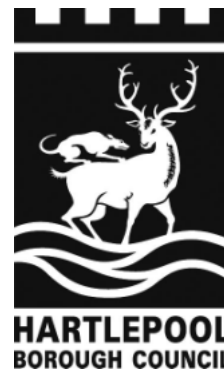


NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM AGENDA



Wednesday 14 September 2011

at 4.30 p.m.

**in Committee Room B,
Civic Centre, Hartlepool.**

MEMBERS: NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM:

Councillors Cook, Fenwick, Gibbon, Ingham, A Lilley, Loynes, Robinson, Tempest, Thomas,

Resident Representatives: John Cambridge, Iris Ryder and 1 vacancy

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
- 2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS**
- 3. TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 JULY 2011**
- 4. RESPONSES FROM THE COUNCIL, THE EXECUTIVE OR COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL TO FINAL REPORTS OF THIS FORUM**

No items
- 5. CONSIDERATION OF REQUEST FOR SCRUTINY REVIEWS REFERRED VIA SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE**

No items
- 6. CONSIDERATION OF PROGRESS REPORTS/BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK DOCUMENTS**

No items.

7. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Private Sector Housing Schemes Investigation

- 7.1 Evidence from Hartlepool Borough Council Housing Services Team:-
 - (a) Covering report – *Scrutiny Support Officer*
 - (b) Report and Presentation - *Assistant Director (Regeneration and Planning)*
- 7.2 Evidence for the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Housing:-
 - (a) Covering report – *Scrutiny Support Officer*
 - (b) Verbal evidence from the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Housing
- 7.3 Evidence from Hartlepool Landlords Steering Group:-
 - (a) Covering report – *Scrutiny Support Officer*
 - (b) Verbal evidence from Hartlepool Landlords Steering Group – *Representatives from Hartlepool Landlords Steering Group*
- 7.4 Evidence from Housing Hartlepool:-
 - (a) Covering report – *Scrutiny Support Officer*
 - (b) Verbal evidence from Housing Hartlepool – *Representatives from Housing Hartlepool*
- 7.5 Member attendance at Tenant Focus Groups
- 7.6 Six Monthly Monitoring of Agreed Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum's Recommendations - *Scrutiny Support Officer*

8. ISSUES IDENTIFIED FROM FORWARD PLAN

- 8.1 The Executive's Forward Plan - *Scrutiny Support Officer*

9. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS ARE URGENT

FOR INFORMATION

- i) **Date of Next Meeting Wednesday 26 October 2011, commencing at 4.30 p.m. in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.**

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

MINUTES

27th July 2011

The meeting commenced at 4.30 pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor: Steve Thomas (In the Chair)

Councillors: Rob Cook, Mick Fenwick, Brenda Loynes, Jean Robinson and Sylvia Tempest

Resident Representatives: Iris Ryder

Officers: Dave Stubbs, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Denise Ogden, Assistant Director (Neighbourhood Services)
Damien Wilson, Assistant Director (Regeneration and Planning)
Nigel Johnson, Housing Services Manager
Sylvia Pinkney, Public Protection Manager
Gemma Day, Principal Regeneration Officer
Jane Kett, Principal Environmental Health Officer (Commercial)
Joan Stevens, Scrutiny Manager
Jo Stubbs, Democratic Services Officer

Also present: Gordon and Stella Johnson

12. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were submitted by Councillor Steve Gibbon

13. Declarations of interest by Members

None

14. Minutes of the meeting held on 11 April 2011

Approved

15. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent

The Chairman ruled that the following item of business should be considered

by the Committee as a matter of urgency in accordance with the provisions of Section 100(B) (4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 in order that the matter could be dealt with without delay.

16. Minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2011

Approved subject to the inclusion of Councillor Loynes' apologies.

The Chair thanked the Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods for the distribution of information on the localism agenda.

17. Portfolio Holder's Response to the Investigation into Foreshore Management *(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods and Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure and Tourism)*

The Assistant Director (Neighbourhood Services) stated that Cabinet had approved, in their entirety, the recommendations of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum's investigation into Foreshore Management. Appendix A to the report set out the proposed actions to be taken in relation to each of the specific recommendations.

The Chair queried whether there had been any progress in relation to the maintenance of the Headland and Seaton Carew paddling pools. The Assistant Director advised that there had been no problems to date in terms of day-to-day maintenance. Nevertheless huge investment was needed to bring the Headland pool back to full working order.

Decision

That the proposed actions be noted.

18. Investigation into 20's Plenty – Traffic Calming Measures – Update Report *(Scrutiny Support Officer)*

The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods stated that following consideration of the Final Report of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum investigation into 20's Plenty Cabinet had determined that the Council should implement 20mph speed limits on all appropriate residential streets and in doing so undertake a full public consultation with Councillors, residents, the emergency services, schools, businesses and all other relevant bodies before the scheme is rolled out. This public consultation would be undertaken by the end of July and reported back to Cabinet before the end of September at which time final consideration would be given to the remainder of the Scrutiny recommendations. The Portfolio Holder's response to all the recommendations of the investigation to be presented at a future meeting of the Forum.

Members queried what the public response had been so far. The Director of

Regeneration and Neighbourhoods indicated that there had been a limited response by the public. Members felt this might be due to the limited nature of the consultation and suggested that more public meetings should be arranged or internet availability at local libraries be improved. In terms of the consultation dates the Chair advised that these had been set by Cabinet.

Decision

That the content of the report and Cabinet's decision be noted.

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

No items

20. Food Law Enforcement Service Plan *(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

The Public Protection Manager outlined the main aspects of the Council's Food Law Enforcement Plan. The plan would be also considered by Cabinet prior to referral to Council. Notable achievements included the completion of an additional 112 inspections due to the Tall Ships event, the taking of 227 microbiological samples and the deeming of 94% of premises in the borough as being 'broadly compliant' with food safety requirements, an increase on the previous 2 years. There had been no Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notices served and 6 Hygiene Improvement Notices. However a significant number of wiping cloths sampled had been deemed unsatisfactory in a trend mirrored across the region. In November 2010 the Food Standards Agency had launched a national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme similar to the Tees Valley Food Hygiene Award Scheme which had been running since April 2007. Hartlepool had chosen not to migrate to the new scheme primarily because food premises would receive a higher rating without any actual improvement in performance. The new scheme also offered re-inspection for free which would have manpower implications.

The Chair queried the reference to unsatisfactory sampling cloths. The Principal Environmental Health Officer confirmed that advice was given to premises regarding washing and swapping of sampling cloths but this was not always heeded. Following the unsatisfactory results further advice had been given and a guidance note was being prepared by the Health Protection Agency.

Members queried whether food providers at the Tall Ships event had been asked to produce certification prior to the event. The Public Protection Manager advised that they had not and that every unit on site had been inspected during the event and their handling techniques monitored. This had been particularly important in the case of foreign providers who may not have been aware of the requirements. In terms of handling members queried whether there was a requirement for people handling foodstuffs to wear hand

protection. The Principal Environmental Health Officer reported that there was not and frequent hand washing was preferred although not after every transaction. Providers of foodstuffs at the Headland Carnival were similarly inspected on a yearly basis whilst trading at the event.

Members asked if there would be a requirement to move to the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme as they felt the regional scheme was far superior. The Public Protection Manager believed it was probable that the national scheme would become mandatory. However they had been in discussions with the Food Standards Agency regarding the addition of an extra level onto the national scheme so that food premises would not achieve top band status simply by moving from one scheme to the other. Representatives from the Food Standards Agency were expected to give a presentation on the benefits of the national scheme to officers very soon.

The Chair noted there had been a 50% increase in notifications of food borne illness. The Principal Environmental Health Officer advised that this related to cases of *Campylobacter*, the most common bacterial cause of food poisoning in England and Wales. Cases of this infection tended to be sporadic and the source was hard to prove as it could be picked up from food or through contact with soil or animals. People with the illness were given guidance with 2 days of diagnosis. A member who had been diagnosed with the infection had informed officers of her suspicions regarding a food premises and this had been filed. She asked whether this was normal practice. The Principal Environmental Health Officer advised that it was not usually possible to investigate individual cases however allegations regarding premises were kept on file should corroborating information be received.

Members questioned whether there was a system whereby notifications of food borne illnesses in other geographical areas could be flagged up. The Principal Environmental Health Officer indicated that this information was shared via the Tees Valley liaison group and reported nationally to the Food Standards Agency.

Members congratulated the Public Protection Manager and her team on an excellent report particularly in light of the additional pressures caused by the Tall Ships event and the financial pressures faced by the department.

Decision

That the report be noted.

21. Neighbourhood and Waste Management Budget Consultation *(Scrutiny Support Officer/Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

The Scrutiny Support Officer reported that at the meeting of Scrutiny Coordinating Committee on 24 June 2011 Members determined their work programme for the 2011/12 Municipal Year. It was decided that each Scrutiny

Forum would focus its attention on preparations for the 2012/13 budget during the current Municipal Year, given the extremely challenging financial situation facing the authority. It was agreed that budget proposals in relation to neighbourhood management and waste management would be considered by the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum. The Forum was asked to provide views and / or alternative suggestions for savings. Following discussion of these budget items at the meeting of the Forum on 8th July 2011 members requested further information as follows:

- Further details of the proposals for both areas
- Initial savings
- Key process elements
- Timescales
- A breakdown of income and key pressures relating to this income

Neighbourhood Management

The Assistant Director (Neighbourhood Services) gave a presentation to the Forum on the future of Neighbourhood Management. The Chair highlighted to members that their remit was to consider overall principles rather than operational detail or matters of staffing. At the previous meeting three options for the way forward had been given as follows:

- I. Retain current geographical arrangements and staffing structures within 3 areas
- II. Two geographical areas
- III. Neighbourhood Management focuses jointly on Community Development and Empowerment

Further detail was provided on each of the options including the impact on front line services and the savings which could be generated. Information was also given on the impending Police and Social Responsibility Bill and what it would mean for Hartlepool i.e. this would lead to the transfer of grants from the Safer Hartlepool Partnership to the newly elected Police and Crime Commissioner.

In addition the Voluntary Sector compact had recently been transferred to Neighbourhood Services and a review was thought to be timely in order to ensure correct delivery of the voluntary sector needs. Members agreed that such a review was needed in order for both the Council and voluntary sector to ascertain what each had to offer and reach solutions both parties were happy with. The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods highlighted the Public Service White paper which promoted Local Authorities to outsource services. This worked in favour of larger national companies/third sector and against smaller local companies/third sector as payments would be made at the end of the process and local organisations might not have sufficient cash-flow to compete.

In terms of the neighbourhood management options both Officers and Members were in agreement that the preferred option was Option 2 – moving

to two geographical areas. This would enable reasonable savings to be made while retaining front line services. Concerns were raised that this option would provide insufficient focus on deprived communities and this was acknowledged by officers. Members also noted that most areas were deprived of something and it could be hard for the public to understand why some areas were focused upon at the expense of others. The Assistant Director (Neighbourhood Services) acknowledged this and stressed a structure would be put together which would provide a standard service for the town with an enhanced Neighbourhood Management focus in our disadvantaged communities..

Decision

- i) That Option 2 (the retention of existing Neighbourhood Management arrangements by reducing geographical neighbourhoods to two) be identified as the Forum's preferred way forward;
- ii) That the Forum recognises the close links, and benefits, of the provision of integrating Community Safety, Neighbourhood Management arrangements within the new structure; and
- iii) That in implementing Option 2, emphasis must be placed upon the provision of maximum protection for the provision of services and resources in to Hartlepool's identified areas of deprivation.

Waste Management

The Assistant Director (Neighbourhood Services) gave a presentation to the Forum on waste management focusing on the following issues:

- Procurement of vehicles, equipment and supplies
- Integration of enforcement activities
- Bulky waste
- Trade waste
- Recycling

The Assistant Director (Neighbourhood Services) went on to advise savings of over half a million had been found to date from Waste Management Services. Savings of approximately £90 thousand were needed in 2012/13. The following issues were raised by members:

Would the expected increase in recycling targets by the Government be reasonable or unachievable? The Assistant Director expected the current target of 45% in 2015 to be increased to 50%, something which would be achievable if everybody recycled. However enforcement powers had recently been removed from Local Authorities making it that bit harder to achieve even the current targets. Members congratulated Officers for their exceptional work on recycling in Hartlepool. They felt that in the absence of enforcement powers attempts should be made to better educate those who refused to recycle.

Had consideration been given to the separation of rubbish left in public litter bins? The refuse from litter bins was sent to the Energy from Waste Plant which produced energy which was sold to the National Grid. Separation of this refuse was not practical due to the high level of contamination.

The introduction of charges for the disposal of bulky waste would lead to fly tipping and an increase in fires. The Assistant Director noted that despite the introduction of charges in April there had been no increase in fly tipping or bonfires. The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods acknowledged that there had been a decrease in the collection of bulky waste but felt this was due to a number of factors including a reduction in the amount of new furniture being purchased and the requirement that any company selling white goods had a legal responsibility to dispose of the goods being replaced. In terms of comparison with other areas the Assistant Director indicated that Hartlepool was below the regional average and charging less than many Authorities, the actual disposal cost was circa £40/colln. Previously Hartlepool had been the only Local Authority to provide a free disposal service. Members asked if there had been any investigation into outsourcing and what impact this would have on staffing. The Assistant Director was aware of charities and voluntary groups which would be interested but had taken no further action had been explored to date without authorisation Cabinet.

The trade waste service unfairly targeted householders borrowing a trade vehicle to dispose of household waste. The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods questioned this assessment saying that traders had been claiming to be disposing of household waste for a number of years when they were not. There were people genuinely trying to dispose of personal waste in a trade vehicle and special dispensation was available in these cases but the majority were not genuine.

What effect would these savings have on staffing? Members were all for improving the system and increasing recycling but at what cost to jobs?

Decision

Vehicle, Equipment and Supplies Procurement:-

- i) That the Forum endorses the exploration of joint procurement arrangements with neighbouring Local Authorities for the provision of vehicle, equipment and supplies.

Integration of Enforcement Activities:-

- i) That the Forum supports the integration of community safety services and the devolving of enforcement powers to the Police and the Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's).

