

PLEASE NOTE VENUE

REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM AGENDA



3 April 2008

at 2.00 pm

in the Palm Court, Staincliffe Hotel, Seaton Carew

MEMBERS: REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM:

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

Resident Representatives: Ted Jackson, Robert Steel 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 15 February 2008
- 3.2 To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2008
- 3.3 To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2008

4. ISSUES RAISED AT NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUMS

None

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

None

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

None

7. **CONSIDERATION OF PROGRESS REPORTS / BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK DOCUMENTS**

- 7.1 Six Month Progress Report – Scrutiny Investigation into the Performance and Operation of Private Sector Rented Accommodation and Landlords in Hartlepool – *Director of Regeneration and Planning Services*

8. **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

- 8.1 Draft Final Report – Seaton Carew's Regeneration Needs and Opportunities – *Chair of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum (to follow)*

9. **ISSUES IDENTIFIED FROM FORWARD PLAN**

None

10. **ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS ARE URGENT**

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- i) **Date of Next Meeting - 19 June 2008 commencing at 2.00 pm (venue to be confirmed)**

REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM MINUTES

15 February 2008

The meeting commenced at 3.00 p.m. in the Belle Vue Community, Sports and Youth Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Officer: David Cosgrove, Principal Democratic Services Officer

68. Adjournment of Meeting

At the request of the Chair the meeting was adjourned to re-commence at 4.00pm at the Marine Hotel, Seaton Carew.

The meeting was re-convened at 4.00pm at the Marine Hotel, Seaton Carew.

Upon being reconvened, the following were present:

Councillor: Shaun Cook (In the Chair)

Councillors: Steve Gibbon, Frances London, Ann Marshall, Gladys Worthy, Edna Wright and David Young.

Resident Representatives: Ted Jackson and Iris Ryder.

Also Present:

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.2: -
Councillor Carl Richardson as substitute for Councillor R W Cook
Councillor Geoff Lilley as substitute for Councillor Allison.

Seaton Ward Councillors Cath Hill and Mike Turner.

The Mayor, Stuart Drummond – Regeneration and Liveability Portfolio Holder.

Councillor Peter Jackson – Neighbourhoods and Communities Portfolio Holder.

Councillor Jonathan Brash.

Officers: John Mennear, Assistant Director ()
Stuart Green, Assistant Director (Planning and Economic Development)
Derek Gouldbum, Urban Policy Manager
Andrew Golightly, Senior Regeneration Officer
Charlotte Burnham, Scrutiny Manager
Joan Wilkins, Scrutiny Support Officer
David Cosgrove, Principal Democratic Services Officer

69. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Steve Alison and Rob W Cook and Resident Representative Robert Steel.

70. Declarations of interest by Members

None.

71. Minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2008

Confirmed.

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

None.

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

None.

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

None.

75. Evidence from the Portfolio Holders for Regeneration and Liveability and Neighbourhoods and Communities *(Scrutiny Support Officer)*

The Mayor, Stuart Drummond, Regeneration and Liveability Portfolio Holder and Councillor Peter Jackson, Neighbourhoods and Communities Portfolio Holder were present at the meeting and addressed the Forum.

The Mayor indicated that in the past four years over £1.7m of investment through various sources had come into Seaton Carew. Seaton Carew also benefitted from the blue flag status for the beach and the beach lifeguards in the summer months. Improvements to the clock tower and the toilets totalling £190,000 were to commence next month and the old toilet block was to be demolished and replaced by a new toilet block near Brinkburn Bridge.

The Mayor stated that the Council had been approached by developers with ideas for potential development in Seaton Carew. The potential development sites in Seaton Carew, Seaton Sands, Elizabeth Way and Coronation Drive were to be marketed by the Council. Facilities in Seaton, such as the Youth Centre and the Library were well past their 'sell-by date' and needed to be replaced. The Council was wishing to bring new and improved facilities to residents but the only way this was likely to happen was on the back of new developments. The Hartlepool Primary Care Trust (PCT) was also interested in bringing new facilities to the town. It had to be acknowledged that there were coastal protection issues particularly with the old Coach Park element of the Seaton Sands site.

Councillor Peter Jackson, Neighbourhoods and Communities Portfolio Holder, commented that Cabinet had actively been looking at potential development sites in Seaton Carew and had been in discussions with the Golf Club. There had been various plans and schemes over recent years that had never come to fruition. Cabinet and Officers had been working recently on developing marketable sites and schemes that would seriously interest developers and as the Mayor had indicated, it was encouraging that even before full marketing had started, developers were coming to discuss potential plans with the authority.

Members of the Forum were concerned to see that any capital gains from the marketing of the development sites came back into Seaton Carew. The Mayor indicated that it was necessary to find out the views of the people of Seaton Carew and the marketing strategies would be open to consultation with residents. Capital gains would, in line with Council policy, go back into the Council where their use would be discussed.

It was highlighted that there were already a number of maintenance issues along the sea front. It was indicated that these should be brought to the attention of the South Neighbourhood manager who could address many of them. In relation to the works on the Clock Tower/Bus station site, members asked how long those works would take. The Mayor indicated that he understood the works were to start next month and would be completed as soon as was practicable. One of the many issues that Seaton Carew had was that it didn't fall in to the necessary 'deprivation categories' to qualify for the additional funds that were available through Neighbourhood Action Plans for example.

