

REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM AGENDA



21 March 2013

at 3.00pm

in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Hartlepool

MEMBERS: REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM:

Councillors Ainslie, Cranney, Dawkins, Hall, Payne, Sirs and Wells.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS

3. MINUTES

3.1 To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2013 *(to follow)*

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

No items

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

No items

6. CONSIDERATION OF PROGRESS REPORTS / BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK DOCUMENTS

No items



7. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Investigation into the JSNA topic of Employment

- 7.1 Feedback on the JSNA Topic of Employment – *Hartlepool Youth Parliament*
- 7.2 Health and Employment:-
 - (a) Covering Report – *Scrutiny Support Officer*
 - (b) Recommendations for Commissioning - Presentation – *Economic Regeneration Team*
 - (c) Verbal evidence – Links between Health and Employment – *Director of Public Health*
 - (d) Formulation of recommendations to inform the development and delivery of the Health and Wellbeing and Commissioning Strategies - *Members of the Forum*

Department for Work and Pensions' Work Programme

- 7.3 Update on Progress:-
 - (a) Covering Report – *Scrutiny Support Officer*, and
 - (b) Verbal Evidence – *Representatives from the Department for Work and Pensions' Work Programme*

Quarterly Housing Services Report

- 7.4 Quarterly Housing Services Report – *Assistant Director (Regeneration and Planning)*

8. ISSUES IDENTIFIED FROM FORWARD PLAN

9. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS ARE URGENT

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- i) **Date of Next Meeting on the 4th April 2013, commencing at 3.00pm in the Council Chamber.**



REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

21 March 2013



Report of: Scrutiny Support Officer

Subject: INVESTIGATION INTO THE JSNA TOPIC OF
'EMPLOYMENT' – HEALTH AND EMPLOYMENT -
COVERING REPORT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum with the opportunity to formulate views and make recommendations in relation to the JSNA topic of Employment.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Members will recall that at the meeting of this Forum on 2 August 2012, the Terms of Reference and Potential Areas of Inquiry/Sources of Evidence were approved by the Forum for this scrutiny investigation.
- 2.2 Subsequently, representatives from the Economic Regeneration Team will be in attendance at today's meeting to provide a presentation on the JSNA topic of Employment focusing on the Recommendations for Commissioning as outlined within the Employment JSNA entry.
- 2.3 The Director of Public Health will also be in attendance at today's meeting to discuss the links between health and employment.
- 2.4 Throughout the course of the investigation Members have considered the responses to the 10 questions outlined in the Employment JSNA entry. In accordance with the terms of reference for this investigation it is recommended that the evidence presented at today's meeting and previous meetings of the Forum is utilised to formulate a view in relation to:-
- i) the needs of Hartlepool residents; and
 - ii) the current level and quality of service provision to meet those needs.
- 2.5 Members are also asked to make recommendations to inform the development and delivery of the health and wellbeing and commissioning strategies.

REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

MINUTES

21 February 2013

The meeting commenced at 3.00 pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor: Gerard Hall (In the Chair)

Councillors: Jim Ainslie, Kevin Cranney, Keith Dawkins and Robbie Payne

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.2 (ii), Councillor Linda Shields was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Kaylee Sirs

Also in attendance:

Graeme Cadas, Hartlepool Job Centre Plus
David Jackson, Skills Funding Agency
Simon Wiginton, National Apprenticeship Service

Members of the public:

Steve Latimer

Officers:

Patrick Wilson, Employment Development Officer
Laura Stones, Scrutiny Support Officer
Angela Armstrong, Principal Democratic Services Officer

62. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Kaylee Sirs.

63. Declarations of interest by Members

None.

64. Minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2013

Confirmed.

65. Matters arising from the minutes

The Chair confirmed that in relation to minute 55, a letter had been forwarded to the Chief Executive and Chief Solicitor outlining Members' concerns about

meeting quorums within the new Committee structure. The Chief Solicitor had indicated that under the new governance arrangements of the Council which will be in place after Annual Council this year, whilst Policy Committee memberships would need to be broadly politically balanced, it was proposed that the quorum for these Committees would be 3 Members with no specific requirement that they would be from more than one political grouping. It was noted that whilst it was always advisable to have cross-party representation at Committee meetings, it was not vital for a quorum.

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

None.

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

None.

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

None.

