

# **NORTH NEIGHBOURHOOD CONSULTATIVE FORUM AGENDA**



**Wednesday, 16 December 2009**

**at 10.00 am**

**at West View Community Centre,  
Miers Avenue, Hartlepool**

**NORTH NEIGHBOURHOOD CONSULTATIVE FORUM:**

Councillors Allison, Atkinson, Barker, R W Cook, Fenwick, Fleet, Fleming, Griffin, Jackson, McKenna, J Marshall, Plant, Rogan, Wallace and Wright.

Resident Representatives: Christine Blakey, John Cambridge, John Lynch, Mary Power, Linda Shields, Bob Steel, Joan Steel and Maureen Waller

- 1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**
- 2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
- 3. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS**
- 4. MINUTES**
  - 4.1 To confirm the minutes of the North Neighbourhood Consultative Forum held on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2009
  - 4.2 Matters arising
  - 4.3 To receive the minutes of the North Area Police and Community Safety Consultative Forum held on 11<sup>th</sup> November
- 5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

**6. WARD ISSUES (from Members and Resident Representatives)**

**7. ITEMS FOR CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 Draft Public Convenience Strategy – *Assistant Director (Neighbourhood Services)*
- 7.2 Draft Empty Homes Strategy – *Principal Environmental Health Officer*

**8. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/INFORMATION**

- 8.1 Building Schools for the Future Update - Presentation – *Project Technical Manager, Schools Transformation Team*
- 8.2 Schools Transformation Stakeholder Board – Election of Councillor Representative from the Forum – *Director of Child and Adult Services*

**9. ITEMS FOR DECISION**

No items

**10. ITEMS OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR**

**11. DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the North Area Police and Community Safety Consultative Forum will take place at 10.00am on Wednesday, 27<sup>th</sup> January 2010 at West View Community Centre, Miers Avenue, Hartlepool.

The next meeting of the North Neighbourhood Consultative Forum will take place at 10.00am on Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> February 2010 at Throston Grange Community Centre, Glamorgan Grove, Hartlepool

**WARDS**

Brus  
 Dyke House  
 Hart  
 St Hilda  
 Throston

# ***NORTH NEIGHBOURHOOD CONSULTATIVE FORUM***

**14 October 2009**

## ***MINUTES OF THE MEETING***



The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. in West View Community Centre,  
 Miers Avenue, Hartlepool

|                 |
|-----------------|
| <b>PRESENT:</b> |
|-----------------|

Chair: Councillor Mary Fleet - Dyke House Ward  
 Vice Chair: Linda Shields (Resident Representative)

|                            |                   |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Councillor Steve Allison   | - St Hilda Ward   |
| Councillor Reuben Atkinson | - Dyke House Ward |
| Councillor Rob Cook        | Hart Ward         |
| Councillor Tim Fleming     | St. Hilda Ward    |
| Councillor Sheila Griffin  | - Brus Ward       |
| Councillor John Marshall   | - St Hilda Ward   |
| Councillor Trevor Rogan    | - Brus Ward       |
| Councillor Edna Wright     | - Hart Ward       |

Resident Representatives: Christine Blakey, Joan Steel, Robert Steel and Maureen Waller

Public: Dorothy Darke, Liam Goulburn, P Harrison, J Hodgson, B Price,  
 Cath Torley, Paul Watson

Officers: Denise Ogden, Head of Neighbourhood Management  
 Paul Mitchinson, Highway Services Manager  
 Colin Ogden, Waste Management Manager  
 Richard Teece, Development Control Manager  
 Peter Nixon, Senior Traffic Technician  
 Karen Oliver, Neighbourhood Manager  
 Garry Jones, Neighbourhood Services Officer  
 Ann Callaghan, Neighbourhood Development Officer (North)  
 Sarah Bird, Democratic Services Officer

Housing Hartlepool Representatives: Mark Dutton, Sarah Fawcett

|                              |
|------------------------------|
| <b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> |
|------------------------------|

Apologies for absence were received  
 from Councillors Barker and Resident

Representatives John Cambridge, John  
 Lynch, Mary Power

#### 18. DECLARATION OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS

None.

#### 19. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2 SEPTEMBER 2009

These were accepted as an accurate account.

#### 20. MATTERS ARISING

**Throston Neighbourhood Action** – A Member expressed concern that the information regarding the Index of Multiple Deprivation had not been forwarded to her and was informed that although this had been sent previously a further copy would be forwarded.

**Central Estate** – A resident clarified that the problems with car parking was actually on raised walkways and not on dropped crossings as reported in the last minutes.

**Availability of Officers** – A Resident Representative asked that if a lead officer was unable to attend to speak on a particular item, an update could be given by another officer who had been briefed on this.

#### 21. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

**Carrick Street** – A resident raised concerns about the poor state of 19 Carrick Street. The Neighbourhood Manager agreed to find out who owned this property to see what could be done about it.

**Jesmond Road Primary School** – Residents of Jesmond Gardens expressed concern about the siting of the entrance to the new school. The

Development Control Manager stated that consultation had taken place and members of the Planning committee had made their decision to which there was no right of appeal. He highlighted the Council Complaints Procedure and the right to complain to the Ombudsman.

#### 22. WARD ISSUES

No items.

#### 23. HIGHWAY SERVICES STRATEGY FOR HARTLEPOOL

The Highway Services Manager gave a presentation in relation to the need to provide a long term Highway Services Strategy by the Local Authority. He stated that the current strategy seemed to be working in relation to main roads but there appeared to be a shortfall in relation to local roads. According to a 2008 survey, Local Authorities only received 51% of the budget necessary to maintain their highways and it is scheduled maintenance on local roads that has been suffering from underfunding. The Strategy was to be based upon levels of service, life cycle planning and whole life costing. There was a need to develop a business case for additional funding for scheduled maintenance. The public could submit their view of the strategy to Paul Mitchinson on 01429 523706 or paul.mitchinson@hartlepool.gov.uk

**Traffic Calming, King Oswy Drive** – A Member referred to the speed humps outside schools on King Oswy Drive which had been rectified on three occasions. She was informed that these were currently at the correct height and assist in reducing the speed of traffic outside the schools.

**Adoption of Roads** – A Resident Representative queried when there would be full adoption of all roads in Hartlepool and was informed that it was the responsibility of the owner of the road to approach the Local Authority for adoption but it was not usual for this to take place until the correct specifications had been reached. The adoption of the roads on the Marina was discussed and the Head of Neighbourhood Management clarified that legal discussions were still underway regarding this as there was potential for a large spend on bringing this area up to specification. A Resident Representative asked that information could be published in the local press so that residents knew the current position with regard to this. The Head of Neighbourhood Management agreed to liaise with the Hartlepool Mail.

**Maintenance of Private Thoroughfares** – A Member queried what legal obligation private owners of shopping precincts had to maintain thoroughfares, specifically the pavements outside Clavering Shops. The Highway Services Manager said that enforcement action could be used if there was a danger to the public and agreed to write to the owners reminding them of their obligations.

**Parking on Pavements and Grassed Areas** – A Member referred to the practise of cars parking on pavements and grassed areas and asked why the Local Authority could not remove them. The Highway Services Manager said that each case was taken on its own merits.

## 24. HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING

The Head of Neighbourhood Management informed the Forum of the new developments with regard to the kerbside recycling provision in Hartlepool necessary in order to increase recycling performance. The Authority needed to

achieve Government targets of 40% recycling. She stated that had all household recyclable materials been sorted for collection, then £120,000 could have been saved by the Authority the previous year.

She outlined current performance across the town and participation rates in the north area as detailed below:-

| Participation Rates – North area breakdown for all materials |         |        |        |         |           |
|--|---------|--------|--------|---------|-----------|
| Area   | Glass   | Cans   | Paper  | Plastic | Cardboard |
| Headland   | 56.82%  | 65.92% | 65.99% | 81.78%  | 84.98%    |
| Central Estate   | 61.75%  | 69.50% | 64.29% | 87.31%  | 93.77%    |
| Brus   | 69.40%  | 75.12% | 75.19% | 84.39%  | 87.65%    |
| King Oswy  | 78.67%  | 84.10% | 80.56% | 87.68%  | 90.78%    |
| King Oswy/Clavering/Hart                                     | 80.61%  | 81.67% | 81.01% | 77.90%  | 87.07%    |
| Throston/Dyke House (Hart Lane)                              | 74.89%  | 77.73% | 83.66% | 67.24%  | 67.17%    |
| Dyke House   | 83.00%  | 84.56% | 82.51% | 86.23%  | 86.47%    |
| Throston   | 74.76%  | 79.55% | 77.59% | 93.36%  | 93.36%    |
| Bishop Cuthbert  | 67.27%  | 69.57% | 70.11% | 79.72%  | 77.80%    |
| Clavering  | 85.33 % | 87.13% | 85.25% | 75.97%  | 75.97%    |

It was noted that the Local Authority intended to take enforcement action against those households who did not recycle.

**Broken Glass** – A Member queried why no broken glass could be placed in the recycling box and was informed that this was for Health and Safety reasons.

**Cleaning of items** – In response to a Member's query it was clarified that although it was preferable for items to be rinsed, enforcement would not take place if this did not happen.

**Waste Collection Calendars** – A resident stated that none had been circulated on the Central Estate. The Head of Neighbourhood Management

agreed to ensure that these were delivered.

**Spillages** – A resident pointed out that there were often spillages during the waste collections and sometimes the street cleaning did not occur for a couple of days on the Central Estate and this made the area look untidy. The Waste Management Manager agreed to liaise with the refuse supervisor to ask the waste collectors to be more careful.

**Proportion of households not participating** – A Member asked what the participation rate was across the town and was informed that approximately 80% of households recycle at least one material, however 20% of households did not recycle. A campaign to raise awareness would take place and following that, if participation did not improve then enforcement action would follow.

**Window envelopes** – In response to a Resident Representative's query, the Waste Management Manager stated that these could not be recycled because of the plastic inserts. It was clarified that the Local Authority used window envelopes as it saved costs on the printing of labels for envelopes.

**Business recycling** – A Resident Representative asked whether inroads had been made into getting businesses to re-cycle and was informed that a number of larger firms had their own targets but the Authority was now encouraging smaller businesses to participate.

**Blocking of footpaths** – A Member expressed concern about a large number of bins being left out all day and causing difficulties with access for pedestrians.

**Grass cuttings** – A Resident Representative asked whether grass cuttings from the two garden areas at the

entrance to Merlin Way could be collected as these were slippery in wet weather. She also asked for a waste bin and dog waste bin to be sited in this area. The Neighbourhood Coordinator agreed to see if this was possible.

**Untidy recycling centres** – A Member stated that the areas immediately surrounding the recycling centres were often untidy due to residents leaving items around the recycling bins. The Head of Neighbourhood Management stated that there had been a tender exercise to procure a recycling centre contract but there had been no interest from firms. A further tendering exercise would take place in the near future to see whether any local firms could take on the contract.

**Returning bins to property** – A Member stated that the waste operatives did not always return bins to the properties and left them at the end of the street. The Waste Management Manager agreed to ensure that this was addressed.

**Bottle recycling on the Headland** – A Member requested that it would be helpful to have a further 'bring centre' located on the Headland as some residents did not have cars. He was informed that it was difficult to find a location for a bring centre in that area and it was hoped that by adding more materials to the kerbside collection scheme, enabling residents to recycle more on the doorstep. Residents could request a further blue box if they wished, if one box was not sufficient.

**King Oswy Drive** – A Member asked whether this could be swept of the fallen leaves which were a slip hazard. The Neighbourhood Services Officer agreed to ensure that this was carried out.

## 25. CJC UPDATE

The Development Control Officer outlined the latest position with regard to the former CJC site. A planning application for approximately 480 houses had been approved at the Planning Committee meeting on 7 October 2009 with several conditions, including the maintenance of the sand dune area. There would be the provision of 10% affordable housing, upgrading of bus stops. The site would be decontaminated and levelled within four months of permission being granted.

In response to a Member query, the Development Control Officer said that the design of the site should preclude vehicles accessing the beach.

## 26. MINOR WORKS BUDGET 2009/2010

A number of improvement schemes had been put forward for consideration by the Forum. There was a balance of £10,500 available to spend on these but this was not enough to fund all of the proposed schemes.

**Telford Close Footpath** – It was agreed that there was not enough money available in the current year's budget to fund this scheme and therefore this would be carried forward to the next financial year. Councillors S Allison and J Marshall voted against the funding of this.

**Ridlington Way Parking Scheme** – It was agreed to fund one part of this at a cost of £8,400.

**King Oswy Drive Bollard Scheme** – It was agreed that this should be deferred until the next financial year. Officers to monitor parking situation and enforce yellow lines when applicable.