The Mayor commented that in relation to the problems existing in Seaton such as the condition of Longscar Hall, this building was high on his list of sites that needed to be addressed. It was difficult for the Council to do what some

residents would like but the efforts of Officers had resulted in some maintenance being carried out and it was being pursued through the Planning Committee.

Members were encouraged that some benefit may come through future developments approved in Seaton. It was highlighted that residents were not looking for some kind of 'fantastic' development but facilities that would add to those already available for residents and some that would enhance facilities for visitors to the resort. The Mayor commented that this was where the authority and this scrutiny forum could work together in ensuring the marketing briefs for the potential development sites outlined the kind of facilities that residents would wish to see happen. It was the Council's aim to get the best from any future development in Seaton.

In relation to the potential Library development, Members and residents were pleased to hear that it was intended to have an improved facility rather than none at all as had been feared for some time. There was still concern at the future of the Longscar Hall building and the new development at the north end of the promenade. This development was not as originally promised and had caused problems for residents. There was a fear that it could turn into a 'Longscar 2'. Many residents believed there should be no further development approved north of Station Road to preserve the views and open aspect of that area.

Councillor Jackson commented that much of Hartlepool had not benefitted from SRB (Single Regeneration Budget) or NRF (Neighbourhood Renewal Fund) funding like Seaton Carew yet Council Officers had managed to access a variety of sources of funding over recent years bringing, as had been reported, £1.7m into Seaton Carew in the last five years. Council officers were exceptionally good at finding these 'pots' of money and grants and successfully applying for them but there were additional costs associated with this capital funding and that was that few of these grants had any revenue funding to maintain the schemes. This was something that needed to be addressed.

Residents were concerned at the plans for the four development sites highlighted by the Mayor. The Mayor indicated that the plans depended on what the residents of Seaton Carew wanted. There was no escaping the fact that there would need to be an element of residential development; it created the highest land prices and would be the only way that schemes such as a new library building, health provision, sports facilities could be funded. Councillor Jackson stressed that the potential for an affordable housing scheme on the land at Coronation Drive was only a possibility, nothing had been decided.

Residents and Resident Representatives expressed their desire to see development limited, or indeed stopped on Coronation Drive. The open spaces in that area should be left for the people of Seaton and visitors to enjoy. What the residents and visitors really did need was better public toilet provision and improved bus services. The Mayor stated that the toilet

provision was being addressed. In regards to bus provision, The Mayor commented that the Council and residents were very much in the hands of the private bus companies.

Recommended

That the Mayor, Stuart Drummond and Councillor Peter Jackson be thanked for their informative contribution to the investigation.

76. Current and Future Community Provision in Seaton Carew and explore their role in the regeneration of Seaton Carew. (Assistant Director (Community Services))

The Assistant Director (Community Services) presented his report to the Forum highlighting the main community facilities within Seaton Carew but also the many other facilities and sites around Seaton which contributed to the well-being of resident and visitors but were outside the scope of the investigation, such as the wildlife sites to the south, the Teesmouth Field Centre, the beach lifeguards and major events such as the fireworks displays on 5 November.

It was acknowledged by the Assistant Director that some facilities in Seaton Carew did need improvement. The indoor sports strategy had highlighted the poor condition of the sports hall and the need for a replacement. The library building was in a poor condition, the state of the roof being the main issue. Repairs to the building could be estimate to be in the region of £96,000 and imminent repairs of over £300,000. While the library was well used, better use could be made if the design and internal layout of the building were much better. It had, however, been designed and constructed in the early seventies when services were much different to what they are now. The sports fields' suffered through the lack of changing facilities and the park, while it was regularly maintained, it did need significant investment.

Residents and Councillors raised again the issue of public toilet facilities. The lack of facilities at the park was seen as an issue, particularly for parents taking children to the play area. There was, however, acknowledgement that there was a great opportunity for development and the facilities and schemes run through the Cricket Club were highlighted in particular.

Members raised concern that some public buildings were being described as "at the end of their useful life and in need of replacement" after only thirty or forty years. It seemed that insubstantial buildings had been provided in the first instance and that this mistake should not be repeated. There was concern expressed that this poor condition may be due to 'corporate neglect' through insufficient maintenance over the years.

The fire works display was raised as an issue that needed to be addressed especially car parking and the operation of unlicensed food retailers on the

evening. It was stated by the Assistant Director that all the food retailers had been licensed by the authority and were checked during the evening. Officers had not been aware of any unlicensed vendors and indeed the Environmental health inspectors had been out on the night but would note the concerns raised.

Members questioned why the library building had not been maintained. The Assistant Director indicated during his presentation of the report that Throston Library which was of a very similar design had been built at around the same time as Seaton Carew library. Throston Library's roof had recently been replaced, hence the reasonably accurate assessment of the costs of doing the same work at Seaton library. The condition assessments carried out on both sites showed that Throston Library's roof was in a worse condition and therefore the works were carried out there. The Council simply could not afford to undertake works to both libraries in the same financial year.

It was highlighted that Hartlepool MP, Iain Wright was to attend the next meeting of the forum on 22 February to discuss the issues raised under the investigation.