Bulky Waste – VCS/Social Enterprise:-

- i) That ways of providing a sustainable bulky waste service, with the capability / capacity for increased income generation, be explored; and
- ii) That in developing the bulky waste service, the Forum's concerns regarding the potential impact on staff be taken in to consideration.

Trade Waste - Joint Service across Tees Valley:–

- i) That opportunities for joint working on a Tees wide basis be explored.

Recycling Kerbside Collection Service:–

- i) That the Forum supports the short term extension of the kerbside dry recyclable collection service contract, as proposed.
- ii) That in the future efforts be focused upon the development of the kerbside dry recyclable collection service, including exploration of the potential options for joint working on a Tees wide basis; and
- iii) That in developing the kerbside dry recyclable collection service, emphasis be placed on the importance of consultation with residents and staff and that the Forum's concerns regarding any potential impact on existing staff be taken into consideration
- iv) That the proposed consultations be undertaken at the minimum possible cost (within exiting resources) and that the results obtained be reported back to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum.

22. Private Sector Housing Management Budget

Consultation (*Scrutiny Support Office/Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*)

The Scrutiny Support Officer reported that at the meeting of Scrutiny Coordinating Committee on 24 June 2011 Members determined their work programme for the 2011/12 Municipal Year. It was decided that each Scrutiny Forum would focus its attention on preparations for the 2012/13 budget during the current Municipal Year, given the extremely challenging financial situation facing the authority. It was agreed that budget proposals in relation to private sector housing management would be considered by the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum. The Scrutiny Support Officer gave details of the nature of the investigation including the overall aim, proposed terms of reference and proposed timetable of the budget process.

The Assistant Director (Regeneration and Planning) gave a brief presentation in relation to the Private Sector Housing Management budget consultation. When the various housing services had been brought together under the Housing Services Manager a number of issues had emerged which required structural management changes. These changes had been duly implemented on a 6 month trial basis and it was suggested that the results of the trial be

brought back to the Forum upon completion in October/November. Members requested early feedback on the restructure. The Assistant Director indicated that the early feedback was positive on the whole. He acknowledged the changes had been radical but felt they were absolutely necessary. The Chair was happy to approve the results of the trial being brought back to the Forum in October/November but felt that the budget information needed to be returned within at least 3 months. The Assistant Director confirmed that this would be done.

Decision

- I. That the report be noted
- II. That an update on the trial restructure be brought back to the forum in October/November
- III. That budget updates in relation to the trial restructure be brought back to the forum within the next 3 months

23. Private Sector Housing Schemes Investigation –

Setting the Scene (*Scrutiny Support Officer/Assistant Director (Regeneration and Planning Services)*)

The report set the scene for the Forum's investigation into Private Sector Housing Schemes outlining the types of schemes operating in Hartlepool. The Assistant Director (Regeneration and Planning) then provided a detailed and comprehensive presentation which included the following issues:-

- Selective Licensing Scheme
- Landlord Accreditation Scheme
- Empty Homes
- Good Tenant Scheme

The Assistant Director highlighted the Selective Licensing Scheme which was currently operating in specific target areas of the town. Cabinet had agreed to extend the scheme but this was on hold pending a further report being produced regarding whether it was appropriate to extend the scheme at this stage. Members felt that there were fundamental flaws in the current scheme and that it should not be rolled out further before the full outcomes were known. The Assistant Director acknowledged this saying they needed to be able to prove the success of the first phase of the scheme and there was no evidence of this at the moment.

Members were in support of any suggestions which could improve the current situation for those renting from private landlords. They felt that schemes such as landlord accreditation should be mandatory however and that so long as such schemes were voluntary very little progress would be made. The Assistant Director acknowledged that the legal aspects needed to be focused

upon especially in relation to inspection and enforcement. The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods believed that a co-ordinated approach would be the key to success.

Decision

That the report be noted

24. Scrutiny Investigation into Private Sector Housing Schemes – Scoping Report (*Scrutiny Support Officer*)

The Scrutiny Support Officer presented a scoping report for the Forum's investigation into Private Sector Housing Schemes.

The aim of Investigation

To explore and evaluate private sector housing schemes in place in Hartlepool, specifically Selective Licensing, Landlord Accreditation, Empty Homes and the Good Tenant Scheme

Proposed Terms of Reference

- (a) To gain an understanding of private sector housing schemes in operation in Hartlepool to include Selective Licensing, Landlord Accreditation, Empty Homes and Good Tenant
- (b) To explore / evaluate the effectiveness of current private sector housing schemes operating in Hartlepool in achieving desired outcomes and schemes which have proven successful in other areas (giving due consideration to the areas demographics, housing types and nature of the housing problems in Hartlepool when considering the transferability of such schemes)
- (c) To gain an understanding of the impact of current and future budget pressures on the way in which private sector housing schemes are provided in Hartlepool
- (d) To explore and consider how private sector housing schemes/services may be provided in the future and if there are alternative ways to achieve the desired outcomes of low levels of anti-social behaviour and active thriving communities

Potential Areas of Enquiry/Sources of Evidence

- (a) Member of Parliament for Hartlepool
- (b) Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Housing (Elected Mayor)
- (c) Director and/or appropriate officers of the Regeneration and

Neighbourhoods Department

- (d) Local residents, private sector housing tenants and private sector landlords
- (e) Another Local Authority as an example of 'good practice'
- (f) Appropriate national/regional organisations and partner agencies
- (g) Representatives of minority communities or interest or heritage
- (h) Ward Councillors

Key suggestions of documentary/internet sources were included in the report together with community engagement issues and details of the proposed timetable.

In terms of the proposed time frame the Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods felt it was fundamental that the Selective Licensing Scheme was put in place as soon as possible, if necessary outside of this time frame. The Chair acknowledged these concerns but advised that if members wanted further information this would take precedence.

Recommended

That the proposed remit for the investigation, terms of reference and potential areas of enquiry/sources of evidence be agreed.

25. Issues identified from Forward Plan

No items

The meeting concluded at 7:10 pm

CHAIR

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

14 September 2011



Report of: Scrutiny Support Officer

Subject: SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION INTO PRIVATE
SECTOR HOUSING SCHEMES – EVIDENCE FROM
HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL HOUSING
SERVICES TEAM - COVERING REPORT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members that the Assistant Director (Regeneration and Planning) and the Housing Services Manager have been invited to attend this meeting to provide evidence in relation to the investigation into Private Sector Housing Schemes.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Members will recall that at the meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on 24 June 2011, Members determined their work programme for the 2011/12 Municipal Year. The topic of Private Sector Housing Schemes was selected by the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum as its topic for investigation. The Terms of Reference and Potential Areas of Inquiry / Sources of Evidence for this Scrutiny investigation were approved by the Forum at its meeting on 27 July 2011.
- 2.2 Consequently, the Assistant Director (Regeneration and Planning) and the Housing Services Manager from Hartlepool Borough Council have agreed to attend this meeting to provide evidence in relation to the effectiveness of private sector housing schemes currently operating in Hartlepool and also to outline the challenges facing the provision of private sector housing schemes in the future.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Members of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum consider the evidence of the Assistant Director (Regeneration and Planning) and the Housing Services Manager from Hartlepool Borough Council in attendance at this meeting and seek clarification on any relevant issues where required.

Contact Officer:- Elaine Hind – Scrutiny Support Officer
Chief Executive's Department – Corporate Strategy
Hartlepool Borough Council

Tel: 01429 523647
e-mail: elaine.hind@hartlepool.gov.uk

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

- (i) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Scrutiny Investigation into Private Sector Housing Schemes – Scoping Report' Presented to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum on 27 July 2011.
- (ii) Minutes of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee 24 June 2011.

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

14 September 2011



Report of: Assistant Director (Regeneration and Planning)

Subject: SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION INTO PRIVATE
SECTOR HOUSING SCHEMES – STAGE 2:
'OPERATION AND PERFORMANCE'

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 Having considered the scoping report for the investigation into 'Private Sector Housing Schemes' on 27 July 2011, this report considers some of the main issues in more detail (*covering Term of Reference b, as outlined in section 4.1*).

2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 On 24 June 2011, members determined their work programme for the 2011/12 municipal year at a meeting of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee. At the meeting the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum selected Private Sector Housing Schemes as its topic for investigation to run from July until November 2011.

2.2 The schemes currently operated by Hartlepool Borough Council include Selective Licensing, Landlord Accreditation and Good Tenant Schemes plus the targeted work on Empty Homes.

2.3 All of the schemes are a range of tools for the Private Sector Housing Team to bring about change, effect improvements and regulate the private rented sector. Together the schemes aim to tackle low demand, improve the condition of properties and management standards, reduce anti-social behaviour, sustain tenancies and create sustainable communities.

3.0 STAGE 1

3.1 The Forum will recall the Assistant Director of Regeneration and Planning delivering a presentation at a meeting of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum on 27 July 2011, to provide an overview of the private sector housing schemes in operation in Hartlepool.

- 3.2 At the same meeting, the Assistant Director also outlined the former and current management arrangements in a separate presentation regarding housing services. The trial restructure introduced in May 2011 has seen all housing functions brought together under one manager in the Housing Services section of the Regeneration and Planning Division (an exception is the Good Tenant Scheme, which is managed by the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit in Neighbourhood Services, but operated from the Housing Options Centre in Park Towers). The intention of the restructure is to create a co-ordinated approach to the Council's Housing Services, which has been recognised as a limitation in service delivery previously that has resulted in a number of inefficiencies. The implementation of the new management structure is being trialled for 6 months. It is due to be reviewed in October / November 2011, following workshops with members of staff and 1:1s with Line Managers. If considered successful it could see a major transformation in service delivery, in the long term, through increased skills and capacity across the section, and greater clarity on roles and responsibilities; ensuring a more effective and efficient service together with improvements in the Council's enabling role.

4.0 STAGE 2

- 4.1 The second stage of the investigation, as detailed in the scoping report, is the evidence gathering stage (*covering Term of Reference b*) of which this report will cover the following elements:

- (i) An analysis of the private sector housing schemes currently in operation in Hartlepool, detailing what has and hasn't worked and the reasons identified for this.
- (ii) Challenges facing the provision of private sector housing schemes in the future.
- (iii) Details of forthcoming legislation, which may affect the way private sector housing schemes are delivered in the future.

5.0 ANALYSIS OF PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING SCHEMES

5.1 Selective Licensing Scheme

- 5.1.1 The Housing Act 2004 introduced a discretionary power for Local Authorities to designate areas for selective licensing of private sector housing in specific target areas suffering from, or likely to suffer from low demand and / or significant and persistent anti-social behaviour, in order to improve housing management standards and reduce anti-social behaviour whilst increasing occupancy of housing stock.
- 5.1.2 In January 2009, the Council obtained approval from the Department for Communities and Local Government to introduce a scheme to licence landlords and their properties in six specific areas of the town (**see Appendix 1a and 1b**) for focussed and intensive area-based activity. From 01 May the same year, private sector landlords who own a property or any individual that controls or manages a property in the designated areas are required to apply for a licence.

5.1.3 Each individual privately rented dwelling is licensable, with a fee of £600 per property, potentially reducing to £300 per property if the landlord is accredited through the Landlord Accreditation Scheme, has more than one property and if they apply for a licence within a specified time.

5.1.4 In order to obtain a license, landlords need to comply with the conditions of the scheme and must:

- Be 'fit and proper' persons or employ agents who are;
- Manage their tenancies effectively;
- Take up references for prospective tenants (preferably using the Good Tenant Scheme to determine suitability);
- Take reasonable steps to deal with complaints of anti-social behaviour by their tenants; and
- Ensure that vital safety checks are carried out in relation to category one hazards.

5.1.5 Landlords who have been granted a licence need to ensure the conditions are met and upheld. The literature associated with the scheme states that failure to comply with such conditions can result in sanctions being imposed, as detailed below.

- A fine up to £20,000 for failure to apply for a licence in a designated area; and
- A penalty of up to £5,000 for a breach of licence conditions.

5.1.6 The implementation of the Selective Licensing Scheme in Hartlepool has been inconsistent since its inception. There have been some significant problems in the delivery of the service with many interventions already being actioned. Other problems are currently being worked through with new strategies, action plans and protocols being put into place to ensure the delivery of a robust scheme in future, which is incontrovertible. It should however be noted that the scheme is in its infancy, only introduced in Hartlepool in early 2009 and is therefore just 20 months into its 5 year life span (although if conditions persist a further designation may be made).

5.1.7 Key Facts

Applications Issued: 815

Licences Issued: 568

Number of Licensable Properties: 869 *estimate*

Total Number of Households: 1775

5.1.8 Tables 1, 2 and 3 in this report identify the issues in relation to the Selective Licensing Scheme, alongside the action that is being taken to ensure controls are in place in the delivery of the scheme to mitigate and / or manage the potential risks.

Table 1: Management of Scheme

Observation	Action
1. The Selective Licensing Steering Group should be reviewed to ensure it is 'fit for purpose' following the interventions being imposed, as this Steering Group will oversee the planned action for improvement and monitor effectiveness.	The membership and terms of reference of the Selective Licensing Steering Group have been refreshed to improve representation and group dynamics.