**Sandwell Gate Hand Rail** – A Member asked that the Parish Council and

Neighbourhood Action Plan Forum be asked to contribute towards this scheme. The Neighbourhood Manager agreed to contact them to see whether they were prepared to do so.

## 27. BELLWAY HOMES

The Forum was reminded that there had been a planning application by Bellway Homes for 51 affordable housing units on the Bishop Cuthbert estate and that there was public feeling against this. This was to be considered at the Planning Committee meeting to be held in November. Neighbour consultations had taken place and advice given on what were material planning considerations. Consultation had also taken place between Housing Hartlepool and a number of residents.

The meeting concluded at 12.25 pm

CHAIR

**North Neighbourhood Consultative Forum****14 October 2009****Issues Raised/Action Sheet**

| ISSUE DETAILS  | ACTION TAKEN   | OFFICER                         |
|--|--|---------------------------------|
| <p><b><u>Matters Arising</u></b></p> <p><b>Throston Neighbourhood Action Plan</b> – to pass on information regarding where areas of Hart Ward stand in the index of multiple deprivation to Councillor Wright. KO to check with Gemma Clough as to what format the information has been sent</p> <p><b><u>Public Question Time</u></b></p> <p><b>19 Carrick Street</b> – overrun with rats. Next door neighbour Dorothy Dargue is upset about this. Need to check who the landlord is and to try and resolve the issue</p> | <p>Information was hand delivered on 15 October to both Councillor Edna Wright and Councillor Caroline Barker. Gemma Clough telephoned Councillor Wright and Councillor Barker on 14 October to explain the situation. Gemma couldn't speak to the Councillors but did leave a message to let them know that the information was going to be hand delivered following two failed attempts with the courier service and the post.</p> <p>A letter has been sent to Hartlepool Management Company, who manages the property, to request that the rear garden is cleared of the rubbish and the grass cut down. This information has also been forwarded to Jan Ledger of Housing Hartlepool, who has spoken to a representative from the company regarding the need to take action urgently. The company have been served with a 72 hour notice on the tenant to carry out the necessary works to tidy up the rear garden.</p> | <p>G Clough</p> <p>K Oliver</p> |



| ISSUE DETAILS  | ACTION TAKEN  | OFFICER   |
|--|---|---|
| <p><b><u>Ward Issues</u></b></p> <p><b>Clavering Shops</b> – write to owners regarding dangerous state of pavements</p> <p><b><u>Recycling Presentation</u></b></p> <p><b>Central Estate</b> – Street cleaning carried out a couple of days after refuse/recycling collection with the estate looking untidy in interim. Liaise with refuse supervisor to ensure that operatives are more careful</p> <p><b>Merlin Way</b> – Maureen Waller asked if bins could be put at the garden areas at the entrance to Merlin Way as this area is enjoyed by residents</p> <p><b>King Oswy Drive</b> – Edna Wright asked that a more regular sweep takes place as the fallen leaves were piling up</p> <p><b><u>Minor Works Schemes</u></b></p> <p><b>King Oswy Drive</b> – ensure enforcement of yellow lines takes place as bollard installation was deferred</p> | <p>Letter sent to Leo Gillen, owner of the Clavering Road Shops and surrounding land, on 4 November 2009 with regard to the dangerous state of the pavements. A copy of the letter has also been sent to Councillor Rob Cook for information.</p> <p>Rounds are to be adjusted where the area will be swept/ cleaned after the recycling wagon has been on the estate.</p> <p>A dog bin will be installed near to the cycle track opposite the seating area, and a litter bin will be installed near the seating area.</p> <p>A large mechanical sweeper is put on the road to sweep leaves town wide each autumn, each area large mechanical also sweeps leaves once their cleansing round is complete.</p> <p>Monitoring of the parking restriction agreed to take place both before and after scheduled enforcement programme in November. Impact to be reported early in 2010 including options and possible further measures of control.</p> | <p>P Mitchinson</p> <p>G Jones</p> <p>G Jones</p> <p>G Jones</p> <p>P Hepburn</p> |

**North Neighbourhood Consultative Forum****Minor Works - 2009/2010 - £87,000**

Forum - £52,000  
 Highway Maintenance - £20,000  
 Grass Verges - £15,000

| Ward      | Name of Scheme      | Date Approved   | Minor Works Funding | Other Funding |
|-----------|---------------------|-----------------|---------------------|---------------|
|           |                     |                 | £                   |               |
| All Wards | Tree Strategy       | 27 May 2009     | 50,000              |               |
| Various   | Dropped Crossings   | 22 July 2009    | 3,500               |               |
| Hart      | Sandbanks Drive     | 22 July 2009    | 18,000              |               |
| Various   | Pride in Hartlepool | 22 July 2009    | 5,000               |               |
| Brus      | Ridlington Way      | 14 October 2009 | 8,400               |               |
|           |                     |                 |                     |               |
|           |                     |                 |                     |               |

Total spend      £84,900  
**Balance            £2,100**

## Minor Works Schemes – 2009/2010

| Ward         | Total cost of Schemes |  |
|--------------|-----------------------|--|
| Brus         | 8,400                 |  |
| Dyke House   |                       |  |
| Hart         | 18,000                |  |
| St Hilda     |                       |  |
| Throston     |                       |  |
| Various      | £58,500               | 50,000 Tree Strategy<br>3,500 Dropped Crossings<br>5,000 Pride in Hartlepool |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | £84,900               |  |

**WARDS**

Brus  
Dyke House  
Hart  
St Hilda  
Throston

# ***NORTH POLICE & COMMUNITY SAFETY CONSULTATIVE FORUM***

## **11<sup>th</sup> November 2009**

### ***MINUTES OF THE MEETING***



The meeting commenced at 10.00 am at  
West View Community Centre, Miers Avenue, Hartlepool

|                 |
|-----------------|
| <b>PRESENT:</b> |
|-----------------|

Chair: Councillor Mary Fleet – Dyke House Ward

Vice Chair: Resident Representative Linda Shields

|                            |                   |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Councillor Reuben Atkinson | - Dyke House Ward |
| Councillor Caroline Barker | - Hart Ward       |
| Councillor Sheila Griffin  | - Brus Ward       |
| Councillor Edna Wright     | - Hart Ward       |

Resident Representatives:

John Cambridge, John Lynch, Mary Power and Bob and Joan Steel

Residents: D Clarke, John Maxwell, Cath and Liz Torley and Alan Vale

Officers:

- Karen Oliver, Neighbourhood Manager
- Sally Forth, Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator
- Phil Hepburn, Parking Services Manager
- Garry Jones, Neighbourhood Services Officer
- Katie Sheehan, Anti-Social Behaviour Officer
- Claire Brookbanks, Community Safety Assistant
- Jo Wilson, Democratic Services Officer

Cleveland Police: Acting Chief Inspector Mick Brown and  
Temporary Inspector Peter Howarth

Cleveland Fire Brigade: Peter Bradley

Housing Hartlepool: Natalie l'Anson

Cleveland Criminal Justice Board – Kate Campbell

### 11. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Rob Cook, Tim Fleming, Chris McKenna and Michelle Plant.

### 12. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5 AUGUST 2009

The minutes were confirmed as a true record.

### 13. MATTERS ARISING

**Sea coaling** – A resident highlighted the issue of sea coalers using vehicles on the beach at the Headland and referred to the previous meeting when Sergeant Brown had indicated that although the vehicles were old they were not considered unroadworthy. He advised that he had recently witnessed a sea coaling truck's front end break apart when it hit the beach. He felt that it was not possible for vehicles which had been driven on the beach for hours at a time to be roadworthy. Acting Chief Inspector Brown advised that he had been liaising with the traffic department with a view to preventing such vehicles from gaining access but they relied on the public reporting such incidents when they occurred. Any such calls made would be acted upon. A Resident Representative felt the Council should be prohibiting sea coaling vehicle access to the beach, as they had previously done for cars and dogs.

### 14. UPDATE FROM THE POLICE

Acting Chief Inspector Brown provided an overview of crime in the Cleveland Force and also the North area of Hartlepool. Force-wide figures were down for House Burglaries, Violent Crime, Criminal Damage, Vehicle Crime and Drugs activity had risen. This positive trend had

continued in Hartlepool, with the exception of violent crime which had risen by 26.9%. The numbers of arrests, cautions, charges, warrants, AS13s and Street encounters in the North area of the town were also given.

Acting Chief Inspector Brown also highlighted a number of items of interest including Operations PIPSOL, Sunshine and Pledge and the Not In My Neighbourhood Week. Details were also given of a recent drugs raid and actions which had been taken in response to allotment break-ins. Members were advised that cycle patrols had been implemented as a direct result of a request at the previous meeting.

A resident requested a PCSO presence after midnight. Acting Chief Inspector Brown commented that there was a perception that crime occurred at night whereas in reality most crime took place during the day. Current police patrols were all analytically led.

A Councillor referred to a recent influx of cars being left for sale on roads rather than at the seller's place of residence. This was occurring in a number of places including Powlett Road and West View Road opposite the Saxon Public House. Acting Chief Inspector Brown advised that this was a trading standards issue but he would take this up with them on behalf of the Forum. The Neighbourhood Manager commented that the people responsible might not be aware that they were acting illegally and suggested that they be contacted and advised of this.

A member of the Forum queried whether undetected crime had dropped. Acting Chief Inspector Brown reported that Cleveland Police had a 46% detection rate, better than any other PCU in the UK. This was the result of positive partnership working (including the relocation of the

Anti-Social Behaviour Unit to within the police station) and the hard work and positive attitude of police officers. The fact that criminals did not tend to travel to the area to commit crime was also a factor.

A Councillor reported a car parked in the middle of York Road pavement, directly outside the Box clothing store. The Parking Services Manager indicated that council officers were aware of this issue and had previously ticketed the vehicle in question. The problem was that some York Road frontage was under private ownership which could lead to confusion on the part of business owners.

A Resident Representative asked what action was being taken against private landlords letting to unsuitable or anti-social tenants. The Neighbourhood Manager advised that new regulations had been implemented recently giving local authorities more powers in this area. Selective licensing schemes had been introduced and the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit and Public Protection had been working together. However public co-operation was essential to ensure problems were brought to attention. The Resident Representative suggested that this be included as an item on the next agenda.

The Chair queried reports that people receiving free methadone as part of the drug rehabilitation programme were selling it for harder drugs. Temporary Inspector Howarth advised that methadone users were regularly monitored at the drug reassessment clinic to confirm which substances were present in their body.

The Chair thanked Acting Chief Inspector Brown and Temporary Inspector Howarth for attending the meeting and answering questions.

#### **15. UPDATE FROM THE FIRE BRIGADE**

The Fire Brigade representative, Peter Bradley, gave details of the number of incidents in the North Area of the town between August and October 2009. There had been a reduction in deliberate F3 fires however deliberate F1 fires and accidental fires had increased. Mr Bradley qualified this by explaining that Steetley was a blot on the landscape as far as figures were concerned and once that was dealt with the figures would go down. A Resident Representative asked if there could be an initiative to stop F3 fires at this site.

The Fire Brigade representative also reported that the number of deliberate car fires was down on the previous year. Bonfire night had seen no F1 fires at all and a reduction on all other categories on 2008. A Resident thanked the fire brigade for their support on the financial enclosure.

The Chair thanked the Fire Brigade representative for attending the meeting.

#### **16. ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR UNIT UPDATE**

The Antisocial Behaviour Co-ordinator gave details of recent activity in the unit and a breakdown of where cases were occurring, what category of complains were dealt with, broken down into wards and outcomes of referrals. She referred to successful partnership working, successes with the good tenant scheme and an increase in the take up of parenting courses. The Staysafe programme had been run on the last 3 consecutive Fridays and had proven very successful with 4 young people picked up by officers.

The Neighbourhood Manager noted the work of all NAP residents in providing

diversionary activities for young people in their neighbourhoods.

A Resident Representative praised the success of the Staysafe initiative but queried whether this was leading youngsters to engage in this behaviour in more seduced areas. Reference was made to recent incident in Clavering Park which resulted in a child being hospitalised. The Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator advised that the Staysafe initiative had only been run on Friday nights so far therefore the incident in question must have occurred another night. If there was evidence to support it then Staysafe could be run on other nights. As part of this police helicopters could be deployed and would detect youths congregating in shaded places.

A Resident Representative referred to ongoing problems with anti-social behaviour near Atkinson Court. There had been regular disturbances near the bungalows and recycling containers were being set alight on the field nearby. Whenever the police attended the scene they used their lights, giving advance warning to those involved. The Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator would speak to Home Housing on this matter. Specific details were passed on to the Police.

A Resident Representative commented upon the relatively low performance of Housing Hartlepool properties in the North area, asking whether their size had been taken into account. The Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator was of the opinion that Housing Hartlepool's figures were not at all bad, praising their positive work in this field particularly in terms of their involvement in the Hartlepool Partnership.