69. Scrutiny Investigation into the JSNA topic of Employment – Projected Level of Need/Service Use; Unmet Needs; Additional Needs Assessment - Presentation *(Scrutiny Support Officer/Representatives from Job Centre Plus, National Apprenticeship Service and the Skills Funding Agency)*

Members were informed that representatives from Job Centre Plus; National Apprenticeship Scheme; and the Skills Funding Agency had been invited to the meeting to provide information in relation to the Forum's investigation into the JSNA topic of 'Employment'.

The representative from the National Apprenticeships Service (NAS) provided a comprehensive presentation which gave detail of the support, funding and co-ordination of the delivery of apprenticeships throughout England. Members were informed that the NAS was responsible for increasing the number of Apprenticeship opportunities and providing a dedicated, responsive service for both employers and learners. This included simplifying the process of recruiting an apprentice through Apprenticeship Vacancies, an online system where employers can advertise opportunities for apprenticeships to enable potential apprentices to apply.

A discussion ensued which included the following issues:

- (i) Members sought clarification on the availability and criteria of eligibility for apprenticeships. The representative from NAS confirmed that anyone aged between 16 and 65 can apply to do an apprenticeship within a working environment. In response to a question from a Member, the representative confirmed that due to the current economic climate grants were available for employers who were new to offering apprenticeships or had not offered an apprenticeship within the previous 12 months. It was confirmed that whilst the minimum timescale to undertake an apprenticeship was 1 year, the apprentice would need to be in training for at least 13 weeks before reaching the eligibility criteria for grant funding.
The Chair allowed a member of the public to address the meeting.
- (ii) A member of the public in attendance sought clarification of the participation level of apprenticeships in Hartlepool. The representative from NAS confirmed that the target for participation within the National Apprenticeship Scheme in Hartlepool was 20% and the current participation rate was 15%, which was particularly based on young people aged 17.
- (iii) A Member questioned what access to the Apprenticeship Scheme there was for young people who had not achieved the expected level of academic qualifications. The representative from NAS confirmed that all apprenticeships had to be undertaken as part of employment and added that it was possible to secure an apprenticeship without the expected academic qualifications as there was additional support in place to help those young people achieve the appropriate academic requirements. However, this was subject to the employers' stipulations in relation to qualifications and skills needed to undertake employment within their organisation.
- (iv) In response to the issues discussed in (iii) above, a Member sought clarification on how young people who may not have achieved the expected academic qualifications could be encouraged to apply for apprenticeships. The representative from NAS commented that recent marketing of apprenticeships had included the development of an 'app' for mobile phones. It was highlighted that the second week in March was National Apprentice Week and additional publicity would be included through advertisements within publications and on the radio. The Chair added that Members of the Scrutiny Forum were keen to be involved with any campaign to raise awareness.
- (v) The representative from the Skills Funding Agency added that consultation was currently being undertaken around the concept of traineeships lasting for up to 6 months to enable young people were 16-18 years old and were unemployed to be more job or apprenticeship ready as it was acknowledged that they may not be recognised as eligible for funding or support until they become 19 years old and form part of the 'Not in Employment, Education or Training' (NEET) group when there were separate streams of funding available.
- (vi) A Member questioned the number of people who secured permanent employment at the end of their apprenticeship training programme. The

- representative from NAS indicated that he did not have those figures available but would forward them to officers for circulation to Members.
- (vii) The Employment Development Officer indicated that schools and training providers needed to identify young peoples' aspirations to ensure they were offered the correct pathway including an appropriate support package, incorporating literacy and numeracy where necessary.
 - (viii) A Member sought clarification on what support was provided to encourage Small Medium Enterprises (SME's) to take on apprentices. The representative from NAS confirmed that they actively work with larger employers and offer 1:1 support through either NAS, Job Centre Plus or the Council.
 - (ix) A Member referred to the Future Jobs Fund which operated successfully in Hartlepool with a number of young people securing permanent employment and questioned if this could be replicated by prime providers. The representative from NAS confirmed that they provided advice and guidance on what opportunities were available for young people but it was the employers' decision whether to take part in the apprenticeship programme or take on a permanent employee.
 - (x) A Member questioned whether the organisations involved in the apprenticeship programme were from the private or public sector. The representative from the NAS confirmed that a number of local authorities were involved in the apprenticeship programme across a variety of departments, as well as colleges and housing associations.
 - (xi) There had been recent publicity around the potential problem of a shortage of industry workers in the near future due to an ageing workforce and a Member questioned how this could be tackled. The representative from NAS indicated that many training providers work with retired workers to provide training and pass on their skills to young people.

