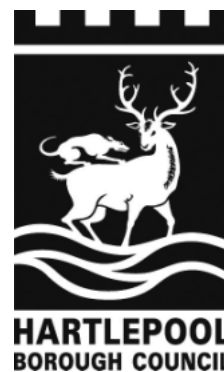


# **NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM AGENDA**



**Wednesday 26 October 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. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 SEPTEMBER 2011**
- 4. RESPONSES FROM THE COUNCIL, THE EXECUTIVE OR COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL TO FINAL REPORTS OF THIS FORUM**
  - 4.1 Portfolio Holder's Response to the investigation into '20's Plenty – traffic Calming Measures' – Joint Report of the Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods and the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Neighbourhoods.
- 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 Middlesbrough Council Housing Services Team:-
- (a) Covering Report – *Scrutiny Support Officer*
  - (b) Presentation – *Housing Services Manager & Principal Environmental Health Officer*
- 7.2 Evidence from Durham Council Housing Services Team:-
- (a) Covering Report – *Scrutiny Support Officer*
  - (b) Presentation – *Areas Based Housing Regeneration Manager & Landlords Initiatives Team Leader*
- 7.3 Written evidence from Stockton Council Private Sector Housing Team - *Scrutiny Support Officer*
- 7.4 Evidence from Hartlepool Council Neighbourhood Services Team:-
- (a) Covering Report – *Scrutiny Support Officer*
  - (b) Presentation – *Assistant Director (Neighbourhood Services)*
- 7.5 Feedback from Tenant Focus Groups and responses to Landlord and Tenant Questionnaires – *Scrutiny Support Officer*

### **Budget Consultation Updates**

- 7.6 Budget Consultation Updates
- (a) Covering report – *Scrutiny Support Officer*
  - (b) Private Sector Housing Management and Private Sector Licensing Income Budget Items - verbal update – *Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods*
  - (c) Neighbourhood and Waste Management Budget Items – verbal update – *Assistant Director (Neighbourhood Services)*

## **8. ISSUES IDENTIFIED FROM FORWARD PLAN**

## **9. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS ARE URGENT**

### **FOR INFORMATION**

- i) **Date of Next Meeting Wednesday 9th November, 2011, commencing at 4.30 p.m. in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.**

# **NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM**

## **MINUTES**

14 September 2011

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

### **Present:**

Councillor: Stephen Thomas (In the Chair)

Councillors: Rob Cook, Mick Fenwick, Steve Gibbon, Brenda Loynes and Sylvia Tempest.

Resident Representatives: John Cambridge and Iris Ryder.

Also present: In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.2, Councillor Carl Richardson as substitute for Councillor Jean Robinson.  
Nigel Budd and Mark Dutton, Housing Hartlepool  
C Stapylton, Belk, Cameron and Furness Streets Residents Association.  
Alan Ridden, Hartlepool Landlords Steering Group  
S & G Johnson.

Officers: Damien Wilson, Assistant Director, Regeneration and Planning  
Nigel Johnson, Housing Services Manager  
Gemma Day, Principal Regeneration Officer  
Elaine Hind, Scrutiny Support Officer  
David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team

### **26. Apologies for Absence**

Councillor Jean Robinson

### **27. Declarations of interest by Members**

Councillor Gibbon declared a personal interest in Minutes no. .

### **28. Minutes of the meeting held on 27 July 2011**

Confirmed.

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

No items.

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

No items.

**31. Consideration of progress reports/budget and policy framework documents**

No items.

**32. Private Sector Housing Schemes Investigation - Evidence from Hartlepool Borough Council Housing Services Team** *(Scrutiny Support Officer)*

The Assistant Director, Regeneration and Planning gave a presentation to Members outlining the current position of the Selective Licensing Scheme in Hartlepool. Full details of the operational aspects of the scheme were set out in the report. The Assistant Director focussed his presentation on the issues that had been highlighted in the report.

The Assistant Director acknowledged that the implementation of the Selective Licensing Scheme in Hartlepool had been inconsistent since its inception. There had been some significant problems in the delivery of the service with many interventions already being actioned. Other problems were 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 was incontrovertible. The Assistant Director stressed that the scheme was in its infancy, having only been introduced in Hartlepool in early 2009 and was therefore just 20 months into its 5-year life span (although if conditions persist a further designation may be made).

The Assistant Director considered that while a lot of work had been done, there was still much to be achieved and the authority wished to move forward with the support of landlords to bring about the changes that the council, residents and landlords wished to see implemented.

The Chair commented that the report gave a comprehensive and honest opinion of 'where we are' and showed the commitment to tackling these issues. The Chair opened the issue to debate where the following comments and questions and response were made –

- How was the scheme encouraging bad landlords to improve and be involved? The Assistant Director indicated that there was an officer within the team now who speaks to landlords to encourage them in particular to bring empty homes back into use through the Tees Valley Pilot scheme. The scheme in Baden Street was an example of how this would bring empty homes back into use. There were still some landlords that were difficult to relate to but the majority were engaging with officers.
- Members questioned if the Baden Street scheme was still going ahead. The Assistant Director commented that one of the main problems that landlords had raised was the lack of security. Often any improvements they installed in a property were stolen or vandalised the day after. This was one of the issues being tackled through the project. The money allocated wasn't wholly grant money as it had initially been portrayed. The scheme was based on repayable loans and grants. Should a property be brought back into use with assistance under the scheme, the agreement would be that the property would remain in use for at least five years before the money could be considered to be a grant. Should that not be the case, the money would be repaid. Following discussions with the landlords it had been agreed that they would be willing to invest if the authority could guarantee the security of the properties. Many of the properties were not in as poor a condition as originally thought so it likely the costs would be much lower than originally anticipated.
- Officers highlighted that one of the critical things that worked with the enforcement of the scheme was the 'carrots' available. With incentives to become involved, 75% of landlords were ready to work with the authority.
- There was some concern that in certain streets, bad tenants seemed to have been installed to clear other properties. Did the Council have the power to get money back from landlords. The Assistant Director indicated that the Council could take over empty properties, improve them and then take the rent for a period of five years before returning the property to the landlord.
- Members questioned if enforcement had previously been lacking in the licensed area. The Assistant Director indicated that some landlords did complain as to why they were being targeted and others were getting away with the same or worse.
- The Forum questioned when the licensing areas were to be expanded. The Assistant Director stated that the Council needed to show it could make the first phase work before moving to the extended areas. If the zones were extended without that, the authority could be open to challenge. The work that had been done, as highlighted in the report, showed that the Housing Services Team was committed to that cause.
- A representative of the Landlords Association commented that in the past there had been a regulation where flats for rent had to be 'fully electric', i.e. no gas heating etc. If there was such a requirement in Baden Street it would make it significantly cheaper and easier for the landlords. It was indicated that most tenants in houses did prefer gas heating as it was cheaper.
- The Chair did feel that the powers to prosecute needed to be

strengthened and that this was something that the MP should be approached about.

- There were still some reservations among Members in relation to providing private landlords with funds to improve their properties. The Mayor commented that the true picture of the Baden Street scheme had not been represented in the press. £35,000 of the funding wouldn't be recoverable as that had been used to enhance the security that was an understandable issue for landlords. The money going into properties would be recoverable through loans.
- Members broadly supported the proposals but did feel that the communication to the public needed to be improved as many saw it as money simply being given to the landlords, which had now been explained as not being the case.
- The Assistant Director highlighted that there was a council tax benefit of bringing the properties back into use. There was also the potential of the council's own DSO being involved in tendering quotes for the works which would essentially recycle the money back through the council.
- The Mayor commented that dealing with bad landlords and empty properties was one of the big issues for Hartlepool. The government weren't funding housing renewal projects anymore so that avenue had gone. Hartlepool needed around 200 new homes each year to meet demand. There were 1000 empty properties in the town and if these could be brought back into use that had to be seen as a good thing for the town and its residents. The points on communication were valid and would be taken on board.
- Members questioned if there was anything else the council could do to assist landlords in bringing properties back into use and could landlords themselves do anything, such as lowering rents. Officers indicated that the council did have the discretionary housing payment fund where small tops ups to rent could be paid; but that budget was already under severe stress. Most of the support from this fund was going to single males and the changes in regulations and the age range to which support could be provided.

The Chair thanked the officers for the presentation and their input into the debate which had been valuable in terms of informing the Forum of the progress of the selective licensing and the work that was being undertaken to move it forward.

#### **Recommended**

That the report and the subsequent debate be noted.

### **33. Private Sector Housing Schemes Investigation - Evidence from the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Housing** *(Scrutiny Support Officer)*

The Mayor, Stuart Drummond was in attendance at the meeting as the Community Safety and Housing Portfolio Holder. The Mayor commented that it had been some time since the Cabinet had considered the licensing scheme

and he was aware it hadn't gone as well as everyone had hoped and that there had been mixed reviews from the public and landlords. The scheme was inter-dependent on all side becoming involved to make it work.

The Mayor did consider that enforcement seemed to be a key issue and work was underway to review the ways s215 notices were issued for instance to help in the process of bringing empty properties back into use. It had to be stressed that the town was generally in good condition; it tended not to be the properties that brought an area down but the people in them. Baden Street was a good example of this where a little assistance to landlords could make a significant difference. However, those landlords that don't want to get involved will soon get the message that we will pursue them.

The Mayor referred to the approach taken in Manchester where the city council had even gone in and changed the locks on properties where they couldn't trace the owners. Such an approach needed to have all the necessary legal support but authorities did have the power to take over property, complete improvements and then take the rent from the property for five years. It was a move that some were not keen on but it was available to the authority. The Mayor had recently heard a speaker from Coventry City Council who had explained some of the innovative ways that problem properties and landlords were being dealt with in that city which were an interesting approach that would be considered further.

Overall, the Mayor did feel that tackling licensing had taken longer than he would have liked but the issues were being dealt with and it was still very high on his agenda.

Members questioned why the authority simply couldn't retain properties that it had had to go into and improve. The Mayor indicated that legally the properties belonged to the owner/landlord. The authority did want to work with landlords; enforcement only worked to a certain point.

The Chair considered that while the physical conditions of many of the properties was not too bad, there still needed to be discussion on some basic standards. The Assistant Director commented that helping people set up homes was also an issue; Cabinet would be considering a report on a scheme to give tenants access to decent affordable furniture, particularly young people setting up their first home. The scheme would provide furniture through a loan payback system. Evidence showed that similar schemes elsewhere secured longer tenancies.

### **Recommended**

That the Community Safety and Housing Portfolio Holder's comments be noted and that The Mayor be thanked for his attendance at the meeting.

### **34. Private Sector Housing Schemes Investigation - Evidence from Hartlepool Landlord Steering Group**

*(Scrutiny Support Officer)*

Alan Ridden and Derek Hamble, members of the Hartlepool Landlords Steering Group were present at the meeting to represent the views of private landlords.

Mr Ridden commented that the tenant accreditation scheme seemed to have taken a back seat to licensing over the past few years and many landlords did look for proper accreditation. It was unfortunate that the scheme could not be extended town-wide and had to be targeted as this would be a sure way of ending the dispersal of bad tenants to blight other areas. Selective licensing had to many seemed to be more about getting numbers involved than actually tackling bad tenants and landlords.

The members of the steering group had been keen to join the process as they hoped it would be good for business as well as reducing social problems. Landlords had to be seen as part of the solution. In some areas if landlords did not come in and buy properties, the problems could be greater. Landlords in general invested an average of £15,000 into properties to bring them up to standard. It was not in their interests to leave them empty; that meant no income and a greater chance of damage and theft.

The landlords have wanted a reliable tenant referencing scheme for years but won't use the current system as it was too slow and regularly issued 'cards' to people that didn't need them. There was no guarantee that anyone through the scheme would be good tenants all the way through a twelve month let. The system would be better if it included past references, was speeded up and applied to the whole of the town.

Mr Hamble indicated that landlords didn't have too many problems with the current licensing zone but would if the zone was extended. There were mixed experiences with the referencing scheme and even so called 'good' tenants had left huge problems after a let. One improvement that the scheme could make was to move online.

The Assistant Director commented that frequently not enough feedback on tenants was coming through from landlords. That information was required to build up a better database.