A Resident Representative asked about the Dordrecht Scheme and was told that this was currently being developed. The

Chair requested an update at the next meeting.

A Resident referred to the Good Tenant Scheme, querying how many applications had come out of the Keys To Success Scheme. The Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator did not have these figures. She noted that the funding for this scheme was due to expire shortly and doubted Council funding would be available following the forthcoming restructure.

The Chair thanked the Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator for attending the meeting and answering questions.

#### **17. OPERATION OBSTRUCTION AWARENESS**

The Parking Services Manager gave a brief report on the problems associated with inconsiderate parking and footpath obstruction. Following a number of complaints, officers from the police and local authority had been working on a joint initiative to raise awareness and tackle this issue. A series of publicity campaigns had been carried out which culminated in a joint enforcement day involving Police and HBC officers. The Headland has been chosen as a trial area for the initiative although the latest joint enforcement actually included all of the North Forum area.

The results of the joint enforcement are still being evaluated however it is difficult to assess the effectiveness from one visit alone. Further enforcement will continue but in future this is likely to also include some weekend and evening coverage. Leaflets have already been distributed to several properties within the North Forum area and the intention is for HBC officers to issue warning notices to offenders and formally report drivers to the Police for prosecution. The ultimate intension is to advise motorists but any fixed penalty notices would need to be issued by the

Police who have jurisdiction for footpath obstruction, The Parking Services Manager also recognised that in some areas a limited amount of parking on footpath may have to be permitted.

The Parking Services Manager also referred to recent changes to law regarding enforcement of dropped crossings and double parking contraventions. Changes to the Traffic Management Act now allowed HBC to enforce any vehicle parked across pedestrian access ways and crossing points. The legislation does not require the carriageway to be marked or signed and the changes have been well received by mobility and access groups. The Parking Services Manager had hoped that the changes to the law would have also included the separate offence of footpath parking as is the case in London; however central government opted not to decriminalize this contravention at this stage.

A resident queried whether the laws applicable to dropped crossing also included raised walkways. The Parking Services Manager advised that the legal definition refers to dropped crossings, but the raised walkway may be able to be considered under the Police / HBC joint enforcement initiative.

A resident representative queried whether a blanket footpath parking ban could be implemented. The Parking Services Manager felt that this would be difficult to justify and enforce as there were areas where some pavement parking may have to be permitted however, this was not a question of being lenient. The representative was assured that plans were already being developed for parking during the Tall Ships event.

A resident representative highlighted a number of instances of dangerous parking on Northgate opposite Henrietta

Street and The High Street. The Parking Services Manager noted this concern and agreed to include this in future patrols.

A resident queried how many tickets had been issued to cars parked in bus stops. The Parking Services Manager estimated this to be between 70-80 PCN's.

A Councillor raised concern as to the level of parking contraventions outside schools on King Oswy Drive and requested action and additional enforcement visits in relation to this. A Councillor also asked for clarification in relation to caravans parked on the public highway. The Parking Services Manager explained that a caravan is not covered by parking legislation however the Police can take action if it is deemed to be an obstruction of the highway.

A Resident referred to vehicles being unable to park in the post office sorting office car park in Clark Street. The Parking Services Manager acknowledged that problems had been caused when the Post Office had restricted access to their car park, however a limited stay parking facility would be provided at the nearby Aldi Store when this is built.

The Chair thanked the Parking Services Manager for attending the meeting and answering questions.

#### **18. CLEVELAND CRIMINAL JUSTICE BOARD**

A representative of the Cleveland Criminal Justice Board, Kate Campbell, provided a brief update of their work. An executive decision-making body comprising representatives from the Police, Probation Service, Crown Prosecution Service, Courts and Youth Offending, they would meet on a monthly basis and had the authority to commit resources to achieve targets. Among their recent achievements had been the



implementation of the Community Cashback Scheme whereby received criminal assets were redistributed to community projects. Further information was available via the website <http://lcjb.cjsonline.gov.uk/Cleveland/home.html>

The Chair thanked the representative of the Cleveland Criminal Justice Board for attending the meeting.

#### **19. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

No issues.

#### **20. ISSUES RAISED BY COUNCILLORS AND RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

**Arson** – A Resident Representative highlighted an increase in fires in the Atkinson Court area and requested action from the police and fire brigade. Acting Chief Inspector Brown promised action would be taken but officers could not be present all the time.

**Wrong property** – A Resident advised that she lived next door to a private landlord property and police were regularly knocking on her door in error. Acting Chief Inspector Brown to take action.

**Operation Obstruction Awareness** – A Resident Representative requested that the pilot scheme in the Headland referred to earlier be expanded to include the whole of the North area. The Neighbourhood Services Manager reported that this was already the intention, as well as a dedicated leaflet drop. Any other suggestions would be taken on board.

The meeting concluded at 12 noon.

Chair

**Report of:** Assistant Director (Neighbourhood Services)

**Subject:** DRAFT PUBLIC CONVENIENCE STRATEGY

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**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider the proposed and newly developed policy for the future provision of public conveniences in Hartlepool (**Appendix A**).

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The first public toilet in Britain was opened over 150 years ago, and for a long time, the provision of municipal public convenience facilities was a matter of considerable civic pride. Over recent years however, many local authorities were unable to maintain or improve the facilities to the required and expected standards, and were forced to close many public conveniences due to financial pressures and high operating and maintenance costs.
- 2.2 Another reason for their decline was the high level of persistent and increased levels of vandalism and antisocial behaviour, which apart from its financial implications, created issues of public anxiety and concern, health and safety and put staff and users of the facilities at risk. As such, many facilities became an eyesore and a focus for activities such as vandalism, drug taking and other anti-social activities which accelerated and necessitated the closure of some of the facilities.
- 2.3 In 2007 the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum carried out a comprehensive investigation into the provision of public conveniences in Hartlepool. The investigation recognised the vital contribution a well-managed public convenience service can make, both to the quality of life for our residents, and our visitors and the negative effect which the lack of adequate provision and the poor maintenance of public conveniences can have on tourism and on the town's image in general. Cabinet accepted the findings of the Scrutiny investigation and an all-embracing action plan was implemented covering the demolition of old redundant and closed facilities, the refurbishment of the remainder and new build in tourist areas such as the Headland and Seaton Carew.
- 2.4 The Scrutiny investigation also recommended the Council had a policy for the provision of Public Conveniences, as there are no corporately agreed criteria for deciding on the provision and the location of public conveniences. The proposed policy is based upon the outcomes of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny review and re-examination of the relevant evidence and information available relating to the provision of Public Convenience in Hartlepool. In attempting to develop and

formulate the most appropriate policy, it is necessary to set-out the parameters of the current and the proposed service requirements.

- 2.5 The provision and maintenance of toilets in public places is at the discretion of local authorities who have a power, under section 87 of the Public Health Act 1936 ("PHA 1936"), to provide public conveniences, but no duty to do so. It is therefore up to the local Authority to decide whether it should provide public toilets and, if so, how many.

### 3. CURRENT SERVICE PROVISION

- 3.1 Currently, Hartlepool Borough Council provides public toilet facilities, at the following sites;

| Item | LOCATION                   | NUMBER OF CUBICLES |      | URINALS | DISABLED FACILITIES | BABY CHANGING |
|------|----------------------------|--------------------|------|---------|---------------------|---------------|
|      |                            | FEMALE             | MALE | MALE    |                     |               |
| 1    | Clock Tower - Seaton Carew | 10                 | 4    | 8       | Yes                 | Yes           |
| 2    | Seaton Old Baths Site      | 6                  | 2    | 9       | Yes                 | Yes           |
| 3    | Middlegate - Headland      | 3                  | 2    | 3       | Yes                 | Yes           |
| 4    | Lighthouse - Headland      | 2                  | 1    | 3       | Yes                 | Yes           |
|      |                            |                    |      |         |                     |               |
| 5    | Stranton Crematorium       | 1                  | 1    | 2       | Yes                 | No            |
| 6    | West View Cemetery         | 1                  | 1    | 2       | No                  | No            |
|      |                            |                    |      |         |                     |               |
| 7    | Ward Jackson Park          | 3                  | 2    | 3       | Yes                 | Yes           |
| 8    | Rossmere Park              | 3                  | 2    | 3       | Yes                 | Yes           |

### OPENING HOURS

- 3.2 Summer Period - 1 March to 31 September

| Item | LOCATION                   | OPERATING HOURS |                   |              |                               |                   |              |
|------|----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
|      |                            | OPENING         |                   |              | CLOSING                       |                   |              |
|      |                            | MONDAY - FRIDAY | SATURDAY - SUNDAY | BANK HOLIDAY | MONDAY - FRIDAY               | SATURDAY - SUNDAY | BANK HOLIDAY |
| 1    | Clock Tower - Seaton Carew | 8:00 am         | 8:00 am           | 8:00 am      | 9:30 pm                       | 10:00 pm          | 10:00 pm     |
| 2    | Seaton Old Baths Site      | 8:00 am         | 8:00 am           | 8:00 am      | 8:00 pm                       | 9:30 pm           | 9:30 pm      |
| 3    | Middlegate - Headland      | 8:00 am         | 8:00 am           | 8:00 am      | 8:00 pm                       | 9:30 pm           | 9:30 pm      |
| 4    | Lighthouse - Headland      | 8:00 am         | 8:00 am           | 8:00 am      | 8:00 pm                       | 9:30 pm           | 9:30 pm      |
|      |                            |                 |                   |              |                               |                   |              |
| 5    | Stranton Crematorium       | 8:00 am         | 8:00 am           | 8:00 am      | 4:30 pm                       | 8:00 pm           | 8:00 pm      |
| 6    | West View Cemetery         | 8:00 am         | 8:00 am           | 8:00 am      | 8:00 pm                       | 8:00 pm           | 8:00 pm      |
|      |                            |                 |                   |              |                               |                   |              |
| 7    | Ward Jackson Park          | 8:00 am         | 8:00 am           | 8:00 am      | * Please refer to table below |                   |              |
| 8    | Rossmere Park              | 8:00 am         | 8:00 am           | 8:00 am      | * Please refer to table below |                   |              |

| Item | LOCATION                   | OPERATING HOURS |                 |              |                               |                 |              |
|------|----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
|      |                            | OPENING         |                 |              | CLOSING                       |                 |              |
|      |                            | MONDAY-FRIDAY   | SATURDAY-SUNDAY | BANK HOLIDAY | MONDAY-FRIDAY                 | SATURDAY-SUNDAY | BANK HOLIDAY |
| 1    | Clock Tower - Seaton Carew | 8:00 am         | 8:00am          | 8:00 am      | 5:00pm                        | 5:00pm          | 5:00pm       |
| 2    | Seaton Old Baths Site      | 8:00 am         | 8:00am          | 8:00 am      | 5:00pm                        | 5:00pm          | 5:00pm       |
| 3    | Middlegate - Headland      | 8:00 am         | 8:00am          | 8:00 am      | 5:00pm                        | 5:00pm          | 5:00pm       |
| 4    | Lighthouse - Headland      | 8:00 am         | 8:00am          | 8:00 am      | 5:00pm                        | 5:00pm          | 5:00pm       |
|      |                            |                 |                 |              |                               |                 |              |
| 5    | Stranton Crematorium       | 8:00 am         | 8:00am          | 8:00 am      | 4:30pm                        | 5:00pm          | 5:00pm       |
| 6    | West View Cemetery         | 8:00 am         | 8:00am          | 8:00 am      | 5:00pm                        | 5:00pm          | 5:00pm       |
|      |                            |                 |                 |              |                               |                 |              |
| 7    | Ward Jackson Park          | 8:00 am         | 8:00am          | 8:00 am      | * Please refer to table below |                 |              |
| 8    | Rossmere Park              | 8:00 am         | 8:00am          | 8:00 am      | * Please refer to table below |                 |              |

**NOTES:**

- All public conveniences shall be opened on **Bank Holidays**, unless otherwise specified.
- Closing times as above or at **DUSK** if earlier (Health & Safety implications)
- Entry to 'Disabled' toilets will require 'Radar' key.

**Clock Tower, Seaton Carew**

- The Clock Tower public conveniences facilities are in the process of being completely refurbished, providing a higher standard of equipment and better level of service.
- Apart from the structural and the general building fabric improvements, the refurbishment includes the complete replacement of the current equipment with new modern equipment incorporating anti-vandal properties.

**Seaton Old Baths Site and Coronation Drive**

- New modern facilities are currently being built near the car park in Coronation Drive, adjacent to the Newburn Bridge which is approximately 500m to the North of the Old Seaton Baths site, which will be demolished and the area grassed over once the new facilities have been fully commissioned and opened.

