

# Minutes of Hartlepool Housing Partnership

18<sup>th</sup> November 2009  
Stranton Room, Greenbank

## Member Attendance & Substitutes

Cath Purdy	Housing Hartlepool (Chair)
Joanne Smithson	Hartlepool Partnership
Dave Stubbs	Hartlepool Borough Council
Penny Garner-Carpenter	Hartlepool Borough Council
Lynda Igoe	Hartlepool Borough Council
Karen Kelly	Hartlepool Borough Council
Nigel Johnson	Hartlepool Borough Council
Peter Morgan	Hartlepool Borough Council
Maurice Brazell	Hartlepool Revival
Michael Corrigan	Hartlepool Community Network
Mark Dutton	Housing Hartlepool
Andy Powell	Housing Hartlepool
Julia Histon	North Star Housing Group
John Lynch	Hartlepool Community Network
Carolyn Wood	Home Group
Alex Ross	Yuill Homes
Jonathon Gibson	JRF
Charlotte Bell	Hartfields

### 1. Apologies

Phil Toal Frank Haslam Milan

### 2. Presentation on Healthy Schools Initiative

This presentation did not go ahead.

### 3. Minutes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2009

The minutes of the meeting of 10<sup>th</sup> June 2009 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

### 4. Matters Arising

John Lynch was welcomed back to the meeting, replacing Lynda Shields as representative from the Community Network. Dave Stubbs, the new Director for Regeneration and Neighbourhoods, was also welcomed to the meeting.

Alex Ross confirmed that she would be happy to attend the Environment Partnership on behalf of the Housing Partnership. This was agreed. Dave Stubbs advised that he also sits on the Environment Partnership.

**5. HBC and Partnership – new roles**

Joanne Smithson advised the partnership that the Community Strategy team have been relocated to the Civic Centre.

She also advised the group that Peter Scott, previous Director of Regeneration, is retiring at the end of the month. A restructure has taken place within the Council and Dave Stubbs has been appointed as the new director.

Dave Stubbs informed the partnership that the 8 divisions within his department were reduced to 6 by Cabinet on 16.11.09. Savings have largely driven this process. The 4<sup>th</sup> tier management level will be confirmed by the end of the week. Dave Stubbs confirmed his commitment to housing.

**6. Comprehensive Area Assessment**

Joanne Smithson updated the partnership on the findings of the recent CAA inspection. The CAA looks at how the town delivers services. Findings for Hartlepool include strong partnership working, working across agendas, support for HMR with an acknowledgement of the difficult times we are working in, and support for Hartfields. There was also recognition that funding will be a challenge to our ambitions.

Joanne Smithson also described how the CAA is not scored but that areas get a green flag, red flag or no flag at all. Housing did not receive a flag and this is deemed good.

CAA is also different to previous inspection as there are no action points raised through this process. The CAA report will be published on the Audit Commission's One Place website on 10<sup>th</sup> December.

Julia Histon advised that RSLs are also going to be inspected on how they engage in the CAA process. Joanne Smithson advised that she is available to help RSLs prepare for this.

Cath Purdy stated that this new process should make real changes and improvements. At the next inspection we should also be in a better position to demonstrate links with health and other partnership areas.

**7. LAA – Delivery Plan 2009/10**

Penny Garner-Carpenter outlined progress that has been made during Q1 and Q2. The financial crisis still impacts on what we do. However, for the first time the Council has been allowed to build housing for rent and is doing this in partnership with Housing Hartlepool. Decent homes in the social sector is still on track, work has begun with Centrepont, CBL has been implemented and the Housing Options Centre opened. The Carr-Gomm scheme is fully occupied. However, a stock condition survey in the private sector has suggested that our decent homes

figures should be revised downwards. Discussions are ongoing with the consultants and this will be reported more fully at the next meeting.

The reduction in funding means that we need to prioritise what money is spent on.

#### **7.1 Outcome 23: Balancing Housing Supply and Demand**

Nigel Johnson discussed Q1 and Q2 outturn performance.

Improvement Target NI 155 – for 2009/10 the target is 60 units. To date 52 have been delivered and 100 are expected to come through during the year.

Alex Ross suggested that due to ongoing changes to the HCA grant system the town needs to be ready to take advantage. Yuills are happy to queue up potential grants and be prepared for future schemes.