Mr Ridden referred to advice he had recently given to a landlord against improving a property because of the problems in an area through thefts of copper piping, wiring and other fittings. The lack of general security also made it difficult to get insurance for some properties. Even if improved the chance of getting a good tenant because of the area was also unlikely. This caused Members concern. Mr Ridden indicated that because of the current market selling the property wouldn't be advisable. Members were concerned



that the council moving in and taking on such properties could leave the authority in exactly the same position as the landlord. The Mayor indicated that it may be worth the Forum speaking to the Police on their action on the increasing metal thefts in the town.

The Assistant Director indicated that some security problems could be quickly addressed in some streets. In some it was as simple as street lights being repaired and a general clean up to give a visible uplift. It may be the case that the authority did need to work closer with the landlords to see what sort of dual investment could be made to make areas more attractive to tenants.

Mr Stapylton, Belk, Cameron and Fumess Streets Residents Association, commented that residents were having problems with vandalism and sinking house values if they were next door to an empty property. Empty homes weren't productive for anyone; the landlord not getting any rent and the council not receiving council tax. Residents didn't want yet another bad tenant dumping on their doorstep, they wanted to work with landlords to improve the community of the streets which was in everyone's best interests.

The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions to the debate.

#### **Recommended**

That the comments raised in the debate be noted.

### **35. Private Sector Housing Schemes Investigation - Evidence from Housing Hartlepool** *(Scrutiny Support Officer)*

Nigel Budd and Mark Dutton from Housing Hartlepool (HH) were present at the meeting and outlined how HH were working with the Council to bring empty properties back into use. A scheme had been developed with the national Housing Council to look at this issue. Properties could be empty for a number of reasons, from the landlord having difficulties, problems in finding tenants in certain areas to some homes being inherited by families with no decision being taken on what to do with it.

Some issues were relatively easy to deal with, some weren't. There were twenty properties that had been empty for over five years in the town, all for different reasons. Finance should be available through the scheme to bring around 25 homes back into use. The improvements would be repaid through loans over three to ten years and the property would be managed by HH while the loan was being repaid. HH would need to assess carefully the properties brought into the scheme as the investment would need to be protected. Homes would need to be of a good standard, affordable and let-able. The improvement work would be geared to providing local employment and training and while this was only a small number of properties, the money could be recycled into new properties as the loans were repaid.

The forum welcomed the scheme reported by Housing Hartlepool as a positive step. There was still general concern within the forum as to where bad tenants ended up. It was indicated that the families of bad tenants tended

to gravitate to certain areas increasing the level of blight on the other residents. The Assistant Director indicated that there would always be bad tenants in some way or other. Some did turn themselves around and all the 'carrots' had to be directed towards that change. The Chair considered that the forum may have a view through the investigation as to what sorts of 'carrots' were made available but also the sanctions that went with them.

The Chair thanked everyone in attendance for their input into this first meeting of the investigation. The comments and feedback had been extremely valuable and constructive and showed the level of commitment on all sides to move these issues forward.

#### **Recommended**

That the representatives from Housing Hartlepool be thanked for their input into the forum's investigation.

### **36. Member Attendance at Tenant Focus Groups** (*Scrutiny Support Officer*)

The Scrutiny Support Officer reported that at the meeting of the Forum on 27 July 2011, the Terms of Reference and Potential Areas of Inquiry / Sources of Evidence for the investigation were approved. As a result two focus groups had been arranged to take place on Tuesday 4 October 2011, at 6.00 p.m. in the Lynnfield Centre, Grosvenor Street Hartlepool and Wednesday 12 October 2011, at 6.00 p.m. in the Stranton Centre, Southburn Terrace, Hartlepool. The purpose of the meetings would be to seek the views of tenants and residents of areas with a high percentage of private rented accommodation. The Chair encouraged Members of the Forum to attend the meetings.

#### **Recommended**

That the dates and times of the two meetings be noted.

### **37. Six Monthly Monitoring of Agreed Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum's Recommendations** (*Scrutiny Support Officer*)

The Scrutiny Support Officer reported that in accordance with the agreed procedure, details of progress made against each of the investigations undertaken by the Forum was submitted twice a year to Members. The report detailed the overall progress made by all scrutiny forums since 2005 and Appendix A to the report included 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. Members attention was drawn to five actions that were overdue and one, SCR-NS/7a "That the Council develops a strategy to achieve a planned approach to highways maintenance as opposed to a reactive approach", where a six month extension to the original target date was requested by officers. The Chair indicated that he had been briefed by the officers and supported the extension but requested that a progress report be submitted to the November meeting.

A Resident Representative commented in relation to the recommendations set out in SCR-NS/8 following the investigation into “Coastal Defence and Shoreline Management in Hartlepool”. The Seaton Carew Regeneration Action Group (SCRAG) had recently been informed of the potential of housing development sites in Seaton Carew. These sites had not been subject to pen public consultation and there was concern that the advanced stages of negotiations some sites had progressed to with developers may preclude such consultation. The Group had been informed of the confidentiality of the proposals and while not wishing to breach that, the Resident Representative considered that reassurance was sought that there would be a full consultation on the proposals being considered by Cabinet. The Chair asked that these concerns be relayed to the appropriate officers and a response sought.

#### **Recommended**

1. That the Six Monthly Monitoring Report of Agreed Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum’s Recommendations be noted.
2. That the six month extension to the completion date of SCR-NS/7a “That the Council develops a strategy to achieve a planned approach to highways maintenance as opposed to a reactive approach” be agreed subject to the submission of an update report to this Forum in November.

### **38. The Executive's Forward Plan** (*Scrutiny Support Officer*)

The Scrutiny Support Officer submitted a report providing the forum with the opportunity to consider whether any item within the Executive’s Forward Plan should be reviewed by the Forum. Attention was drawn in the report to seven items that related to the remit of the forum. A Member of the forum indicated that further details of the proposed decision relating to the Former Leathers Chemical Site be reported to the forum. The Chair indicated that the matter had already been referred by Members to the Council Working Group and the forum would be updated accordingly in the future.

#### **Recommended**

That the report be noted.

The meeting concluded at 6.40 p.m.

CHAIR

## **NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM**

**26 October 2011**



**Report of:** Joint Report of Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods and the Portfolio Holder for Transport Neighbourhoods.

**Subject:** PORTFOLIO HOLDERS RESPONSE TO 20's PLENTY – TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES

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### **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members of the Neighbourhood Service Scrutiny Forum with feedback on the recommendations from the investigation into '20's Plenty – Traffic Calming Measures', which was reported to Cabinet on 21 March 2011 and to the Portfolio Holder on 6 October 2011.

### **2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 The investigation into 20's Plenty – Traffic Calming Measures conducted by this Forum falls under the remit of the Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department and is, under the Executive Delegation Scheme, within the service area covered by the Transport and Neighbourhoods Portfolio Holder.
- 2.2 On 21 March 2011, Cabinet considered the Final Report of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum into 20's Plenty – Traffic Calming Measures, further consideration was given to the Final Report by the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Neighbourhoods on 6 October 2011. This report provides feedback from the Portfolio Holder following Cabinet and Portfolio consideration of, and decisions in relation to this Forum's recommendations.
- 2.3 Following on from this report, progress towards completion of the actions contained within the Action Plan will be monitored through Covalent; the Council's Performance Management System; with standardised six monthly monitoring reports to be presented to the Forum.

### 3. SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS AND EXECUTIVE DECISION

3.1 Following consideration of the Final Report on 21 March 2011, Cabinet determined that the following recommendation should be implemented:-

(a) That the Council implements 20mph speed limits on all appropriate residential streets in Hartlepool, and in doing so:-

(i) undertakes a full public consultation (before the scheme is rolled out) with Councillors, residents, the emergency services; schools; businesses and all other relevant bodies.

3.2 The results of this consultation were presented to Cabinet on 15 August 2011. The consultation received 62 responses, 35 against the proposals, 9 supporting the introduction of 20mph limits on all appropriate residential streets in Hartlepool and 18 specifically requesting the scheme be extended to include Warrior Drive in Seaton Carew (not one of the roads originally included in the scheme).

3.3 Following consideration of the results of the consultation exercise Cabinet made the following decision:-

(i) *That due to the low and negative response to the consultation exercise over the introduction of a town-wide 20 mph speed limit, officers continue to work with Members to identify more localised areas in which the speed limit could be introduced.*

(ii) *That the introduction of 20 mph speed limit on Warrior Drive be considered in line the consultation responses received from residents.*

3.4 The remainder of the recommendations contained within the Final Report were considered by the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Neighbourhoods on 6 October 2011. An extract of the decision record is detailed below:-

(i) *That the updated action plan be noted*

(ii) *That where requests for 20 mph speed limits are received a local public consultation be carried out prior to implementation, and detailed proposals brought back to Portfolio if there is wider public support.*

(iii) *That the 20mph areas around schools be widened*

(iv) *That the press office continue to promote 20s plenty*

3.5 The Portfolio Holder's suggestion (ii) above is in addition to the Forum's recommendations. It is suggested that this recommendation be included in the department's action plan as recommendation (f). Full details of the action plan are provided at **Appendix A**.

## 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

### 4.1 That Members:-

- (i) note the proposed actions detailed within the Action Plan, appended to this report (**Appendix A**) and seek clarification on its content where felt appropriate;
- (ii) consider the inclusion of the additional recommendation as suggested by the Portfolio Holder.

**Contact Officer:-** Alastair Smith – Assistant Director (Transport and Engineering)  
Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
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E-mail – [alastair.smith@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:alastair.smith@hartlepool.gov.uk)

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

- (i) The Scrutiny Forum's Final Report '20's Plenty – Traffic Calming Measures' considered by Cabinet on 21 March 2011.
- (ii) Decision Record of Cabinet held on 21 March 2011.
- (iii) Cabinet Report of 15 August 2011 – 20's Plenty Traffic Calming Measures – Outcome of Town-Wide Consultation.
- (iv) Decision Record of Cabinet held on 15 August 2011.
- (v) Decision Record of Transport and Neighbourhoods Portfolio 6 October 2011.

# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN – SEPTEMBER 2011 UPDATE

NAME OF FORUM : Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum

4.1 Appendix 1

NAME OF SCRUTINY ENQUIRY: 20's Plenty – Traffic Calming Measures

DECISION MAKING DATE OF FINAL REPORT: March 2011

RECOMMENDATION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE	
(a)	That the Council implements 20mph speed limits on all appropriate residential streets in Hartlepool, and in doing so:-	Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum approved the implementation of 20mph limits on appropriate residential streets at the meeting of 19 January.  Cabinet meeting of 15 August 2011 agreed that 20's Plenty would <u>not</u> be implemented on a town-wide basis, but that estates/ self-contained areas of the town where there is support from residents, could be considered in exceptional circumstances.	Estimated £150,000 required from the Local Transport Plan for implementation programme.	Peter Frost	March 2014
(i)	undertakes a full public consultation (before the scheme is rolled out) with Councillors, residents, the emergency services; schools; businesses and all other relevant bodies;	Consultation exercise to commence in new financial year (2011/12).  Consultation was undertaken in June/ July 2011, comprising:-  Elected members consulted by letter; Officers attended each of the Neighbourhood Consultative Forums;	Consultation costs to be met from overall scheme budget.	Peter Frost	31 July 2011

# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN – SEPTEMBER 2011 UPDATE

**NAME OF FORUM:** Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum

**4.1 Appendix 1**

**NAME OF SCRUTINY ENQUIRY:** 20's Plenty – Traffic Calming Measures

**DECISION MAKING DATE OF FINAL REPORT:** March 2011

RECOMMENDATION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE
		<p>A town-wide public meeting was held, on 15<sup>th</sup> July;            An article was placed in the Council's Hartbeat Magazine;            Press releases in the Hartlepool Mail on 3 occasions;            A radio interview and advertising campaign was carried out; and            the views of the emergency services, bus operators, taxi drivers, driving instructors and other road users were sought through the Traffic Liaison Group.</p>		
(ii)	<p>discusses and shares information with regional local authorities to develop the best way possible for Hartlepool to roll out 20mph speed limits;</p>	<p>Discussions to take place with neighbouring Authorities prior to consultation. Have already met with Newcastle City Council as part of scrutiny investigation. Networking to continue with other 20's Plenty authorities.</p> <p>Further discussions were held with Newcastle City Council, and also colleagues in the other Tees Valley Authorities.</p>	N/A	Peter Frost
				30 April 2011



# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN – SEPTEMBER 2011 UPDATE

NAME OF FORUM: Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum

4.1 Appendix 1

NAME OF SCRUTINY ENQUIRY: 20's Plenty – Traffic Calming Measures

DECISION MAKING DATE OF FINAL REPORT: March 2011

RECOMMENDATION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE	
		Trafford Borough Council also contacted HBC for advice on taking their own scheme forward. Not applicable, now that 20's Plenty will no longer be rolled out on a town-wide basis.			
(iii)	does not install any new physical traffic calming measures in residential areas, unless, following speed surveys or accidents it is thought necessary in order to slow traffic down further;	Physical traffic calming schemes to be installed as a last resort, and will be prioritised using accident records and speed survey results.  Each location to be assessed on its individual merits before schemes are implemented subject to Portfolio approval. Not applicable, now that 20's Plenty will no longer be rolled out on a town-wide basis, however this is departmental policy.	Scheme dependent.	Peter Frost	21 March 2011
(iv)	when it becomes necessary to replace speed humps, the most appropriate cost effective solution be used;	Either tarmac or pre-formed humps to be used, dependent on cost.  Scheme dependent. Ongoing process as part of highway	Scheme dependent, as part of highway maintenance.	Peter Frost/ Kevin Young	21 March 2011

# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN – SEPTEMBER 2011 UPDATE

**NAME OF FORUM:** Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum

**4.1 Appendix 1**

**NAME OF SCRUTINY ENQUIRY:** 20's Plenty – Traffic Calming Measures

**DECISION MAKING DATE OF FINAL REPORT:** March 2011

RECOMMENDATION		EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE
		<p>maintenance programme.</p> <p>Not applicable, now that 20's Plenty will no longer be rolled out on a town-wide basis, however this is departmental policy.</p>			
(v)	continues to deliver school safety schemes;	<p>School safety schemes to continue as part of Local Transport Plan.</p> <p>LTP programme is continuing. A further report will be presented to a future Portfolio meeting detailing this year's scheme, and work is continuing to implement schemes with Neighbourhood Forums where appropriate.</p>	Scheme dependent. Funded from LTP, plus Neighbourhood Forums, etc, where possible.	Peter Frost/ Peter Nixon	One school per year from LTP budget – 31 March 2012.
(vi)	develops a set of criteria (including accident statistics, schools in the area, local street patterns and existing traffic calming provision) to assess how the scheme will be rolled out;	<p>Existing safety scheme criteria to be developed, to suit 20's Plenty implementation.</p> <p>Not applicable, now that 20's Plenty will no longer be rolled out on a town-wide basis.</p>	N/A	Peter Frost	30 April 2011

# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN – SEPTEMBER 2011 UPDATE

**NAME OF FORUM:** Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum

**4.1 Appendix 1**

**NAME OF SCRUTINY ENQUIRY:** 20's Plenty – Traffic Calming Measures

**DECISION MAKING DATE OF FINAL REPORT:** March 2011

RECOMMENDATION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE	
(vii)	<p>publicises the roll out of 20mph limits in the Council's magazine, Hartbeat; through the local press, radio and schools; and on the Council's website to encourage a change in driver behaviour and attitude; and</p>	<p>To be carried out following consultation exercise.</p> <p>A local radio discussion has also been organised. This took place in July, with the Chair of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum, and Traffic Team Leader.</p> <p>The consultation process was publicised using the methods outlined in the left hand column, but it is not necessary to continue regarding the implementation, as this will not now go ahead on a town-wide basis.</p>	N/A	Peter Frost	30 September 2011 initially, and ongoing throughout implementation programme.
(viii)	<p>Reviews the planning requirements relating to the installation of physical traffic calming measures on new housing developments with a view to implementing 20mph speed limits as opposed to physical traffic calming and</p>	<p>To be done on a Tees Valley wide basis, through the Tees Valley Residential Development Working Party Group.</p> <p>Discussions are ongoing over a Tees Valley approach.</p> <p>Not applicable, now that 20's</p>	N/A	Mike Blair	31 July 2011

# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN – SEPTEMBER 2011 UPDATE

**NAME OF FORUM:** Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum

**4.1 Appendix 1**

**NAME OF SCRUTINY ENQUIRY:** 20's Plenty – Traffic Calming Measures

**DECISION MAKING DATE OF FINAL REPORT:** March 2011

RECOMMENDATION		EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE
	works with developers to implement 20mph limits on new housing estates where the roads have not yet been adopted by the Council.	Plenty will no longer be rolled out on a town-wide basis, however developers are asked to promote 20mph limits on appropriate roads, as part of the planning process.			
(b)	That the costs for the 20mph scheme be funded through the Local Transport Plan and appropriate funding streams and be phased over a number of years with the aim of full implementation by March 2014;	It is proposed to implement the scheme over the next 3 years (up to March 2014), and this is reflected in LTP budgets.  Not applicable, now that 20's Plenty will no longer be rolled out on a town-wide basis, however funding for localised areas which are supported by residents will be available from the Local Transport Plan.	Included in LTP.	Mike Blair	31 March 2014
(c)	That the Council explore all possible options to try and secure further funding for the delivery of the 20mph scheme, such as the Sustainable Transport Fund;	Discussions have already taken place with Neighbourhood Forums over funding specific areas, and other options will also be investigated.	Possible reduced burden on LTP budgets.	Peter Frost	31 March 2013

# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN – SEPTEMBER 2011 UPDATE

**NAME OF FORUM:** Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum

**4.1 Appendix 1**

**NAME OF SCRUTINY ENQUIRY:** 20's Plenty – Traffic Calming Measures

**DECISION MAKING DATE OF FINAL REPORT:** March 2011

RECOMMENDATION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE
	the Neighbourhood Consultative Forums; the Neighbourhood Action Plans and partnership working with other organisations;	Neighbourhood Forum funded schemes are also an option, should LTP funding not be available until later years. However it is likely that Highway funding will not be available in future years for Forum use.  Not applicable, now that 20's Plenty will no longer be rolled out on a town-wide basis.		
(d)	That the Council work with local schools to stop inconsiderate parking and raise awareness of road safety in conjunction with the Council's Parking Strategy, given the strength of public opinion in this area; and	An ongoing programme of road safety training and parking enforcement around schools is already in place.  A further initiative is to be rolled out in April 2011, in the form of a mobile camera enforcement car, which will utilise number plate recognition technology.  The camera enforcement vehicle is now in operation, and is achieving good levels of compliance outside of schools.	N/A  £40,000  Paul Watson/ Phil Hepburn  Phil Hepburn	21 March 2011  30 April 2011

# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN – SEPTEMBER 2011 UPDATE

**NAME OF FORUM:** Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum

**4.1 Appendix 1**

**NAME OF SCRUTINY ENQUIRY:** 20's Plenty – Traffic Calming Measures

**DECISION MAKING DATE OF FINAL REPORT:** March 2011

RECOMMENDATION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE	
(e)	That the Council circulate an accident map and ward based accident information to all Councillors as a means of communicating this information to residents.	Ward specific data to be circulated to members on a monthly basis.  The software is being adapted in order to allow this data to be produced and then circulated to members.	N/A	Peter Frost	30 April 2011
(f)	That where requests for 20 mph speed limits are received a local public consultation be carried out prior to implementation, and detailed proposals brought back to Portfolio if there is wider public support.	At the meeting of the Transport and Neighbourhoods Portfolio on 6 <sup>th</sup> October 2011 the Portfolio Holder agreed that where requests for 20 mph speed limits are received a local public consultation be carried out prior to implementation, and detailed proposals brought back to Portfolio if there is wider public support.	Funding is still available through the Local Transport Plan for 20 mph zones	Peter Frost	31 March 2015

## **NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM**

26 October 2011



**Report of:** Scrutiny Support Officer

**Subject:** SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION INTO PRIVATE  
SECTOR HOUSING SCHEMES – EVIDENCE FROM  
MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL - COVERING  
REPORT

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform Members that representatives from Middlesbrough Council 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, representatives from Middlesbrough Council have agreed to attend this meeting to provide evidence in relation to the private sector housing schemes currently operating in Middlesbrough, their effectiveness, the extent to which the authority has used its legal powers in this area and how private sector housing schemes may be provided going forward, given current budget pressures.
- 2.3 Middlesbrough Council will also provide details of their efforts to work in closer partnership with their local PCT to get housing on the health agenda and to demonstrate the value of private sector housing interventions on health.

### **3. RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Members of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum consider the evidence of the representatives from Middlesbrough Council in attendance at this meeting and seek clarification on any relevant issues where required.

**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.
- (ii) Minutes of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee 24 June 2011.



## **NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM**

26 October 2011



**Report of:** Scrutiny Support Officer

**Subject:** SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION IN TO PRIVATE  
SECTOR HOUSING SCHEMES – EVIDENCE FROM  
DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL - COVERING  
REPORT

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform Members that representatives from Durham County Council 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 it's meeting on 27 July 2011.
- 2.2 Consequently, Representatives from Durham County Council have agreed to attend this meeting to provide evidence in relation to the private sector housing schemes currently operating in Durham, their effectiveness, the extent to which the authority used its legal powers in this area, and how private sector housing schemes may be provided going forward, given current budget pressures.

### **3. RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Members of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum consider the evidence of the representatives from Durham County

Council in attendance at this meeting and seek clarification on any relevant issues where required.

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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.
- (ii) Minutes of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee 24 June 2011.

## NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

26 October 2011



**Report of:** Scrutiny Support Officer

**Subject:** WRITTEN EVIDENCE FROM STOCKTON COUNCIL

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of the Forum that Stockton Council have been invited to submit written evidence to the Forum in relation to the investigation in to '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, written evidence has been sought from Stockton Council Private Sector Housing Division in relation to the private sector housing schemes operated by the Council. The evidence received has been circulated to Members at today's meeting as **Appendix A**.

### 3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum note the content of this report and the written evidence from Stockton Council.

**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 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 on 27 July 2011.

## **Introduction**

Local Authorities have many statutory duties in relation to improving conditions in both private and public sector housing. There are over 100 pieces of primary and secondary legislation regulating housing. Public sector housing comes under the management of Housing Associations or Registered Providers but Local Authorities can intervene where poor housing conditions exist and require their improvement.

Many Local Authorities are currently experiencing budget cuts and a reduction in the number of officers working in the private sector housing area. The identification of Members key priorities for housing is essential to develop the way forward, having regard to the statutory nature of the powers that the Council must implement.

Stockton Council's Private Sector Housing Division provides a number of services, these include improving poor housing conditions, mandatory licensing of houses in multiple occupation, landlord accreditation, the provision of financial assistance to improve the condition of the private sector stock or to provide adaptations for people with special physical needs and the bringing back into use long term empty properties. The Council does not operate a selective licensing scheme.

## **Stockton's private sector housing stock condition survey**

In November 2009, the Private Sector Housing Division completed its statutory, borough wide private sector housing stock condition survey. This was procured jointly with Hartlepool and Darlington Councils. The headline information reveals:

- There are 67,150 private sector homes in the borough of which 58,120 (86.5%) are owner occupied and 9,030 (13.5%) are private rented
- There are 10,700 homes in the borough that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard of which 4,500 are non decent because they contain a category 1 hazard
- The total cost to remedy category 1 hazards is £16 million
- The total cost to remedy non-decent homes is £42 million
- 33,237 (51%) of households in the borough live on an income of less than £15,000 per year, which raises significant affordability issues
- 9,500 dwellings (14.7%) have at least one resident with a long-term illness or disability, of these, 4,180 (44%) are unsteady on their feet.
- Since 2003 the number of empty dwellings has increased by 27% from 1,600 to 2,420
- 99% of households in fuel poverty have an income less than £15,000 per year and 31% of private rented tenants are classed as fuel poor.