Table 2: Administration and Operational Elements of the Scheme

Observation	Action
2. Formal written policies / procedures which define the administration of the scheme need to be in place. Such documentation will ensure consistency in practices and demonstrate that the right procedures have been followed. This will support the Council's position in the event of a challenge i.e. judicial review when the lawfulness of a decision or action made by the Council would be scrutinised.	Formal documented policies / procedures are being developed for all aspects of the scheme and the application revisited (to be approved by the Council's Legal services). Draft guidance documents, including an appeals procedure, have also been produced to accompany application forms.
3. Existing systems need to be developed to ensure database records hold accurate, complete and up to date information.	An assessment procedure, detailing each aspect of the process has been drafted. The Authority Public Protection (APP) Housing Management system is also being developed to record progress at all stages and staff are being trained appropriately.
4. Not all landlords have been identified even though reasonable efforts have been made to do so through the use of Housing Benefits and Landlord Accreditation records and door knocking exercises.	The use of data from the Revenues section to obtain details on the ownership of empty properties plus the use of land registry records will be used to 'fill in' gaps in information, to ensure the APP Housing Management system is kept up to date and to identify where applications need to be issued to the remaining licensable properties.
5. Property inspections were scheduled for 6 months after the licence is issued.	Inspections of properties are now being undertaken prior to the award of a licence to ensure properties meet the required standards.
6. Partnership arrangements need to be strengthened to assist in a fit and proper assessment to be undertaken.	Consultees such as the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit will be required to provide a mandatory response even if it is a 'nil' return, to avoid an inappropriate person being awarded a licence. Working arrangements are currently being

Observation	Action
	negotiated with the relevant parties.
7. Recovery arrangements for non payment and cancelled direct debits needed to be strengthened, to ensure all licence fees are received.	A procedure has now been determined and monthly monitoring reports are being prepared. The option to pay in instalments has been revoked. A licence will now only be granted once the required fee has been paid in full.
8. Comparing practices with other similar local authorities that operate Selective Licensing Schemes have not been undertaken.	A method is being developed to co-ordinate benchmarking exercises to identify any further areas for improvement and best practice techniques from local authorities in the sub region, regionally and nationally.

Table 3: Implementation of the Scheme

Observation	Action
9. Licences have occasionally been awarded prior to all relevant documentation being submitted with the intention of enforcing licence conditions to obtain what is outstanding.	Arrangements for progressing applications now ensure that all relevant documentation included in the licence conditions document are obtained prior to awarding licences.
10. Whilst recovery action has been taken to obtain documentation such as gas safety certificates, enforcement tools have not been actively used in the past on landlords who have not cooperated in the scheme or complied with the conditions of the scheme. The Local Authority has avoided the use of such powers in the past resulting in no landlord being subject to full enforcement.	An enforcement procedure has been drafted to deal with uncooperative landlords and to ensure defective licences can be enforced. Staff will be encouraged to use enforcement tools in the future, where applicable, to ensure the objectives of the scheme are achieved.
11. Expectations in the community need to be carefully managed in relation to what the scheme can achieve. It is not a panacea for all private sector housing related issues.	Further work is being undertaken to ensure the scheme is integrated and has a consistent strategic fit with other initiatives to balance expectations. The opportunities to communicate key messages will be maximised.

5.1.9 The extension to the Selective Licensing Scheme into an additional nine areas of the Borough has not been progressed pending an evaluation of the existing scheme, to consider its effectiveness in achieving strategic aims, determine the financial implications of administering the scheme and whether lessons can be learnt for the future. It is felt that the second phase was designed too quickly, in response to political pressure, to address criticism that there are concentrated problems in certain streets in the town. A report to Cabinet is due to be considered in September to inform members of this proposal.

5.1.10 Going forward with the Selective Licensing Scheme the Council is working towards ensuring effective arrangements are in place, the scheme is consistent with the overall housing strategy and other relevant initiatives, including homelessness and anti-social behaviour initiatives, and will achieve strategic aims and objectives. Applications will be completed for all privately rented properties in the designation area, with appropriate checks in place to ensure the applicants meet the 'fit and proper' assessment criteria. Mandatory conditions of the licence will also be clearly communicated to landlords and enforced.

5.1.11 The planning for phase two will need to be revisited to ensure that there is sufficient evidence to justify the adoption of the extension, and that social and economic conditions will be improved and / or anti-social behaviour reduced as a result. Detailed work would also be required to ascertain whether an extension into an additional nine areas would be manageable and it would be necessary to re-consult to ensure all landlords are included. The impact on any areas that are not taken forward would also have to be carefully managed, as aspirations have been raised in the local community through the public consultation. In the interim, whilst on hold, it will be necessary to communicate some key messages to those who have been involved in the initial consultation process to inform them of the current position.

5.2 Landlord Accreditation Scheme

5.2.1 The scheme is a town-wide voluntary scheme, launched in August 2002, which aims to encourage, acknowledge and actively promote good standards of accommodation and management in privately rented housing. Acquiring accredited status is dependent on an acceptable standard of property condition, basic amenities and management practices. Landlords must comply with a Code of Conduct and meet certain terms and conditions relating to standards and practice, which are requirements of the scheme and meet their legal obligations and responsibilities. The Code sets out a basic standard for the condition of the property and includes a number of recommendations over and above the current minimum statutory requirement. The Code also covers a wide range of tenancy matters such as tenancy agreements and inventories.

5.2.2 The scheme requires an element of self regulation and therefore relies on a degree of goodwill on the parts of landlords, agents and tenants.

5.2.3 Failure to comply with the Code of Conduct will result in the landlords membership to the scheme being withdrawn.

5.2.4 Although the scheme provides no income stream, it is considered to be good practice to run accreditation schemes alongside selective licensing as a means to address standards in the private rented sector.

5.2.5 Key Facts

Accredited Properties: 1528

Inspections Undertaken: 562

5.2.6 Tables 4 and 6 in this report identify the issues in relation to the Landlord Accreditation Scheme, alongside the action that is being taken to ensure controls are in place in the delivery of the scheme to mitigate and / or manage the potential risks.

Table 4: Administration and Operational Elements of the Scheme

Observation	Action
<p>1. The APP Housing Management system is not currently used to record data. Records are held and maintained on Microsoft excel spreadsheets which have limitations and do not provide sufficient detail to manage the system effectively in comparison. Historical data is held on the old 'Flare' system.</p> <p>Landlord Accreditation Scheme data has not been populated onto the system due to the reduction in admin support.</p>	<p>Data relating to the scheme is to be migrated onto the APP Housing Management system. Arrangements are currently being put into place to populate the APP system with all Landlord Accreditation data. This will enable more informed decisions to be made in future.</p>
<p>2. Records in relation to property inspections need to be improved and standardised so that results of inspections and recovery action can be clearly evidenced.</p>	<p>Inspection forms are to be maintained in a secure manner and policy / procedures are being established which formally define the level of inspections required to obtain the necessary assurance required to award accreditation (also see point 5 in table 5).</p>
<p>3. Comparing practices with other similar local authorities that operate a Landlord Accreditation Scheme have not been undertaken. The aim would be to identify measures to promote accreditation, maximise the number of landlords participating and assess the economic, efficient and effective use of resources.</p>	<p>A method is being developed to co-ordinate benchmarking exercises to identify any further areas for improvement and best practice techniques from local authorities, particularly in the Tees Valley.</p>
<p>4. Performance measures designed to gauge the effectiveness of the scheme are not established.</p>	<p>Performance indicators for the scheme are required to determine how effective it is in improving standards and how it is contributing to wider Council objectives and strategies such as the Housing Strategy.</p>

Table 5: Implementation of the Scheme

Observation	Action
<p>5. A lack of resources has resulted in not all properties being subject to inspection which means that assurances that landlords meet the criteria might not necessarily be in place.</p>	<p>Procedures have been put into place to select a random sample of properties to inspect by suitably qualified staff, prior to awarding accreditation. In determining the sample to inspect, consideration is</p>

Observation	Action
	given to the number of inspections required to provide the necessary assurance that the landlord provides property throughout his / her portfolio of sufficient standards.
6. The value of the scheme is undermined if inspections are not executed and / or documented appropriately and recovery action is not followed up to obtain the relevant documentation.	Recovery action is being undertaken as a matter of priority for all accredited properties.

5.2.7 Going forward the Council will ensure the scheme promotes good standards of accommodation in private rented housing, increases the availability housing and develops effective relationships with landlords.

5.3 Hartlepool Good Tenant Scheme

5.3.1 Hartlepool Good Tenant Scheme was launched on 1st May 2008 and is a free to use tenant referencing service managed by Hartlepool Anti-social Behaviour Unit, and delivered by the Housing Advice Team, from the Housing Options Centre in Park Road, Hartlepool. A multi-agency Steering Group oversees the operation and development of the scheme.

5.3.2 The aim of the scheme is to reduce anti-social behaviour in the private rented sector, by providing a risk management tool to landlords, and linking vulnerable tenants to support to enable them to maintain their tenancies.

5.3.3 Landlords subject to Selective Licensing are strongly recommended to use the Good Tenant Scheme for their tenant references.

5.3.4 Landlords are often reluctant to let their properties to people who they know little about. They fear their property could be damaged, used for illegal or immoral purposes or that the rent may not be paid. This can make finding a good property difficult and time consuming. Membership of the scheme allows someone to show that they are a good tenant quickly and easily.

5.3.5 The scheme allows private sector landlords to obtain reliable, accurate and comprehensive information regarding the tenancy history of someone who has approached them for housing. This information is provided with the written consent of the prospective tenant.

5.3.6 Landlords use the information provided by the scheme to make a risk assessment of whether it would be appropriate for them to take someone as their tenant.

- 5.3.7 Different landlords have different levels of experience, resources, and ability in tenancy management. For example; whether or not they are locally based; the number and experience of the staff they employ; the number of properties they manage; the financial resources available to them to maintain the property and manage the tenancy.
- 5.3.8 This means that some landlords will be able to successfully maintain and manage tenancies that other landlords can not.
- 5.3.9 Using information from the scheme, landlords are able to confirm whether someone is a good tenant and to hopefully offer them a property. As a voluntary scheme, the final decision as to whether to take someone as a tenant remains with the landlord.

The Application Process

- 5.3.10 Applicants seeking membership of the Good Tenant Scheme complete a simple application form providing basic information about themselves, the members of their household, and their background and housing history for the previous two years. This form gives the scheme written permission to carry out background checks into the applicant's tenancy history.
- 5.3.11 The application form is handed in at the Housing Options Centre, Park Towers, Park Road, Hartlepool.
- 5.3.12 When handing in their application form applicants are required to:
- provide proof of their identity (two forms of identity or one photograph based form of identity from an approved list of identity documents),
 - provide proof of their current address,
 - have their photograph taken for their scheme membership letter.
- 5.3.13 Applicants are then sent an acknowledgement letter confirming receipt of their application, which also provides the applicant with the name, and direct contact number of the housing services officer dealing with their application, the service standards and timescales for the Good Tenant Scheme, and information on how to make a complaint or make an appeal regarding the scheme. The scheme aims to process all applications within 10 working days.

Background Checks

- 5.3.14 The Good Tenant Scheme then carries out the following checks:
- Housing History Check – the document imaging system (I-clipse) is checked to confirm the current and previous housing history of the applicant in Hartlepool. This is done to check that no addresses have been hidden from the scheme by the applicant where they may have had problems.

- ASB History Check – the Authority Public Protection (APP) and Flare case management systems are checked. These systems are used by Hartlepool Anti-social Behaviour Unit and Housing Hartlepool's Tenancy Relations and Enforcement Team to record anti-social behaviour complaints in Hartlepool.
- Landlord Check – where previous tenancies have been held by the applicant, references are obtained from the current, and all previous landlords, within the previous two years.
- Local Knowledge Check – Front line officers from various statutory agencies in Hartlepool are contacted to see whether they have had any relevant dealings with the applicant.
- Police Knowledge Check – where information regarding the conduct of an applicant's housing history is obtained which is not sufficient to make a decision regarding their application for membership, but which gives a cause for concern, an additional check is made with Cleveland Police. This check is regarding any relevant calls to the address/credible intelligence only and is NOT a check of criminal records. The Good Tenant Scheme does not carry out criminal record checks.

5.3.15 Any information obtained through these background checks is then used by the Housing Services Officer dealing with the application to decide on whether to grant the applicant membership of the Good Tenant Scheme, and the type of membership to grant based on the scheme's membership criteria guidance document.

Membership Types

5.3.16 The scheme operates a traffic light system of membership:

- Full Membership (Green) – Membership granted for 6 months. Applicants must have held a previous tenancy within the last two years. Applicants with no history of rent arrears, anti-social or criminal behaviour related to the tenancy or tenancy management concerns,
- Provisional Membership (Yellow) – Membership granted for 6 months. Applicants with minor rent arrears, anti-social or criminal behaviour related to the tenancy, tenancy management concerns, or who have not previously held a tenancy,
- Rejected Membership (Red) – Membership rejected for 12 months. Applicants whose behaviour would have entitled a landlord to seek immediate possession of the property at court. i.e., significant rent arrears, serious anti-social / criminal behaviour, major problems involving tenancy management.

Applicants have a right to re-apply to join the scheme provided they can show an improvement in their behaviour over a consistent period of at least 6 months.

5.3.17 Once a decision has been made regarding an application for membership of the scheme, the applicant is sent a Membership Decision Letter. This letter explains to the applicant whether they have been granted or refused membership, the type of membership they have been granted (where appropriate) and sets out the information used by the scheme to make this decision. The letter has a photograph of the applicant on the back to ensure that it cannot be used by anyone other than the applicant. The applicant is also sent a Satisfaction Form, an Appeal Form and a stamped addressed envelope with the Decision letter.

Service Standards

5.3.18 The scheme operates according to the following service standards:

- We will be fair, equal, impartial, courteous, professional and accountable.
- We will use plain language and avoid unnecessary jargon.
- We will acknowledge your application in writing within five working days.*
- We will give you the name and direct contact number of the person dealing with your application.
- We will process your application within 10 working days.*
- We will aim to respond to your phone calls within two working days.
- We will aim to respond to your letters/e-mails within five working days.
- We will keep you informed about what happens with your application.
- We will share your information with others according to the permissions you give us.
- We will review at least 10% of applications to ensure our service standards are being maintained.*
- We will ask you for your views on the service and any changes you think will improve it*.
- We will acknowledge all appeals made within 5 working days.*
- We will inform you of the outcome of an appeal within 15 working days.*

*These performance indicators are monitored through the Good Tenant Scheme Steering Group.

Complaint and Appeal Process

5.3.19 All applicants have a right of appeal regarding their application to join the Good Tenant Scheme. The scheme appeal process mirrors the Corporate Complaints and Comments Procedure. Informal complaints are dealt with by the supervisor of the scheme at the Housing Options Centre, with formal complaints and appeals regarding membership dealt with by the manager of the scheme at the Anti-social Behaviour Unit.

