

PLEASE NOTE VENUE

REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM AGENDA



Thursday 12 July 2007

at 2.00 pm

**at Jutland Road Community Centre,
Jutland Road, Hartlepool**

MEMBERS: REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM:

Councillors Alison, R W Cook, S Cook, Cranney, Gibbon, Johnson, Laffey, London,
A Marshall, Worthy and Wright.

Resident Representatives:

Ted Jackson, Robert Steele and Iris Ryder

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS

3. MINUTES

3.1 To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2007.

**4. RESPONSES FROM THE COUNCIL, THE EXECUTIVE OR COMMITTEES OF THE
COUNCIL TO FINAL REPORTS OF THIS FORUM**

No items.

**5. CONSIDERATION OF REQUEST FOR SCRUTINY REVIEWS REFERRED VIA
SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE**

No items.

PLEASE NOTE VENUE

6. CONSIDERATION OF PROGRESS REPORTS/BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK DOCUMENTS

No items.

7. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

7.1 Portfolio Holder's Response to the Railway Approaches Scrutiny Investigation – *Joint Report of Director of Regeneration and Planning Services, Director of Neighbourhood Services and the Portfolio Holders for Regeneration and Liveability; Culture, Leisure and Tourism; and Neighbourhoods and Communities.*

7.2 Scoping Report - Scrutiny Investigation into the Availability of Good Quality Affordable Rented Accommodation in Hartlepool – *Scrutiny Support Officer (To Follow)*

8. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS ARE URGENT

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

i) **Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 16 August commencing at 2.00 pm in the Red Room, Avondale Centre, Hartlepool**

REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

MINUTES

14 June 2007

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm at Jutland Road
Community Centre, Jutland Road, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor: Shaun Cook (In the Chair)

Councillors: Rob W Cook, Kevin Cranney, Michael Johnson,
Frances London, Gladys Worthy and Edna Wright

In accordance with Paragraph 4.2(ii) Councillor Chris Simmons was in
attendance as substitute for Councillor Ann Marshall.

Resident Representatives:

Ted Jackson, Bob Steel and Iris Ryder

Officers: Peter Scott, Director of Regeneration and Planning Services
Stuart Green, Head of Economic Development and Planning
Charlotte Burnham, Scrutiny Manager
Joan Wilkins, Scrutiny Support Officer
Angela Hunter, Principal Democratic Services Officer

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Stephen Allison, Steve Gibbon and Ann Marshall.

2. Declarations of interest by Members

Councillor Mick Johnson declared a non-prejudicial interest in minute 8.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 22 March 2007

Confirmed with the addition of Councillor Rob Cook's apologies.

4. Responses from the Council, the Executive or Committees of the Council to Final Reports of this Forum

None.

5. Consideration of request for scrutiny reviews referred via Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee

None.

6. Consideration of progress reports/budget and policy framework documents

None.

7. The Role of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum (*Scrutiny Support Officer*)

The Scrutiny Support Officer submitted a brief report outlining the background to the approach to overview and scrutiny in the Council. The key roles of Scrutiny were detailed as:

- Policy development and review
- Holding the Executive to account
- Investigating issues of local concern

The role of Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee was set out with a detailed description of the role and functions of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum. The report highlighted that the strategic direction of the Scrutiny Forums was to assess, monitor and advise on the Council's progress towards the seven priority aims. The Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum's remit was specifically to consider issues relating to regeneration, the Community Strategy, building control, development control, economic development, landscape and conservation, strategic housing and community safety. A schedule of the Forum's meetings dates was also set out in the report and Members were requested to note that all scheduled meetings would commence at 2.00 pm.

Decision

That the report be noted.

8. **Determining the Scrutiny Forum's Work Programme for 2007/08** *(Scrutiny Support Officer)*

The Scrutiny Support Officer presented a report that requested the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum to identify a Work Programme for the 2007/08 Municipal Year, together with a timeframe for each review, for consideration by the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee on 29 June 2007.

The Director of Regeneration and Planning Services; Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Liveability; Local Area Agreement Reward Element Targets (also known as LPSA2); Corporate Plan (BVPP); and the Viewpoint Surveys had been the foundation sources for the report to enable the Forum to compile its Work Programme.