**Improving poor housing conditions in the private sector**

The Private Sector Housing Division has a number of 'tools' it utilises to remedy sub standard housing conditions. Stockton's approach to dealing with unsatisfactory conditions and poor Landlord practices is both proactive and reactive.

We have developed a 'private rented toolkit' comprising of:

- Informal actions – to support and encourage Landlords to improve their property and management practices. An example of this approach is our popular Landlord Accreditation Scheme through which Landlords can access help and practical support such as discounted services, a rent bond guarantee scheme, tenant referencing and a priority Housing Benefit service. In the two years the Scheme has been in operation we have accredited 80 Landlords who have a combined portfolio of more than 560 properties.
- Formal actions – in the first instance we always try to work informally with Landlords. However, where this is not successful, we have a number of enforcement powers which we fully utilise. For example, we have introduced a mandatory House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licensing Scheme and we were the first authority in the Tees Valley to apply for an Interim Empty Dwelling Management Order to take control of a long term empty property. We do not hesitate to serve a statutory notice if a Landlord will not carry out the required works or if the Landlord has a track record of non compliance.

**The following is a brief summary of some of the services we provide to improve homes in the private sector, whether rented or occupied by the owner:**

- Advice and information relating to the rights and responsibilities of home owners, landlords and tenants
- Disabled adaptations such as ramps, level access showers, stair lifts and house extensions through either: -
  - The Equipment Loan Scheme loans ramps and stair lifts which are returned for re-use when they are no longer required or
  - Disabled Facilities Grants providing financial assistance for major adaptations.
- Facelift Projects which enhance the appearance and perceptions of housing through external improvements to the front elevation of properties, positively changing the appearance of whole streets and neighbourhoods
- Landlord Forum events and newsletters to inform, educate and update private landlords on issues relating to renting properties, such as new regulations to be followed

- Landlord Accreditation Scheme in which landlords voluntarily sign up to a code of standards and work with the Council to improve property conditions and management standards in the private rented sector
- A HMO Licensing scheme to ensure that large HMOs are properly managed and meet agreed standards for amenities and fire safety
- Advice and financial assistance for homeowners to improve the condition of their home in the form of an affordable loan through the North East Regional Loans Scheme.
- Advice and signposting to financial assistance for homeowners, landlords and tenants who wish to improve the energy efficiency of the homes they own or rent
- A free tenant referencing service to Landlords who wish to undertake basic checks on the suitability of prospective tenants
- A rent deposit/bond scheme for tenants who wish to move into a property owned by a member of the Council's Landlord Accreditation Scheme
- Joint working with Cleveland Fire Brigade through its Winter Warmth campaign to assist vulnerable or elderly people in crisis during winter months by the provision of safety checks and emergency equipment.
- Joint working with Cleveland Fire Brigade to develop common standards for means of escape and other fire safety measures in Houses in Multiple Occupation
- A proactive approach to dealing with the issues caused by empty homes through the process of informal advice, information and assistance. Where this approach fails formal enforcement action is taken. There are currently 2000 long term empty homes in Stockton. We have developed a priority list of the top 150 empty properties, based on a scored rating system and we actively focus on the top 15. We have improved partnership work across the Council and have a Corporate Empty Homes Group that meets monthly.

### **Responding to the results of the stock condition survey and emerging national issues**

The 2009 Stock Condition Survey highlighted that £42million was required to remedy non decent homes and £16million was required to remove category 1 hazards under the Housing Health and Safety Rating Scheme – a standard by which the condition of a property is assessed upon inspection.

With the knowledge that there will never be enough finance available to deal with the extent of the problem, we have developed a new strategic direction for dealing with properties in disrepair and in need of renovation. The emphasis of this is to achieve positive health outcomes through the provision of timely and effective interventions rather than simply focusing on improving poor housing conditions.

Key to the success of this objective is the targeting of housing conditions that have the biggest impact on the health of our residents. What this means in practice is a focus on the removal of category 1 hazards only. For example - we will look to remove damp and perished wall plaster by providing a damp proof course and at the same time provide an efficient, effective heating system to remedy excess cold rather than look to carry out additional works to the whole of the house that may not necessarily have a negative impact on the occupier's health.

To ensure we effectively target our resources to those most at risk and to obtain the biggest impact from our limited funding we work successfully with our colleagues in Health and in Social Care. Housing Services are represented at both Partnership and Management Team levels of the Health and Well Being Partnership and at the Housing and Neighbourhood Partnership.

Through active membership of the Health and Well Being Partnership we have successfully bid for PCT funding to provide financial assistance to remove category 1 hazards for the past two years. This funding not only eliminates the category 1 hazards it also reduces the NHS's expenditure on medical treatment and hospital care.

For example, the cost to remedy excess cold in 210 properties is £1.1million whilst the cost to the NHS to provide medical treatment to the occupiers of those 210 properties is £3.6million. A further example of how savings can be made relates to falls on the level and falls on the stairs. With a hip replacement costing £28,665 it is not surprising that an investment of only £217,000 per year to remedy hazards to prevent falls could save the NHS approximately £1.6 million per annum. (Reference - 2009 Stock Condition Survey and BRE/CIEH Toolkit)

We actively contribute to the annual statutory Joint Strategic Needs Assessment between the PCT and the Council which highlights the links between poor housing and poor health and the affects an increasing older population will have on available budgets for disabled adaptations.

### **Current funding position**

Despite the clear and evidential benefits and savings from removing Category 1 hazards, Government announced that it will no longer provide funding to Councils for private sector housing renewal and has reduced the funding for Disabled Facilities Grants. At Stockton there has been an 88% reduction in capital funding to improve housing conditions and a reduction of 34% in Disabled Facilities Grant funding.

The consequences of large budget reductions will be very significant considering that over the last three years the number of requests for financial assistance has increased by 21% and the number of requests for Disabled Facilities Grants has increased by 38%. Similarly, the number of requests for service from tenants in the private rented sector has increased by 24% over the same time period. This increase in demand for our services is a direct result of the current economic climate and is set to increase due to recently announced changes to the Local Housing Allowance, homelessness duties and changes to social housing tenancies which will significantly increase



demand in the private rented sector. In the past 8 months, there has been a 40% reduction in the number of officers working in the Private Sector Housing Division.

### **Tees Valley Partnership Working**

The five Tees Valley Local Authorities work together across a number of areas from Heads of Housing through to Strategic Private Sector Housing Managers and the Operational Enforcement Teams. There are work programmes for these groups that set the priorities and the focus for service delivery for a number of years. Attached at **Appendix B** is an example of a previous Strategic Private Sector Housing work programme.

The joint working of the five Local Authorities has been successful and has led to joint projects in several areas:

- The North East Regional Loans Scheme
- Empty Homes Scheme
- Energy Efficiency Scheme
- Procurement of stock condition surveys
- Joint bids for capital funding
- Development of agreed and approved standards for HMO amenities and fire safety
- Annual Tees Valley Landlord Forum

19/10/2011													
OCTOBER 2009 - MARCH 2012													
(RR) Linked to the Rugg Review													
RED = LEAD													
										Nov-10 updates	Nov-10 updates		
Objective	Action	Key Tasks Required	Milestones	Responsibility	Verified Lead Role/Feedback to which Group	Key Partner	Priority Low/medium/high	Timescale	Monitoring	Update/ evidence	blue = dton / stockton = orange red = HBC green = MBC		
PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR										Redcar & Cleveland	STATUS		
To continue to drive up standards within the private rented sector.	To increase the participation of landlord accreditation. (RR)	Promotion of landlord accreditation / similar schemes, introduce accreditation where resources allow.	Establish landlord schemes in areas without accreditation or similar. Promotion of schemes across the sub region	DARLINGTON - Gillian Fox(lead) Hartlepool - Lesley Hewitson, Stockton - Eleanor Foster, Middlesbrough - Monica Marron, Redcar- Steve McCabe	Darlington/ Private Sector Managers Group	Landlord Groups, ANUK, National Landlord Association	Low	Mar-11	Quarterly	Sub regional development of manual and on line guidance, new loal PI 20% growth = 90 properties in 2010-11. 100% inspection to commence, refresh application / website info / logo developed to promote scheme since April 2010 29 additional properties, funding to run post March 2011 - CSR impact/ LIP proposal made to manage in sub region	No Further progress to date (Accreditaion officer is on maternity leave until June 11) LIP - BID RCBS - Landlord Charter MBC - NLA Pilot HBC - Established DBC - Established SBC - Established  on hold  Landlord Fair arranged for 24/01/10  TV Procurement Group with view to framework agreement  ongoing GK	ACHIEVED / MONITOR	
	Implement and review where appropriate Selective Licensing Schemes within the Tees Valley (a) New areas (b) Existing areas	(a) Implementation of new Selective Licensing Schemes as required	(a) Collection of evidence, preparation of a bid, obtain approval, (b) draft exit /review strategy	(a) Redcar, Stockton, Darlington, MIDDLESBROUGH, Hartlepool (b) Middlesbrough, HARTLEPOOL	Middlesbrough and Hartepool - Private Sector Managers Group	(a) Evidence - Community Safety Teams/Empty Homes Officer, Approval - CLG, (b) Selective Licensing Team and partners	Low	Sep-10	Biannual	Elected members interest in Sbank - anti social behaviour, report in May 2010 and second options report being drafted/ LACORS support is more of an info exchange not extra resource as originally suspected by Area Management / REPORT TO CABINET IN JANUARY 2011 REGARDING CONSULTATION FOR SL IN GREATER ESTON		ONGOING	
	Delivery of an annual sub regional Landlord Forum Event (RR)	Delivery of annual event	(a) Plan, prepare and deliver first sub regional event (b) Assess success of first event and plan for 2010 event	Conference Group, MIDDLESBROUGH	Middlesbrough - Enforcement Group	National Landlord Association	High	(a) 01/11/2009 (b) Assessment Jan 2010	Qtrly	Support event - officers have attended meetings to date. Scale down due to economic situation preferred		ACHIEVED 2ND EVENT 24/11/10 / review success following event	
	Procurement of a partner to assist in the delivery of "Management Order" activity across the sub region. (Initial management order through to final management order)	Procurement of management partner	Tender process (accommodate European timeline) advertise, expression of interest, vetting of applications, interview, selection process	Tees Valley Private Sector Managers MIDDLESBROUGH	Middlesbrough - Private Sector Managers Group	Tees Valley Procurement Teams	High	Dec 2009 (OJEU timeline) MIDDLESBROUGH TO CONFIRM END DATE	Qtrly	MBC did not pursue - paper to go to Tees Valley procurement meeting		OUTSTANDING	
	Development of a menu of options available to private landlords to assist in the proactive improvement of housing conditions within the private rented sector (RR)	Identify options across the Tees Valley	Production of a Tees Valley toolkit	Stockton	Stockton - Enforcement Group	Landlord Groups/Fire Service/ Energy Teams	Medium	Jul-10	Qtly	Statutory enforcement only at this time		ONGOING	
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE													
To provide a holistic Housing Assistance Service within the resources allocated to the sub region.	To obtain approval of the North East Financial Housing Assistance Policy	(a) Timely response to Regional Lead Body - procurement of Loan Administrator and progress scheme for launch 2010 (b)Obtain local authority approval (cabinet / delegated approval)	Sign Memo Understanding etc / Approval of policy	Tees Valley Private Sector Managers STOCKTON	Stockton - Private Sectors Managers Group	Heads of Housing/ Directors of Regeneration (DORS)	High	Jan-10	Qtly	Approval obtained by members - cabinet paper provided for regional website evidnece etc	• Debenture to be signed • Update	ACHIEVED	archive
	To implement training for officers in preparation for the launch of regional assistance	Establish sub regional training programme	Implement training programme	Tees Valley Private Sector Managers , Home Loan Partnership Project Manager STOCKTON	Stockton - Private Sectors Managers Group	HIA's, North East Home Loan Partnership	High	Jan-10	Qtly	Event held in MBC for all teams - Feb 2010 Individual breifing by Anna Tannkerville Attendance at Technical Steering Group by AWO / EDL sub	training for RLS staff - front line	ACHIEVED	archive
	Promotion of housing assistance throughout the sub region	Develop publicity and communication policy (via Home Loan Partnership Project Manager)	Adapt templates from home loan partnership menu of options for use in sub region	Tees Valley Private Sector Managers REDCAR AND CLEVELAND	Redcar and Cleveland - Private Sector Managers Group	North East Home Loan Partnership	High	March 2010 (adopt publicity guidelines)	Qtly	Posters in public buildings / article in council magazine to be arranged	board and TSG	COMPLETED BUT NOT AS SUB REGION	archive
	Maintain sub regional representation on the regional core and steering groups	Attendance at Core and Steering Group meetings	Oversee development and implementation of regional policy, delivery of tasks by "Body" (Sunderland)	STOCKTON - core, REDCAR - steering Sub Region Reps (New membership - Technical Steering Group and RLS Board)	Stockton and Redcar and Cleveland - Private Sector Managers Group	North East Home Loan Partnership	Medium	Mar-11	Qtly	Board = EGR / Technical Grp = AWO	promotion of 5 Las xxx	ACHIEVED	archive
	Provide timely SHIP / external funding returns to the sub regional co-ordinating local authority	Provision of financial and output supporting data.	Quarterly returns submitted to GONE	MIDDLESBROUGH 2009-10 (lead)	Middlesbrough - Private Sector Managers Group	Tees Valley Private Sector Managers, DFG team, HIAs, Housing Assistance teams	High	Mar-11	Qtly	no SHIP return in 2010-11 as yet requested, enquiries progressed no referrals to 5 lamps yet		ANNUAL RETURN FOR 2010 LIKELY	
NEW action	Post October 2010 CSR - identify other funding streams to sustain investment in existing private housing stock from April 2011 onwards	Identify posts at risk / activities that will cease should no funding be achieved / activities to undertake if funding secured / capital programme bids within own local authorities / contact PCTs & GP constium / Energy Companies	Outcome of the local government settlements 13/12/10 notifications / Regional Growth Bid via home loan board group (deadline 07/01/11)	Tees Valley Private Sector Managers	Private Sector Managers / North East Home Loan Board	North East Home Loan Partnership	High	Apr-11	Monthly				
NEW NOVEMBER 2010													
EMPTY HOMES													
To minimise the amount of time homes stand empty and make best use of this wasted resource to meet increasing housing need.	Develop and approve a sub regional Empty Homes Strategy	Establish working group/responsible officers - commentary from officers / managers etc	First draft of policy prior to member approval (Include with new Sub Regional Housing Strategy)	Tees Valley Private Sector Managers, STOCKTON	Stockton - Private Sectors Managers Group	Landlord groups	High	Mar-11	Annual	drafted document - comments made new target required - priority?	On Hold Discuss and agree way forward	DELETE AS ACTION REQUIRES DEDICATED RESOURCES - NO STATUTORY STRATEGY	archive
	Develop and implement Tees Valley Enforced Sale Policy, EDMO policy etc	Develop an enforced sale / EDMO procedure, promotion of enforcement option in sub region and monitor its application	Identify officers to work on task group	Tees Valley Private Sector Managers, REDCAR & CLEVELAND Enf Sale & STOCKTON - EDMO	Stockton and Redcar and Cleveland - Private Sector Managers Group	Legal services, council tax, housing benefit (council wide interest)	High	Mar-10	Biannual (included also in Qtly benchmarking)	Enforced Sale updates given at managers and enforcement group. Nearing completion of first enforced sale - from which policy will emerge. Ongoing working group within RCBC to develop ownership of empty homes activity across all teams - legal / planning etc NEW = TSHG development in year - partnership with CCH funded by HCA - potential development in sub region in future		ONGOING VIA ENFORCEMENT GROUP	