Recommended

That the report be noted.

77. Seaton Carew Asset Management Issues *(Assistant Director (Planning and Economic Development))*

The Assistant Director (Planning and Economic Development) outlined to the forum current proposals to explore the use of various Council-owned property assets in Seaton Carew to generate a range of benefits for Seaton Carew and Hartlepool as a whole. Officers had been considering a combination of identified local (i.e. local to Seaton Carew) and town-wide community needs and opportunities and how the Council's land holdings at Seaton Carew might be best utilised to address these. This thinking had been informed by unsolicited informal approaches by prospective developers expressing interest in undertaking developments at Seaton Carew as had been highlighted by the Mayor earlier in the meeting.

These issues had been considered by Cabinet on 22 January, 2008 and a slightly updated version of that Cabinet report was attached as Appendix A to the report. That report set out the range of needs/opportunities and assets under consideration, for the Forum's information. Cabinet minute 192 from the meeting on 22 January was also submitted, from which the forum could see that Cabinet had authorised consultation with local stakeholders and the public on draft marketing particulars before reporting back to Cabinet. Officers were now working on the preparation of such material for consultation purposes.

The Assistant Director outlined the following relevant needs/opportunities that

had been identified via a variety of studies and discussions.

- a) Affordable housing: the housing assessment completed in 2007 indicated a substantial town-wide need for more affordable housing. Past reports to Cabinet had outlined ways in which the Council might bring forward appropriate sites in its ownership for affordable housing.
- b) Improved local community facilities: Seaton Carew currently suffers from a range of dated community facilities including the sports hall and youth/community centre off Elizabeth Way, library on Station Lane, and many of the facilities within Seaton Park. The recently adopted Indoor Sport Facility Strategy identifies the potential for Seaton to have a new two court sports hall and associated facilities including the need for changing facilities for football pitch use at Dodds Field /Seaton Park. As the current sports hall, library and existing park facilities not only have significant maintenance/repair needs but do not meet modern service expectations, a potential opportunity arises to provide enhanced community facilities for Seaton Carew. In addition, the Primary Care Trust has expressed an interest in exploring the scope for enhanced primary care and community facilities in Seaton Carew.
- c) additional visitor attraction(s): both the Hartlepool Tourism Strategy and the Seaton Carew Tourism Strategy have identified the need to expand and diversify Seaton's range of attractions for visitors, especially in the form of indoor facilities which will attract/cater for visitors in wet weather. Such provision would expand Hartlepool's overall visitor offer, complementing the attractions and facilities of the marina, town centre, and the Headland, as well as Seaton Carew itself.
- d) potential capital receipts: the Council's asset management strategy and capital programme continue to place importance on generating a flow of capital receipts from the disposal of assets, to assist in funding future spending plans.

There may therefore be ways of utilising the Council's property holdings to generate a series of benefits which collectively represent a significant enhancement on existing services and facilities. What was important to indicate to the forum and residents was that no plans had been prepared and any proposals would still be subject to public consultation and the usual planning process which also had a built in consultation phase.

There was concern raised in relation to the seaside development and the other sites in that the identity of Seaton could be altered by significant housing development. The Assistant Director indicated that the highest land values would be obtained through sales for housing development; that could not be denied. In relation to social housing developments and affordable housing, there were legal means that could be used to facilitate these but there would be a consequent cost. Cabinet had identified the site on Coronation Drive as a potential site for affordable housing but that didn't mean the whole of the development. It did have to be recognised that the demand for affordable

housing in the borough at present equalled all that provided in the last ten years.

There was concern expressed at the meeting that while there may be a need for affordable housing it was short-sighted to designate the Coronation Drive site for housing at all. The Assistant Director indicated that any marketing of any of the sites would indicate preferred uses. The coach park site was presently the preferred site for a visitor attraction, not housing.

Some Councillors expressed the view that many in Seaton Carew didn't want anymore housing but already had an expectation that they would be ignored. Further development on Coronation Drive would make the appearance of the front far too congested and create an appearance of urban sprawl with little gap between Hartlepool and Seaton. The assistant Director indicated that the consultation exercise would put forward the needs that both Hartlepool and Seaton Crew faced in terms of housing and other demand. It would also include the sites available and their potential uses. There was a scope for a mix of community uses to come forward through the development either as direct consequence of what was being developed or through planning gain.

After a wide discussion on the issues surrounding the sites and potential uses, the Assistant Director suggested it was essential that people responded to the consultation and put their views forward.

Recommended

That the report and the comments be noted.

78. Feedback form the South Neighbourhood Forum and the Focus Group Meeting *(Scrutiny Support Officer)*

The Scrutiny Support Officer reported the comments made at the South Neighbourhood Forum on 1 February and the Focus Group session held on 6 February 2008.

The forum raised the issue of the Northumbrian Water Limited (NWL) treatment plant on the sea front and the fact that NWL were proposing to remove the third stage of water treatment at the plant. Residents and Councillors considered this should be strongly resisted. Seaton Carew beach had gained a 'blue flag' for the quality of the sea water and this move could jeopardise that. There was also further discussion on the Longscar Hall and the potential for the council to instigate a compulsory purchase order (CPO). The Assistant Director (Planning and Economic Development) indicated that he understood residents' frustration with the condition of the building and the Council was doing what it could within the legal powers it had to force the owners to address the problems that existed. Officers were just as frustrated at the timescales involved. The use of CPO was unlikely at the present and could really only be used if there was the probability of redevelopment.