**Headland (Middlegate and Lighthouse)**

- The newly purpose built public conveniences at Middlegate, close to the Northgate Shopping Parade and the Croft Gardens, and the recently refurbished and upgraded facilities at the Lighthouse public conveniences near the Heugh Battery, include disabled and baby changing facilities providing high quality public toilet facilities for the visitors to the Headland's foreshore and tourist areas.

**Stranton Cemetery**

- 3.8 Heating, together with routine and planned maintenance to the main facility has been introduced.

#### **West View Cemetery**

- 3.9 No major investment required, maintenance of existing facilities is ongoing.

#### **Ward Jackson and Rossmere Parks**

- 3.10 Following the recent refurbishment and modernisation of these facilities, Ward Jackson and Rossmere parks now offer high quality public conveniences. Both sites have been upgraded to include facilities for the disabled people, as well as baby changing facilities.
- 3.11 The Council will ensure that all conveniences are maintained to a high standard of cleanliness at all times and shall ensure there is an adequate supply of toiletries.

### **4. SECURITY**

- 4.1 The Council has and continues to invest substantial resources in combating anti social behaviour and vandalism. The public's perceived fear of crime is such that CCTV etc is now almost a necessity.
- 4.2 As a further measure to reduce and deter vandalism and anti-social behaviour, and also to discourage large groups from gathering near or inside these facilities, CCTV cameras have been installed at the lobby of the new toilets at the Middlegate – Headland. Reports indicate that this measure has been successful, particularly in terms of reassuring the elderly and other vulnerable people.
- 4.3 In line with above findings and experiences, and in an attempt to alleviate public concerns, to improve the security aspect even further, and to reduce the criminal and anti-social behaviour, consideration will be given to installing low light stand-alone CCTV cameras to all public conveniences as funding opportunities become available.

### **5. PUBLIC EVENTS**

- 5.1 The Council gives great importance to the positive value of those high prominence events such as the Maritime Festival, Dock Fest and Tall ships 2010.

- 5.2 As far as the provision of public conveniences for large events is concerned, the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) 'Event Safety Manual' in relation to the provision of sanitary facilities, requirements is recommended.

## 6. COMMUNITY TOILET SCHEME

- 6.1 As an addition and supplement to the Council's provision of public conveniences, it is proposed the Council approaches the private sector to work in partnership and provide additional public toilet facilities.
- 6.2 The Community toilet scheme would use existing toilets within the business community for the public benefit rather than building a new toilet. The scheme is recognised by the Department of CLG and the British Toilet Association as one of best practice. The scheme would enable local businesses such as pubs, restaurants and shops, to work in partnership with the Council to make more clean, safe and accessible toilets available to the public.
- 6.3 Businesses are invited to enter into an agreement with the Authority, which involves the Authority paying an annual amount to the business for making their toilet facilities accessible to the public. Their commitment is to ensure they keep their toilets up to a certain standard of cleanliness. Members of the public can use toilet facilities during the premises opening hours and without the need to make a purchase. A survey would be carried out and if the premises are considered suitable, then an agreement between Hartlepool Borough Council and the private business will be signed, setting out the terms of the agreement. Participating businesses would have to display purposely designed stickers in their window, advertising they are members of the scheme and that they provide public toilet facilities. The sign shows the type of service i.e. male, female, and whether it also provides wheelchair or baby changing facilities.
- 6.4 Richmond upon Thames Council has in excess of 60 facilities taking part in its 'Community Toilet Scheme', and Perth and Kinross Council has over 20 businesses taking part in its 'Comfort Scheme'. Both Councils reported that the business number participating continues to grow.
- 6.5 It is proposed to develop the scheme in tourist areas, retail parks, and shopping precincts inviting interested businesses with the appropriate facilities to apply and be considered to take part in the scheme.
- 6.6 Preference will be given to premises offering high quality facilities, including facilities for the disabled and baby changing, first in the tourist areas, and in areas where the Council does not provide public convenience facilities or the facilities may not be adequate.

- 6.7 The level of payment would depend on the level of service to be provided, namely, the type and number of facilities and whether they provide disabled or baby changing facilities, and the hours the facilities would be made available to the public.
- 6.8 Initially it is proposed to run a pilot scheme involving the participation of no more than ten facilities spread throughout the town. The scheme would then be evaluated and if successful as it is anticipated, the scheme can be further expanded as considered appropriate.
- 6.9 The disadvantages are that not all toilets are kept up to the said standard. Businesses can close without notice and the Authority is beholden to their opening and closing times.

## **7. FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS**

- 7.1 New public and private developments, new large leisure and retail business premises should be encouraged to make provision for public toilet facilities, highlighting the many benefits such facilities can bring to their business, as well as to the local economy and community. Effective use of the planning legislation such as 'Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as well as the Licensing provision process should also be considered secure reasonable levels of public toilets in new buildings.

## **8. PUBLICITY / ADVERTISEMENT**

- 8.1 All relevant information about the Public Conveniences in Hartlepool will be made available and displayed on the Council's webpage including the location and the facilities provided on each site.
- 8.2 Business participation in the Community Toilet Scheme would be expected to display appropriate and specific signage on their premises. In addition, where appropriate, highway signs / directory finger posts would be installed.

## **9. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS / IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The current budget provision provides for the day to day planned maintenance and operational costs. The revenue budget does not include for any major future refurbishment or major capital schemes or any future structural works. The facilities will be considered and included within the Council's Asset and Property Management Plan.

- 9.2 Annual, condition surveys will be undertaken by building surveyors to identify and to schedule planned maintenance works, and any other extensive capital works, so these could be timely included in the Council's capital works programme.
- 9.3 The initial costs for the setting-up, the signage and the operational costs for the proposed 'Community Toilet Scheme', is yet to be determined, however, it is expected the costs can be considered within existing budgets.

## **10. CONCLUSION**

- 10.1 Having considered all the relevant information, Hartlepool Borough Council has recognised there is a clear need and public expectation for the provision of clean, safe, well planned, well designed, well maintained and clearly signposted high quality public toilets.
- 10.2 The Council has invested significantly in a refurbishment programme over the last 2 years based on the finding of the Neighbourhood Scrutiny Forum.
- 10.3 It is recommended that additional public convenience facilities in Hartlepool be provided partnership, between Hartlepool Borough Council and the private sector in through the development of a Community Toilet Scheme.
- 10.4 As part of the Council's measures to minimise vandalism and anti-social behaviour, we will investigate all funding opportunities to instal low light CCTV cameras to its facilities, where this is technically possible and where appropriate, the Council's security contractor will be used to monitor areas of risk.
- 10.5 New facilities will be considered in line with this policy's aims and must fulfill the relevant criteria. Appropriate consultation with interested parties and stakeholders would also take place, prior to the final decision.

## **11. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 11.1 The views of the Neighbourhood Consultative Forums are sought to shape the policy prior to reporting to Portfolio for Transport and Neighbourhood



## **THE PUBLIC CONVENIENCE POLICY**

Our aim is *“to provide clean, safe, high quality, and well signposted public convenience facilities catering for the needs of our residents and tourists”*.

The expected outcome of this policy is to provide public toilet facilities:

- a) at appropriate locations
- b) which are well sign posted, providing information, including opening and closing times, and an emergency contact telephone number
- c) that are accessible to all
- d) that are clean and safe to use

The policy will be implemented by working to the following service standards.

The Council shall ensure that all conveniences are maintained to a high standard of cleanliness at all times and shall ensure that there is always an adequate supply of toiletries.

The Council will display a notice in each convenience recording the last date and time the toilets were cleansed and checked, and by whom. The Council will display a notice in each convenience to be specified by the Authorised Officer providing sufficient guidance and contact details to enable any member of the public to make a complaint.

The Council shall check the facilities on a daily basis and report all faults and damage of any kind whatsoever as soon as they occur direct to the Council's designated Maintenance Section.

The Council shall ensure that employees are trained to take safe and reasonable steps to discourage improper, anti-social, and criminal behaviour in and around the conveniences, and shall report appropriate incidents to the Police whenever such behaviour occurs.

Being able to access a toilet is a fundamental need for anyone particularly to a visitor in Hartlepool. Tourists need more information and more clear signposts.

Public conveniences including the proposed participating facilities of the 'Community Toilet Scheme' will be well signposted. Appropriate and sufficient number of signs should be installed directing users to the location of the public conveniences. They should be of good quality and comply fully with the corporate signage scheme of Hartlepool Borough Council and comply with any planning, road-traffic and other regulations.

Clear signs indicating the opening and closing times of the facilities will be displayed near the entrance.

Suitable signs showing the date and times of inspection and cleaning of the facilities should be display in appropriate locations inside the toilets. Also signs advising and showing the contact telephone number(s), where anyone wishing to make a complaint about the public conveniences or to report a defect should also be display.

In addition to the day to day maintenance, a yearly condition survey will be carried out to every public convenience facility provided by the Council to establish the condition and to identify the maintenance and any other requirements including costings. Based on the surveys' findings and the planned maintenance requirements, appropriate maintenance regimes and capital schemes should be drawn-up and implemented in order to maintain high standards of service.

The Council recognises that its public conveniences are at risk of abuse by anti-social persons or criminals, including drug users and vandals. As such the Council's security contractor patrol, monitor and open and close some of the facilities.

**Report of:** Principal Environmental Health Officer

**Subject:** DRAFT EMPTY HOMES STRATEGY

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**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To bring the attention of the Forum to the draft Empty Homes Strategy and to seek consultation on the main proposals and its further development

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The need for this Strategy acknowledges the concerns of the community and members about the numbers of empty private houses and the associated issues that relate to the image of the town.
- 2.2 The main aims of the Strategy are to bring empty private houses back into use, maximise the use of existing housing, and contribute towards neighbourhood sustainability and community well-being.
- 2.3 In April 2009 631 private dwellings were recorded as being empty for over 6 months which is 1.9% of the total number.
- 2.4 A proactive approach has been taken to deal with the condition of these individual properties, securing works by agreement with owners or in default after the service of notice. The focus of this work has been on the physical condition of the property and its effect on neighbouring residents.

**3. PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY**

The purpose of the Strategy is to:

- Bring long-term empty homes back into use using flexible solutions / appropriate enforcement action
- Prevent homes from becoming long-term empty
- Increase decent and affordable housing for those in housing need / maximise housing options in the town
- Continue to identify the *real* situation with regard to the distribution and ownership of empty homes and establish trends and reasons
- Support investment in Housing Market Renewal and its surrounding areas through the reduction of long-term empty homes
- Devise and implement an Action Plan with targets and milestones to deliver this Strategy up to 2014 in partnership with departments, organisations and agencies involved in its implementation.

**4. PROPOSALS**

- 4.1. The draft Strategy is attached as **Appendix A**. The focus will be on prioritising houses, streets and areas for action using an assessment form and to introduce new actions open to the Council.
- 4.2. The consultation questions are attached as **Appendix B**

**5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 5.1. That the report be noted and that any interested parties be encouraged to submit any representations during the consultation period up to 1<sup>st</sup> February 2010.

**6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

**7. CONTACT OFFICER**

John Smalley, Principal Environmental Health Officer  
Tel: 01429 523322  
e-mail: [john.smalley@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:john.smalley@hartlepool.gov.uk)

## APPENDIX A

# Hartlepool Borough Council Empty Homes Strategy 2010 – 2015



### Foreword by the Mayor

(Links with EHS and work with derelict buildings and empty commercial units etc)

To be produced by the Mayor after consultation on the strategy.



### **Contents**

|                   |   |
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| <b>Section 1</b>  | <b>Introduction / Background –<br/>Why is it important to tackle empty homes?</b> |
| <b>Section 2</b>  | <b>What can we do to tackle empty homes?</b>                                      |
| <b>Section 3</b>  | <b>Strategic Action</b>   |
| <b>Section 4</b>  | <b>Action Plan</b>  |
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| <b>Appendix 1</b> | <b>Empty Property Assessment Form</b>   |
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| <b>Appendix 7</b> | <b>EDMO Survey Findings</b>   |



## **Section 1: Introduction / Background – Why is it important to tackle empty homes?**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Hartlepool Borough Council has prioritised the adoption of real measures to bring privately owned empty properties back into use as part of its strategic housing approach.

This Strategy will therefore provide an effective framework for bringing private sector empty homes back into use in Hartlepool. This includes failed private rented properties, abandoned properties, buy to leave empty properties and surplus new build houses and flats.

The key aim of this Strategy is to bring empty homes back into use and acknowledges the concerns of the community about empty homes and the associated issues that relate to the image of the town.

Areas of low demand and abandonment are primarily being dealt with through Housing Market Renewal and regeneration activity.

This Strategy should be read in conjunction with the Housing Strategy 2006-2011. It will support and complement the current priorities of maintaining housing regeneration; homelessness prevention; provision of affordable housing and improving the quality of existing housing. It is also linked to the wider objectives in Appendix 5.