From these sources and the work programme from 2006/07, the following list of potential subjects for investigation had been identified: -

CCTV

Seaton Carew Regeneration Needs and Opportunities

The Marketing of Hartlepool

Neighbourhood Policing

Housing Market Renewal – The Way Forward

Landfill Sites in Hartlepool

The Availability of Affordable Rented Accommodation in Hartlepool

Community Strategy

Local Heritage

Policing and Crime

Building Regulations

In setting the Work Programme for 2007/08, Members were advised that consideration would also need to be given to Budget and Policy Framework documents which the Forum would need to consider throughout the year and the following 6 Monthly Progress Review reports; Railway Approaches and Youth Unemployment. Members were informed that due to the transfer of the Housing Division to the Regeneration and Planning Services Department from the Neighbourhood Services Department, this issue now fell under the remit this Forum, which would therefore consider the progress report of the Performance and Operation of Private Rented Accommodation and Landlords in Hartlepool.

The Forum was advised to be cautious in setting an overly ambitious Work Programme for which it may be unable to deliver and the Scrutiny Support Officer recommended that only two issues should be listed for investigation at this time. This approach had proved to very successful in the previous municipal year. The Forum could revisit the potential list of investigations should time allow later in the Municipal year.

Members had a lengthy discussion in which the potential areas of investigation were considered. It was considered that the Availability of Affordable Rented Accommodation in Hartlepool was a priority issue linked in with Housing Market Renewal – The Way Forward. Members also considered that an investigation into Seaton Carew Regeneration Needs and Opportunities would be extremely worthwhile and could incorporate the Marketing of Hartlepool.

Decision

That the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee be advised that the Forum wished to undertake the following investigations, in the order shown:-

- 1) The Availability of Affordable Rented Accommodation in Hartlepool (incorporating the suggested Housing Market Renewal – The Way Forward topic);
- 2) Seaton Carew Regeneration Needs and Opportunities (incorporating the suggested Marketing of Hartlepool topic).

SHAUN COOK

CHAIRMAN

REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

12 July 2007



Report of: Joint Report of Director of Regeneration and Planning Services, Director of Neighbourhood Services and the Portfolio Holders for Regeneration and Liveability; Culture, Leisure and Tourism; and Neighbourhoods and Communities.

Subject: PORTFOLIO HOLDERS RESPONSE TO THE
RAILWAY APPROACHES SCRUTINY
INVESTIGATION

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum with feedback on the recommendations from the investigation into the *Railway Approaches* Scrutiny Investigation, which was reported to Cabinet on 5 March 2007 and 11 June 2007.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The investigation into Railway Approaches conducted by this Forum falls under the remit of the Regeneration and Planning Services and Neighbourhood Services Departments and is, under the Executive Delegation Scheme, within the service area covered by the Regeneration and Liveability; Culture, Leisure and Tourism; and Neighbourhoods and Communities Portfolio Holders.
- 2.2 On 5 March, Cabinet considered the Final Report of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum into Railway Approaches. The report was well received, and all of the Scrutiny Forum recommendations were approved, with a request that an action plan for the implementation of these recommendations be prepared and reported back to Cabinet.
- 2.3 On 11 June, Cabinet considered and approved the Action Plan in response to these recommendations.

- 2.4 This report provides feedback from the Portfolio Holder/s following the Cabinet's consideration of, and decisions in relation to this Forum's recommendations.
- 2.5 In addition to this report a further progress report will be produced for Member's consideration six months after the Final Report was considered by Cabinet to enable Members to monitor the implementation of their recommendations.

3. SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS AND EXECUTIVE DECISION

- 3.1 Following consideration of the Final Report, Cabinet approved the recommendations in their entirety. Details of each recommendation and proposed actions to be taken following approval by Cabinet are provided in the Action Plan attached at **Appendix A**.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 That Members note the proposed actions detailed within the Action Plan, appended to this report (**Appendix A**) and seek clarification on its content where felt appropriate.