The Scrutiny Support Officer highlighted for the forum's information that the Hartlepool Young Voices group was to be involved in seeking the views of the young people of Seaton Carew on what sort of facilities and development they wished to see in the future. The Chair welcomed this as a very positive input into the investigation.

Recommended

That the comments reported from the South Neighbourhood Forum and the Focus Group be noted.

SHAUN COOK

CHAIRMAN

REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM MINUTES

22 February 2008

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm at the Marine Hotel, Seaton Carew

Present:

Councillor: Shaun Cook (In the Chair)

Councillors: Steve Alison, Rob W Cook, Kevin Cranney,
Steve Gibbon, Michael Johnson, Frances London, Ann Marshall,
Edna Wright and David Young

Resident Representatives:

Ted Jackson, Iris Ryder and Bob Steel

Also Present:

Councillors G Lilley, C Hill, J Brash, M Turner – Ward
Councillors
Iain Wright, MP

Officers: Jo Cole, Principal Economic Development Officer (Tourism)
Bart Johnson, Principal Economic Development Officer (Europe)
Derek Gouldbum, Urban Policy Manager
Andrew Golightly, Principal Regeneration Officer
Alison Mawson, Head of Community Safety and Prevention
David Hunt, Strategy and Performance Officer
Denise Wimpenny, Principal Democratic Services Officer

79. Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Gladys Worthy.

80. Declarations of interest by Members

None

81. Minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2008

Confirmed.

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

None

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

None

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

None

85. Corporate Plan 2008/09 – Proposed Outcomes and Actions *(Director of Regeneration and Planning Services and Assistant Chief Executive)*

It was reported that at a meeting of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee held on 18 January 2008 it was agreed that the Corporate Plan proposals should be considered by each of the Scrutiny Forums which related to the Community Strategy themes that fell under their remit. The comments/observations of each Forum would be fed back to the meeting of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee to be held on 14 March 2008 and would be used to formulate the formal Scrutiny response to Cabinet on 28 April 2008.

The Principal Economic Development Officer (Europe) and Strategy and Performance Officer were in attendance to present the report which provided Members with the opportunity to consider the proposed outcomes and actions for inclusion in the Corporate Plan 2008/09 as detailed in Appendix A.

A discussion ensued in which the following issues were raised:-

- In response to a query as to whether any funding had been allocated by the Government to reduce harm caused by illegal drugs and alcohol, it was reported that funding could be accessed by the PCT from the Alcohol and Drug Reduction Strategy and this issue would be further explored by the town's MP.
- In relation to affordable housing, it was pointed out that prior to any decision being taken to develop the land at Coronation Drive, the implications for Seaton Carew should be considered.
- It was considered that the Council's Tourism Strategy should include

the promotion of Seaton Carew as a tourist centre.

- With regard to the proposed action to continue to liaise with PD ports to secure agreed project delivery arrangements, the Urban Policy Manager reported that PD ports would be included within broader discussions in terms of focus and support for Seaton Carew which would form part of the overall tourism strategy.
- Following concerns raised regarding the level of support available to assist young people with drug and alcohol problems, it was agreed that arrangements would be made for a written response to be provided to all Members of the Forum following the meeting.

Recommendation

- (i) Members supported the proposed outcomes and actions for inclusion in the 2008/09 Corporate Plan.
- (ii) That the comments of the Forum, as outlined above, be presented to Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on 14 March 2008.

86. Marketing of Seaton Carew – Presentation by the Principal Economic Development Officer (Tourism) – Covering Report *(Scrutiny Support Officer)*

As part of the Forum's ongoing investigation into Seaton Carew's regeneration needs and opportunities the Principal Economic Development Officer had been invited to attend the meeting to provide information on how Hartlepool, and in particular, Seaton Carew was marketed to attract tourism and businesses.

The Principal Economic Development Officer provided a detailed presentation which focused on the following issues:-

- Volume and Value of Tourism to Hartlepool
- Hartlepool Tourism Strategy 2004
- The Hartlepool Experience
- Tourism Structures
 - North East Tourism Network
 - Area Tourism Partnerships – visit Tees Valley
 - Funding opportunities
- Marketing Activity - Consumer
 - Visit Tees Valley visit guide 2008
 - Accommodation led brochure
 - Marketed to the short breaks/holiday market
 - Services all accommodation enquiries
- Marketing Activity – Hartlepool (Hartlepool Mini Guide)

- Hartlepool Networks – Hartlepool Passport Group, Hartlepool Hotels Group, Hartlepool Restaurant Initiative
- Website Information
- Opportunities with advanced technology
- Events
- Future Opportunities
- Business Marketing

In summary, the Forum was advised that all businesses within Seaton Carew had the opportunity to feature in appropriate marketing activities. Seaton Carew was represented in all appropriate promotional material and the importance of utilising 'lead' image when targeting wider area markets was highlighted. The lack of funding resources and the heavy influence by the regional structure of tourism was emphasised.