### **1.2 Why do we need this strategy?**

The aim of this Strategy is to bring appropriate empty homes back into use, using a range of flexible solutions.

#### **1.2.1 Empty homes are a wasted asset if there is unmet demand.**

This Strategy needs to be clear about demand for the type and location of empty homes to be targeted for action.

The Government continues to promote the use of private rented sector homes for people in housing need. The Rugg Review of the Private Rented Sector<sup>1</sup> considers how this sector can meet local demand.

#### **1.2.2. To maximise the use of the existing housing stock**

The Government has stated the importance of maximising the use of the existing housing stock in order to minimise the number of new homes that need to be built each year. Hartlepool has a significant level of outstanding planning permissions; of these 61% are flats. Given the current number of new build flat developments which are yet to be sold, at the time of writing this strategy, this could potentially result in a significant number of empty homes in the future.

This Strategy also needs to take into consideration the particular problem within Hartlepool of the mismatch between the existing stock and the increasingly diverse and sophisticated aspirations of the local population to own or rent properties.

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<sup>1</sup> The Private Rented Sector: its contribution and potential. October 2008. Centre for Housing Policy, University of York.

This Strategy will also align with contribution towards the provision of affordable housing in Hartlepool. The affordable housing need in Hartlepool has been evidenced through the Hartlepool Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and the Tees Valley SHMA and is supported by the large social housing waiting list. These reports acknowledge the important role of the private rented sector in meeting this affordable housing need.

1.2.3 To contribute towards neighbourhood sustainability and community well being through:

- An increased stock of good quality housing meeting the Decent Homes Standard
- Promoting regeneration and investment in affected areas
- Discouraging local property price devaluation
- Reducing nuisance and negative environmental impact caused by empty homes i.e. crime, fly tipping, vandalism, vermin, arson
- Reducing damp and other problems for neighbouring properties
- Helping to meet local housing need, therefore reducing the need for new build homes and the potential reduction of greenfield land development
- Cutting carbon emissions by renovating and undertaking home improvements rather than building new homes
- Increasing health outcomes for people
- Encourage economic vitality through increased trade for local businesses and increasing employment opportunities

1.2.4 To reduce the direct and indirect financial costs borne by empty property owners, neighbours, and public services such as the local authority, police and fire service.

### 1.3 Current Position

1.3.1 As in all towns, there will always be a percentage of empty homes in Hartlepool to allow the housing system to function effectively and facilitate residential mobility and the improvement of the housing stock. This is normal and allows the market to operate effectively. 3% has been generally used as a guideline.

Homes are empty for different reasons and we need to understand the causes in order to provide effective solutions. The main reason identified for the high number of empty private sector homes is the high number of small terraced homes in low demand locations. Other reasons include:

- Neglect by owners / abandonment due to lack of value
- Disputes over ownership
- Inability to sell
- Repossession / bankruptcy
- Deceased estate
- Ownership of the property unknown
- Speculative purchase (buy to keep empty)

An effective strategy will ensure owners of these properties are informed of all the options available, the benefits of filling an empty home and the enforcement options available to the Council.

The total number of properties in Hartlepool is 41,594 and of those **XXX** are vacant

In Hartlepool the number of empty private homes empty at April 2009 was 631, 1.9% of the total number of private homes. The number of households on the waiting list at April 2009 was 3794. These numbers are counted in accordance with the Government's annual housing return<sup>2</sup>.

**To be inserted: No. households approaching the Council for assistance to find accommodation**

<sup>2</sup> Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix 2009



Dwellings in the following categories are counted as being potentially available to the market:

- Empty between changing occupants
- Undergoing modernisation, repair or conversion
- Awaiting demolition
- Repossessions
- Awaiting probate
- Newly completed but not occupied
- Owned by a charity
- Unoccupied annexes
- Trustee in bankruptcy.

Dwellings in the following categories are excluded because they are not considered as being available to the market:

- Second homes
- Holiday lets
- Flats and houses normally occupied by students
- Owner in prison
- Owner receiving or giving care
- Owner in the armed or visiting forces
- Flood damaged
- Awaiting occupation by clergy

The calculation also excludes long-term vacant private sector dwellings earmarked for redevelopment or demolition.

Using Council Tax Records, the properties that have been empty for over 6 months (as at April 2009) have been mapped out on a Geographical Information System. The map indicates clusters of empty homes in XXX areas. **GIS map to be inserted.**

#### 1.4 Current available resources –

1.4.1 Council Tax data is used to provide a snapshot of the numbers of houses empty at any one time. Problematic properties affected by vandalism or nuisance come to the attention of the council by complaints from residents, residents groups and elected members. A proactive approach has been taken to deal with the condition of these individual properties, securing works by agreement with owners or in default after the service of notice. The focus of this work has been on the physical condition of the property and its effect on neighbouring residents.

1.4.2 An emergency property securing service in partnership with the Fire Brigade has contributed successfully towards reducing the incidence of deliberate fire setting in targeted areas.

1.4.3 Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO) have been used to bring two houses back into use and a further Order is pending.

Owners of empty houses which have been the subject of complaint are asked to provide details of their plans to bring dwellings back into occupation.

#### 1.4.4 Housing Market Renewal (HMR) Funding for the period 2008/2012

Single Housing Investment Pot (SHIP) & HMRF £11.5m and Homes and Communities Agency (English Partnerships legacy funding £4.85m)

This funding is to purchase private sector property in three key sites in central Hartlepool. The programme covers the following sites:

- Raby Road Corridor – This includes Hurworth, Perth, Gray, Grainger Streets and parts of Raby Road and Turnbull Street. All properties can be purchased by agreement.

- Belle Vue – This includes properties in parts of Borrowdale, Patterdale, Kathleen Streets together with parts of Windermere Road. Only owner occupied properties can be purchased.
- The third area is Carr, Hopps, Jobson, Richardson, Rodney Streets and parts of Blake Street and Hart Lane. Only owner occupied properties can be purchased.

Other strategic purchases can be made on the three HMR sites.

In order to deliver the programme on the ground a front line delivery Regeneration team is managed on a day to day basis in partnership with Housing Hartlepool. This Team effectively provide a 'mini' Neighbourhood Management Service in the three HMR areas. Each area has named Officers who deal with residents on a 'one to one' basis and hold street surgeries where needed. The Officers liaise with other bodies, sections of the Council and statutory agencies to improve the day to day living environment of residents. They hold and gather up to date evidence and information of how the areas are progressing, what issues/problems are occurring in any particular street.

### 1.5 Purpose of the Strategy

This Strategy for Hartlepool sets out the strategic direction for empty homes work and supports Hartlepool's Local Area Agreement outcomes. Its objectives are to:

- Bring long-term<sup>3</sup> empty homes back into use using flexible solutions / appropriate enforcement action
- Prevent homes from becoming long-term empty
- Increase decent and affordable housing for those in housing need / maximise housing options in the town
- Continue to identify the *real* situation with regard to the distribution and ownership of empty homes and establish trends and reasons
- Support investment in Housing Market Renewal and its surrounding areas through the reduction of long-term empty homes
- Devise and implement an Action Plan with targets and milestones to deliver this Strategy up to 2014 in partnership with departments, organisations and agencies involved in its implementation.

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<sup>3</sup> Empty for over 6 months



## Section 2: What can we do to tackle empty homes?

### 2.1 Identify the scale of action needed

Research relevant to this Strategy includes

The **2007 Strategic Housing Market Assessment** identified a shortfall of affordable housing (393 dwellings (244 net)) and a high number of empty homes at 4.7%.

The **2008 Tees Valley Strategic Housing Market Assessment** reported an overall vacancy rate of 5.7% for Hartlepool in 2007 (7.1% in the private sector and 1.3% in the social sector) – the highest rate in the Tees Valley. This assessment identified a revised shortfall figure for affordable housing at 291 dwellings (193 net).

**The 2009 draft Private Sector House Condition Survey estimates that there are 1,480 vacant dwellings, 4.6% of the private housing stock within Hartlepool. The national average is approximately 4.1%. Based on the results taken from the stock condition survey it is estimated that 1.9% of the private sector dwellings within Hartlepool are long-term vacant.**

### 2.2 Provide Advice

The Council will need to engage owners, and where possible, to work in partnership with them to find the right solutions through the provision of advice on:

- Redevelopment / planning consents
- Finding a contractor / managing repairs
- How to join the Council's Landlord Accreditation Scheme
- Finding a tenant through the Compass Choice Based Lettings Scheme
- How to sell the property
- Renting/leasing the property or finding a letting agent

### 2.3 Provide Financial Assistance

The council has the flexibility within its allocation of central government SHIP funding to provide financial assistance for owners to bring empty properties back into use. A repayable loan could be provided where the property is in need of works to make it habitable or lettable. The recent Government policy shift targeted towards supporting new build affordable homes means that the scope to introduce financial assistance for bringing empty homes back into use has been severely restricted, particularly in the short term.

Potentially any of the voluntary and enforcement options could involve the council in having to find funding to instigate action.

### 2.4 Voluntary acquisition

The council could purchase by agreement for onward sale/lease to a partner Registered Provider (formerly Registered Social Landlord) or for owner-occupation. Alternatively the council could broker a purchase by a partner Registered Provider.

## 2.5 Direct owners towards voluntary Leasing Schemes

The Council could work in partnership with suitable Registered Providers or private managing agents to provide a leasing scheme to which owners can be directed. Through such a leasing scheme the owner would agree a lease for a period of years and be guaranteed a rental income. The Registered Provider could sub-lease to the council and take nominated tenants.

## 2.6 Enforcement Options

- **Tackling security / nuisance issues - Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982**  
Used to prevent unauthorised entry or for the purpose of preventing the property from becoming a danger to public health, and to remove rubbish. Works are carried out in default where an owner does not give a verbal agreement to carry out the works and costs are recharged back to the owner.
- **Tackling nuisance issues - Environmental Protection Act 1990**  
Used to remove rubbish from empty properties and to carry out works to remedy the cause of the nuisance.
- **Tackling visual impact – Section 215, Town and Country Planning Act 1990**  
Poor visual impact is one of the most common complaints about an empty home. The council can serve notice on owners who fail to maintain their properties. It deals with the external appearance (the visual amenity) but does not deal with the internal aspects. It will not necessarily result in the property being returned to use.
- **Empty Dwelling Management Order (EDMO) – Section 132 Housing Act 2004**  
The Council can apply to a Residential Property Tribunal to take over a property and to repair, let and manage it on behalf of the landlord for up to 7 years. Costs can be recouped from the rental income. However, it does mean that only properties with relatively low repair costs will be financially viable. This tool is a solution to the empty home whilst balancing the rights of the owner. The Council would seek to work with a partner Registered Provider, and/or an accredited private landlord who have the resources to manage properties to pilot an EDMO.
- **Enforced Sale – Section 103, Law of Property Act 1925** is a last resort option which allows the Council to force the sale of a property subject to a local land charge following works in default Action by the Council. The sale allows the Council to recover debt owed by the owner and also costs incurred as a result of the enforced sale. This tool may indirectly prompt the new owner to return the property to use.
- **Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) –Section 17, Housing Act 1985**, is generally regarded as a last resort solution as it removes ownership from the current owner to the Council. It may only be used if the Council can demonstrate that it has taken other measures to bring the property back into use and has a robust plan for the re-occupation / use / management of the property. This option shifts responsibility from the owner to the Council for bringing the property back into use and requires public resources.

## 2.6 Joint working across the Council

Although the Council has a range of legislative tools at its disposal the success of the Empty Homes Strategy will depend on co-operation across its various divisions including Planning, Regeneration, Strategic Housing, Community Safety, Council Tax and Legal. Joint working is already well established and can be developed to assist in the delivery of this Strategy.

## 2.7 End Use of Properties

The location and type of property brought back into use will be important in deciding what residential use is appropriate.

Options for end use include:

- Leasing with Registered Providers through council nominations
- Properties advertised for rent on Compass Choice Based Lettings Scheme
- EDMO
- Disposal of CPO'd properties to Registered Providers

Empty homes brought back into use through this Strategy will be delivered and monitored according to demand for that property type and location.



### **Section 3: Strategic Action**

#### **3.1 Setting Aims and Objectives**

The purpose of this Strategy has been outlined in 1.5 and is detailed in the strategic objectives, which form the basis for the Action Plan in Section 4.

Action on empty homes can also be linked to wider objectives such as:

- Increasing the supply of affordable housing and temporary accommodation
- Tackling anti-social behaviour and crime
- Neighbourhood regeneration
- Increasing revenue from Council Tax
- Reducing complaints and demands on environmental health, police and fire service
- Increasing local economic activity
- Delivering sustainable development which considers effective protection of the environment.