The representative from the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) provided a detailed presentation that included information on the following:

- Adult Skills a New Landscape
 - Investing in Skills for Sustainable Growth
 - The story so far
 - Looking ahead
- (xii) A Member raised concerns that young people were volunteering within the community and voluntary sector (CVS), but were unable to access training and obtain qualifications as there was no accessible funding for the CVS organisation. The representative from the SFA confirmed that there will be opportunities for the providers to work with community groups to fund activities that they deliver. One of the aims of the SFA was to ensure providers had a more realistic view of the world they operated in such as identifying people with skills needs and working to facilitate that for them.
 - (xiii) A Member referred to a previous scheme that enabled colleges to provide vocational training and enable people to utilise further education to upskill and go to college. It was noted that the Hartlepool College of

Further Education had not hit targets for adult going into additional learning and training and the Member questioned if the College had more flexibility to offer alternative training. The representative from the SFA confirmed that Hartlepool College of Further Education had some funding rescinded in view of recent results and commented that it was up to providers to be more proactive about marketing and delivering Government priorities.

- (xiv) In relation to clawing back funding, a Member questioned whether this was undertaken if a provider had not identified sufficient ways to utilise the funding. The representative from the SFA confirmed that budget allocations were made to providers on an historical basis of the previous two years' performance. This may also have knock on implications for the provider with future years' allocations. Any funding clawed back in this way would be recycled and utilised by providers who were delivering an effective programme of training.
- (xv) In response to a question from a Member, the representative from SFA confirmed that funding was allocated annually from 1 August to 31 July which spanned two financial years. Providers had up to 3 months after the end of July to submit all their performance data to the SFA with final calculations on future budget allocations being taken in November and subsequent payment made in January.
- (xvi) A Member sought clarification on the level of joined up working undertaken between Colleges and the Local Authority in relation to adult education aspects. The representative from the SFA indicated that as a co-ordinating body, there were a number of things a Local Authority could do such as holding provider forums for key deliverers to discuss priorities, recruitment with employers and shortfalls in delivery. The Employment Development Officer confirmed that the Economic Regeneration Forum was private sector led with the involvement of the Skills Funding Agency and Job Centre Plus. However, it was recognised that there needed to be more done to bring together training providers. One of the concerns raised by Officers was that there was almost a saturation of providers offering pre-employment programmes and the need to ensure these programmes included quality support for people looking for work was emphasised.
- (xvii) It was highlighted by a Member that a significant amount of funding had been allocated to a particular organisation by the SFA and clarification was sought on the purpose of this funding. The representative from SFA confirmed that the organisation was working with Job Centre Plus and other employers on the Wilton Site to develop a pre-employment route that will link to the National Apprenticeship Scheme for young people aged 16-18 and 19-24 and deliver skills to existing staff. The Member questioned whether the Local Authority could bid for similar funding. The representative from the SFA confirmed that match funding would need to be provided by any organisation bidding to this funding stream.

The representative from Job Centre Plus (JCP) provided a detailed and comprehensive presentation which included an overview of the role of JCP including elements of joint working with the Council. The presentation outlined

the projected level of need in Hartlepool and reviewed the needs that might be unmet. Members were informed that additional JCP activity included supporting the Council with the implementation of the Hartlepool Youth Investment Project, planned employment engagement events and the promotion of the Youth Contract, including the Wage Incentive Scheme.