Key Facts

5.3.20 The following tables were provided to the Good Tenant Scheme Steering Group on 23rd August 2011.

5.3.21 Breakdown of Good Tenant Scheme applications for 1st quarter 2011 compared to 1st quarter 2010:

Type	Q1 2011	Q1 2010	Difference
Applicant (applications being processed at the time of the report)	23	17	6
Full Membership	75	26	49
Prov. Member - 1st Tenancy	68	69	-1
Prov. Member - ASB / Criminal Issues	11	9	2
Prov. Member - Rent Arrears	26	30	-4
Prov. Member - Support Dependant	5	2	3
Prov. Member - Tenancy Management Issues	16	4	12
Rejected Applicant	29	9	20
Tenancy Complaint	3	4	-1
Passported Membership (use limited to where references cannot be obtained or where exceptional circumstances apply)	0	9	-9
Total Applicants	256	179	77 (43% increase)

5.3.22 Service Standard monitoring:

Type	Working Days Q1 2011	Update since 23.08.11
Number of working days to send acknowledgement of application letters (Target 5 working days)	Changes to recording were needed to be able to report on this stat. This has now been done, but will mean that stats will report from 17.08.11 onwards	Admin Officers report that all acknowledgement letters sent same day as application processed
Number of working days to process applications (Target 10 working days)	18 (this is due to staff absences)	For the next incomplete quarter 01.07.11 - 17.08.11 this has reduced to 7 working days
Number of working days to send appeal acknowledgement letters (Target 5 working days)	n/a - letter not yet introduced	Appeal Acknowledgement Letters now introduced
Number of working days to process appeals (Target 15 working days)	15	

5.3.23 Tables 6 and 7 in this report identify issues in relation to the Good Tenant Scheme, alongside the actions that have been taken or are being taken to ensure the delivery of the scheme which have been identified since April 2011.

Table 6: Management of Scheme

Observation	Action
1. The Good Tenant Scheme Steering Group - originally set up when the scheme was being developed in 2007-08 has been reconvened and has met three times since April 2011.	Service Standards and Performance Indicators have been developed for the scheme which are being monitored by the GTS Steering Group. (also see point 10 in table 7)

Table 7: Administration and Operational Elements of the Scheme

Observation	Action
2. The scheme needs to develop simple, clear procedures and standardised documents for staff.	Various new procedures and documents have been written and implemented as of April 2011 and July 2011.
3. The scheme needs to review its staff training.	Staff training and refresher training completed for all staff. (Both admin and housing services officers)
4. The scheme has faced delays during February – May 2011 in processing applications due to staff shortages and sickness. (aims to process applications within 10 working days)	All staff administering the scheme are now in post / returned from sickness. 3 additional officers have been given training in the operation of the scheme to ensure resilience in the future should staff shortages reoccur. The scheme is now completely up to date.
5. The scheme needs to ensure the quality of the application process and that outcomes are consistent.	A weekly review meeting has been implemented where a 25% sample of applications processed each week are reviewed by scheme management to ensure standards are being maintained. Satisfaction Forms are sent to all applicants on closure of their application.

Observation	Action
6. The quality of the information received from the police needs to be improved as this has sometimes made it difficult to use to determine an applicant's membership status.	A formal Information Exchange Protocol between Cleveland Police and the scheme has been written and is awaiting sign off by the Police. This will allow for more specific and detailed information exchange. This will commence shortly.
7. The scheme needs to review and update its documentation.	A new application form will be launched in October 2011. This will contain improved advice and guidance regarding the scheme, and include a checklist built into the form informing applicants what documents they need to hand in with their application.
	A standardised Landlord Reference Form has been produced and is now in use.
	Detailed guidance for Officers on making a decision regarding an applicant's membership status has been written and came into effect in July 2011.
	The webpage regarding the scheme on the Council's website is being reviewed and updated and will shortly include copies of scheme procedures available for download.
8. Historically there have been a significant number of applicants who fail to complete the application process. (the scheme refers to this as 'attrition') The attrition rate has however been reducing over the time the scheme has been running.	Attrition has reduced from an average of 24% in 2009/10 to 9% during the 1 st quarter of 2011 since the changes to the scheme were implemented.
9. The scheme needs to review its support pathways to ensure any available and appropriate support is offered to applicants.	The scheme is currently reviewing the support it offers to applicants and the role of the Supported Housing Panel in this process.

Observation	Action
10. The scheme needs to review its performance indicator(s) to show the impact of the scheme.	<p>A new performance indicator has been developed for the scheme which links with selective licensing monitoring.</p> <p>This indicator is detailed in the Joint Working Protocol between the Community Safety Team and the Selective Licensing Scheme.</p>
11. The scheme needs to publicise the changes to the scheme.	All private sector landlords known to the scheme will shortly be written to giving them an update on the changes to the scheme and providing them with copies of the new application form. Nominations will also be requested for a private landlord to sit on the Steering Group.

5.4 Empty Homes

5.4.1 Bringing long term privately owned empty homes back into use is a key priority for the Council.

5.4.2 The Empty Homes Strategy 2010-2015 was developed to address the excessive number of long term (empty for over six months) private sector empty homes in the Borough. It demonstrates the commitment of the Council and partners through the adoption of real measures to bring privately owned empty homes back into use. The strategy is overseen by the Empty Homes Strategy Steering Group which meets on a monthly basis to monitor progress on the delivery of the strategy.

5.4.3 The Empty Homes Officer was appointed in April 2011 and has since began the implementation of the Empty Homes Strategy Action Plan aimed at developing the empty homes service, developing enforcement procedures and actively working with owners to inform them of all of the options available to them to bring empty homes back into use. The Council have a number of flexible tools and incentive along with an enforcement approach to assist this work.

5.4.4 On a day to day basis the Empty Homes Officer concentrates on the long term more problematic empty properties, whilst the Housing Standards Officers and the Landlord Accreditation Officer as part of their everyday duties are involved with short and medium term empty properties for example, securing empty properties when they have been vacated at short notice, investigating rubbish complaints, liaising with landlords regarding potential tenants for their empty properties.

- 5.4.5 Initially the Empty Homes Officer has been identifying the ownership of empty homes and will then engage with owners and offer advice and support to encourage owners to bring empty homes back into use. Enforcement Action will be used where required to ensure properties are brought back into use.
- 5.4.6 All empty properties which are known to have been empty for longer than 2 years have now been assessed on a case by case basis using the Empty Property Assessment Form. The use of this standard assessment form will ensure a consistent and transparent approach to determine the necessary actions to bring these empty properties back into use, using a combination of persuasion and enforcement actions as appropriate to each individual case.
- 5.4.7 The Empty Homes Strategy highlights that the Council must use all reasonable endeavours to work with landlords to develop an informal solution to bringing a property back into use before enforcement action is taken. A series of positive action letters have now been developed which are used to establish the owner's intentions for the property and to encourage that owner to bring the property back into use. If positive action letters are unsuccessful and the informal approach does not result in a property being brought back into use, the most suitable option for enforcement will be identified. These positive action letters also provide evidence to demonstrate enforcement action is required if a landlord does not engage. There are a number of enforcement tools identified in the Empty Homes Strategy which are a part of an overall enforcement policy in place for private sector housing.
- 5.4.8 In addition to the above, an incentive approach is in development in the form of the Empty Property Pilot Scheme, approved by Cabinet in August 2011. The Council will work in partnership with Housing Hartlepool to bring empty homes back into use through a grant / loan package for landlords. There is also a pilot project to initially bring empty properties back into use in Baden Street. This is being introduced to address the concentrated problems and in the long term ensure the sustainability of the street. Both of these schemes are being piloted and could be rolled out to other areas in the town, in the future, if successful.
- 5.4.9 The work that has been undertaken in relation to bringing empty homes back into use has been an overall success with 56 empty properties brought back into use out of a target of 63 in 2010/11. Much of the work has been underpinned by the Empty Homes Strategy 2010-2015 and the preparation of a short term Action Plans to support the delivery of the Strategy.
- 5.4.10 Table 8 in this report identifies the issues in relation to the work associated with Empty Homes, alongside the action that is being taken to ensure controls are in place in the delivery of the scheme to mitigate and / or manage the potential risks.

Table 8: Service Delivery

Observation	Action
1. In the past there has been no	An Empty Homes Officer was appointed

dedicated resource to focus on bringing empty properties back into use resulting in an uncoordinated approach to tackling the problem. Tackling the issue of empty homes was being delivered by different sections within the Council, which wasn't joined up.	in April 2011. This appointment was delayed due to the freeze on recruitment once the Business Transformation process was underway.
	The Housing Services Team now employ a joined up team approach to the issue of empty properties.
2. Need to pro-actively work to bring long term empty homes back into use using flexible solutions / appropriate enforcement action to improve neighbourhoods and the environment.	Develop an Empty Homes Toolkit.
	Use enforcement proactively to tackle long term empty properties in areas of housing need.
	Explore opportunities for financial assistance to private owners.
3. Prevent homes from becoming long-term empty to minimise the number of properties becoming empty for longer than 6 months.	Develop a marketing and publicity approach to promote the Empty Homes Strategy.
	Provide a contact point within the Council for empty homes work.
	Enhance liaison with private landlords.
	Enhance partnership working across services.
	Establish procedures for working with mortgage companies with clients at threat of repossession.
4. Increase decent and affordable rented housing for those in housing need / maximise housing options in the town to improve access to decent and affordable housing for people in housing need.	Investigate and develop a range of re-use options for owners.
	Increase the use of affordable empty homes in meeting housing need.
	Work with registered providers to maximise housing options in the town.

Observation	Action
5. Continue to identify the reasons for the distribution and ownership of empty homes and establish trends and reasons, and have accurate information and trends mapped in order to effectively progress strategy development and enable informed decision making.	Enhance partnership working across services.
	Develop an Empty Homes Database.
	Establish an accurate baseline of empty homes information.
	Map areas of housing need.
	Review and monitor empty homes performance.
6. Support investment in Housing Market Renewal and its surrounding areas through the reduction of long-term empty homes to achieve long-term sustainability of these areas.	Ensure empty homes work complements the regeneration activity for the town.

5.4.11 Through a series of improvements, including establishing a robust system to provide an accurate picture of the number of empty homes across the Borough, to engaging proactively with owners of empty properties, the Council, going forward, has the foundations in place to rid the town of long term empty homes and prevent more properties from becoming empty.

6.0 CHALLENGES

- Staffing shortages and limited resources.
- Lengthy timescales involved in enforcement activity and managing perceptions associated with this.
- The number of empty and competing properties

7.0 IMPACT OF FORTHCOMING LEGISLATION

- Changes in benefits, in particular the introduction of the single room rate for under 35s and the impact this might have on houses of multiple occupation.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 The members of the Forum note the content of the report and where appropriate seek clarification.

9.0 CONTACT OFFICER

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10.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

- (i) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Scrutiny Investigation into Private Sector Housing Schemes – Scoping Report' (presented to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum on 27 July 2011).
- (ii) Minutes of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum on 27 July 2011 (draft version).
- (iii) Report of the Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods entitled 'Selective Licensing of Private Landlords, Landlord Accreditation Scheme and Good Tenant Scheme' (presented to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum on 11 April 2011).
- (iv) Evaluation of the Good Tenant Scheme, March 2010. (evaluation 2009)
- (v) Report of the Assistant Director of Regeneration and Planning entitled 'Empty Homes Strategy Update' (presented to the Community Safety and Housing Portfolio Holder on 02 September 2011).
- (vi) Empty Homes Strategy 2010 to 2015.
- (vii) Baden Street Business Case.

Appendix 1a**List of Addresses in Selective Licensing Designation Areas**

Area A		Area E	
Brougham Terrace	2 - 40 evens	Charterhouse Street	
Grainger Street	1 - 21 inc	Cornwall Street	
Gray Street		Derby Street	
Hurworth Street		Devon Street	
Perth Street		Dorset Street	
Turnbull Street	46 - 68 inc	Eton Street	
Area B		Harrow Street	
Addison Road	2 - 4 evens	Jackson Street	
Belk Street		Marlborough Street	
Cameron Road		Oxford Road	2 - 136a evens
Furness Street		Richmond Street	
Area C		Rossall Street	
Blake Street	2 - 18 evens	Rugby Street	
Carr Street		Shrewsbury Street	11 - 39a odds
Hart Lane	31 - 57 odds	Uppingham Street	
Hopps Street		Area F	
Jobson Street		Borrowdale Street	
Murray Street	77 - 79 odds	Kathleen Street	2 - 8 evens
Richardson Street		Kathleen Street	1 - 5 odds
Rodney Street		Patterdale Street	
Area D			
Avenue Road	36 - 60 evens		
Dent Street			
Derwent Street			
Elliott Street	2 - 12 evens		
Errol Street			
Lowthian Road			
Morton Street			
Raby Road	25 - 57 odds		
Straker Street			
Wharton Street			
York Road	11 - 81 odds		
York Road	2 - 48 evens		
Young Street	5 - 11 odds		



NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

14 September 2011



Report of: Scrutiny Support Officer

Subject: SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION INTO PRIVATE
SECTOR HOUSING SCHEMES - EVIDENCE FROM
THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR COMMUNITY
SAFETY AND HOUSING – COVERING REPORT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of the Forum that the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Housing has been invited to attend this meeting to provide evidence in relation to the ongoing investigation into 'Private Sector Housing Schemes'.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Members will recall that at the meeting of this Forum on 27 July 2011, the Terms of Reference and Potential Areas of Inquiry / Sources of Evidence were approved by the Forum for this scrutiny investigation into 'Private Sector Housing Schemes'.
- 2.2 Consequently, the Authority's Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Housing has been invited to this meeting to provide evidence to the Forum in relation to their views on 'Private Sector Housing Schemes'.
- 2.3 During this evidence gathering session with the Authority's Community Safety and Housing Portfolio Holder, it is suggested that responses should be sought to the key questions below:-
- (a) What are your views on the Private Sector Housing Schemes operating in Hartlepool and how effective do you feel the current schemes are in improving homes in the private rented sector?

- (b) What in your view are the key challenges facing the provision of private sector rented accommodation in Hartlepool and how do you envision these being addressed in the future?
- (c) Do you have any views as to how current or future services can be delivered more effectively and efficiently within the resources available in the current economic climate?
- (d) Do you have any other views / information which you feel maybe useful to Members in forming their recommendations?

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Members of the Forum consider the views of the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Housing in relation to the questions outlined in section 2.3.

