

# COMMUNITY SAFETY AND HOUSING PORTFOLIO

## DECISION RECORD

22 October 2010

The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

**Present:**

The Mayor, Stuart Drummond (Community Safety and Housing Portfolio Holder)

Officers: Denise Ogden, Assistant Director (Neighbourhood Services)  
Damien Wilson, Assistant Director (Regeneration and Planning)  
Lynda Igoe, Principal Housing Advice Officer  
Paul Hurwood, Climate Change Officer  
Fiona Stanforth, Regeneration Officer  
Jo Wilson, Democratic Services Officer

### 11. **Covenant of Mayors Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP)** – *Assistant Director (Neighbourhood Services)*

**Type of Decision**

Non key.

**Purpose of Report**

To seek approval of the Covenant of Mayors (CoM) Baseline and Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP).

**Issues for Consideration**

The CoM is a European Union (EU) initiative designed to raise awareness of the need to reduce carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions and to initiate local action to deliver these reductions. Signatories of the CoM, which include Hartlepool, have made a public commitment to exceed the EU's reduction target of 20% by 2020 within their respective Local Authority areas. To measure progress signatories must produce an Emissions Baseline Inventory. Hartlepool's Baseline, which was appended to the report, includes all emissions from the domestic and transport sectors. Industrial and commercial emissions are excluded, as emissions from this sector have been very sensitive to the economic downturn: less business equals a reduction in emissions, but clearly has negative implications for the local area... However the industrial and commercial sectors would be engaged throughout the lifetime of the SEAP.

CoM signatories were now required to produce a SEAP outlining action

required to go beyond a 20% reduction by 2020 and the indicative costs of this. Hartlepool's SEAP, which was appended to the report, had been produced following consultation with a range of organisations and partners, including One North East and the Energy Saving Trust. The total cost of all actions within the SEAP was approximately £103 million, this would be financed by a range of sources including the private sector, utilities companies and central government. HBC would be required to contribute to certain elements and champion behavioural change programmes however funding for this would be low and would not need to be found through core budgets. Work was also underway to submit a regional bid for funding from the European Local Energy Assistance Facility and possibly a further bid to the European Investment Bank.

The Climate Change Officer stressed that the SEAP demonstrates one possible scenario for delivering carbon savings, and that it is a working document, requiring further development. The measures and costs included are indicative, and further work will be required prior to the implementation of any part of the SEAP.

### **Decision**

That the proposed Emission Inventory Baseline and contents of the SEAP be approved and submitted to the Covenant of Mayors Office.

## **12. Developments in the Housing Options Centre – Assistant Director (Community Safety and Protection)**

### **Type of Decision**

Non key.

### **Purpose of Report**

To provide information on the services delivered from the Housing Options Centre following the first year of operation and to update on progress to develop the Centre further.

To seek approval to pilot an advertising service for accredited private sector landlords willing to restrict their vacancies to members of the Good Tenant Scheme.

### **Issues for Consideration**

The Housing Options Centre opened in September 2009. As well as housing advice and homelessness services the Housing Advice Team also deliver the Council's Tenancy Relations Service, the Compass Choice Based Lettings (CBL) Scheme and the Good Tenant Scheme. The Children's Services Leaving Care Team also provide advice and assistance to 16 and 17 year olds who are, or may become, homeless. The Centre also provides an operational point of contact for all Housing

Associations with housing stock in Hartlepool and agencies providing housing support for clients to access and sustain suitable housing.

Part of the CBL scheme involved the provision of accredited private sector landlords the facility to advertise their vacancies on the Compass website, in their newsletter and on the office windows. This service had previously been provided free of charge however it was intended to introduce charges during 2011. A promotional campaign was proposed, targeted at private landlords and their potential tenants, prior to the charges being introduced. Details would include a prominent window display in the Housing Options Centre dedicated to the private sector and the specific advertising of ten properties from accredited landlords, only available to members of the Good Tenant Scheme. It was felt that this would improve access to suitable housing and help alleviate anti-social behaviour problems.

The Portfolio Holder queried how well-used the Housing Options Centre was. The Principal Housing Advice Officer advised that following an initial increase in footfall levels had now reverted to what they had been when the service was offered at the Civic Centre. However it was felt that when the Housing Hartlepool lettings team moved into the premises this would increase, something that was necessary if the Centre was to fulfil its potential. The Portfolio Holder queried how many of the 170 applications made per month were successful. The Principal Housing Advice Officer indicated that around 30 per month were re-housed, meaning a constant increase to the waiting list. For this reason it was imperative that private sector housing be promoted. By using accredited landlords the suitability of accommodation could be guaranteed. Those waiting for housing to become available needed to be realistic and look at several options. Following recent Government announcements housing benefit looked set to become a major issue and young people in particular needed to consider whether they would be better off remaining at the family home. A report on the implications of changes to Housing Benefit would be brought to the Portfolio Holder and the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Procurement in the future.

### **Decision**

That the progress made to the delivery of services from the Housing Options Centre be noted and that the approval of the extension of an advertising service for accredited private sector landlords be approved.

## **13. Hartlepool Compact Action Plan 2010/11 – Assistant Director (Regeneration and Planning)**

### **Type of Decision**

Non key.

## **Purpose of Report**

To present the progress that has been made by partners on actions that have previously been reported and detail the next steps for the Hartlepool Compact Action Plan.

## **Issues for Consideration**

The report detailed the work that had been undertaken to update the Compact Action Plan and the progress which had been made by partners since 2009/10. It summarised the background to the Hartlepool Compact and emphasised the importance of the Compact Codes, particularly in light of the current financial climate. The next steps for the Plan were outlined along with methods to strengthen actions in the future. Copies of the 2009/2010 Action Plan and 2010/11 updated Action plan were appended to the report for the Portfolio Holder's attention.

The Regeneration Officer further highlighted that at their September meeting the VSS Implementation Group had agreed to report the progress that had been made on their action plan and priorities for 2011/12 at the same time as the Compact Action Plan. Consequently a combined report on the Compact Action Plan Update and Priorities for the VSS Action Plan for 2011/12 would be brought to the Portfolio Holder in Spring 2011.

The Portfolio Holder highlighted the need for the Council to stay close to the voluntary sector and for information as to future actions to be shared across both groups, in light of the anticipated funding cuts.

## **Decision**

That the contents of the report, the next steps for the Hartlepool Compact Action Plan and the combined future reporting procedures for the Compact and VSS Action Plans be noted

The meeting concluded at 10:20 am

**PETER DEVLIN**

**CHIEF SOLICITOR**

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