

CABINET AGENDA



Monday 11th June 2007

at 9.00am

**in the Red Room, Avondale Centre,
Dyke House, Hartlepool
(Raby Road entrance)**

MEMBERS: CABINET:

The Mayor, Stuart Drummond

Councillors Hall, Hargreaves, Hill, Jackson, Payne and Tumilty

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS

3. MINUTES

To receive the Record of Decision in respect of the meeting held on 29th May 2007
(already circulated)

4. BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

4.1 2006/2007 Final Outturn Strategy – *Chief Financial Officer*

5. KEY DECISIONS

5.1 Business Improvement District (BID) Proposal for Longhill and Sandgate
Industrial Estates – *Director of Regeneration and Planning Services*

6. OTHER ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION

6.1 Scrutiny Investigation Railway Approaches Action Plan – *Director of
Regeneration and Planning Services and Director of Neighbourhood Services*

7. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION / INFORMATION

No items

8. REPORTS FROM OVERVIEW OF SCRUTINY FORUMS

- 8.1 Youth Unemployment – Final Report – *Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum*
- 8.2 Final Report – Scrutiny Investigation into Social Prescribing – *Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum*
- 8.3 Final Report – Response to Hartlepool PCT's Consultation on its Proposed Management Arrangements – *Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum*
- 8.4 Final Report – Scrutiny Investigation into the Provision of Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) in Hartlepool Schools – *Children's Services Scrutiny Forum*
- 8.5 Final Report – Scrutiny Investigation into the Performance and Operation of Private Sector Rented Accommodation and Landlords in Hartlepool – *Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum*

EXEMPT ITEMS

Under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs referred to below of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

9. EXEMPT ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION

- 9.1 Hartlepool People Centre, 21 Raby Road (para 3) – *Director of Neighbourhood Services*

CABINET REPORT

11th June, 2007



Report of: Chief Financial Officer

Subject: 2006/2007 FINAL OUTTURN STRATEGY

SUMMARY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To enable Members to finalise details of the 2006/2007 Outturn Strategy.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

2.1 The report provides details of the latest forecast outturn and informs Members that the underspend on corporate budgets is more favourable than previously anticipated. This is mainly owing to one-off factors and in particular the achievement of a discount on the Loans Portfolio at the end of March. On the down side there are a number of additional commitments which need funding. After reflecting these items and the issues approved in the provisional outturn strategy, there is an uncommitted underspend of £70,000.

3. RELEVANCE TO CABINET

3.1 The report enables Cabinet to finalise the 2006/2007 Outturn Strategy.

4. TYPE OF DECISION

4.1 Key Decision – test (i) applies.

5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE

5.1 Cabinet 11th June, 2007

6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED

6.1 It is recommended that Members:

- i) Determine which of the following options they wish to adopt for funding the bonus buy-out costs:
 - a) Fund the bonus buy-out costs of £1.3m from the one-off loan discount of £1.2m and the final quarters investment income of £0.1m; or
 - b) Fund the bonus buy-out costs from General Fund Reserves, as previously approved by Council and transfer £1.3m (£1.2m one off loan discount and £0.1m final quarters investment income) into the Budget Support Fund pending the development of a strategy for using these resources as part of the 2008/2009 Budget and Policy Framework proposals.
- ii) Approve the use of the corporate underspends to meet the additional commitments detailed in paragraph 3.11;
- iii) Determined how they wish to allocate the net uncommitted resources of £70,000, detailed in paragraph 3.11.
- iv) Approve the proposals for finalising capital outturn details in paragraph 4.2;
- v) Approve the proposal for reallocating reserves as detailed in paragraph 5.1 (i).
- vi) Authorise the Chief Financial Officer to finalise the 2006/2007 outturn and should any further issues arise to fund these by varying the contributions to the Legal Costs reserve and or the Job Evaluation Protection Reserve in consultation with the Finance and Efficiency Portfolio Holder.

Report of: Chief Financial Officer

Subject: 2006/2007 FINAL OUTTURN STRATEGY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To enable Cabinet to approve the final outturn strategy for 2006/2007.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Members have previously considered a number of strategic issues in relation to the provisional 2006/2007 outturn position as part of the 2007/2008 Budget and Policy Framework. These proposals were approved by Council on 15th February, 2007 and covered:

- the use of corporate underspends to meet one-off unbudgeted commitments and support for the 2009/2010 budget;
- a strategy for funding Neighbourhood Services 2006/2007 overspend; and
- the earmarking of resources for the Tall Ships Visit.

- 2.2 Work is now progressing to finalise the 2006/2007 accounts. Whilst this work will not be complete for a number of weeks there are a number of additional strategic financial issues which Members need to address.

3. PROVISIONAL 2006/2007 REVENUE OUTTURN

- 3.1 Details of the forecast outturn position were reported at the end of quarter three and as part of the 2007/2008 Budget and Policy Framework. In total the reports anticipated a gross underspend of £1.8m. Members approved a 2006/2007 closure strategy and 2007/2008 budget strategy which addressed this issue. The most significant item being the allocation of £1m to support the budget in 2009/2010 and £0.8m to support the Tall Ships visit.

- 3.2 Since that projection was prepared two significant changes have occurred:

- Cost of Bonus Buy Out £1.3m;
- Achievement of one-off discount on Loans Portfolio £1.2m.

This benefit was only achieved in the last week of March as a result of increases in interest rates.

- 3.3 Council has previously approved that the cost of the bonus buy-out should be funded from General Fund balances, pending repayment of these monies in 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 from the resulting base budget savings.
- 3.4 In view of the achievement of a one-off discount on the Loans Portfolio Members may wish to use this amount to substantially fund the bonus buy-out costs. The resulting shortfall of £0.1m could then be funded from additional investment income earned in the final quarter of 2006/2007. This would avoid having to fund these costs from General Fund balances.
- 3.5 Alternatively, Members may wish to fund the bonus buy-out costs from General Fund balances, as previously approved by Council and to earmark the one-off discount on the Loans Portfolio to support the budget strategy in 2008/2009 and future years, if this option is adopted this amount will be transferred to the Budget Support Fund. A strategy for using this amount can then be developed as part of the 2008/2009 Budget and Policy Framework proposals. These proposals will then be subject to detailed consultation and scrutiny as part of the normal budget process later in the year.
- 3.6 Detailed outturns for corporate and service based budgets are nearing completion.
- 3.7 There are a number of additional corporate benefits, including a saving against the strategic contingency and one-off Prudential Borrowing savings.
- 3.8 In respect of departmental budget all areas, other than Neighbourhood Services underspent. Departments will therefore be able to carry forward Managed Revenue underspends, albeit at reduced levels. Further details of these proposals will be reported to Cabinet once final outturns are available.
- 3.9 On the downside there are a number of adverse factors which need to be addressed, including an increase in the Neighbourhood Services overspend and the need to make provision for potential costs relating to the Ship Dismantling and Related Development Appeal and Dial-a-Ride legal costs.
- 3.10 It would also be prudent to earmark resources to meet potential temporary protection costs arising from the implementation of a new Pay and Grading system later in the year.

- 3.11 After reflecting the above factors it is anticipated that there will be a net underspend on the revenue budget of £70,000, as summarised below and detailed in Appendix A.

£'000

Summary of Additional Benefits and Commitments

Investment Income (net)	200
Savings on Strategic Contingency	351
One-off Prudential Borrowing Savings	410
Benefit Subsidy (net of Shopping Centre Income)	140
Brinkburn Pool Savings	90
Miscellaneous	<u>45</u>
	1,236

Commitments

Job Evaluation Protection Reserve	(400)
Increase Neighbourhood Services Overspend	(180)
Provision for Ship Dismantling and Related Development/ Dial-a-Ride Legal Costs	(406)
Swimming Pool Maintenance Reserve	(90)
Community Sports Centre Deficits Reserve	(50)
Contributions towards cost of greater integration between HBC and PCT (e.g. Director of Public Health)	(40)
Uncommitted Resources	<u>70</u>

- 3.12 The Council has also received a payment of £0.37m under the Government's LABGI (Local Authority Business Growth Incentive) Scheme. Members have previously determined to earmark this amount to support the 2008/2009 budget and Council Tax strategy.

4. CAPITAL OUTTURN

- 4.1 Capital outturns are also nearing completion and there is only one minor issue to bring to Members attention in relation to the sale of Cromwell Street. In accordance with existing policies the department vacating an operational asset normally receives 25% of the net sale proceeds, which in this case is Neighbourhood Services.
- 4.2 In this particular case costs of £97,000 have been incurred to relocate facilities previously provided from Cromwell Street within the main Church Street depot. As these works were needed to achieve the capital receipts generated of £225,000 and will provide a longer term benefit it is proposed that the Neighbourhood Services Department does not receive 25% of the net receipt. This proposal will mean that the net capital receipt of £128,000 can be earmarked towards the achievement of the capital receipts required to meet the existing capital receipts targets for 2006/2007 and 2007/2008.

- 4.3 Members have previously been advised that the achievement of these targets is dependent upon the completion of large land sales from the sale of the former Barlow's Site and the Briarfields Lodge Site. Until these sales are complete it is prudent to earmark all other receipts to avoid any shortfalls in the resources already committed to supporting capital expenditure.

5. REVIEW OF EARMARKED RESERVES

- 5.1 A comprehensive review of the Council's reserves was completed as part of the 2007/2008 budget process. As part of closure the following issues are brought to Members attention:

i) Specific Reserves – Residual Uncommitted Reserves - £64,000

After reflecting actual expenditure commitments there are minor balances remaining on a number of reserves. The largest single item relates to the Hart Quarry Judicial Review Reserve which has an uncommitted balance of £35,000, following the negotiation of lower costs by the Chief Solicitor. It is suggested that these resources be reallocated for potential costs arising from the Ship Dismantling and Related Development Planning Appeal/Dial-a-Ride court case to supplement the resources identified earlier in the report.

ii) Budget Support Reserves 2007/2008 to 2009/2010

Previous reports have advised Members that the budget strategy for 2007/2008 to 2009/2010 is based on using £6.5m of reserves to support services. It was previously anticipated that £5.6m would be set aside at 31st March, 2007, to meet this commitment. Following the receipt of further income under the RTB sharing agreement during 2006/2007 the actual resources available at 31st March, 2007, are £6.2m. Therefore, the shortfall in resources has reduced to £0.3m. It is expected that this shortfall will be bridged during 2007/2008 from further income received from the RTB sharing agreement. This cannot be guaranteed as sales have reduced significantly and this trend is likely to continue based on experience in other authorities. In addition, the fear of further increases in interest rates are likely to discourage people from exercising their right to buy.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Council's revenue outturn is more favourable than anticipated owing to a number of one-off factors. The main item relates to the one-off discount achieved on the Council's Loans Portfolio, which cannot be repeated.

- 6.2 On the downside there are also a number of one-off costs and overspends which need to be funded. The net impact of these factors is an underspend of £70,000.
- 6.3 The one-off costs include provision for Ship Dismantling and Related Development/Dial-a-Ride legal costs. At this stage the costs of these issues are uncertain. At the time of preparing this report the Planning Committee were still considering their approach to the appeal. A verbal update will be provided at your meeting. In the event that the costs of these issues are less than the provision included in this report it is suggested that any uncommitted resources should be transferred to the Budget Support Fund. A strategy for using these resources can then be developed as part of the 2008/2009 Budget and Policy Framework proposals.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 It is recommended that Members:

- i) Determine which of the following options they wish to adopt for funding the bonus buy-out costs:
 - a) Fund the bonus buy-out costs of £1.3m from the one-off loan discount of £1.2m and the final quarters investment income of £0.1m; or
 - b) Fund the bonus buy-out costs from General Fund Reserves, as previously approved by Council and transfer £1.3m (£1.2m one off loan discount and £0.1m final quarters investment income) into the Budget Support Fund pending the development of a strategy for using these resources as part of the 2008/2009 Budget and Policy Framework proposals.
- ii) Approve the use of the corporate underspends to meet the additional commitments detailed in paragraph 3.11 and paragraph 6.3;
- iii) Determine how they wish to allocate the net uncommitted resources of £70,000, detailed in paragraph 3.11.
- iv) Approve the proposals for finalising capital outturn details in paragraph 4.2;
- v) Approve the proposal for reallocating reserves as detailed in paragraph 5.1 (i).

- vi) Authorise the Chief Financial Officer to finalise the 2006/2007 outturn and should any further issues arise to fund these by varying the contributions to the Legal Costs reserve and or the Job Evaluation Protection Reserve in consultation with the Finance and Efficiency Portfolio Holder.

<u>Additional Benefits and Commitments</u>	<u>£'000</u>
i) <u>Investment Income</u>	200
Interest income in the final quarter of 2006/2007 was higher than previously forecast.	
ii) <u>Savings on Strategic Contingency</u>	351
The savings reflected lower costs in relation to the provisions included for Older People Care costs, energy costs and a net saving on the Single Status implementation budget.	
The latter budget was originally included to meet the costs of implementing Single Status in April, 2006. In practice, part of the provision has been used to fund the final COT3 costs, employment tribunal legal costs and costs of undertaking detailed job evaluations.	
iii) <u>One-Off Prudential Borrowing Savings</u>	410
These savings have arisen owing to capital expenditure being incurred later than expected.	
iv) <u>Benefit Subsidy (net Shopping Centre Income)</u>	140
These budgets are held within the Chief Executive's Department, although they could be classed as corporate budgets as they are effectively demand lead budgets and therefore difficult to predict. For 2006/2007 the current Benefit Subsidy Grant regime has had a positive financial impact. On the downside the level of Shopping Centre income has been lower than anticipated.	
v) <u>Brinkburn Pool</u>	90
The Children's Services, Performance Management and Regeneration, Liveability & Housing Portfolios have determined, on the basis of advice from the Amateur Swimming Association and consultation with Hartlepool Swimming Instructors, not to install a moveable floor at Brinkburn Pool. The Portfolio Holders have requested that this budget provision be earmarked for the general upkeep of Swimming Pools within the town. (See item (xi)).	
vi) <u>Miscellaneous</u>	45
Savings on other corporate budgets.	
	<hr/> 1,236

vii) Job Evaluation Protection Reserve (400)

This reserve will provide additional resources to assist with the implementation of a new Pay and Grading system. In particular, these resources will help meet the temporary costs of providing protection to individual employees where their salary is downgraded.

viii) Increase in Neighbourhood Services Overspend (180)

This increase is owing to three one-off factors:

- Reduction in Car Parking Income

This position is linked to the reduction in Shopping Centre income detailed in paragraph (iv) above.

- Cost of 53 Week Year

In a normal year Neighbourhood Services budgets are based on 52 weeks. However, every seven years there needs to be 53 weeks in the financial year and 2006/2007 was such a year. In previous years when this position arose the Neighbourhood Services Trading Accounts had generated a surplus to offset these costs. However, since the last 53 weeks occurred the financial position on trading activities has become more challenging and it has not been possible to absorb these costs in 2006/2007.

- Recovery of Trading Activity Income

During 2006/2007 a new Financial Management System was introduced, which included replacing the Neighbourhood Services Uniclass Costing System. This change has enabled efficiency savings to be made by Neighbourhood Services and further corporate savings will be achieved in 2007/2008. This was a major exercise and was carried out by seconding staff from their normal day jobs. As a result of these factors some minor problems in recovering income from clients within the Council (including schools) have been experienced. As the amount is not significant (£75,000 compared to total income of £25m) and the timescale for closing the accounts is extremely challenging it has been determined to not pursue this issue. It is proposed to review existing procedures to ensure these problems do not re-occur in 2007/2008.

ix) Ship Dismantling and Related Development/Dial-a-Ride Legal Costs (406)

Following recent Planning Committee decisions the Council faces a number of Planning Appeals and the most significant case relates to the Ship Dismantling and Related Development Appeal. The Council will need to incur legal and other costs in defending these cases. In the event that the final decisions go against the Council it is likely that the Council will have costs awarded against it. It would therefore be prudent to establish a provision for these potential costs.

The Council will also incur legal costs in relation to the Dial-a-Ride incident.

This overall provision will, it is hoped, be sufficient to meet the costs of these cases. However, final figures will not be known until the detail cases go to appeal/court.

x) Swimming Pool Maintenance Reserves (90)

The Children's Services, Performance Management and Regeneration, Liveability & Housing Portfolios have determined, on the basis of advice from the Amateur Swimming Association and consultation with Hartlepool Swimming Instructors, not to install a moveable floor at Brinkburn Pool. The Portfolio Holders have requested that this budget provision be earmarked for the general upkeep of Swimming Pools within the town.

xi) Community Sports Centre Deficit Reserve (50)

This is an increasing area of risk owing to the potential withdrawal of revenue grant funding, it would therefore be prudent to set aside resources to manage this risk.

xii) Contribution towards Cost of Greater Integration between HBC and PCT (e.g. Director of Public Health) (40)

70

CABINET REPORT

11th June 2007



Report of: The Director of Regeneration & Planning Services

Subject: BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID)
PROPOSAL FOR LONGHILL & SANDGATE
INDUSTRIAL ESTATES

SUMMARY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide background information on Business Improvement Districts (BID) and discussions to date on the possible establishment of a BID for Longhill and Sandgate Industrial Estates and to seek, in principle, authorisation to engage in setting up the BID.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

This report details what a Business Improvement District is, the proposal being put forward to develop a BID for the Longhill and Sandgate Industrial Estates, the theme of the proposed BID and what the identified management arrangements are for the BID including the anticipated role of HBC. The report further provides details of the progress made to date including the consultation undertaken so far with the businesses and finally identifies what the next steps are.

3. RELEVANCE TO CABINET

The proposed Business Improvement Districts for Longhill and Sandgate Industrial Estates are part of the overall improvements that have been undertaken to that area over the past five years that has been led by the Council.

4. TYPE OF DECISION

Key Decision, test i applies.

5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE

Cabinet 11th June 2007

6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED

Cabinet are asked to accept this report as a pre-proposal notification to pursue a BID for the Longhill and Sandgate Industrial Estates.

Cabinet are asked to agree in principle and authorise continuing discussions with a view to completing the business plan and preparing for the ballot.

Report of: The Director of Regeneration & Planning Services

Subject: BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID)
PROPOSAL FOR LONGHILL & SANDGATE
INDUSTRIAL ESTATES

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide background information on Business Improvement Districts and discussions to date on the possible establishment of a BID for Longhill and Sandgate Industrial Estates and to seek, in principle, authorisation to engage in setting up the BID.

2.0 WHAT IS A BID

- 2.1 A Business Improvement District (BID) is a partnership arrangement through which local authorities and the local business community can take forward schemes which will benefit the local community, subject to the agreement of non-domestic ratepayers within the detailed BID area, who will then finance the scheme, at least in part, through a levy on their rates.
- 2.2 The enabling power to establish a BID is covered by Part four of the Local Government Act 2003, (2003 C.26) which received Royal assent on 18th September 2003.
- 2.3 There are at present over 42 BIDs established across England and Wales at present.
- 2.4 The BID can have duration of between one and five years, the decision on the duration is made by the businesses involved in developing the BID.
- 2.5 A levy is agreed and paid by all non-domestic ratepayers, after a ballot of all businesses within an agreed geographical area. The ballot must meet two tests to be accepted:
1. A simple majority of those voting in the ballot must vote in favour.
 2. Those voting in favour must represent a majority by rateable value of the hereditaments (rateable properties) of those voting.

This “dual key” mechanism is intended to ensure that a small number of large businesses cannot force through a measure that small businesses do not support and vice versa.

- 2.6 Most BIDs are made up of a Partnership of agencies that provide inputs to, and gain positive returns from the BID itself e.g Business Associations, local authorities, management agencies, voluntary sector agencies, land owners, police and private landlords.
- 2.7 All funding collected from the levy is ring fenced for use by the Partnership; legislation also allows voluntary contributions to be made by property owners, county, borough or parish councils as well as other organisations.
- 2.8 BIDS are being developed in the UK after being successfully implemented in other countries such as the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand where their introduction has led to major regeneration of commercial and industrial areas.

3.0 THE PROPOSAL FOR A LONGHILL & SANDGATE BID

- 3.1 The history encompassing the proposed Longhill and Sandgate estates BID starts back in 2002 with the introduction and subsequent implementation of the Longhill and Sandgate Improvement Strategy within the New Deal for Communities programme. The idea of introducing a BID on the Longhill and Sandgate estates areas has evolved from the initial specific need to access funds to monitor, maintain and update the proposed CCTV system that is being funded by the NDC and HBC.
- 3.2 Longhill & Sandgate are strategic industrial sites in Hartlepool located on the A689 and close to the town centre. The estates consist of approximately 200 businesses ranging from large recycling concerns through to manufacturing companies and small service and retail units. There is also some scope to expand the company base with more land becoming available and other vacant premises being refurbished.
- 3.3 The Arup report commissioned by the NDC in August 2002 clearly identified that crime was a major concern for resident businesses on the Longhill & Sandgate estates.
- 3.4 The key priority of businesses participating in the initiative is to improve the security of the area. Crime has been identified as a significant concern for resident businesses and a number of measures have already been undertaken under the umbrella of the Longhill & Sandgate Improvement Scheme.
- 3.5 Since the launch of the scheme reported crime has reduced significantly. However, there is a concern that criminal activity may have been dispersed to other areas and could return having an impact on production, increasing insurance premiums and subsequently the bottom line if the momentum is not maintained.

- 3.6 Consultations undertaken during Longhill & Sandgate Business Association meetings and Working Party meetings have taken place on additional security for Longhill & Sandgate and the merits of various delivery methods have been discussed including private patrols, warden schemes and CCTV, the level of cover required and vulnerable times.
- 3.7 In late 2005/06 businesses were canvassed by mail, email, Business Association Working Party members visits, NDC/Council officers and consultants visits to gauge the feelings as to a voluntary levy payment to sustain the CCTV after introduction and it was found that the required funding could be obtained voluntarily. Further consultation however revealed that most businesses were unhappy with a small number of businesses covering the costs of a CCTV system that was beneficial to all businesses on the estates.
- 3.8 The businesses therefore were presented with the option of a BID that would be a fairer way of all businesses concerned to be contributing to the scheme and would also provide a more sustainable method of obtaining funds for the agreed term of the BID.
- 3.9 Funding has already been agreed by Hartlepool NDC for £149,800 and HBC Community Safety Capital Grants Scheme for £31,200 to implement the CCTV Scheme. A further £85,000 has been agreed through a Section 106 agreement with Tesco and their proposal to expand their store on the Longhill Industrial Estate.

4.0 CONSULTATION SO FAR

- 4.1 There has been extensive consultation already with the businesses concerned including regular Business Association meetings and a regular newsletter is used to further inform businesses between the meetings.
- 4.2 A full marketing and communication plan has been developed and subject to Cabinet approval will be implemented to run up to the actual balloting of the businesses to give as much information to the businesses as possible and to allow any queries to be clarified.
- 4.3 Furthermore consultation has been undertaken with Stockton-on-Tees Council, which has successfully implemented a BID on the Cowpen Industrial Estate in October 2006. Of the 43 BIDS up and running nationally this is the first successful BID in the North East and it is also one of nine BIDS to be on an industrial estate nationally.

5.0 BID THEME

- 5.1 From the work that has been undertaken so far and the feedback from the various consultations, the main emphasis of the BID proposal has been focussed on the proposed CCTV installation.
- 5.2 A CCTV system for the estates was identified by the businesses from the outset and was prominent in the feedback used to pull together the Longhill and Sandgate Improvement Scheme.
- 5.3 Funding was subsequently identified from Hartlepool NDC for the installation of the CCTV which meant that the businesses can pursue the successful implementation of the project provided that they can find the funds for the ongoing revenue costs of the scheme.
- 5.4 The businesses will therefore be able to sustain the project for an agreed period of time on an agreed basis of levies through the BID.

6.0 MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

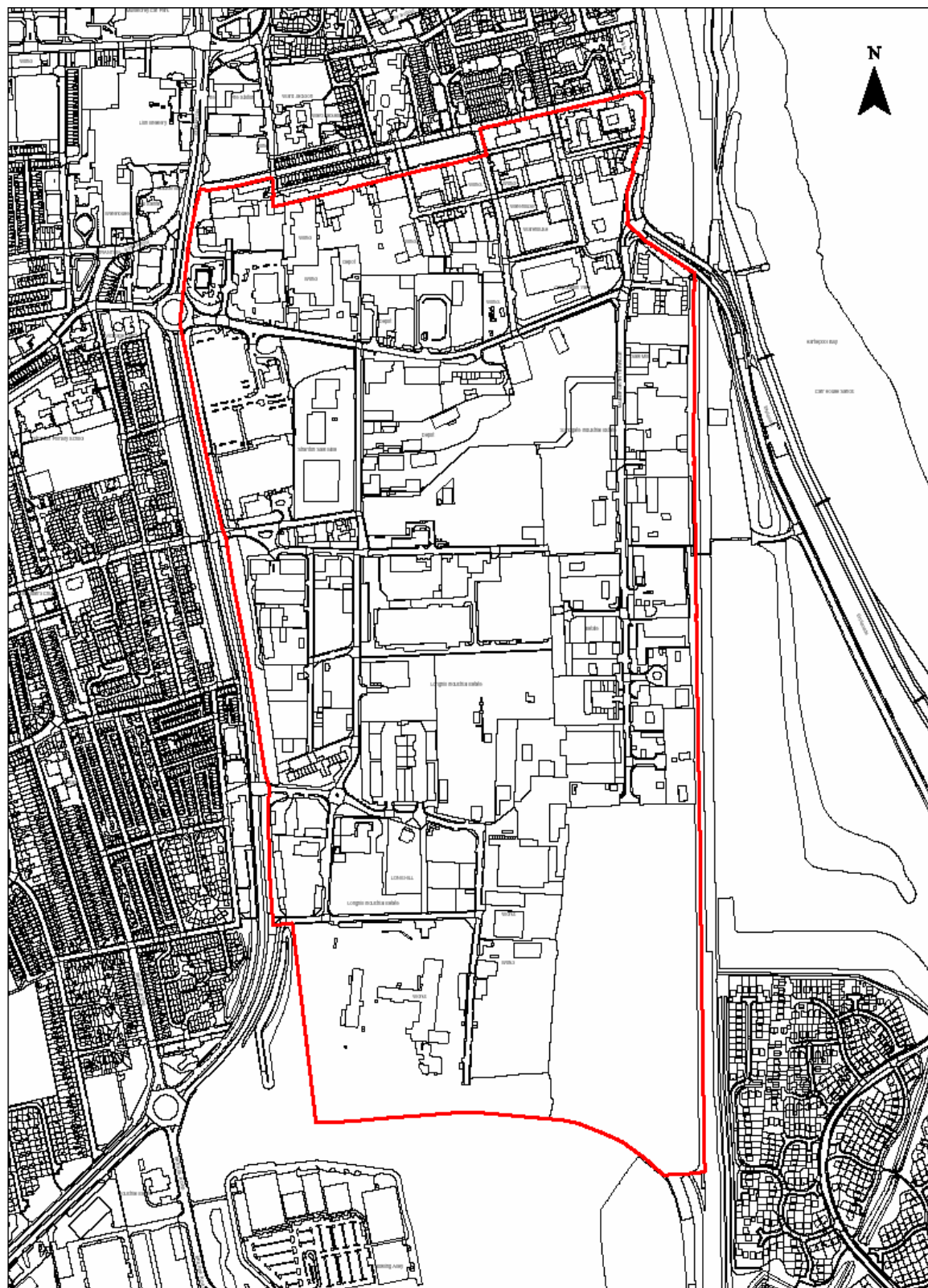
- 6.1 The Partnership will consist of the Business Association, HBC, Hartlepool NDC and Hartlepool Police, all of these partners have the expertise and specialist knowledge required to help make the BID a success.
- 6.2 The Partnership will require the setting up of a Management Board to run the BID. The representation on this board from the partner organisations will be:

Longhill/Sandgate Business Association	3 representatives (from the Business Association executive)
Hartlepool Borough Council	2 representatives (Regeneration Portfolio Holder and Director of Regeneration & Planning)
Hartlepool NDC	2 representatives (Director of NDC and one NDC Resident Steering Group Rep)
Hartlepool Police	1 representative (District Commander)

- 6.3 All of the representatives identified above will have the power to send appropriate nominated substitutes as and when required to represent them and their particular organisations.
- 6.4 The Management Board will also be supplemented with relevant officers from the Partnership organisations with particular expertise as and when required.
- 6.5 The Management Board will be chaired by one of the three Longhill/Sandgate Business Association representatives.
- 6.6 HBC will be the accountable body and will have the role of collecting the levy revenue from businesses, holding the money collected, arranging payments of invoices on expenditure as approved in accordance with the overall BID purpose and agreement.

7.0 GEOGRAPHICAL AREA OF THE BID

- 7.1 The area of the Longhill and Sandgate BID will be formed by the following boundaries:
- to the north - Burbank St/Moreland St
 - to the east - Middlesbrough/Newcastle railway line
 - to the south - the boundary of the industrial estate
 - to the west - the A689 Belle Vue Way
- 7.2 The actual area is shown in the map below.



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DEPT REGENERATION & PLANNING
HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL

8.0 PROGRESS TO DATE

- 8.1 Consultation has been constant (see items 3 & 4) and the Arup report used information collated from the 2000 MORI Household survey, 2000 NEMS Business survey and the Tees Valley Joint Strategic Unit (TVJSU).
- 8.2 Communication has been open and inclusive and this will be continued throughout the period of setting the ballot up and then if successful the actual implementation of the BID.
- 8.3 The Longhill & Sandgate Business Association is due to be formalised as an unincorporated association in April with an agreed constitution and a formally elected committee and executive. This will formally allow the Business Association to take lead role within the BID Partnership.
- 8.4 All partners have been contacted to get their commitment to the proposals, which has been positive. The partners have also been asked to identify possible individuals to sit on the proposed Partnership Board.
- 8.5 The BID proposal itself, which will be used to consult with the businesses, is very near to completion and only requires some decisions from the Partnership Board as to how the levy is to be set and the final amounts required to fulfil the requirements of the BID.
- 8.6 A timeline for the proposed run out of the BID project has been finalised. This timeline is aimed at paralleling the introduction of the actual CCTV system onto the estates.

9.0 NEXT STEPS

- 9.1 This report serves as the official pre-proposal notification to the Council to pursue the development of a BID for the Longhill and Sandgate Industrial Estates. And subject to Cabinet agreement (in principle) for HBC being a Partner in the development of the BID.
- 9.2 The process for developing the BID involves a number of steps that have to be taken as identified in the table below.

11/06/07	Report to Cabinet that will serve as a pre-proposal notification to HBC. At the same time the Secretary of State will be notified as well with the report going to Government Office North East.
22/06/07	A 'Shadow Board' will be set up for the BID comprising representatives from the identified partner organisations to develop the business plan and progress the BID.
20/07/07	Business Plan finalised detailing what the BID aims to undertake, and how it will be achieved
July to November	There will a period of comprehensive communication to the businesses of Longhill and Sandgate informing them of the detail

	of the business plan and an opportunity to provide formal feedback.
17/09/07	After 84 clear days another report will be presented to Cabinet (including the completed business plan proposal) that will serve as the formal proposal notification to HBC and the Secretary of State informing of the intention to undertake a BID and the necessary ballot.
28/09/07	Formal notice to ballot published in the local press and in direct mail to the businesses.
12/10/07	Ballot papers sent out to businesses
09/11/07	Actual ballot day

10.0 RECOMMENDATION TO CABINET

- 10.1 To accept this report as a pre-proposal notification to pursue a BID for the Longhill and Sandgate Industrial Estates.
- 10.2 To agree in principle and authorise continuing discussions with a view to completing the business plan and preparing for the ballot.

CABINET REPORT

11th June 2007



Report of: The Director of Regeneration and Planning Services
And the Director of Neighbourhood Services

Subject: SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION RAILWAY APPROACHES
ACTION PLAN

SUMMARY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To agree an Action Plan in response to the findings of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum investigation into Railway Approaches.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

- 2.1 The report provides brief background information on the Railway Approaches Investigation and provides an Action-Plan (**Appendix A**) in response to the Forum's recommendations

3. RELEVANCE TO CABINET

- 3.1 At its meeting of 5th March Cabinet agreed the Forum's recommendations.

4. TYPE OF DECISION

- 4.1 Non-Key.

5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE

- 5.1 The Action Plan, and then progress on its implementation will be reported to Regeneration & Planning Services Scrutiny Forum on 12th July 2007.

6. DECISION REQUIRED

- 6.1 That Members of the Cabinet approve the Action Plan attached at Appendix A in response to the recommendations of the Regeneration & Planning Services Scrutiny Forum's railway Approaches Investigation.

Report of: The Director of Regeneration and Planning Services
and Director Neighbourhood Services

Subject: SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION RAILWAY APPROACHES
ACTION PLAN

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To agree an Action Plan in response to the findings of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum investigation into Railway Approaches.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In March 2007 Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum concluded its investigation into Railway Approaches. The overall aim of the investigation was to assess the entrance into Hartlepool by train from both south and north and develop suggestions for improvement.
- 2.2 Over the course of the investigation Members employed a variety of methods, which included evidence gleaned from :
- Hartlepool Borough Council Officers
 - The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Liveability and Housing;
 - The Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure and Transportation;
 - MP for Hartlepool
 - Network Rail
 - Northern Rail
 - Grand central
 - Chair of the Economic Forum
 - Representatives from 'Coastliners'; and
 - Written submission on behalf of the Community and Voluntary Sector
 - Site visit on the railway corridor approaches supported by video footage taken on the journey
- 2.3 On 5th March 2007, Cabinet received the Forum's final report and approved and supported the associated recommendations.

3. ACTION PLAN

3.1 As a result of the Railway Approaches scrutiny investigation the Forum made the following recommendations:

- a) That in relation to Network Rail:
 - i. The Authority seeks to develop a proactive approach with Network Rail around combating graffiti, and in particular through making connections to Network Rail's graffiti budget.
 - ii. That Network Rail's 24 hour helpline number (08457 11 41 41) is publicised through the dissemination of the Forum's final report, associated press releases and through the Authority's Hartbeat magazine.
 - iii. That the Authority invites Network Rail to bring the 'No Messin' scheme to schools in Hartlepool in the interests of reducing trespassing, graffiti and vandalism around the railway lines.
- b) That the Authority reports incidences of graffiti and litter along the Railway Approaches and liaises with Network Rail about these where appropriate.
- c) That the Authority invites Northern Rail's police and schools liaison officer to attend Hartlepool schools.
- d) That the Authority uses its Planning and Development Control powers proactively to enhance the Railway Approaches into the town.
- e) That the Authority seeks to maximise the regeneration benefits of the 2010 Tall Ships event, the development of 'Hartlepool Quays', and the direct rail link to London by linking, where appropriate, prospective improvements to Hartlepool's Railway Approaches into the regional, sub-regional and local strategies described in the main body of this report.
- f) That the 'key problem spots' sites identified in the Railway Approaches Scrutiny Investigation, are incorporated, wherever possible, into the Green Infrastructure Strategy and its associated site specific schedules.
- g) That the area of unused land identified in paragraph 11.6 of this report is developed as a 'Community Forest' or 'Woodland Area' and as a diversionary route away from traffic.

- h) That the Authority supports the development of the North Hartlepool Linear Park strategy.
- i) That discussions between representatives of the Regeneration and Planning Services Department and Tees Forest (North East Community Forests) around the development of a broad programme of planting to create 'green fingers' of woodland extending into the urban area along the railway corridor is supported.
- j) That the Authority develops an 'allotments policy' and consults allotment users in the development and implementation of this policy.
- k) That the 'key problem spots' identified during the Scrutiny Investigation are incorporated, where appropriate, into the list of Untidy / Derelict Land and Buildings.
- l) That the Authority develops a strategy geared towards screening the 'key problem spots' identified during the Scrutiny Investigation based on the approaches outlined in paragraph 11.5.
- m) That in relation to Stations in Hartlepool:
 - i. The Authority pursues enhanced adoption of Hartlepool Station to a 'Partners Scheme' in conjunction with Northern Rail and that involvement from the CVS, 'Coastliners' and Pride in Hartlepool is sought in this.
 - ii. That the Authority pursues the development of a station adoption scheme at Seaton Carew Station in conjunction with Northern Rail and that involvement from the CVS, 'Coastliners' and Pride in Hartlepool is sought in this.
 - iii. The Authority maximises the opportunity that the Tall Ships event provides to lobby the Department for Transport, Network Rail and Northern Rail to make structural improvements to Hartlepool and Seaton Stations, prior to improving the cosmetic appearance of these.
 - iv. That the Authority continues to lobby the Department for Transport, Network Rail and Northern Rail for a station halt to reopen at Hart Station.
 - v. That pedestrian and vehicle signage (including further development of brown signage) around Hartlepool Station is improved, especially in relation to the town centre.

- n) That 'Coastliners' have a continuing involvement in implementing the outcomes of this investigation. In particular in improvements to Hartlepool and Seaton Carew Stations and in the development of a 'Railway Approaches Forum'.
- o) That the CVS has a number of specific contributions it can make to improvements to Railway Approaches, as outlined in Appendix C, and that the Authority considers how best the adoption of these options can be supported.
- p) That the Authority helps to establish a 'Railway Approaches Forum' in partnership with the CVS to ensure that the momentum for this issue is maintained around improvements to both the railway corridors and stations. In addition to the Authority and the CVS, the rail operators, rail user groups and the disabled access group should be involved in this forum.
- q) That the recommendations from this report are reflected, where appropriate, in actions contained in Departmental / Service Plans.