Contact Officer:- Geoff Thompson, Head of Regeneration
Department of Regeneration and Planning Services
Hartlepool Borough Council
Tel : (01429) 523597
Email : geoff.thompson@hartlepool .gov.uk

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

- (i) The Regeneration & Planning Services Scrutiny Forum's Final Report into Railway Approaches considered by Cabinet on 5 March 2007
- (ii) Decision Record of Cabinet held on 5 March 2007
- (iii) Decision Record of Cabinet held on 11 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 11 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 Rails 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; and	<p>Introduce regular liaison meetings and prepare action plan to remove existing graffiti and protocols for reporting incidents.</p> <p>Dissemination of final Forum Report and associated press release upon approval of Action Plan.</p> <p>Ongoing publicity via Hartbeat and other appropriate press-release opportunities, via magazines and other media.</p>	<p>Denise Ogden (Head of Neighbourhood Management)</p> <p>Steve Hilton (Asst. Public Relations Officer)</p>	<p>September 2007 (ongoing)</p> <p>June 2007 (and ongoing)</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 11 June 2007 (Action Plan)

RECOMMENDATION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE
(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.	The Children's Services Department to raise awareness of the "No Messin" campaign within schools through dialogue with Network Rail. 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)
(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)

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 11 June 2007 (Action Plan)

RECOMMENDATION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE
(d)	That the Authority uses its Planning and Development Control powers proactively to enhance the Railway Approaches into the town.	Planning & Development Control powers to be used as appropriate, including reporting mechanisms via Planning Committee, subject to individual site considerations.	Richard Teece (Development Control Manager)
(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))
(f)	That the 'key problem spots' sites identified in the Railway Approaches	Continued officer representation on Green Infrastructure Strategy Working	Mathew King (Principal) June 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 11 June 2007 (Action Plan)

RECOMMENDATION		EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE
	Scrutiny Investigation, are incorporated, wherever possible, into the Green Infrastructure Strategy and its associated site specific schedules.	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.	Planning Officer)	
(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)

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 11 June 2007 (Action Plan)

	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	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 11 June 2007 (Action Plan)

RECOMMENDATION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE
		where none exist with a view to increasing devolved management.	
(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)
(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

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 11 June 2007 (Action Plan)

RECOMMENDATION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE
(m)	<p>That in relation to Stations in Hartlepool:</p> <p>(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;</p> <p>(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</p>	<p>Identify the procedure and progress the adoption of Hartlepool railway station in discussion with Northern Rail and Network Rail</p> <p>Identify the procedure and progresses the adoption of Seaton Carew railway station in discussion with Northern Rail and Network Rail</p>	<p>Ian Jopling (Transportation Team Leader)</p> <p>July 2007</p> <p>Ian Jopling (Transportation Team Leader)</p> <p>July 2007</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 11 June 2007 (Action Plan)

RECOMMENDATION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE
<p>Hartlepool is sought in this;</p> <p>(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;</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>Formally write to Network Rail to request that planned infrastructure 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>Alastair Smith (Director of Technical Services)</p> <p>Ian Jopling (Transportation Team Leader)</p>	<p>June 2007</p> <p>September 2007</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 11 June 2007 (Action Plan)

RECOMMENDATION		EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE
	(v) That pedestrian and vehicle signage (including further development of brown signage) around Hartlepod Station is improved, especially in relation to the town centre.	Provide new highway signage as considered appropriate.	Peter Frost (Traffic Team Leader)	March 2008
(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	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)

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 11 June 2007 (Action Plan)

RECOMMENDATION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE
	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.	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)
(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)
			October 2007 (Ongoing)
			June 2007

REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

12 July 2007



Report of: Scrutiny Support Officer

Subject: SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION INTO THE
AVAILABILITY OF GOOD QUALITY AFFORDABLE
RENTED ACCOMMODATION IN HARTLEPOOL –
SCOPING REPORT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To make proposals to Members of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum for their forthcoming investigation into 'The Availability of Good Quality Affordable Rented Accommodation in Hartlepool'.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 At its meeting on the 14 June 2007 the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum selected 'The Availability of Good Quality Affordable Rented Accommodation in Hartlepool' and 'Seaton Carew - Regeneration Needs and Opportunities' as the two topics for its 2007/8 Work Programme. The Forum's 2007/8 Work Programme was approved by the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on 29 June 2007 and the intention of this report is to scope the Forum's first investigation into 'The Availability of Good Quality Affordable Rented Accommodation in Hartlepool'.
- 2.2 In identifying this issue as the first topic for investigation, Members of the Forum expressed concern in relation to the availability of good quality affordable rented accommodation in Hartlepool and attention was drawn to the increasing length of housing waiting lists held by the Council and the town's Registered Social Landlords. Members were of the view that the town is experiencing a significant problem in terms of the availability of good quality affordable rented accommodation. It was recognised that work is at an advanced stage in identifying and quantifying housing needs and potential responses which are to be reported to Cabinet. Nevertheless Members felt that this Forum has a responsibility to play an active role in the identification of a way forward to address the issue.