#### **3.2 Prioritising Action**

The aim of this Strategy is to reduce the overall number of empty homes. A targeted approach will be used to bring properties back into use in areas that have been identified for proactive action. Analysis has shown particularly high concentrations of empty homes in particular areas (Appendix 4).

Within these 'priority areas' empty properties will be assessed for future action using the revised Empty Property Assessment Form which is a point based system. The Form will be used to gauge the most appropriate enforcement action for a particular case. The intention will be to return properties to meaningful use based on consistent and transparent criteria and policy. This takes into account factors such as:

- Condition / environmental impact / no. complaints received
- Time empty
- Number of empty properties in the same street

Although most of the proactive work will be within the identified areas it must be recognised that on occasion there will be the need to deal with homes outside of these areas, and a reporting

mechanism is being put in place to do this through the Derelict Buildings, Untidy Land, and Open Spaces Group.

### 3.3 Balancing enforcement and incentives

The appropriate course of action for any individual property will depend on whether the owner can be located and if they are willing to bring it back into use. In conjunction with this the financial vitality of the property should be considered balanced against the likely rental or sale price.

Action within this Strategy will be prioritised according to how long the property has been empty, the negative visual impact the property is having on the immediate neighbourhood, the level of complaints and the area it is situated in.

A range of solutions will be employed to ensure empty homes are brought back into use in appropriate areas. The Strategy will ensure a consistent and transparent approach to bringing empty homes back into use through the implementation of the revised Empty Property Assessment Form (Appendix 1).

### 3.4 Impact of the recession and other risks

The current recession and failing housing market offers threats and opportunities for tackling empty homes.

Mortgage repossessions are increasing across the country and there are concerns about the potential impact on buy-to-let tenants. This will be closely monitored within Hartlepool.

The market downturn in 2008/09 may result in an increase in empty homes as owners choose not to sell or can not find a buyer or tenant. The limited access to credit may also make it more difficult for owners and developers to raise finance for renovations and may result in churning of the private rented market. This will also be closely monitored and its impact assessed.

However, the market downturn may also bring opportunities for owners with an empty home falling in value to enter into long-term agreements with Registered Providers while they wait for the market to recover.

The Housing Sub-Group of the Hartlepool Partnership has recently examined the effect of the recession on a range of housing issues, including Private Sector Empty Homes, and identified some immediate actions<sup>4</sup>. (Appendix 5)

Changes in buy to let lending and less availability of owner occupier mortgages will impact on the number of homes left empty for over 6 months.

In addition there are a significant number of new build units currently empty in Hartlepool (mainly on the Marina). In the longer-term there will be a need to work more closely with planning colleagues to better align future housing demand with planning approvals.

### 3.5 Resources Needed

Most proactive authorities have at least one officer dedicated to carrying out the actions required to be carried out by an Empty Homes Strategy. The scale of action desired by the Council will require consideration of ways to provide this essential staffing resource

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<sup>4</sup> A Review of the impact of the recession on the implementation of Hartlepool's Housing Strategy. Housing Sub-Group, September 2009.

Financial aid towards the cost of empty homes work will be significant in assisting their return into use. Funding sources are restricted, and the Council will have to investigate the possibility of using SHIP capital, Section 106 agreement funding, and borrowing to pump-prime the enforcement actions proposed.

A business case will need to be developed to ensure the financial implications of using EDMO and CPO are understood.

### 3.6 How we will deal with empty homes / priority areas

In order to address the challenges to delivering this Strategy the following strategic objectives have been identified:



**Objective One: Bring long-term empty homes back into use using flexible solutions / appropriate enforcement action**



**Objective Two: Prevent homes from becoming long-term empty**



**Objective Three: Increase decent and affordable housing for those in housing need / maximise housing options in the town**



**Objective Four: Continue to identify the *real* situation with regard to the distribution and ownership of empty homes and establish trends and reasons**



**Objective Five: Support investment in Housing Market Renewal and its surrounding areas through the reduction of long-term empty homes**



**Objective Six: Devise and implement an Action Plan with targets and milestones to deliver this Strategy up to 2014 in partnership with departments, organisations and agencies involved in its implementation**

A SMART action plan for delivery of this Strategy up to 2014 has been developed using the 5 strategic objectives identified above and is contained in Section 4.

## Section 4: Action Plan




**Objective One: Bring long-term empty homes back into use using flexible solutions / appropriate enforcement action**

**Desired Outcome: To improve neighbourhoods and the environment by targeting and helping to bring long-term empty homes back into use.**

| Key Action | Key Task / Actions | Responsibility | Resources | Timescale |
|------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------|-----------|
|------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------|-----------|

|   | Involved   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| Develop an Empty Homes Toolkit  | Develop an Empty Homes Management Protocol for private owners and registered providers to use when they own empty properties |  |  |  |
|   | Develop EDMO policy and procedures   |  |  |  |
|   | Develop CPO policy and procedures  |  |  |  |
|   | Develop Enforced Sale policy and procedures  |  |  |  |
| Using enforcement proactively tackle long-term empty properties in areas of housing need. | Bring <del>XXX</del> long-term empty properties back into use over the next 5 years  |  |  |  |
|   | Identify first phase empty properties suitable for enforcement action  |  |  |  |
|   | Pilot and evaluate the use of EDMO in line with policy and procedures  |  |  |  |
|   | Explore possibility of employing a dedicated empty homes officer   |  |  |  |
| Explore opportunities for financial assistance to private owners                          | Evaluate the costs of bringing homes back into use   |  |  |  |
|   | Investigate sources of funding   |  |  |  |

|  <b>Objective Two: Prevent homes from becoming long-term empty</b> |   |                |           |           |
|--|---|----------------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>Desired Outcome: Minimise the number of properties becoming empty for longer than 6 months</b>  |   |                |           |           |
| Key Action   | Key Task / Actions Involved   | Responsibility | Resources | Timescale |
| Develop a marketing and publicity approach to promote the Empty Homes Strategy   | Develop empty homes publicity material  |                |           |           |
|  | Improve empty homes information on the internet   |                |           |           |
| Provide a contact point within the Council for empty homes work  | Develop and provide a range of methods of communication to enable people to make contact easily |                |           |           |
| Improve liaison with private landlords   | Offer advice to landlords on becoming a landlord  |                |           |           |



|  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|
|  | and assist in letting empty homes  |  |  |  |
|  | Continue to promote and reward good landlords through the Landlords Accreditation Scheme   |  |  |  |
| Improve partnership working within the Council | Take a proactive approach and work closely with the anti-social behaviour team to educate landlords                                      |  |  |  |
|  | Work with colleagues in Council Tax to ensure that the options available to bring empty homes back into use are made available to owners |  |  |  |



### **Objective Three: Increase decent and affordable housing for those in housing need / maximise housing options in the town**

**Desired Outcome: Improved access to decent and affordable housing for people in housing need**

| <b>Key Action</b>  | <b>Key Task / Actions Involved</b>   | <b>Responsibility</b> | <b>Resources</b> | <b>Timescale</b> |
|--|--|-----------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Investigate and develop a range of re-use options for owners           | Investigate and evaluate the feasibility of developing a leasing scheme with providers through council nominations |                       |                  |                  |
|  | Promote the use of Compass CBL to advertise properties for rent  |                       |                  |                  |
| Increase the use of empty homes in meeting housing need                | Use the marketing strategy to create demand  |                       |                  |                  |
| Work with registered providers to maximise housing options in the town | Monitor and evaluate the outcome from the pilot HH Managing Agent scheme   |                       |                  |                  |



### **Objective Four: Continue to identify the *real* situation with regard to the distribution and ownership of empty homes and establish trends and reasons**

**Desired Outcome: To have accurate information and mapped trends in order to effectively progress strategy development and enable informed decision making**

| <b>Key Action</b>   | <b>Key Task / Actions Involved</b>  | <b>Responsibility</b> | <b>Resources</b> | <b>Timescale</b> |
|---|---|-----------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Develop an Empty Homes Database                           |   |                       |                  |                  |
| Establish an accurate baseline of empty homes information | Undertake a survey of empty home owners and establish why they are leaving their properties empty |                       |                  |                  |
|   | Consult owners on their   |                       |                  |                  |

|  |   |  |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|--|
|  | views as to what the Council should be doing to help them return their property to use        |  |  |  |
|  | Consult local residents and other groups for their views on empty homes in Hartlepool         |  |  |  |
| Map areas of housing need                  | Use the information from the Compass CBL scheme to identify areas of housing need             |  |  |  |
| Review and monitor empty homes performance | Join National Association of Empty Property Practitioners                                     |  |  |  |
| Work in partnership with Council Tax       | Work with colleagues in Council Tax section to identify the data held on all empty properties |  |  |  |



### **Objective Five: Support investment in Housing Market Renewal and its surrounding areas through the reduction of long-term empty homes**

**Desired Outcome: Achieve long-term sustainability of these areas**

| <b>Key Action</b>  | <b>Key Task / Actions Involved</b> | <b>Responsibility</b> | <b>Resources</b> | <b>Timescale</b> |
|--|------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Ensure empty homes work complements the regeneration activity for the town |                                    |                       |                  |                  |



### **Section 5: Development of the Empty Homes Strategy**

An Empty Homes Strategy Steering Group was established at the start of the Strategy development process. The aim of this was to engage internal and external partners, raise awareness and seek the views of relevant departments and organisations for the issues and priorities that the Strategy should address.

The Steering Group is made up of:

- Strategic Housing Officers
- Private Sector Housing Officers
- Housing Advice Team Manager
- Neighbourhood Managers
- Regeneration Officers
- Planning Officers
- Anti Social Behaviour Team Manager
- Local Taxation Assistant
- Housing Hartlepool
- NDC Trust

The Empty Homes Strategy Steering Group is attended by officers who have a corporate interest to ensure the success of the Strategy. The group reports to the Derelict Buildings Group, chaired by the Mayor.



### Appendix 1 Empty Property Assessment Form

|                               |       |
|-------------------------------|-------|
| <b>Address</b>                | _____ |
| <b>Date of Inspection</b>     | _____ |
| <b>Number homes in street</b> | _____ |
| <b>Number empty in street</b> | _____ |

| TIME VACANT                        |    |
|------------------------------------|----|
| Less than 6 months                 | 5  |
| 6 months – 1 year                  | 10 |
| 1 year – 5 years                   | 15 |
| Over 5 years                       | 25 |
| VISUAL IMPACT                      |    |
| Visible neglect                    |    |
| Broken window (s)                  | 5  |
| Damaged door                       | 5  |
| Partial boarding / shuttering      | 10 |
| Full boarding / shuttering         | 20 |
| Poor paintwork (fascias / windows) | 5  |
| Overgrown garden                   | 5  |
| History of fly-tipping             | 10 |
| Insecure / attracting vandalism    | 10 |
| Location                           |    |
| Thoroughfare                       | 10 |

| <b>CRIME / COMMUNITY SAFETY</b>   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| Risk of Arson   | 15                   |
| ASB Complaints  | 5 (per complaint)    |
| Repeat Calls to Police / community tension  | 10                   |
| <b>AREA</b>   |                      |
| Zone A (areas identified for possible HMR work but not yet confirmed – info on streets involved from AW/NJ) | 10                   |
| Zone B (Regeneration Area)  | 5                    |
| Zone C (list from AW on neighbouring streets to Regen areas + all Selective Licensing streets)              | 15                   |
| <b>COMPLAINTS / STATUTORY ACTION</b>  |                      |
| Justified Complaints about property condition   | 5 (per complaint)    |
| Notices Served  | 5 (per notice)       |
| Works in Default  | 5 (per order raised) |
| <b>DEMAND</b>   |                      |
| Interest from purchasers  | 10                   |
| Interest from renters   | 10                   |
| <b>SCORE</b>  |                      |
| <b>A. SUB TOTAL</b>   |                      |
| <b>B. MULTIPLIED BY % EMPTY IN STREET</b>   |                      |
| <b>C. TOTAL (A+B)</b>   |                      |

**Works in Default debts – details (notice served and amount of debt:**

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**Other debt (e.g. Council Tax) – details:**