19/10/2011													
LICENSING													
To sustain consistent advice and enforcement to those residential properties effected by licensing	To continue to work in partnership with Cleveland & Durham and Darlington Fire Brigade	Fire service to attend regular enforcement group meetings	Review policy / partnership	Tees Valley Enforcement Group (Chair - lead <b>DARLINGTON</b> )	Darlington - Enforcement Group	Fire Service	Low	Jul-10	Biannual	Cleveland Fire Brigade inspections - appear to have ceased, contact with fire officer variable, HMO enforcement officer action to pursue update	Work ongoing with Enforcement Group Reviewed by enforcement group	ONGOING - CHECK WITH ENFORCEMENT GROUP	
	To maintain consistent management and amenity standards required for licensed residential premises (selective, additional or mandatory licensing)	Adopt any changes to legislation or guidance	Review changes	Tees Valley Enforcement Group (Chair - lead <b>DARLINGTON</b> )	Darlington - Enforcement Group	Lacors	Low	Jul-10	Biannual	see enforcement group		AS ABOVE	
	Review of existing licensing fee charges within sub region (mandatory / selective schemes)	Achieve consistent charging structure across the sub region	Review current charges, comparison with other sub regions.	Tees Valley Private Sector Managers, <b>STOCKTON</b>	Stockton - Private Sectors Managers Group	Landlords, TV Enforcement Group	Medium	Apr-10	Annual	Efficiencies - review of fees inevitable however renewal dates for majority of HMOs in RCBC are not until June 2012	new fees at SBC New fees at DBC by 1/04/11 for other related services	OUTSTANDING	
COMMUNITY HOUSING NEEDS													
To deliver housing options/services to meet the changing needs of vulnerable clients	To develop new policies in accordance with government changes (DFGs)	Give consideration to a sub regional approach to placing charges against property for DFGs, review guidance and draft priority list. Monitor charges returned	Annual recovered funding - monitor	Tees Valley Private Sector Managers <b>MIDDLESBROUGH</b>	Middlesbrough - Private Sector Managers Group	HIAs	Low	Mar-10	Annual	referred to Adult and Children Services	DBC and SBC - Charges registered for DFGs <b>HBC - adaptation policy in development</b> MBC charge on properties in development	OUTSTANDING	
	Review sub regional procurement /contracts for DFG associated works eg ramps / level access showers etc	Undertake a review of effectiveness of existing sub regional contracts	What are existing framework contracts and review dates? Prioritise reviews,identify new contracts, VFM consideration. Monitor annual savings.	Tees Valley Private Sector Managers <b>STOCKTON</b>	Stockton - Private Sectors Managers Group	HIAs, Social Care, Consortium Procurement	Medium	Sep-10	Annual	referred to Adult and Children Services	LE Showers contract at SBC , RCBC expressed an interest Ramps contract at SBC	OUTSTANDING	
STOCK CONDITION													
To focus housing intervention to property type / locations that are currently most in need.	To maintain up to date private stock condition data across the sub region	Review existing stock condition survey data	Implementation of the recommendations of stock condition surveys into review of Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategies	Tees Valley Private Sector Managers <b>HARTLEPOOL</b>	Hartlepool - Private Sector Managers Group	Ward Members / Hof Housing	Low	Mar-11	Annual	Capital requested for early HCS not due until 2012, will endeavour to accommodate BRE new research	Benchmarking with North East Local Authorities on activities processes and service costs / Undertake additional research with BRE	ACHIEVED FOLLOWING COMPLETION OF JOINT SURVEY IN 3 LAS - NEXT DUE DATES?	
New	Identify alternative means of maintaining information on private sector stock condition - other than via HCS every 5 years		Agreement of a shared view of robust data collection / analysis to maintain annual updates of private stock condition	Tees Valley Private Sector Managers / Housing Strategy Managers	Private Sector Managers Group	TVU / Energy Teams / socio - economic info source?	Low	Nov-11	Quarterly			NEW	
ENERGY EFFICIENCY													
To promote the delivery of energy efficiency measures in existing housing stock to address fuel poverty and climate change?	Work towards achieving SAP rating of at least 65 across all vulnerable households following housing assistance / HHRS enforcement activity.	Use findings of latest Stock condition Surveys to focus intervention and funding programmes (find money)	Increase the number of vulnerable households living in homes SAP65+	Tees Valley Private Sector Managers <b>HARTLEPOOL</b>	Hartlepool - Private Sector Managers Group	JSU, Housing Assistance teams, TV Enforcement Group	Low	Jul-10	Annual	updated Warm & Well following introduction of new policy for region	Discussed Quarterly	RESEARCH LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS (SUB REGIONAL GROUP?) CSR OUTCOME?	
	Monitor the impact of signposting of clients to external partners on improving the energy efficiency of homes	More robust monitoring of take up of Warm Front Grant	Develop a monitoring system, identify sub regional / regional / national schemes. Reflect SHIP funding restrictions as / when imposed.	Tees Valley Private Sector Managers <b>HARTLEPOOL</b>	Hartlepool - Private Sector Managers Group	Energy Teams	Medium	Mar-11	Annual	no data from Warm and Well		RESEARCH LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS (SUB REGIONAL GROUP?) CSR OUTCOME?	
GENERAL													
To continue to sustain the strong partnership working across the sub region within Private Sector Housing Assistance / Enforcement?	Maintain quarterly benchmarking returns for all local authorities within the sub region for housing assistance, enforcement and service delivery.	Establish agreed revised benchmarking criteria	collate benchmarking information	Tees Valley Private Sector Managers, <b>REDCAR &amp; CLEVELAND</b>	Redcar and Cleveland - Private Sector Managers Group	Enforcement, Housing Assistance and DFG teams	Medium	Mar-11	Qtly	analysis outstanding from EGR , not all LAS have provided detail and one provided year end not quarterly as requested	LIP - Empty Homes/Landlord Accreditation Scheme / Decent Homes in the private sector and PCT Health joint working	FOLLOWING COLLATION OF ALL DATA FROM 2008-2010 DETERMINE BENCHMARKING SET FOR 2011-12 / ONGOING	
	Continue joint procurement of research/ develop products and services to improved the standard of private housing stock across the Tees Valley	Establish need when appropriate, identify priority list	secure funding to deliver	Tees Valley Private Sector Managers <b>MIDDLESBROUGH</b>	Middlesbrough - Private Sector Managers Group	Tees Valley Procurement Group	low	Mar-11	Annual	new BRE proposed		LOCAL INVESTMENT PLAN / PROGRESS VIA LEP AND TVU IN THE FUTURE?	MONITOR
	Continue to explore sub regional funding opportunities to allow for the delivery of schemes to improve the condition / management of private housing sector	Identify funding opportunities when they become available	Prepare bids	Tees Valley Private Sector Managers <b>MIDDLESBROUGH</b>	Middlesbrough - Private Sector Managers Group	TVL	Determined by funding opportunities	Mar-11	Annual	LIP projects proposed	LIP and CSR implications	OUTCOME OF LEP / ONGOING?	MONITOR
	Monitor the impact of the economic downturn on the private housing sector on a biannual basis	Establish impact criteria - is this being done elsewhere?	Adoption of good practice and promotion of housing related support.	Tees Valley Private Sector Managers	ALL - Private Sector Managers	Other groups/TVL, Credit Crunch task group, Homeless & Housing Option Teams, Housing Benefit, Time2Buy	Low	Mar-11	Biannual	MRAS - Tees Valley wide / share stats to determine sub regional impact	Monthly Data from Homeless Teams Update Mortgage Information	ONGOING	
	Raise awareness of the continued joint working and success of the Tees Valley through submission of features to local press...	Maintain promotion of housing services / and success via local boroughwide & sub regional media	Number of articles in press and impact on service demand as a result. Monitor service satisfaction (benchmarking data)	Tees Valley Private Sector Managers	ALL - Private Sector Managers	Relevant partners	High	Mar-11	annual	Press Articles from records collate	Articles to report from DBC	ONGOING	
ACHIEVED		6											
ONGOING		8											
OUTSTANDING		8											
MONITOR		3											
NEW ACTIONS		2											
OPEN ACTIONS		21											

## **NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM**

26 October 2011



**Report of:** Scrutiny Support Officer

**Subject:** SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION IN TO PRIVATE  
SECTOR HOUSING SCHEMES – EVIDENCE FROM  
THE NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES TEAM -  
COVERING REPORT

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform Members that Assistant Director (Neighbourhood Services) has 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 it's meeting on 27 July 2011.
- 2.2 Consequently, the Assistant Director (Neighbourhood Services) from Hartlepool Borough Council has agreed to attend this meeting to provide evidence regarding the role private sector housing schemes in relation to the work of the Neighbourhood Management and Anti-Social Behaviour teams.