Contact Officer:- Elaine Hind – Scrutiny Support Officer
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BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

- (i) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer titled 'Scrutiny Investigation into 'Private Sector Housing Schemes' – Scoping Report,' presented at the meeting of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum of 27 July 2011.

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

14 September 2011



Report of: Scrutiny Support Officer

Subject: SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION INTO PRIVATE
SECTOR HOUSING SCHEMES – EVIDENCE FROM
HARTLEPOOL LANDLORDS STEERING GROUP

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of the Forum that representatives from the Landlord Steering Group have been invited to attend this meeting to provide evidence in relation to the ongoing investigation into 'Private Sector Housing Schemes'.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Members will recall that at the meeting of this Forum on 27 July 2011, the Terms of Reference and Potential Areas of Inquiry / Sources of Evidence were approved by the Forum for this scrutiny investigation into 'Private Sector Housing Schemes'.
- 2.2 Consequently, representatives from the Landlord Steering Group have been invited to this meeting to provide evidence to the Forum in relation to their views on the private sector housing schemes in operation in areas where they own properties.
- 2.3 During this evidence gathering session with representatives of the Landlord Steering Group, it is suggested that responses should be sought to the key questions below:-
- (a) What are the views of the Landlord Steering Group on the private sector housing schemes currently in place in Hartlepool?
 - (b) How has participation in the private sector housing schemes benefited private sector landlords in Hartlepool and are there any drawbacks to providing accommodation in areas where licensing is compulsory?

- (c) What are the views of the Landlord Steering Group on how private sector housing schemes could be developed in the future to ensure effective and efficient partnership working to achieve the desired outcomes of good quality housing and thriving communities?
- (d) Do representatives of the Landlord Steering Group have any other views / information that may be useful to the Members of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum when considering the recommendations arising from their investigation into Private Sector Housing Schemes?

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Members of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum consider the views of the representatives from the Landlord Steering Group in relation to the questions outlined in section 2.3.

Contact Officer:- Elaine Hind – Scrutiny Support Officer
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e-mail: elaine.hind@hartlepool.gov.uk

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

- (i) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Scrutiny Investigation into 'Private Sector Housing Schemes' – Scoping Report,' presented at the meeting of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum of 27 July 2011.

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

14 September 2011



Report of: Scrutiny Support Officer

Subject: SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION INTO PRIVATE
SECTOR HOUSING SCHEMES – EVIDENCE FROM
HOUSING HARTLEPOOL

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of the Forum that a representative from Housing Hartlepool has been invited to attend this meeting to provide evidence in relation to the ongoing investigation into 'Private Sector Housing Schemes'.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Members will recall that at the meeting of this Forum on 27 July 2011, the Terms of Reference and Potential Areas of Inquiry / Sources of Evidence were approved by the Forum for this scrutiny investigation into 'Private Sector Housing Schemes'.
- 2.2 Consequently, a representative from the Housing Hartlepool has been invited to this meeting to provide evidence to the Forum in relation to the role of Housing Hartlepool in bringing private sector empty homes back into use.
- 2.3 During this evidence gathering session with the Housing Hartlepool, it is suggested that responses should be sought to the key questions below:-
- (a) What are the roles/responsibilities of Housing Hartlepool in bringing empty private sector homes back into use?
 - (b) What factors determine which empty private sector properties are selected for the process and what are the barriers to expanding the scheme in the future?
 - (c) What benefits have Housing Hartlepool identified to local communities as a result of their work in this area?

- (d) Does Housing Hartlepool have any other views / information that may be useful to the Members of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum when considering the recommendations arising from their investigation into Private Sector Housing Schemes?

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Members of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum consider the views of the representative from Housing Hartlepool in relation to the questions outlined in section 2.3.

Contact Officer:- Elaine Hind – Scrutiny Support Officer
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BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

- (i) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Scrutiny Investigation into 'Private Sector Housing Schemes' – Scoping Report,' presented at the meeting of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum of 27 July 2011.

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

14 September 2011



Report of: Scrutiny Support Officer

Subject: SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION INTO PRIVATE
SECTOR HOUSING SCHEMES – MEMBER
ATTENDANCE AT TENANT FOCUS GROUPS

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To seek Member attendance at tenant focus groups.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 Members will recall at the meeting of this Forum on 27 July 2011, the Terms of Reference and Potential Areas of Inquiry / Sources of Evidence for this Scrutiny Investigation were approved by the Forum.

2.2 As a result two focus groups have been arranged to take place on Tuesday 4 October 2011, at 6pm in the Lynnfield Centre, Grosvenor Street Hartlepool and Wednesday 12 October 2011, at 6pm in the Stranton Centre, Southburn Terrace, Hartlepool. The purpose of these meetings is to seek the views of tenants and residents of areas with a high percentage of private rented accommodation.

3. RECOMMENDATION

3.1 It is recommended that Members of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum wishing to attend the tenant focus groups to take place between 14 September and 26 October 2011 nominate themselves at today's meeting.

Contact Officer:- Elaine Hind – Scrutiny Support Officer
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BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

- (i) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Scrutiny Investigation into Private Sector Housing Schemes – Scoping Report' Presented to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum on 27 July 2011.

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

14 September 2011



Report of: Scrutiny Support Officer

Subject: SIX MONTHLY MONITORING OF AGREED
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY
FORUM'S RECOMMENDATIONS

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Members with the six monthly progress made on the delivery of the agreed scrutiny recommendations of this Forum.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 In November 2007 the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee approved the introduction of the Scrutiny Monitoring Database, an electronic database, to monitor the delivery of agreed scrutiny recommendations since the 2005/06 Municipal Year.
- 2.2 In March 2010 Scrutiny Chairs noted and agreed for the movement of the Scrutiny Monitoring Database into the Covalent, which is the Council's Performance Management System. Members are asked to note that during May 2011 all call-in's and referrals since the 2005/06 Municipal Year were added to Covalent, therefore, although actions may have been completed as far back as 2005/06 they will appear in Appendix A.
- 2.3 In accordance with the agreed procedure, this report provides for Members details of progress made against each of the investigations undertaken by the Forum. **Chart1** overleaf is the overall progress made by all scrutiny forums since 2005 and **Appendix A** provides a detailed explanation of progress made against each scrutiny recommendation agreed by this Forum since the last six monthly monitoring report presented in March 2011.

Chart1: Progress made by all Scrutiny Investigations Undertaken since 2005

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 That Members:-

- (a) Note progress against the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum's agreed recommendations, since the 2005/06 Municipal Year, and explore further where appropriate; and
- (b) Retain **Appendix A** for future reference.

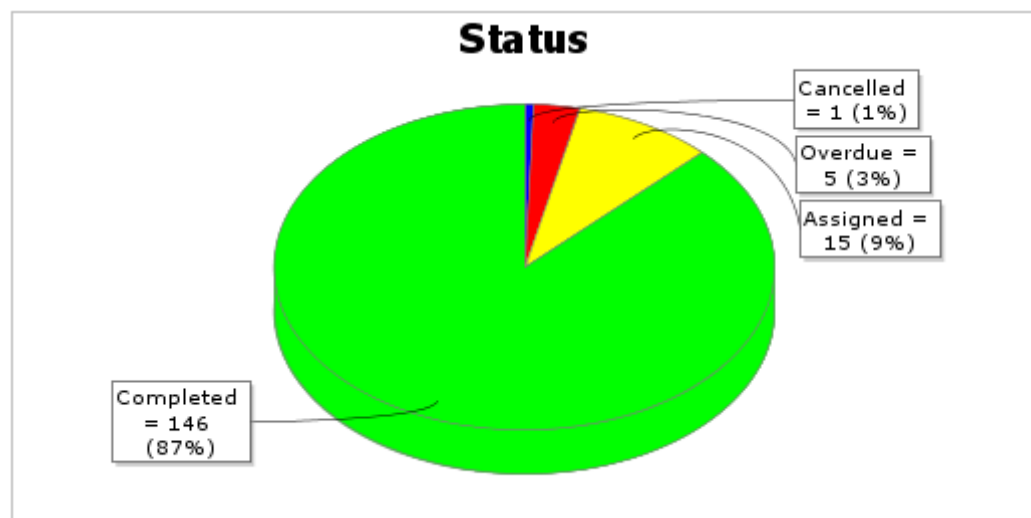
Contact Officer:- Elaine Hind – Scrutiny Support Officer
 Chief Executive's Department - Corporate Strategy
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 Email: Elaine.hind@hartlepool.gov.uk

BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum - All

Generated on: 26 August 2011



Year 2005/06

Investigation Hartlepool's Local Bus Service Provision

Recommendation	Action	Assigned To	Original Due Date	Due Date	Note	Progress
SCR-NS/2a/ii That work be undertaken by the Authority to improve the infrastructure of the bus network in Hartlepool.	SCR-NS/2a/ii Continue to review issues relating to timetable information. Improve clarity and presentation of at stop timetable information. Provide Real Time information at selected stops and through the internet, WAP and	Geoff Knowlson	01-Dec-2011	01-Dec-2011	23-Feb-2010 New style of timetable displays introduced at bus stops to improve clarity and presentation. Real Time Passenger Information delayed as a result of problems with the Tees Valley system.	<div> <div></div> <div>Assigned</div> </div>

7.6 Appendix A

Recommendation	Action	Assigned To	Original Due Date	Due Date	Note	Progress
	SMS.					

Year 2008/09

Investigation Coastal Defence and Shoreline Management in Hartlepool

Recommendation	Action	Assigned To	Original Due Date	Due Date	Note	Progress
SCR-NS/8a That the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Communities lobby the Government to increase the funding available for coastal protection works.	SCR-NS/8a Grant aid is currently managed by the Environment Agency on behalf of DEFRA. Lobbying can be undertaken at a regional level at Newcastle or at a national level at London as part of the National Review Group meeting (NRG). Lobbying will have to be undertaken at the correct point in time for each individual project.	Dennis Hancock	31-Dec-2010	31-Dec-2011	04-Mar-2011 Hartlepool successful in being awarded a capital grant allocation of approx £6m (over 2011/12 - 2013/14) for upgrading the coastal defence in Seaton Carew and reviewing the long term coastal strategy for the Headland area. Lobbying was carried out in presentation of the Seaton Strategy to the Environment Agency's National Review Group in September 2010 and will be carried out for any further projects to be promoted. This is an ongoing process 23-Feb-2010 The Seaton Carew Strategy Study is to be presented to the Environment Agency's National Review Group in April 2010.	<div><div>50%</div></div> Assigned
SCR-NS/8c That the Council continues to promote climate	SCR-NS/8c All coast protection studies follow a methodology as set out by DEFRA on behalf	Dennis Hancock	31-Dec-2010	31-Dec-2011	04-Mar-2011 Climate change is a Fundamental factor to	<div><div>50%</div></div> Assigned

7.6 Appendix A

Recommendation	Action	Assigned To	Original Due Date	Due Date	Note	Progress
change and involves local residents in raising awareness of the effects it has on Hartlepool's coastline.	of the Government. A key thread that runs through all such studies is the need to strongly include climate change and in particular sea level rise as key drivers for coast protection works. All such studies have an allowance for consultation with many statutory bodies including the public and there are public exhibitions where the awareness of all issues is raised.				be considered in all coastal studies and will remain a key issue for consideration when studies are progressed. 23-Feb-2010 Continuing to promote the impact of climate change and its effect on Hartlepool's coastline.	
SCR-NS/8d That the Council establishes the potential risks and implications associated with the loss of the Heugh Breakwater infrastructure and communicates this to members of the public to alleviate concerns.	SCR-NS/8d The Heugh Breakwater has been examined in some detail as part of both the Headland Strategy Study and the Shoreline Management Plan II. The potential risks and implications are well understood. During the forthcoming public exhibition in respect of the Town Wall study, the issue of the breakwater in relation to the Town Wall will be a important part of the consultant's presentation.	Dennis Hancock	30-Jun-2009	01-Dec-2011	04-Mar-2011 Heugh Breakwater to be reviewed in detail by the Headland Coastal Strategy Review which commenced in January 2011. Public consultation will be carried out over the course of producing the Strategy review. 23-Feb-2010 The Headland Strategy Study is due for review in 2011 when further consideration will be given.	<div><div></div></div> 30% Assigned
SCR-NS/8e That the Council continues to evaluate the risks of developing on sites which could potentially be at risk of coastal erosion in	SCR-NS/8e The Shoreline Management Plan II that covered the entire Hartlepool coastline determined erosion contours for the next hundred years. These identify parts of the	Dennis Hancock	31-Mar-2010	31-Dec-2011	04-Mar-2011 Seaton Coastal Strategy study complete. Review of Headland Strategy commenced in January 2011. These will inform the risks of developing	<div><div></div></div> 50% Assigned

7.6 Appendix A

Recommendation	Action	Assigned To	Original Due Date	Due Date	Note	Progress
order to ensure the sustainability of future building developments.	<p>coastline where coastal erosion is likely to occur.</p> <p>The Strategy Studies which are the next level down in the hierarchical system used by the Environment Agency look at such vulnerable areas in more detail and identify potential solutions.</p> <p>These studies will assist the planning process in ensuring that potential developments will be sustainable.</p>				<p>on sites which could potentially suffer from coastal erosion</p> <p>23-Feb-2010 Seaton Strategy Study currently ongoing, review of the Headland Strategy Study planned for 2011.</p>	
SCR-NS/8f That the Council continues to consult extensively with local residents on current / future coastal studies and where appropriate holds such consultation events in the locations covered by the relevant study.	<p>SCR-NS/8f</p> <p>The Seaton Carew public exhibition was held at the Staincliffe Hotel and was well attended by members of the public.</p> <p>The forthcoming public exhibition associated with the Town Wall project will be held at the Borough Hall.</p> <p>All future public exhibitions will be located as near as possible to the areas covered by the studies.</p>	Dennis Hancock	30-Jun-2009	01-Dec-2011	<p>04-Mar-2011 Consultation is an ongoing process and was carried out extensively for the Seaton Carew Coastal Strategy. Consultation will be a key requirement of the Headland Strategy review which commenced in January 2011 and events will be arranged and held locally.</p> <p>23-Feb-2010 The second public consultation meeting for the Strategy Study was held in the Staincliffe Hotel. The Town Wall meeting was held at the Borough Hall. A further public meeting for the Town Wall Study will be</p>	<div> <div>50%</div> Assigned </div>

7.6 Appendix A

Recommendation	Action	Assigned To	Original Due Date	Due Date	Note	Progress
					held in the Borough Hall early 2010.	