Following the conclusion of the presentation the following issues were raised:-

- Concern was expressed that a number of attractions at Seaton Carew had not been highlighted in the marketing material which included the Annual Caravan Club Event, Golf Festival and Boxing Day Dip.
- Various events/activities were suggested which included the provision of live entertainment, music events and the promotion of the area's cultural heritage.
- Some concern was expressed regarding the marketing of attractions in Hartlepool by other local authorities and how this was of benefit to the town. The Principal Economic Development Officer (Tourism) highlighted the importance of local authorities working together and stated that this was an ideal marketing opportunity which could encourage more tourists to the area.
- In response to a query relating to the level of involvement of One North East in the Tall Ships Event, Members were advised that regional meetings were being held and discussions were ongoing in terms of publicity, public relations and media support from One North East.
- The need to introduce effective marketing strategies and the possibility of using the Maritime Experience to encourage tourism in other parts of Hartlepool was highlighted. The Principal Economic Development Officer (Tourism) reported that work was required to establish what should be marketed, where the focus should be and identify where Hartlepool fitted in to the overall regional tourism strategy. Further suggestions from the Forum were welcomed.

Recommendation

That the information given, be noted and discussions be used to assist the Forum in completing the scrutiny investigation.

87. Scrutiny Investigation into Seaton Carew Regeneration Needs and Opportunities – Evidence from Iain Wright MP – Covering Report *(Scrutiny Support Officer)*

As part of the Forum's ongoing investigation into Seaton Carew's regeneration needs and opportunities the town's MP has been invited to the meeting to provide evidence from a local perspective. The Chair welcomed Ian Wright, MP to the Forum.

The MP reported that Seaton Carew was not a stand alone tourist destination and had a lot to offer in terms of quality of life, high quality shops and restaurants, good quality housing, more disposable income as well as being a pleasant area to retire. Reference was made to the economic decline in other coastal towns in the country. It was suggested that methods to encourage more spend in the area should be explored.

A discussion ensued in which the following issues were raised:-

- In response to a resident's comments that Seaton Carew did not offer sufficient facilities to encourage families to visit, the MP advised that it was not considered that Seaton Carew should be competing with other coastal resorts like Blackpool and emphasis should be placed on offering first class amenities with opportunities for people to spend money in order to boost economic regeneration.
- A resident expressed concern regarding the reduction in Government funding for Hartlepool which was used to subsidise local authorities elsewhere and that Seaton Carew was not referred to in the North East Spatial Strategy. In response, the MP made reference to funding that had been secured from Local Government Finance and highlighted concerns regarding the cost of improvements to the civic centre building.
- Concerns were expressed in relation to the MP's comments regarding the high levels of disposable income in Seaton Carew and pointed out that this was not the case as the majority of the population were retired. The MP stated that it was not envisaged that Seaton Carew would become a retirement village and emphasis should be placed on the need to preserve and enhance the facilities that were already there.
- Reference was made to the two rubbish tips which were a major eyesore in the area and concerns were raised that they were not adequately maintained. The MP acknowledged that this should be regularly monitored and stated that this issue had been reported in a letter to the Chief Executive of the Council. It was suggested that conditions on planning permissions were actively enforced to address this issue.

- Following suggestions that visitors to the Marina should be encouraged to continue their visit to Seaton Carew, the Forum was advised that discussions were required on how Seaton Carew fitted into the overall tourism strategy for the town.
- The importance of revenue funding to maintain facilities was discussed to which the Scrutiny Support Officer advised that the lack of revenue funding had been recognised by the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum in a recent scrutiny investigation into revenue and capital funding from which a number of recommendations had been made.

In addition to the issues outlined above, it was suggested that regeneration of Seaton Carew should focus on the following issues:-

- The importance of exploring the town's Victorian heritage and the need to preserve certain pieces of architecture
- Secure funding for refurbishment of the bus shelter
- Publicise sporting strengths to attract visitors to the area
- Protect current assets and open space
- Additional funding sources be explored – the Power Station was suggested as a potential source of funding.
- Appropriate marketing of Seaton Carew and the possibility of a webcam facility to be explored.
- Ensure existing community facilities were preserved and improved
- Facilities/activities for families be further examined
- Explore transport links from the Headland to Seaton Carew

In response to a resident's comments regarding various queries raised at the Focus Group meeting, the Scrutiny Support Officer advised that written responses were included in the minutes of the Focus Group meeting, a copy of which had been circulated to all residents in attendance. Future strategies and regeneration would be discussed at the next meeting to be held on Thursday 28 February at 2.00 pm at the Marine Hotel.

Recommendation

That the information given, be noted and discussions be used to assist the Forum in completing the scrutiny investigation.

SHAUN COOK

CHAIRMAN

REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM MINUTES

28 February 2008

The meeting commenced at 2.00 p.m. in the Marine Hotel,
Seaton Carew, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor: Shaun Cook (In the Chair)

Councillors: Kevin Cranney, Steve Gibbon, Frances London,
Ann Marshall, and Edna Wright.

Resident Representatives: Ted Jackson and Bob Steel.