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**Comments**

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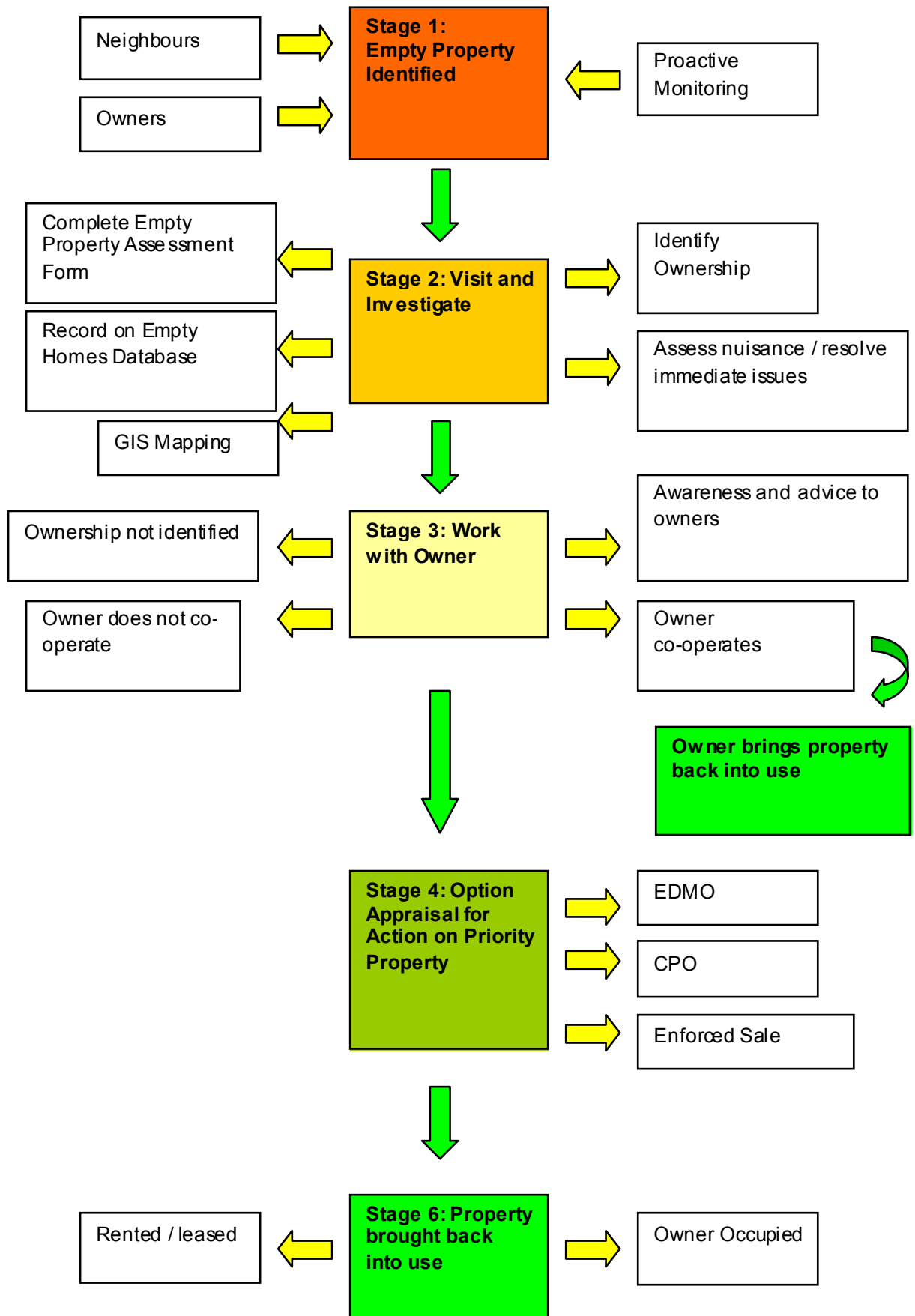
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| Non-enforcement incentives   | Risks / Disadvantages   | Advantages  |
|--|---|---|
| <b>Advice on:</b><br>*redevelopment / planning consents<br>*finding a contractor / managing repairs<br>*how to join the Landlord Accreditation Scheme<br>*finding a tenant through the Compass CBL Scheme<br>*how to sell the property<br>*the leasing scheme<br>*tax issues |   |   |
| <b>Financial Assistance</b><br><br>The Council could provide a loan to the owner to make the property lettable or suitable for owner-occupation, to be repaid monthly at an agreed rate, in a lump sum, or for a share of the value of the property on future sale           | 1. Reduced central government funding for private sector housing improvement due to the policy shift targeted towards new build affordable homes means that financial assistance for bringing empty homes back into use is restricted | 1. Only relevant for regeneration of targeted areas<br><br>2. Council can apply conditions<br><br>3. Funding can be recycled<br><br>4. Placing a financial charge on a property for repayment on future sale could assist an owner of a single empty with very limited access to finance, to bring the property back into use |
| <b>Rent Deposit Scheme</b><br><br>Providing a link to existing schemes or financing a new scheme to offer landlords a bond in lieu of a deposit for accepting applicants nominated by the Council  |   |   |
| <b>Voluntary Leasing</b><br><br>Directing the owner to a Registered Provider management / leasing scheme for a period of years. The Registered Provider could sub-lease to the Council and take nominated tenants  |   | 1. The owner will sign a long-term lease and be guaranteed a rental income for the length of the lease.   |
| <b>Voluntary Acquisition</b><br><br>The Council can purchase by agreement for onward sale / lease to a Registered Provider for owner-occupation. Alternatively to broker a purchase between the owner and a Registered Provider  | 1. Restrictions on the Council purchasing and retaining houses for rent.<br><br>2. Transfers financial risk to the Council / Registered Provider  | 1. Gains control of the property<br><br>2. Useful as a pre-CPO procedure to show that the Council has tried to deal with the owner by discussion rather than enforcement  |

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Good Tenant Scheme</b><br><br>This aims to reduce ASB in the private rented sector by providing landlords with information to enable them to make informed choices about the history of potential tenants |  | 1. Landlord provided with detailed history of potential tenants |
|--|--|---|

| Enforcement Tools to deal with property condition   | Risks / Disadvantages   | Advantages   |
|---|---|--|
| <b>Preventing Unauthorised Access</b><br><b>Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 – Section 29</b><br><br>Service of notice on properties open to unauthorised access or likely to become a danger to public health. Requires the owner to take steps to secure the property. The Council can secure the property if the work is not carried out, and has powers to secure without notice in emergency |   |  |
| <b>Removing rubbish</b><br><b>Environmental Protection Act 1990 – Section 79/80</b><br><br>Service of notice on the owner to remove rubbish from empty houses   |   | 1. Can be used to target premises and to proceed with Works in Default, EDMO, CPO<br><br>2. Works lead to a registered charge and is fully recoverable with costs. |
| <b>Tackling Visual Impact</b><br><b>Town and Country Planning Act 1990 - Section 215</b><br><br>Service of notice to improve the external appearance of unsightly property or land considered detrimental to the amenity of the neighbourhood   | 1. Does not directly bring property back into use<br><br>2. Does not deal with the internal parts of the property | 1. Non payment of any debt can be used as the basis for Enforced Sale action   |
| <b>Work in Default</b><br><br>The Council can proceed to carry out any of the above works when an owner defaults on any of the above notices by not carrying out the works  | 1. Involves an initial outlay of capital.   | 1. Accumulation of specific outstanding debts can instigate Enforced Sale  |

| Enforcement tools to bring properties back into use                              | Risks / Disadvantages | Advantages |
|--|-----------------------|------------|
| <b>Empty Dwelling Management Orders</b><br><b>Housing Act 2004 – Section 132</b> |                       |            |

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Council can make an application for an Interim Management Order to a Residential Property Tribunal to take over management for up to a year. If the owner has not reached an agreement with the Council for the owner to resume management during the year, the Council can make a Final Management Order to retain management for up to a further 7 years</p>   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Open to appeal, particularly in hard to let areas</li> <li>2. Procurement process needed to secure managing agent, e.g. RSL</li> <li>3. Owner entitled to receive rent less acceptable costs of management</li> <li>4. The Council may not recoup the total cost of repair/refurbishment necessary to make the property lettable</li> <li>5. May need to identify funding for costs of appearing at Residential Property Tribunal</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Brings property back into use.</li> <li>2. Powerful persuasive tool.</li> <li>3. Costs can be recouped from rental income</li> <li>4. Funding for acquisition is not required, though some initial expenditure may be needed to bring the property up to a reasonable standard</li> <li>5. May take as little as 6 months to obtain</li> </ol>  |
| <p><b>Enforced Sale Law of Property Act 1925</b></p> <p>A debt recovery power which allows the Council to force the sale of a property when charges are registered as a result of works carried out in default and the debt isn't paid.</p> <p>Suggested level of accumulated debt to trigger action is £300.</p> <p>Transfer of ownership is monitored by the Council to ensure that the property is brought back into use</p>                         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Can't enforce a sale if the debt is paid – but is a catalyst for dialogue.</li> <li>2. Doesn't apply to all debts, e.g. Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act notices are not registerable</li> <li>3. May not be appropriate for heavily blighted areas.</li> </ol>   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Can't enforce a sale if the debt is paid – but may result in the owner reconsidering the options. 1. Brings property back into use.</li> <li>2. Recovers debts.</li> <li>3. Has been successful in larger authorities with dedicated teams</li> <li>4. Council is never liable for the property</li> <li>5. Costs incurred in taking action can be taken out of proceeds of onward sale</li> <li>6. Relatively short time period of 6-9 months to force the sale</li> <li>7. Owner is required to identify future use and not just pay the debt.</li> </ol> |
| <p><b>Compulsory Purchase Order Housing Act 1985 – Sec.17</b></p> <p>The Council can acquire an empty house where it can be demonstrated that there is housing need. Used when an owner has no realistic plans to bring property back into use or won't agree a voluntary solution. The owner is entitled to the market value of the property. The property would be sold, either on the open market or by inviting offers from interested parties.</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Council financial resources needed up front</li> <li>2. Council must have proposals for subsequent occupation and management</li> <li>3. Open to public enquiry</li> <li>4. Have to hold the purchase funds indefinitely in cases where the owner is not known</li> <li>5. May not recoup the total cost of purchase</li> </ol>  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Threat of CPO can persuade owner to take action without the need to enforce the CPO.</li> <li>2. Can apply conditions to the sale, e.g. buy back if the property is not renovated within a specified timescale, e.g. restricting the sale for owner-occupation</li> </ol>   |



- |  |                                      |  |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|
|  | 6. May be difficulties in selling on |  |
|  | 7. Process can be lengthy            |  |



#### **Appendix 4      Priority Areas for 2010 - 2015**

In producing this Strategy for 2010 – 2015 the Empty Homes Strategy Steering Group identified the following areas as having particularly high concentration of empty homes:

- 6 Selective Licensing Areas
- Belle Vue
- Oxford Road
- Stephen Street
- Maina
- West View Road
- Individual Streets i.e.
  - Helmsley Street
  - Dent / Derwent Street
  - Baden Street
  - Sheriff Street
  - Mapleton Road / St Oswalds Street<sup>5</sup>

In addition the Strategy will also prioritise individual properties in streets that do not have high numbers of empties i.e.

- Tankerville Street
- St Pauls Road

These priority areas were identified in December 2009 and it is expected that during the lifetime of this Strategy that this list may change and it will therefore be monitored and analysed on a regular basis. Strict criteria will be introduced to remove any streets from the priority list and replace them.

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<sup>5</sup> Please note that this list is not exhaustive



## Appendix 5 Links to Wider Objectives

### • National Policy

Empty homes have become an important issue nationally over the last few years and the Government, working with the Empty Homes Agency, is encouraging local authorities to adopt measures to bring privately owned empty properties back into use as part of their strategic housing approach.

The government estimates that empty homes account for 3% of the housing stock. Of the 697,055 vacant properties in 2008, 293,728 were identified as private sector vacancies of over 6 months.

The government has produced a range of guidance and legislation designed to help Councils set and achieve challenging targets on this issue.

- All local authorities have been encouraged to publish an empty homes strategy
  - VAT has been reduced to 5% on properties empty for 2 years and 0% on properties empty over 10 years.
  - Full council tax charging has been introduced on empty homes and access to the name and address details of owners
  - CPO streamlining procedures have been introduced
- **Communities Plan – Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future (2003).** This sets a long-term programme of action for delivering sustainable communities in both urban and rural areas. The Plan includes housing and planning reforms and offers a new approach to how we build and what we build. It specifically refers to bringing empty homes back into use.
  - **Housing Act 2004.** This introduced Empty Dwelling Management Orders, the first power specifically targeting privately owned empty homes. This involves local authorities taking over most of the rights and responsibilities of the owner of an empty dwelling, to refurbish and rent out the property, without becoming the legal owner.
  - **Barker Review of Housing Supply 2006.** One of the key themes within the report and recommendations was to ensure more efficient use of urban land – this included more efficient use of existing housing stock and returning empty homes back into use.
  - **Housing and Regeneration Act 2008.** The Act established the Homes and Communities Agency, which focuses on delivering more new and affordable homes across all tenures and will drive and invest in regeneration. It will help to deliver the commitments set out in the Housing Green Paper 2007, which make specific reference to the need to tackle long term empty properties.

### • Regional Policy

Government Office for the North East contributes to the implementation and promotion of the Government's Housing Policy to ensure people have a good quality of life in sustainable communities. They work with local delivery partners and stakeholders around the key policy themes of affordable homes; tackling low demand and market restructuring; the provision of decent homes and addressing the housing needs of vulnerable groups. The North East Housing Strategy 2007 sets the strategic housing priorities for the region with two of the four strategic objectives relating to existing housing stock, therefore impacting on returning empty homes back into use.

