

Hartlepool Housing Partnership

Terms of Reference

Version 2

**Agreed by the Housing Partnership
December 2010**

Revision Log

Version	Date	Revision
2	Dec 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Changes in outcomes and functions• Revised roles and responsibilities• Revised membership• Membership and addition of non-voting members• Minor amendments to reflect names of groups / organisations• Establish quorum as 6 members• Additional sections included on legal status, complaints, dissolution of the Housing Partnership, Freedom of Information, updating Terms of Reference• Formatted document to bring in line with the Hartlepool Partnership's governance Standard

Framework

The Terms of Reference cover nine key areas:

- 1 Purpose and outcomes
- 2 Functions
- 3 Roles and responsibilities
- 4 Membership
- 5 Principles
- 6 Performance and risk management
- 7 Developing capacity and capability
- 8 Engaging with stakeholders
- 9 Operations

1 Purpose and outcomes

1.1 Purpose

The aim of the Housing Partnership is to bring partners together to ensure that there is access to good quality and affordable housing in sustainable neighbourhoods and communities where people want to live.

1.2 Outcomes

Our strategy for doing this involves:

- Balancing housing supply and demand
- Improving the quality of existing houses
- Meeting the housing needs of vulnerable people
- Access to Housing

2 Functions

2.1 The Housing Partnership will work towards achieving the outcomes set out in 1.2 by:

- (i) Producing a comprehensive housing strategy which will meet the housing needs of Hartlepool;
- (ii) Co-ordinating and facilitating multi-agency and private sector involvement in needs assessment and strategy delivery;
- (iii) Providing a link between housing and wider policies for the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area, including the regeneration of deprived neighbourhoods;
- (iv) Facilitating housing involvement in local partnerships;
- (v) Working with neighbouring (sub regional) and regional organisations to tackle wider issues of common concerns;

- (vi) Working with sub regional partners to develop and implement the sub regional housing strategy, bid for capital finance and ensure that the Tees Valley maintains a high profile both regionally and nationally;
- (vii) Ensuring that performance management arrangements are fit for purpose and that corrective actions are agreed and implemented as required.

3 Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The role and responsibilities of members of the Housing Partnership:

- To act in the best interests of the partnership, the organisations they represent and the people and business community of Hartlepool.
- To take part in themed working groups as determined by the Chair.
- To represent the views of the partnership in external networks and meetings as appropriate.
- To provide timely and appropriate updates on performance.
- To attend all appropriate meetings wherever possible and to submit timely apologies where this is not possible.
- Private Sector members to act as the 'demanding customer' ensuring that services and priorities are relevant to ensure the current and future prosperity and wellbeing of Hartlepool.

3.2 Chair / Vice Chair of the Housing Partnership:

- The Chair / Vice Chair of the partnership are elected by the full membership of the partnership. The term of office is two years, which can be reviewed on agreement of the Partnership.
- The Chair / Vice Chair will also represent the partnership on the Hartlepool Partnership Board during the period of office.
- The Chair / Vice Chair will be representatives of the Local Authority, Registered Provider or voluntary/community sector. Ideally the Chair and Vice-Chair will not be from the same sector.

3.3 Role of the Chair

- To lead the work of the Housing Partnership, ensuring that the views of the partnership are communicated to a wide audience.

- To represent the partnership on the Hartlepool Partnership Board.
- To meet with the Chair of the LSP to review the performance management framework as required.
- To ensure the efficient and effective operation of the partnership.
- To promote effective partnership working between members of the partnership and if necessary resolve conflict and help foster an environment of mutual interest.
- To approve the formation of Working Groups to deliver specific items of work on behalf of the partnership.
- With the support of the Secretariat to agree the agenda, associated papers and minutes of previous meetings.

3.4 Role of Vice Chair

- To deputise for the Chair as required.
- To support the Chair to ensure the work of the partnership is effectively deployed.

3.5 Standards of Behaviour

Members of the Housing Partnership will strive to meet the standards set out in the COMPACT's code of practice on communication and consultation. We will also follow the protocol between the Hartlepool Partnership and the Hartlepool Community Empowerment Network.