3.2 An Action-Plan in response to these recommendations has now been produced and is attached at **Appendix A**.

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 Cabinet is requested to approve the Action Plan attached at **Appendix A** in response to the recommendations of the Regeneration & Planning Services Scrutiny Forum's Railway Approaches Investigation.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN

NAME OF FORUM:	Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum
NAME OF SCRUTINY ENQUIRY:	Railway Approaches
DECISION MAKING DATE OF FINAL REPORT:	Cabinet on 5 March 2007 (Recommendations) and 11th June 2007 (Action Plan)

RECOMMENDATION		EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE
(a)	That in relation to Network Rail:			
	(i) The Authority seeks to develop a proactive approach with Network Rail around combating graffiti, and in particular through making connections to Network Rail's graffiti budget;	Introduce regular liaison meetings and prepare action plan to remove existing graffiti and protocols for reporting incidents.	Denise Ogden (Head of Neighbourhood Management)	September 2007 (ongoing)
	(ii) That Network Rail's 24 hour helpline number (08457 11 41 41) is publicised through the dissemination of the Forum's final report, associated press releases and through the Authority's Hartbeat magazine; and	Dissemination of final Forum Report and associated press release upon approval of Action Plan. Ongoing publicity via Hartbeat and other appropriate press-release opportunities, via magazines and other media.	Steve Hilton (Asst. Public Relations Officer)	June 2007 (and ongoing)
	(iii) That the Authority invites Network Rail to bring the 'No	The Children's Services Department to raise awareness of the "No Messin"	John Collings (Assistant	October 2007 (Autumn term)

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN

NAME OF FORUM: Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum

NAME OF SCRUTINY ENQUIRY: Railway Approaches

DECISION MAKING DATE OF FINAL REPORT: Cabinet on 5 March 2007 (Recommendations) and 11th June 2007 (Action Plan)

RECOMMENDATION		EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE
	Messin' scheme to schools in Hartlepool in the interests of reducing trespassing, graffiti and vandalism around the railway lines.	campaign within schools through dialogue with Network Rail. Invitation to attend Head Teacher meeting(s) and visits to individual schools, as appropriate.	Director, (Performance and Achievement))	
(b)	That the Authority reports incidences of graffiti and litter along the Railway Approaches and liaises with Network Rail about these where appropriate.	Introduce regular liaison meetings and prepare action plan to remove existing graffiti and protocols for reporting incidents.	Craig Thelwell (Environmental Action Manager)	September 2007 (and ongoing)
(c)	That the Authority invites Northern Rail's police and schools liaison officer to attend Hartlepool schools.	As per rec. (a) iii, Children's Services to have dialogue with Northern Rail through invitation to attend Head Teacher meeting(s) and visits to individual schools as appropriate.	John Cdlings (Assistant Director (Performance and Achievement))	October 2007 (Autumn Term)
	That the Authority uses its Planning	Planning & Development Control powers to	Richard Teece	June 2007

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN

NAME OF FORUM: Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum

NAME OF SCRUTINY ENQUIRY: Railway Approaches

DECISION MAKING DATE OF FINAL REPORT: Cabinet on 5 March 2007 (Recommendations) and 11th June 2007 (Action Plan)

	RECOMMENDATION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE
(d)	and Development Control powers proactively to enhance the Railway Approaches into the town.	be used as appropriate, including reporting mechanisms via Planning Committee, subject to individual site considerations.	(Development Control Manager)	(ongoing)
(e)	That the Authority seeks to maximise the regeneration benefits of the 2010 Tall Ships event, the development of 'Hartlepool Quays', and the direct rail link to London by linking, where appropriate, prospective improvements to Hartlepool's Railway Approaches into the regional, sub-regional and local strategies described in the main body of this report.	Liaise and participate as appropriate with relevant staff representatives upon the thematic working groups being established under the Tall Ships Programme. Engage with and influence where possible the production of relevant strategies at the local, sub-regional and regional level.	Stuart Green (Assistant Director, (Planning and Economic Development))	March 2008 (and ongoing)

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN

NAME OF FORUM: Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum

NAME OF SCRUTINY ENQUIRY: Railway Approaches

DECISION MAKING DATE OF FINAL REPORT: Cabinet on 5 March 2007 (Recommendations) and 11th June 2007 (Action Plan)

	RECOMMENDATION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE
(f)	That the 'key problem spots' sites identified in the Railway Approaches Scrutiny Investigation, are incorporated, wherever possible, into the Green Infrastructure Strategy and its associated site specific schedules.	Continued officer representation on Green Infrastructure Strategy Working Group, including requests for adequate reflection of Hartlepool Railway Corridor within the document and to ensure that the authority is well placed to access any funds that become available for environmental works to improve the green infrastructure network within Tees Valley.	Mathew King (Principal Planning Officer)	June 2007 (ongoing)
(g)	That the area of unused land identified in paragraph 11.6 of this report is developed as a 'Community Forest' or 'Woodland Area' and as a diversionary route away from traffic.	Treatment of this site to be taken forward as part of the actions proposed under Rec. (i) and in relation to the Linear Park Strategy under Rec. (h).	Karen Oliver Neighbourhood Manager (North)	March 2009
(h)	That the Authority supports the development of the North Hartlepool Linear Park strategy.	This action to be taken forward in conjunction with the North Hartlepool Partnership (SRB) End of Programme Evaluation and Forward Strategy.	Karen Oliver Neighbourhood Manager (North)	March 2008 (ongoing)

RECOMMENDATION		EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE
(i)	That discussions between representatives of the Regeneration and Planning Services Department and Tees Forest (North East Community Forests) around the development of a broad programme of planting to create 'green fingers' of woodland extending into the urban area along the railway corridor is supported.	Discussions have commenced with North East Community Forests with a view to selecting appropriate sites and securing funding	Richard Waldmeyer (Principal Planning Officer (Policy Planning & Info.))	Planting season Spring 2008 – Spring 2009
(j)	That the Authority develops an 'allotments policy' and consults allotment users in the development and implementation of this policy.	A review of existing policy documents and future strategy for the improvement of all allotments within town is to be undertaken. This will include consultation with tenants and the development of allotment associations where none exist with a view to increasing devolved management.	Andrew Pearson (Parks and Countryside Manager)	March 2008

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN

NAME OF FORUM: Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum

NAME OF SCRUTINY ENQUIRY: Railway Approaches

DECISION MAKING DATE OF FINAL REPORT: Cabinet on 5 March 2007 (Recommendations) and 11th June 2007 (Action Plan)

RECOMMENDATION		EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE
(k)	That the 'key problem spots' identified during the Scrutiny Investigation are incorporated, where appropriate, into the list of Untidy/ Derelict Land and Buildings.	Action being taken on board by the Derelict Buildings and Underused Land Group Chaired by the Mayor	Denise Ogden (Head of Neighbourhood Management)	June 07
(l)	That the Authority develops a strategy geared towards screening the 'key problem spots' identified during the Scrutiny Investigation based on the approaches outlined in paragraph 11.5.	Strategy to be prepared setting out priorities for tackling key problem sites. Discussions with owners and operators to be undertaken to encourage and require improvements where possible new planning applications and enforcement action where necessary	Richard Waldmeyer (Principal Planning Officer (Policy Planning & Info.))	July – August 2007
	That in relation to Stations in			

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN

NAME OF FORUM: Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum

NAME OF SCRUTINY ENQUIRY: Railway Approaches

DECISION MAKING DATE OF FINAL REPORT: Cabinet on 5 March 2007 (Recommendations) and 11th June 2007 (Action Plan)

RECOMMENDATION		EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE
(m)	Hartlepool:			
	(i) The Authority pursues enhanced adoption of Hartlepool Station to a 'Partners Scheme' in conjunction with Northern Rail and that involvement from the CVS, 'Coastliners' and Pride in Hartlepool is sought in this;	Identify the procedure and progress the adoption of Hartlepool railway station in discussion with Northern Rail and Network Rail	Ian Jopling (Transportation Team Leader)	July 2007
	(ii) That the Authority pursues the development of a station adoption scheme at Seaton Carew Station in conjunction with Northern Rail and that involvement from the CVS, 'Coastliners' and Pride in Hartlepool is sought in this;	Identify the procedure and progresses the adoption of Seaton Carew railway station in discussion with Northern Rail and Network Rail	Ian Jopling (Transportation Team Leader)	July 2007
	(iii) The Authority maximises the opportunity that the Tall Ships	Formally write to Network Rail to request that planned infrastructure	Alastair Smith (Director of	June 2007

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN

NAME OF FORUM: Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum

NAME OF SCRUTINY ENQUIRY: Railway Approaches

DECISION MAKING DATE OF FINAL REPORT: Cabinet on 5 March 2007 (Recommendations) and 11th June 2007 (Action Plan)

RECOMMENDATION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE
<p>event provides to lobby the Department for Transport, Network Rail and Northern Rail to make structural improvements to Hartlepool and Seaton Stations, prior to improving the cosmetic appearance of these;</p> <p>(iv) That the Authority continues to lobby the Department for Transport, Network Rail and Northern Rail for a station halt to reopen at Hart Station; and</p> <p>(v) That pedestrian and vehicle signage (including further development of brown signage) around Hartlepool Station is improved, especially in relation to the town centre.</p>	<p>works at the stations are brought forward, or, as a minimum, delivered as currently programmed.</p> <p>Explore regional and national opportunities for funding</p> <p>Provide new highway signage as considered appropriate.</p>	<p>Technical Services)</p> <p>Ian Jopling (Transportation Team Leader)</p> <p>Peter Frost (Traffic Team Leader)</p>	<p>September 2007</p> <p>March 2008</p>

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN

NAME OF FORUM: Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum

NAME OF SCRUTINY ENQUIRY: Railway Approaches

DECISION MAKING DATE OF FINAL REPORT: Cabinet on 5 March 2007 (Recommendations) and 11th June 2007 (Action Plan)

RECOMMENDATION		EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE
(n)	That 'Coastliners' have a continuing involvement in implementing the outcomes of this investigation. In particular in improvements to Hartlepool and Seaton Carew Stations and in the development of a 'Railway Approaches Forum'.	Council officers to attend meetings of Coastliners' to update and involve members as considered appropriate	Ian Jopling (Traffic and Team Leader)	July 2007
(o)	That the CVS has a number of specific contributions it can make to improvements to Railway Approaches, as outlined in Appendix C, and that the Authority considers how best the adoption of these options can be supported.	Meetings to be arranged between Council officers and CVS to agree CVS involvement with ongoing support via Railways Approaches Forum (see Rec. (p) below)	Ian Jopling (Transportation Team Leader)	October 2007 (Ongoing)
(p)	That the Authority helps to establish a 'Railway Approaches Forum' in partnership with the CVS to ensure that the momentum for this issue is maintained around improvements to	Meetings between Council Officers and CVS (as above) to agree representation upon Railway Approaches Forum. Quarterly meetings of Forum thereafter.	Alastair Smith (Head of Technical Services)	October 2007 (Ongoing)

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN

NAME OF FORUM: Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum

NAME OF SCRUTINY ENQUIRY: Railway Approaches

DECISION MAKING DATE OF FINAL REPORT: Cabinet on 5 March 2007 (Recommendations) and 11th June 2007 (Action Plan)

RECOMMENDATION		EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE
	both the railway corridors and stations. In addition to the Authority and the CVS, the rail operators, rail user groups and the disabled access group should be involved in this forum.			
(q)	That the recommendations from this report are reflected, where appropriate, in actions contained in Departmental / Service Plans.	Include co-ordination / monitoring responsibilities for the Railway Approaches Action Plan in R&PS Departmental Plan and invite other lead officers to accommodate within their own more detailed Service Plan arrangements	Geoff Thompson (Head of Regeneration)	June 2007

CABINET REPORT

11 June 2007



Report of: Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum

Subject: YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT – FINAL REPORT

SUMMARY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline the findings and conclusions of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum's investigation into Youth Unemployment.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

- 2.1 The findings of the Scrutiny investigation are divided into the following sections:
- (a) Causes of the level of Youth Unemployment rising as a percentage of the overall unemployment level;
 - (b) Roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders in Hartlepool who have some responsibility for tackling Youth Unemployment;
 - (c) The role of the Authority as a non-statutory service provider in relation to Youth Unemployment, and in particular its role in Economic Development;
 - (d) Views of young people who are affected by this issue; and
 - (e) Suggested areas for improvement.

3. RELEVANCE TO CABINET

- 3.1 It is Cabinet's decision to approve the recommendations in this report.

4. TYPE OF DECISION

- 4.1 This is a Non-key decision.

5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE

- 5.1 The final report was approved by Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on 18 May 2007. Cabinet is requested to consider, and approve, the report at today's meeting.

6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED

- 6.1 Cabinet is requested to approve the recommendations outlined in section 13.1 of the bound report, which is attached to the back of the papers for this meeting.

CABINET

11 June 2007



Report of: Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum

Subject: YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT – FINAL REPORT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present the findings of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum following its investigation into Youth Unemployment.

2. SETTING THE SCENE

- 2.1 At the meeting of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum on 16 June 2006 Members considered potential work programme items for the 2006/07 municipal year. During this meeting Members of this Forum selected the 'Youth Unemployment' topic as its second main Scrutiny investigations for the current municipal year. Youth Unemployment is one of the key economic targets included in the Hartlepool Community Strategy, Local Area Agreement and Best Value Performance Plan.
- 2.2 Members selected the topic from an appendix attached to the 'Determining the Work Programme' report submitted at the Forum's meeting on 16 June 2006. This appendix contained a list of the Authority's Performance Indicators of relevance to the remit of this Forum. Under the Corporate Plan Objective JE9, "To support young people to gain suitable employment," Members identified the *Local Area Agreement (LAA) target 2.5*, which focuses on the youth unemployment rate in Hartlepool, as an issue they wished to investigate. The outturn figure for this issue in 2005/06 was 36% (Nov 05) against a 2006/07 target of 31% and a 2008/09 LAA target of 30%. The target is measured by the proportion of Job Seeker Allowance (JSA) Claimants who are aged 18-24 years old, where the overall claimant count is 100%.

3. OVERALL AIM OF THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

- 3.1 To gain an understanding of the issues around Youth Unemployment and to suggest areas for improvement.

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE

4.1 The following Terms of Reference for the review were agreed by the Forum:-

- (a) To gain an understanding of why the level of Youth Unemployment has risen as a percentage of the overall unemployment level;
- (b) To gain an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders in Hartlepool who have some responsibility for tackling Youth Unemployment;
- (c) To examine the role of the Authority as a non-statutory service provider in relation to Youth Unemployment, and in particular its role in Economic Development;
- (d) To gain the views of young people who are unemployed in relation to this issue; and
- (e) To identify suggested areas for improvement in relation to the Youth Unemployment rate.

5. MEMBERSHIP OF THE FORUM

5.1 Membership of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum for the 2006/7 Municipal Year:-

Councillors R W Cook, S Cook, Gibbon, Laffey, London, A Marshall, J Marshall, Richardson, Wallace, D Waller and Wright.

Resident Representatives:

Ted Jackson and Iris Ryder

6. METHODS OF INVESTIGATION

6.1 Over the course of the investigation Members have considered evidence from a wide variety of sources, including:

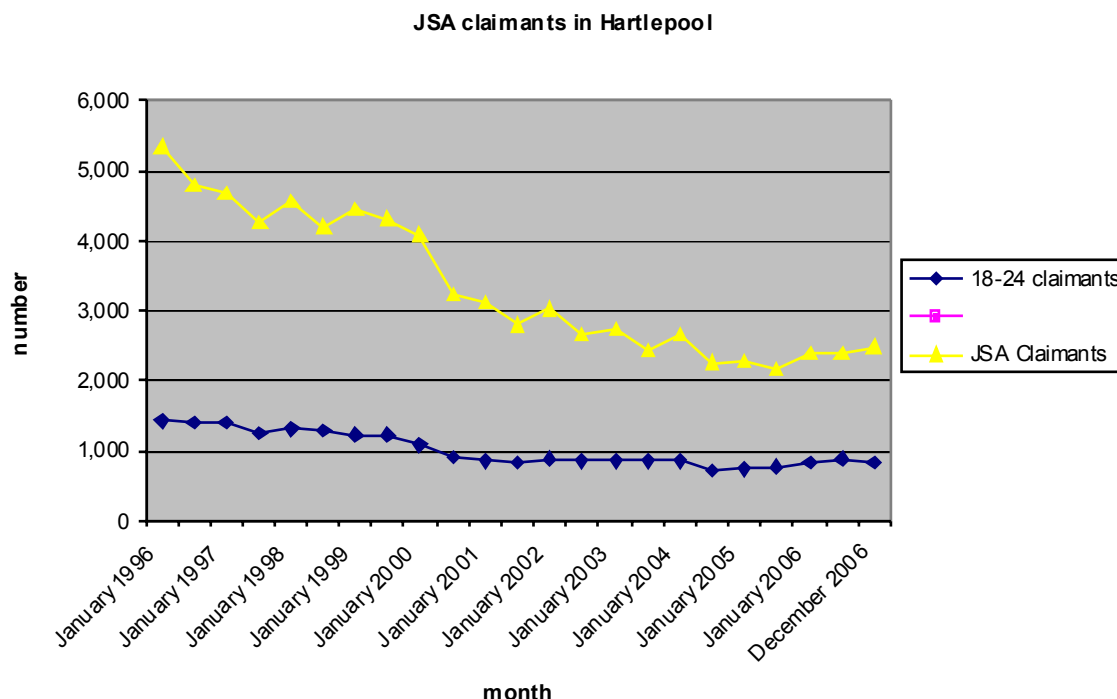
- (a) Hartlepool Borough Council (HBC) Officers;
- (b) Representative from Job Centre Plus;
- (c) Representative from Connexions (submitted written evidence);
- (d) Representative from the Learning and Skills Council (submitted written evidence);

- (e) Representative from Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS) – potentially seek involvement of HVDA as ‘umbrella’ organisation.
 - (f) Focus Group with unemployed young people – fed into the Forum through *Youth Unemployment in Hartlepool: Developing an evidence base* report on 23 February 2007; and
- 6.2 In addition the Economic Development Service commissioned a report on, *Youth Unemployment in Hartlepool: Developing an evidence base*. The research took place between November 2006 and January 2007. The first stage of the research involved a review of the existing data using NOMIS (who produce official labour market statistics) and Joint Strategy Unit (JSU) reports, comparing the data where possible, to the rest of Tees Valley and the UK; focusing on indicators in relation to claimant count, economic activity and inactivity, worklessness, the Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) group and destinations of school leavers. This data was supplemented by qualitative anecdotal information from semi structured interviews with individuals and focus groups as well as responses to questionnaires. Consultation took place with 18 representatives from the public, private and voluntary sector as well as interviews and focus groups with 10 young people.
- 6.3 The findings from the *Youth Unemployment in Hartlepool: Developing an evidence base* report have been used extensively in the production of this final report.

FINDINGS

7. Causes of the Level of Youth Unemployment Increasing as a Percentage of the Overall Unemployment Level

- 7.1 As can be seen from the chart (below), overall unemployment (as measured in terms of claimant count JSA) has declined from a high of 5357 in 1996 to just over 2500 in January 2004 with 18-24 claimants reducing from a high of over 1400 to fewer than 800. However, during this period, the rate of 18-24 claimants measured as a proportion of overall JSA claimants fluctuated between 27% and reaching a high of 35% in the same period. Consequently, the overall number of Hartlepool residents claiming JSA has declined at a greater rate than that of the 18-24 year old age group. Recently there has been a steady increase in the overall numbers of young people claiming JSA, from under 700 in January 2005 to nearly 900 by September 2006, although during the last two months this figure has reduced by 10% to 805 in November 2006.



7.2 In 2001 the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) produced a report providing a snapshot of the local economy in 2000 and found some defining characteristics:

- (a) Slack labour market;
- (b) Low wage levels;
- (c) Lowered expectations of work and attainment; and
- (d) High availability and provision of training.

7.3 At this time unemployment was at 10.9% (February 2000). Over the last six years unemployment has reduced to 4.5% (September 2006) but the characteristics of the labour market remain similar.

7.4 The table below identifies the percentage of young people in the 16-18 cohort 'in learning'; 'Not in Employment, Education or Training' (NEET); 'in employment'; and those 'not known'.

	Hartlepool	Tees Valley	England
16-18 Cohort Profile	2950	21209	1125658
% In learning	70.2	71.2	75.2
% NEET	11.7	12.4	8.6
% In employment	17.2	15.5	17.9
% Not known	4.00	4.8	5.4

Source: Connexions Tees Valley

In Learning

7.5 Hartlepool compares well with Tees Valley and England in terms of the number of young people in learning with 70.2% of this cohort in learning in

Hartlepool compared to 71.2% in Tees Valley and 75.2% in England. Of those in learning, 58.2% are in education – slightly lower than Tees Valley (59.4%) and lower than England at 65.6%. 3.3% of those in learning are in employment with training – consistent with Tees Valley but significantly lower than in England (6.4%). 8.7% of those in learning in Hartlepool are on government supported schemes. Both Hartlepool and Tees Valley are significantly higher than England at 3.2%. Data on qualifications from the JSU shows that Hartlepool has higher rates of people achieving NVQ level 1 and 2 than Tees Valley, the region or nationally, but lower rates of those achieving trade apprenticeships.

In Employment

- 7.6 The number of young people in employment in Hartlepool compares well with England and is higher than in the Tees Valley. However, data indicates that a significant proportion of this employment is part time (65%) (NOMIS Jan-March 2006). During the consultation process for the production of, *Youth Unemployment in Hartlepool: Developing an evidence base*, concerns were expressed that education and training were not linked closely enough to the labour market and employers, and that the curriculum and training programmes do not prepare young people for the labour market.

NEET

- 7.7 The NEET figures for Hartlepool are higher than England but lower than the Tees Valley at 11.7%. The NEET group can be broken down into those available for work and those not available for work. In relation to Hartlepool, those NEETs available for work make up 7.9% of the overall 11.7% with those not available for work making up 3.6%. This is significantly higher than Tees Valley at 2.8% and almost three times the rate for England at 1.3%.
- 7.8 Consultation for the, *Youth Unemployment in Hartlepool: Developing an evidence base*, report with agencies and organisations revealed a number of factors that lead young people to becoming NEET:
- (a) Disengaging from learning at school;
 - (b) Low skills and qualifications;
 - (c) Low aspirations – linked to generational unemployment;
 - (d) Lack of confidence to access support networks when things go wrong; and
 - (e) Wider social issues e.g. homelessness, dependency issues, mental health issues, teenage pregnancy, caring responsibilities, young people in care.
- 7.9 Analysis of vulnerable young people reveals that Hartlepool has the highest percentage of teenage parents of all local authority areas in England. Furthermore, the data indicates that only 50% of 19 year old care leavers in the town are in education, employment or training (EET), therefore,

correspondingly 50% are NEET or not known. This trend is replicated in Tees Valley (with the exception of Redcar and Cleveland) and England.

Not Knowns

- 7.10 Hartlepool has a lower number of 'not knowns' than Tees Valley but is higher than England. Hartlepool in particular has made a significant improvement in reducing the numbers of not knowns at 16 – a reduction of 83% since June 2005 and has also made an impact on the 17 and 18 year olds, however, 18 year olds still make up 70% of those not known.
- 7.11 Discussions with Connexions in the consultation for the, *Youth Unemployment in Hartlepool: Developing an evidence base*, report highlighted that destinations of those aged 17 and 18 are much harder to trace at 18 as many sign on and 'shift' contact from Connexions, as a young people's service, to Job Centre Plus. The two agencies have started to share data to enable closer tracking of young people aged 17-18. The higher numbers of not known at 17 and 18 can in part be explained by the difficulty in tracking them, however, this would also be consistent with a significant number of 17 and 18 year olds dropping out of training programmes as highlighted in the previous sections.

Employment and Worklessness

- 7.12 The following table shows a profile of young people in the town in relation to employment and worklessness (May 2006). Due to how data is collected and collated it is not possible to analyse the data consistently across age groups and categories, however, the data in the table below provides an indication of the numbers in each category.

Indicator	16-17 years	16-19 years	18-24 years	20-24 years	Total
Unemployment (JSA Claimants)			820		820
Employment		2300		3700	6000
Income Support	50		730		780
Incapacity Benefit	30		410		440
Workless/Not known (remainder of population)					2560
Total					10,600
Ward with highest unemployment	Stranton				

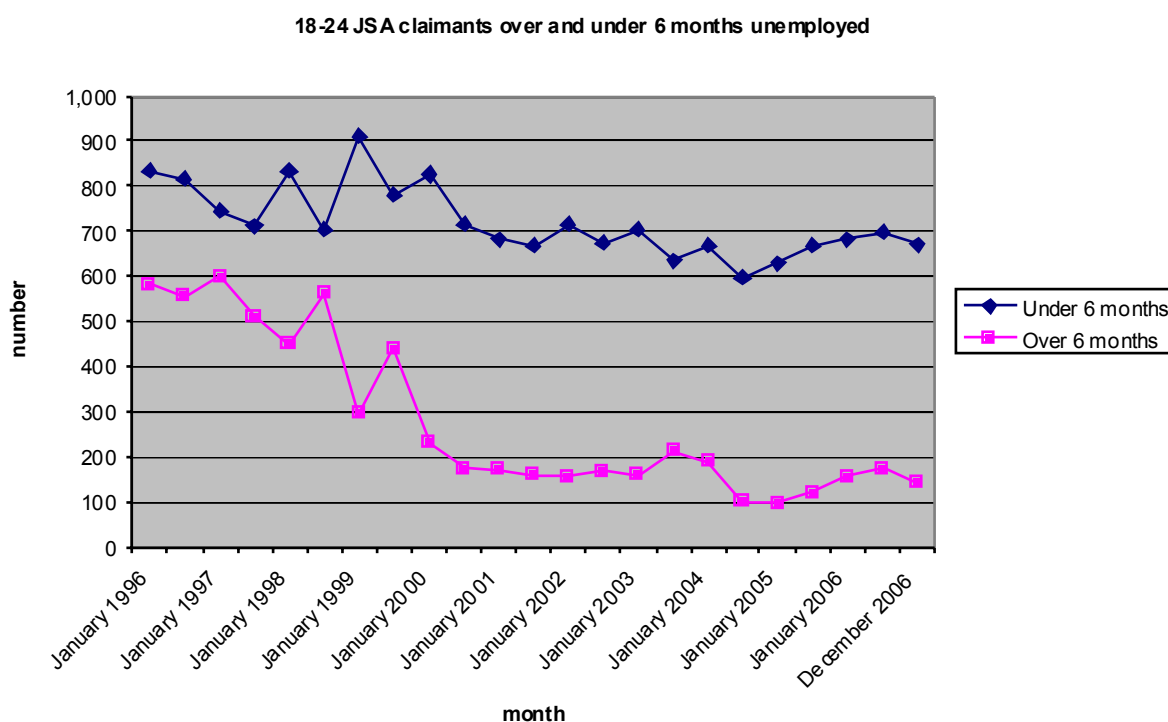
- 7.13 67% of the 16-24 age groups are in employment, with almost 8% unemployed. 7% of the cohort is claiming income support and 4% are claiming Incapacity Benefit. When this data is compared with the corresponding rates for the 25-retirement age group, (3.7% unemployed, 14%

Incapacity benefit, 10% income support), the rates of unemployment and income support would seem high – however, this concurs with the data indicating that youth unemployment has reduced at a slower rate than overall unemployment but it would also be anticipated that the high incidence of teenage pregnancy amongst this age group would impact on the income support rate.

- 7.14 Furthermore, whilst the incapacity benefit rate for this group does not appear overly high in relation to the older age group – there are 440 young people on incapacity benefit. It is highlighted in the, *Youth Unemployment in Hartlepool: Developing an evidence base*, report that this figure does give cause for concern given the Government's green paper - *A New Deal for Welfare Empowering People to Work* (January 2006) which stated that, "after two years on Incapacity Benefit, a person is more likely to die or retire than to find a new job". Furthermore, the report questions whether this means that 4% of the 16-24 age groups could potentially be looking at long term benefit dependency?

Claimant count and duration of unemployment

- 7.15 A closer look at the data reveals that the rate of unemployment is affected according to how long a young person has been unemployed. The following chart shows that those young people who have been unemployed for over 6 months have a seen a significantly greater reduction in the numbers unemployed over the period than for those unemployed under 6 months.



Source: NOMIS

7.16 Those unemployed over 6 months are eligible for New Deal and it is this group that have seen a downward trend of 84% from its peak of 600 in January 1997 to its lowest point of 95 in January 2005. However, the numbers in this group have also started to increase steadily from this point, increasing to 175 in July 2006, although this figure has since come down to 140 in December 2006.

7.17 Those unemployed for less than 6 months have not seen the corresponding reduction in numbers. This group has seen a 35% reduction from its peak of 910 in January 1999 to its lowest point of 595 in July 2004. It would appear that the lower rate of reduction amongst this group is keeping the overall 18-24 rate at the 'high' identified in the baseline data. This trend is repeated across Tees Valley. Redcar and Cleveland have the lowest reduction in this claimant group of 33%. Further exploration of the factors impacting on the under 6month unemployed group is required.

'Churn'

7.18 The term 'Churn' is used to explain the number of young people moving on and off the unemployment claimant count. The table below shows the 'on' and the 'off flow' for unemployed young people across the Tees Valley, the region and nationally for those aged under 25 years.

	On flow		Off Flow		On flow under 25 years		Off Flow under 25 years	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Darlington	495	29.4	520	30.9	210	42.7	220	42.7
Hartlepool	585	24.4	590	24.7	280	48.2	245	41.6
Middlesbrough	945	23.5	1010	25.2	430	45.7	445	44.0
Redcar & Cleveland	835	27.3	860	28.2	415	49.7	400	46.7
Stockton	1130	29.1	1030	26.6	480	42.4	435	42.1
Tees Valley	3985	26.6	4015	26.6	1815	45.6	1750	43.5
North East	14060	28.2	14190	28.5	6375	45.3	6080	42.8
Great Britain	242735	26.0	233610	25.1	103445	42.6	90995	39.0

Source: JSU July 2006

7.19 Hartlepool has slightly lower numbers of those signing on and off the register than in Tees Valley, the North East or nationally. However, amongst those aged under 25 years, Hartlepool has a higher percentage (48%) signing on than that of the sub region, the region or nationally. For those signing off the register, Hartlepool's rate is lower than Tees Valley and the region but higher than the national rate. This indicates significant churn amongst this age group.

7.20 The table below provides the reasons why young people sign off the register.

Reason for leaving claimant count – 18-24 year olds	January 2006	April 2006	July 2006	October 2006
Found work	40	80	60	70
Increases work to 16+ hours/week	0	5	5	5
Gone abroad	0	0	10	0
Claimed Income Support	15	5	10	5
Claimed Sickness Benefit	-	-	-	-
Claimed Incapacity Benefit	5	5	15	20
Claimed another benefit	0	0	0	0
Gone to full-time education	0	0	0	15
Gone onto approved training	0	5	5	5
Transfer to Govt-supported training	15	45	20	40
Retirement age reached	0	0	0	0
Automatic credits payable	0	0	0	0
Claims back-to-work bonus	0	0	0	0
Gone to prison	0	0	0	0
Attending court	0	0	0	0
New claim review	0	0	0	0
Defective claim	0	0	5	0
Ceased claiming	0	0	0	5
Deceased	0	0	0	0
Not known	15	10	25	25
Failed to sign	90	120	90	110
Total	180	285	245	300

- These figures are missing. Data rounded to nearest 5.

Source: NOMIS

7.21 A snap shot of 'flow off' the register in 2006 taken at quarterly intervals shows that by far the most common reason for leaving the claimant count is failure to sign amongst this age group – accounting for between 37-50%, with finding work second (22-28%), and transfer to government supported training programme next (8-16%) with not known accounting for between 3-10%. Those signing off JSA to claim another benefit (incapacity and income support) account for 3.5-11%. It is not clear from the data how many of those transferring to Government supported training are young people on New Deal transferring to the options period.

7.22 The data also indicates a slightly greater churn amongst those young people unemployed under 6months. It has not been possible to analyse the data further but consultation suggests a number of reasons for the slower reduction in the rate of those under 6 months unemployed and the significant churn on and off the register:

- (a) Avoidance of New Deal – 'the threat effect'. Young people are signing off the register before they are eligible for New Deal to take up employment or training, transfer to another benefit or fail to sign – only to sign on at a later date.

(b) This creates the potential for churn between those claimants unemployed for over 6 months and those unemployed for under 6 months. If a young person who is eligible for New Deal signs off or fails to sign for 13 weeks, they break their eligibility for New Deal and return to under the 6 months unemployed category. Given that failure to sign is the most common reason for claimants in this age group signing off the register, there is a significant possibility that this kind of churn is taking place. Without further in depth analysis – the extent of this is not possible to gauge. Those who complete the gateway, options and follow through parts of New Deal return to JSA and have to complete another 26 weeks on JSA before they are eligible again for New Deal however, they are still counted in the 6+ unemployed category. To reduce this incidence of 'churn' amongst the 25+ claimants on New Deal, the eligibility criteria was amended – claimants would be eligible for New Deal if they had claimed JSA for 18 months over a 21 month period.

(c) Young people dropping out of training and signing on. Discussions with young people and agencies indicate a number of possible reasons for this:

- 1) Young people completing the first year of their training who are then unable to secure a placement to complete their second year of training. These young people then join the claimant count when they are eighteen years old.
- 2) Young people leaving school and start training but have no clear direction or progression route in mind. They later drop out as this was not the appropriate progression route for them.
- 3) Young people leave school and embark on NVQ level 2 training. The progression routes available at this stage include level 3 training and university or employment. For those not 'academically' able to progress to a level 3 or University, the links to the labour market after completing their level 2 are not always visible or achievable. This may also link in with the high number of those at 18 who are 'not known' to Connexions.

7.23 Furthermore, the *Youth Unemployment in Hartlepool: Developing an evidence base report* identifies a number of barriers to young people accessing and progressing in the local labour market:

(a) Employability skills – it was felt that many young people lack key employability and life skills. From discussions with employers and training providers it is possible to see their role developing into one of 'parent', providing 'life skills' support to young people e.g. help with managing money, personal hygiene, getting to work/training on time, taking responsibility for their actions.

- (b) **Basic skills-** concern was expressed that despite significant funding to support the improvement of basic skills, this was still a major barrier to young people accessing and progressing in training or the labour market. Changes to the New Deal programme in Hartlepool have seen the introduction of basic skills support in the gateway period to assist with job search and progression to training.
- (c) **Generational unemployment** - it was felt that young people lack role models in relation to training and employment and that this was limiting their aspirations. 7 out of 10 of the young people interviewed stated their parents and other family members were not working –a significant number of parents had caring responsibilities either for other siblings or relatives. The issues was also raised that worklessness was increasingly concentrated in families and communities where a culture of worklessness and benefit dependency was the ‘nom’ and an accepted way of life. Since 1996 the number of families on benefits with children under 15 in the town has increased overall. However, single parent families have significantly decreased. This could be an indication that New Deal for Lone Parents is having an impact on lone parent’s families.
- (d) **Structural issues** - Benefit dependency was felt to impact on the group identified above, particularly in relation to a young person’s status (e.g. in learning, unemployed working) and its impact on the family’s benefits. It was also felt to be an issue where young people were claiming incapacity benefit, where minimum wage jobs are not that attractive in comparison.
- (e) **Macro economic issues** – there was felt to be a lack of jobs resulting in a significant number of young people taking up training.
- (f) **Recruitment and training of young people** – Employers were not always clear about “how to go about” recruiting young people under the age of 18. Where recruitment and retention of young people had been successful this was attributed to:
- Good local networks – local businesses embedded in local communities
 - Employer had employed the young person straight from school and invested significant training and support. One employer felt that when young people leave education/training at 18-20 they were less inclined to “learn a trade and more difficult to mould”.
 - Employer assumes the ‘parent role’ providing significant social and emotional support to young people.

7.24 During discussions of this item Members expressed concern that the process of claimants signing off the unemployment register to go abroad and re-signing onto it when returning from abroad was contributing towards unemployment figures, and ‘chum’ in particular, and that this should be challenged, wherever possible.

Impact of mainstream provision

- 7.25 The *Youth Unemployment in Hartlepool: Developing an evidence base report* argues that it is possible to conclude that mainstream support is impacting positively on young people aged 16-18 in Hartlepool because the majority of young people in this cohort are engaged in Education, employment or training (EET) - 87%, and the NEET group and the 'not known' have both seen reductions in Hartlepool.
- 7.26 However, the data and qualitative information highlights a number of areas for further consideration:
- (a) There are vulnerable groups within the NEET group who require targeted and intensive support – in particular teenage parents and young carers.
 - (b) Young people appear to be dropping out of training and potentially contributing to the significant number of 'not known' aged 17 and 18 in Hartlepool.
 - (c) Young people still seem unsure about progression routes and the need for more targeted vocational Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) linked to the local labour market was identified.
 - (d) There was a general consensus that training and education was not adequately preparing young people for the labour market. Whilst Hartlepool has high rates of people achieving NVQ level 1 and 2, how far is this training improving their employability and assisting them to get jobs?
 - (e) Young people are 'turned off' by traditional learning styles, particularly if they have basic skills issues.
 - (f) The young people interviewed and feedback from agencies identified a very clear lack of aspiration and inspiration with some of the provision available

8. Roles and Responsibilities of the Various Stakeholders in Hartlepool who have some Responsibility for Tackling Youth Unemployment

- 8.1 Over the course of this Scrutiny Investigation each of the major stakeholders that exercise some responsibility for this issue have been invited to attend the Forum to provide evidence. These bodies are:
- (a) Job Centre Plus;
 - (b) The Learning and Skills Council;
 - (c) Connexions; and
 - (d) The Community and Voluntary Sector.