Year 2008/09

Investigation Condition of Highways in Hartlepool

Recommendation	Action	Assigned To	Original Due Date	Due Date	Note	Progress
SCR-NS/7a That the Council develops a strategy to achieve a planned approach to highways maintenance as opposed to a reactive approach.	SCR-NS/7a Strategy to be developed to give Council options to provide a minimum service level; a fair service level; a good service level; or an excellent service level. Council to select appropriate strategy dependant on affordability.	Mike Blair	01-Jun-2010	01-Jun-2011	<p>07-Mar-2011 Strategy still being developed in conjunction with other Tees Valley Partners. Requirement for a joint strategy has delayed the process beyond expected due date.</p> <p>20-Jan-2011 Strategy still being developed in conjunction with other Tees Valley Partners. Requirement for a joint strategy has delayed the process beyond expected due date.</p> <p>01-Sep-2010 Strategy still being developed in conjunction with other Tees Valley Partners. Requirement for a joint strategy has delayed the process beyond expected due date.</p> <p>14-Apr-2010 An interim strategy was reported to and approved by the Portfolio Holder in August 2009. Longer term strategy will be developed based on the</p>	<div> <div></div> 25% </div> Overdue

7.6 Appendix A

Recommendation	Action	Assigned To	Original Due Date	Due Date	Note	Progress
					contents of this report 23-Feb-2010 An interim strategy will be presented to portfolio holder in August 2009 whilst the long term strategy incorporating the different levels of service is being developed for 2010.	

Year 2009/10 Investigation CarParking on Estates

Recommendation	Action	Assigned To	Original Due Date	Due Date	Note	Progress	
SCR-NS/9a That the Council explores the viability of extending the operational hours of resident parking schemes to include evenings and weekends;	SCR-NS/9a	Consider views of Permit user group members. Additional coverage would incur further staffing costs which would need to be recovered through increased permit charges. Last time this was considered residents were unwilling to pay for further coverage. Enforcement hours are currently Mon – Sat 8am-6pm	Philip Hepburn	01-Mar-2011	01-Mar-2011	18-Aug-2010 Permit user group meeting to be scheduled November 2010-	<div><div></div></div> Overdue
SCR-NS/9b That the Council explores ways of publicising the reporting arrangements and points of contact for parking problems;	SCR-NS/9b	Publicity to be improved via website, Council A-Z services , and Hartlepool Connect scripted service provision.	Philip Hepburn	01-Mar-2011	30-Sep-2011	18-Aug-2010 Website updates are scheduled to take place in Jan 2011-	<div><div></div></div> Assigned
SCR-NS/9f That the Council develops a process to monitor	SCR-NS/9f	The Neighbourhood Coordinators in each of the three forum area will take	Jon Wright	01-Mar-2011	01-Dec-2011	02-Mar-2011 Most schemes are now complete, however	<div><div></div></div> Assigned

7.6 Appendix A

Recommendation	Action	Assigned To	Original Due Date	Due Date	Note	Progress
and review the impact of the Minor Works funding allocation available to each individual Neighbourhood Consultative Forum on a ward basis	photographs before and after the parking scheme is delivered to demonstrate the impact within the community. During the financial year each forum area is monitored by the Neighbourhood Manager with regard to the spend in each ward and a table is produced at year end to indicate the scheme type and costs per ward.				some new parking schemes were only agreed at the last round of Consultative Forums held week commencing 14th February. 03-Aug-2010 Forum schemes are late this year due to elections however this will take place	

Year 2009/10

Investigation Possible Environmental Impacts of Dust Deposits on the Headland and Surrounding Areas

Recommendation	Action	Assigned To	Original Due Date	Due Date	Note	Progress
SCR-NS/10f That the Council explores with the relevant companies the option of moving the scrap metal and all the cargoes; and provides an update to Cabinet on the discussions which have been undertaken within three months;	SCR-NS/10f Series of meetings to be set up with relevant parties in order to conclude or reach an agreement on any options for moving the scrap metal and other problematic cargoes from the Port.	Dave Stubbs	31-Aug-2010	31-Aug-2011	11-Mar-2011 Discussions ongoing but no movement at present 03-Aug-2010 Meetings are taking place.	<div> <div></div> 80% Assigned </div>

Year 2010/11

Investigation 20's Plenty - Traffic Calming Measures

7.6 Appendix A

Recommendation	Action	Assigned To	Original Due Date	Due Date	Note	Progress	
SCR-NS/12a That the Council implements 20mph speed limits on all appropriate residential streets in Hartlepool	SCR-NS/12a	Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum approved the implementation of 20mph limits on appropriate residential streets at the meeting of 19 January.	Peter Frost	31-Mar-2014	31-Mar-2014		<div><div></div></div> 100% Assigned

Year 2010/11 Investigation Foreshore Management

Recommendation	Action	Assigned To	Original Due Date	Due Date	Note	Progress	
SCR-NS/14b That the Council works with local businesses / industry and developers to explore and encourage investment opportunities to assist in the future development and restoration of foreshore activities.	SCR-NS/14b	Identify preferred developer to support the progression of the Seaton Carew master plan and development of key sites.	Derek Gouldburn	31-May-2011	31-May-2011	<p>12-Aug-2011 Sites have now been marketed, interested developers shortlisted and first round interviews held. Final submissions have been requested from shortlisted companies and a preferred developer will be identified in September.</p> <p>06-Jul-2011 A marketing and development brief has been prepared and initial expressions of interest sought. Cabinet has endorsed the overall approach towards procurement which will involve requesting further information from two developers to inform the selection of a preferred developer who would work in partnership with HBC to</p>	<div><div></div></div> 75% Overdue

7.6 Appendix A

Recommendation	Action	Assigned To	Original Due Date	Due Date	Note	Progress
					deliver the masterplan. Interviews with the two developers will take place in July with the preferred developer selected in September/October	
SCR-NS/14c That the Headland and Seaton Carew paddling pools be kept open and work undertaken to identify the most cost effective means of dealing with ongoing maintenance issues.	SCR-NS/14c Quality and Safety Officer will explore effective and efficient means to keep the paddling pools open within existing resources. Subject to any proposals and/or requirements in respect of the budget process for 12/13.	Debbie Kershaw	31-Aug-2011	31-Aug-2011	12-Jul-2011 Continuing to keep the paddling pools open for the season with existing resources.	<div><div>50%</div></div> Assigned
SCR-NS/14f That, in marketing areas of interest to tourists along the foreshore, in addition to traditional attractions, increased emphasis should be placed upon the promotion of Hartlepool's natural assets	SCR-NS/14f To work with key internal (Parks & Countryside Teams, Cultural Services) and external partners to provide and deliver on information collection to support marketing activity to promote Hartlepool's natural assets.	Jo Cole	31-May-2011	31-Mar-2012	12-Jul-2011 Working with the countryside team to engage them in information collection, particularly in regard to destinationhartlepool.com. Training exercise coordinated to assist with engagement which will allow countryside team to directly input information on to the website. Engagement will also assist in communicating information more effectively.	<div><div>35%</div></div> Assigned
SCR-NS/14g That the promotion of tourist attractions / events in Hartlepool should continue to be undertaken	SCR-NS/14g Hartlepool's assets will continue to be promoted within the key piece of tourism print, the Hartlepool Mini Guide.	Jo Cole	30-Jun-2011	31-Mar-2012	12-Jul-2011 Hartlepool's assets are currently being promoted to a 1-2 hour drive time through the current 2011 mini guide. Work will	<div><div>27%</div></div> Assigned

7.6 Appendix A

Recommendation	Action	Assigned To	Original Due Date	Due Date	Note	Progress
through traditional means, in addition to web based approaches, in order to reach as wide an audience as possible.					commence on the new publication in September, with the publication due for publication in January 2012.	
SCR-NS/14h That the Council provides guidance and support to local business and groups to access funding to improve the appearance of the foreshore.	SCR-NS/14h/2 Provide advice and guidance to tourism related businesses through the two key networks – Hotels Group and Passport Group	Jo Cole	31-May-2011	31-Mar-2012	12-Jul-2011 Four networking events have taken place within this quarter and minutes of events have been circulated to key stakeholders. Information has been provided related to marketing, product development and also the changing structures of the tourism industry.	<div><div></div></div> 77% Assigned
SCR-NS/14i That concerns regarding the lack of formal response(s) to residents reports of vehicular access to the beach via the Brus Tunnel, and nuisance on / damage to the beach and dunes, be relayed to Cleveland Police.	SCR-NS/14i Neighbourhood Managers and Community Safety Team will feed concerns to Hartlepool Neighbourhood Police	Karen Oliver	31-May-2011	31-May-2011	04-Aug-2011 Funding to redesign access to the Brus Tunnel is complete. All emergency services have been consulted. A further meeting with the fire brigade is required to clarify a few minor details. Awaiting the authorities legal section to confirm changes for vehicle access in relation to Rail Track.	<div><div></div></div> 70% Overdue
SCR-NS/14j/i That a permanent solution is explored to close the Brus Tunnel to vehicles, utilising funds obtained in relation to the	SCR-NS/14j/i Agencies will be involved in providing a permanent solution.	Chris Scaife	31-Oct-2011	31-Oct-2011	24-Jun-2011 HBC has entered discussions with Network Rail regarding changes of entry onto Network Rail (NR) land by their operatives. The reason for this action is	<div><div></div></div> 15% Assigned

7.6 Appendix A

Recommendation	Action	Assigned To	Original Due Date	Due Date	Note	Progress
vandalised camera on the site					a) to remove vehicular access through the Brus Tunnel, b) to stop vehicles using the public footpath that runs nearby and past the seaward entrance to the tunnel c) to help reduce the incidence of illegal vehicular activity to and from as well as on North Beach. HBC has also consulted with emergency services regarding the proposed plans for NR and the Brus Tunnel; the response so far has been very positive. The Coast Guards, NE Ambulance and Hartlepool Police are all behind the change for restrictions to vehicular access through Brus tunnel and a change of access to the north beach area for emergency services.	
SCR-NS/14j/ii That a permanent solution is explored to close the Brus Tunnel to vehicles, utilising funds obtained in relation to the vandalised camera on the site, giving consideration to:- (ii) Views of local residents	SCR-NS/14j/ii Special meeting of the North Neighbourhood Consultative Forum to be arranged.	Karen Oliver	31-May-2011	31-May-2011	04-Aug-2011 Funding to redesign access to the Brus Tunnel is complete. All emergency services have been consulted. A further meeting with the fire brigade is required to clarify a few minor details. Awaiting the authorities legal section to confirm changes for vehicle access in relation to Rail	<div> <div>70%</div> <div>Overdue</div> </div>

7.6 Appendix A

Recommendation	Action	Assigned To	Original Due Date	Due Date	Note	Progress
					Track	

Year 2006/07 Investigation Thoroughfare Policy

Recommendation	Action	Assigned To	Original Due Date	Due Date	Note	Progress
SCR-NS/13a That the guidelines identified in 3.9 of this report be approved for any applications received by the Council for the gating or closure of thoroughfares due to anti-social or criminal activities.	SCR-NS/13a That the guidelines identified in 3.9 of Cabinet's report of 6th November 2006 for any applications received by the Council for the gating or closure of thoroughfares due to anti-social or criminal activities be approved with immediate effect.		30-Nov-2006	30-Nov-2006	11-May-2011 Agreed by Cabinet at their meeting of 6 November 2006.	<div><div>100%</div></div> Completed
SCR-NS/13b Any gating orders schemes currently being investigated should fall in line with this policy	SCR-NS/13b That any gating orders schemes currently being investigated should fall in line with this policy.		30-Nov-2006	30-Nov-2006	11-May-2011 Agreed by Cabinet at their meeting of 6 November 2006.	<div><div>100%</div></div> Completed

Year 2009/10 Investigation Climate Change and Carbon Management

Recommendation	Action	Assigned To	Original Due Date	Due Date	Note	Progress
SCR-NS/11e That the Council publicise their climate change targets along with how the public can help to achieve	SCR-NS/11e Climate change targets and actions will be publicised, as well as associated successes. The Press Office will be kept informed of progress to	Paul Hurwood	01-Mar-2011	01-Apr-2011	13-Apr-2011 A webpage has been produced for Hartlepool's Covenant of Mayors participation, and includes information on the town-wide 20%	<div><div>100%</div></div> Completed

7.6 Appendix A

Recommendation	Action	Assigned To	Original Due Date	Due Date	Note	Progress
these targets;	ensure that the community is aware of progress and how they can take action.				<p>carbon reduction target by 2020. The CAN-DO group has identified baselining as a key action that is being, and will continue to be, undertaken.</p> <p>28-Feb-2011 Press release produced in response to HBC receiving a certificate from the Carbon Trust to recognise efforts that have been made to reduce carbon emissions. The Carbon Action Now Departmental Officers group was pictured with the certificate and accompanied the press release. A number of events fall during March 2011, and will present opportunities for promoting targets and achievements. Most notable are Climate Week (21-27March) and Earth Hour (26 March). Activities are currently being planned and press releases, including info on targets and successes, will be produced for these events to generate further publicity.</p> <p>06-Jan-2011 Steve Hilton, Public Relations Officer continues to represent Press Office</p>	

7.6 Appendix A

Recommendation	Action	Assigned To	Original Due Date	Due Date	Note	Progress
					on Carbon Action Now Group, and is aware of advancements, targets, successes, etc. Q&A regarding home insulation appeared in Christmas edition of Hartbeat magazine. Regular article on climate change/carbon reduction to appear in Staff News. Efforts will be made to inform public of renewable energy advancements as and when they develop.	
					14-Oct-2010 Publicity generated through articles for newslines and Regen & N'Hoods Departmental newsletter and through 10:10 carbon reduction email to all staff. Switch Off & Save Energy Awareness Training due to be launched on 26th October by Mayor & Denise Ogden - photo will be used for generation of publicity.	
					15-Sep-2010 Home insulation articles to appear in Hartbeat and Newslines	
					15-Sep-2010 -- enter new status update --	
					15-Jul-2010 Discussed with external partners at Climate Change	