##### Planning Framework

Nigel Johnson briefed the partnership about 3 key planning issues:

1. Affordable Housing Development Plan Document – this has been approved by Cabinet and is out for consultation until 4<sup>th</sup> Jan 10. It is expected to be adopted late 2010. A viability assessment toolkit has been purchased by the Council and a minimum of 10% affordable housing will be expected on any site. However, we need to be mindful that Stockton Borough Council have a 15% affordable housing request.
2. SHLAA – this is currently ready to go to Cabinet for approval to go out for consultation.
3. Replacement for Local Plan – the preferred options will be widely publicised.

Nigel Johnson confirmed that minimum standards will be Code 3 for affordable housing and Code 4 for the Council New Build.

##### Empty Homes Strategy

Karen Kelly advised the partnership that the Empty Homes Strategy is currently being developed by a Steering Group from across a range of partners who have been meeting since July. The draft Strategy will be completed by the end of November and circulated for consultation.

It was agreed that the Strategy should include an action to pilot the use of an Empty Dwelling Management Order and Cath Purdy requested that this could be actioned in advance of the Strategy being approved.

##### Housing Market Renewal

Nigel Johnson updated the partnership about the 3 sites (Perth/Hurworth, Carr/Hopps and Belle Vue) where spend is on target.

The next stage will be Cabinet approval for any necessary compulsory purchases – likely to be Jan 10.

Nigel Johnson also confirmed that although funding has been cut this will not prevent the schemes from moving forward and work will continue with Housing Hartlepool on Belle Vue. Both Housing Hartlepool and Endeavour have also expressed interest in the Carr/Hopps site.

At a recent HMR conference Hartlepool were mentioned a few times in respect of its good partnership working and delivery. Although funding will be different it will still be available.

A discussion took place about the implications of the 20% cut and the HCA single pot post 2011.

Mark Dutton informed that partnership that the vast majority of houses in Belle Vue are now demolished. At Easington Road a demolition contractor is on site and should be completed by May. The new development will be on site by the end of 2010 and due to its high profile location a design competition is being run.

On Belle Vue the scheme design has been finalised and planning permission is expected Jan 10. The site will be tenure blind.

Julia Histon stated that it is important to keep the programmes going and to put in interventions e.g. at Carr/Hopps to prevent decline. Dave Stubbs agreed that schemes can not stall and innovative ways to fund them need to be explored.

#### New Build

Nigel Johnson updated the partnership about the local target and that 29 other properties have been built to Code 3. The Council has made a 2<sup>nd</sup> bid for funding and if successful over 100 units will be delivered.

## **7.2 Outcome 24: Improving the quality of existing housing**

Penny Garner-Carpenter discussed Q1 and Q2 outturn performance.

The regional loans scheme was discussed and the need to ensure it is monitored to catch those who can not afford the loans.

The risks for this outcome have now been split between the social and private sector.

#### Beyond Decent Homes Standards – next 5 years

Penny Garner-Carpenter asked the partnership if they want to set a target post 2010.

John Lynch explained how the Decent Homes plus target was well received by tenants.

A discussion also took place about priorities and whether efforts would be better focussed on the private sector. It was agreed that social housing is the better quality stock in the town.

It was agreed that the quarterly monitoring form should continue to collect information on decent homes.

### **7.3 Outcome 25: Meeting the housing needs of vulnerable people**

Penny Garner-Carpenter discussed Q1 and Q2 outturn performance.

A discussion took place about lack of continued funding for short-term services and the risks associated with this. Peter Morgan advised the partnership that Supporting People is in the first round of reviews for Business Transformation. Peter Morgan also spoke about the budget pressure.

The target for NI 142 has acceptable progress.

A bigger discussion took place about the impact of short-term services on move-on, health, drug and alcohol issues and how these schemes are vital.

Dave Stubbs advised how it is not too late to be considered as a budget pressure and Joanne Smithson advised how a mapping exercise she is currently involved in could look more closely at the drug/alcohol aspect.

Integrated strategies and the need to work together planning for continuing and changing projects were debated. Dave Stubbs asked for an analysis of how well the schemes work. Peter Morgan confirmed that he can demonstrate the cost effectiveness of the schemes. Peter Morgan advised that priorities and costs of interventions need to be clear.