Jobcentre Plus

- 8.2 Jobcentre Plus is a government agency supporting people of a working age from welfare into work, and helping employers to fill their vacancies. They are part of the Department of Work and Pensions and play a major role in supporting the Department's aim to, 'promote opportunity and independence for all through modern, customer-focused services.' Initially a new claim for

JSA has a work focused interview. If the claimant has been claiming Hardship for longer than 6 months they will immediately be available for New Deal. At 13 weeks of unemployment about 70% of claimants have got employment at this stage. At 6 months unemployment they move onto New Deal for Young people.

- 8.3 At a macro level youth unemployment was identified as a key economic issue by the current Government and in 1998 and the New Deal for Young People was introduced to provide a series of cohesive and integrated interventions that aimed to improve the skills and employability of young people.
- 8.4 The New Deal is delivered by Jobcentre Plus, an executive agency of the Department of Work and Pensions and elements of the programme are sub-contracted to external public, private and voluntary sector organisations that provide training, work placements and personal development support. Each person is provided with a Jobcentre Plus Personal Advisor who is responsible for supporting the claimant through the New Deal journey to the point whereby employment is secured. The New Deal is a mandatory programme, and JSA claimants are expected to participate in programmes that will meet the objectives of individual job seeker agreements. Benefit entitlement can be affected if the young person fails to adhere to the requirements of the programme in relation to attendance and timekeeping.
- 8.5 During the evidence gathering session with the representative from Jobcentre Plus Members focused on the need to make jobs and employment attractive to young people. The issue of low wages for potentially unrewarding jobs was discussed and it was felt that employment needed to be sufficiently attractive for some young people to move them away from benefits.
- 8.6 At the following meeting of this Forum on 22 March 2007 Members questioned the impact that the six month period of unemployment as a qualification for New Deal training programmes was having on the unemployed claimant count. It was argued that some young people may be remaining unemployed specifically to access training courses through the New Deal programme. It was indicated to Members that the New Deal programme had been set up with the intention of responding to the key issue of young people who had been unemployed for over six months and that the programmes were geared towards improving the skills and employability of young people that had been unemployed for this length of time. Nevertheless, Members argued that the Authority should be lobbying for enhanced flexibility in the delivery of the New Deal programme so that young people could access training courses if they were unemployed for less than six months.

Learning and Skills Council (LSC)

- 8.7 Representatives of the LSC were unable to attend the Forum's evidence gathering session with external partners. However, they were eager to be involved in the process and submitted written evidence to the Forum instead. This sub-section draws on the written information provided by LSC.

- 8.8 The LSC plan and invest in high quality education and training for young people and adults that will build a skilled and competitive workforce. They help employers to get the training and skills they need for their business. The LSC are transforming the further education sector to meet the needs of employers and the local community. They are committed to improving learning opportunities for everyone.
- 8.9 The LSC is working towards the following regional priorities as detailed in the Tees Valley Learning and Skills Council Annual Plan 2006 – 07:
- (a) Increase employer demand for, and investment in, skills.
 - (b) Raise individual aspirations and demand for learning and provide individuals with opportunities throughout life to achieve their aspirations and embrace change.
 - (c) Enable those excluded from the Labour market to access learning and sustainable employment.
 - (d) Ensure all individuals have the foundations for employability – the attainment of Skills for Life and a first level 2 qualification.
 - (e) Increase the achievement of intermediate and higher level skills to support growth, innovation and productivity.
 - (f) Enable colleges and learning providers to be more responsive to employers' and learners' needs.
- 8.10 Following a joint mapping exercise by the LSC and Hartlepool LA it was found that there was no significant gaps in provision in this age band with the exception of level 3 in Accounting and Horticulture. However, NEET remains stubbornly high despite working in collaboration with Connexions on a number of projects. A review of the young people classified as NEET has highlighted that young people from vulnerable groups form a higher than expected percentage of the NEET group. Local Area Agreements have identified these groups and projects have been introduced to target these vulnerable groups. Specific actions that will be taken, across the Tees Valley, to reduce the NEET group will include:
- (a) Via the European Social Fund provision of programmes of support for 500 13 -17 year olds at risk of joining the NEET;
 - (b) Provide 300 additional places on pre E2E programmes; and
 - (c) Deliver a programme of education business link activity to include 8,200 work experience places, 100 professional days for teachers and 250 employers engaged in work related activity.
- 8.11 The LSC collaborates with the following organisations in relation to this issue: Jobcentre Plus; Connexions; the Local Authority; Schools; Colleges; Work-based Learning Providers; Sector Skills Councils; and Local employers.

Connexions

- 8.12 Representatives of Connexions were unable to attend the Forum's evidence gathering session with external partners. However, they were eager to be

involved in the process and submitted written evidence to the Forum instead. This sub-section draws on the written information provided by Connexions.

- 8.13 Connexions is a relatively recent statutory service, created under the Learning & Skills Act 2000 in order to, *“encourage, enable or assist, directly or indirectly, young people’s effective participation in learning”* (Section 114).
- 8.14 The Connexions service also totally subsumed the responsibilities and budgets of the previous Careers Service, created under the still extant 1973 Employment & Training Act in order to *“assist young persons undergoing relevant education to decide what employments , having regard to their capabilities, will be suitable for and available to them when they cease undergoing such education ;and what training or education is, or will be required, by and available to them, in order to fit them for those employments.”* (Section 8 as amended by Trade Union Reform & Employment Rights Act 1993).
- 8.15 Since 2002 Connexions partnerships have had a responsibility to report the current known destinations of all 16 19 year olds who have completed compulsory education. Throughout its brief history, all 47 Connexions Partnerships have been set targets by DfES, via its annual planning guidance, to reduce the levels of youth unemployment amongst those aged 16-18 in particular. Initially all partnerships were asked to reduce youth unemployment by one tenth (10%) between November 2002 and November 2004, and subsequently by varying levels (depending on previous baselines) between November 2004 – November 2006.
- 8.16 These targets were the forerunners of the current national DfES PSA target 12 to reduce Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETs) by 2 percentage points from 8% to 6% over the period 2004 to 2010. With the demise of subregional Connexions services, these targets have now manifested themselves, with an annual trajectory, as part of local authorities’ Local Area Agreement targets.
- 8.17 During discussions at the informal meeting of this Forum on 8 March 2007 it was recognised that Connexions is being brought under the remit of the Local Authority. Consequently, Members suggested that the Authority (and Economic Development and Children’s Services, in particular) seek to work closely with Connexions to support young people to achieve economic well-being.
- 8.18 The key elements of provision by Jobcentre Plus, Learning and Skills Council and Connexions Tees Valley (this sub regional service will be disaggregated in April 2007) have been included in the table below. Delivery of programmes can be via a range of contractors from the public, private and voluntary sectors.

Provider	Provision	Key Elements
Job Centre Plus	<p>Support for people of working age</p> <p>Under 6 months unemployed –</p> <p>Over 6 months unemployed:</p> <p>New Deal for Young People 18-24 years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory programme • Must have been claiming JSA for 6 months to be eligible for the programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active help from personal advisers to find work to meet individual needs • Jobseeker Direct is a job vacancy phone service • All young people assigned Personal Adviser • Assistance to draw up action plan • 'Gateway' for up to 4 months – regular meetings with Personal Adviser and then move into full time help/package of support • Option period: during this time the young person receives a training allowance equivalent to JSA and may also receive a £15.38 top up. • Options include: work experience, placements with employer or voluntary organisation, courses to develop skills employers want, help applying for jobs. • At end of option period if not found employment or moved into training the young person returns to JSA for 'follow through' period.
Learning and Skills Council	<p>Improving the skills of young people and adults to ensure a workforce of world-class standard.</p> <p>Apprenticeships -</p> <p>Entry to Employment (E2E)</p> <p>Further Education</p> <p>1st level 2 Entitlement</p> <p>Adult & Community Learning</p>	<p>A work-based learning programme that allows employers to train existing staff and new young people. The programme involves key skills qualification as well as technical certificate eg BTEC, City and Guilds. Lasts between 1-4 yrs.</p> <p>Programme aimed at young people aged 16 – 18 who are not involved in employment, education or training; aims to prepare the learner for employment in the apprenticeship programme through work placements and/or training.</p> <p>Courses can be full or part time, academic or vocational. Providers fall broadly into five categories: agriculture and horticulture colleges; art, design and performing arts colleges; general FE and tertiary colleges; sixth form colleges; and specialist designated institutions.</p> <p>Priority given to those learners who have not already achieved this standard.</p> <p>Support a diverse range of community-based and outreach learning opportunities.</p>

	Skills for Life – National LSC Train to Gain -for businesses,	Initiative for improving literacy, numeracy and language (ESOL) skills. Skills Brokers match any training needs identified with training providers ensure that training is delivered to meet business needs.
Connexions Tees Valley	Offers a family of services Valley including impartial and accessible information, advice and guidance for 13-19 year olds	Service delivered by teams of Personal Advisers located at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • schools and colleges • community locations • youth facilities • one stop shops in high street locations As well as the Connexions Tees Valley website. Support offered includes: Support learning, removing barriers to progression, raising aspirations and creating opportunities to enter education, employment or training.

The Community and Voluntary Sector

- 8.19 A representative of HVDA, who manages Millennium Volunteers, provided verbal evidence to Forum. It was argued that the Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS) can identify needs and fill in gaps not provided by statutory providers. In the CVS in the town only two organisations offer support specifically for young people, these are Brougham Annex and OFCA. However other CVS organisations provide support to young people on an ad hoc basis. For example, the West View Project takes young people away on confidence building weekends.
- 8.20 Through volunteering young people can gain skills and confidence. Volunteering can be an important stepping stone into work. Indeed, through Millennium Volunteers (MV) many young people move on to get jobs. Of the 35 young people who were unemployed and volunteered through MV last year 25 felt they had gained employment through volunteering.
- 8.21 Over the course of the investigation Members were generally supportive of the CVS's role in providing services for tackling youth unemployment. It was argued that the CVS's role should be maximised in providing services for this issue.

9. The Role of the Authority as a Non-statutory Service Provider in relation to Youth Unemployment, and in particular its Role in Economic Development

- 9.1 HBC is a non-statutory service provider for this issue. However, the Authority does exercise a role in monitoring and co-ordinating the LAA target and in its role as a 'Community Leader' and 'Place Shaper' in the locality. Consequently, it is HBC's intention to develop an additional range of employment and training projects that will assist in a reduction of youth unemployment and economic inactivity. To this end the Council have commissioned research to provide an evidence base that will support the development of these additional initiatives. As has been indicated earlier in this paper much of this evidence base has been used to inform the findings of this report (particularly section 7).
- 9.2 Locally HBC's Economic Development Service has worked closely with a number of agencies contracted by Job Centre Plus to deliver elements of the New Deal. This includes Nacro Tees Valley who are responsible for delivering the Environmental Task Force. This offers New Deal participants training, work experience and personal development, using environmental projects as the basis for improving employability. HBC developed a funding scheme to provide this as a waged option, so that young people are employed directly by the Council and the Neighbourhood Services Department has provided significant work activities to develop individual skills. In addition the Economic Development Service have used a variety of area based funding schemes to develop employment schemes that add value to mainstream New Deal provision and also support those people who are not eligible due to their benefit entitlement.
- 9.3 In this respect HBC, through Hartlepool Working Solutions, offers a range of employment related activities that facilitate a joined up approach to service delivery in the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (NRS) area. Hartlepool Working Solutions has seven separate elements:
- 1) Targeted Training;
 - 2) Womens Opportunities;
 - 3) Jobs Build;
 - 4) Work Route (ILM);
 - 5) Enhancing Employability;
 - 6) Progression to Work; and
 - 7) Work Smart.

Each element complements each other and aims to:

- (a) Provide support for residents furthest removed from the labour market by offering a cocktail of interventions, which help to overcome multiple barriers to employment.

- (b) Employment focused training, which meets the needs of the local labour market.
 - (c) Intermediary activities, which offer NRS residents with paid employment through HBC and acts as a transition to unsupported employment.
 - (d) Incentives to improve the match between the needs of employers and the aspirations of residents.
 - (e) Focused activities to support lone parents wishing to return to the labour market or become self-employed.
 - (f) Build links with employers to improve job brokerage and enhance agency activities in the town through the sharing of best practice.
 - (g) Ensure that residents have access to effective information, advice and guidance in order that they can make informed decisions regarding the opportunities open to them.
- 9.4 In 2005-06 Hartlepool Working Solutions supported 157 young people into employment.
- 9.5 During discussions Members expressed a desire to see more apprenticeships developed for young people. In addition, Members agreed that generational unemployment is a key issue that needs to be targeted.

10. Views of Young People who are Affected by this Issue

- 10.1 Given the time constraints for this investigation, it was agreed during the initial scoping exercise for this investigation that the views of young people would be sought through a focus group and fed back into the Forum. This was achieved through a couple of sessions with young people at the end of January and the beginning of February 2007. The views of the young people were fed back into the Forum through the, *Youth Unemployment in Hartlepool: Developing an evidence base* at its meeting on 23 February 2007 and are reproduced here.
- 10.2 The young people consulted with ranged from 17-21 years of age. Five young people were on E2e programmes, two were on New Deal and had just been accepted on HBC Intermediate Labour Market (ILM) project, one was in employment, and two were on placement with a voluntary sector organisation. Young people's perception of the training they had undertaken or were currently undertaking raised a number of issues:
- (a) It was evident that all the young people were unclear about what they wanted to do when they left school. This appears to result in:

Training as a stop gap – it was evident that most of these young people had taken up training because they did not know what else to

do or because “their mates were going on the course”. 6 out of 10 of the young people who had been on training all commented that they were unsure what they wanted to do when they left school and that the training course “was better than doing nothing”. One young person was very clear that once they turned eighteen they would leave the course and “they would get a job or sign on”.

Dropping out – many of the young people had started courses, usually straight from leaving school at 16 and had then ‘dropped out’ and then went onto start another programme at a different provider. Two of the young people interviewed said that they did not think they would complete the programme.

- (b) The young people were keen to start the job related aspects of the programmes and were not keen on the classroom elements of the training.
- (c) All the young people interviewed had had contact with a Connexions Personal Adviser with Personal Advisers referring young people to training provision.
- (d) One young person who had undertaken a diploma course at a college, but dropped out after two years, felt that there was not enough vocational support and was unclear as to the available progression routes had he completed the course.
- (e) Young people were keen to have more tasters of programmes to help them identify which course is ‘for them’.
- (f) 7 out of 10 of the young people interviewed stated their parents and other family members were not working –a significant number of parents had caring responsibilities either for other siblings or relatives.
- (g) The young people interviewed felt there were not enough jobs advertised for young people. Job adverts tended to ask for people with experience.

11. Suggested Areas for Improvement

- 11.1 The Terms of Reference for this investigation identified the need to suggest areas for improvement as part of the Forum’s remit in relation to this issue. This report has provided a summary of the evidence gathered by the Forum over a relatively short period of time. The information provided in this report suggests that this issue is broad and fairly complex. Indeed, the *Youth Unemployment in Hartlepool: Developing an evidence base report*, concluded that further consultation with young people, agencies and organisations is needed and highlighted some of the key areas that require further exploration. It argues that from discussions with young people, agencies and

organisations it is possible to identify a number of areas where additional resources could be targeted:

1. Links to the local labour market. Training and employment support must be closely linked to current and future opportunities in the local labour market. Employers are central to this and need to be:

- (a) Involved in the design and delivery of programmes.
- (b) Enabled and supported to provide work experience and placements to young people. The brokerage of placements is crucial to ensure young people complete their programmes.
- (c) Enabled and supported to provide more waged apprenticeships.
- (d) Involved as earlier as possible. Employer involvement needs to start in schools with clearly identified progression routes with training.

Specialised Diploma Lines will be available from 2008 onwards to learners aged 14-19 within applied settings and contexts. They are designed to meet skills needs of employers and on this basis should assist in bridging the gap between learning and the labour market.

2. Sustained support for those with multiple barriers. Mentoring was seen as an initiative that could provide sustained support to this target group.

3. More Intermediate Labour Market (ILM) provision – in linking points 2 and 3 together, ILM type activity can provide intensive support clearly linked to the labour market, engaging local employers and leading to real jobs. This provision would need to be available across the age range 16-24.

4. More training and vocational tasters. This would provide more opportunities for young people to gain a real insight into different courses and areas of work before making decisions as to which training/vocational route they would like to go down.

5. Information, advice and guidance. Additional support is needed for those that drop out of training or are in danger of dropping out of training. Once a progression route had been identified additional support is needed to ensure that young person does not become NEET. More focused and clearly linked to progression routes to the local labour market

6. More intensive and focused support for those young people unemployed under 6 months. To ensure they identify an appropriate progression route and that their engagement and retention in that provision/opportunity is supported to prevent them returning to the claimant count.

7. Funding. Funding needs to be more flexible to respond to the needs of those hardest to reach. More provision needs to include flexible grants to support young people to overcome barriers to accessing and staying in training and employment.

11.2 More specifically the *Youth Unemployment in Hartlepool: Developing an evidence base report* made a number of recommendations that included:

(a) A number of data issues need to be addressed, including:

- 1) More in depth analysis of 18-24 claimant count and flow; and
- 2) Data on the delivery and outcomes of New Deal for Young People in Hartlepool.

(b) Systems for recording, collating and sharing data between agencies need to be developed and implemented in order to gain as full an understanding of these claimant group.

11.3 In addition a number of further potential projects areas have been suggested through the *Youth Unemployment in Hartlepool: Developing an evidence base report*. These include:

Extending ILM type activities across the age range to provide intensive support that can effectively address issues of basic skills, employability and wider social issues. Consideration needs to be given to extending current provision to 12 months and introducing increments as incentives. Particularly with the 'hard to reach' groups a significant amount of resources and multi-agency working is required to remove more fundamental barriers eg care, financial/benefit, health, housing, aspirations

Support for those young people unemployed under 6 months to ensure they identify an appropriate progression route and that their engagement and retention in that provision/opportunity is supported to prevent them returning to the claimant count.

Support for young vulnerable young people – ensure existing and new provision can be targeted to the needs of vulnerable young people as identified in this report: young people leaving care, teenage parents, young carers and those with other 'family issues', homeless young people, young people with mental health issues, dependency issues and learning difficulties and disabilities. This also touches on the need for **support for those young people on incapacity benefit**. A greater understanding of this group and the support they require to move into training or employment is needed.

More training and vocational tasters to provide young people with the opportunity to gain a real insight into different courses and areas of work

Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) must be focused and clearly linked to progression routes in the local labour market and provide targeted support for those that drop out of training or are in danger of dropping out of training.

Explore the potential for social enterprise activities to support young people in training and employment opportunities.

Impact of the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) needs to be monitored in terms of how far it assists young people to engage and stay engaged in learning.

- 11.4 In addition, in their written submission to the Forum on 23 February 2007 Connexions argued that:

There are no panacea solutions for what is a complex problem. As well as continuing to work on simplifying progression routes from foundation & intermediate level qualifications, areas to consider include making the rewards for participation in work based training as comparatively attractive to young people as they were prior to the introduction of the Educational Maintenance allowance. More support for organizations to employ young people through the work based learning programme and pay employed status rates of around £80 per week direct to the young person may reinvigorate participation. The proportion of young people in real jobs remains low. Whether this is more a reflection of the overall lack of buoyancy in the local labour market, as opposed to a potential relative lack of employability skills vis a vis other age cohorts needs to be more thoroughly investigated as this could shape potential solutions.

- 11.5 During the informal meeting of this Forum on 8 March 2007 Members indicated that they felt careers guidance and training for young people under 16 years of age is crucial to determining young people's attitude to employment. It was felt that the attitudes of young people to employment before they reached 16 years of age is key. Consequently, it was suggested further research should be conducted into the impact of the provision of key stakeholders on careers guidance and training and that these services should be fully integrated within schools.

12. CONCLUSIONS

- 12.1 Over the course of the Scrutiny Investigation the following conclusions have been agreed by the Forum:-

- (a) The overall rate of unemployment over the last ten years has fallen faster than it has done for the 18-24 ('youth') cohort.
- (b) Hartlepool has high levels of under 25's moving both on and off the unemployment claimant count. This is in contrast to the town's overall number of people moving both on and off the unemployment claimant count. Consequently, there are relatively high levels of 'churn' in terms of youth unemployment.
- (c) Through its consultation process with agencies and organisations the *Youth Unemployment in Hartlepool: Developing an evidence base report* identified that a significant amount of work and resources had been targeted at supporting the NEET group in Hartlepool and that headway

had been made in working with this group. The report argues that the focus for resources should now be directed towards those vulnerable young people within the NEET group: young people leaving care, teenage parents, young carers and those with other 'family issues', homeless young people, young people with mental health issues, dependency issues and learning difficulties and disabilities.

- (d) It was also felt that many NEET and vulnerable young people often have low aspirations, self esteem and motivation, and that further work is needed to address wider issues of social deprivation and generational worklessness. Many of the young people interviewed had eventually embarked on a particular training route because their Dad, Mum, brother, friend etc. had worked in this field. However, the majority of their parents and siblings were currently not working.
- (e) There is a general consensus that training and education is not adequately preparing young people for the labour market. Whilst Hartlepool has high rates of people achieving NVQ level 1 and 2, how far is this training improving their employability and assisting them to get jobs?
- (f) Young people face particular barriers in relation to their engagement and retention in training and employment, which include; lack of employability skills, lack of basic skills, and structural barriers, including benefit dependency and a lack of jobs in the local labour market
- (g) Over the last 10 years Hartlepool has seen a reduction in the number of 18-24 year old claimants. But there is insufficient data available to ascertain the impact of New Deal on this reduction or to analyse the destinations of these young people. Within this cohort there is significant 'churn' on and off the claimant register which would be consistent with feed back from young people, agencies and organisations that young people are dropping out of provision or avoiding New Deal, however, without further data and analysis this cannot be confirmed.
- (h) The young people interviewed and feedback from agencies identified a very clear lack of aspiration and inspiration in relation to some of the provision available. However, there was a general consensus that mainstream provision had the potential to make a difference to young peoples' training and employment opportunities and to their lives in general, but it was felt that this was down to how individual providers delivered the programmes and that due to the sometimes fragmented nature of provision the support to ensure their learning and experience gained from various programmes of support was translated into positive outcomes, was often lacking.
- (i) That the identification of Youth Unemployment as a local 'problem' through a Local Area Agreement (LAA) target represents a positive step towards improving this issue through the enhanced performance management and monitoring and local actions that the introduction of a LAA target can bring about.

- (j) That the *Youth Unemployment in Hartlepool: Developing an evidence base report*, which has been attached at **Appendix A** (and has informed much of the findings of this report) identifies a number of data issues that need addressing and a number of potential project areas, which could help to maintain the momentum generated for this issue through the introduction of the LAA target.
- (k) A number of issues were raised by the young people, agencies and organisations consulted with in the production of the *Youth Unemployment in Hartlepool: Developing an evidence base report*, which have contributed to the Forum's conclusions. Including:-
 - 1) Concern was expressed that young people are dropping out of training, in particular this was felt to be an issue in relation to young people part completing programmes due to being unable to secure a placement.
 - 2) It was felt that academic routeways were not suitable for all and that more vocational routes incorporating different (individual) learning styles were needed to assist with keeping young people engaged in education and training.
 - 3) There needs to be "a stronger bridge between training and labour market" and in particular it was felt that there needed to be more input and support from employers for apprenticeships.
 - 4) Introduction of the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) was seen as having both a positive and negative impact. Whilst it was recognised the EMA may help some young people to take up training it was also suggested that it may not necessarily help those young people wanting to progress along the work based learning route and its introduction had resulted in a reduction in numbers of young people on E2e and apprenticeships, and the 'means test' element of the application was deterring some families from applying.
 - 5) The key to engaging and retaining young people in learning is identifying a 'spark' of interest – something that interests and inspires them.
 - 6) Mainstream funding can be too output driven and not always flexible enough to support the hardest reach young people. Additional funding streams (e.g. European Social Fund, Co financing) have been targeted at the NEET and hard to reach groups to assist with engaging and retaining them in learning. However, as these short term funding streams come to an end – concern was expressed that Hartlepool may see an increase in these figures without sustained targeting of additional resources.

13. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 13.1 The Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum has gathered evidence from a wide range of sources. The key recommendations to Cabinet are:

- (a) That the Authority is commended for taking on an active role in relation to Youth Unemployment and that the value of this work is supported and that, wherever possible, it should be supported further.
- (b) That the data issues and potential project areas identified in the *Youth Unemployment in Hartlepool: Developing an evidence base report*, which has been attached at **Appendix A**, are supported as a means to maintain the momentum generated for this issue through the introduction of the LAA target.
- (c) That, given that Connexions is being brought under the remit of the Local Authority, the Authority (and Economic Development and Children's Services, in particular) seek to work closely with Connexions to support young people to achieve economic well-being.
- (d) That further research should be conducted into the impact of the provision of key stakeholders on careers guidance and training for under 16's and that these services should be fully integrated within schools.
- (e) That the Authority should lobby for increased flexibility of the New Deal programme so that young people are able to access training programmes through this programme even if they have been unemployed for less than six months.
- (f) That the CVS's role should be maximised, wherever possible, in providing services for tackling youth unemployment.

**COUNCILLOR STEPHEN WALLACE
CHAIR OF REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM**

May 2007

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were used in preparation of this report:-

- (a) Report entitled 'Determining the Work Programme' (Scrutiny Support Officer) presented to the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum on 16 June 2006.

- (b) Report entitled 'Youth Unemployment – Scoping Report' (Scrutiny Support Officer) presented to the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum on 18 January 2007.
- (c) Report entitled 'Youth Unemployment – Evidence from Connexions – Covering Report' (SSO) presented to the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum on 23 February 2007
- (d) Report entitled 'Youth Unemployment – Evidence from the Learning and Skills Council – Covering Report' (SSO) presented to the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum on 23 February 2007
- (e) Report entitled 'Youth Unemployment – Evidence from Job Centre Plus – Covering Report' (SSO) presented to the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum on 23 February 2007
- (f) Report entitled 'Youth Unemployment – Evidence from the Community and Voluntary Sector – Covering Report' (SSO) presented to the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum on 23 February 2007
- (g) Report entitled 'Scrutiny Investigation into Youth Unemployment – Draft Research Report' (Economic Development Manager) presented to the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum on 23 February 2007.
- (h) Report entitled 'Scrutiny Investigation into Youth Unemployment – Draft Final Report' (Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum) presented to the Forum on 22 March 2007.
- (i) Minutes of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum from the 16 June 2006, 18 January, and 23 February 2007. In addition, the draft minutes from 22 March 2007 were used in preparation of this report.

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN HARTLEPOOL
Developing an evidence base

FEBRUARY 2007

Tracy Elwin - Research and Consultancy

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1. Introduction

It is Hartlepool Borough Council's intention to develop an additional range of employment and training projects that will assist in a reduction of youth unemployment and economic inactivity. To this end the Council have commissioned research to provide an evidence base that will support the development of these additional initiatives.

1.1 The Brief

The research brief outlines a number of key areas for further exploration.

- What is the real scale of the NEET problem in Hartlepool and what are the factors that lead to 16 and 17 year olds becoming classified as NEET?
- What has been the impact of mainstream publicly funded employment and training programmes targeted at 16-24 year olds?
- Where are the gaps in mainstream provision?
- What are the perception of employers and young people?

It was also the intention that this work should build upon the research undertaken by CLES into unemployment in Hartlepool in 2001. This research brief posed a number of questions:

- Why had the unemployment rate for Hartlepool remained at the 10-11%?
- Why had success across a range of initiatives not translated into lower unemployment levels
- What are the key groups or segments within the total group of unemployed and how are they fairing within the overall statistics?
- Churn in the labour market - what does it say about the structure of the labour market?

The report concluded that the vast part of what was going on in the labour market ***“is a direct result of macro economic drivers and policies. Other problems are institutionalised or cultural and will not be easy to resolve”***.

The report highlighted in particular that:

- Unemployment rates had remained high due to macro economic pressures – Hartlepool's slack labour market meant that active labour market projects had had less impact. Employment opportunities were not impacting on those on JSA but were being taken up by those who were economically inactive and had a greater incentive to work.
- There was evidence of significant churn in the labour market – with many people coming on and off training courses and initiatives
- Barriers to employment for the 16-24 age group included:

- A lack of work experience and qualifications
- The inter relationship between work and parents' benefits (where the young person was living at home)
- Unrealistic expectations of work and wages
- These young people were often in a non working peer group.

This report aims to build on and update the findings of this research focussing on the 16-24 age group. Given the huge body of data and the breadth of provision available to this target group it has not been possible to provide an in depth analysis in the available timeframe. However, this research has begun the process of 'unpicking the headline data' on youth unemployment and undertaken some initial consultation with young people and key stakeholders. From this initial research it has been possible to build up a picture of youth unemployment in Hartlepool and to identify a number of key areas that require further and more detailed exploration and analysis.

1.2 Methodology

The research took place between November 2006 and January 2007. The first stage of the research involved a review of the existing data using NOMIS and JSU reports, comparing the data where possible, to the rest of Tees Valley and the UK; focusing on indicators in relation to claimant count, economic activity and inactivity, worklessness, the NEET group and destinations of school leavers.

This data has then been supplemented by qualitative anecdotal information from semi structured interviews with individuals and focus groups as well as responses to questionnaires. To date consultation has taken place with 18 representatives from the public, private and voluntary sector as well as interviews and focus groups with 10 young people. The young people ranged from 17-21 years of age. Five young people were on E2e programmes, two were on New Deal and had just been accepted on Hartlepool Borough Council's ILM project, one was in employment, and two were on placement with a voluntary sector organisation.

2. Background

Over the last 10 years Hartlepool has benefited from significant investment in the regeneration of the town, both physically and in its people.

- City Challenge
- Single Regeneration Budget
- New Deal for Communities
- Neighbourhood Renewal Fund
- European Social Fund Objective 2 & 3 and ERDF

Improving the employability of the town's residents has been a key priority for these regeneration initiatives.

2.1 Mainstream provision

Within the timeframe available it has only been possible to apply a 'light touch' approach to assessing mainstream provision and undertaking a gap analysis.

On this basis the mainstream programmes available to this target group include those funded by Job Centre Plus, Learning and Skills Council and Connexions Tees Valley (this sub regional service will be disaggregated in April 2007). Delivery of programmes can be via a range of contractors from the public, private and voluntary sectors.

Provider	Provision	Key Elements
Job Centre Plus	<p>Support for people of working age</p> <p>Under 6 months unemployed –</p> <p>Over 6 months unemployed: New Deal for Young People 18-24 years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory programme • Must have been claiming JSA for 6 months to be eligible for the programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active help from personal advisers to find work to meet individual needs • Jobseeker Direct is a job vacancy phone service • All young people assigned Personal Adviser • Assistance to draw up action plan • 'Gateway' for up to 4 months – regular meetings with Personal Adviser and then move into full time help/package of support • Option period: during this time the young person receives a training allowance equivalent to JSA and may also receive a £15.38 top up. • Options include: work experience, placements with employer or voluntary organisation, courses to develop skills employers want, help applying for jobs. • At end of option period if not found employment or moved into training the young person returns to JSA for 'follow through' period.
Learning and Skills Council	<p>Improving the skills of young people and adults to ensure a workforce of world-class standard.</p> <p>Apprenticeships -</p>	<p>A work-based learning programme that allows employers to train existing staff and new young people. The programme involves key skills</p>

	<p>Entry to Employment (E2E)</p> <p>Further Education</p> <p>1st level 2 Entitlement</p> <p>Adult & Community Learning</p> <p>Skills for Life – National LSC</p> <p>Train to Gain - for businesses,</p>	<p>qualification as well as technical certificate eg BTEC, City and Guilds. Lasts between 1-4 yrs.</p> <p>Programme aimed at young people aged 16 – 18 who are not involved in employment, education or training; aims to prepare the learner for employment in the apprenticeship programme through work placements and/or training.</p> <p>Courses can be full or part time, academic or vocational. Providers fall broadly into five categories: agriculture and horticulture colleges; art, design and performing arts colleges; general FE and tertiary colleges; sixth form colleges; and specialist designated institutions.</p> <p>Priority given to those learners who have not already achieved this standard.</p> <p>Support a diverse range of community-based and outreach learning opportunities.</p> <p>Initiative for improving literacy, numeracy and language (ESOL) skills.</p> <p>Skills Brokers match any training needs identified with training providers ensure that training is delivered to meet business needs.</p>
Connexions Tees Valley	Offers a family of services Valley including impartial and accessible information, advice and guidance for 13-19 year olds	<p>Service delivered by teams of Personal Advisers located at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • schools and colleges • community locations • youth facilities • one stop shops in high street locations <p>As well as the Connexions Tees Valley website.</p> <p>Support offered includes: Support learning, removing barriers to progression, raising aspirations and creating opportunities to enter education, employment or training.</p>

The above agencies supplement their mainstream provision with a range of additional projects and initiatives funded from Europe as well as area based

regeneration programmes. This enables the targeting of additional resources to identified needs. However, these funding streams are fixed term but they enable pilot provision to be delivered and any subsequent good practice to be mainstreamed.

Hartlepool Borough Council provision

Hartlepool Working Solutions offers a range of employment related activities that facilitates a joined up approach to service delivery in the NRS area. Hartlepool Working Solutions has seven separate elements:

- Targeted Training
- Womens Opportunities
- Jobs Build
- Work Route (ILM)
- Enhancing Employability
- Progression to Work
- Work Smart

Each element complements each other and aims to:

- Provide support for residents furthest removed from the labour market by offering a cocktail of interventions, which help to overcome multiple barriers to employment.
- Employment focused training, which meets the needs of the local labour market.
- Intermediary activities, which offer NRS residents with paid employment through Hartlepool Borough Council and acts as a transition to unsupported employment.
- Incentives to improve the match between the needs of employers and the aspirations of residents.
- Focused activities to support lone parents wishing to return to the labour market or become self-employed.
- Build links with employers to improve job brokerage and enhance agency activities in the town through the sharing of best practice.
- Ensure that residents have access to effective information, advice and guidance in order that they can make informed decisions regarding the opportunities open to them.

In 2005-06 Hartlepool Working Solutions supported 157 residents into employment.

2.2 Population

The table below shows the population of Hartlepool by age group. The cohort this report focuses on, the 16-24 age group, represent 10,600 of the overall population in Hartlepool in mid 2006 making up 12% of the overall population.

	Total Population	Population by Age Group:						
		0-4	5-15	16-24	25-44	45-ret*	Ret*-74	75 plus
Darlington	99,800	6,100	13,400	10,900	26,400	23,200	11,700	8,000
Hartlepool	89,600	5,200	13,000	10,600	23,400	20,400	10,600	6,500
Middlesbrough	137,300	8,200	19,800	18,000	37,600	29,700	14,600	9,600
Redcar & Cleveland	137,200	7,200	18,600	15,600	34,100	32,600	18,000	11,200
Stockton-on-Tees	187,100	10,500	26,400	22,000	51,600	43,700	20,500	12,500
Tees Valley	651,000	37,100	91,100	77,100	173,100	149,600	75,400	47,700
North East	2,529,000	132,700	334,000	305,500	662,400	592,200	302,000	200,200
England & Wales	53,463,000	3,070,000	7,131,000	6,219,000	15,128,000	11,813,000	5,942,000	4,160,000

Notes : * "Ret" - Retirement age is 60 for Women, 65 for Men. Totals may not sum due to rounding.

Source : TVJSU

2.3 Economic Profile of Hartlepool

This section provides a snap shot of the local economy for the year ended December 2005 (Economic Profile for Districts in the Tees Valley - October 2006 Edition, JSU).

- 71.7% of the working age population are economically active. Hartlepool has the lowest rate of economic activity across Tees Valley and is significantly lower than the rate for the region – 75.2% and nationally 78.4%. Since 1999 Hartlepool is the only area in the Tees Valley that has seen an overall reduction in the rate of economic activity.
- 67.2% of the working age population are in employment – 49.6% in full time and 17.7% in part time employment. Hartlepool has a lower rate than Tees Valley (only Middlesbrough is lower than Hartlepool at 66.4%), the region and nationally.
- 6.4% of the working population are in self employment – this is the second highest rate in Tees Valley. Hartlepool has seen a significant

increase in this rate since 1999 – almost 3% - the highest increase in Tees Valley. This rate compares favourable with Tees Valley and the region at 6% and 6.3% respectively but is still lower than the national rate at 9%.