### • Sub Regional Policy

Across the Tees Valley there are 3918 private sector homes that have been empty for over 6 months<sup>6</sup>. Hartlepool works closely with its Tees Valley partners to develop specific initiatives to address the problem of empty homes and the Tees Valley has a good track record of sub-regional working.

- **Tees Valley Empty Homes Scheme.** Between 2007 and March 2009 the Tees Valley Local Authorities were involved in this initiative to target long term empty homes through purchase and renovation. 7 properties were purchased within Hartlepool.
- **Sub Regional Empty Homes Strategy.** At the time of writing this Strategy work has commenced on the development of a Sub Regional Empty Homes Strategy to introduce wider ranging and varied enforcement approaches, and where possible, to follow a common approach.

- **Local Strategies**

Empty homes impact upon and have links with many local strategies.

- **Community Strategy & Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy 2008-2020.** The Community Strategy, called Hartlepool's Ambition, looks ahead to 2020 and sets out the long-term vision and aspirations for the future:

***"Hartlepool will be an ambitious, healthy, respectful, inclusive, thriving and outward-looking community, in an attractive and safe environment, where everyone is able to realise their potential".***

The Vision is described in more detail in eight themes:

1. [Jobs and the Economy](#)
2. [Lifelong Learning & Skills](#)
3. [Health & Wellbeing](#)
4. [Community Safety](#)
5. [Environment](#)
6. [Housing](#)
7. [Culture & Leisure](#)
8. [Strengthening Communities](#)

The Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy provides the context for neighbourhood level regeneration within Hartlepool. It forms part of the Community Strategy and its aim is to reduce inequalities in the most disadvantaged communities and to help tackle social and economic exclusion by lowering worklessness and crime and improving health, skills, housing and the physical environment.

- **Housing Strategy 2006-2011.** The current Strategy was developed by the Hartlepool Partnership through the Housing Partnership. It details our housing objectives, priorities and the actions that will be undertaken to meet local housing need and aspiration. The aim of the housing partnership is to:

***"Ensure that there is access to good quality and affordable housing in sustainable neighbourhoods and communities where people want to live."***

In 2008 a supplement was produced to be read alongside the Housing Strategy 2006-11. It acknowledges that there is a need to be more proactive in bringing empty homes back into use and to consider the use of all of the options open to the council.

**Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy.** This Strategy identifies the following priorities:

- Achieving Decent Homes targets for private housing occupied by vulnerable groups
- Delivering empty homes initiatives

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<sup>6</sup> Empty Homes Agency 2008

- Providing targeted support to renovate and repair housing in areas adjacent to redevelopment areas
- **Homelessness Strategy.** At the time of writing this Strategy work has commenced on the development of an updated Homelessness Strategy for Hartlepool. The Strategy will set out the strategic framework for the continued improvement to the housing and support services delivered by the Council and its partners in the prevention of homelessness.
- **Housing Market Renewal / Regeneration.** HMR is a key priority for the Council. It is the leading thrust of the Council's Housing and Regeneration Strategies and a major element of the Local Strategic Partnership's Community Plan. Access to funding since 2006 has been through the Council's participation in the Tees Valley Living Partnership, where the Council is a major local authority partner in the 'Pathfinder'. Sub regional co-ordination is undertaken by Tees Valley Living with implementation and delivery by the individual local authority.

The Council's Housing Regeneration Team prepare neighbourhood, area based and town-wide regeneration strategies, co-ordinate the development of bids and submissions for regeneration resources and manage/support a range of regeneration programmes and projects.

The programme has been driven by community input and involvement which has been heavily influenced and guided by residents. Two key documents are the New Deal for Communities Community Housing Plan and the North Central Hartlepool Master Plan. All current and passed HMR sites have been the key priorities in these documents.

- **Crime, Disorder and Substance Misuse Strategy 2008.** The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 placed a statutory duty on local authorities to form a Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) and to work with partners to promote community safety. In Hartlepool this is the Safer Hartlepool Partnership and its Strategy 2008 – 2011 has the reduction of criminal damage and anti social behaviour among its priorities.

### 3.6.5 Links to training / employment

Within the Council's HMR and new build programme links have been made to employment and training. At the initial developer selection stage a development brief is produced which details the employment and training requirements of the scheme. The preferred developer is then appointed and the employment and training requirements secured within a development brief. On commencement of the development the employment and training requirements are monitored by the Council's Working Solutions Team to ensure that all requirements in the development brief are fulfilled. This approach is used for all Council HMR schemes and new build affordable housing schemes.



## Appendix 6 Housing Sub-Group Findings

The Housing Sub-Group of the Hartlepool Partnership has identified a small number of issues worthy of more detailed investigation through the process of the updating of the Housing Strategy. For Private Sector Empty Homes these are:

- Through selective licensing, there is the opportunity to engage with landlords earlier, and more proactively when homes are known to be empty
- To date, the Council has not used Empty Dwelling Management Orders. This should be piloted and the approach evaluated
- There is an opportunity to explore more innovative ownership deals for homes which are vacant. This could include a partnership approach between HBC and a RSL in an owner and manager role

- The emerging Empty Homes Strategy and associated Action Plan should be completed. This should clearly identify geographic areas for priority intervention and present a review of resources available for this activity
- There is an opportunity to explore the availability of funding to support loans to fund repairs or rent guarantee / bond payments to make properties available for Council nominated applicants
- The Community Campus activity has been well received. Is there an opportunity to secure additional funding to support this activity?



## **Appendix 7 EDMO Survey Findings**

In July 2009 a survey was sent out to all Local Authorities (LAs) who currently use or propose to use the EDMO tool.

From the responses received from 9 LAs using or threatening to use EDMO it was seen that the time taken to serve an EDMO ranged from 3 months to 18 months. The authorities that take the quickest time have employed dedicated empty homes officers. Where it is taking 18 months can be said to be due to staff undertaking this task as part of their overall duties. The costs of serving an EDMO also range considerably, from £1.5k to £25k. Looking at the funding sources it could be concluded that the authorities with larger budgets are spending more.

EDMOs have been served on a range of property types that have been empty for a range of reasons including mental health issues, debt, owner moved out. The time left empty before the EDMO was served also ranges widely from 12 months to 17 years. Most properties are now being let through private letting agents, the owner, partner ALMO and RSLs. Some have also been sold and a couple are still empty.

All LAs that responded to the survey believe that the EDMO proves value for money and would serve another.

**APPENDIX B****EMPTY HOMES STRATEGY 2010-2015****CONSULTATION 3.12.09 – 1.2.10**

| <b>Question</b>   | <b>Comment</b> |
|---|----------------|
| Do you think our priorities and objectives are the right ones?              |                |
| Do you think that the Action Plan will address the objectives?              |                |
| Do you think there are any gaps in the Strategy that relate to empty homes? |                |
| Do you think the priority areas (Appendix 4) are the right ones?            |                |
| How easy is the Strategy to read?   |                |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Your Name</b>  |  |
| <b>Contact Details</b><br>(please provide your preferred contact details so that we may respond to your feedback) |  |

This consultation is an opportunity to comment of the draft Empty Homes Strategy for 2010 – 2015. We want to ensure that the document reflects the priorities of the wider community. Please complete the questionnaire to ensure that your comments are included in this consultation process. If you would like further information on the development of the Empty Homes Strategy or have any questions /

comments on the first draft please contact Karen Kelly on 01429 524896 or [karen.kelly@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:karen.kelly@hartlepool.gov.uk)

**Report of:** Director of Child and Adult Services

**Subject:** SCHOOLS TRANSFORMATION  
STAKEHOLDER BOARD – ELECTION OF  
COUNCILLOR REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE  
FORUM

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## **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To elect a Councillor representative from the North Neighbourhood Consultative Forum to serve as a member of the Schools Transformation Stakeholder Board.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

The main purpose of the Schools Transformation Stakeholder Board is to provide a forum for wide ranging discussion on all aspects of the Schools Transformation Programme; this programme encompasses Building Schools for the Future (BSF) and the Primary Capital Programme (PCP). Views expressed at Stakeholder Board meetings inform project planning and the drafting of key documents. The Terms and Reference for the Stakeholder Board can be found at Appendix 1.

At the meeting of the North Neighbourhood Forum on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2006, Councillor John Marshall was elected to serve as the Forum's representative on the Schools Transformation Stakeholder Board. Councillor John Marshall has subsequently resigned from this position and therefore the election of a new representative from the North Neighbourhood Consultative Forum is required.

## **3. PROPOSALS**

To elect a representative from the North Neighbourhood Consultative Forum to serve as a member of the Schools Transformation Stakeholder Board.

## **4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That a representative from the North Neighbourhood Consultative Forum is elected to serve as a member of the Schools Transformation Stakeholder Board.



## **5. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

To ensure that the North Neighbourhood Consultative Forum has a representative on the Schools Transformation Stakeholder Board to support and inform project planning for the Schools Transformation agenda.

## **6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The Terms and Reference for the Schools Transformation Stakeholder Board can be found at Appendix 1.

## **7. CONTACT OFFICER**

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## **School Provision for Hartlepool: Major Capital Development**

### **Schools Transformation Stakeholder Board**

#### **Membership and Terms of Reference**

##### **Membership**

Membership of the Stakeholder Board will be as follows:

##### **Group A – Elected Members**

Portfolio Holder for Children's Services  
Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency  
Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure and Tourism  
Chair of Scrutiny Coordinating Committee  
Chair of Children's Services Scrutiny Forum  
Chair of Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum  
Ward Member – North  
Ward Member – Central  
Ward Member – South

##### **Group B – Officers**

Chief Executive  
Director of Children's Services  
Chief Finance Officer  
Director of Neighbourhood Services  
Director of Regeneration and Planning  
Director of Adult and Community Services

##### **Group C – Secondary Schools**

Catcote Secondary Special School - Headteacher  
Two headteachers from mainstream secondary schools, nominated by all mainstream secondary headteachers.  
Three secondary chairs of governing bodies, elected by all secondary chairs of governors.

##### **Group D – Primary Schools (including Springwell Special School and Seaton Nursery School)**

Springwell Primary Special School – Headteacher  
Six headteachers from mainstream primary schools, nominated by all mainstream primary headteachers.  
Six primary chairs of governing bodies, elected by all primary chairs of governing bodies

##### **Group E – Colleges**

One college principal, nominated by all college principals  
One college Chair of governing body, elected by all college chairs of governing bodies

**Group F – Children, Young People, Families and Carers**

UKYP – elected member

Hartlepool Partnership Youth Representative

Foster Carer Representative, nominated by Foster Carers' Forum

Elected Parent Governor Representative,

Families First, Manager

PATCH – Family Support Officer

**Group G – Key Partners, stakeholders and partner organisations**

Director of Education, Diocese of Durham

Director of Education Services, Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle

Chief Executive, Tees Valley Learning and Skills Council

Community Network – Officer

Community Network – Board Member

Children & Young People Strategic Partnership – representative

Lifelong Learning Partnership – representative

Chief Constable, Cleveland Police

Chief Executive, Hartlepool Primary Care Trust

One Integration Support Manager (representing Children's Centres and extended services)

One private sector childcare provider

**Group H – Unions and Associations**

Teaching Unions and Associations – one representative

Support Staff unions – one representative

**Terms of Reference**

**Membership**

Membership of the Stakeholder Board will be determined by Cabinet, on the recommendation of the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services. Membership of the Board will be reviewed at least annually.

**Alternates**

Any member of the Stakeholder Board who is unable to attend a particular meeting may nominate an alternate for that meeting. An alternative must be nominated on the basis that he/she fully represents the substantive member.

**Chair**

The Chair of the Stakeholder Board shall be the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services.

**Quorum**

The Project Administrative Support Officer shall make every effort to ensure that all groups on the Board are represented at all meetings. A formal quorum shall not apply.

**Frequency and conduct of meetings**

The Stakeholder Board shall meet at regular intervals to coincide with important milestones in the Project Plan. It is expected that the Stakeholder Board will need to meet three or four times each year. There shall be an agenda for each meeting and this will be circulated to members at least five working days before the meeting takes place.

**Scope of responsibility of the Stakeholder Board**

The main purpose of the Stakeholder Board is to provide a forum for wide ranging discussion on all aspects of the Schools Transformation Programme; this programme encompasses Building Schools for the Future (BSF) and the Primary Capital Programme (PCP). Views expressed at Stakeholder Board meetings will inform project planning and the drafting of key documents.

**Decision Making Process**

The Stakeholder Board is not a formal decision making body. However, if there is clear consensus on recommendations for consideration by the Project Board, these will be brought to the attention of the Project Board by the Chair.