### **3. RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Members of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum consider the evidence of the Assistant Director (Neighbourhood Services) 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

26 October 2011



**Report of:** Scrutiny Support Officer

**Subject:** PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING SCHEMES –  
FEEDBACK FROM TENANT FOCUS GROUPS AND  
RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRES - COVERING  
REPORT

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### 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To facilitate a discussion amongst Members of this Forum in relation to the feedback from the Tenant Focus Groups and responses to the Landlords and Tenant Questionnaires.

### 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 As part of the evidence gathering process for the investigation into 'Private Sector Housing Schemes', two tenant focus groups were held to seek the views of tenants and residents from areas with high concentrations of private rented accommodation. The feedback received from each tenant focus group is attached as **Appendix A**
- 2.3 In addition to the Focus Groups, as part of the evidence gathering process, questionnaires have been circulated to tenants, Landlords, residents associations, members of the public who attended the Focus Groups and online via the Council's website.
- 2.4 In accordance with the Authority's Access to Information Rules, it has not been possible to include responses to the questionnaires within the statutory requirements for the dispatch of the agenda and papers for this meeting,

responses received in advance of the meeting will be circulated under separate cover as **Appendix B**.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 That the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum:-

- (a) note the content of the feedback received from each of the Tenant Focus Groups; and
- (b) consider the responses received to the questionnaires as part of the evidence gathered for the investigation.

Contact Officer:- Elaine Hind – Scrutiny Support Officer  
Chief Executive's Department - Corporate Strategy  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
Tel: 01429 52647  
Email: elaine.hind@hartlepool.gov.uk

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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

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

## **TENANT FOCUS GROUP FEEDBACK**

### **Good Tenant Scheme**

This is a good system which works

Important, this can make a difference

A tenant raised the issue of the difficulty of performing checks on foreign nationals.

### **Landlord Accreditation**

Only partially works

Needs work.

It was suggested that this should be used to gather information which could be used to roll out selective licensing.

### **Selective Licensing**

All Landlords included.

All, plus charity Landlords.

A Landlord with housing in selective licensing areas felt that good Landlords were penalised due to no action being taken against Landlords who do not adhere to the terms of the licence. The Landlord felt that the Council were not keeping to their side of the bargain.

The Landlord was concerned that bad Landlords keep bad tenants in properties rather than dealing with problems, this in turn causes problems for good landlords and tenants, there is a concern that as areas become full of bad landlords and tenants that they will become areas where families will not want to live causing a downward spiral.

The Landlord identified that there were problems asking people to move into properties in certain streets due to the reputation of the area, regardless of the standard of the property. Tenants had been lost through the anti-social behaviour of other tenants in the street and nothing was being done, the scheme has been operating a year and decent Landlords have seen no benefit.

To influence decent people to move back into areas and regenerate the area there needs to be increased publicity about what is being done, and once tenants move back in they need strong back up from the Council should things start to go wrong, as at the moment Landlords tend to deal with problem Neighbours themselves.



## **TENANT FOCUS GROUP FEEDBACK**

A tenant raised concerns that all costs Landlords incur are eventually passed on to the tenant. It was suggested the scheme should include all Landlords and be self-funding.

An issue was discussed regarding a gap in the multi-agency approach where it had been identified that the Council were not aware that ex-offenders were being placed in rented properties. This was a cause for concern as Landlords may feel obliged to take the tenant, and the Council (if they were aware of the suggested placement) may feel the particular area is not the most appropriate for the ex-offender to be housed.

Tenants also raised the issue of parents taking tenancies on for their children rather than themselves, which has caused problems in areas in the past due to behaviour issues.

### **Empty Homes Scheme**

Empty homes should be subject to compulsory purchase orders in some instances.

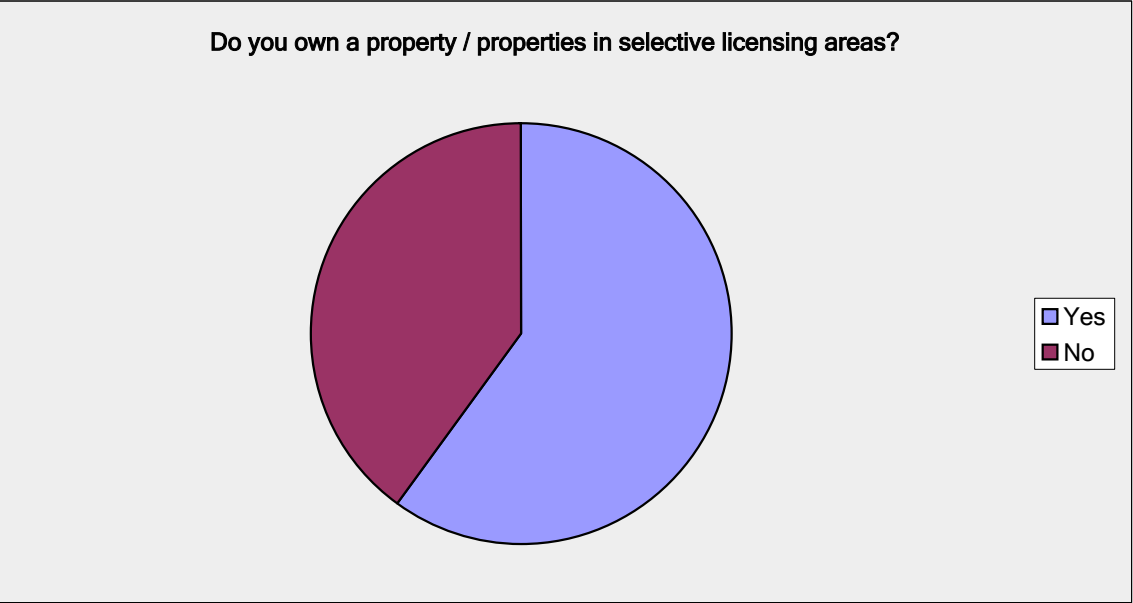
Should not be empty for more than six weeks.

It was suggested that estate agents need to be on board regarding empty homes.

Tenants raised issues regarding damp caused by empty properties next door. Tenants also raised an issue that condensation and the resultant damp issue is now exacerbated by people drying clothes mainly indoors in certain areas, as a result of the increasing number of clothing thefts from washing lines.

Private Sector Landlords Views on Hartlepool's Private Sector Housing Schemes

Do you own a property / properties in selective licensing areas?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	60.0%	3
No	40.0%	2
answered question		5
skipped question		0

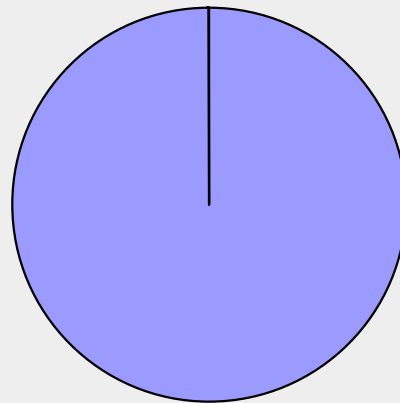


## Private Sector Landlords Views on Hartlepool's Private Sector Housing Schemes

Are you currently a member of, or do you utilise private sector housing schemes (excluding selective licensing)?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	100.0%	5
No	0.0%	0
<i>answered question</i>		5
<i>skipped question</i>		0

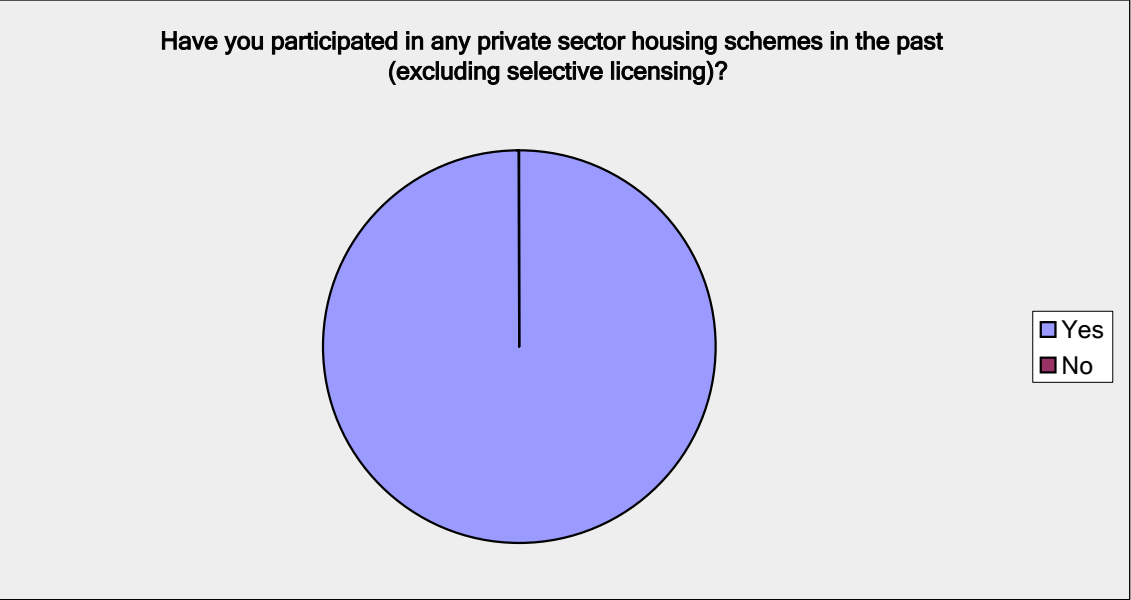
Are you currently a member of, or do you utilise private sector housing schemes (excluding selective licensing)?



■ Yes  
■ No

Private Sector Landlords Views on Hartlepool's Private Sector Housing Schemes

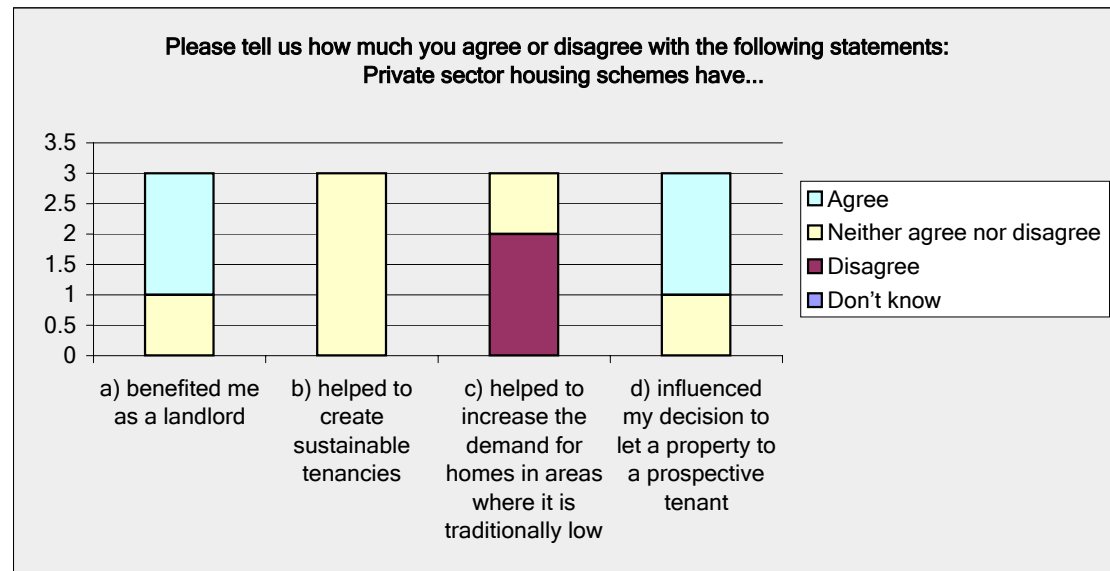
Have you participated in any private sector housing schemes in the past (excluding selective licensing)?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	100.0%	5
No	0.0%	0
answered question		5
skipped question		0



## Private Sector Landlords Views on Hartlepool's Private Sector Housing Schemes

Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: Private sector housing schemes have...