- 16.1% of the working age population have an NVQ4 or above (the lowest in Tees Valley). This is significantly lower than the regional rate of 21.3% and the national rate of 26.5%. 20.2% have no qualifications (the second highest in Tees Valley) compared to 18.8% for Tees Valley, 15.6% for the region and 14.3% nationally.
- Unemployment has been steadily decreasing since 1997 – from 8% to a low of 3.8% in 2005. The rate is now increasing and had reached 4.5% in September 2006. This rate is higher than Tees Valley at 3.8%, the region at 3.2% and nationally at 2.6%.
- Worklessness can be used as an alternative view of unemployment by measuring the total percentage of people of working age without work. Hartlepool's workless rate in September 2006 was 34.8% - the second highest in Tees Valley – higher than both Tees Valley at 33% and Great Britain at 25.5%.
- Hartlepool's average weekly earnings (full time and resident based)) at £373 are lower than Tees Valley, the north East and Great Britain.
- The job density figure for Hartlepool (devised as an indicator of job demand whilst vacancy data was temporarily unavailable) was 0.64 in 2004. The national average was 0.8 – indicating Hartlepool has more people than jobs and therefore has a slack labour market.

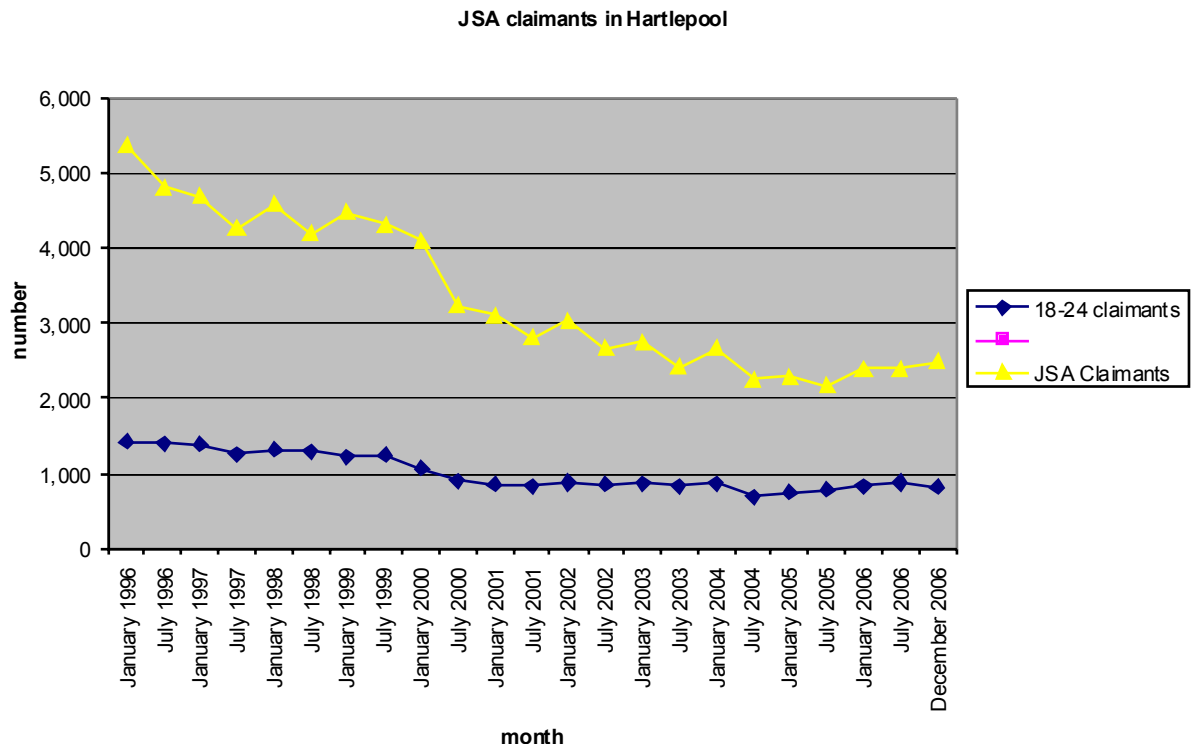
The CLES report provided a snapshot of the local economy in 2000 and found some similar characteristics:

- Slack labour market
- Low wage levels
- Lowered expectations of work and attainment
- High availability and provision of training

At this time unemployment was at 10.9% (February 2000). Over the last six years unemployment has reduced to 4.5% (September 2006) but the characteristics of the labour market remain similar.

2.4 Unemployment and worklessness

Youth unemployment is one of the key economic targets included in the Hartlepool Community Strategy, Local Area Agreement and Best Value Performance Plan. The long term target established in 2002 is to reduce the overall rate to 29% in 2012 from a baseline of 30.7%



As can be seen from the chart, overall unemployment (as measured in terms of claimant count JSA) has declined from a high of 5357 in 1996 to just over 2500 in January 2004 with 18-24 claimants reducing from a high of over 1400 to fewer than 800. However, during this period, the rate of 18-24 claimants measured as a proportion of overall JSA claimants fluctuated between 27% and reaching a high of 35% in the same period. The overall number of Hartlepool residents claiming JSA has declined at a greater rate than that of the 18-24 year old age group.

This research seeks to understand what is the real scale of youth unemployment in Hartlepool and provide an evidence base that will support the development of additional targeted employment and training projects that will lead to a reduction in youth unemployment. This report will address a number of key issues as laid out in the research brief:

- Research into the factors that lead to 16 and 17 year olds becoming classified as NEET and identify the real scale of the problem
- Assess the impact of mainstream publicly funded employment and training programmes targeted at 16-24 year olds
- Undertake a gap analysis of mainstream interventions
- Ascertain employers and young peoples perceptions of the issues

3. Findings

In order to gain a better understanding of the factors that may have impacted on the youth unemployment rate in Hartlepool the following data has been analysed:

- Population trends of the target group.
- Key indicators for the 16-18 cohorts – to gain in sight into the real scale of worklessness amongst this group: young people in learning and work, the NEET group and those whose destination is “not known”.
- Issues of unemployment and worklessness
- Claimant count and duration of unemployment.

Feedback from consultations with young people, agencies and organisations and stakeholders has also been used to add value to the data and to explore barriers to young people taking up training and employment.

3.1 Population trends

The overall population of the town in this period has declined; however, there has been a 15% increase in those aged 15-24 compared to only a 7% increase in those aged 25-59. With the main increase in those young people aged 15-19.

Whilst an increase in the population in this age group may account for some of the rate rise in 18-24 year old JSA claimants, analysis of data and qualitative information in relation to the 16-24 target group highlights some further issues.

3.2 Key Issues – 16-18 cohort

	Hartlepool	Tees Valley	England
16-18 Cohort Profile	2950	21209	1125658
% In learning	70.2	71.2	75.2
% NEET	11.7	12.4	8.6
% In employment	17.2	15.5	17.9
% Not known	4.00%	4.8	5.4

Source: Connexions Tees Valley

(i) Young People in learning

Hartlepool compares well with Tees Valley and England in terms of the number of young people in learning with 70.2% of this cohort in learning in Hartlepool compared to 71.2% in Tees Valley and 75.2% in England. Of those in learning, 58.2% are in education – slightly lower than Tees Valley (59.4%) and lower than England at 65.6%.

3.3% of those in learning are in employment with training – consistent with Tees Valley but significantly lower than in England – 6.4%. 8.7 of those in learning in Hartlepool are on government supported schemes. Both Hartlepool and Tees Valley are significantly higher than England at 3.2%.

Data on qualifications from the JSU shows that Hartlepool has higher rates of people achieving NVQ level 1 and 2 than Tees Valley, the region or nationally, but lower rates of those achieving trade apprenticeships.

Qualifications of working age population – 2005 Annual Population Survey

	Percentage people of working age with at least the following qualification level -						
	NVQ4 and above	NVQ3	Trade apprenticeships	NVQ2	NVQ1	Other qualifications	With no qualifications
Darlington	25.5	14.0	4.9	16.3	13.6	5.0	20.8
Hartlepool	16.1	17.0	6.7	19.1	15.7	5.3	20.2
Middlesbrough	16.5	15.4	7.1	17.9	14.4	8.8	19.8
Redcar & Cleveland	18.8	16.8	7.4	17.8	14.7	7.2	17.2
Stockton-on-Tees	25.4	17.8	5.5	18.6	14.3	4.1	14.3
Tees Valley	18.4	14.7	8.5	17.0	16.5	6.2	18.8
North East	21.3	15.4	7.3	18.3	15.5	6.6	15.6
Great Britain	26.5	15.1	5.6	15.8	14.3	8.4	14.3

Source: Annual Population Survey/JSUTV

Data from Connexions Tees Valley also reveals that more young people currently in training in Hartlepool join the NEET group from work based learning (WBL), E2e or Government Supported Training (GST) than in England 5.1% and 3.6% respectively.

Young people's perception of the training they had undertaken or were currently undertaking raised a number of issues. 5/7 young people were currently on E2e provision in Hartlepool, but all ten young people had undertaken some training provision in the town. Those currently on e2e programmes were all in receipt of EMA.

- It was evident that all the young people were unclear about what they wanted to do when they left school. This appears to result in:

Training as a stop gap – it was evident that most of these young people had taken up training because they did not know what else to do or because “their mates were going on the

course". 6 out of 10 of the young people who had been on training all commented that they were unsure what they wanted to do when they left school and that the training course "was better than doing nothing". One young person was very clear that once they turned eighteen they would leave the course and "they would get a job or sign on".

Dropping out – many of the young people had started courses, usually straight from leaving school at 16 and had then 'dropped out' and then went onto start another programme at a different provider. Two of the young people interviewed said that they did not think they would complete the programme.

- The young people were keen to start the job related aspects of the programmes and were not keen on the classroom elements of the training.
- All the young people interviewed had had contact with a Connexions Personal Adviser with Personal Advisers referring young people to training provision.
- One young person who had undertaken a diploma course at a college, but dropped out after two years, felt that there was not enough vocational support and was unclear as to the available progression routes had he completed the course.
- Young people were keen to have more tasters of programmes to help them identify which course is 'for them'.

The issues raised were reinforced by the agencies and organisations consulted with:

- Concern was expressed that young people are dropping out of training, in particular this was felt to be an issue in relation to young people part completing programmes due to being unable to secure a placement.
- It was felt that academic pathways were not suitable for all and that more vocational routes incorporating different (individual) learning styles were needed to assist with keeping young people engaged in education and training.
- There needs to be "a stronger bridge between training and labour market" and in particular it was felt that there needed to be more input and support from employers for apprenticeships.

A number of further points were raised with reference to young people and learning:

- Introduction of the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) was seen as having both a positive and negative impact. Whilst it was recognised

the EMA may help some young people to take up training a number of concerns were expressed:

- It was not necessarily helping those young people wanting to progress along the work based learning route and its introduction had resulted in a reduction in numbers of young people on E2e and apprenticeships
 - The 'means test' element of the application was deterring some families from applying.
- The key to engaging and retaining young people in learning is identifying a 'spark' of interest – something that interests and inspires them.
- Mainstream funding can be too output driven and not always flexible enough to support the hardest reach young people. Additional funding streams (e.g. ESF, Co financing) have been targeted at the NEET and hard to reach groups to assist with engaging and retaining them in learning. However, as these short term funding streams come to an end – concern was expressed that Hartlepool may see an increase in these figures without sustained targeting of additional resources.

(ii) Young People and employment

The number of young people in employment in Hartlepool compares well with England and is higher than in the Tees Valley. However, data indicates that a significant proportion of this employment is part time (65%) (NOMIS Jan-March 2006).

Employment is not seen as an 'option' at 16/17, "once I turn eighteen I'll leave the course and get a job or sign on".. The young people interviewed all saw employment as the end goal and were keen to receive a wage –although many were unsure of what kind of job they would like. It was evident that some had unrealistic expectations of the world of work – one young person commented when he was on placement "I had to start work at 7am and didn't finish till 6.30pm and I didn't even get any backhanders".

Concerns were expressed that education and training were not closely enough linked to the labour market and employers and that the curriculum and training programmes do not prepare young people for the labour market.

(iii) NEET Young People

The NEET figures for Hartlepool are higher than England but lower than the Tees Valley at 11.7%.

The NEET group can be broken down into those available for work and those not available for work. In relation to Hartlepool, those NEETs available for work make up 7.9% of the overall 11.7% with those not available for work making up 3.6%. This is significantly higher than Tees Valley at 2.8% but almost three times the rate for England at 1.3%.

Consultation with agencies and organisations revealed a number of factors that lead young people to becoming NEET:

- Disengaging from learning at school
- Low skills and qualifications
- Low aspirations – linked to generational unemployment
- Lack of confidence to access support networks when things go wrong
- Wider social issues eg homelessness, dependency issues, mental health issues, teenage pregnancy, caring responsibilities, young people in care

Vulnerable young people

Further analysis of this group reveals that Hartlepool has the highest percentage of teenage parents of all local authority areas in England. Furthermore, the data indicates that only 50% of 19 year old care leavers in the town are in education, employment or training (EET), therefore, correspondingly 50% are NEET or not known. This trend replicated in Tees Valley (with the exception of Redcar and Cleveland) and England.

The consultation process with agencies and organisations identified very clearly that a significant amount of work and resources had been targeted at supporting the NEET group in Hartlepool and that headway had been made in working with this group. The focus for resources should now be directed towards those vulnerable young people within the NEET group: young people leaving care, teenage parents, young carers and those with other 'family issues', homeless young people, young people with mental health issues, dependency issues and learning difficulties and disabilities.

It was also felt that many NEET and vulnerable young people often have low aspirations, self esteem and motivation and further work is needed to address wider issues of social deprivation and generational worklessness. Many of the young people interviewed had eventually embarked on a particular training route because their Dad, Mum, brother, friend etc had worked in this field. However, the majority of their parents and siblings were currently not working.

(iv) The Not Knowns

Hartlepool has a lower number of not knowns than Tees Valley but is higher than England. Hartlepool in particular has made a significant improvement in reducing the numbers of not knowns at 16 – a reduction of 83% since June 2005 and has also made an impact on the 17 and 18 year olds, however, 18 year olds still make up 70% of those not known.

16-18 cohort – Not knowns	June 2006	June 2005	Reduction	% in age range
Not knowns	122			
Not known at 16	5	29	83%	4
Not known at 17	32	102	69%	26
Not known at 18	85	216	61%	70
16-18	122	347	65%	100

Discussions with Connexions highlighted that destinations of those aged 17 and 18 are much harder to trace at 18 as many sign on and 'shift' contact from Connexions, as a young people's service, to Job Centre Plus. The two agencies have started to share data to enable closer tracking of young people aged 17-18.

The higher numbers of not known at 17 and 18 can in part be explained by the difficulty in tracking them, however, this would also be consistent with a significant number of 17 and 18 year olds dropping out of training programmes as highlighted in the previous sections.

(v) Young People still at school

Although this is beyond the remit of this research, a number of issues were raised in relation to school aged young people and support available at school regarding training and employment:

- Disengagement from school (sometimes exclusion) due to curriculum issues, teaching and learning styles
- Options and route ways are not sufficiently explained to young people early enough. This was reinforced by the young people interviewed who indicated that they would have liked more information about courses and what they entailed and what they could expect
- Pressure at school to perform in course work and exams. Many young people feel they cannot live up to expectations. This was a feeling expressed by one young person interviewed "there was too much pressure to do well".

(vi) Impact of mainstream provision

From the data and qualitative information it is possible to conclude that mainstream support is impacting positively on young people aged 16-18 in Hartlepool:

- The majority of young people in this cohort are engaged in Education, employment or training (EET) - 87%.
- The NEET group and the not known have both seen reductions in Hartlepool.

However, the data and qualitative information highlights a number of areas for further consideration:

- There are vulnerable groups within the NEET group who require targeted and intensive support – in particular teenage parents and young carers
- Young people appear to be dropping out of training and potentially contributing to the significant number of 'not known' aged 17 and 18 in Hartlepool.

- Young people still seem unsure about progression routes and the need for more targeted vocational IAG linked to the local labour market was identified.
- There was a general consensus that training and education was not adequately preparing young people for the labour market. Whilst Hartlepool has high rates of people achieving NVQ level 1 and 2, how far is this training improving their employability and assisting them to get jobs?
- Young people are 'tuned off' by traditional learning styles, particularly if they have basic skills issues.
- The young people interviewed and feedback from agencies identified a very clear lack of aspiration and inspiration with some of the provision available

3.3 Unemployment and Worklessness

The brief poses a specific question in relation to the 18-24 cohorts: to assess the impact of mainstream publicly funded employment and training programmes targeted at 16-24 year olds. This needs to be considered in light of the fact that the overall number of Hartlepool residents claiming JSA declining at a greater rate than that of the 18-24 year old age group.

The following table shows a profile of young people in the town in relation to employment and worklessness (May 2006). Due to how data is collected and collated it is not possible to analyse the data consistently across age groups and categories, however, the data in the table below provides an indication of the numbers in each category.

Indicator	16-17 years	16-19 years	18-24 years	20-24 years	Total
Unemployment (JSA Claimants)			820		820
Employment		2300		3700	6000
Income Support	50		730		780
Incapacity Benefit	30		410		440
Workless/Not known (remainder of population)					2560
Total					10,600
Ward with highest unemployment	Stranton				

67% of the 16-24 age groups are in employment, with almost 8% unemployed. 7% of the cohort is claiming income support and 4% are claiming Incapacity Benefit. When this data is compared with the corresponding rates for the 25-retirement age group, (3.7% unemployed, 14% Incapacity benefit, 10% income support), the rates of unemployment and

income support would seem high – however, this concurs with the data indicating that youth unemployment has reduced at a slower rate than overall unemployment but it would also be anticipated that the high incidence of teenage pregnancy amongst this age group would impact on the income support rate.

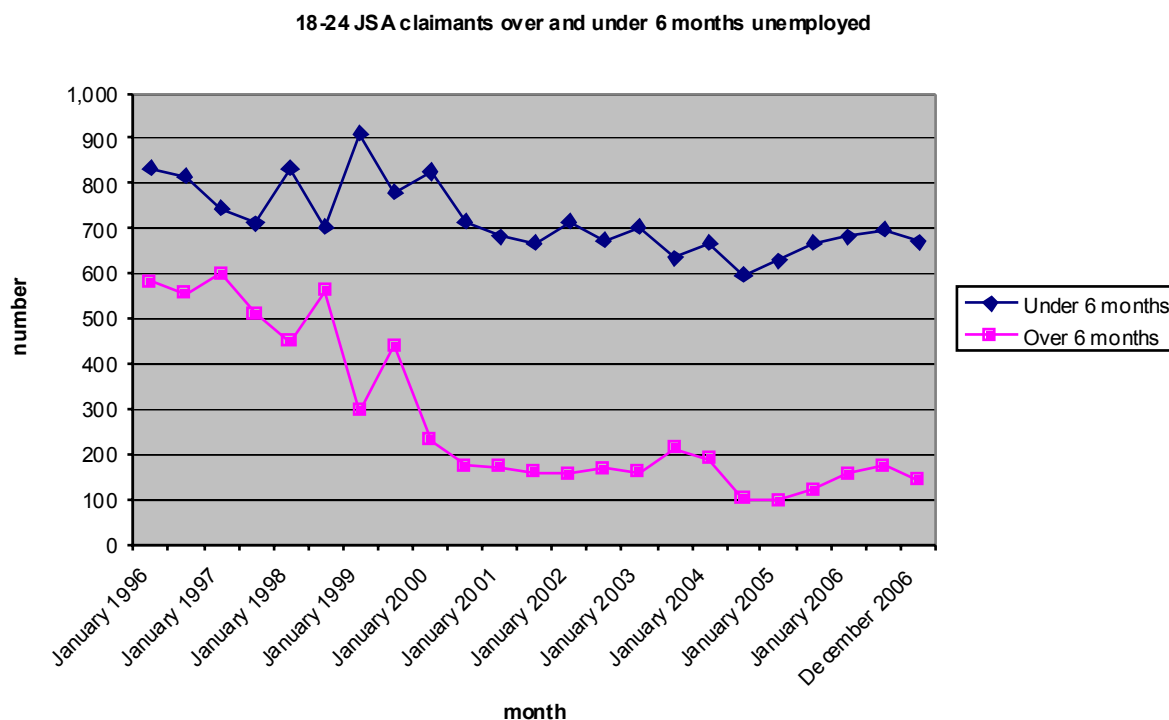
Furthermore, whilst the incapacity benefit rate for this group does not appear overly high in relation to the older age group – there are 440 young people on incapacity benefit – this figure does give cause for concern given the Government's green paper - A New Deal for Welfare Empowering People to Work (January 2006) which stated that "After two years on Incapacity Benefit, a person is more likely to die or retire than to find a new job". Does this mean that 4% of the 16-24 age groups could potentially be looking at long term benefit dependency?

(i) Claimant count and duration of unemployment

A closer look at the data reveals that the rate of unemployment is affected according to how long a young person has been unemployed.

Duration of unemployment

The following chart shows that those young people who have been unemployed for over 6 months have seen a significantly greater reduction in the numbers unemployed over the period than for those unemployed under 6 months.



Source: NOMIS

Those unemployed over 6 months are eligible for New Deal and it is this group that have seen a downward trend of 84% from its peak of 600 in January 1997 to its lowest point of 95 in January 2005. However, the numbers in this group have also started to increase steadily from this point, increasing to 175 in July 2006, although this figure has since come down to 140 in December 2006.

Those unemployed for less than 6 months have not seen the corresponding reduction in numbers. This group has seen a 35% reduction from its peak of 910 in January 1999 to its lowest point of 595 in July 2004. It would appear that the lower rate of reduction amongst this group is keeping the overall 18-24 rate at the 'high' identified in the baseline data. This trend is repeated across Tees Valley. Redcar and Cleveland have the lowest reduction in this claimant group of 33%. Further exploration of the factors impacting on the under 6month unemployed group is required.

(ii) Churn

Churn is the number young people moving on and off the unemployment claimant count. The table below shows on and off flow for across Tees Valley, the region and nationally for those aged under 25 years.

	On flow		Off Flow		On flow under 25 years		Off Flow under 25 years	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Darlington	495	29.4	520	30.9	210	42.7	220	42.7
Hartlepool	585	24.4	590	24.7	280	48.2	245	41.6
Middlesbrough	945	23.5	1010	25.2	430	45.7	445	44.0
Redcar & Cleveland	835	27.3	860	28.2	415	49.7	400	46.7
Stockton	1130	29.1	1030	26.6	480	42.4	435	42.1
Tees Valley	3985	26.6	4015	26.6	1815	45.6	1750	43.5
North East	14060	28.2	14190	28.5	6375	45.3	6080	42.8
Great Britain	242735	26.0	233610	25.1	103445	42.6	90995	39.0

Source: JSU July 2006

Hartlepool has slighter lower numbers of those signing on and off the register than in Tees Valley, the North East or nationally. However, amongst those aged under 25 years, Hartlepool has a higher percentage (48%) signing on than that of the sub region, the region or nationally and for those signing off the register, Hartlepool's rate is lower than Tees Valley and the region but higher than the national rate. This indicates significant churn amongst this age group.

The following table provides the reasons why young people sign off the register.

Reason for leaving claimant count – 18-24 year olds	January 2006	April 2006	July 2006	October 2006
Found work	40	80	60	70
Increases work to 16+ hours/week	0	5	5	5
Gone abroad	0	0	10	0
Claimed Income Support	15	5	10	5
Claimed Sickness Benefit	-	-	-	-
Claimed Incapacity Benefit	5	5	15	20
Claimed another benefit	0	0	0	0
Gone to full-time education	0	0	0	15
Gone onto approved training	0	5	5	5
Transfer to Govt-supported training	15	45	20	40
Retirement age reached	0	0	0	0
Automatic credits payable	0	0	0	0
Claims back-to-work bonus	0	0	0	0
Gone to prison	0	0	0	0
Attending court	0	0	0	0
New claim review	0	0	0	0
Defective claim	0	0	5	0
Ceased claiming	0	0	0	5
Deceased	0	0	0	0
Not known	15	10	25	25
Failed to sign	90	120	90	110
Total	180	285	245	300

- These figures are missing. Data rounded to nearest 5.

Source: NOMIS

A snap shot of flow off the register in 2006 taken at quarterly intervals shows that by far the most common reason for leaving the claimant count is failure to sign amongst this age group – accounting for between 37-50%, with finding work second (22-28%), and transfer to government supported training programme next (8-16%) with not known accounting for between 3-10%. Those signing off JSA to claim another benefit (incapacity and income support) account for 3.5-11%. It is not clear from the data how many of those transferring to Government supported training are young people on New Deal transferring to the options period.

The data also indicates a slightly greater churn amongst those young people unemployed under 6months. It has not been possible to analyse the data further but consultation suggests a number of reasons for the slower reduction in the rate of those under 6 months unemployed and the significant churn on and off the register:

- Avoidance of New Deal – ‘the threat effect’. Young people signing off the register before they are eligible for New Deal to take up employment or training, transfer to another benefit or fail to sign – only to sign on at a later date.

- This creates the potential for churn between those claimants unemployed for over 6months and those unemployed for under 6months. If a young person who is eligible for New Deal signs off or fails to sign for 13 weeks, they break their eligibility for New Deal and return to under the 6months unemployed category. Given that failure to sign is the most common reason for claimants in this age group signing off the register, there is a significant possibility that this kind of churn is taking place. Without further in depth analysis – the extent of this is not possible to gauge. Those who complete the gateway, options and follow through parts of New Deal return to JSA and have to complete another 26 weeks on JSA before they are eligible again for New Deal however, they are still counted in the 6+ unemployed category. To reduce this incidence of ‘churn’ amongst the 25+ claimants on New Deal, the eligibility criteria was amended – claimants would be eligible for New Deal if they had claimed JSA for 18 months over a 21 month period.
- Young people dropping out of training and signing on. Discussions with young people and agencies indicate a number of possible reasons for this:
 - Young people completing the first year of their training who are then unable to secure a placement to complete their second year of training. These young people then join the claimant count when they are eighteen years old.
 - Young people leaving school and start training but have no clear direction or progression route in mind. They later drop out as this was not the appropriate progression route for them.
 - Young people leave school and embark on NVQ level 2 training. The progression routes available at this stage include level 3 training and university or employment. For those not ‘academically’ able to progress to a level 3 or University, the links to the labour market after completing their level 2 are not always visible or achievable. This may also link in with the high number of those at 18 who are ‘not known’ to Connexions.

(ii) Young people and the labour market

From discussions with young people, agencies, organisations and employers a number of key barriers were identified to young people accessing and progressing in the local labour market:

Employability skills – it was felt that many young people lack key employability and life skills. Those specifically mentioned included, communication skills, confidence, motivation – getting out of bed, personal hygiene, and an appreciation of ‘appropriate behaviour’ in relation to the workplace. From discussions with employers and training providers it is

possible to see their role developing into one of 'parent', providing 'life skills' support to young people e.g. help with managing money, personal hygiene, getting to work/training on time, taking responsibility for their actions.

Basic skills- concern was expressed that despite significant funding to support the improvement of basic skills, this was still a major barrier to young people accessing and progressing in training or the labour market. Changes to the New Deal programme in Hartlepool have seen the introduction of basic skills support in the gateway period to assist with job search and progression to training.

Generational unemployment

It was felt that young people lack role models in relation to training and employment and that this was limiting their aspirations. 7 out of 10 of the young people interviewed stated their parents and other family members were not working –a significant number of parents had caring responsibilities either for other siblings or relatives.

The issues was also raised that worklessness was increasingly concentrated in families and communities where a culture of worklessness and benefit dependency was the 'norm' and an accepted way of life. Since 1996 the number of families on benefits with children under 15 in the town has increased overall. However, single parent families have significantly decreased. This could be an indication that New Deal for Lone Parents is having an impact on lone parent's families.

Structural issues

Benefit dependency was felt to impact on this group, particularly in relation to a young person's status (e.g. in learning, unemployed working) and its impact on the family's benefits. It was also felt to be an issue where young people were claiming incapacity benefit, where minimum wage jobs are not that attractive in comparison.

Macro economic issues – there was felt to be a lack of jobs resulting in a significant number of young people taking up training

Recruitment and training of young people

Employers were not always clear about "how to go about" recruiting young people under the age of 18. Where recruitment and retention of young people had been successful this was attributed to:

- Good local networks – local businesses embedded in local communities
- Employer had employed the young person straight from school and invested significant training and support. One employer felt that when young people leave education/training at 18-20 they were less inclined to "learn a trade and more difficult to mould".
- Employer assumes the 'parent role' providing significant social and emotional support to young people.

The young people interviewed felt there were not enough jobs advertised for young people. Job adverts tended to ask for people with experience.

(iv) Impact of Mainstream Provision

From the data on claimant count and duration, there would appear to be a link between the introduction of New Deal in 1998 and the reduction in numbers claiming JSA who are over 6 months unemployed. However, young people can access additional training and employment support initiatives aimed at enhancing New Deal provision provided through the voluntary and community sector as well as the local authority and therefore, it is not possible to isolate the impact of New Deal.

Furthermore, data on young people on New Deal in Hartlepool in terms of destinations is not available. This means it is not possible to analyse the impact of New Deal on the flow of young people on and off the register to gauge the extent to which New Deal has supported young people into employment or training and how sustainable that destination has been. From discussions with JCP it would appear that:

- New Deal data recorded and collated by JCP is only available on a Tees Valley wide basis and cannot be interrogated for Hartlepool only
- Performance is measured by contractor not by area or cohort
- Targets and measures have changed over time making any form of time series analysis difficult.

Feedback from young people on New Deal was limited as only two young people had experience of New Deal. Both young people had completed the gateway elements of New Deal and were about to start 'employment' with Hartlepool Borough Council's intermediate Labour Market Programme as a result of joint working between Economic Development and the Leaving Care Team. Both young people would have liked more intensive support from New Deal. One of the young people had completed a short training course whilst on New Deal which he found useful but had then sourced employment himself and with the help of his social worker. The other young person would have liked more proactive job search support during the gateway period.

Evaluations of New Deal

An initial search for local evaluations of New Deal for Young People has revealed very little. There have been numerous national evaluations that comment on the performance of the programme and the experience of young people.

Joseph Rowntree Foundation- The New Deals: The experience so far (July 2000) found that just under a half of young people participating on the programme had found work and three quarters of these were sustained jobs. The report goes on to suggest that the programme had led to a reduction in youth unemployment by about 30,000 in the first year, but also raises the issues that some of these would have got jobs without the programme.

Research undertaken by David Wilkinson (2003) concludes that the New Deal programme has reduced youth unemployment, “a significant part of the impact has come from young people who no longer claim unemployment benefit for 6 months and hence do not qualify for New Deal. For those that did participate in the programme, the largest effect is an increase in the proportion of young people who left unemployment to go into GST”.

These findings are supported by a study undertaken by **Duncan McVicar and Jan M Podivinsky** in 2003 ‘**Into Jobs or into the classroom**’ which found that the New Deal for young people boosted exit rates to all destinations* at different durations of unemployment but identified a previously unidentified primary effect to “shift large numbers of young people out of unemployment and into education and training”.

*definition: employment, other benefits, education and training, other

This study went on to pose the further question “it is not yet clear whether these young people are subsequently more employable as a result of the intervention”. Without data on the destinations of young people in Hartlepool on New Deal, it is not possible to comment on the impact on exit rates or employability.

There exists a consensus that job search programmes work best in dynamic labour markets and that whilst “active labour market policies can assist the long term unemployed, the key to widening the opportunities available to the unemployed and work poor is sustained employment growth” (CLES report pg 8).

With reference to learning and training provision for the 18-24 age group, many of the issues raised in the section 4.1 apply:

- Provision is not closely enough linked to the labour market and ‘real jobs’.
- Young people completing NVQ level 2 training who are not ‘academically’ able to progress to a level 3 or University are struggling to make the transition to the labour market.
- Impact has been curtailed due to young people ‘dipping in and out’ of provision. This fragmented nature of support often dilutes any positives outcomes.

Whilst assessing the impact of mainstream provision has proved a very difficult exercise, it has raised a number of important issues:

- Additional data and further interrogation of available data is needed in relation to:
 - (i) Claimant count and duration of unemployment – in particular flow on and off the register to investigate further the potential links between claimant flow and :

- Avoidance of New Deal
- Young people dropping out of training

(ii) Incapacity benefit claimants – further understanding is needed of this group to ensure support can be targeted to prevent long term dependency on this benefit.

- In order to ensure the development of new and existing training and employment projects in Hartlepool can benefit from the experience of New Deal, systems for recording, collating and sharing data need to be developed and implemented.

4. Gap Analysis

From discussions with young people, agencies and organisations it is possible to identify a number of areas where additional resources could be targeted.

1. Links to the local labour market. Training and employment support must be closely linked to current and future opportunities in the local labour market. Employers are central to this and need to be:

- Involved in the design and delivery of programmes.
- Enabled and supported to provide work experience and placements to young people. The brokerage of placements is crucial to ensure young people complete their programmes.
- Enabled and supported to provide more waged apprenticeships.
- Involved as earlier as possible. Employer involvement needs to start in schools with clearly identified progression routes with training.

Specialised Diploma Lines will be available from 2008 onwards to learners aged 14-19 within applied settings and contexts. They are designed to meet skills needs of employers and on this basis should assist in bridging the gap between learning and the labour market.

2. Sustained support for those with multiple barriers. Mentoring was seen as an initiative that could provide sustained support to this target group.

3. More Intermediate Labour market provision – in linking points 2 and 3 together, ILM type activity can provide intensive support clearly linked to the labour market, engaging local employers and leading to real jobs. This provision would need to be available across the age range 16-24.

4. More training and vocational tasters. This would provide more opportunities for young people to gain a real insight into different courses and areas of work before making decisions as to which training/vocational route they would like to go down.

5. Information, advice and guidance

- Additional support needed for those that drop out of training or are in danger of dropping out of training. Once a progression route had been identified additional support is needed to ensure that young person does not become NEET.
- More focused and clearly linked to progression routes to the local labour market

6. More intensive and focused support for those young people unemployed under 6 months

- To ensure they identify an appropriate progression route and that their engagement and retention in that provision/opportunity is supported to prevent them returning to the claimant count.

7. Funding

- Funding needs to be more flexible to respond to the needs of those hardest to reach
- More provision needs to include flexible grants to support young people to overcome barriers to accessing and staying in training and employment.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

Young People 16-18

The majority of young people at 16 are identifying progression routes – the vast majority of these into further learning (71.7%). However, for a significant number of these young people this is not a sustained outcome and they are disengaging from learning for a variety of reasons:

- Lack of direction – “I don’t know what I want to do” and many seem unsure about progression routes
- Unable to secure a placement
- Inappropriate provision often due to:
 - basic skill needs
 - ‘academic’ teaching and learning styles

The majority of young people are signposted to education and training at 16 as they cannot claim JSA. Employers and young people rarely saw employment between the ages of 16-18 as a possible option.

There was a general consensus that training and education was not adequately preparing young people for the labour market. Whilst Hartlepool has high rates of people achieving NVQ level 1 and 2, how far is this training improving their employability and assisting them to get jobs?

The NEET Group

There are vulnerable groups within the NEET group who require targeted and intensive support – in particular teenage parents and young carers. The wider issues of social deprivation and generational unemployment also need to be addressed before issues relating to learning or employability can be addressed. It was evident that training providers and employers were confronting many of these issues on a daily basis and in some instances assuming the role of 'parent' to provide these young people with the necessary level of support.

Barriers to training and employment

Young people face particular barriers in relation to their engagement and retention in training and employment:

- Lack of employability skills
- Lack of basic skills
- Structural barriers, including benefit dependency and a lack of jobs in the local labour market

Impact of mainstream provision

Over the last 10 years Hartlepool has seen a reduction in the number of 18-24 year old claimants. But there is insufficient data available to ascertain the impact of New Deal on this reduction or to analyse the destinations of these young people. Within this cohort there is significant 'churn' on and off the claimant register which would be consistent with feed back from young people, agencies and organisations that young people are dropping out of provision or avoiding New Deal, however, without further data and analysis this cannot be confirmed.

The young people interviewed and feedback from agencies identified a very clear lack of aspiration and inspiration in relation to some of the provision available. However, there was a general consensus that mainstream provision had the potential to make a difference to young peoples' training and employment opportunities and to their lives in general, but it was felt that this was down to how individual providers delivered the programmes and that due to the sometimes fragmented nature of provision the support to ensure their learning and experience gained from various programmes of support was translated into positive outcomes, was often lacking.

Recommendations

Data

There are a number of data issues that need to be addressed

- More in depth analysis of 18-24 claimant count and flow
- Data on the delivery and outcomes of New Deal for Young People in Hartlepool.

In order to gain as full an understanding of these claimant group systems for recording, collating and sharing data between agencies need to be developed and implemented.

Potential projects areas

Extending ILM type activities across the age range to provide intensive support that can effectively address issues of basic skills, employability and wider social issues. Consideration needs to be given to extending current provision to 12months and introducing increments as incentives. Particularly with the 'hard to reach' groups a significant amount of resources and multi-agency working is required to remove more fundamental barriers eg care, financial/benefit, health, housing, aspirations

Support for those young people unemployed under 6 months to ensure they identify an appropriate progression route and that their engagement and retention in that provision/opportunity is supported to prevent them returning to the claimant count.

Support for young vulnerable young people – ensure existing and new provision can be targeted to the needs of vulnerable young people as identified in this report: young people leaving care, teenage parents, young carers and those with other 'family issues', homeless young people, young people with mental health issues, dependency issues and learning difficulties and disabilities. This also touches on the need for **support for those young people on incapacity benefit**. A greater understanding of this group and the support they require to move into training or employment is needed.