4 Membership

4.1 The Housing Partnership is made up of the following members:

Organisation	Representation
Hartlepool Borough Council	Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Housing
	Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
	Assistant Director of Regeneration and Planning
Community Network	Representatives from disability, youth and BME
Housing Hartlepool Tenants	Chair

Consultation Panel	
New Deal for Communities	Resident
Registered Providers	Housing Hartlepool Fabrick North Star Home Three Rivers Guinness Northern Counties Accent Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust
Hartlepool Estate Agent	

Non Voting Members:

Organisation	Representation
Theme Lead Officer	Principal Housing Regeneration and Policy Manager
Hartlepool Borough Council	Officers from Housing Regeneration and Policy; Community Safety; Child and Adult Services; Neighbourhood Management
Hartlepool Partnership	Member of HBC's Performance & Partnerships Team

Council Officers who are not members of the theme partnership

There may be occasional attendance from relevant officers on specific subjects.

5 Principles

5.1 Shared Principles

All members of the partnership shall be committed to applying the principles established in the Community Strategy:

- Decision making and communication
- Effective partnership working
- Efficient partnership working
- Integrity
- Involvement and inclusion
- Leadership and influence

- Performance management
- Skills and knowledge
- Sustainable development

6 Performance and risk management

6.1 Decision Making

The Housing Partnership will continue to develop consensus, commitment and common decision making processes. Where practicable, members should have the authority to take decisions and make commitments. However individual organisations will remain responsible and accountable for decisions on their services and the use of their resources.

6.2 Information, Advice and Support

All information, advice and support will be fit for purpose and tailored to the functions of the Housing Partnership. The executive will ensure that all information is directly relevant to the decisions being taken and is:

- timely
- objective
- sufficient
- clear and concise
- reliable

The Housing Partnership will call on professional advice and support when deemed necessary, particularly when the outcome of decision has a significant legal or financial implication.

6.3 Performance Management

The Housing Partnership is responsible for delivering the Housing Theme of the Community Strategy and the Housing Strategy. The Housing Partnership will receive regular reports on progress towards implementing the Strategies. Where performance is not on track the Housing Partnership will take action to address this.

6.4 Risk Management

The Housing Partnership will take a planned and systematic approach to identifying, evaluating and responding to risks. We will consider the full range of our activities and responsibilities, and continuously check that various good management disciplines are in place, including:

- strategies and policies are put into practice where appropriate
- high quality services are delivered efficiently and effectively
- performance is regularly monitored and effective measures are put in place to tackle poor performance

- laws and regulations are complied with
- information used by the partnership is relevant, accurate, up-to-date, timely and reliable
- financial statements and other information published by the partnership are accurate and reliable
- financial and human resources are managed efficiently and effectively and are safeguarded

7 Developing capacity and capability

7.1 Recruitment and Induction

The Housing Partnership is aware of the importance of recruiting people with the right skills, knowledge and experience to play an effective part in delivering the strategic aims of the partnership. It aims to involve individuals who reflect the community/organisation they represent. We will balance the need for stability which comes from continuity of knowledge and relationships with the need for new ideas and new thinking. New members will receive an induction which is tailored to their role in the Housing Partnership.

7.2 Personal Development

All partnership members will be given the opportunity to further develop skills and update their knowledge throughout their period of membership.

8 Engaging with stakeholders

8.1 Accountability relationships

- Each member feeds back to its representative group or body.
- Community Network representatives are accountable through the network's feedback framework.
- The Chair of the Tenants Consultation Panel feeds back directly to the Panel, which in turn feeds back to individual tenant groups.
- Policy and strategy decisions are forwarded to the Council's Cabinet and for information to the Hartlepool Partnership Board.
- The themed partnership is accountable through the performance management framework and reports to the Hartlepool Partnership.

Theme partnerships will also refer certain matters to the Hartlepool Partnership Board. Matters referred would include issues that:

- are strategic and involve very substantial changes in structures, services and use of resources
- significantly affect the delivery or development of the Community Strategy or the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy
- previously have been referred by the Hartlepool Partnership
- are cross-cutting
- are contentious or novel, and
- report on progress towards targets within the appropriate theme

8.2 Stakeholder engagement

The Housing Partnership will ensure that on key issues for the Housing Strategy and LAA delivery it will seek to involve service users and local residents to reflect local priorities.