- 2.3 During the course of the investigation Members are asked to bear in mind the areas/issues already covered during the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum's investigation into 'The Performance and Operation of Private Rented Accommodation and Landlords'. To assist in this, the Forum will on the 16 August 2007 be receiving the 'Action Plan' in respect of the recommendations made during the course of this investigation. It is hoped that this will inform the Forum and assist in avoiding duplication of work, with full copies of the Final Report available upon request from the Scrutiny Support Officer.
- 2.4 On this basis, Members are asked today to 'scope' the investigation, formalising the overall aim, terms of reference and timetable for the investigation. Suggestions for each of these and other areas of the investigation are outlined below.

3. OVERALL AIM OF THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION/ENQUIRY

- 3.1 To establish the extent of demand for, and availability of, good quality affordable rented accommodation in Hartlepool and recommend options for increasing availability.

4. PROPOSED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION/ENQUIRY

- 4.1 The following Terms of Reference for the investigation are proposed:-
- (a) To gain an understanding of national and regional policy/guidance in relation to the provision of good quality affordable accommodation, with particular reference to the social rented sector;
 - (b) To consider and agree a definition of good quality affordable rented accommodation for the purpose of the investigation;
 - (c) To gain an understanding of how good quality affordable rented accommodation is currently provided in Hartlepool and the issues affecting provision;
 - (d) To explore the extent of demand for, and availability of, good quality affordable rented accommodation in Hartlepool;
 - (e) To consider the work already being undertaken by the Council and other agencies to seek to increase the supply of good quality affordable rented accommodation in Hartlepool;
 - (f) To explore viable ways of increasing the availability of good quality affordable rented accommodation in Hartlepool, to go some way to meeting unmet demand;
 - (g) To seek the views of residents, including people from minority communities of interest, regarding the availability of good quality affordable rented accommodation in Hartlepool.

5. POTENTIAL AREAS OF ENQUIRY/SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

5.1 Members of the Forum can request a range of evidential and comparative information throughout the Scrutiny review.

5.2 The Forum can invite a variety of people to attend to assist in the forming of a balanced and focused range of recommendations as follows:-

- (a) Member of Parliament for Hartlepool (*Arrangements to facilitate the MP's attendance to be discussed further at the meeting*);
- (b) Elected Mayor (Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Regeneration and Liveability);
- (c) Cabinet Member with Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Communities;
- (d) Director of Regeneration and Planning Services and other relevant Hartlepool Borough Council Officers;
- (e) The Housing Corporation;
- (f) Local residents and tenants, including representatives of minority communities of interest to supplement existing research; (*i.e. 50+ Forum – Other suggestions welcomed from the Forum*)
- (g) Residents Associations;
- (h) Registered Social Landlords (*i.e. Housing Hartlepool and Endeavour Housing Association*);
- (i) Neighbouring Tees Valley Authorities (*to ascertain their position and work being undertaken to address the issue*); and
- (j) Ward Councillors.

5.3 The Forum may also wish to refer to a variety of documentary/internet sources, key suggestions are as highlighted below:-

- (a) Delivering Affordable Housing (Communities and Local Government – November 2006);
- (b) Review of Housing Supply (Kate Barker – www.barkerreview.org.uk)
- (c) <http://www.housingcorp.gov.uk/>;
- (d) <http://www.core.ac.uk/core/#> (*Core - Continuous recording System monitors social landlord's lettings and sales in England.*);
- (e) <http://www.hqnetwork.org.uk/> (*The Housing Quality Network is a network of local authorities, registered social landlords and housing associations which seeks to promote good practice and quality in the provision of rented accommodation in the UK.*);
- (f) Hartlepool Borough Council's Housing Strategy 2006-11;