Also Present: Councillor G Lilley as substitute for Councillor Allison in
accordance with Council procedure rule 4.2.
Councillor Mike Turner, Seaton Ward

Officers: Alan Coulson, Engineering Manager
Dave Thompson, Principal Engineer - Environmental Issues
Derek Gouldbum, Urban Policy Manager
Andrew Golightly, Senior Regeneration Officer
Denise Ogden, Head of Neighbourhood Management
Joan Wilkins, Scrutiny Support Officer
David Cosgrove, Principal Democratic Services Officer

88. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Steve Alison, Rob W
Cook and Gladys Worthy and Resident Representative Iris Ryder.

89. Declarations of interest by Members

None

90. Minutes

No items.

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

No items.

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

No items.

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

No items.

94. Coastal Defence Issues for Consideration in Relation to the overall regeneration of Seaton Carew *(Director of Neighbourhood Services)*

Alan Coulson, Engineering Manager, and Dave Thompson, Principal Engineer - Environmental Issues, outlined the main issues in relation to coastal defence for Seaton Carew.

Hartlepool Borough Council was the designated Coast Protection Authority to ensure coastal protection for the borough. The major difference between coastal protection, i.e. defence from erosion, and sea defence, i.e. defence from flooding from land, is that the sea defence function lay with Environment Agency (EA) and not with the local authority. Some issues did require a joint approach though.

Central government has recommended a hierarchical approach to sea defence management. The top level was the Shoreline Management Plans (SMP). For our section of coast the SMP covered the coast from the River Tyne to Flamborough Head. The second level was the individual Strategy Studies that addressed issues for shorter lengths of coast in much greater detail. The third level was specific project appraisals which set out specific issues in detail at 'ground level'.

The first SMP had been adopted in 1999 and the second in 2007. A separate individual study had been done on the Headland in 2006. At the third level, the only scheme that qualified was the Headland Wall and recently the Council had been awarded central government finance for the design of that capital scheme. Recently, there had also been central government grant aid of £100,000 for a strategy study of Seaton Carew.

In producing any plans or strategies, the local authority was required to take

into account the government's guidance on global warming and rising sea levels. The current guidance was that over 60 years, there would be an allowance of 425mm rise in sea level for non residential areas and for residential areas this allowance would be 800mm. All this had to be taken into account plus the effects of wave action.

There was also the problem that Seaton beach is lowering due to sand erosion which was causing problems for the coastal protection. In March 2006 £40,000 was spent on repairs to the coastal protection infrastructure. The most recent damage to the coastal protection structure would cost £98,000 to repair. If the predicted sea level rises do occur, the coastal protection plans would be very important. Shoreline Management Plans and Strategy Studies are set to address issues for 100 years ahead. Sea walls will need to be much higher and their footprint significantly larger. However due to environmental restrictions, the authority won't be allowed to put these new structures in front of current walls, they will have to go behind taking up valuable land. If developers come forward they will have to put in coastal protection at their own cost as they won't be eligible for grant aid. This will obviously add significantly to any development costs and may prove prohibitive.

It was anticipated that some elements of the Seaton Carew strategy may qualify for grant aid. However, the development of the strategy would take quite some time and the authority wouldn't get any results until spring 2010. The review was costing £100,000 and by its nature would be very detailed.

The officers gave the forum an idea of the heights of the potential coastal protection structures that would be needed to protect Seaton Carew from the projected sea level rises. At the Rocket House car park, for example, the current wall is 5.2m above ordnance level. That wall will have to be increased in height by an additional 3.8m (12ft) in order to protect any new development over the lifetime of that development.

Members questioned whether the fall in the beach height was due to dredging works at the port. Dredging had in the past led to the beaches at the Headland disappearing. There were also concerns at past sand removal by local merchants and whether the sand could be replaced. The Engineering Manager indicated that there was an allegation of dredging at the port having caused problems for the Headland but recent studies had not proven this. In relation to Seaton Carew, there had been no dredging works. There was always some variation in the beach due to storms etc. but there was a noticeable reduction in the beach height in the last few years. One of the issues the consultants would look at in the development of the strategy was beach replenishment. It was also questioned as to whether the dredging for the new deep sea port in the Tees would result in further erosion. Officers indicated that it was unlikely but there would be very strict controls on the dredging, as there were now.

Members questioned why the study was taking so long with an expected delivery in spring 2010. Officers indicated that it was a very complex study

modelling beach movement, tides etc. The Headland study had taken seven years to complete as these studies had to follow government guidance and required significant site surveys and consultations.

There was some surprise expressed at the restrictions on the construction of coastal protection in that they had to be land side rather than sea side. This would mean that they would take up more land, cutting into open spaces and development land. Officers indicated that this was based on current studies carried out here and elsewhere around the country. There were lots of beaches with special environmental protection status around the UK coast and the controls associated with this were very stringent. The authority could not undertake any beach maintenance unless permission had been obtained from Natural England. It was highly unlikely under current circumstances that any permission would be given to take a strip of the beach of up to 30m deep in order to construct coast protection structures. Residents and Councillors commented that nobody was going to want a twelve foot high wall along the sea front.

There were questions raised as to what would be the situation if developers bought land before the study was completed in 2010. Officers indicated that experienced developers would be aware of the implications that they would be required to construct coastal protection to this authority's satisfaction. There was the contrast that south of the coach park area, the Shoreline Management Plan did not propose any defences. If there were to be any constructed that would be up to the Golf club to fund. Residents considered that there appeared to be a view that the 'wet land' areas south of Seaton Carew should be left to nature.