#### Adaptations

Penny Garner-Carpenter advised the partnership about the current situation with this agenda and how there is high demand in Hartlepool across tenures.

Penny Garner-Carpenter discussed the papers produced by the Housing Sub Group and the RSL quarterly return which collects information on how many adaptations have been carried out.

Penny Garner-Carpenter also explained how the issue is being looked at sub regionally to deliver adaptations.

The partnership were asked to consider loans, spreading the load, new build with disabilities in mind and how they can help to address the issue.

Andy Powell expressed concern that this issue has been on the agenda for at least 18 months and that there is a need for it to be addressed in Hartlepool rather than sub regionally. Options for delivery and procurement need to be considered and because this issue impacts on how people live independently it needs to be a priority.

Dave Stubbs agreed that there needs to be a strategy around Disabled Facilities Grants rather than rely on SCRAPT money each year. Cath Purdy stressed that this needs to feature in the Housing Strategy and that the different RSLs' policies need pulling together.

#### Homelessness Strategy – draft

Lynda Igoe circulated the Housing Needs Activity report and updated the partnership about progress with the Homelessness Strategy. The low homeless acceptance figures for Hartlepool are due to the focus on prevention.

In December a half day event will be held with the Homelessness Strategy Steering Group and its wider members to consult on priorities that have been identified for this strategy.

The service user event for young people that was discussed at the last meeting will now take place in December and will also be important to determining the priorities. It is emerging that a concentration on young people will be a priority for this strategy as it was in the last one.

The full draft document will be consulted on in January and it will go to Cabinet for approval in March.

Lynda Igoe also talked the partnership through the recent activity for the Housing Advice Team. The Housing Options Centre opened on 14<sup>th</sup> September and has been well used with the number of people coming in increasing each month. From 16<sup>th</sup> October Housing Hartlepool has provided a reception service and it is anticipated that the remainder of the lettings team will be based in the Options Centre by early 2010. The Leaving Care Team will also be providing a surgery from the centre and CAB will be offering a money advice service for people with mortgage difficulties.

Since the introduction of CBL 9 people in supported housing have moved into new homes. John Lynch advised that there is strong tenant support for CBL and he has received good feedback.

#### Re-housing Challenging Clients

Peter Morgan asked the partnership to sign up to the protocol outlined in the papers sent out before the meeting. It was agreed that the partnership was happy to sign up to this.

**7.4. Outcome 26: Access to Housing**

Penny Garner-Carpenter discussed Q1 and Q2 outturn performance. It was also confirmed that the learning disabilities scheme is now complete and has been welcomed by the local community.

Choice Based Lettings

This was updated under Outcome 25

Time2Buy

Andy Powell updated the partnership about progress with this. During April to October there were 11 completions for Homebuy Direct and 1 for the 1<sup>st</sup> Time Buyers scheme. In respect of mortgage rescue Time2Buy will be acting as a clearing house and the Council will be an important source of referrals. Andy Powell will liaise with Lynda Igoe regarding this.

**8. Sub Regional Housing Strategy**

Penny Garner-Carpenter described how the new strategy is a revision to the previous strategy. Consultation is currently underway with the Tees Valley Housing Forum and the immediate timetable is for it to be presented to Directors of Regeneration on 9<sup>th</sup> December, TVL Board in January and individual Cabinets thereafter.

A joint Heads of Housing and Housing Strategy Managers meeting is taking place on 16<sup>th</sup> December to start work on the Action Plan.

Any comments should be forwarded to Penny Garner-Carpenter or Karen Kelly as soon as possible.

**9. Housing Strategy Update 2009 and new strategy 2010 - 15**

Penny Garner-Carpenter circulated the report produced by the Housing Sub Group which is to be used as the 2009 update. A new strategy will be produced in 2010 in conjunction with the Empty Homes Strategy and the Homelessness Strategy.

**10. Any Other Business**

Andy Powell advised the partnership that the Sub Regional CBL Policy will be revised in April 10. Stakeholders will be contacted in January for their comments.

**11. Dates and Times of Meetings for 2010**

The meetings for 2010 were agreed to take place on 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 1<sup>st</sup> September and 1<sup>st</sup> December all @ 10am at Greenbank.