- (g) Hansard Speech by Iain Wright on the 18 June 2007 (and Ministerial response); and
- (h) Hartlepool Housing Needs Assessment.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY

- 6.1 Community engagement plays a crucial role in the Scrutiny process and paragraph 5.2 details who the Forum could involve. However, thought will need to be given to the structure in the way that the Forum wishes to encourage those views.
- 6.2 In addition, diversity issues have been considered in the background research for this enquiry under the Equality Standards for Local Government. As such the views of local diversity groups will be sought throughout the inquiry where felt appropriate and time allows. Consequently, consideration has been given as to how the views of people from minority communities of interest or heritage (for example, people with disabilities, people with learning disabilities, people with mental health problems, black and minority ethnic people, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people), which may not be gathered through the usual community engagement routes, can be included over the course of the inquiry.

7. REQUEST FOR FUNDING FROM THE DEDICATED OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BUDGET

- 7.1 Consideration has been given, through the background research for this scoping report, to the need to request funding from the dedicated Overview and Scrutiny budget to aid Members in their enquiry. At this stage no additional funding has been identified as being necessary to support Members in their investigation. Members, however, may wish to seek additional funding over the course of the investigation and the blank pro forma attached at **Appendix A** outlines the criteria on which a request to Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee will be judged.

8. PROPOSED TIMETABLE OF THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

- 8.1 Detailed below is the proposed timetable for the review to be undertaken, which may be changed at any stage:-

12 July 2007 – ‘Scoping Session’ - To formalise the process for the Forum’s investigation.

8, 9 and 10 August 2007 – Chair to attend the Neighbourhood Consultative Forums to raise awareness of the investigation and seek views to be reported back to the Forum.

16 August 2007 - Formal meeting of the Forum to receive:-

- (i) A 'Setting the Scene' presentation/report from the Department/Scrutiny Support Officer (*Covering Terms of Reference (a), (b), (c), (d) and (e)*); and
- (ii) Evidence from the Portfolio Holders for Neighbourhoods and Communities and Regeneration and Liveability.

27 September 2007 – Formal meeting of the Forum to receive evidence from relevant Department/individuals on:-

- (i) Issues affecting the provision of good quality affordable rented accommodation in Hartlepool (*Term of Reference (c)*);
- (ii) Exploration of viable ways of increasing the availability of good quality affordable rented accommodation to meet demand in Hartlepool (*Term of Reference (d)*);
- (iii) A summary of feedback from the Chair following his attendance at the Neighbourhood Forums (*Term of Reference (g)*); and
- (iv) To seek the views of residents, Residents Associations and other bodies, including people from minority communities of interest regarding the availability of good quality affordable rented accommodation in Hartlepool (*Term of Reference (g)*).

1 November 2007 – Formal meeting of the Forum to receive evidence from relevant Department/individuals on:-

- (i) Further exploration of viable ways of increasing the availability of good quality affordable rented accommodation to meet demand in Hartlepool (*Term of Reference (d)*); and
- (ii) To seek the views of Registered Social Landlords in Hartlepool, residents and other interested parties regarding the availability of good quality affordable rented accommodation in Hartlepool.

w/c 19 November 2007 – Informal meeting to consider the content of the Draft Final Report.

6 December 2007 – Consideration of Draft Final Report.

4 January 2008 – Consideration of Final Report by the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee.

21 January 2008 – Consideration of Final Report by the Cabinet.

9. RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 Members are recommended to agree the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum's remit of the Scrutiny investigation as outlined in the report.

Contact Officer: - Joan Wilkins – Scrutiny Support Officer
Chief Executive's Department - Corporate Strategy
Hartlepool Borough Council
Tel: 01429 523 339
Email: joan.wilkins@hartlepool.gov.uk

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

- (a) Delivering Affordable Housing (Communities and Local Government – November 2006);
- (b) Review of Housing Supply (Kate Barker – www.barkerreview.org.uk);
- (c) Hartlepool Borough Council's Housing Strategy 2006-11;
- (d) Hansard Speech by Iain Wright on the 18 June 2007 (and Ministerial response); and
- (e) Hartlepool Housing Needs Assessment.