- (xviii) A Member referred to the Get Britain Working initiative which provided work experience to those in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance and questioned what measures were in place to stop employers continually seeking people to undertake work experience at no cost. The representative from JCP confirmed that this was a rolling programme that was managed very closely by JCP. If there were any instances of this nature, a discussion would be held with the employer with a view to creating a waged vacancy. The ultimate sanction would be to stop sending people for work experience to that company. The Employment Development Officer confirmed that it was the responsibility of JCP to monitor this closely to ensure that local employers did not take advantage of people undertaking voluntary work experience. The representative from JCP indicated that initial feedback received from people undertaking voluntary work experience had been positive insofar as they commented that they had gained a lot from a social and well-being aspect as well as actual experience of being in the work place.
- (xix) In view of all that had been said, a Member questioned why long term youth unemployment had risen? The representatives from JCP indicated that whilst the 0-6 months' cohort had risen, the other figures remained low. Whilst the voluntary work experience was a relatively new initiative, the unemployed figures were reducing on the back of that.
- (xx) The representative from JCP referred to the recent creation of Environmental Apprenticeships which had been part-funded from Members' Ward Budgets and confirmed that 15 young people were commencing these year long apprenticeships, commencing with a two week work trial.
- (xxi) A Member sought clarification on how many work clubs and enterprise clubs operated in the town. The representative from JCP indicated that he did not have that information but would ensure it was forwarded to officers to disseminate to Members. However, it was noted that work was ongoing to develop work clubs within the community as this would compliment the work undertaken already by JCP.
- (xxii) A Member questioned whether young people were encouraged to look at self employment as an opportunity. The representative from JCP confirmed that this was discussed with young people who could be referred to an advisor for the provision of detailed information around the start-up of a business and what was needed to do that.
- (xxiii) In response to a question from a Member, the representative from JCP confirmed that 6 months was the measure of what was classed as sustainable employment.

The Chair thanked the representatives from the National Apprentice Scheme, Skills Funding Agency and Job Centre Plus for their attendance, comprehensive presentations and for answering Members' questions. The

Chair was pleased to note the joint working being undertaken with employers working with the agencies with a view to reducing unemployment.

Recommended

- (i) That the presentations and discussions above be utilised to inform the Scrutiny Forum's investigation into the JSNA topic of Employment.
- (ii) That the figures including the number of people who secured permanent employment at the end of their apprenticeship training programme be forward to officers for circulation to Members.
- (iii) That the figures including the number of work clubs and enterprise clubs that operated in the town would be forwarded to officers for circulation to Members.

70. Scrutiny Investigation into the JSNA topic of Employment – JSNA Employment Entry (*Scrutiny Support Officer*)

The report provided Members with the JSNA Employment entry for consideration as part of the Forum's ongoing investigation and Members were asked to consider the JSNA content in its entirety and express a view in relation to the responses provided within the JSNA entry.

The Employment Development Officer indicated that the JSNA entry took on board the comments and discussions from this meeting along with local knowledge. It had been proven that employment was the best way to improving someone's health and being economically active had major benefits in increasing social status, creating economic independence and inclusion in the wider community. Members were asked to note that there was a direct correlation between poor physical and mental health and unemployment, with unemployed people three more times to have a mental health problem compared to their counterparts.

A discussion ensued which included the following issues:

- (i) It was recognised that being out of work had a knock on affect to not feeling part of society and a Member questioned what was in place to help people who were out of work secure employment. The Employment Development Officer indicated that there was insufficient support for those people who received a work capability assessment and were identified as fit for work. It was noted that a pre-employment programme for long term unemployed adults incorporating health provisions was required, similar to that which proved successful as part of the Working Neighbourhoods Fund. It was also important to be able to identify where there was a gap in what was being provided through a comprehensive assessment. As outlined within the JSNA, Members were asked to be mindful of ensuring there were sufficient support mechanisms in place for those in employment but feeling vulnerable in relation to their job security, potential redundancies and the affects of

- the current economic climate, in particular low skilled workers and middle management who were most at risk of stress.
- (ii) A Member referred to the lack of detailed performance information from the current prime providers. The Employment Development Officer indicated that the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) instructed prime providers that they could not announce their performance and that it would be the responsibility of DWP to announce this. The prime providers did agree to inform local authorities of their performance on a confidential basis, but by the time this was agreed, the information was in the public domain.
 - (iii) The Chair reminded Members that an open invitation had been extended to the prime providers to work in partnership with this Scrutiny Forum and the Council and the Employment Development Officer were working to facilitate this.

In conclusion, the Chair commented that the JSNA was a living document that was being continuously updated and the concentration on employment as a major determinant on health and well-being was welcomed. The Chair invited the Director of Public Health to attend the next meeting to discuss the links between health and unemployment. The Employment Development Officer was thanked for the report and the Chair echoed the comments made by Iain Wright, MP who commented when he attended a previous meeting, at the necessity of retaining an effective Economic Regeneration Team as promoting employment was considered a crucial factor in the economic well-being of the town.