More training and vocational tasters to provide young people with the opportunity to gain a real insight into different courses and areas of work

LAG must be focused and clearly linked to progression routes in the local labour market and provide targeted support for those that drop out of training or are in danger of dropping out of training.

Explore the potential for social enterprise activities to support young people in training and employment opportunities

Further consultation with young people, agencies and organisations

The research brief 'threw a very wide net' over the issues to be explored. This initial report has highlighted some of the key areas that require further exploration.

Other issues

Impact of the EMA needs to be monitored in terms of how far it assists young people to engage and stay engaged in learning.

Appendix 1

Interviewees

Tom Argument, Hartlepool Borough Council – 14-19 Coordinator

Rick Wells, Principal, Hartlepool Sixth Form College

Terry Curren, English Martyrs Sixth Form College

Trevor Mortlock and Susan Alderson, Job Centre Plus

Dave Waddington and Paul Marshall, Hartlepool College of Further Education

Marjorie James, Community Empowerment Network

Miriam Robertson and Terry Wilson, Connexions Tees Valley

Sue William, Denise Taylor and Paul Johnson, Hartlepool Borough Council,
Hartlepool Working Solutions

Dane Mills, Managing Director, Flexability

Leo Gillen,

Gill Dunn, Call Centre Manager, Garlands

Respondents to Questionnaires

Stephen Wright, Partnership Manager Learning and Skills Council

Chris Wise, West View Project

CABINET REPORT

11th June 2007



Report of: Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum

Subject: FINAL REPORT – SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION INTO SOCIAL PRESCRIBING

SUMMARY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present the Final Report of the Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum following its investigation into Social Prescribing.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

- 2.1 The Final Report outlines the overall aim of the scrutiny investigation, terms of reference, methods of investigation, findings, conclusions, and subsequent recommendations.

3. RELEVANCE TO CABINET

- 3.1 Cabinet are requested to consider the Final Report and approve the recommendations contained within it.

4. TYPE OF DECISION

- 4.1 This is a non-key decision.

5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE

- 5.1 The report makes recommendations to both Hartlepool PCT and Cabinet..

6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED

- 6.1 The Cabinet is recommended to consider the content of the Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum's Final Report and approve the recommendations detailed within it.

CABINET**11 June 2007**

**Report of: Adult and Community Services and Health
Scrutiny Forum**

Subject: SOCIAL PRESCRIBING – FINAL REPORT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present the findings of the Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum following its investigation into Social Prescribing.

2. SETTING THE SCENE

- 2.1 At a meeting of the Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum on 13 June 2006 the Forum established its annual work programme which included an investigation into 'Social Prescribing.' Social Prescribing is an emerging field and is an approach for linking patients and the public with non-medical sources of support, especially within primary care and community settings. It is widely accepted that 'the broader, holistic framework evident in Social Prescribing, with an emphasis on personal experiences, relationships and social conditions, is more compatible with lay understandings of mental well-being and mental distress than a medical model'. (Rodgers and Pilgrim, 1997)
- 2.2 Social Prescribing has been widely adopted in the context of mild to moderate mental health problems with a range of positive outcomes. (Friedli and Watson, 2004) Increasingly, it is also being used to help extend social inclusion and, thereby increase health and well-being, among disadvantaged, isolated and vulnerable populations. The aim of this investigation was essentially to explore the ways in which Social Prescribing can be further developed in Hartlepool with its high levels of deprivation, mortality and illness.
- 2.3 The investigation explored a number of factors (outlined overleaf) with a view to identifying how non-medical interventions might assist people with longer term or complex health and social care needs to maintain their independence and to live as fulfilling a life as possible. It also sought to understand the links between primary care, Local Authority, Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) services necessary to provide such interventions and how the funding

streams for each of these services could be used to secure appropriate flows of resources.

3. OVERALL AIM OF THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

- 3.1 The overall aim of the Scrutiny investigation was to explore the ways in which Social Prescribing is being and might be further developed in Hartlepool.

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

- 4.1 The Terms of Reference for the Scrutiny investigation were:-

- (a) To gain an understanding of national policy and practice in relation to 'Social Prescribing';
- (b) To seek evidence for the effectiveness of Social Prescribing;
- (c) To identify current provision of Social Prescribing in Hartlepool;
- (d) To identify challenges in integrating Social Prescribing within primary care practice and other areas;
- (e) To identify the funding streams that currently support and in future will support Social Prescribing and, to examine the long-term sustainability of these;
- (f) To compare what good practice exists in other Local Authorities in relation to Social Prescribing;
- (g) To seek the views of the service users and carers in relation to Social Prescribing initiatives; and
- (h) To seek the views of GPs and service providers in the statutory and non-statutory sectors.

5. MEMBERSHIP OF THE ADULT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES AND HEALTH SCRUTINY FORUM

- 5.1 The membership of the Scrutiny Forum was as detailed below:-

Councillors Barker, Akers-Belcher, Brash, Fleet, Griffin, Lauderdale, Lilley, Rayner, Wistow, Worthy and Young.

Resident Representatives: Mary Green, Jean Kennedy and Joan Noman

6. METHODS OF INVESTIGATION

- 6.1 Members of the Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum met formally from 25 July 2006 to 29 March 2007 to discuss and receive evidence relating to this investigation. A detailed record of the issues raised during these meetings is available from the Council's Democratic Services.
- 6.2 A brief summary of the methods of investigation are outlined below:-
- (a) Detailed Officer reports supplemented by verbal evidence;
 - (b) Evidence from the Authority's Portfolio Holder for Adult and Public Health Services;
 - (c) Examination of good practice that exists within a neighbouring Local Authority;
 - (d) Evidence received from a representative of HVDA;
 - (e) Evidence received from Hartlepool PCT;
 - (f) Evidence received from Hartlepool MIND;
 - (g) Evidence received from Hartlepool NDC, and
 - (h) The views of local service users and representatives of carers' views.

FINDINGS

7 NATIONAL POLICY AND PRACTICE IN RELATION TO SOCIAL PRESCRIBING;

- 7.1 Members of the Forum learned that a number of developments have created a potentially favourable policy environment for developing Social Prescribing. These factors are outlined below:-
- (i) Our Health, Our Care, Our Say
- 7.2 The Government White Paper, Our Health, Our Care, Our say states that People with longer-term or more complex health and social care needs want services that will help them to maintain their independence and wellbeing and to lead as fulfilling a life as possible. With over 17.5 million people in Britain reporting a long-term condition such as diabetes, asthma or arthritis the White Paper recognises that discomfort and stress is an everyday occurrence.
- 7.3 The Government further acknowledges that care for many of these people has traditionally been reactive, unplanned and episodic. This resulted in heavy use of secondary care services. It was clear to Members, therefore,

that that improved support and a wholesale change in the delivery of health and social care services was essential.

- 7.4 Thus the Forum welcomed change in Government policy which is moving away from reactive based care in acute systems towards a systematic, patient centred approach with care rooted in primary care settings and the creation of new partnerships across the whole health and social care spectrum to provide a different and more extensive range of interventions in the community. Evidence suggesting that only 50% of medicines are taken as prescribed raised further questions about the effectiveness and appropriateness of current medical interventions.

(ii) Local Involvement Networks (LINKs)

- 7.5 The Forum established that public participation and patient involvement are closely linked to a growing emphasis on the need to take account of consumer views in deciding how services are planned, delivered and evaluated. LINKs are intended to provide flexible ways for individuals, organisations and communities to engage with health and social care services in ways that best suit the communities and the people in them. They are also intended to build on the best work of public and patient involvement forums creating a strengthened system of user involvement and promote greater public accountability in health and social care through open and transparent communication with commissioners and providers.

(iii) Partnership with the Voluntary and Community Sectors

- 7.6 Also significant is the recent agreement between the Department of Health, the NHS and the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) to promote an increasing role for the latter in health service delivery, as well as its complementary and distinct roles in relation to promoting health and health care. (Department of Health, 2003). At a national conference on Social Prescribing, the benefits for patients of greater involvement through partnerships between PCTs and the voluntary and community sectors were summarised as follows:-

- (a) Builds networks
- (b) Provides group support
- (c) Increases confidence
- (d) Develops transferable skills
- (e) Fosters feelings of control

[Cambridge Council for Voluntary Service 2003 –Community on Prescription Conference Report]

- 7.7 The Forum welcomed the expansion of the boundaries of primary care which is a recurring theme in a range of primary care guidelines and has led to stronger engagement with all sectors which is essential to tackle health issues in disadvantaged and deprived communities such as Hartlepool.

- 7.8 Members further welcomed initiatives such as the introduction of personal medical contracts which links primary care development to local health needs and thereby allows more flexible working patterns related to local needs. In addition, Members recognised the need to link the outcome of the local Fair Access to Care Services Consultation to any future work in relation to Social Prescribing.

8 EVIDENCE FOR THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SOCIAL PRESCRIBING

- 8.1 The Forum learned that whilst the evidence base for Social Prescribing is still developing, it is suggesting that benefits for both service users and GP practices can be expected locally.
- 8.2 For example, research has indicated that 75% of service users presenting in general practice have at least one psychosocial problem, and that these service users make up approximately 15% of the total primary care workload. It is also well known within primary care that around 30% of all consultations and 50% of consecutive attendances concern some form of psychiatric problems, predominantly depression or anxiety. (Kessler et al, 2001; NIMHE, 2003).
- 8.3 The Forum noted with concern that patients with psychosocial problems may present with physical symptoms to their GP rather than psychological symptoms which can make diagnosis extremely complex. Furthermore, as the solution to their problems often lies outside the primary care arena, the ability of practice staff to respond is limited. This situation is further exacerbated if patients develop multiple long-term conditions as their care becomes disproportionately complex and it can be difficult for the individual and the health and social care system to manage given the intricate mix of health and social care difficulties.
- 8.4 The Forum was pleased to learn that a review of the literature by Sykes (2002) showed that some social prescribing schemes can result in reduced workload for general practice in the order of one or two less consultations per annum (equivalent to a 1% reduction in workload). Furthermore, the research reported that most Social Prescribing projects identified the reduction in workload as a perceived benefit by GPs.
- 8.5 Other potential benefits to service users highlighted by the research included: improved general health and quality of life; improved functional ability; and reduced anxiety. In light of these findings, it was encouraging to note that Social Prescribing schemes are becoming increasingly common in primary care.
- 8.6 Whilst not always labelled as Social Prescribing, on-going and personalised care has been shown to improve both the quality of life and outcomes for patients. In addition, there is also growing interest in Social Prescribing as a route to reducing social exclusion, both for disadvantaged, isolated and vulnerable populations. (Bates, 2002, Gask et al 2000).

- 8.7 However, the National Institute for Mental Health in England notes that Social Prescribing sits within, and may also include, a range of emerging areas of service provision for which there is varying or limited high quality evidence of effectiveness. (E.g. telephone support / self help).
- 8.8 The development of an evidence base for Social Prescribing has been limited by wide variations in how the term is used and understood and considerable inconsistency in indicators used to measure success. (Friedli and Watson, 2004). The small size of pilot trials and lack of independent evaluation make it difficult to draw robust conclusions about the health impact of Social Prescribing, particularly in comparison with usual GP care or in terms of cost effectiveness.
- 8.9 In many cases, project evaluations are said to have been confined to feedback from participants and/or health and other staff involved. This suggests that primary care needs to work more closely with agencies to develop alternative responses to and sources of support for mental and long-term illness. In spite of these apparent weaknesses in the evidence base for Social Prescribing, Members considered that there is sufficient evidence of potential benefits to merit further investment especially where evidence suggests that existing interventions may also be of questionable effectiveness, appropriateness and/or acceptability.
- 8.10 The Forum learned that, nationally, there are no general guidelines on referrals to non-medical sources of support. Whilst there are some limited examples of national quality assurance frameworks for exercise referrals and the management of anxiety and depression, quality control largely is the responsibility of individual schemes. Whilst this does enable each primary care-based scheme to establish its own selection criteria tailored to the local population and the range of facilities available, some background framework or guidance might be helpful especially in terms of reinforcing the wider acceptance of social prescribing among medical and other health professions.

9 CURRENT PROVISION OF SOCIAL PRESCRIBING SERVICES IN HARTLEPOOL

- 9.1 Members sought evidence from a variety of witnesses about the current provision of Social Prescribing services in Hartlepool,. Their contributions are summarised below:-

Evidence from Independent Consultant / Hartlepool Partnership & HVDA

- 9.2 The Forum benefited from having in attendance the author of the report 'Developing Social Prescribing in Hartlepool' which was commissioned by Hartlepool Partnership and HVDA. The consultant presented the findings from the study which considered current provision of Social Prescribing in Hartlepool, the findings of which have been reproduced below:-

9.3 The study considered two Social Prescribing schemes operating in Hartlepool:-

(i). The MIND scheme – providing support and services for people with mental health issues.

9.4 The Forum learnt that Hartlepool MIND currently receives referrals from most of the 54 GP's in the town (estimated at between 60% to 70% of GPs' referring to MIND). Most GP's use a referral form supplied by MIND whereas others call direct. Other providers including some VCS groups also use the MIND referral form.

9.5 In relation to process, Members were informed that MIND carry out a 'holistic assessment' of anyone who is referred to them and then provide in house services and/or refer on to another service. In some cases direct support is provided by MIND staff so they can access services including by accompanying people to attend sessions.

9.6 Members were pleased to find that MIND estimate that 90% of people referred to them attend for the holistic assessment, of whom over 90% take up further sessions/activities following their assessment. During the past 12 months, Hartlepool MIND has carried out 572 assessments. Table One below records the progress made by clients referred to them during the past 12 months. Members learned that the approach to social prescribing developed by Hartlepool MIND was nationally recognised and the subject of large numbers of visitors from other parts of the country. They highly commended this work as a valuable resource to the local community and were especially impressed by the degree of support from service users who attended Scrutiny meetings. Against this background, they were especially concerned to discover the precarious funding basis for this service and recommended that sustainable funding for it should be an early and high priority for the council and PCT. Consideration should be given during the 2007/08 year to re-allocating funds to this and similar services from activities that service users found less helpful and acceptable.

Table One

Accessed volunteering	70
Enrolled into Education	107
Medication has been reduced as a result of accessing Mind	61
Came off medication as a result of accessing Hartlepool Mind	19
Gained Employment	45
Returned to employment (came off benefits)	47

(ii). The Hartlepool Exercise for Life Programme (HELP) - providing a range of exercise sessions.

9.7 The Hartlepool Exercise for Life Programme is an exercise on prescription scheme operated by HBC and supported by the Hartlepool PCT. People who are referred receive an assessment to select the right activity. In terms of

supporting and encouraging users, Members learnt that everyone referred onto the scheme is contacted by telephone by the HELP co-ordinator.

- 9.8 The Forum also learned that the HELP scheme is currently using a range of eight local authority and community venues throughout Hartlepool to offer 11 different activities. HELP has formed working partnerships with the PCT Health Development Team and Manor Residents Association to deliver some of the services. Some of the programme provides additional support alongside exercise sessions for example the 'Shapes and Sizes' weight loss support groups supplements one hour of exercise with an additional hour when Pharmacists, Community Nutritionists, MIND and a Diabetic Nurse talk to the group members. There is a small sessional charge for attending most sessions although one of the weight management and a men's health group are free.
- 9.9 The Forum found that the HELP Co-ordinator estimates that the scheme is currently receiving approximately 500 referrals a year. Of those 500, 40% do not turn up and 10% do not complete the programme, thus the programme has a completion rate of 50%.
- 9.10 A referral to the Hartlepool Exercise for Life Programme is for a limited time usually 10 sessions over a ten-week period. However, the programme encourages people to continue to exercise and to take up offers linked to the venues from which it is delivered. To get back onto the HELP programme people would have to go back to their GP. HELP occasionally refers people onto MIND and refers to the HBC Walks for All programme.
- 9.11 Referrals to HELP are received from a range of health service settings including GP's, dieticians, nurses, health visitors, hospitals and various mental health organisations. HELP have referral forms in all 16 GP practices in Hartlepool and have received referrals from all, practices. HELP reported that they are working mainly, but not exclusively, with older people. Whilst Members welcomed the approach, some concern that referrals should not be limited to Health-care professionals and wished to explore further the possibility of self-referral.

Evidence from HBC, HPCT & VCS

- 9.12 Members also considered evidence from the Authority's Director for Adult and Community Services, Hartlepool PCT, and representatives from the VCS, all of whom highlighted the existence of a number of highly effective partnerships across all sectors. This has resulted in a number of initiatives that fit the definition of Social Prescribing, including such initiatives such books on prescription and allotments.
- 9.13 However, it was consistently highlighted to Members by all witnesses that the schemes are not always well co-ordinated which inevitably resulted in lost synergies. Further, Members considered that further work was necessary to assess the potential power of a well co-ordinated model of Social Prescribing, which have not been fully realised.

10 CHALLENGES IN INTEGRATING SOCIAL PRESCRIBING WITHIN PRIMARY CARE

10.1 Members learned that a key challenge in developing Social Prescribing is ensuring that it is appropriately integrated within the primary care model. A number of reviews have identified the following challenges in integrating Social Prescribing within primary care practice:-

- (a) Maintaining up to date information on sources of voluntary and community support;
- (b) Cultural differences between medical and community development models;
- (c) The need for a skilled link worker;
- (d) Concerns about voluntary sector capacity;
- (e) Concerns about increased GP workload, at least initially;
- (f) Agreeing referral criteria;
- (g) Recording and evaluating outcomes; and
- (h) Accountability and liability for referred patients.

(Sykes 2002)

10.2 The local study on the development of Social Prescribing in Hartlepool also found that there are a number of barriers that the design of a Social Prescribing scheme needs to consider:-

Gaining the Support of GP's and Health Care Professionals

10.3 The need to gain the support and trust of primary health care staff especially GP's. For a system to work it needs to be trusted by GP's and other key referrers.

Monitoring and Evaluation Methods

10.4 The need for common monitoring and evaluation methods with a Social Prescribing scheme. There needs to be robust systems in place to gather the monitoring data required to measure the impact of a social referring scheme. It is important that this information is fed back in an appropriate way to the people making referrals.

Funding - Community & Voluntary Sector

10.5 The voluntary sector said it was facing a funding crisis and that many organisations are at threat of closure or are having to scale down their operations. While strategically the voluntary sector is being increasingly identified as an important deliverer of services their inclusion within the procurement process is not developing at the same pace. Moreover, sources of funding (for example EU funds) used by the sector will not be available from 2006 and 2007 onwards.

Funding for the service delivery

- 10.6. If there is not access to funds that 'follow' the person in receipt of a social prescription then such service delivery agencies will be further stretched financially. While in theory this concept appears to fit with the introduction of Practice Based Commissioning and Payment by Results it has yet to be developed and applied in practice.

Waiting times for certain services.

- 10.7 Some of the key services delivered by the voluntary sector are working at capacity and have long waiting lists (for example up to 8 weeks for some Hartlepool MIND services). If further demand is put on these services without making additional resources available, waiting times would seem bound to increase.

Evidence from HBC, HPCT & CVS

- 10.8 During the collation of evidence, Members welcomed the establishment of a Joint Working Development Group chaired by the Director of Public Health which brought together the leads of a number of existing projects that could be considered to form a Social Prescribing network. Members were advised that the working group is considering the development of a specification defining the elements of a Social Prescribing service and standards. The group is being supported by a consultant, funded by NRF under-spends on health trainer projects, and it is anticipated that a toolkit will be developed to support other organisations that may wish to develop such a service. Members considered the establishment of the group as a step in the right direction and, had it been available its outcome would have usefully informed the Scrutiny review,. Members also considered it important that the membership of the working group be reviewed to include new providers, service users and carers to ensure all stakeholders are represented at the formative stage in the network's development.
- 10.9 Members further considered that the challenges raised above in relation to integrating Social Prescribing within primary care are important issues for the group to address. This was considered particularly important if individual groups began to target health care staff, each with individual referral criteria. Members welcomed the development a co-ordinated approach to maximise the potential of Social Prescribing.

11 EXAMINATION OF THE LONG TERM SUSTAINABILITY OF CURRENT FUNDING STREAMS FOR SOCIAL PRESCRIBING

- 11.1 Based on the evidence received below, Members noted that funding is a key factor that hampers the long-term development of Social Prescribing initiatives in Hartlepool.

Evidence from NDC / Hartlepool MIND

- 11.2 Members were informed that Hartlepool NDC are funding a pilot Social Prescribing scheme in conjunction with Hartlepool Mind and a local GP surgery. This project had been established within the context of research findings which were reported to highlight the link between psychosocial problems and loneliness to the extent that loneliness was said to be a bigger risk than smoking for heart disease. Moreover, other research was said to suggest that volunteers and people with meaningful occupations were healthier and lived longer. Against this background, the NDC considered it important to recreate social connections for vulnerable people.
- 11.3 The Programme Manager for NDC advised that Hartlepool MIND would offer clients a holistic assessment considering the emotional as well as physical needs of individuals. MIND will then use skilled service navigators (or brokers) to refer patients to appropriate schemes based on the outcome of the assessment.
- 11.4 While the Forum welcomed the support from NDC, Members were keen to see the short-term / one-off funding situation addressed so that Social Prescribing projects could have sufficiently sustainable funding to have the opportunity to develop as viable alternatives to the traditional medical model.
- 11.5 The Programme Manager for NDC advised that if the relationship between the GP surgery becomes well-developed and effective, in theory it should lead to a reduction in the practice's drug bill. If so, mechanisms to re-invest such savings into social prescribing would be helpful to their sustainability. Members were told that long-term support for Social Prescribing could only be achieved if the pilot initiatives demonstrated direct benefits to patients and budgets. Whilst a reduction in practice drug bills were one mechanism of assessing effectiveness, Members acknowledged that quantifying psychosocial improvement is difficult to assess. Monitoring and evaluation of such outcomes would be necessary to attract longer term funding.

Evidence from HVDA

- 11.6 HVDA informed Members about its brokerage role for people wishing to volunteer. This involves recruitment, interviewing, advice, guidance and placement of volunteers with VCS groups and the public sector. This role is particularly important for many people wanting to volunteer but who are unaware of available opportunities. The aim is to match the skills, interests and motivation to volunteer with available voluntary work opportunities.
- 11.7 In addition to the volunteer brokerage role, HVDA offer a Career Coaching Project which is another project facilitated by the Volunteer Centre at HVDA. Effective coaching methods will uncover underlying issues; seek out participants' hidden abilities and motivations so they are empowered to take positive action towards achieving their goals. It enables people to accept responsibility for their lives by taking control and making necessary changes for life improvement.

- 11.8 The third part of HVDA's work is with young people under 25 known as Millennium Volunteers. Members were advised that since inception the project has encouraged over 1700 people from across Hartlepool to volunteer.
- 11.9 The Manager highlighted these key aspects of HVDA's work for two reasons:-
- (i) The brokerage role is currently funded, but on a short-term basis;
 - (ii) HVDA receives many referrals from health care professionals.
- 11.10 Members were advised that the Government has committed to funding the work with young people from September 2007 for a further three year period. However, concern was expressed that no such funding is in place for the work with adults beyond March 2008. Given the importance of the volunteer brokerage role within any Social Prescribing model the manager of HVDA was keen to see this issue addressed through the Scrutiny Investigation.

12 BEST PRACTICE IN RELATION TO SOCIAL PRESCRIBING

- 12.1 The Forum received evidence from representatives of Bradford South and West Primary Care Trust at a meeting held on 14 November 2006. Members were advised that a pilot Social Prescribing scheme has been established by the Trust.
- 12.2 The aims of the scheme, called CHAT (Community Health Advice Team), are to broaden service provision for patients with non-clinical needs and to facilitate links between primary health care and the community and voluntary sector. The first pilot scheme in the PCT was started in 2004 through Healthy Lifestyle Healthy Living Centre at Highfield Health Centre. This has recently expanded to include Dr Mills and Partners. A second Social Prescribing pilot was started in 2005 within two general practices, The Ridge (in Great Horton and Wibsey) and Royds (in Buttershaw). A CHAT worker was appointed to develop and deliver the scheme in both practices.
- 12.3 Members were informed that the Social Prescribing scheme in Bradford South and West PCT works by primary health care professionals referring patients with non-clinical needs to CHAT. The CHAT worker meets with the patient to discuss their needs and then identifies an appropriate source of support in the community. The CHAT worker facilitates access to community groups or courses and may accompany the patient on their first visit if required. Any member of the primary health care team, including GPs, nurses, health visitors, district nurses and receptionists, can refer patients to the scheme by completing a simple referral form. Alternatively, patients can self refer by completing the tear off slip included in a leaflet which is available from surgery receptions and local pharmacies.
- 12.4 Members noted that a key benefit of the scheme is that the CHAT worker offers up to three forty-minute appointments and, is therefore able to spend longer with a patient than primary care staff are often able to,. This provides

the patients with the opportunity to discuss any issues that they feel are affecting their health and the possibility of exploring a variety of solutions.

12.5 Based on the information shared with Members, it was found that:-

- (a) That Bradford South and West PCT is facing the same challenges to their Social Prescribing Scheme as those documented within the national and local studies. (Section 10 Refers).
- (b) That involving Health Care Professionals in the recruitment of the service navigator helped gain the trust of those groups.
- (c) That Bradford and South West PCT's funding of the CHAT scheme is time limited until March 2007. Funding options to extend the life of the project were at the time of writing being considered.
- (d) That the PCT is exploring where Social Prescribing will sit in the future. The areas under consideration include; mental health, public health (via health trainers funding), primary care or social services.

13 VIEWS OF SERVICE USERS / CARERS AND INTERESTED STAKEHOLDERS

13.1 Members of the Forum were keen to engage with service users and carers and other interested stakeholders as part of this investigation.

13.2 Therefore, the Forum sought the views of a group of service users accessing services via Hartlepool MIND. The session was well attended and service users were given the opportunity to provide their views on the value of Social Prescribing initiatives based on their experience. The views of service users are outlined below:-

Views of Service Users

- (a) Service users felt abandoned and dismissed by the mental health service;
- (b) The encouragement and support offered by Hartlepool MIND was very different to traditional health approaches;
- (c) Hartlepool MIND deal with approximately 900 clients per year;
- (d) Hartlepool MIND enable people to develop new skills and refine existing skills which build confidence and raise self esteem;
- (e) Hartlepool MIND may direct service users to a range of projects based on their interests, including art classes and volunteering opportunities;
- (f) Limited resources result in a delay of 4-8 weeks before appointments are available;

- (g) The Hartlepool MIND approach is held up as a beacon of best practice nationally.

Views of Carers

13.3 The Forum also thought it was important to consider what impact Social Prescribing may have on carers. Thus the Authority's Planning Manager (Carers) was invited to make a presentation to the Forum identifying how carers in Hartlepool may benefit (if at all) from Social Prescribing. The views expressed are noted below:-

- (a) Many carers remain unrecognised in the community and continue in their caring roles without support and with increasing levels of emotional, physical and social needs;
- (b) Carers make a valuable contribution to the local health and social care economy;
- (c) All stakeholders needs to ensure that carers are recognised and appropriate services provided to meet assessed need;
- (d) All agencies have a responsibility to work together in partnership to ensure that carers receive relevant information and support to enable them to continue caring for as long as they wish, whilst also having access to opportunities for a good quality of life within the local community;
- (e) Carers in Hartlepool already benefit from a range of support services provided through voluntary sector agencies such as Hartlepool Carers, Hartlepool MIND and Hartlepool and East Durham Alzheimer's Trust;
- (f) Existing examples of the types of support provided to carers falls within the remit of Social Prescribing;
- (g) The needs of the person cared for and the needs of the carer are interdependent and agencies need to work closely together to ensure that both sets of need are appropriately met;
- (h) That there is a gap in services available for couples in Hartlepool. Reference was made to a dementia café that has recently been launched in Easington that enables patients and carers to access activities together;
- (i) Care needs to be taken to ensure that the needs of ex-carers are recognised; and,
- (j) The requirement that GP's maintain a carers' register provides a real opportunity to identify target groups of such individuals who might benefit from Social Prescribing.

View of Interested Stakeholders

- 13.4 The Forum was also approached by a representative of Briarfields Allotments Association who wished to highlight the benefits of allotment gardening which include social inclusion, and aids mental well-being during stressful circumstances.

14 VIEWS OF GP'S AND SERVICE PROVIDERS – STATUTORY AND NON-STATUTORY SECTORS

- 14.1 The Forum invited Dr Brash, a local GP who is involved in the pilot Social Prescribing project with NDC and Hartlepool MIND to outline a GP's perspective in relation to Social Prescribing. The views expressed at that meeting are summarised below:-

Evidence from Dr. Brash – The GP's Perspective

- (a) That Social Prescribing can be of enormous benefit to patients;
- (b) That the idea of holistic assessments and a service navigator to assist GP's/patients in identifying appropriate schemes is welcomed;
- (c) That consideration needs to be given to how and when the pilot will be rolled out across the Town;
- (d) That data protection issues need to be resolved to ensure that patients are fully aware and consent to their medical records being disclosed to a third party; and,
- (e) That an appropriate feedback mechanism needs to be developed to enable GP's to assess the effectiveness of the non-medical intervention.

Evidence from Service Providers- Statutory and Non-Statutory Sectors

- 14.2 Whilst evidence received from all service providers in the statutory and non-statutory sectors has been reflected throughout this report, Members welcomed the clear partnership working going on amongst all sectors in relation to Social Prescribing.
- 14.3 The Forum consistently received common messages from agencies from the statutory and non-statutory sector which supported the principles of Social Prescribing and highlighted areas for review and further development. Clearly the creation of the working group with representation from all bodies demonstrates a clear commitment to developing Social Prescribing in Hartlepool.
- 14.4 Members of the Forum particularly welcomed the presentation from the Director of Adult and Community Services which usefully established a possible way forward:-

- (a) That the Council agrees that Social Prescribing is a priority;
- (b) That the evidence from Scrutiny and the Consultant be used to identify a way forward and agree a model for Hartlepool;
- (c) That all stakeholders begin to focus on co-ordinating existing schemes. For example, referral routes, signposting, promotion of information etc
- (d) That an invest to save approach be adopted across Health and the local authority and Council be asked to support a joint funding strategy;
- (e) That the beneficiaries of Social Prescribing should be identified supported by a clear evaluation strategy;
- (f) That Social Prescribing be linked to the Public Health Strategy outcomes and;
- (g) That Social Prescribing is incorporated within the Voluntary Sector Strategy Development.

15 CONCLUSIONS

15.1 The Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum concluded:-

- (a) That the evidence base for the effectiveness of non-medical responses is sufficiently robust to justify further investment and exploration;
- (b) That Social Prescribing is a potentially effective mechanism to link patients in primary care with non-medical sources of support within the community, based on a holistic assessment of need;
- (c) That a number of Government policies have created a potentially favourable environment for developing Social Prescribing;
- (d) That there is no accepted model for Social Prescribing or any national guidelines for organizations interested in pursuing such a model;
- (e) That Hartlepool is considered as one of the best practice authorities in relation to work on Social Prescribing and the VCS, including HVDA, NDC and Hartlepool MIND should be commended for their efforts in developing it ;
- (f) That, Social Prescribing can be used as a tool to both improve health outcomes but also to improve community well-being and reduce social exclusion;
- (g) That there are a number of schemes that could be encompassed within the term 'Social Prescribing.' Consequently it has been stressed that a co-

ordinated approach needs to be developed to ensure synergies are achieved and duplication is minimized;

- (h) That there needs to be a clear acceptance within the medical community of the influence of social and cultural factors on health outcomes, coupled with a commitment to consider alternative approaches to the traditional medical model;
- (i) That the development of an evidence base for Social Prescribing has been limited by wide variations in how the term is used and understood and considerable inconsistency in indicators used to measure success;
- (j) That the brokerage /referral facilitator role is vitally important within any Social Prescribing model to assist Health Care Professionals in assessing need and identifying appropriate support;
- (k) That training and support is required to develop indicators to measure the impact of Social Prescribing interventions;
- (l) That appropriate feedback and evaluation mechanisms need to be developed to enable GP's and other Health Care Professionals to assess the effectiveness of the non-medical intervention.
- (m) That under the current system, quality control of Social Prescribing projects is largely the responsibility of individual schemes. Whilst this enables each scheme to establish its own selection criteria Members recognized a need a degree of standardisation in quality and evaluation processes to support future bids for funding/mainstreaming;
- (n) That referrals should not be limited to HealthCare Professionals, and the possibility of self-referrals should be encouraged;
- (o) That the requirement for GP's to maintain a carers' register provides a real opportunity to identify target groups of such individuals that may benefit from Social Prescribing;
- (p) That Social Prescribing projects primarily is supported by short-term / one-off funding which hampers the long-term development of future projects;
- (q) That data protection issues need to be resolved to ensure that patients are made fully aware of and consent to aspects of their medical records being disclosed to a third party; and,
- (r) That the Local Authority needs to link the outcome of the local Fair Access to Care Services Consultation to any future work in relation to Social Prescribing and also use the potential of individualised budgets, self assessments and direct payments to develop projects;

16 RECOMMENDATIONS

16.1 The Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum has taken evidence from a wide range of sources to assist in the formulation of a balanced range of recommendations. The Forum's key recommendations to Council and HPCT are as outlined below to be championed by both organisations for implementation / action via the Working Group:-

- (a) That the authority agrees that Social Prescribing is a priority and use the evidence gathered through this investigation, and other studies to agree a framework for Hartlepool;
- (b) That a comprehensive and coordinated strategy for the development, delivery, funding and evaluation of social prescribing be produced within the coming Municipal Year (2007/08) across council departments and, so far as possible, the NHS and VCS.
- (c) As part of this process, detailed consideration should be given during the 2007/08 year to re-allocating funds to the MIND and other social prescribing services from existing activities that service users found less helpful and acceptable.
- (d) That work is undertaken locally to standardise and secure greater understanding of the definition of Social Prescribing;
- (e) That work is undertaken to establish a clear picture of Social Prescribing projects currently offered in Hartlepool or those that can be encompassed within the definition of Social Prescribing with a view to securing greater standardisation of issues such as the availability of information, data protection, referral routes and evaluation;
- (f) That Social Prescribing be adopted as part of the joint PCT and council Public Health Strategy and its outcome criteria, together as well as the emerging strategy for integrating adult social care and community services;
- (g) That Social Prescribing be incorporated within the Voluntary Sector Strategy Development;
- (h) That Social Prescribing be linked to any future Commissioning strategies;
- (i) That funding streams to support Social Prescribing in the long-term be actively identified and developed;
- (j) That the Council link the outcomes of the FACS consultation to funding Social Prescribing activities as part of the proposed resourcing of low level support;
- (k) That work is undertaken by HBC and HPCT with the PBC Group in a bid to increase the level of support for Social Prescribing;

- (l) That work be undertaken to identify target groups who would benefit from Social Prescribing initiatives, including carers and hard to reach groups;
- (m) That capacity issues be considered within the VCS in conjunction with plans to develop Social Prescribing;

17 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 17.1 The Committee is grateful to all those who have presented evidence during the course of our investigation. We would like to place on record our appreciation, in particular of the willingness and co-operation we have received from the below named:-

Hartlepool Borough Council:

Councillor Ray Waller – Cabinet Member Portfolio Holder for Adult and Public Health Services.

Nicola Bailey – Director of Adult and Community Services

Janet Wistow – Planning Manager- Adult and Community Services

External Representatives:

Paul Hyde – Independent Consultant

Julian Penton – Programme Manager for Community Development & Inclusion - NDC

Iain Caldwell – Manager of Hartlepool MIND

Dr Brash – Brash Medical Practice

Tracy Higgins – Health Partnerships Co-ordinator, Bradford South & West PCT

Simon White – Public Health Project Development Worker, Bradford South & West PCT

Members of the Public (Including Resident Representatives)

COUNCILLOR GERALD WISTOW

**CHAIR OF THE ADULT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES AND HEALTH SCRUTINY
FORUM**

May 2007

Contact Officer: Sajda Banaras – Scrutiny Support Officer e
Chief Executive's Department – Corporate Strategy
Hartlepool Borough Council
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BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were consulted or referred to in the preparation of this report:-

- (i). Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Scrutiny Investigation into Social Prescribing' – Scoping Report, presented to the Adult and Community Services Scrutiny Forum of 25 July 2006.
- (ii). Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled ' National Perspective / Social Prescribing' presented to the Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum on 26 October 2006.
- (iii). Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Evidence from HVDA & Author of Report Commissioned by Hartlepool Partnership & HVDA in relation to 'Developing Social Prescribing in Hartlepool', presented to the Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum on 26 October 2006.
- (iv). Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Introduction of New Deal in the Community Social Prescribing Project' presented to the Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum on 26 October 2006.
- (v). Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Written submission from Hartlepool MIND in relation to Social Prescribing in Hartlepool' presented to the Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum on 26 October 2006.
- (vi). Presentation from Dr Brash to the Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum of 26 October 2006.
- (vii). Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Evidence from Bradford PCT – Covering Report' presented to the Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum on 14 November 2006.
- (viii). Presentation from Director of Public Health & Well-being entitled 'Scrutiny Investigation into Social Prescribing' to the Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum of 19 December 2006.
- (ix). Report of Director of Adult and Community Services entitled 'Carers and Social Prescribing' presented to the Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum of 19 December 2006.