7.6 Appendix A

Recommendation	Action	Assigned To	Original Due Date	Due Date	Note	Progress
					Working Group meeting. Group will ensure that figures, targets, actions and successes are communicated accross the borough.	
SCR-NS/11f That the Council continue to educate the public and the Council's workforce on how to help reduce energy costs;	SCR-NS/11f/i Climate change awareness raising activities and displays will be held at various locations.	Paul Hurwood	01-Mar-2011	01-Apr-2011	<p>13-Apr-2011 Climate Change Week and Earth Hour promoted via press release. Other partners encouraged to take action through the Hartlepool Healthy Workplace Forum and the Climate Change Working Group (sub-group of the Environment Partnership). Bike2Work Breakfast event held for HBC staff. Walks held to make link between low carbon travel and health. Hartley the Hedgehog attended the official opening of the new market garden at Throston Primary School, promoting the 'grow your own' principle.</p> <p>28-Feb-2011 The Environment Roundabout was a success, with around 500 school children attending to learn about a range of environmental issues and how they link to climate change. Preparations are</p>	<div>100%</div> Completed

7.6 Appendix A

Recommendation	Action	Assigned To	Original Due Date	Due Date	Note	Progress
					<p>underway for Climate Week (21-27 March). HBC has registered to show support for Climate Week, and planning to undertake the Climate Week 1 Hour Challenge. Approached Hartlepool Water and Housing Hartlepool to ask for support - ie for them to also complete the 1 Hour Challenge. In contact with Public Relations Officer to produce Press Release to encourage other organisations and groups to show their support and register for Climate Week. Details of the 1 Hour Challenge will not be released by the Climate Week team until the first day of Climate Week. Cycle to work activity planned for Climate Week. Schools have been invited to undertake projects during Climate Week. Earth Hour falls this year on 26th March, and the Carbon Action Now team is considering ideas for a visible illumination in Hartlepool to be turned off for the hour. The public will be encouraged to take part in Earth Hour closer to</p>	

7.6 Appendix A

Recommendation	Action	Assigned To	Original Due Date	Due Date	Note	Progress
					the event.	
					06-Jan-2011 Switch off & Save energy awareness training clip sent to all office based employees. Environment Roundabout will be held at end of January 2011, and will educate pupils from a range of schools from across the town.	
					14-Dec-2010 Smarter Living Roadshow event held at Civic Centre. Unfortunately larger scale event at Middleton Grange Shopping Centre had to be cancelled as partners unable to participate due to severe weather (snow).	
					14-Oct-2010 Smarter Living Roadshow event planned to take place at Throston School on 18th October. School visits to the Environmental Education Centre at Burn Road continue.	
					15-Sep-2010 Climate change and associated displays at Tall Ship for duration of event. Community/voluntary sector activities and workshop held in partnership with HVDA during July and August. Climate Change presentation delivered	

7.6 Appendix A

Recommendation	Action	Assigned To	Original Due Date	Due Date	Note	Progress
					to Hartlepool Retired Mens Forum, and follow up energy saving event being planned. 16-Jul-2010 Hartlepool Schools competed and won Regional Solar Car Challenge. Three Schools Switch Off & Save assemblies delivered in Q1. Green Britain Day event at Hartlepool Powerstation. Keys to success event in partnership with Housing Hartlepool - practical on-site examples for home energy efficiency. Brougham Centre Health Event - attended with climate change/energy efficiency information stall.	
SCR-NS/11i That the Council continue to promote cycling initiatives to the public and the workforce	SCR-NS/11i A Sustainable Travel Officer will be appointed to provide cycle training and promotion, as well as to work on school and staff travel plans. Back to Biking training will be offered to employees alongside the forthcoming cycle salary sacrifice scheme. Training will be made available to HBC employees and the general public through the appointment of National Standard Cycle Trainers	Alastair Smith; Paul Watson	01-Mar-2011	01-Mar-2011	20-Apr-2011 Sustainable travel officer delivering a number of schemes in schools, to businesses and to Hartlepool staff to encourage sustainable travel and reduce the reliance on the private motor car. The Road Safety Unit has made a bid to the DfT for the expansion of the work undertaken to address adult cycle training and to promote all forms of sustainable	<div><div>100%</div></div> Completed

7.6 Appendix A

Recommendation	Action	Assigned To	Original Due Date	Due Date	Note	Progress
					transport to all staff and local businesses. Results of the bid will be known in June 2011.	
					22-Oct-2010 Sustainable Travel Officer is involved in the Councils Salary Sacrifice Scheme and is currently involved in the promotion of walking and cycling in all schools	
					01-Sep-2010 Robert Snowball appointed 19/7/2010 and will deliver sustainable travel issues to HBC staff and the general public	
					29-Jul-2010 Robert Snowball appointed 19/7/2010 and will deliver sustainable travel issues to HBC staff and the general public.	

Year 2010/11

Investigation 20's Plenty - Traffic Calming Measures

Recommendation	Action	Assigned To	Original Due Date	Due Date	Note	Progress
SCR-NS/12d That the Council work with local schools to stop inconsiderate parking and raise awareness of road safety in conjunction	SCR-NS/12d/1 An ongoing programme of road safety training and parking enforcement around schools is already in place.	Philip Hepburn; Paul Watson	21-Mar-2011	21-Mar-2011	20-Apr-2011 Parking enforcement and education at schools now integrated into both the Car Parking Enforcement Team activities and the	<div><div>100%</div></div> Completed

7.6 Appendix A

Recommendation	Action	Assigned To	Original Due Date	Due Date	Note	Progress
with the Council's Parking Strategy, given the strength of public opinion in this area					initiatives delivered by the Road Safety and Sustainable Transport Team. Use of the new Camera Enforcement Vehicle will support these programmes and deliver greater safety benefits at schools and improve safety. Schools have benefited from pupil based education and encouragement initiatives supported by targeted enforcement.	

Year 2010/11

Investigation Foreshore Management

Recommendation	Action	Assigned To	Original Due Date	Due Date	Note	Progress
SCR-NS/14a That the Council co-ordinates its beach cleaning services with forthcoming public events in order to provide an improved public service.	SCR-NS/14a The Quality and Safety Officer will liaise with Environmental Supervisors as and when events take place.	Debbie Kershaw	31-May-2011	31-May-2011	09-Aug-2011 Touch rugby event that was planned for July 24th was cancelled due to lack of participants, next event will be the kite festival on August Bank holiday weekend 12-Jul-2011 Liaising with Enviromental Supervisors for the cleaning of the beach prior to events to take place in July / August	<div><div>100%</div></div> Completed
SCR-NS/14d That the Council fully consults with residents on any	SCR-NS/14d Neighbourhood Management Consultative mechanisms will be employed to ensure	David Frame	31-May-2011	31-May-2011	04-Jul-2011 SEATON CAREW RENEWAL AND ADVISORY GROUP(SCRAG) MET IN	<div><div>100%</div></div> Completed

7.6 Appendix A

Recommendation	Action	Assigned To	Original Due Date	Due Date	Note	Progress
improvements which are to be made to sites along the foreshore and ensures that residents are kept up to date on the progress of the improvements.	residents are consulted with regarding the development of the Foreshore.				JUNE TO CONSULT ON FORESHORE MASTERPLAN WITH.FURTHER MEETINGS TO BE SCHEDULED PROGRESS REPORTS TO BE TAKEN TO SOUTH CONSULTATIVE FORUM AS APPROPRIATE	
SCR-NS/14e That the Seaton Carew Residents Action Group is re-launched and the membership refreshed to provide a suitable forum to engage with local residents and business and encourage their input into the economic development of Seaton.	SCR-NS/14e SCRAG will be used as a sounding board on emerging development proposals that flow from the overall master plan delivery process. Membership of SCRAG will be reviewed as and when required in relation to each regeneration issue, to ensure membership is appropriate and adds the most value to the process.	Derek Gouldburn	30-Jun-2011	30-Jun-2011	12-Aug-2011 The SCRAG Group has agreed to review their membership and potential new members have been identified and will be invited to the next meeting in September. 06-Jul-2011 The SCRAG group has been reconvened and updated on the initial stage of the developer selection process.A SCRAG representative will be part of the interview panel for the initial selection stage. Consideration has been given to broadening membership of the group.	<div><div>100%</div></div> Completed
SCR-NS/14h That the Council provides guidance and support to local business and groups to access funding to improve the appearance of the	SCR-NS/14h/1 Whilst funding opportunities are currently limited, as funding streams come on line, advice and support will be given to local businesses.	Andrew Golightly; Antony Steinberg	31-May-2011	31-May-2011	09-Aug-2011 In Seaton Carew, the membership of the Seaton Carew Renewal and Advisory Group, made up of residents, businesses, resident reps, local members etc is being	<div><div>100%</div></div> Completed

7.6 Appendix A

Recommendation	Action	Assigned To	Original Due Date	Due Date	Note	Progress
foreshore.					<p>expanded. This group offers an opportunity to feed into and help shape funding bids and find out about other potential opportunities when they become available.</p> <p>15-Jul-2011 With regard to Seaton Carew, draft proposals have been received from 2 developers regarding land at Seaton, which if implemented could encourage investment and development at The Front. Improvement works would not be expected until 2012.</p> <p>08-Jul-2011 Support has been given to local businesses to submit RGF bids in round 2. In addition support has been given to the submission of programme bids which if approved will offer a route for financial assistance for local businesses. Businesses are supported by specialist advice and support to promote the visitor offer.</p>	

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

14 September 2011



Report of: Scrutiny Support Officer

Subject: THE EXECUTIVE'S FORWARD PLAN

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide the opportunity for the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum to consider whether any item within the Executive's Forward Plan should be considered by this Forum.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 One of the main duties of Scrutiny is to hold the Executive to account by considering the forthcoming decisions of the Executive (as outlined in the Executive's Forward Plan) and to decide whether value can be added to the decision by the Scrutiny process in advance of the decision being made.
- 2.2 This would not negate Non-Executive Members ability to call-in a decision after it has been made.
- 2.3 As you are aware, the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee has delegated powers to manage the work of Scrutiny, as it thinks fit, and if appropriate can exercise or delegate to individual Scrutiny Forums. Consequently, Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee monitors the Executive's Forward Plan and delegates decisions to individual Forums where it feels appropriate.
- 2.4 In addition to this, the key decisions contained within the Executive's Forward Plan (September – December 2011) relating to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum are shown below for Members consideration:-

DECISION REFERENCE: RN57/11 – DOG CONTROL ORDERS

Nature of the decision

To seek approval to implement changes to the current series of Dog Control Orders in force across the Borough of Hartlepool.

Who will make the decision?

The decision will be made by the Community Safety & Housing Portfolio Holder.

Ward(s) affected

All wards throughout the borough of Hartlepool.

Timing of the decision

The decision will be made by the Portfolio Holder in October 2011.

Who will be consulted and how?

The review process will follow a similar course to that taken at the time the orders were introduced in 2008. Members of the public will be consulted in the following ways:

- Attendance at central neighbourhood forums, resident/community groups etc;
- Media coverage, including news articles and public notices in the Hartlepool Mail and the council's Hartbeat magazine;
- Information on the council's website.
- Letters/e-mails/etc.

Relevant bodies/organisations will also be consulted.

Council Members and the media will be consulted via executive reports.

Information to be considered by the decision makers

Five Dog Control Orders were introduced in Hartlepool in 2008, which apply to many parts of the town, but essentially parks, open spaces and some of the beaches and foreshores. Specifically, the Orders are:

- The Fouling of Land by Dogs (Borough of Hartlepool) Order;
- The Dogs on Leads (Borough of Hartlepool) Order;
- The Dogs on Leads by Direction (Borough of Hartlepool) Order;
- The Dogs Exclusion (Borough of Hartlepool) Order;
- The Dogs (Specified Maximum) (Borough of Hartlepool) Order.

Since the introduction of the Orders, Hartlepool Borough Council has received a number of requests from council members and members of the public for amendments to be made to designated areas; Natural England has also requested that an order is placed on the SSSI area of North Sands, Headland.

The review will therefore seek to establish the following:

- areas of land where new orders are to placed;
- areas of land where existing orders will be removed;
- areas of land where existing orders will be replaced with a different order.

Following this review, the outcome and recommendations will be reported to a subsequent meeting of the Portfolio Holder. At this meeting, permission will be sought to introduce any changes, which shall then be made in accordance with statutory guidelines.

How to make representation

Representations should be made to Denise Ogden, Assistant Director (Neighbourhood Services), Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department,

Hartlepool Borough Council, Civic Centre, Victoria Road, TS24 8AY. Tel: 01429 523201 Email: denise.ogden@hartlepool.gov.uk

Further information

Further information can be obtained from Craig Thelwell, Waste & Environmental Services Manager, 1 Church St, Hartlepool, TS24 1DS. Tel: 01429 523370 Email: craig.thelwell@hartlepool.gov.uk

DECISION REFERENCE: RN 61/11 SELECTION OF PREFERRED DEVELOPER FOR SITES IN SEATON CAREW

Nature of the decision

Given the reduction in government regeneration funding and reduction in future opportunities to regenerate areas such as Seaton Carew, alternative ways to deliver investment need to be explored. One option is to utilise existing Council assets to generate funding to secure improvements which encourage tourism, support business investment and deliver community benefits.

Expressions of interest have therefore been sought from developers regarding Council owned sites in Seaton Carew. Developers have been asked to respond to a development brief with their initial proposals for the identified sites. It is envisaged that the development of these sites will enable the wider regeneration of Seaton Carew, releasing funding to deliver improvements to The Front, community facilities and contribute toward renewed sea defences. As part of the next phase of the procurement process shortlisted developers will be interviewed during June 2011 and asked to provide more detailed information to support their proposals. A report will be brought to Cabinet in August 2011 to seek endorsement for the appointment of a preferred development partner. The appointed partner would then work with the Council to develop, refine and deliver the proposals in accordance with an agreed masterplan for the area.