8.3 Forming and maintaining relationships with other partnerships

The partnership will take the lead in forming and maintaining relationships with other partnerships to successfully deliver the housing outcomes. This will include but not exclusively be limited to the following partnerships:

- Safer Hartlepool Partnership
- Health and Care Partnership
- Environment Partnership
- Jobs and the Economy
- Lifelong Learning and Skills
- Strengthening Communities
- Supporting People
- Sub Regional partnerships including Tees Valley Unlimited & the Choice Based Lettings Partnership.

8.4 Working arrangements with the Community Network

The partnership will work with the Community Network as outlined in the Hartlepool Partnership and Hartlepool Community Empowerment Network Protocol.

9. Operation of the Housing Partnership

9.1 Legal Status

The Housing Partnership is a theme partnership of the Hartlepool Partnership. It will not act as an accountable body for any grant or funding regime.

These Terms of Reference do not change, replace, substitute or amend in any way partner's own management or accountability frameworks.

9.2 Decision making and voting

As far as practicable business will be conducted in the spirit of partnership and consensus will be sought without recourse to votes. In exceptional circumstances where a vote proves necessary, each member will have a single vote and in the event of a tied vote, the Chair will have the casting vote. The quorum for the Partnership will be six members. Named substitutes will be entitled to vote and be included in quorum.

9.3 Attendance at meetings

Members will endeavour to attend all meetings of the Housing Partnership. However, if they are unable to attend any meeting they should submit their apologies in advance of the meeting.

As flexibility and continuity is essential to partnership working, each member may identify a named substitute who may attend on their behalf when necessary.

Members unable to attend for three consecutive meetings will be removed unless extenuating circumstances exist.

9.4 Declaration of interest

Decisions of the Housing Partnership must be taken and be seen to be taken in the interests of the well-being of Hartlepool. All Partnership members should complete declaration of interest forms. This records any personal interests that members believe could come into conflict with their responsibilities as partnership members. The forms will be kept by the Housing Partnership Secretariat as public documents.

9.5 Meeting procedures

The Housing Partnership meets quarterly with additional meetings established as and when required through agreement with the Chair.

Meetings are structured through agendas with opportunity for all members to raise issues and identify agenda items.

9.6 Complaints procedure

The Housing Partnership will follow the Hartlepool Partnership complaints procedure where necessary.

9.7 Dissolution of the Housing Partnership

The Hartlepool Partnership Board and the Housing Partnership may at any time dissolve the Housing Partnership if it determines it necessary or advisable to do so. Views of members of the Housing Partnership will be sought and reported to the meeting of the Hartlepool Partnership where a

decision is to be made. The Housing Partnership would be dissolved if such a proposal were supported by a three quarters majority of those present and voting at the meeting.

9.8 Freedom of Information Act

The Freedom of Information Act gives everyone the right to access information that is held by public authorities. Hartlepool Borough Council has developed guidance to help staff comply with the act. The Housing Partnership works within this policy when giving out information to partners and the public.

9.9 Public access

Meetings of the Housing Partnership will be open to the public and press unless in exceptional circumstances they are excluded by a vote for reasons that shall be recorded. Observers will not be allowed to comment or address the partnership unless asked to do so by the Chair. They do not have the right to vote on any issue.

The Secretarial Team should be informed of any persons attending the meeting to observe.

9.10 Secretarial support arrangements

Secretariat support for the partnership will be provided by Hartlepool Borough Council's Housing Strategy Officer and the PA to the Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods. This support includes:

- Arranging Partnership meetings on a quarterly basis, plus any additional meetings as required.
- Publishing agendas, papers and minutes of previous meetings on the instruction of the Chair.
- Arranging guest speakers and reports from external bodies for the attention of the partnership members.
- Providing training, induction and other development events for the benefit of partnership members.
- Managing communication, consultation and performance management events on behalf of the partnership.
- Submitting funding applications where appropriate and managing and accounting for resources allocated to the Partnership.
- Promoting partnership working for the benefit of local people and businesses in Hartlepool.

- All other general administrative support for the partnership.

9.11 Partnership sub groups

Occasionally a sub group of the Partnership may be established which requires focused activity or where a more specialist membership is required. These would normally have a specific remit and period of operation to undertake a specific task and report directly back to the Partnership.

9.12 Updating the Terms of Reference

This Terms of Reference can be amended or updated by obtaining a two thirds majority agreement by the Housing Partnership. The proposed change should be set out in a report as an agenda item for consideration by the Housing Partnership at one of its meetings.