- (x). Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Evidence from Service Users and Interested Stakeholders' presented to the Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum of 19 December 2006.
- (xi). Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Evidence from Hartlepool MIND' presented to the Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum of 19 December 2006.
- (xii). Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Scrutiny Investigation into Social Prescribing – Evidence Gathering Session presented to the Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum of 29 January 2007.
- (xiii). Presentation from Director of Adult and Community Services entitled 'Social Prescribing' presented to the Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum of 29 January 2007.
- (xiv). Developing Social Prescribing in Hartlepool, Commissioned by Hartlepool Partnership and Hartlepool Voluntary Development Agency – February 2006.
- (xv). Solutions not medication – Hartlepool NDC 2004
- (xvi). Social Prescribing for Mental Health, Northern Centre for Mental Health – February 2004.
- (xvii). Sign Posting Evaluation Report – March 2005
- (xviii). The Evaluation of the CHAT Social Prescribing Scheme in Bradford South & West PCT – November 2005
- (xix). Department of Health - Our health, Our care, Our say: A New Direction for Community Services.

REFERENCES

- (i). Kessler D, Lloyd K And Lewis G (1999) 'Cross sectional study of symptom attribution and recognition of depression and anxiety in primary care' -British Medical Journal 318:436-39
- (ii). Gask L, Rogers A, Roland M, Morris D (2000) 'Improving quality in primary care: a practical guide to the national service framework for mental health' National Primary Care Research and Development Centre: University of Manchester
- (iii). BATES P (EDITOR) (2002) 'Working for Inclusion: making social inclusion a reality for people with severe mental health problems' London: Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health.

- (iv). Sykes S (2002) Literature Review (Conducted for Penge Social Prescribing Scheme)
- (v). Department of Health (2003) 'Making partnership work for patients, carers and service users a proposed strategic partnership agreement between the Department of Health, the NHS and the voluntary and community sector.'

CABINET REPORT

11th June 2007



Report of: Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum

Subject: FINAL REPORT – RESPONSE TO HARTLEPOOL PCT'S CONSULTATION ON ITS PROPOSED MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS.

SUMMARY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present the Final Report of the Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum following its investigation into Hartlepool PCT's Consultation on its proposed management arrangements.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

- 2.1 The Final Report outlines the overall aim of the scrutiny investigation, terms of reference, methods of investigation, findings, conclusions, and subsequent recommendations.

3. RELEVANCE TO CABINET

- 3.1 Cabinet are requested to consider the Final Report and approve the recommendations contained within it.

4. TYPE OF DECISION

- 4.1 This is a non-key decision.

5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE

- 5.1 The report makes recommendations to both Hartlepool PCT and Cabinet.

6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED

- 6.1 The Cabinet is recommended to consider the content of the Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum's Final Report and approve the recommendations detailed within it.

CABINET**11 June 2007**

**Report of: Adult and Community Services and Health
Scrutiny Forum**

**Subject: FINAL REPORT - RESPONSE TO HARTLEPOOL
PCTS CONSULTATION ON ITS PROPOSED
MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS -**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present the Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum's response to Hartlepool PCT's consultation in relation to its proposed management structure.

2. SETTING THE SCENE

- 2.1 Hartlepool PCT was confirmed as a separate statutory body following the Department of Health exercise, "Commissioning a Patient-Led NHS". In determining its future management arrangements Hartlepool PCT consulted key stakeholders including this Overview and Scrutiny Committee to seek views in relation to its proposed management structure.
- 2.2 The Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum met on September 19 2006 to receive from the PCT a presentation of its proposals. This meeting followed the Forum's previous submission to the Strategic Health Authority (SHA) in March 2006, recommending the continuance of one to one coterminosity between the PCT and the Borough Council. The same view was unanimously supported by the Borough Council at its meeting on 16 February 2006 and Hartlepool Partnership (of which Hartlepool PCT is a core Member) at its meeting on 4 November 2005. In addition, each body supported the concept of an independent Board for the PCT rather than one incorporating shared management arrangements with other PCTs.
- 2.3 The Forum submitted an interim report to Cabinet and HPCT on 9 October 2006 in response to the PCT's consultation on its proposed management arrangements. A formal response to this report was received by the Authority on the 18 December 2006 (outside of the 28 days within which the Forum had requested a response and within which health bodies are expected to reply to OSC reports). Members considered the response at the Forum's meeting on 29 January 2007 and agreed the approach to be adopted in this final report. In

particular, Members endorsed their previous findings and conclusions within the context of both bodies having now placed their considered views on the public record. Members also concluded that local residents were better served by a focus on securing more effective working relationships rather than a further point by point account of what is now an historical decision making process.

3. OVERALL AIM OF THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

- 3.1 The overall aim of the Scrutiny Inquiry was to provide a response to Hartlepool PCT's consultation on its proposed management structure. This focus was of particular significance because:

3.1.1 The PCT had proposed to initiate a form of shared management arrangements under which the Executive Director posts would be joint appointments with North Tees PCT;

3.1.2 The PCT had previously supported the case put forward in an independent report it had jointly commissioned with the council and other members of the LSP. This position was endorsed unanimously at the LSP meeting of 4 November 2005 and the report submitted to the Strategic Health Authority;

3.1.3 The Executive of the Council had obtained advice from leading counsel in the Chambers of the former Lord Chancellor that the NHS was obliged to conduct a formal statutory consultation on its proposals for management re-structuring.

4. MEMBERSHIP OF THE ADULT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES AND HEALTH SCRUTINY FORUM

- 4.1 The membership of the Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum 2006/07 Municipal Year was as detailed below:-

Councillors: Barker (Vice-Chair), Akers-Belcher, Brash, Fleet, Griffin, Lauderdale, Lilley, Rayner, Wistow (Chair), Worthy and Young.

Resident Representatives: Mary Green, Jean Kennedy and Joan Noman

5. METHODS OF INVESTIGATION

- 5.1 Members of the Scrutiny Forum met on 19 September 2006 to receive and discuss evidence in relation to this inquiry. A detailed record of the issues raised during this meeting is available from the Council's Democratic Services.
- 5.2 Due to the limited time available during which to undertake this inquiry, the key method of investigation involved detailed reports supplemented by verbal evidence by representatives of Hartlepool Primary Care Trust.

SCRUTINY FINDINGS

6. HARTLEPOOL PCT MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

- 6.1 The Forum was advised that under the proposals presented to the SHA:-
- (a) Hartlepool PCT will be a statutory body with its own Board with a Chairman and Non Executive Directors appointed by the Appointments Commission.
 - (b) HPCT will receive its own financial allocations to meet the health care needs of its population and will need to meet its statutory duties to achieve financial balance and the re-payment of previous deficits.
 - (c) HPCT Board will consider how it can best meet its duties and responsibilities, and, where appropriate, may decide to work collaboratively with other organisations, including other PCTs or Local Authorities.
- 6.2 The PCT informed Members that after careful consideration involving discussions with a range of stakeholders and the initial feedback following the Fitness for Purpose Review, Hartlepool PCT proposed to create a joint management team with North Tees PCT together with a range of Tees wide functions including commissioning. In further developing these arrangements, the PCT chairman stated that his 'bottom line' was that decision making in the joint committee would be on the basis of unanimity rather than majority voting.
- 6.3 The PCT advised Members that the proposal demonstrated a significant presence at a senior level north of Tees, supported by some Tees wide functions where this is the most effective way to undertake these. Further, the PCT informed the Forum that several areas must have senior local leaders in each PCT/LA area and may lead to the creation of joint posts, subject to further discussion and agreement over governance and funding arrangements. In summary the PCT stated that for Hartlepool this option would enable the PCT to create senior posts focussed on areas of work with direct relevance to Hartlepool Borough Council. However, no detail of these proposals was then available to enable the Forum to form a view on whether they might meet the conditions in the letter from the Acting Permanent Secretary and Andy Burnham's Ministerial statement to Parliament both of 16 May 2006.
- 6.4 In light of all these issues, the Forum considered that the proposals needed to be developed further to demonstrate clearly how local responsiveness would be maintained to deal with differing local needs. The Forum was pleased to note that HPCT and HBC had begun to work together to address this requirement. However, Members maintained that the loss of a locally-focussed PCT in favour of a Joint Management Structure would make health improvement in Hartlepool and joint commissioning more difficult to achieve.

- 6.5 Members considered it vital to preserve joint working in Hartlepool to reinforce the community and public health agenda. Members also continued to support the direction in 'Delivering the NHS Improvement Plan' [2005] which refers to the relationship with local authorities as being crucial and states: *"all PCTs need to play strongly into LSPs and where applicable LAAs"* (para 5.11 refers) and hoped to see clear evidence of Hartlepool PCT remaining committed to closer integration with local governance structures.
- 6.6 The Forum learned via Hartlepool PCTs response to its interim report that HPCT has affirmed its own commitment to ensuring that these conditions be met, especially with regard to increased co-operation between co-terminous PCTs and local Authorities. Whilst the Forum welcomes HPCTs resolve to ensure that all the conditions set out in the Acting Permanent Secretary's letter are met, the Forum has yet to see robust evidence demonstrating how the PCT intend on achieving this beyond a reference to the role of the Chair and NED team.
- 6.7 While acknowledging that the Chair and NED team will play a central role in ensuring that the needs of Hartlepool are realised, Members consider that further work still remains to develop a more detailed framework for joint working to ensure that partnership working is maintained and enhanced in Hartlepool.

7. CONSULTATIVE BASIS

- 7.1 The Forum learned that Hartlepool Council has obtained legal advice from leading counsel on the duties of the SHA and PCT to consult under the terms of the Health & Social Care Act 2003 and Health Scrutiny Regulations. This advice was communicated to these bodies by the Chief Executive of Hartlepool Borough Council in letters dated 28 July 2006 and 11 August 2006.
- 7.2 Consequently, the Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum conducted this enquiry in line with the legal advice received by the Council that the PCT Consultation in relation to the proposed management structure comprised a substantial change in the provision of health services which necessitated a formal consultation process involving local authorities and the Patients and Public Involvement Forums. The requirement for such consultation enables a Health Scrutiny Committee to refer disputed matters to the Secretary of State for consideration before any changes can be implemented. In practice, Hartlepool PCT made a decision to implement its management changes within three weeks of submitting them to the Forum and before even an interim report could be completed and approved.(see below).
- 7.3 The SHA rejected the view that it had a legal duty to consult and Hartlepool PCT did not accept that changes in management arrangements were subject to formal statutory consultation processes. While Members of the Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum considered that the timetable proposed by HPCT (3 weeks) was too short to allow due process, they nevertheless wished to interpret their statutory duty as flexibly as possible in

the circumstances. Consequently, the Forum agreed to consider its response to the PCT's proposals at a joint meeting with the, Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on September 29 2006. The normal process would be for the Forum to conclude its enquiry and submit its report to the next meeting of Scrutiny Coordinating within the normal meetings cycle. The special joint meeting was arranged with the minimum notice that could be given to comply with Scrutiny process. The Forum's aim was that at least an interim report could be submitted to the authority's Cabinet at its scheduled meeting on 9th October. The Forum was however disappointed to learn that, despite its best efforts to respond as rapidly as possible, the HPCT Board made a decision on October 2 2006 to implement the proposals presented to the Forum. Thus, it made a decision on the outcome of its consultation in the absence of a response from Scrutiny.

- 7.4 The Forum readily understands why the SHA and PCT might wish to question the advice which leading counsel supplied to the Local Authority. Its content apparently challenges assumptions on which the NHS and local government have generally operated in terms of what constitutes substantial changes in the provision of health services. The Forum does not believe that the interests of local residents would be served by placing the Council and PCT in a position of legal conflict or delaying the implementation of new arrangements for effective joint working. Legal action by the Council and a formal report to the Secretary of State by this Forum would be likely to have those serious disadvantages even if justified by the advice received.
- 7.5 Nonetheless, the Executive has commissioned a legal opinion and the nature of the advice it received is such that it may be of wider regional and national significance. Consequently, the Forum considers that the Executive would be serving the wider public interest, and potentially securing fuller value for money, if the Executive were to draw to the attention of other relevant bodies the nature of the advice it commissioned., Members of the Forum also considered that they could contribute to this process by publicising this report to other local Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committees through the Centre for Public Scrutiny in the normal way.

8. CABINET OFFICE CODE OF PRACTICE ON CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Whilst the nature of the consultation exercise (statutory or not) remains unresolved between the PCT and the Borough Council the Forum notes that the consultation process adopted by HPCT did not comply with the Cabinet Office, Code of Practice on written consultations. The code of practice clearly outlines that one of the main purposes of consultation is to "improve decision making by ensuring that decisions are soundly based on evidence, that they take into account the views and experience of those affected by them, that innovative and creative options are considered and that new arrangements are workable." In addition the code of practice outlines that sufficient time should be allowed for considered responses from all groups with an interest, and twelve weeks is considered as a standard minimum.

- 8.2 In light of this advice the Forum does not consider that HPCT has consulted in a proper or effective manner irrespective of whether the consultation required was of a statutory nature. This is an unfortunate start for the new PCT in a context where the need for the public to have greater confidence in consultation processes conducted by the NHS has received growing attention (as in for example the White Paper 'Our Health, Our Care, Our Say').

9. CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 The Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum concluded:-

- (a) That the consultation process adopted by HPCT did not comply with the Cabinet Office, Code of Practice on written consultations. Consequently the Forum was not provided with sufficient time to "improve decision making by ensuring that decisions are soundly based on evidence, that they take into account the views and experience of those affected by them, that innovative and creative options are considered and that new arrangements are workable."
- (b) That the consultation process did not comply with the legal requirements placed on it to conduct a statutory consultation, though it recognizes that the Council and PCT have received different advice on the relevance of these requirements to this case.;
- (c) That the Forum considers that there is limited value in pursuing the advice of leading counsel as this will un-necessarily hamper relations between the Council and the Trust. However, the Forum does recognize the value in developing a protocol to clarify the roles and responsibilities of both organizations in respect of consultation processes;
- (d) That the Forum welcomes the recognition within the NHS that it must 'Raise the bar' on the quality of consultations. A national review found high variation in the manner and success of reconfiguration consultations, even within the same area. Sir Ian Carruthers, who led the review said: 'The detail, style, format [and] language of consultation documents varies too much. When you read a lot of them, it is not clear what is being discussed.' It also says that primary care trusts should take a central role in leading reconfiguration. 'PCTs should normally lead the preparation and consultation on service improvement proposals.' Although the Carruthers review focussed on service re-configurations, the Forum would expect his recommendations to apply to NHS consultations more generally.
- (e) That the Forum is aware, informally that that progress has been made in establishing joint arrangements between HPCT and this Local Authority.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 Based on the evidence considered during the undertaking of this Scrutiny investigation, the Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum recommends:-

Hartlepool PCT

- (a) That future consultation/engagement exercises undertaken by Hartlepool PCT comply with the relevant statutory guidance and the Cabinet Office Code of Practice on written consultations;
- (b) That consultation processes are planned clearly with identifiable markers identifying where Scrutiny can input into the process;
- (c) That Hartlepool PCT support the implementation of a protocol governing consultation between both organisations;
- (d) That the PCT submit an update report to this Forum on the development of the management structure including plans for Joint Commissioning with the Council together with the terms of reference for any Tees-wide and North of the Tees Joint arrangements and Committees.

Hartlepool Borough Council

- (e) That the Executive draws to the attention of national and regional organisations, such as the LGA and ANEC, the nature of the legal advice received by this Local Authority, namely that consultation on proposed management arrangements are subject to a formal statutory consultation processes.

11. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 11.1 The Committee is grateful to all those who have presented evidence during the course of our investigation. We would like to place on record our appreciation, in particular of the willingness and co-operation we have received from the below named:-

Chairman of Hartlepool PCT;

Officers representing Hartlepool PCT;

Hartlepool Borough Council's Chief Executive;

Hartlepool Borough Council's Director of Adult and Community Services; and

Hartlepool Borough Council's Chief Solicitor.

COUNCILLOR GERALD WISTOW

CHAIR OF THE ADULT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES AND HEALTH SCRUTINY FORUM

March 2007

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were consulted or referred to in the preparation of this report:-

- (i). Report of Hartlepool Partnership entitled 'Locality Plus – Retaining a Cotemminus PCT in Hartlepool';
- (ii) "Locality Plus" - Hartlepool Borough Council's Health Scrutiny response to the County Durham and Tees Valley Strategic Health Authorities consultation document on new Primary Care Trust arrangements in County Durham and the Tees Valley.
- (iii) Letter from Acting Permanent Secretary Hugh Taylor to David Flory –Dated 16 May 2006.
- (iv) Letter from SHA to PCT Chairs and Chief Executives – Dated 23 May 2006.
- (v) Letter from David Flory SHA Chief Executive to Local Authority Chief Executives - Dated 30 May 2006
- (vi) Report of the Director of Adult and Community Services entitled 'PCT Reconfiguration – Tees Valley' presented to the Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum held on 23 June 2006.
- (vii) Report of the Chairman of Hartlepool PCT entitled 'Hartlepool PCT – Future Board and Management Arrangements' presented to the Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum held on 19 September 2006.
- (viii) Statement by Andy Burnham MP to the House of Commons on 16 May 2006.

CABINET REPORT

11th June 2007



Report of: Children's Services Scrutiny Forum

Subject: FINAL REPORT – SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION
INTO THE PROVISION OF SEX AND
RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION (SRE) IN
HARTLEPOOL SCHOOLS

SUMMARY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present the Final Report of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum following its investigation into the 'Provision of Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) in Hartlepool Schools'.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

- 2.1 The Final Report outlines the overall aim of the scrutiny investigation, terms of reference, methods of investigation, findings, conclusions, and subsequent recommendations.

3. RELEVANCE TO CABINET

- 3.1 Cabinet are requested to consider the Final Report and approve the recommendations contained within it.

4. TYPE OF DECISION

- 4.1 This is a non-key decision.

5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE

- 5.1 This is an Executive function and Cabinet will make the decision.

6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED

- 6.1 The Cabinet is recommended to consider the content of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum's Final Report and approve the recommendations detailed within it.

CABINET

11 June 2007



Report of: Children's Services Scrutiny Forum

Subject: FINAL REPORT – SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION
INTO THE PROVISION OF SEX AND
RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION (SRE) IN
HARTLEPOOL SCHOOLS

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present the findings of the Children's Scrutiny Forum following its investigation into the provision of sex and relationship education (SRE) in Hartlepool Schools.

2. SETTING THE SCENE

- 2.1 There has over the last 12 years been a recorded deterioration of UK resident's sexual health, with increasing levels of teenage conceptions and sexually transmitted infections (STI's). In recognition of major national concern regarding this issue, growing emphasis was now being placed upon the importance of Sex and Relationship education (SRE) for young people.
- 2.2 In considering a subject for investigation the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum, at its meeting on the 12 June 2006, explored a variety of options. During the course of discussions concern was expressed regarding teenage conception and STI rates in Hartlepool and attention drawn to the importance of effective SRE as a tool to help improve the sexual health of the town's young people.
- 2.3 The issue of sexual health was not a new one for scrutiny in Hartlepool. An investigation into teenage pregnancy and associated issues had been undertaken in 2002; however, it had not focussed specifically on the way in which SRE was provided in Hartlepool. In view of the importance of SRE provision, the Forum was of the view that a full investigation into its provision



in Hartlepool should be undertaken. The 'Provision of Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) in Hartlepool Schools' was subsequently selected as an investigation to be undertaken as part of the Forum's 2006/07 Work Programme.

3. OVERALL AIM OF THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

- 3.1 The overall aim of the Scrutiny investigation was to review current practice in the provision of sex and relationship education (SRE) to young people in Hartlepool and suggest possible improvements.

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

- 4.1 The Terms of Reference for the Scrutiny investigation were as outlined below:-

- (a) To gain an understanding of the sexual health issues affecting young people nationally and regionally;
- (b) To gain an understanding of the national and regional position relating to the provision of SRE for young people, with particular reference to:-
 - (i) National policy relating to the provision of sex and relationship education for young people.
- (c) To gain an understanding of, and examine, the local position relating to the provision of SRE for young people, with particular reference to:-
 - (i) The sexual health issues affecting young people in Hartlepool;
 - (ii) The strategies/practices being implemented in Hartlepool schools for the provision of SRE;
 - (iii) Effectiveness of strategies/policies being implemented in Hartlepool; and
 - (iv) Sources of advice outside schools and how outside bodies/agencies assist in the provision of SRE in Hartlepool.
- (d) To consider examples of best practice in other Local Authorities;
- (e) To compare strategies/practices implemented in other Local Authorities, and strategies/models identified nationally, with those being implemented in Hartlepool with a view to identifying possible areas of improvement; and
- (f) To seek the views of local residents, parents, children/young people and those working in schools on this issue.

5. MEMBERSHIP OF THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

5.1 The membership of the Scrutiny Forum was as detailed below:-

Councillors Brash, S Cook, Fleet, Griffin, Laffey, London, Preece, Rogan, Shaw, M Waller and Young

Resident Representatives:

John Cambridge, Evelyn Leck and Michael Ward

Co-opted Members:

Elizabeth Barraclough, David Relton and Jesse Smith

Young People Co-opted onto the Forum:

Leigh Bradley, Kelly Goulding, Cassie Jeffries, Gillian Pounder, Hannah Shaw, Jonathan Simpson and Leon Smith

6. METHODS OF INVESTIGATION

6.1 Members of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum met formally from 8 January 2007 to 16 April 2007 to discuss and receive evidence relating to this investigation. A detailed record of the issues raised during these meetings is available from the Council's Democratic Services.

6.2 A brief summary of the methods of investigation are outlined below:-

- (a) Detailed officer reports supplemented by verbal evidence;
- (b) Evidence from the Authority's Cabinet Member Portfolio Holder for Children's Services;
- (c) Questionnaire produced by the young people co-opted onto the Forum;
- (d) A Focus Group Session with Year 10 students, and teachers with responsibility for SRE, from schools across Hartlepool to obtain first hand views on the provision of SRE in Hartlepool;
- (e) Delivery of an SRE class to the Forum to illustrate the ways in which it is provided within Hartlepool schools;
- (f) Representatives from another Local Authority with examples of good practice (South Tyneside Council);
- (g) Evidence received from the United Kingdom Youth Parliament (UKYP) on their work in relation to SRE provision nationally;

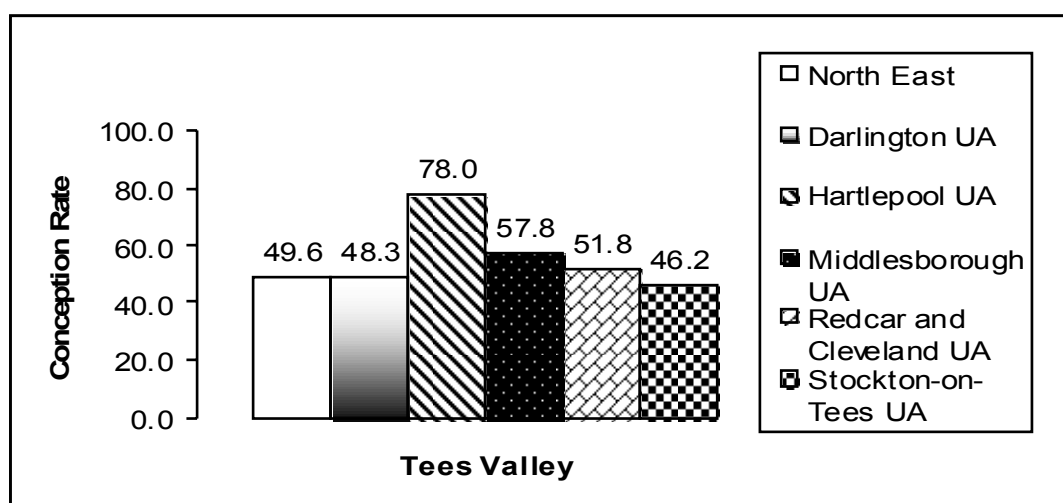
- (h) Representatives from national and regional bodies. (Regional Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinator and Regional Healthy Schools Co-ordinator);
- (i) Representatives from outside groups/bodies. (B76/Barnardos, Sure Start, Youth Service, the School Nursing Service, Relate, PATCH (Parent and Toddler Care in Hartlepool) and Teesside Positive Action; and
- (j) The views of the local community.

FINDINGS

7. SEXUAL HEALTH ISSUES AFFECTING YOUNG PEOPLE (NATIONALLY AND REGIONALLY)

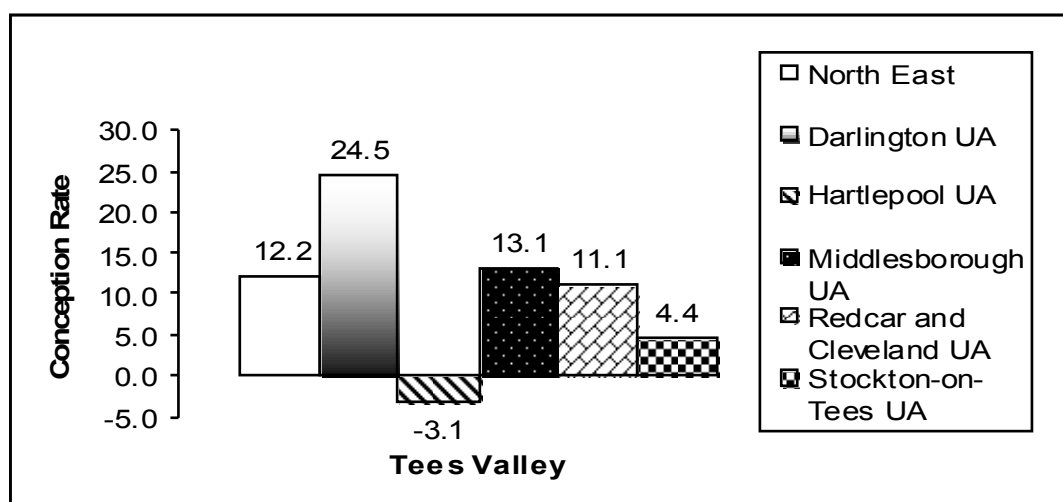
- 7.1 As starting point for its investigation, the Forum learned that the key sexual health issues affecting young people in England were teenage pregnancy, termination of pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. The Forum also found of interest more detailed information on the extent of problems on a national and regional basis.
- 7.2 National Sexual Health Issues - The Forum noted the deterioration of sexual health in the UK over the last 12 years and expressed concern regarding the large increases in STI's (e.g. Chlamydia by over 300%, Gonorrhoea by over 200%) and the incidence of HIV (more than threefold).
- 7.3 On a more positive note, Members welcomed indications that since the introduction of the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy, teenage pregnancy rates in England had fallen by 11.8% for under-18's and 12.1% for under-16's. Although national teenage pregnancies were at a 20 year low, Members were disappointed to learn that the UK still had the highest rate of teenage pregnancies in Western Europe.⁽ⁱ⁾
- 7.4 Regional – On a regional basis, the Forum was informed that the 2005 rate of under-18 conceptions in the North East was 49.6, compared to 41.1 nationally (England).⁽ⁱⁱ⁾ Members were, however, encouraged to learn that the under-18 teenage pregnancy rate in the North East had fallen by 12.2% between 1998 and 2005. Although, it was noted that the North East rate was still 0.4% higher than the national figure over the same period.
- 7.5 The Forum found of interest figures for 2005 relating to the rate of under-18 conception across the Tees Valley (as summarised in **Table 1** overleaf) and noted with concern that Hartlepool's figures were the highest across the sub region.

- (i) Office of National Statistics – Provisional 2005 Conception Rates
- (ii) *Rate per 1000 females aged 15-17*

Table 1 - Under-18 Conception Rates in the Tees Valley (2005)

Source: Office for National Statistics and Teenage Pregnancy Unit, 2007
Rate per 1000 females aged 15-17

- 7.6 Members also received information in relation to the levels of improvement in under-18 conception rates across the Tees Valley (as outlined in **Table 2** below) and noted with disappointment that Hartlepool was the only Tees Valley Authority to have an increase in its rate (3%).

Table 2 – Percentage Improvement in Under-18 Conception Rates in the Tees Valley (2005)

Source: Office for National Statistics and Teenage Pregnancy Unit, 2007
Rate per 1000 females aged 15-17

8. THE NATIONAL AND REGIONAL POSITION IN RELATION TO THE PROVISION OF SEX AND RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION (SRE)

- 8.1 The Forum learned that the provision of sex education had for many years been a key factor in addressing sexual health issues. It was noted with interest that sex education provision had over the last 50 years changed

drastically, with provision in the 1950's and 1960's sex education largely focussed upon the teaching about reproduction. It was not until the 1980's that emphasis started to be placed upon the acquisition of skills for decision making, communication, personal relationships and parenting strategies as part of sex education. This path led to the development of today's SRE, the aim of which was to provide learning about sex, sexuality, and sexual health, with emphasis upon emotions and relationships.

National Policy for the Provision of SRE for Young People

- 8.2 During the course of the investigation, it became apparent to the Forum that the provision of sexual health education was engrained through many strands of national policy and strategies, including Every Child Matters, the Children and Young Person's Plan and Extended Schools.
- 8.3 The Forum received clarification that every local education authority, head teacher and governing body had a statutory responsibility to take account of guidance requiring the provision of SRE. Members acknowledged that whilst every school was required to have an SRE policy in place there was no statutory requirement for the provision of SRE as a specific element of the curriculum. In reality, much of the biological content of SRE was provided through the statutory National Science Curriculum with the provision of the remainder of SRE engrained in Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (PSHE).
- 8.4 Members were interested to find that on a national basis indications were that children and young people wished to receive better SRE. It was also interesting for the Forum to learn through its investigation that many of the views expressed nationally were shared by Hartlepool pupils with in many ways the SRE provided being too little, too late and too biological, with insufficient emphasis on practical relationship advice.
- 8.5 The Forum noted with interest OFSTED observations regarding the difference in the quality of teaching in SRE by specialists and non-specialist tutors. With indications that the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory in twice as many lessons taught by tutors as by specialist teachers. Members supported the view that the most effective teaching was by teachers with a special interest and expertise in SRE. Emphasis was, however, placed upon the need for a package of measures; including a professional lead (i.e. a school nurse), peer mentoring and the availability of outside expertise should it be required.
- 8.6 In relation to how SRE is provided, the Forum also received evidence of the mounting pressure being placed upon Government for the inclusion of SRE as a statutory element of the curriculum. Bodies involved in this included the UK Youth Parliament (UKYP) and the Forum was disappointed that the results of its work would not be available in time for consideration during the course of this investigation.

9. THE PROVISION OF SEX AND RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION (SRE) IN HARTLEPOOL SCHOOLS

- 9.1 Following consideration of the national and regional position in relation to the provision of SRE, the Forum went on to look in detail at the position in Hartlepool.

The Sexual Health Issues Effecting Young People in Hartlepool

- 9.2 The Forum noted with concern that the percentage of Year 11 students who were sexually active in Hartlepool had increased over the last five years, as shown in **Table 3** below. Members also found of interest information provided on the sexual health issues affecting these young people (teenage pregnancies, terminations and STI's).

Table 3: Percentage of Year 11 Students Sexually Active.

	2002 (%)	2003 (%)	2004 (%)	2005 (%)	2006 (%)
Boys	35	41	34	38	39
Girls	46	56	55	51	49

Source: Additional Information Report – Children's Services Scrutiny Forum 19 March 2007

- 9.3 Teenage Pregnancies/Conceptions – Evidence provided showed that the number for under-18 conceptions in Hartlepool had increased from 126 in 2004 to 149 in 2006, making it the highest in the North East region. Further information on the under-18 conception rate in Hartlepool was provided earlier in Section 7.5 of this report. ⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾
- 9.4 The Forum expressed its disappointment with this situation and emphasised the importance of accelerating the full implementation of the Council's Teenage Pregnancy Strategy to assist in reversing this trend.
- 9.5 Termination of Pregnancies – The Forum considered evidence in relation to the percentage of conceptions that lead to terminations in Hartlepool and was troubled to see that the figures had increased between 1998 and 2005 for both under-18 and under-16 conceptions. In the case of under-16 conceptions, this equated to 52.9% leading to abortion in 1998, compared with 57.2% in 2005. For under-18's, the figure was 42.4% in 1998, compared to 46.9% in 2005. ⁽ⁱⁱ⁾
- 9.6 Particular attention was drawn to the issue of repeat terminations as a problem in Hartlepool. Whilst the Forum was reassured that this represented only a very small number of individuals, concern was expressed that even one was too many. Members were, however, pleased to find that work was ongoing to address the issue.

(iii) Office of National Statistics – Provisional 2005 Conception Rates

- 9.7 Sexually Transmitted Infections – Members considered, with concern, evidence in relation to Hartlepool's high rate of STI's. It was evident that in 2005 three males and 14 females had contracted conditions including Chlamydia, gonorrhoea, bacterial vaginosis and the wart virus.
- 9.8 The Forum welcomed indications that detailed work was being undertaken to deal with the issue in Hartlepool, including the provision of highly visible advertisements for special clinics in non-clinical settings, i.e. Connexions and the Youth Service. Members were, however, frustrated that despite all of the work being undertaken projections were that figures for 2006 would increase even further.

Strategies/Practices Implemented for the Provision of SRE in Hartlepool.

- 9.9 Members were encouraged to find that SRE provision in Hartlepool schools played an important part of the Council's strategic agenda and received evidence of its inclusion within the following plans and strategies:-
- (i) Every Child Matters;
 - (ii) The Children and Young Person's Plan;
 - (iii) Local Area Agreements;
 - (iv) The Teenage Pregnancy Strategy;
 - (v) The Healthy Schools Headline Plan; and
 - (vi) School Improvement Operational Plan.
- 9.10 The Forum was pleased to find that the approach to SRE in Hartlepool had been geared to reflect the differing needs of children and young people in primary and secondary schools across the town.
- 9.11 SRE in Hartlepool Primary Schools – Members noted with interests that the identification of a gap in SRE provision resulted in the 'in house' development of the 'Lucinda and Godfrey' programme. The intention of the programme being to provide SRE from Reception, supporting existing work and providing a gentle approach to aspects of Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (PSHE) that had been taught for many years.
- 9.12 The Forum was advised of the various stages of the 'Lucinda and Godfrey' programme and was pleased to learn of its successful implementation in all 29 out of Hartlepool's 30 primary schools, with discussions ongoing with the one remaining school. Members were also pleased to find that 'Lucinda and Godfrey' materials were being further developed for use in special schools.



- 9.13 Although Members were disappointed to find that 'take up' of the programme was not 100%, it was recognised that the issue of SRE in primary schools was a very contentious one, especially in some church schools. It was, however, evident to the Forum that the aim of SRE in primary schools was not to promote sexual relationships, but rather to develop children's confidence in dealing with the whole range of relationships they will develop and the issues that arise from them. In view of this the Forum expressed its support for the encouragement of all schools to take advantage of the 'Lucinda and Godfrey' programme.
- 9.14 SRE Provision in Hartlepool Secondary School – Members learned that in 1998 the 'APAUSE' programme (Added Power and Understanding in Sex Education) was introduced in Hartlepool to provide extended SRE provision. As occurred nationally, SRE provision in Hartlepool was provided in conjunction with PSHE lessons and consisted of:-
- (i) Curriculum materials for Years 7 and 8 (National Curriculum Science);
 - (ii) Three adult led sessions in Years 9 and 10 (led jointly by a class teacher and a health professional, often as school nurse); and
 - (iii) Four peer led sessions in year 9.
- 9.15 Whilst curriculum material was provided in Years 7 and 8, the Forum expressed concern regarding the gap in specific SRE provision in these years. These concerns were supported by the views of young people during the investigation, in that the start of the 'APAUSE' programme in Year 9 was too late for some pupils. The Forum was keen to see this gap filled and was happy to learn that a pilot project was in the process of being developed to strengthen the delivery of SRE in secondary schools. The new programme was to begin in Year 7 and end in Year 11 and was based on evidence from OFSTED which demonstrated that comprehensive and early SRE empowered and encouraged young people to have sex later and use contraception when they do so.
- 9.16 The Forum expressed disappointment that only five out of the Local Authority's seven secondary schools would be delivering the 'APAUSE' programme in 2007 and felt that work to encourage participation by the remaining schools should be maintained. It was, however, recognised that the provision of SRE could be a contentious issue for some schools.
- 9.17 The Forum noted that SRE outside PSHE science classes was at the discretion of the school and its governing body. Whilst the Forum acknowledged that changing this situation was not within its remit, a view was expressed that ways of obtaining governing body 'buy in' for the provision of SRE, and any recommendations made by this Forum, needed to be explored. As a means of doing this, Members suggested that it would be beneficial for the Chair of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum to meet with school governors to obtain 'buy in' for the recommendations arising from this investigation.

- 9.18 The Forum was also made aware that SRE in secondary schools was currently funded by individual schools and the Primary Care Trust. In view of this, the Forum felt that it was important that schools continued to see the value of SRE and that an investment in staff was required to enable them to deliver high quality teaching and learning in SRE. This was particularly evident to the Forum given indications that schools were finding it hard to get teachers to provide SRE and the importance of 'good' teaching for the success of SRE. Emphasis was also placed upon the role for external agencies to support schools in the delivery of SRE, with it most effective where it was planned to add value to the existing programme.