Who will make the decision?

The decision will be made by Cabinet

Ward(s) affected

Seaton Ward will be directly affected by the proposals.

Timing of the decision

The decision is expected to be made in September 2011.

Who will be consulted and how?

A number of consultation exercises have been carried out already in Seaton Carew in relation to the regeneration of the area. Further consultation is expected as part of the selection process.

Information to be considered by the decision makers

Within the report, Cabinet will be requested to consider information submitted by the shortlisted developers, regarding their proposals for development on the sites identified. The developers will be asked for more detailed information regarding their proposals for both residential and commercial development, in line with the development brief. They will also be asked for a valuation of the identified sites and an estimated sum that will be available through the development of sites, in order to deliver the regeneration priorities in Seaton Carew. This information along with draft plans and layouts for the suggested sites will form the basis upon which Cabinet will be asked to confirm the selection of a development partner.

How to make representation

Representations should be made to Damien Wilson, Assistant Director (Regeneration and Planning), Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department, Civic Centre, Victoria Road, Hartlepool. Telephone: 01429 523400. E Mail: damien.wilson@hartlepool.gov.uk.

Further information

Further information can be obtained from Damien Wilson, as above.

DECISION REFERENCE: RN62/11 SEATON CAREW COASTAL STRATEGY NORTHERN MANAGEMENT UNIT PHASE 2

Nature of the decision

To note:-

- the progress made on developing a detailed business case for the construction of a new coastal seawall from Station Lane Access Ramp down to the former Coach Park site (Northumbrian Water Headworks);
- the proposed funding package for the scheme involving Hartlepool Borough Council, the Environment Agency and Northumbrian Water.

To approve:-

- a financial contribution to the funding package for the scheme from Hartlepool Borough Council.

Who will make the decision?

The decision will be made by the Cabinet / Council.

Ward(s) affected

Coastal erosion and flooding are Borough wide issues, however the proposed works to be carried out are located in the Seaton Ward.

Timing of the decision

The decision is expected to be made in September 2011.

Who will be consulted and how?

Public consultations and presentations, stakeholder meetings and press releases were all undertaken as part of the wider Seaton Carew Coastal Strategy. Consultation will be carried out through the formal Planning process.

Information to be considered by the decision makers

A Detailed Project Appraisal Report for the proposed coastal works setting out the justification, funding package and business case for carrying out the works (an essential requirement to secure Government Grant from the Environment Agency).

How to make representation

Formal representations can be made in writing to:-

Formal representations can be made in writing to Alastair Smith, Assistant Director (Transportation and Engineering Services), Civic Centre, Victoria Road, Hartlepool, TS24 8AY, Tel: 01429 523802. alastair.smith@hartlepool.gov.uk

Further information

Copies of the wider strategy documents are available at the Civic Centre, Bryan Hanson House and the Town Centre and Seaton Libraries. Further information can be obtained from Dennis Hancock.

DECISION REFERENCE: RN 68 / 11 - COMMUNITY COHESION FRAMEWORK

Nature of the decision

The Portfolio Holder is asked to approve the adoption of a Community Cohesion Framework.

Who will make the decision?

The decision will be made by the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Housing

Ward(s) affected

The Community Cohesion Framework covers all Wards of the Town

Timing of the decision

The decision is expected to be made in November 2011

Who will be consulted and how?

The Draft Community Cohesion Framework will be presented to the following:

- SHP Executive
- Community Safety and Housing Portfolio
- Both the Statutory and Voluntary Organisations : including - HVDA, Salaam Centre, Hart Gables, Access Group, Places of Worship, Police Adult and Child Services, Fire Brigade, Health and Social Housing Providers. After consultation on the Draft Framework the final document will be ratified by the relevant Portfolio Holder.

Information to be considered by the decision makers

The issue of Community Cohesion has risen up the national political agenda in recent years. Equality and diversity are key concepts for all of us as they

aim to ensure a fair society where everyone has the same opportunities, and their different needs and aspirations are recognised and respected. The framework will be a resource which keeps developing and whose elements are constantly renewed as our knowledge and understanding continues to develop in relation to building well integrated and cohesive communities.

There are already lots of strategies and plans, locally and nationally, which talk about how the Council and others will work to promote Community Cohesion. To strengthen the overall approach it will be essential that this framework and the issues involving community cohesion must be specifically addressed by drawing on the strategies already in place, such as Neighbourhood Management and Community Empowerment, SHP Crime and Disorder Strategy and Volunteering etc. The aim is that cohesion is not seen as an 'add on' to these existing strategies but as an integral part of everything that we do. Nationally it also will reflect the Coalition's recent initiatives around 'Big Society' and the Localism Bill.

How to make representation

Representations should be made to Denise Ogden Assistant Director (Neighbourhood Services), Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department, Hartlepool Borough Council, Civic Centre, Victoria Road, TS24 8AY. Tel: 01429523201 Email: denise.ogden@hartlepool.gov.uk

Further information

Further information can be obtained from Karen Oliver, Neighbourhood Management (North), Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department, Hartlepool Borough Council, Bryan Hanson House, Hanson Square, Hartlepool. TS24 7BT. Telephone 01429 523860. E-mail: karen.oliver@hartlepool.gov.uk

DECISION REFERENCE: RN72 / 11 - SELECTIVE LICENSING OF PRIVATELY RENTED HOUSES

Nature of the decision

To provide an update on the existing Selective Licensing scheme following a management restructure in May 2011, which transferred all private sector housing functions from Public Protection to Housing Services. Members will also be updated on progress with the proposed extension of the scheme into further areas of Hartlepool and how this will be implemented.

Who will make the decision?

The Cabinet will make the decision.

Timing of the decision

The decision is expected to be made in September/October 2011.

Who will be consulted and how?

- Residents in the potential areas for designation using individual questionnaires and drop-in sessions.

- Residents groups through presentations at their meetings plus completion of questionnaire on behalf of the group.
- Landlords using questionnaires designed for landlords.
- Stakeholder organisations such as NDC Trust and Housing Hartlepool.
- HBC sections dealing with housing and anti-social behaviour.

Information to be considered by the decision makers

- An evaluation of the Selective Licensing scheme, since implementation in May 2009, and the impact it has made within the existing designated areas.
- The data concerning the criteria which must be met to designate selective licensing, i.e. to show that an area is in 'low demand' or likely to be in 'low demand', or that significant or persistent anti-social behaviour, requires action through licensing.
- The information collected from consultation with residents, landlords and officers on the extent of the problems and the suitability of selective licensing to tackle them.

How to make representation

Representations should be made to Damien Wilson, Assistant Director (Regeneration and Planning) Regeneration & Neighbourhoods Department, Civic Centre, Victoria Road, Hartlepool, TS24 8AY. Tel: 01429 523400. Email: damien.wilson@hartlepool.gov.uk

Further information

Further information can be obtained from Nigel Johnson, Housing Services Manager, Regeneration & Neighbourhoods Department, Bryan Hanson House, Hanson Square, Hartlepool, TS24 7BT. Tel: 01429 284339. Email: nigel.johnson@hartlepool.gov.uk

DECISION REFERENCE: RN 73/11 - NATURE IMPROVEMENT AREAS.

Nature of the decision

Approval of a bid for funding to develop a Nature Improvement Area for Hartlepool

Who will make the decision?

Community Safety and Housing Portfolio Holder and /or the Culture Leisure and Tourism Portfolio Holder.

Ward(s) affected

Several wards across the town could be affected, depending on the outcome of assessments into suitable sites and the form of the bid.

Timing of the decision

The decision is expected to be made in September 2011

Who will be consulted and how?

Should the bid progress beyond the first bidding stage consultations will be held on the detail of the scheme with key stakeholders, ward councillors, the Community Consultation Forums and local residents.

Information to be considered by the decision makers

In June 2011 the government published a Natural Environment White Paper, one of the features of which is the introduction of Nature Improvement Area designation sites (NIAs). NIAs are aimed at creating new, linking and enhancing existing strategic and local ecological networks with a view to restoring ecosystems, encouraging wild life and providing community resources. To support the establishment of NIAs, DEFRA has announced the provision of £7.5 million to be spent between 2011 and 2014, to support the development of 12 Nature Improvement Areas. The sites to receive funding will be determined through a competitive process, details of which were announced in July. Officers are currently examining the bidding criteria and looking at opportunities for Hartlepool to become involved in a bid. Due to the size of areas likely to be considered, this may involve a joint bid in partnership with other Tees Valley authorities or the North Tees Natural Network.

First phase bids need to be submitted by the end of September. If following a detailed assessment of the bid criteria, a viable bid can be developed, this will be reported to the Community Safety and Housing Portfolio Holder in September and /or the Culture Leisure and Tourism Portfolio Holder.

How to make representation

Representations should be made to Damien Wilson, Assistant Director (Regeneration and Planning), Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department, Civic Centre, Victoria Road, Hartlepool. Telephone: 01429 523400. E Mail: damien.wilson@hartlepool.gov.uk.

Further information

Ian Bond, Ecologist, Hartlepool Borough Council, Bryan Hanson House. Tel (01429) 523431 or Richard Harlanderson, Green Spaces Development Officer (01429) 284124

DECISION REFERENCE: RN 74/11 – FORMER LEATHERS CHEMICAL SITE**Nature of the decision**

To consider a report containing the outcome and recommendations of the Environment Agency following a Contaminated Land Special Site investigation into the former Leathers Chemicals site situated off Zinc Works Road and how this may impact on the Council.

Who will make the decision?

The decision will be made by the Cabinet.

Ward(s) affected

The former Leathers Chemicals site is situated in the Seaton Ward.

Timing of the decision

The decision is expected to be made in November 2011.

Who will be consulted and how?

Statutory consultees including land owner, leasee, land occupier, adjacent land owners and other public bodies will be consulted as part of the process following consideration of the report and these will be consulted in writing.

Information to be considered by the decision makers

Following a site investigation including sampling and testing of soils, the Environment Agency will advise the Council of their recommendations following the Contaminated Land Special Site investigation into the former Leathers Chemicals Site and adjacent sand dunes. The Cabinet report will present these recommendations and discuss how the Council must then proceed in terms of the legislation (Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990) and the potential options available.

How to make representation

Formal representations can be made to Alastair Smith (Assistant Director Transportation and Engineering), Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department, Civic Centre, Hartlepool, TS24 8AY. Tel 01429 523802 or e-mail alastair.smith@hartlepool.gov.uk

Further information

Further information can be sought by contacting Stephen Telford (Senior Engineer – Environmental Issues) on 01429 523245 or stephen.telford@hartlepool.gov.uk.

- 2.5 A summary of all key decisions is attached as **APPENDIX A** to this report.
- 2.6 Copies of the Executive's Forward Plan will be available at the meeting and are also available on request from the Scrutiny Team (01429 523647) prior to the meeting.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum:-
 - (a) considers the Executive's Forward Plan; and
 - (b) decides whether there are any items where value can be added to the decision by the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum in advance of the decision being made.

CONTACT OFFICER – Elaine Hind – Scrutiny Support Officer
 Chief Executive's Department - Corporate Strategy
 Hartlepool Borough Council
 Tel: 01429 523647

Email: elaine.hind@hartlepool.gov.uk

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background paper was used in preparation of this report:

- (a) The Forward Plan – September – December 2011

TIMETABLE OF KEY DECISIONS

Decisions are shown on the timetable at the earliest date at which they may be expected to be made.

1. DECISIONS EXPECTED TO BE MADE IN SEPTEMBER 2011

CAS 98/11 (page 14) Hartlepool School Admission Arrangements for 2013/14 Portfolio Holder RN 13/09 (page 22) Disposal of Surplus Assets Cabinet / Portfolio Holder
RN 53/11 (page 25) Sustainable Construction Strategy Cabinet / Portfolio Holders
RN 55/11 (page 27) Hartlepool Compact / Voluntary Sector Strategy Action Plans Cabinet
RN 60/11 (page 34) Hartlepool Housing Strategy 2011-2015 Cabinet
RN 61/11 (page 36) Selection of Preferred Developer for Sites in Seaton Carew Cabinet
RN 62/11 (page 38) Seaton Carew Coastal Strategy Northern Management Unit Phase 2 Cabinet / Council
RN 66/11 (page 42) Future Approach to Neighbourhood Management Cabinet
RN 67/11 (page 44) Purchase of Focus Unit Lynn Street and Sale of Land at Tanfield Road adjoining Stranton Cemetery Cabinet / Council
RM 69/11 (page 49) Flexible Support Fund Cabinet
RN 70/11 (page 50) Innovation Fund Cabinet
RN 71/11 (page 51) Families with Multiple Problems Cabinet
RN 72/11 (page 53) Selective Licensing of Privately Rented Houses Cabinet
RN 73/11 (page 55) Nature Improvement Areas Portfolio Holder(s)
RN 75/11 (page 59) Furniture Solutions Project Portfolio Holder
RN 76/11 (page 61) Raby Road Corridor – General Vesting Declaration Cabinet

2. DECISIONS EXPECTED TO BE MADE IN OCTOBER 2011

CE44/11 (page 6) Workforce Arrangements Cabinet
CE45/11 (page 7) Strategy for Bridging the Budget Deficit 2012/13 – ICT, Revenues and Benefits Services Cabinet
CE 46/11 (page 9) Review of Community Involvement and Engagement (Including LSP Review): Update on Decisions taken in principle Cabinet/Council
CAS 99/11 (page 15) Early Intervention Strategy Cabinet
RN 57/11 (page 29) Dog Control Orders Portfolio Holder
RN 58/11 (page 31) Allotments Portfolio Holder
RN 65/11 (page 40) Review of Waste Management Services Cabinet

3. DECISIONS EXPECTED TO BE MADE IN NOVEMBER 2011

CAS 97/11 (page 13) Community Services Budget Reductions Cabinet
RN 68/11 (page 47) Community Cohesion Framework Portfolio Holder
RN 74/11 (page 57) Former Leathers Chemical Site Cabinet

4. DECISIONS EXPECTED TO BE MADE IN DECEMBER 2011

CE47/11 (page 11) Customer and Support Services – Service Review Cabinet
RN 29/10 (page 24) Hartlepool Domestic Violence Strategy Cabinet