Answer Options	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Response Count
a) benefited me as a landlord	2	1	0	0	3
b) helped to create sustainable tenancies	0	3	0	0	3
c) helped to increase the demand for homes in areas where it is traditionally low	0	1	2	0	3
d) influenced my decision to let a property to a prospective tenant	2	1	0	0	3
<i>answered question</i>					<b>3</b>
<i>skipped question</i>					<b>2</b>



## Private Sector Landlords Views on Hartlepool's Private Sector Housing Schemes

If you have disagreed with any of the statements above, please tell us why in the space below:

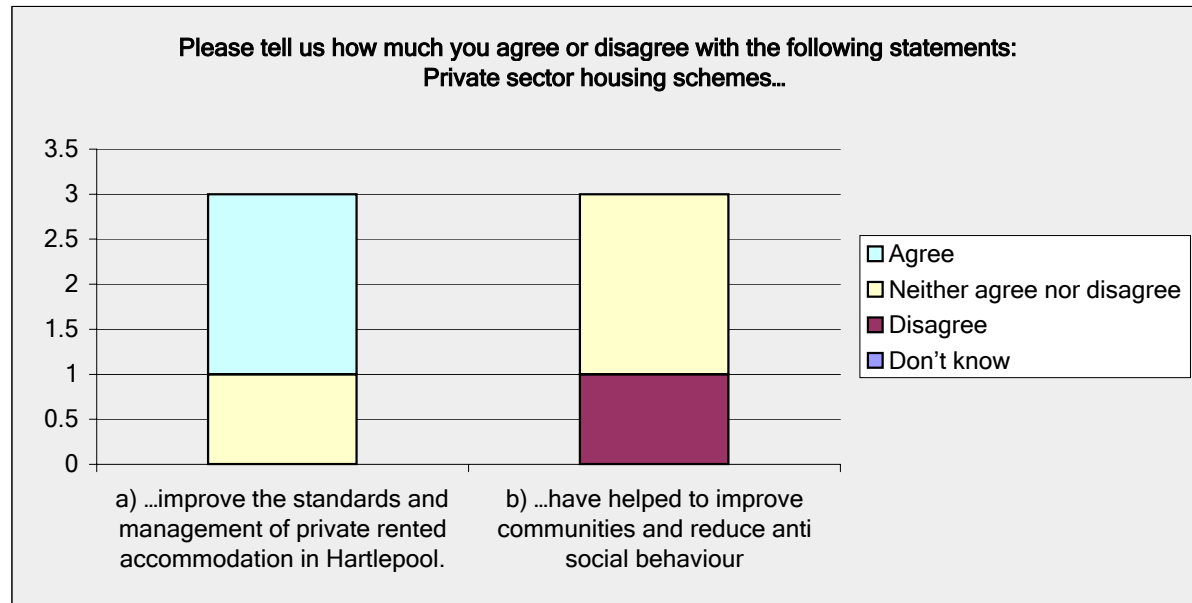
Answer Options	Response Count
	2
<i>answered question</i>	2
<i>skipped question</i>	3

Number	Response Date	Response Text	Categories
1	Oct 17, 2011 2:14 PM	I just do not believe that they have helped to increase demand for homes in areas of low demand. What evidence do you have that supports this suggestion?	
2	Sep 21, 2011 9:23 AM	Where proposed selective licensing is to be imposed it has caused good tenants to move out, prospective tenants to avoid the area and landlords wary of taking tenants from those areas.	

## Private Sector Landlords Views on Hartlepool's Private Sector Housing Schemes

Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: Private sector housing schemes...

Answer Options	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Response Count
a) ...improve the standards and management of private	2	1	0	0	3
b) ...have helped to improve communities and reduce anti	0	2	1	0	3
<i>answered question</i>					3
<i>skipped question</i>					2



## Private Sector Landlords Views on Hartlepool's Private Sector Housing Schemes

Do you have any other thoughts or comments on the private sector housing schemes currently operating in Hartlepool and suggestions as to

Answer Options	Response Count
	2
<i>answered question</i>	2
<i>skipped question</i>	3

Number	Response Date	Response Text	Categories
1	Oct 17, 2011 2:22 PM	<p>The tenant passport scheme should be a mandatory requirement for any tenant claiming housing benefit.</p> <p>Selective licensing does not address the causes of anti social behaviour and by licensing the landlords it does not stop anti social behaviour. The local authority have powers and duties to enforce good management standards without selective licensing which has stigmatised areas. Culprits of ASB should be forced to attend daily classes on citizenship and how to behave, and what is expected of them as a good tenant. The cost of this would be covered by the reduction in repeatedly trying to enforce ASBOs and worthless Behavioural Agreements.</p>	
2	Sep 21, 2011 9:33 AM	<p>It should be mandatory for all claimants of HB to be part of the Tenant Passport scheme and their application to join should be part of the claim form for HB.</p> <p>The anti social behaviour team should work more on the ground.</p> <p>There should be a facility provided for tenants to report their landlord's failings and any anti social behaviour without fear of retribution.</p> <p>The council should be more pro active in enforcing Notices for disrepair to landlords.</p>	



## Your views on Hartlepool's Private Sector Housing Schemes

Where did you hear about this survey (please tick one answer)

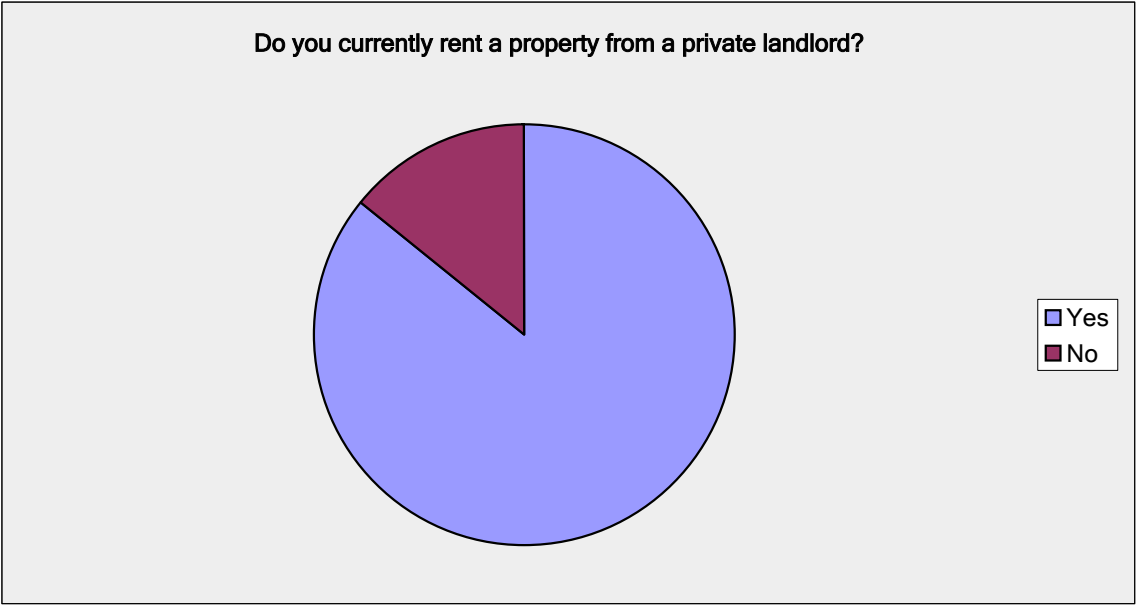
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
a tenant focus group meeting	0.0%	0
a residents association	0.0%	0
through my landlord	0.0%	0
on a poster/on the council website	0.0%	0
information sent directly to me	0.0%	0
Other (please specify)		0
<i>answered question</i>		<b>0</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>7</b>

Where did you hear about this survey (please tick one answer)

- ☐ a tenant focus group meeting
- ☐ a residents association
- ☐ through my landlord
- ☐ on a poster/on the council website
- ☐ information sent directly to me

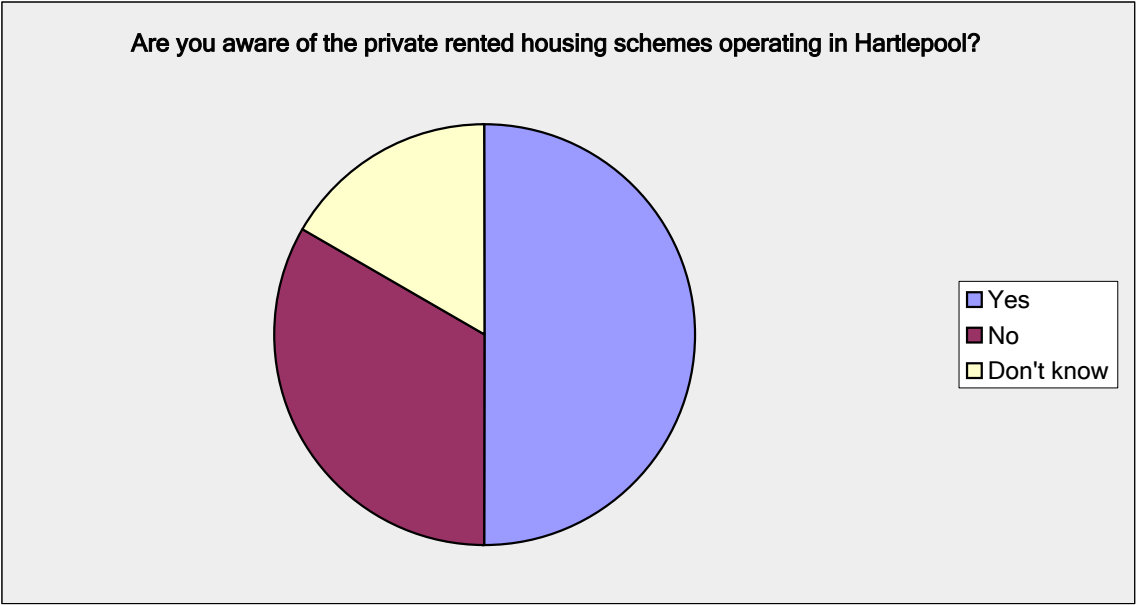
**Your views on Hartlepool's Private Sector Housing Schemes**

Do you currently rent a property from a private landlord?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	85.7%	6
No	14.3%	1
<i>answered question</i>		<b>7</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>0</b>



**Your views on Hartlepool's Private Sector Housing Schemes**

Are you aware of the private rented housing schemes operating in Hartlepool?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	50.0%	3
No	33.3%	2
Don't know	16.7%	1
<i>answered question</i>		<b>6</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>1</b>

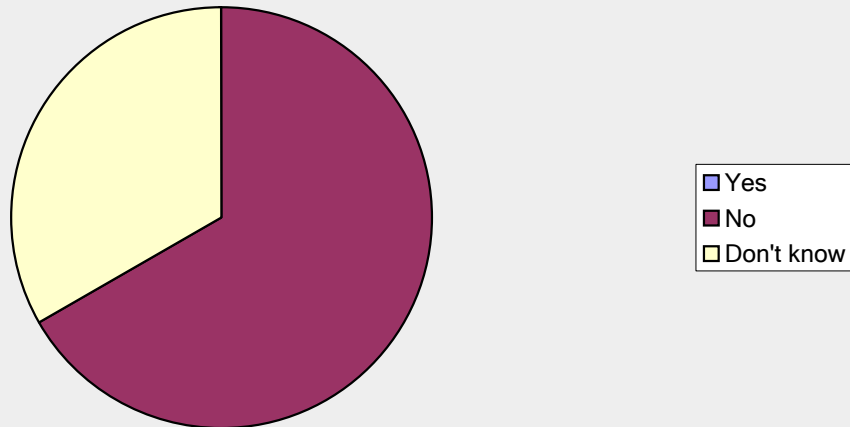


## Your views on Hartlepool's Private Sector Housing Schemes

Do you know what the aims of these housing schemes are?