10. EVIDENCE FROM THE AUTHORITY'S CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

- 10.1 The Forum was keen to seek the views of the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services and at its meeting on the 8 January 2007 received confirmation of the Portfolio Holder's acknowledgement for the importance of SRE in Hartlepool. Members welcomed the Portfolio Holder's eagerness to receive the outcome of their investigation and took on board her views regarding the importance of undertaking a subjective/qualitative assessment of young people's views, in addition to the examination of statistical information. The Forum's activities to obtain this subjective/qualitative information are outlined in Sections 11.7 and 13 of this report.

11. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SRE PROVISION IN HARTLEPOOL AND POSSIBLE WAYS OF IMPROVING IT.

- 11.1 The Forum considered evidence on the effectiveness of SRE provision from a variety of sources, including detailed officer reports, the results of the annual Year 11 'APAUSE' questionnaire and an informal survey undertaken by the young people co-opted to the Forum. The views of young people, and teachers with responsibility for the provision of SRE, were also obtained through a Focus Group session, details of which are outlined in Section 11 of the report.

The Effectiveness of SRE in Hartlepool's Primary Schools

- 11.2 The Forum was pleased to learn that the success of the 'Lucinda and Godfrey' programme in Hartlepool had resulted in it being purchased, and 'rolled out' by other Local Authorities. Members acknowledged the importance of the continued development of the programme with the income generated. As a way of doing this attention was drawn to the possible benefits of extending the availability of the Lucinda and Godfrey' books direct to parents.
- 11.3 The Forum was aware of the controversial nature of the provision of SRE in primary schools and Members themselves initially expressed mixed views regarding the age at which SRE should start to be provided. It was,

however, apparent to the Forum that there had been a good response from schools to the 'Lucinda and Godfrey' programme and officers were commended on the development of the programme.

The Effectiveness of SRE in Hartlepool's Secondary Schools

- 11.4 Results of the Year 11 'APAUSE' Questionnaire - The effectiveness of the 'APAUSE' programme was measured by a questionnaire undertaken by all Year 11 Pupils. Members were pleased to find from the results of last year's 'APAUSE' questionnaire that there had been a steady increase in the number of students with correct knowledge about STI's and contraception. **Table 4** illustrates this and highlights that girls have a better understanding than boys.

Table 4 – Percentage Improvement in Under-18 Conception Rates in the Tees Valley (2005)

	Boys				Girls			
	2003 %	2004 %	2005 %	2006 %	2003 %	2004 %	2005 %	2006 %
STI Questions	58	66	62	67	67	73	76	78
Contraception Questions	62	59	65	66	71	72	76	77

Source: Additional Information Report (APAUSE Questionnaire results 2006) – Children's Services Scrutiny Forum 19 March 2007

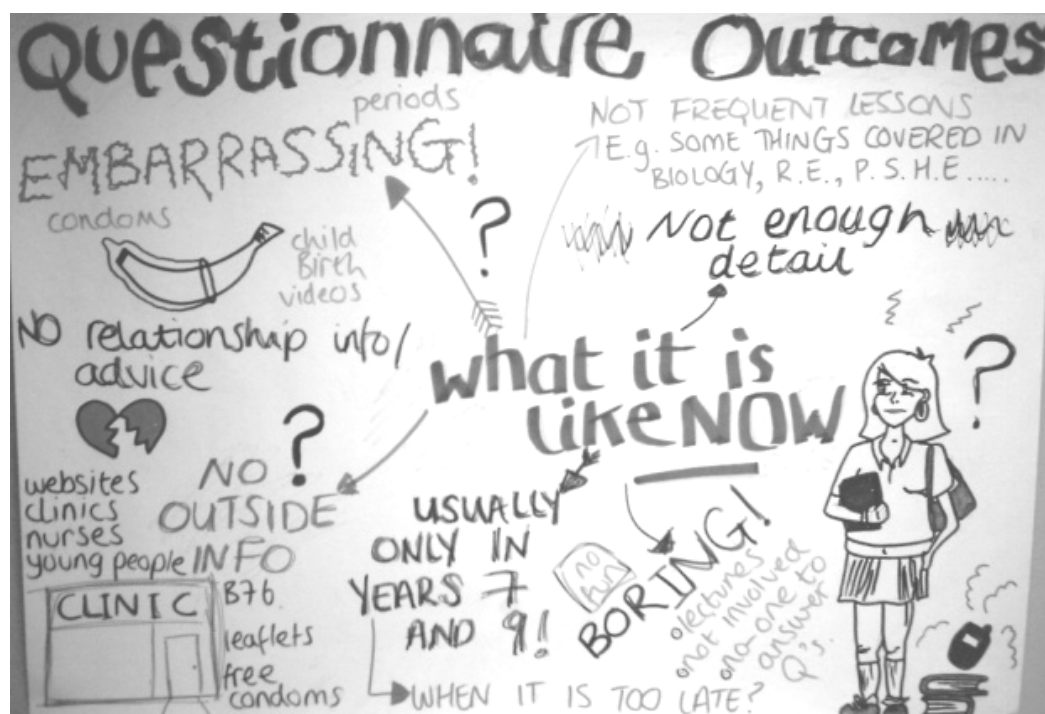
- 11.5 There was, however, some concern regarding the negative trend in terms of satisfaction with the overall provision of sex education. Whilst **Table 5** illustrates this it also showed that the highest proportion of students were of the view that they had learnt a lot and SRE provision should be left as it is.

Table 5 – How Year 11 Pupils Participating in the 'APAUSE' Programme Feel About Their Sex Education?

	Boys				Girls			
	2003 %	2004 %	2005 %	2006 %	2003 %	2004 %	2005 %	2006 %
It is ok as it is	72	64	73	72	48	59	61	68
Boring	40		37	39	33		37	39
Learnt a lot	83	82	71	78	82	83	72	77
Enjoyed it	66	68	64	60	62	69	57	58

- 11.6 Whilst a reduction in figures was good the Forum drew attention to the importance of raising the aspirations of young women at risk of teenage pregnancies as a way of reducing conception rates. This was particularly relevant given the disappointing results of the Year 11 questionnaire, which indicated that only 30% of boys and 40% of girls in Hartlepool were planning to take a degree, compared with 45% and 58% respectively in 2003. This was low in comparison to other Authorities nationally.
- 11.7 The Forum noted that a similar route for the identification of parent's views did not exist. In view of this, the Forum indicated that the establishment of a similar questionnaire for parents could be beneficial as indications were that some parents find it difficult to communicate with their children about sex and relationships.
- 11.8 Questionnaire undertaken by the young people's representatives co-opted onto the Forum – As part of the Forum innovative approach to this investigation, the young people co-opted to the Forum agreed to undertake an informal survey of their peers (older than Year 11) to ascertain their views on SRE provision and possible improvements.
- 11.9 Following completion of the questionnaire a 'mind mapping' exercise was undertaken by the young people and the outcomes of this are outlined below and overleaf.

What young people think of SRE provision in Hartlepool.



How young people would like to see SRE provided in Hartlepool.



11.10 The Forum received a summary of the findings of the questionnaire at its meeting on the 19 March 2007. The Forum found of particular interest issues raised regarding:-

- (i) The link between the sex education and drug/alcohol education and the need to combine provision in the future;
- (ii) The preference of students for young people to provide SRE education;
- (iii) The feeling that current SRE provision was too little, too, with insufficient relationship information;
- (iv) Lacked the provision of information regarding outside sources of advice and assistance; and
- (v) The perception that SRE was boring with lessons too much like lectures (no real practical involvement).

11.11 Members were impressed with the information obtained by the young people co-opted on to the Forum and were pleased to find that some mirrored the views of SRE professionals. In particular justification for the development of combined sex/drugs/alcohol education which Members were encouraged to learn was already being explored.

11.12 The Forum also took on board the preference for young people to provide SRE and suggested that a the establishment of a working relationship with Millennium Volunteers and Further Education Colleges in Hartlepool (in

particular Hartlepool College of FE) for the provision of peer mentors should be explored. It was, however, recognised that there had been problems in the past with students fitting participation in with their course work. In light of this, it was suggested that the possible course of action would be to explore the feasibility of acting as a peer mentor contributing to their qualifications.

- 11.13 The Forum found of interest a contradiction in young people and teacher views in relation to the provision of the relationship element of SRE provision. Whilst young people during the questionnaire process and Focus Group session (Section 13 of the report refers) felt that adequate 'practical' relationship education was not provided it was clear that teacher believed that it was. It was evident to the Forum that there was a difference of opinion as to what young people wanted, and needed, and as such further work needed to be undertaken to develop the relationship element of SRE provision.
- 11.14 The Forum acknowledged that considerable work had been undertaken to improve SRE in schools, non school settings and for parents' access to Contraception and Sexual Health Services. It was also the Forum's view that disappointing figures for under-18 conception rates did not truly reflect the level and quality of work being undertaken to ensure the provision of effective SRE.

How outside bodies/agencies assist in the provision of SRE in Hartlepool.

- 11.15 The Forum noted with interest that Hartlepool Borough Council worked with a number of external agencies to provide support in the provision of SRE. To gain a flavour of the work undertaken the Forum received evidence from Teesside Positive Action, PATCH (Parent and Toddler Care in Hartlepool) in relation to their 'Speakeasy' Project and RELATE in relation to their 'Time to Talk' programme.
- 11.16 Members also found of interest details of the 'Speak Easy' and 'Time to Talk' projects and received positive parent feedback on the work of the 'Speak Easy' project. It was brought to the Forum's attention that other Local Authorities (i.e. Sunderland) had benefited from a combination of external programmes, including the 'Time to Talk' and 'Speakeasy' programmes, with the 'APAUSE' system. Whilst the feasibility, and benefits of developing SRE in Hartlepool in this way needed to be explored further the Forum expressed support for the development of links between the Local Authority and these projects.
- 11.17 During the course of presentation the Forum's attention was again drawn to the gap in provision at Years 7 and 8 and the poor attendance of parents at information sessions prior to their children starting the 'APAUSE' programme. Members were keen to reiterate their support for the bridging of the gap in provision in Years 7 and 8 and expressed concern that by the time the 'APAUSE' programme started it was often too late for some young people in terms of providing information. Members also welcomed the comments made in relation to the need to identify ways of encouraging

parental involvement and indicated that this would need to be explored further in Hartlepool.

- 11.18 It was also suggested that it would be beneficial to review/update the language used for the delivery of the 'APAUSE' programme and the Forum was interested to hear views in support of the compulsory inclusion of SRE as a part of the curriculum.

12. SRE PROVISION IN A NEIGHBOURING LOCAL AUTHORITY

- 12.1 It had originally been intended that a small sub-group of the Forum would visit a neighbouring Local Authority to establish what good practice exists and how Hartlepool could benefit from the adoption of any such practices. During the course of the investigation it became apparent to Members that it would be more effective for a presentation to be given to the whole Forum.
- 12.2 The Forum subsequently welcomed evidence from South Tyneside Council's SRE Co-ordinator and was interested to learn that South Tyneside's under-18 conception figures in 2005 were broadly in line with those in Hartlepool (149 in Hartlepool and 147). However, it became apparent to the Forum that this was where the similarity between the two authorities ceased in terms of rates of improvement in 2005. The Forum noted with interest that the percentage improvement rate for South Tyneside in 2005 was 25.7% whilst as previously indicated there had been a 3% increase over the same period in Hartlepool.
- 12.3 In examining the ways in which South Tyneside Council achieved its 2005 decrease in under-18 conception rates, the Forum noted that the authority's work in relation to sex, drugs and alcohol education was now combined to reflect the views of young people's views that the two subjects were connected. Work had also been undertaken to provide more regular SRE/Drugs Awareness training following feedback from young people that nine hours over 3 weeks was insufficient to meet their needs. It had also been highlighted that previous SRE provision was not flexible enough to cater for children who were ready for SRE at different times.
- 12.4 The Forum was interested to find that South Tyneside Council also worked closely with the Youth Service, the Stag Project and the PEP Project (Policy, Education and Prevention) and that emphasis was placed upon the inclusion of SRE as a qualification for KS4 pupils. Of particular interest to the Forum was the use of 'Practice Sessions', as part of which young people were asked to interview an adult. The benefits of this in opening up dialogue between young people and parents were apparent to the Forum.
- 12.5 South Tyneside had also in the past relied heavily upon external providers to support SRE; however, budgetary restraints had meant that this could not be sustained. Members were interested to find South Tyneside now viewed the way forward as being through the provision of effective staff training to enable teachers to comfortably teach the sessions, with support from

specialist such as school nurses and where applicable additional input from outside providers. The Forum was pleased to find that this mirrored the views expressed by SRE professionals in Hartlepool and encouraged to find that a pilot scheme for a combined SRE, drug and alcohol awareness course was already underway in Hartlepool. The intention of this scheme was also to start to bridge the gap in SRE provision in Years 7 and 8.

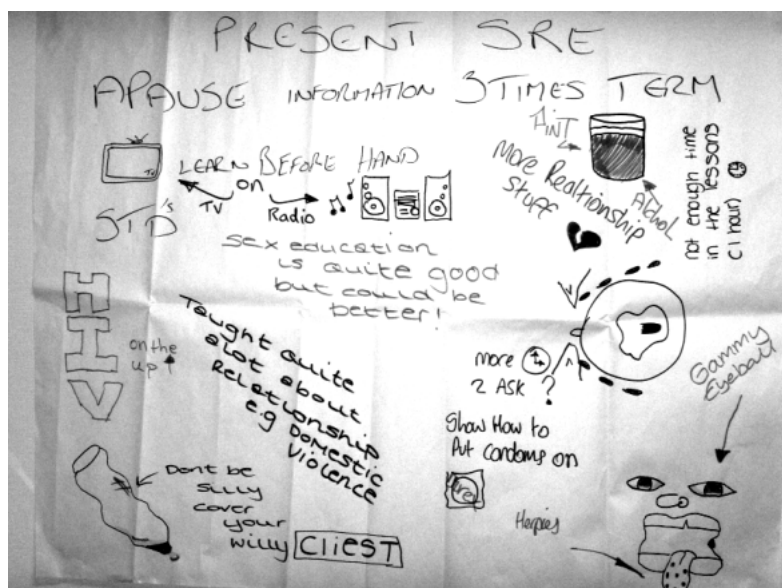
13. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT – THE VIEWS OF LOCAL RESIDENTS, PARENTS, CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE AND THOSE WORKING IN SCHOOLS ON THE PROVISION OF SER IN HARTLEPOOL

- 13.1 In addition to the consultation exercise undertaken with young people through the informal questionnaire (as outlined in Section 9.19 of the report) the Forum was keen to engage further with pupils and teachers with responsibility for the provision of SRE. In order for this to occur a Focus Group Session was held on the 15 March 2007, to which invitations were extended to all of the Council's secondary schools to send a selection of Year 10 pupils and a teacher.



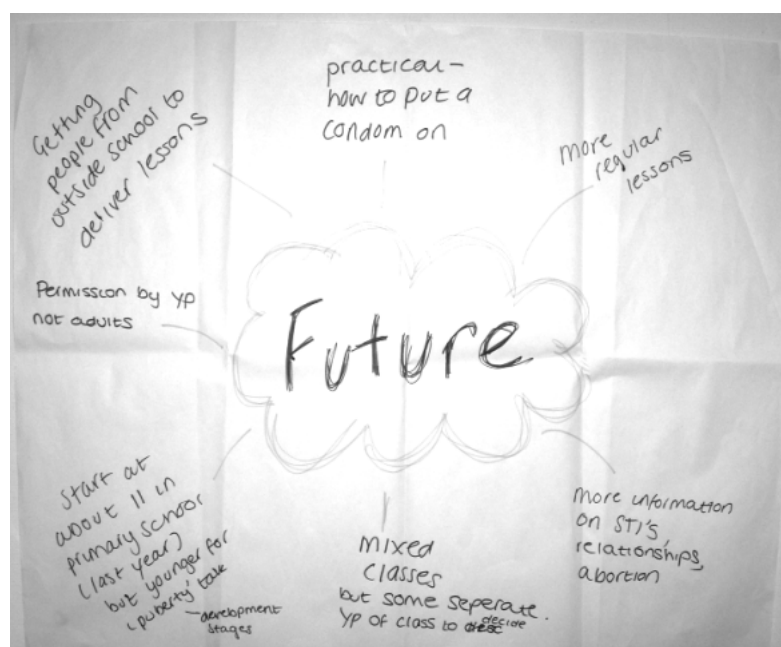
Focus Group Session was held on the 15 March 2007.

- 13.2 Invitations to the session were accepted by Brierton Secondary School, English Martyrs Secondary School and Manor College of Technology. During the course of the session representatives were given the opportunity to express their views on the effectiveness of SRE in Hartlepool and how they would like to see it improve in the future. To facilitate this teachers and pupils were split into separate groups to ensure that everyone felt free to speak and a 'mind mapping' exercise was undertaken with students, as illustrated overleaf.



What Year 10 pupils think of SRE provision in Hartlepool.

How Year 10 pupils would like to see SRE provided in Hartlepool.



13.3 A summary of the views expressed at this event were as outlined below:-

Year 10 Student's Views

SRE Provision Now

- (i) There is not enough relationship advice;
- (ii) SRE should include drugs and alcohol information and advice;
- (iii) Lessons aren't often enough, or long enough;
- (iv) Need more practical demonstrations;
- (v) A lot of what it taught pupils already know, or feel they know, from the TV and radio; and
- (vi) SRE is quite good but could be better.

SRE Provision in the Future

- (i) That lessons should be provided by young people and not adults;
- (ii) There should be more practical demonstrations i.e. How to put on a condom;
- (iii) Lessons need to be more regular;
- (iv) There needs to be more information on STI's, relationships and abortion; and
- (v) It would be beneficial for some classes to be single sex (The students in the class should decide).

Teachers ViewsSRE Provision Now

- (i) Felt that there was no gap in provision in years 7 and 8, with information provided through PSHE lessons;
- (ii) It was useful for children to know who to speak to, hence better for a teacher to provide SRE, with specialist assistance;
- (iii) It is not easy for young people to talk to their parents. Need to find ways of opening dialogue;
- (iv) Parental take up of information sessions prior to their children beginning 'APAUSE' is poor and it would be better if parents were more involved in the 'APAUSE' programme; and
- (v) Schools are not fully aware of the external services available to assist them in the provision of SRE.

SRE Provision in the Future

- (i) There would be benefits in promoting parental awareness of the 'APAUSE' programme at parent's evenings, options evenings and similar events (i.e. a stand).
- (ii) An information/best practice sharing system needs to be developed between schools. This could perhaps be done through a regular seminar or shared personal development days;
- (iii) Schools would benefit from a central resource/query line, possibly through Health Development;
- (iv) Teachers would like to be able to give the same support to students in Years 7 and 8 as is provided later through the 'APAUSE' programme (need smaller classes and similar support as with the 'APAUSE' programme; and
- (v) It would be useful to obtain feedback from students immediately following each session to assess its effectiveness, especially when an external provider is used.

- 13.3 The Forum noted with interest concerns regarding parental involvement and awareness in the education of their children in relation to sex and relationships. Members were concerned at the poor attendance of parents at pre 'APAUSE' information sessions and agreed that alternative ways of relaying information needed to be explored. Members welcomed proposals

that the use of a stall or presentation at parents evenings or option selection sessions could be a way forward and suggested that the feasibility of this be explored.

- 13.4 Based on the evidence provided it was also evident to the Forum that there appeared to be room for improvement in terms of information sharing between schools. In view of this, Members supported the development of information/best practice sharing systems between schools, as suggested by teachers through a regular seminar or shared personal development days. Support was also given for the development of a central resource/query line for schools, possibly through Health Development, to ensure that teachers are fully aware of the internal and external assistance available for the provision of SRE.

14. CONCLUSIONS

- 14.1 The Children's Services Scrutiny Forum concluded:-

- (a) That increasing teenage pregnancy rates in Hartlepool did not truly reflect the level, and quality, of work being undertaken to improve SRE in schools, non school settings and for parent's access to Contraception and Sexual Health Services;
- (b) That emphasis needed to be placed upon the link between sexual health and drugs/alcohol education with the need for their combination in the future;
- (c) That the most effective way of providing SRE was for lessons to be provided by a specialist team (as recommended by OFSTED and to ensure a consistency of approach) of trained teachers with expertise in SRE/PSHE, with support from a professional lead (e.g. School Nurse) and the use of an element of peer mentoring. Specialist external providers should also be utilised where appropriate;
- (d) That a working relationship with Millennium Volunteers and Colleges of Further Education in Hartlepool (in particular Hartlepool College of FE) for the provision of SRE peer mentors could be beneficial for all parties. The feasibility of this needed to be explored further, including, as an incentive, the possibility of participation as a peer mentor contributing to further education students qualifications;
- (e) That the effectiveness of SRE in Hartlepool was dependent upon the provision of quality teaching, and as such emphasis needed to be placed on provision of effective training and support to encourage teachers to become specialist SRE providers;

- (f) That with the 'APAUSE' programme beginning in Year 9, a gap in SRE provision existed during Years 7 and 8. This gap needed to be bridged to ensure that the commencement of SRE in secondary schools was not too late for some pupils, and in order for this to occur the pilot programme currently being implemented needed to be supported;
- (g) That parental involvement was crucial to the provision of effective SRE provision and ways of encouraging this needed to be explored. This could include the use of external learning sources such as the 'Speakeasy' programme and development of ways to raise parental awareness of the 'APAUSE' programme and external sources of advice and support, i.e. a stall or presentation at parents evenings and/or option selection sessions;
- (h) That although the provision of SRE was not a compulsory element of the National Curriculum, its importance for the children and young people of Hartlepool had to be recognised. In view of this, Head Teachers and Governors in all Hartlepool Schools needed to be encouraged to provide SRE, including the Lucinda and Godfrey programme, in addition to existing PSHE lessons. As an incentive to do this, ways of supporting schools in terms of resources and time needed to be explored;
- (i) That the sexual and emotional development of children and young people with special educational needs must be recognised and emphasis placed upon the development, and implementation, of SRE material suitable for all needs. This included the modification of the programme for the delivery of the Lucinda and Godfrey books;
- (j) That work by other Local Authorities had identified a clear benefit in the combination of external programmes, including the 'Time to Talk' and 'Speakeasy' programmes, with the 'APAUSE' system. The feasibility and benefits of developing SRE in Hartlepool in this way needed to be explored further.
- (k) That whilst relationship issues were included in the current SRE programme, it was apparent that young people did not feel that their needs in terms of the provision of relationship education were being met. In light of this further work needed to be undertaken to develop the relationship element of SRE provision, with a change of emphasis from sex to relationships, including the possible renaming of the programme;
- (l) That officer's work on the development of the Lucinda and Godfrey books was commended and support needed to be given to the further development of the learning resource;
- (m) That whilst the effectiveness of the 'APAUSE' programme was monitored through the Year 11 student questionnaire additional ways of ascertaining the effectiveness of SRE provision needed to be explored, including the possible development of a questionnaire for parents and use of feedback forms to assess the effectiveness of individual lessons;

- (n) That in terms of the further development of SRE in Hartlepool consideration needed to be given to:-
 - (i) The importance of raising pupil aspirations;
 - (ii) The use of less formal language in the delivery of the 'APAUSE' programme, as suggested by young people and external providers;
 - (iii) The development of information/best practice sharing systems between schools, as suggested by teachers through a regular seminar or shared personal development days; and
 - (iv) The development of a central resource/query line for schools, possibly through Health Development, to ensure that teachers are aware of the internal and external assistance available for the provision of SRE.
- (o) That as a means of achieving buy in for the provision of SRE outside PSHE lessons it could be beneficial for the Chair of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum to meet with school governors to present the findings of this investigation.

15. RECOMMENDATIONS

15.1 The Children's Services Scrutiny Forum has taken evidence from a wide range of sources to assist in the formulation of a balanced range of recommendations. The Forum's key recommendations to the Cabinet are as outlined below:-

- (a) That all primary, secondary and specialist schools in Hartlepool be encouraged to provide SRE, as part of PSHE, and a uniform approach to its provision promoted, based upon the use of trained teachers, with:-
 - (i) support from a health professional (e.g. School Nurse);
 - (ii) an element of peer mentoring, where appropriate; and
 - (iii) the use of specialist external providers where appropriate.
- (b) That the establishment of a working relationship with Millennium Volunteers and further education establishments in Hartlepool for the provision of SRE peer mentors be explored;
- (c) That parental involvement/awareness plays a crucial role in the effective provision of SRE and more emphasis should therefore be placed upon the use of external learning sources such as the 'Speakeasy' programme and stalls/presentations at school events;
- (d) That in recognition of the sexual and emotional development of children and young people with special educational needs, work continues to be undertaken to develop, and modify, SRE materials;

- (e) That in order to further develop SRE provision in Hartlepool the Local Authority explore:-
 - (i) Ways of improving the delivery of the 'relationship' element of SRE to better meet young people's needs;
 - (ii) The use of less formal language in the delivery of the 'APAUSE' programme;
 - (iii) Ways of improving training and support for SRE teachers, to encourage their participation;
 - (iv) Ways of ensuring the continuation of SRE provision between Years 7 and 8;
 - (v) Ways of increasing the current frequency of SRE provision within the curriculum; and
 - (vi) The development of improved information/best practice sharing systems/processes for schools, including the provision of a central resource/query line.
- (f) That additional ways of assessing the effectiveness of SRE provision, including the introduction of a parental questionnaire and feedback forms for students following individual lessons, be explored;
- (g) That the combining of external programmes, including the 'Time to Talk' and 'Speakeasy' programmes, with the 'APAUSE' system be explored;
- (h) That consideration be given to the renaming of 'Sex and Relationship Education' (SRE) to place primary emphasis upon the relationship aspect of provision within Hartlepool schools;
- (i) That the current Chair of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum meets with school governors to present the findings of this investigation and encourage 'buy in' for the provision of SRE; and
- (j) That the young people who participated in the Focus Group Session on the 15 March 2007 be thanked for their involvement in the Forum's investigation.

16. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 16.1 The Committee is grateful to all those who have presented evidence during the course of our investigation. We would like to place on record our appreciation, in particular of the willingness and co-operation we have received from the below named:-

Hartlepool Borough Council:

Sandra Saint, PSHE and Healthy Schools Co-ordinator
 Deborah Gibbin, Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinator
 John Robinson, Children's Fund Manager
 Cynthia Alder, School Nurse
 Chris Rounsley, School Nurses
 A Hamilton, English Martyrs Secondary School,
 Claire Nossiter, English Martyrs Secondary School
 Marcia McHale, English Martyrs Secondary School
 W Smith, Brierton Secondary School,
 Grace Mitchell, Brierton Secondary School
 Jill Hall, Manor College of Technology
 Reuben Bianco, Manor College of Technology
 Dwayne Douglas, Manor College of Technology
 Chelsea Carrington, Manor College of Technology
 R Goodhand, Manor College of Technology

External Representatives:

Doug Hallam, Regional Co-ordinator North East/UK Youth Parliament
 Michael Kay, Service Manager, Teesside Positive Action
 Jan Dobson, Training & Development Officer, PATCH
 Debby Ianson, Parent participating in the 'Speakeasy' programme (PATCH)
 Rita Nelson, Director, Relate North East
 David Messenger, SRE Co-ordinator, South Tyneside Council

COUNCILLOR JANE SHAW
CHAIR OF THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

May 2007

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were consulted or referred to in the preparation of this report:-

- (i) Office of National Statistics – Provisional 2005 Conception Rates.
- (ii) Extended Schools: Improving Access to Sexual Health Advice Services (DfES).
- (iii) National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (Prevention of sexually transmitted infections and under 18 conceptions) February 2007.

- (iv) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Scrutiny Investigation into the Provision of Sexual Health Education for Young People in Hartlepool Schools – Scoping Report' presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum on 8 January 2007.
- (v) Department of Health – Hartlepool 2006 Health Profile.
- (vi) Article by Michael Reiss (Professor of Science education at the Institute of Education, University of London).
- (vii) The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools 2004/05
- (viii) Sex and relationship education (HMI 433), Ofsted, 2002
- (ix) APAUSE Year 11 Reports, Peninsular Medical School, Universities of Exeter & Plymouth, 2006.
- (x) Sex Education Forum – SRE Framework – Fact Sheet 30

CABINET REPORT

11th June 2007



Report of: Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum

Subject: FINAL REPORT – SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION INTO THE PERFORMANCE AND OPERATION OF PRIVATE SECTOR RENTED ACCOMMODATION AND LANDLORDS IN HARTLEPOOL

SUMMARY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present the Final Report of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum following its investigation into the 'Performance and Operation of Private Sector Rented Accommodation and Landlords in Hartlepool'.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

- 2.1 The Final Report outlines the overall aim of the scrutiny investigation, terms of reference, methods of investigation, findings, conclusions, and subsequent recommendations.

3. RELEVANCE TO CABINET

- 3.1 Cabinet are requested to consider the Final Report and approve the recommendations contained within it.

4. TYPE OF DECISION

- 4.1 This is a non-key decision.

5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE

- 5.1 This is an Executive function and Cabinet will make the decision.

6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED

- 6.1 The Cabinet is recommended to consider the content of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum's Final Report and approve the recommendations detailed within it.

CABINET

11 June 2007



Report of: Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum

Subject: FINAL REPORT – PERFORMANCE AND OPERATION OF PRIVATE SECTOR RENTED ACCOMMODATION AND LANDLORDS IN HARTLEPOOL

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present the findings of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum following its investigation into the 'Performance and Operation of Private Sector Rented Accommodation and Landlords in Hartlepool'.

2. SETTING THE SCENE

- 2.2 Historically, the private rented sector has played a major role in the housing market with in the 1900's 90% of households in England living in private rented accommodation.
- 2.1 Over the last decade changes to the housing market, and people's expectations in terms of home ownership, have nationally resulted in the decline of the private rented sector. Rising house prices are, however, now making it increasingly unaffordable for many people to get onto the property ladder and this coupled with a reduction in the availability of good quality public housing has resulted in a gap in housing provision. The private rented sector is to play a vital role in filling this gap, and with increased levels of buy to rent, the prevalence of private rented accommodation is increasing again.
- 2.2 In considering a subject for investigation the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum explored a variety of options and during the course of initial discussions raised issues around:-
- (i) Problems experienced by private sector tenants and surrounding residents, particularly in relation to the condition of properties and anti-



- social behaviour (criminal or non-criminal);
 - (ii) The effect on communities (both social and economic) of increasing levels of private rented accommodation of varying quality in areas across the town; and
 - (iii) The operational practices of Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) and Private Sector Landlords (PSL's) and the options available particularly for the regulation of the private sector.
- 2.3 The private rented sector has throughout its history been the subject of contention in terms of quality of provision and the behaviour of landlords and tenants. It is, however, important to acknowledge that not all private landlords and their tenants are bad, the majority are responsible. There are also clear benefits from the operation of the private rented sector, including the provision of a flexible form of tenure and wider choice to assist in meeting the full range of housing needs.
- 2.4 Taking into consideration all of these issues, and their impact on the residents of Hartlepool, the 'Performance and Operation of Private Sector Rented Accommodation and Landlords in Hartlepool' was selected as an investigation to be undertaken as part of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum's 2006/07 work programme.

3. THE OVERALL AIM OF THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

- 3.1 The overall aim of the Scrutiny investigation was to examine the performance/operation of private sector rented accommodation, and landlords, in Hartlepool and evaluates the options available to the Local Authority for the protection of tenants and surrounding residents.



4. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

- 4.1 The Terms of Reference for the Scrutiny investigation were as outlined below:-
- (a) To gain an understanding of national policies and practice relating to the performance/operation of Private Sector Rented Accommodation and Landlords, with particular reference to:-
 - i) Current and future national policy/legislation regulating the provision of rented accommodation;
 - ii) The difference between private sector landlords and registered

- social landlords and the legislation/regulations effecting the operation of each; and
- iii) Possible changes to the Local Authorities enforcement powers in relation to private sector landlords as a result of changes in legislation and the introduction of landlord licensing (Mandatory and Discretionary).
- b) To gain an understanding of local policies and practice relating to the operation of Private Sector Rented Accommodation and Landlords, with particular reference to:-
- i) The position in Hartlepool in terms of the regulation of private landlords and the options currently available to the Local Authority for the protection of private sector tenants and surrounding residents;
 - ii) The level and types of problems experienced by private sector tenants, landlords and surrounding residents and the social/economic effects on communities of concentrated pockets of private rented accommodation;
 - iii) Ways of dealing with the social and economic effects on communities of concentrated pockets of private rented accommodation, which could include schemes to facilitate increased home ownership (i.e. shared ownership) and demolition of properties;
 - iv) The effectiveness of the voluntary registration scheme for private landlords currently in operation in Hartlepool; and
 - v) The implications of current and future actions in relation to the regulation of the private rented sector particularly the 'knock on' effect of enforcement action against landlords and tenants.
- (c) To examine and compare best practice for the provision of rented accommodation with particular reference to:-
- i) Examples of best practice implemented by Registered Social Landlords, responsible private landlords and letting agencies/companies to deal with problem tenants in order to ascertain if any could be implemented as part of a landlord licensing scheme (Mandatory and Discretionary); and
 - ii) Strategies/practices implemented in other Local Authorities (for example Gateshead Council, Newcastle Council or Manchester Council), with those in place in Hartlepool in order to identify any possible areas for improvement.

- (d) To seek the views of local residents, Ward Councillors, private landlords, tenants, letting agents and representatives from national and local bodies in relation to the provision of rented accommodation.
- (e) To determine on the evidence provided whether the action available to Hartlepool Borough Council to protect tenants and surrounding residents is being undertaken effectively.

5. MEMBERSHIP OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

5.1 The membership of the Scrutiny Forum was as detailed below:-

Councillors S Allison, Brash, Clouth, R W Cook, Cranney, Gibbon, Hall, Henery, Lilley, Rayner and D Waller.

Resident Representatives: Ann Butterfield, Ian Campbell and Linda Shields.

6. METHODS OF INVESTIGATION

6.1 Members of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum met formally from the 25 October 2006 to 21 March 2007 to discuss and receive evidence relating to this investigation. A detailed record of the issues raised during these meetings is available from the Council's Democratic Services.

6.2 A brief summary of the methods of investigation are outlined below:-

- (a) Detailed officer reports supplemented by verbal evidence and detailed presentations;
- (b) Evidence from the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Housing and Liveability;
- (c) Site visit to examine good practice within a neighbouring Local Authority (Gateshead Council);
- (d) Relevant officers from various Departments (Community Safety Division and Benefits Division);
- (e) Private Landlords. (Both registered and unregistered landlords with particular involvement through a Focus Group Session);
- (f) Representatives from national and regional bodies. (Teesside Landlords Association and Letting Agents operating in Hartlepool - Involved in the process through a Focus Group Session);
- (g) Representatives from Residents Associations, Housing Associations, Letting Agents, Housing Hartlepool (Registered Social Landlord), New Deal for Communities, the Rent Office and Hartlepool Citizens Advice

Bureau;

(h) Local residents and Resident Representatives; and

(i) Ward Councillors.

FINDINGS

7. COMPOSITION OF THE HOUSING MARKET AND IN PARTICULAR THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR (NATIONAL AND LOCAL)

7.1 At the beginning of its investigation the Forum received national and local base line evidence on the composition of the housing market, and in particular the private rented sector.

The National Housing Market ⁽ⁱ⁾

7.2 The Forum was advised that the majority of the United Kingdom housing market is today made up of mixed tenure housing, consisting of different social landlords, private landlords and owner occupiers. In terms of the private rented sector, the 2001 Census showed a decrease in the proportion of households in England and Wales, and the North East, renting privately over the decade from 1991 to 2001.

	1991	2001
North East	6.7	6.3
England & Wales	9.2	8.7

7.3 This trend is, however, being reversed nationally and the private rented sector now accounts for 10% of the overall housing market. It is also dominated by landlords with small portfolios, with:-

- 74% of private lettings owned by those for whom being a landlord is a sideline activity;
- 60% of private lettings owned by private individuals;
- A quarter of all private lettings owned by landlords with only one letting and three quarters have less than 40 lets. (The average number of lettings owned is seven); and
- More landlords, particularly those with small portfolios, indicating that they would welcome more information about their rights and responsibilities.

The Housing Market in Hartlepool ⁽ⁱⁱ⁾

7.4 On a local basis, the Forum learned that the housing market in Hartlepool is currently unbalanced in terms of its composition with a high number of small terraced houses that no longer attract owner-occupiers. It was also noted that the main issues affecting Hartlepool relate to affordable housing, large

numbers of empty properties (leading to illegal use) and poorly maintained and managed homes (causing problems for tenants and neighbours). All of these issues have served to discourage owner occupiers and increase the number of properties left empty or rented out.

(i) Department of Communities and Local Government - Housing Research Summary (No. 054, 2005) – Private Landlords in England

7.5 In March 2004 the Council transferred its housing stock to Housing Hartlepool, which is now the largest of the town's sixteen Registered Social Landlords (RSL's). The Forum was interested to learn that Registered Social Landlords now account for 26.6% of the housing market in Hartlepool, with the remainder of the market consisting of 63% owner occupier, 7.4% private rented and 3% other. The level of private rented accommodation across the town does, however, vary with higher concentrations in certain areas such as the New Deal for Communities area (21.6%) and Dyke House ward (9.6%).

7.6 When comparing previous year's figures, it became apparent to the Forum that there had been an increase in the proportion of households in Hartlepool renting privately over the decade from 1991 to 2001 (7.7% in 1991 to 8.3% in 2001). This trend was mirrored across the Tees Valley with 5.8% of households privately renting in 1991 compared to 6.5% in 2001.