A resident referred to a recent Northumbrian Water Limited seminar and commented on the lack of joined up thinking between NWL and the Council in relation to planning applications. It was suggested that NWA be requested to give the seminar to Councillors.

Some Members commented that Cabinet should consider stopping the marketing of sites that were at potential risk of flooding in the future. There were already policies against development of flood plain land.

Recommended

That the comments raised during the discussion be noted.

95. Seaton Carew – Future Regeneration Needs and Opportunities and Regeneration Initiatives suggested by the Forum during the course of the investigation – Further Exploration (*Head of Regeneration*)

Derek Gouldburn, Urban Policy Manager and Andy Golightly, Senior Regeneration Officer, gave a presentation to the Forum on the future regeneration needs of Seaton Carew and the opportunities that were presently available or desired. The presentation highlighted: -

- The previous considerations of the forum in relation to the regeneration of Seaton Carew; including the Tourism Strategy, previous regeneration investment, the potential for the renewal of community facilities' and the marketing of the resort.
- Seaton Sands – the need to provide a modern attraction and the previously suggested 'Gelateria' scheme, discussions with the Golf Club for the inclusion of part of their land in the marketing exercise, Heritage Lottery funding and other works such as the Bus Station.
- Seaton Sands coastal protection.
- Community owned facilities and Council owned assets.
- Potential replacement facilities – a multi purpose community facility, a new library, PCT health services provision, improvements to the park and affordable housing.
- Future Regeneration Activity.
- Seaton Carew Tourism Strategy.
- Other suggestions put forward by the forum.
- Maintaining the current assets.
- Major events and activities and resident/business community involvement.

It was highlighted that, as had been previously reported to the forum, there had been around £2m of investment in Seaton Carew over recent years. In relation to previous comments about not developing in flood plain areas, it was not you couldn't develop those areas but more about the design of what was developed. The gelateria scheme had been one that had been discussed in the past but there was concern about the financial viability of such a scheme. There had also been an application to the Heritage Lottery which had failed.

Informal marketing showed that there was a lot of interest in developers coming into Seaton Carew. There was no escaping the argument that private sector input was needed if any of the 'enhanced' facilities were to be achieved.

Members considered that the most important aspect of the marketing exercise would be the consultation. There were many voices against the development on Coronation Drive for example and it was hoped that through the consultation process these voices could be given due weight when Cabinet made its final decision.

There was concern that no consultation was being undertaken with young people. The Chair commented that a visit to Dyke House School had been arranged to talk to the young people of Seaton Carew.

A resident referred to the lack of any reference to Seaton Carew in the Regional Spatial Strategy and the Coastal Arc document. It was highlighted that the RSS was a regional document that was aimed at a regional perspective and there impossible to include all the local detail; it was a very high level document. The Coastal Arc did include Seaton Carew. It was noted that the forum was very disappointed with the RSS document and those

comments would be fed through to the Cabinet when it made its final comments on the document.

Recommended

That the forums comments be noted.

S COOK

CHAIRMAN

REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM AGENDA

3RD APRIL 2008



Report of: Director of Regeneration & Planning Services

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

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum with an update on the progress that has been made in relation to the Private Sector housing investigation which was originally conducted by the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum and reported to Cabinet on 11th June 2007 where the Action Plan was approved.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 With the transfer of the Housing Division to the Regeneration and Planning Services Department the investigation into private sector landlords was also transferred to this forum.
- 2.2 The forum reviewed the final report and recommendation on 6th September 2007. It was agreed that a 6 month review would be undertaken.

3. OVERALL AIM OF THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

- 3.1 Members will recall that 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. **DEPARTMENT RESPONSE TO THE PROGRESS MADE TO DATE
ON THE DELIVERY OF THE ACTION PLAN**

- 4.1 Whilst much progress has been made in some areas, other areas have been postponed, partially due to the absence of the Strategic Housing Manager.
- 4.2 The Tenant Referencing Scheme has been developed and will be officially launched in April 2008. We will now be monitoring progress and undertake an impact assessment.
- 4.3 The implementation of Selective Licensing is making significant progress and we will follow Cabinet's timetable in seeking to implement by October 2008.
- 4.4 Progress against each of the actions in the Action Plan is shown in bold at **Appendix 1**

5. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 5.1 That Members note the progress to date in relation to the delivery of the Action Plan

Contact Officer Penny Garner-Carpenter, Strategic Housing Manager
Department of Regeneration and Planning Services
Housing Division
Hartlepool Borough Council
01429 284117

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

- (i) The Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum's final report into the 'Performance and Operation of Private Sector Rented Accommodation and Landlords in Hartlepool' considered by Cabinet on 11th June 2007 and the Action Plan accepted by Cabinet and considered at Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum on 6th September 08.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN

APPENDIX 1

NAME OF FORUM: Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum

NAME OF SCRUTINY ENQUIRY: The Performance and Operation of Private Sector Rented Accommodation and Landlords in Hartlepool

DECISION MAKING DATE OF FINAL REPORT: Cabinet on 11 June 2007

RECOMMENDATION		PROPOSED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE
(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.	Impact assessment to be undertaken once proposed actions in relation to recommendations b) to q) have been completed.	Penny Garner-Carpenter	End March 08
	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	Discussions to be held with Local Authorities already successful in obtaining CLG approval for selective licensing scheme	Joanne Burnley/ John Smalley	End Sept 07