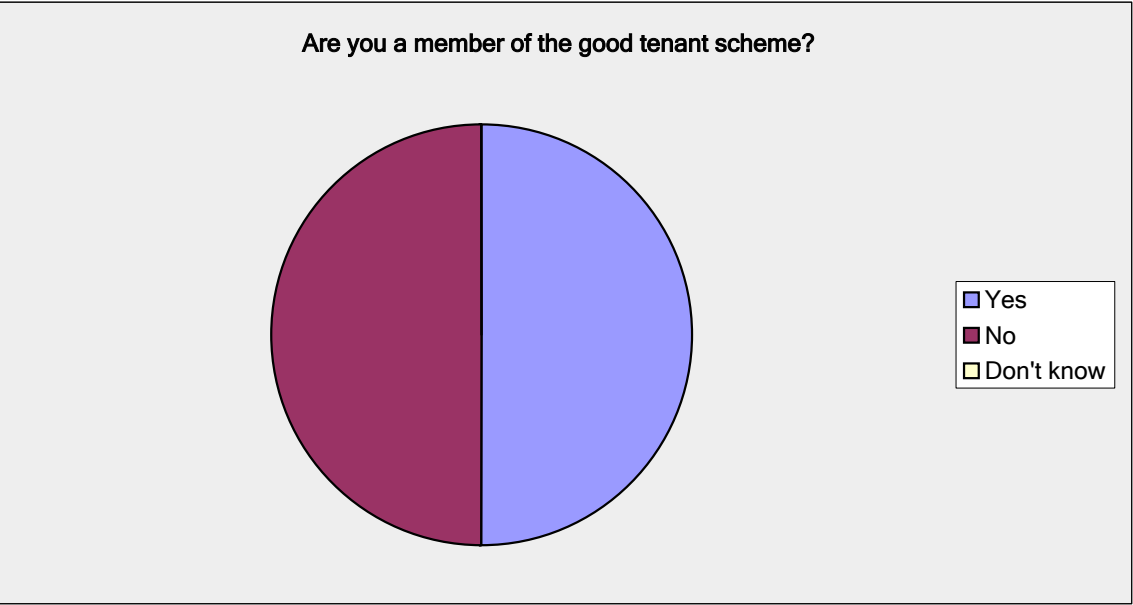
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	0.0%	0
No	66.7%	4
Don't know	33.3%	2
<i>answered question</i>		6
<i>skipped question</i>		1

Do you know what the aims of these housing schemes are?



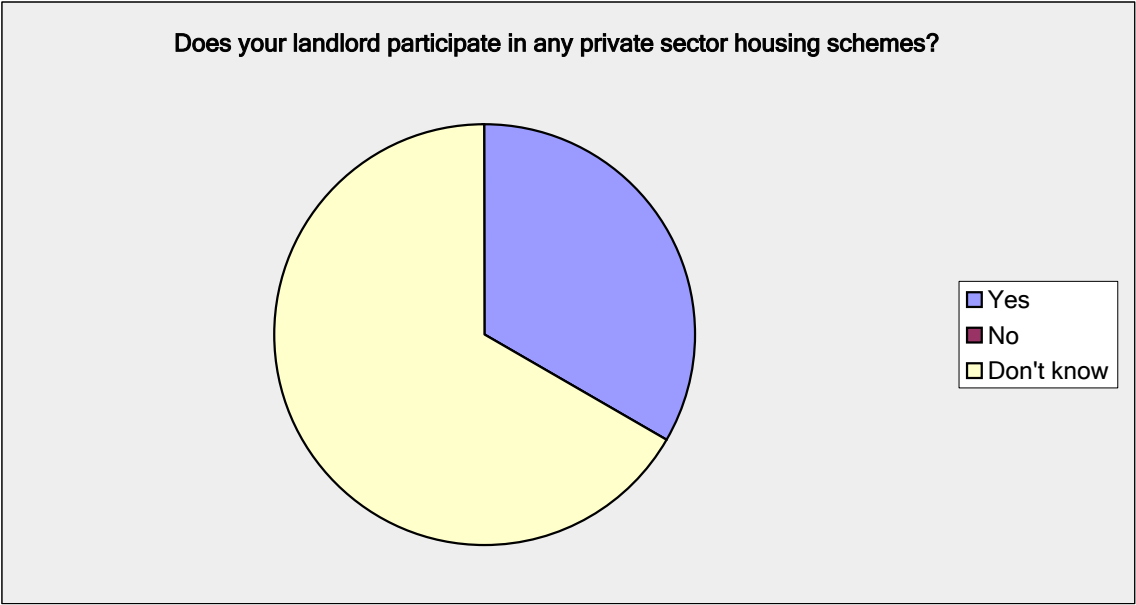
Your views on Hartlepool's Private Sector Housing Schemes

Are you a member of the good tenant scheme?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	50.0%	3
No	50.0%	3
Don't know	0.0%	0
answered question		6
skipped question		1



**Your views on Hartlepool's Private Sector Housing Schemes**

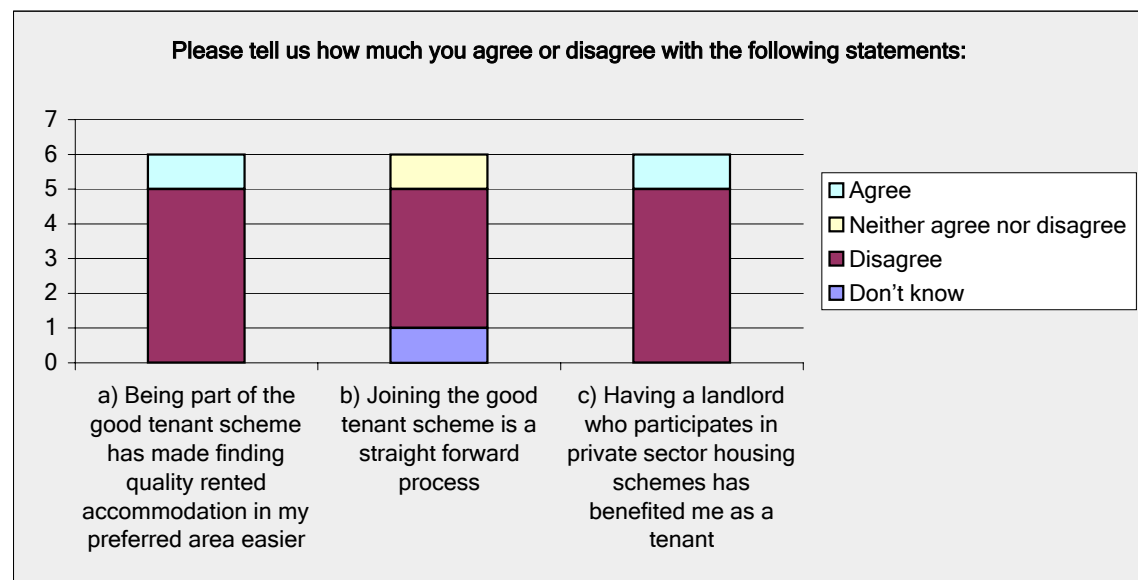
Does your landlord participate in any private sector housing schemes?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	33.3%	2
No	0.0%	0
Don't know	66.7%	4
answered question		6
skipped question		1



## Your views on Hartlepool's Private Sector Housing Schemes

Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

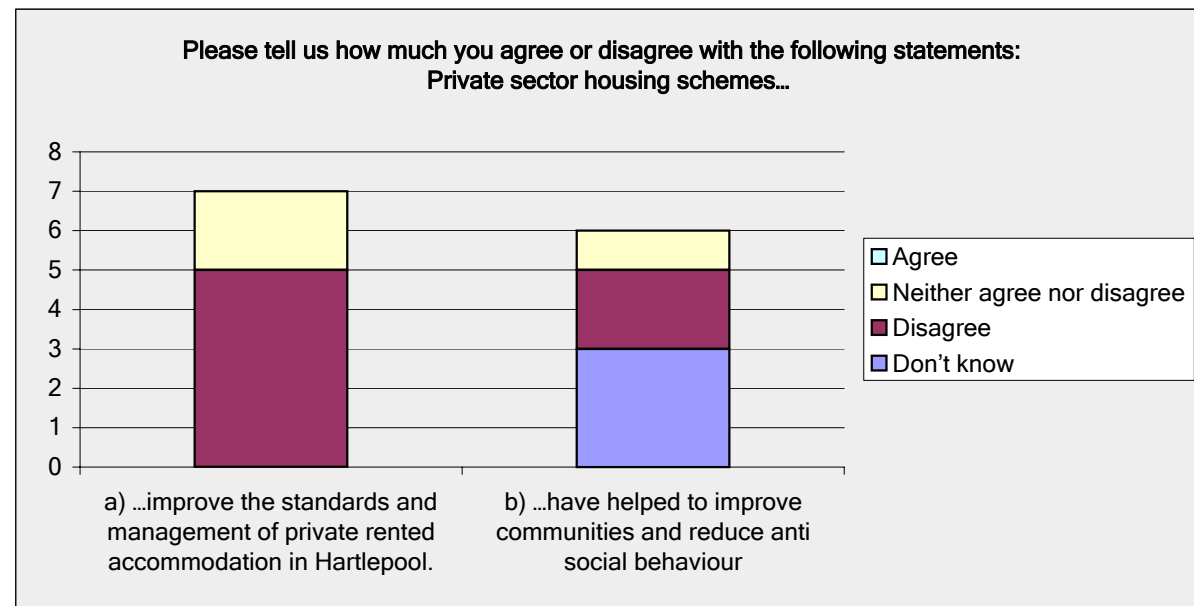
Answer Options	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Response Count
a) Being part of the good tenant scheme has made finding quality rented accommodation in my preferred area easier	1	0	5	0	6
b) Joining the good tenant scheme is a straight forward process	0	1	4	1	6
c) Having a landlord who participates in private sector housing schemes has benefited me as a tenant	1	0	5	0	6
<i>answered question</i>					<b>6</b>
<i>skipped question</i>					<b>1</b>



## Your views on Hartlepool's Private Sector Housing Schemes

Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: Private sector housing schemes...

Answer Options	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Response Count
a) ...improve the standards and management of private rented accommodation in Hartlepool.	0	2	5	0	7
b) ...have helped to improve communities and reduce anti social behaviour	0	1	2	3	6
<i>answered question</i>					7
<i>skipped question</i>					0





## Your views on Hartlepool's Private Sector Housing Schemes

Do you have any other thoughts or comments on the private sector housing schemes currently operating in Hartlepool and suggestions as to

Answer Options	Response Count
	7
<i>answered question</i>	7
<i>skipped question</i>	0

Number	Response Date	Response Text	Categories
1	Oct 13, 2011 10:02 AM	All should be covered leaving houses empty for more than six weeks should be address urgently	
2	Oct 5, 2011 8:46 AM	Landlords to pay for improvements	
3	Oct 5, 2011 8:46 AM	As far as I can see it makes no difference. My landlord does what is required.	
4	Sep 28, 2011 9:23 AM	To me it has made no difference. The way to improvements is to help not load down with paper	
5	Sep 28, 2011 9:22 AM	Jobs for the boys	
6	Sep 28, 2011 9:20 AM	None other than it is a job for the Council people and does nothing	
7	Sep 28, 2011 9:19 AM	Waste of time	

## NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

26 October 2011



**Report of:** Scrutiny Support Officer

**Subject:** BUDGET CONSULTATION FEEDBACK -  
COVERING REPORT

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### 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members of the Neighbourhood Service Scrutiny Forum with feedback on the recommendations from the Neighbourhood Management and Waste Management budget items and to provide an update on the Private Sector Housing Management and Private Sector Licensing Income budget items.

### 2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 At the meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on Friday 24 June 2011, it was agreed that the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum would consider the following budget items during the 2011/12 Municipal year:-

Neighbourhood Management  
Waste Management  
Private Sector Housing Management  
Private Sector Licensing Income

- 2.2 The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods and the Assistant Director (Neighbourhood Services) are in attendance at today's meeting to provide Members of the Forum with an update on the progress of the budget items considered by the Forum.

### 3. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Members of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum consider the information provided by the Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods and the Assistant Director (Neighbourhood Services) 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 52647  
Email: elaine.hind@hartlepool.gov.uk

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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

- (i) Report of the Assistant Chief Executive entitled 'Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2011/12 – Selection and Timetabling of Project / Service Areas to feed into the 2012/13 Budget Process' delivered to Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on 24 June 2011.