8. NATIONAL POLICIES AND PRACTICE – PERFORMANCE/OPERATION OF PRIVATE SECTOR RENTED ACCOMMODATION AND LANDLORDS

Differentiation between Private Sector Landlords (PSL) and Registered Social Landlord (RSL)

8.1 During the course of the investigation it became apparent that there was some confusion as to the local authority's power to initiate enforcement action against RSL's, PSL's and their tenants. This often leads to expectations over and above what the local authority can actually do in terms of controlling the behaviour of the different types of tenants and landlords. To assist in clarifying the situation evidence was provided by the Chief Executive of Housing Hartlepool, and Council officers on the organisational and regulatory differences between the two types of landlords.

8.2 Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) - The Forum noted that organisations such as trusts, co-operatives and housing associations act as RSL's on a 'not for profit' basis with any surpluses they might have retained within the organisation. In terms of their operational practices RSL's are regulated through the Housing Corporation (a Quango). In addition to this, in Housing Hartlepool's case, as the 'transfer' organisation it shares a waiting list, allocation policy and housing strategies with Hartlepool Borough Council.

8.3 The Forum noted that the operation of RSL's can affect the private sector market in a number of ways. Particular concern was expressed regarding their waiting lists and allocation policies which can deter some tenants from

applying or result in their eviction. Whilst the Forum was pleased to see the effective management of tenancies and implementation of tenancy agreements issues were raised regarding the displacement of problem tenants into the private rented sector. To this end there is a greater degree of control over RSL's.

(ii) 2001 Census

8.4 Private Sector Landlords (PSL) - The Forum learned that the definition of a PSL is a private individual or company who owns property that is entirely independent of the local authority or the registered social landlord sector. The size of property portfolio owned by private landlords can vary and whilst RSL's offer assured tenancies PSL offer, in the main assured short-term tenancies.

8.5 In terms of the regulation of PSL's, the Forum learned that the Authority has very little control over this element of the housing market with the exception of powers in relation to property maintenance and tenancy management in relation to houses of multiple occupation. Further details of these powers are outlined in Section 9 of the report.

Legislation Covering the Regulation of the Private Rented Sector

8.6 It was evident to Members upon receipt of the evidence provided that Central Government legislation covering the private rented sector is much and varied. Members also learned how legislation was being updated and expanded to create a fairer and better private rented housing market, with the most recent legislation enacted being the Housing Act 2004. The Forum discussed in detail the following key aspects of the Act and considered how they were being, or would be, implemented in Hartlepool as outlined in Section 9 of the report:-

- (i) The Health and Safety Rating System;
- (ii) Licensing of Houses of Multiple Occupation;
- (iii) Selective voluntary licensing for low areas of housing demand or areas faced with particular anti-social behaviour problems;
- (iv) A Private Sector Pilot Project;
- (v) Landlord Accreditation; and
- (vi) Tenant Referencing.

9. LOCAL POLICIES AND PRACTICE – PERFORMANCE/OPERATION OF PRIVATE SECTOR RENTED ACCOMMODATION AND LANDLORDS

The Regulatory Position in Hartlepool and Options Currently Available for the Protection of Private Sector Tenants and Surrounding Residents

9.1 The Forum accepted that despite the level of legislation covering this sector of the housing market, as shown in Section 8.6 of the report, the local authority has very little actual control. Areas where the local authority does,

however, have regulatory/enforcement control are:-

Property Maintenance - The Local Authority regulates the condition of Housing; empty properties (securing and bringing them back into use) and statutory nuisance (leaky gutters etc. and not anti-social behaviour).

Management of Tenancies – The licensing of houses of multiple occupation, and accreditation in the NDC area.

Strategically:-

- i) Influencing size and location of sector;
- ii) Supporting the sector through advice and assistance;
- iii) Licensing and accreditation;
- iv) Homelessness strategies; and
- v) The 'Supporting People' strategies.

- 9.2 Members were pleased to find that the local authority is successfully undertaking a variety of activities under each of these areas and is exploring further schemes to support tenants, landlords and neighbouring residents. Details of these schemes/initiatives are outlined at a later stage in this report (Section 9.15 refers).
- 9.3 Despite the work being undertaken, Members continued to be concerned regarding the misapprehension that the local authority has power/responsibility to deal with issues such as anti-social behaviour (criminal or non-criminal) in private rented accommodation beyond its role through the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit. This view came to the fore again during the Focus Group session on the 13 December 2006.
- 9.4 The Forum welcomed clarification that it is the responsibility of the landlord to take eviction action where their tenants, or their visitors, are causing problems. How this misapprehension could be dispelled was, however, to continue to be a problem.

Evidence from the Authority's Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Liveability

- 9.5 The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Housing and Liveability informed the Forum of his concerns as to how the new legislation for the provision of selective licensing and tenant referencing was being portrayed in the press. The Forum shared the Portfolio Holder's view that the legislation would not be the sole solution to all anti-social behaviour problems, but could work as part of a package of measures. The Forum also welcomed Cabinet's commitment, financial and otherwise, to landlord licensing and tenant referencing schemes in 2007.

Problems Experienced by Private Sector Tenants, Landlords and Surrounding Residents

- 9.6 The Forum considered evidence in relation to the problems experienced by private sector tenants, landlords and surrounding residents at each of its meetings throughout the investigation. A Focus Group session was also held on the 13 December 2006 at which the Forum received further evidence (Section 11 of the report refers).
- 9.7 Problems and issues raised throughout the investigation were as outlined in **Appendix B**.

Dealing with the Social and Economic Effects on Communities of Concentrated Pockets of Private Rented Accommodation

- 9.8 The Forum was reminded that the composition of the housing market in Hartlepool is unbalanced with in some areas of the town high numbers of small terraced houses that no longer attract owner-occupiers and large numbers of empty or poorly maintained properties. The Forum acknowledged the detrimental affect this can have on the sustainability of communities and welcomed the activities of New Deal for Communities (NDC) in areas of the town to improve housing and the environment and build strong sustainable communities.
- 9.9 Traditional approaches to dealing with problem tenants/landlords and residents concerns have in the past tended to be on a case by case basis. Much of the recent legislation affecting private renting, however, now relies on local authorities developing coherent and relevant strategies for improving the private rented sector, going beyond previous methods of intervention. The Forum acknowledged the importance of initiatives such as selective demolition, redevelopment, and in particular the NDC's role as the pilot area for the voluntary landlord registration scheme.
- 9.10 The Forum agreed with the views of the NDC's in relation to the importance of tenant referencing and support and was interested to learn about other initiatives in place to assist tenants who have had tenancy problems in the past, including the NDC Bond Scheme. Members were also interested to find that the Council's activities in supporting people and reducing homelessness were proving to be very effective.
- 9.11 Whilst the Forum noted landlords concerns regarding the disadvantages of selective licensing and creation of ghettos in the area(s) selected it was apparent that there are possible benefits from the introduction of selective licensing. The Forum was, however, clear in its view that further work would need to be undertaken in relation to the selection of an area and the feasibility/benefits of the scheme. The Forum was also of the view that the scheme would operate best in conjunction with a package of other measures, including landlord accreditation and tenant referencing.
- 9.12 In considering this issue the Forum was also encouraged by the activities of Housing Hartlepool in terms shared equity and new build initiatives (Section 10.2 refers) and the work being undertaken by the Anti-Social Behaviour

Unit.

Effectiveness of Hartlepool's Voluntary Registration/Accreditation Scheme for Private Landlords

- 9.13 The Forum learned that the Landlord Accreditation Scheme currently provides advice to 200 landlords (approximately 380 properties) per year on the management and maintenance of properties. The scheme has also been useful in relation to anti-social behaviour complaints and has been used to inform landlords of responsible and effective methods to deal with such problems. The Forum was pleased with indications that the scheme had led to improved engagement with landlords and with closer working relationships had improved the Authority's understanding of the market, enabling activities to be more effectively focused.
- 9.14 Members acknowledged that it was difficult to assess the effectiveness of the scheme with no figures in terms of its effects on the creation of sustainable tenancies available at this time. The Forum welcomed indications that recent inspections had shown an improvement in standards, particularly in the fitting of smoke alarms and security, with four out of five properties inspected now up to standard. The Forum, however, noted with concern that the level of staffing within the Private Sector Housing Team had meant that not all properties covered by the scheme had been inspected. With this in mind it was apparent to the Forum that the level staffing and other resources would need to be reassessed if the Landlord Accreditation Scheme was to operate effectively.

The Implications of Current and Future Actions in Relation to the Regulation of the Private Rented Sector

- 9.15 Whilst it was accepted that the local authority has little direct control the private rented sector, the Forum was of the view that with joined up working the private rented sector could be successfully managed. If this was to occur a full range of tools needed to be utilised, and sufficient resources provided, including Selective Landlord Licensing and Tenant Referencing.
- 9.16 Selective Licensing - In terms of Selective Licensing, the Forum was interested to receive the results of the recent consultation exercise with residents and landlords. Members were advised that the majority of residents supported selective licensing whilst there was limited support from landlords. This had also been reflected during the course of the Forum's investigation.
- 9.17 Members acknowledged possible problems in relation to the displacement of problem landlords and tenants and it was suggested that the most effective way of trying to prevent this would be to implement a selective licensing scheme alongside an expanded version of the existing voluntary accreditation, and the new tenant referencing, schemes. Again, however, the Forum was of the view that prior to the implementation of a Selective

Licensing Scheme, consideration would need to be given to the benefits/feasibility of the scheme, specifically the geographical location of the area covered and staffing/financial implications.

- 9.18 Tenant Referencing – In relation to the Tenant Referencing Scheme, Members considered proposals for the introduction of a scheme and noted the views expressed in relation to its benefits, including those made at the Focus Group session (**Appendix C** refers). These views included the suggestion that the most appropriate way of providing a reference would be through the use of a tenant 'Passport'.
- 9.19 In considering the information provided, Members emphasised the importance of the support from resident, landlords, tenants, and the provision of a 'housing support' package, if the introduction of a Tenant Referencing Scheme was to be successful. The Forum again discussed the issue of displacement of problem landlords and tenants and reiterated the earlier view that the most beneficial way of implementing a Tenant Referencing Scheme would be in conjunction with any Selective Licensing and Accreditation Schemes.
- 9.20 Rent Assessments, Under 25 Single Room Rate and Discretionary Payments – The Forum considered evidence from the Rent Officer in relation to the way in which rent assessments are made and the level at which they are set. Members noted with concern the gap that regularly exists between rent assessments and actual rents and were advised of the option for the Authority to make discretionary payments to bridge this gap.
- 9.21 Members learned that Hartlepool was in 2006 allocated £45,000 for the payment of discretionary payment and on a regular basis utilises over and above its allocation. In view of this, it was apparent to the Forum that there was not only a need for a review of the current budgetary allocation for Discretionary Payments to more truly reflect demand, but also a need to explore mechanism by which to lobby the Rent Office and Central Government in relation to the requirement of realistic rent assessments.
- 9.22 In relation to the process for the allocation of discretionary payments, the Forum also noted that there was an issue regarding the role of the Housing section and the lead currently taken by the Benefits section. The Forum listened to explanations in terms of the appropriateness of both options and on the basis of the information provided was of the view that a review of the process for the award of Discretionary Payments would be beneficial, with particular reference to:-
- (i) The possible inclusion of a Housing section representative on the Discretionary Payments Panel; or
 - (ii) The practicalities of transferring responsibility for the award of discretionary payments to the Housing section with input from Housing Benefits.

- 9.23 The Forum also learned that there is a real issue in Hartlepool in terms of the effects of the under-25 single room rate and the knock on effect in terms of 'sofa surfing'.

What More Could Be Done By the Local Authority

- 9.24 On the basis of the information provided, including the views expressed at the Focus Group session on the 13 December 2006 (**Appendix C**), Members acknowledged that there are limited enforcement options available to the local authority in terms of the regulation and enforcement of the private rented sector. It was, however, recognised that a considerable amount of good work is being undertaken by the Authority and its partners to reduce problems associated with the private rented sector, including the effects of anti-social behaviour (criminal and non criminal).
- 9.25 In relation to tenancy advice and support, the Forum noted the considerable efforts were being made to help tenants and landlords manage and maintain tenancies. Particular attention was drawn to the role of supported accommodation in equipping individuals who had previously experienced failed tenancies to take on new tenancies in the private and social rented sectors. The Forum, however, expressed concern regarding the amount of supported accommodation available in Hartlepool and suggested that ways of increasing its provision needed to be looked into. It was also suggested that where insufficient supported accommodation was available the provision of additional 'floating support' needed to be explored.
- 9.26 Whilst no single action, or initiative, could solve the problems associated with the private rented sector Members shared the national view that there is a general lack of knowledge of responsibilities among Landlords regarding both the ending of tenancies and how to deal with anti social behaviour. The Forum also recognised that tenant referencing, tenancy support, selective licensing, accreditation and enforcement were all vital elements of a package of activities required to address problems associated with the operation of the private rented sector.

10. EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICE - MANDATORY AND DISCRETIONARY LANDLORD LICENSING SCHEMES

- 10.1 The Forum were keen to seek examples of best practice implemented by registered social landlord and a neighbouring local authority with a view to identifying any possible areas for further improvement in Hartlepool. The findings of which are outlined overleaf.

Registered Social Landlords (RSL's)

- 10.2 There are currently sixteen Registered Social Landlords in Hartlepool, as shown in **Appendix D**. As the largest of the sixteen the Forum considered

evidence provided by the Chief Executive of Housing Hartlepool and found of real interest how thoroughly the organisation manages its tenancies and interfaces with the Local Authority and other agencies/bodies.

- 10.3 The Forum shared the view that whilst RSL's and PSL's are different entities this should not be a barrier to good management practice. The Forum also found of interest:-
- (i) The view that the licensing regime could make it attractive for RSL's to compete to provide management and maintenance services to the private rented sector;
 - (ii) The long term prospect that there was through licensing and referencing schemes the possibility of a blurring of the distinction between the private rented sector and social renting in terms of quality and access; and
 - (iii) Housing Hartlepool's involvement in shared equity schemes as a way of getting people on to the property ladder and new build schemes as a way of providing revenue for the sale of property to increase their housing stock.
- 10.4 The Forum welcomed Housing Hartlepool involvement in shared equity and new build schemes and suggested that this could be one of the ways forward to provide people with good quality housing in sustainable communities. The Forum, however, noted problems related to it regarding the complexity of some RSL allocations policies and highlighted the need for the provision of effective advice.

Local Authority Best Practice – Gateshead Council

- 10.5 Members of the Forum visited Gateshead Council on 29 January 2007 to examine good practice within a neighbouring Local Authority and how Hartlepool could benefit from the adoption of any such practices.
- 10.6 During the delivery of the presentation from Gateshead Council, Members were informed of the Council's approach to working with landlords, tenants and other partners. Members found of particular interest the Council's experience in implementing selective licensing and learned that:-
- (i) Gateshead operates an incentive scheme to encourage landlord participation in their Accreditation Scheme;
 - (ii) Staffing in Gateshead's Housing Renewal Team, with responsibility for the implementation of initiatives and enforcement in the private rented sector, is approximately 29 staff;
 - (iii) The Housing Renewal Team is funded from NRF, NDC and lottery

funding;

- (iv) Gateshead Council considers selective licensing, with emphasis on partnership working, as the way forward;
- (v) Gateshead Council had assisted in the formation of the Gateshead Landlord Association and worked in close partnership with it;
- (vi) Approximately 700 and 800 tenants were vetted last year as part of the referencing scheme. This included a five years housing history; and
- (vii) The area selected for the introduction of Selective Licensing in Gateshead was clearly defined, something which it would be hard to do in Hartlepool.

10.7 The Forum found information provided in relation to the incentive scheme of particular interest and were impressed with the possible benefits of introducing of a similar scheme in Hartlepool. Members also considered evidence in relation to staffing levels in Hartlepool and it was evident to the Forum that consideration needed to be given to the actual staffing/resource levels required for the implementation of schemes such as selective licensing, accreditation and tenant referencing if they are to be effective.

11. PRIVATE RENTED ACCOMMODATION AND LANDLORDS - THE COLLECTIVE VIEWS OF HARTLEPOOL'S RESIDENTS, WARD COUNCILLORS, PRIVATE LANDLORDS, TENANTS AND LETTING AGENTS

- 11.1 In addition to the consultation exercise already being undertaken with landlords, tenants and residents in relation to selective licensing and tenant referencing, Members of the Forum were keen to engage with residents, providers and users of private rented accommodation as part of the investigation.
- 11.2 Therefore the Forum sought the views residents associations, tenants, landlords and letting/estate agents in a Focus Group event held on 13 December 2006 in West View Community Centre (illustrated in the photograph below). The event was publicised in the local press, on local radio and with direct invitations to those outlined in **Appendix A**.



Focus Group with members of the public, tenants, landlords and Estate/Letting Agents held on 13 December 2006

- 11.3 The issues raised during the course of discussions were as outlined in **Appendices B and C.**

12. CONCLUSIONS

- 12.1 The Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum concluded:-

- (a) That there are limited enforcement options available to the local authority in terms of the regulation and enforcement of the private rented sector. However, a considerable amount of good work is being undertaken to reduce problems associated with the private rented sector, including the effects of anti-social behaviour (criminal and non criminal);
- (b) That the importance of good quality rented accommodation can not be underestimated in creating an environment of respect for tenants in terms of the properties they live in and the surrounding communities;
- (c) That no single action, or initiative, can solve the problems associated with the private rented sector;
- (d) That tenant referencing, tenancy support, selective licensing, accreditation and enforcement are vital elements of a package of activities required to address problems associated with the operation of the private rented sector;
- (e) That any action taken to improve the operation and management of the private rented sector should not have a detrimental effect on work being undertaken elsewhere in the town or on other services, e.g. homelessness and the costs of temporary accommodation;
- (f) That shared equity and new build schemes could be one of the ways forward to provide people with good quality housing in sustainable

communities;

Selective Licensing

- (g) That in principle the introduction of selective licensing in Hartlepool be supported;
- (h) That it was evident that the most effective way of implementing selective licensing in Hartlepool would be for it to run in conjunction with the existing voluntary accreditation and tenant referencing schemes. Thereby providing a holistic approach against the displacement of problem tenants/landlords;
- (i) That should the authority chose to introduce a Selective Licensing Scheme in Hartlepool, consideration would need to be given to the benefits/feasibility of the scheme, the geographical location of the area covered (i.e. where it could be detrimental to surrounding areas) and staffing/financial implications;

Landlord Accreditation Scheme

- (j) That in principle the continuation of the existing voluntary landlord accreditation scheme be supported;
- (k) That based on the evidence obtained during the visit to Gateshead Council, the Forum recognised the benefits of an incentive scheme to encourage landlord participation and was of the view that Hartlepool would benefit from the introduction of a similar scheme;

Tenant Referencing Scheme

- (l) That in principle the introduction of a Tenant Referencing Scheme be supported;
- (m) That in terms of addressing the issue of displacement of problem landlords and tenants it would be beneficial for a Tenant Referencing Scheme to be implemented in conjunction with any Selective Licensing and Accreditation Schemes;
- (n) That support from resident, landlords, tenants and the provision of a housing support package would be vital to the success of a Tenant Referencing Scheme;

Partnership working with outside agencies/bodies

- (o) That, if future actions to deal with problems associated with the private rented sector are to be successful, significant emphasis should be placed upon partnership working between Council departments and

outside agencies, including the Hartlepool Partnership;

- (p) That it was disappointed to find that existing funding arrangements for the NDC Bond Guarantee scheme were to cease in the near future, resulting in the discontinuation of scheme;

Supported Accommodation

- (q) That it was concerned to find that there is an insufficient supply of supported housing in Hartlepool to meet demand and recognised the need to explore ways of:-
 - (i) Increasing supported housing provision or providing additional 'floating support'; and
 - (ii) Improving the transmission of accurate information in relation to planning applications for supported housing premises in order to prevent the creation of misapprehensions.

Hartlepool Landlords Association

- (r) That it was encouraged to find that the work already undertaken in relation to this investigation had prompted the creation of a Hartlepool Landlord Association. It was, however, recognised that further efforts were required to develop the role, Code of Conduct/Constitution and activities of the association;
- (s) That in view of the authority's strategic role in the provision of housing in Hartlepool it would be imperative for there to be local authority representation on the Hartlepool Landlords Association;

Registered Social Landlords

- (t) That Registered Social Landlords should be commended on their activities to provide affordable and good quality housing;
- (u) That in view of the complexity of allocations policies emphasis should be placed upon the provision of effective advice for prospective tenants;
- (v) That in view of the effectiveness of the way in which Registered Social Landlords manage their tenancies ways of sharing expertise with the private rented sector would be beneficial;

Fair Rents and Discretionary Payments

- (w) That the consistent gap between the levels of rent assessments, undertaken by the Rent Office, and the actual rental charges in Hartlepool should be addressed;
- (x) That there were concerns regarding the process for the award of Discretionary Payments in relation to the membership of the Panel and involvement of the Housing Division;
- (y) In view of the importance of Discretionary Payments in bridging the gap between rent assessments and actual rents a review of the budgetary allocation for Discretionary Payments is needed to ensure that it meets demand;

Tenant, Resident and Landlord Support

- (z) That there is a need to place emphasis upon the benefit and value of support activities, in particular supported accommodation, already provided for tenants, residents and landlords in order to create sustainable tenancies and communities; and
- (aa) That it was pleased to learn of the advice service already available through the local authority for residents, tenants and landlords. There was, however, a need for the availability of this advice service to be better publicised.

13. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 13.1 The Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum has taken evidence from a wide range of sources to assist in the formulation of a balanced range of recommendations.
- 13.2 The Forum's key recommendations to the Cabinet are as outlined below:-
 - (a) That before any actions are taken to improve the operation and management of the private rented sector an assessment of their impact be undertaken;

Selective Licensing

- (b) That prior to the introduction of any Selective Licensing Scheme in Hartlepool an evaluation be undertaken of:-
 - (i) Its feasibility and benefits;
 - (ii) The level of staffing and financial resources required for its effective operation; and

- (iii) The practicalities of operating the existing Voluntary Registration Scheme alongside any Selective Licensing and Tenant Referencing Schemes.

Landlord Accreditation Scheme

- (c) That the introduction of an incentive scheme to encourage landlords to become members of the accreditation scheme be further explored;
- (d) That the provision of tenant and landlord information packs as part of the accreditation scheme be explored;
- (e) That an assessment of staffing requirements to enable the effective provision, and expansion, of the Landlord Accreditation Scheme be undertaken;

Tenant Referencing Scheme

- (f) That a Tenant Referencing Scheme be implemented within Hartlepool and the practicalities of its operation alongside the proposed Selective Licensing and Accreditation Schemes be explored;

Partnership working with outside agencies/bodies

- (g) That partnership working be developed further to ensure the success of future initiatives to deal with problems associated with the private rented sector;
- (h) That ways of assisting the NDC to identify alternative funding sources to ensure the continuation of its Bond Guarantee scheme be explored;

Supported Accommodation

- (i) That further work be undertaken to identify ways of increasing the level of supported housing in Hartlepool and/or 'floating support' in order to meet demand;
- (j) That in dealing with planning applications for the provision of supported housing ways of better publicising accurate details of applications be explored in order to prevent the creation of misapprehensions;

Hartlepool Landlord Association

- (k) That further work be undertaken with the newly formed Hartlepool Landlords Association in relation to:-
 - (i) The promotion of partnership working, in particular the inclusion of a Hartlepool Borough Council representatives on its board; and

- (ii) The development of its code of conduct, role and activities.

Registered Social Landlords

- (l) That the development of a working relationship between Registered Social Landlords and the private rented sector for the sharing of management services be explored;
- (m) That an evaluation of the effectiveness of Registered Social Landlords advice to prospective tenants in terms of their allocation policies be explored;

Fair Rents and Discretionary Payments

- (n) That the Authority explores a mechanism by which to lobby the Rent Office and Central Government in relation to the requirement of realistic rent assessments;
- (o) That a review be undertaken of the process for the award of Discretionary Payments with particular reference to:-
 - (i) The possible inclusion of a Housing Division representative on the Discretionary Payments Panel; and
 - (ii) The practicalities of transferring responsibility for the award of discretionary payments to the Housing Division with input from Housing Benefits.
- (p) That the current budgetary allocation for Discretionary Payments be reviewed to more truly reflect demand; and

Tenant, Resident and Landlord Support

- (q) That further work is undertaken to more widely publicise the advice service available for residents, tenants and landlords through the local authority.

14. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 14.1 The Committee is grateful to all those who have presented evidence during the course of our investigation. We would like to place on record our appreciation, in particular of the willingness and co-operation we have received from the below-named:-

Hartlepool Borough Council:

Dave Stubbs, Director of Neighbourhood Services

Penny Garner-Carpenter, Housing Strategy Manager
 Siobhan Rafferty, Homeless Strategy Officer
 Alistair Simpson, Tenancy Relations Officer
 Alison Mawson, Head of Community Strategy and Prevention
 Sally Forth, Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator
 Joanne Burnley, Senior Environmental Health Officer
 Ken Natt, Landlord Registration Officer
 Christopher Akers-Belcher, Benefits Manager

External Representatives:

Joe Michna, Manager, Hartlepool Citizens Advice Bureau
 Alan Simpson, Valuation Team Manager, the Rent Service
 Graeme Wilson, Gateshead Council
 Mandy Reed, Gateshead Council
 Cath Purdy, Chief Executive, Housing Hartlepool
 Andy Powell, Director of Housing Services, Housing Hartlepool
 Malcolm Walker, Programme Director, New Deal for Communities
 Bryon Hanna, Partnership Chair, New Deal for Communities
 Brian Dixon, Programme Manager, New Deal for Communities
 Bob Farrow, Deputy Partnership Chair, New Deal for Communities
 Sue Thompson, Teesside Landlords Association
 Clair Clark, Neighbourhood Manager, New Deal for Communities

**COUNCILLOR GERARD HALL
 CHAIR OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM**

May 2007

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were consulted or referred to in the preparation of this report:-

- (i) Department of Communities and Local Government - Housing Research Summary (No. 228, 2006) – Dealing with 'Problem Rented Housing'
- (ii) Residential Landlords Association (web page – www.rla.org.uk)
- (iii) National Federation of Residential Landlords (web page – www.nfrl.org.uk)
- (iv) Housing Corporation (web page – www.housingcorp.gov.uk)
- (v) Department of Communities and Local Government - Housing Research

Summary (No. 054, 2005) – Private Landlords in England

- (vi) Presentations given at Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum on 19 February 2007
- (vii) Protection from Eviction Act 1977
- (viii) Housing Act 1988
- (ix) Children's Act 1989
- (x) Housing Act part VII (as amended) 1996
- (xi) Homelessness Act 2002
- (xii) Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2004
- (xiii) Housing Benefit Act (as amended) 2006 - Regulation 12 - Rent Determinations, Private Sector, Regulation 2 - Single Room Rent
- (xiv) Human Rights Act 1998
- (xv) 2001 Census
- (xvi) Gateshead Landlord Association – Membership Pack

APPENDIX A

**RESIDENT/COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS AND TRUSTS INVITED TO ATTEND
THE FOCUS GROUP SESSION HELD ON THE 13 DECEMBER 2006***Source – Hartlepool Housing Department*

- Anchor Trust;
- Guinness Trust;
- Home Housing Association;
- Bramley Court Residents Association;
- Elmtree Community Action Group;
- Fens Residents Association;
- Manor Residents Association;
- Ow ton Fens Community Association;
- Ow ton Manor West Neighbourhood Watch & Residents Association;
- Brougham Area Residents Association;
- Brus Ward Residents Association;
- Communities Acting Together (CAT);
- Derwent Grange Residents Association;
- Dyke House Residents Association;
- Friends of Regent Square;
- Residents Association of Clavering and Hart Station (RACHS);
- Headland Residents Association;
- Lancaster Road Residents Association;
- Middle Warren Action Group;
- Middleton & Raby Road Community Action Group;
- Percy Street Residents Association;
- Princess Residents Association;
- Springwell Residents Association;
- Throston Grange Residents Association;
- West View Residents Association;
- Oak & Pine Residents Association;
- Belk/Cameron/Furness Street Residents Association;
- Belle Vue Residents Association;
- Burn Valley North Residents Association;
- Clarence Estate Residents Association;
- Cobden Area Residents Association;
- Dent/Derwent Street Residents Association;
- Endeavour Residents Action Group;
- Greatham Community Association;
- Grosvenor Gardens Residents Association;
- Hart Villagers;
- Hartwell Residents Association;
- Holt & Lister Street Residents Association;
- Manor Residents Association;
- Oxford Road East Residents Association;
- Rift House Community Association;
- St Cuthbert's Resident Association;
- Stockton Road Areas Residents Association;
- Stofold Area Residents Association;
- Salaam Centre;
- West End Residents Association;
- West Park Residents Association;
- Westbourne Road Residents Association;
- Wharton/Errol Area Residents Association; and

- Derwent Grange Residents Association.

APPENDIX A

LETTING AND ESTATE AGENTS IN HARTLEPOOL

Letting Agents :

- Paramount Homes;
- Ashvale Homes;
- Live Smart Homes Ltd; and
- Cavey Craig Commercial Ltd.

Estate Agents :

- Jones;
- Robinsons;
- Downen;
- Gowland White; and
- Whitegates.

Source - Access (web page – www.accessplace.com)

APPENDIX B**ISSUES RAISED AT THE FOCUS GROUP SESSION ON THE 13 DECEMBER 2007****Problems experienced by tenants and residents.**

- (i) Anti-social behaviour of all types, from loud noise to threatening behaviour, over a sustained period;
- (ii) Landlords in the Raby Road/Perth Street and Stephen Street areas are renting properties to unacceptable tenants i.e. drug dealers resulting in anti-social behaviour problems;
- (iii) Some privately rented properties are unsafe, and not adequately maintained, and their appearance creates an adverse impression of the area;
- (iv) Tenants have reported problems to landlords/collection agents regarding the condition of properties and no action is taken. Alternatively some tenants are afraid to make complaints;
- (v) Residents find it difficult to contact landlords to pass on information directly to them regarding problems with vacant properties and problem tenants. In most instances residents have to go through the Local Authority to pass on this information and in some instances this has resulted in the boarding up of property when it is not really needed;
- (vi) Responses from Neighbourhood Police is patchy and slow with difficulty addressing noise/nuisance problems;
- (vii) The phrase 'anti social behaviour landlords' was used frequently in that it was felt that some landlords felt it was acceptable to rent properties to individuals with an ASB background;
- (viii) That there was clearly sub-standard properties placed on the rental market by landlords who felt it was acceptable to do so;
- (ix) That the majority of landlords lived out of the area or in fact the country, which resulted in rented properties becoming neglected/in a state of repair, although it was felt that the agents were not managing/dealing with the condition of such properties with a degree of urgency. In fact it was actually questioned whether some agents were actually fulfilling their role in an honest way;
- (x) That poor repairs were undertaken on rental properties although it was acknowledged that this was improving;
- (xi) The rental of properties to individuals with ASB quickly effects the owner occupier market within the area, resulting in properties being left empty which are then subject to acts of vandalism etc; and

- (xii) Void properties encourage ASB resulting in the neighbourhood deteriorating.

APPENDIX B

Problems experienced by landlords.

- (xiii) From a landlords perspective references and the requirement of guarantors is not always effective in weeding out problem tenants. Problems have been experienced with:
- Parents acting as guarantors for their children who then go on to create problems; and
 - Poor/inaccurate references from the Bond Scheme and Smart Move Scheme.
- (xiv) In instances where responsible private landlords serve eviction notices they can feel pressured by organisations such as the Council and Social Services not to do so.

Help received with your problem and how effective was it?

- (i) Whilst residents with problems go through various routes to seek solutions it is often felt that nothing really happens to deal with the problem. Also, that the needs of the tenant are seen as more important than rights of neighbours to live without disturbance;
- (ii) Where problems are experienced with vacant private rented properties often action taken is too much too soon, in terms of the installation of shutters. This can be detrimental to the image of even the best area and promote its degeneration;
- (iii) Police response times to complaints;
- Neighbourhood Policing has made a real difference; although there was also mixed feelings in relation to the response time from the police. Some felt that there was no urgency from the police in fact on occasions responses received were 'it was not a police matter its a council matter – sorry' with no further assistance being provided;
- (iv) Contact with Hartlepool BC and Housing Hartlepool was satisfactory although any action undertaken in terms of enforcement was felt to be extremely slow;
- (v) The formation of Resident Associations was proving to be very effective and should be encouraged across the town;
- (vi) On occasions it was felt that the letting agents choose to ignore tenants concerns, with no feedback or action being undertaken; and
- (vii) In general it was felt that the powers available to the Council weren't enough to deal with ASB issues associated with rented properties.

APPENDIX C

ISSUES RAISED AT THE FOCUS GROUP SESSION ON THE 13 DECEMBER 2007

WHAT MORE IT WAS FEEL COULD BE DONE BY THE LOCAL AUTHORITY TO ADDRESS INDIVIDUAL PROBLEMS AND THE GREATER OVERALL ISSUE OF PROBLEM LANDLORDS AND TENANTS IN HARTLEPOOL?

Suggested actions for landlords:-

- (i) Landlords should carry out more checks on the suitability of tenants;

Suggested actions for the Local Authority:-

- (ii) It should be easier for tenants to contact landlords directly should they wish. This would reduce the need for the Local Authority intervention;
- (iii) In terms of the transmission of information on tenants:
 - The concept of a tenant referencing scheme was supported, however, it was felt that the best way to do this would be through a 'Tenant Passport'. Landlords would be required to complete this document and tenants required to produce it when applying for a new tenancy;
 - It was suggested that a tenant referencing, or 'Passport', scheme needs to be operated on a regional basis if it is to work effectively; and
 - It was suggested that existing channels of communication between Residents Associations and some landlords (i.e. almost an informal referencing service) need to be formalised and made available to all landlords.
- (iv) Increased enforcement action should be undertaken and the length of time it takes addressed;
- (v) The Council should publicise an emergency contact number for residents and tenants with problems;
- (vi) Increased information needs to be made available to residents, tenants and responsible landlords to ensure that they know the most appropriate course of action to deal with problems;
- (vii) A way of dealing with irresponsible landlords and in particular those who live out of the town needs to be found;
- (viii) In respect of tenant complaints to landlords/collection agents regarding the

condition of properties it was suggested that a process/service should be provided:

APPENDIX C

- To assist tenants in making complaints to their landlords. This could add weight to complaints and assist in getting something done;
 - Whereby the Council could make complaints for tenants who are perhaps unable to do so for themselves, for whatever reason; and
 - To enable tenants to make anonymous complaints to the Council without fear of retribution. The Council should then pursue the landlord through the avenues open to rectify the problems.
- (ix) Arrangements need to be put in place to provide a system that provides alternatives to the boarding up of vacant private rented properties by both the Council and landlords. Boarding up should be the last alternative;
- (x) Co-ordination between Council departments and other organisations needs to be improved and the implementation of enforcement action speeded up;
- (xi) Residents, agents, tenants and landlords in attendance weren't aware of the Council's emergency out of hours number and it was felt that this would be widely publicised;
- (xii) The Police's response to ASB issues in rental neighbourhood needs to be addressed and where the police say its a council matter, further signposting of key services/contacts should be provided;
- (xiii) The Council should both exercise and publicise its enforcement powers more widely; and

Suggested actions for other agencies:-

- (xiv) The rate at which police respond to complaints needs to be improved and the gravity of the impact of anti-social behaviour on neighbours acknowledged.

General Comments.

- (i) The primary problem with the private rented sector is that good tenants tend go to registered social landlords leaving the less well behaved tenants to move into private rented accommodation;
- (ii) Enforcement action by registered social landlords results in the displacement of problem tenants into the private rented sector;
- (iii) Many problem tenants are 'serial movers'. This makes them difficult to deal with and even less inclined to behave in a responsible manner towards the property

they occupy and the community around them;

- (iv) Concern was expressed that Government quangos are living off anti-social behaviour with little incentive to really solve the problem;

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- (v) That not all problem tenants are on housing benefit. Those in employment can also create problems so in this sense the withholding of housing benefit payments to landlords would not completely address the problem;
- (vi) There was a clear difference of opinion between those landlords and residents present in terms of whether a landlord should be held responsible for the actions of their tenant; and
- (vii) Concern was expressed that the operation of a selective licensing scheme could create a negative image for the areas selected (a ghetto).

APPENDIX D

REGISTERED SOCIAL LANDLORDS IN HARTLEPOOL AND NUMBER OF RENTED HOMES WITHIN THEIR PORTFOLIOS

- Housing Hartlepool (7326);
- Tees Valley Trust Limited (11);
- Three Rivers Charitable Housing Association Ltd (118);
- Anchor Trust (342);
- Home Group Ltd (957);
- Tees Valley Housing Group Ltd (340);
- North British Housing Ltd (2);
- Housing 21 (50);
- New Era Housing Association Ltd (10);
- Accent Homes Ltd (105);
- Three Rivers Housing Association Ltd (241)
- The Guinness Trust (269);
- Endeavour Housing association Ltd (233);
- Victoria Homes and Others (26);
- Railway Housing Association and Benefit Fund (25); and
- Hartlepool's War Memorial Homes and Crosby Homes (24).

Source - Housing Corporation (web page – www.housingcorp.gov.uk)