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN

	its effective operation; and	<p>Detailed information gathered from other authorities on the content and process for obtaining CLG approval</p> <p>Information to be collated in support of an application (or otherwise) for selective licensing designation.</p> <p>Data collected from ASB, private sector, housing benefits and Police used as the basis for a report to Cabinet in February 2008 to proceed with selective licensing</p>	<p>Joanne Burnley/ John Smalley</p> <p>Joanne Burnley/ John Smalley</p>	<p>End Nov 07</p> <p>End Nov 07</p>
	(iii) The practicalities of operating the existing Voluntary Registration Scheme alongside any Selective Licensing and Tenant Referencing Schemes.	<p>Prepare a report on how the existing voluntary scheme may work in conjunction with tenant referencing and selective licensing and the benefits of doing so.</p> <p>Report prepared</p>		
	Landlord Accreditation Scheme			
(c)	That the introduction of an incentive scheme to encourage landlords to become members of the accreditation scheme be further explored.	<p>Information to be gathered from other scheme operators about incentives offered and how they complement their scheme.</p> <p>Prepare a report on potential schemes and likely costs.</p> <p>Consult existing scheme members to assess take up.</p> <p>Information gathered. Work on incentives will be a priority for the</p>	Ken Natt	End Nov 07

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN

		new Landlord Registration Officer		
(d)	That the provision of tenant and landlord information packs as part of the accreditation scheme be explored.	Produce a model information pack and assess the financial implications of introducing this into the accreditation scheme. Model leaflets prepared	Ken Natt	End Sept 07
(e)	That an assessment of staffing requirements to enable the effective provision, and expansion, of the Landlord Accreditation Scheme be undertaken.	Prepare a report on the operation and effectiveness of the accreditation scheme. Identify possible improvements to the effectiveness of the scheme. Assess additional resources required to make the accreditation scheme more effective. Report prepared	Joanne Burnley	End Nov 07
	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.	Ensure best practice and lessons learned by other authorities are included in HBC's scheme. Establish tenant referencing scheme procedures, linking to accreditation and selective licensing as and when appropriate Implement Tenant Referencing Scheme Tenant Reference scheme developed; to be launched in April 08	Sally Forth	End Aug 07 End Dec 07 End Jan 08

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	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.	Continue the development of the partnership with the Landlord Forum. Explore possible links with other organisations involved with the private rented sector. Not completed	Ken Natt	End Dec 07
(h)	That ways of assisting the NDC to identify alternative funding sources to ensure the continuation of its Bond Guarantee scheme be explored.	Provide assistance in identifying sources of funding for the Bond Guarantee Scheme. Not completed	Penny Garner-Carpenter	End Dec 07
	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.	Work to be undertaken by SP team to maximise available funding through reviews of existing services. Review in progress	Pam Twells, SP Lead Officer	End March 08
(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.	Establish procedures for working with partners to ensure that timely and extensive consultation with residents and members is undertaken as applications are considered, ensuring that statutory guidelines on consultation within the planning processes are followed. This has been put in place although support for affordable and specialist housing is needed from ward	Penny Garner-Carpenter	End March 08

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN

		members if housing is to be provided within the town.		
	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 representative on its board; and (ii) The development of its code of conduct, role and activities.	Discussions to be held with the Hartlepool Landlords Association regarding HBC representation on its board. Discussions held. At this stage the Association has declined HBC representation, but agreed HBC attendance at meetings by prior arrangement Offer assistance to the Landlords Association in the development of its code of conduct, role and activities. Assistance provided	Ken Natt	End Dec 07
	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.	Explore the types of services that could be offered by RSLs to private landlords to improve/ enhance management. Identify the level of interest of RSLs to take on this work. Discussions held with 2 RSLs. Tees Valley scheme being explored	John Smalley	End Jan 08
(m)	That an evaluation of the	Carry out an audit of the advice given	Lynda Igoe	End Dec 07

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	effectiveness of Registered Social Landlords advice to prospective tenants in terms of their allocation policies be explored.	regarding allocation policies (jointly with HH & HBC as there is a joint allocation policy) Ongoing Evaluate the findings of the audit Work with the RSLs to improve advice where the need is identified.		End March 08 End Sept 08
	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.	Explore the options available for lobbying Government and the Rent Service. Not completed	John Smalley	End Nov 07
(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	Negotiations between Department of Regeneration & Planning & Finance Department to decide on the future allocation of discretionary payments This has been postponed due to staff sickness	Penny Garner-Carpenter	End Mar 08 Now Oct 08

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	Housing Benefits.			
(p)	That the current budgetary allocation for Discretionary Payments be reviewed to more truly reflect demand.	Carry out a review of the demand for Discretionary Payments and its impact on budget allocation. This has been postponed due to staff sickness	Penny Garner-Carpenter	End Mar 08 October 08
	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.	Audit of literature and information available to be carried out. Completed Identify ways of extending advice availability Not completed Implement publicity as identified above Not completed	Penny Garner-Carpenter	End Dec 07 End Jan 08 End Feb 08