Recommended

That the report and discussions above be utilised to inform the Scrutiny Forum's investigation into the JSNA topic of Employment.

71. Scrutiny Investigation into the JSNA topic of Employment – Feedback from Neighbourhood Forums (Scrutiny Support Officer)

The report provided Members with details of the discussions that took place at the Neighbourhood Forums on 3 October 2012 regarding the JSNA topic of 'Employment'. At the meetings, members of the public were provided with a brief presentation regarding the investigation into Employment and were asked to answer questions on the subject. Members of the public were also able to comment on the topic and raise any issues of concern they had. The responses, issues raised and views expressed at the Neighbourhood Forums were detailed within the report.

The Chair noted that a member of the public had commented on a similar point made by a Member earlier in the meeting that more needed to be done to help people less academic with specific focus on the harder to reach groups when promoting initiatives.

Recommended

That the report and feedback from the Neighbourhood Forums held on 3 October 2012 be utilised to inform the Scrutiny Forum's investigation into the JSNA topic of Employment.

72. Six Monthly Monitoring of Agreed Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum's Recommendations *(Scrutiny Support Officer)*

The Scrutiny Support Officer provided details of progress made on the delivery of the agreed scrutiny recommendations against investigations undertaken by the Forum since the 2005/06 municipal year. The report included a chart which provided the overall progress made by all scrutiny forums since 2005 and provided a detailed explanation of progress made against each recommendation agreed by this Forum since the last six monthly monitoring report presented in September 2012.

It was noted that since the 2005/06 municipal year, 96% of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum's recommendations had been completed with 1% in progress and 3% overdue.

Recommended

The progress against the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum's agreed recommendations since the 2005/06 Municipal Year was noted.

73. Executive's Forward Plan March 2013 – June 2013 *(Scrutiny Support Officer)*

The Executive's Forward Plan for March 2013 – June 2013 relating to the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum was provided to give Members of the Forum the opportunity to consider whether any items within the Plan should be considered by this Forum.

The Chair commented that in view of the forthcoming changes to the Council's governance arrangements, some of the decisions proposed to be taken by the Executive would be transferred to the relevant Policy Committees. During the discussion that followed, it was noted that there would be a significant shift for the majority of Members who would be moving from scrutinising decisions to making decisions. The Chair indicated that it was hoped that there would be some form of shadowing arrangements in place prior to the commencement of the new municipal year.

The Chair highlighted the forthcoming decision on the issue of selective

licensing in certain areas of town which would be considered in May.

Recommended

That the Forward Plan was noted.

74. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent

None.

Meeting concluded at 5.21 pm

CHAIR

- 2.6 During the formulation of recommendations, Members should be mindful of the Marmot principle to 'Create Fair Employment and Good Work for all'.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 That Members of the Forum consider the evidence presented during the course of the investigation to:-
- i) Formulate a view in relation to:-
 - a) the needs of Hartlepool residents; and
 - b) the current level and quality of service provision to meet those needs; and in doing so
 - ii) Make recommendations to inform the development and delivery of the health and wellbeing and commissioning strategies.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

- (i) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Scrutiny Investigation into Employment' – Scoping Report' presented to the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum on 2 August 2012.
- (ii) Minutes of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum held on 2 August 2012

REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

21 March 2013



Report of: Scrutiny Support Officer

Subject: DEPARTMENT FOR WORK AND PENSIONS' WORK
PROGRAMME – COVERING REPORT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of this Forum that representatives from the Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP) Work Programme have been invited to attend today's meeting to provide an update of progress made in Hartlepool.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The DWP launched The Work Programme in June 2011 as:-

*"Tailored support for claimants who need more help to undertake active and effective jobseeking. Participants receive support to overcome barriers that prevent them from finding and staying in work. It is delivered by DWP contracted service providers who have been given complete autonomy to decide how best to support participants while meeting their minimum service delivery standards."*¹

- 2.2 In Hartlepool the Prime Contractors for The Work Programme are Avanta Enterprise Ltd and Ingeus UK Ltd. With the subcontractor being Triage Central Ltd, whose role it is to:-

*"Support, training, work preparation and job opportunities. To help people in receipt of benefits progress back and into work."*²

- 2.3 Members may recollect that following this Forum's investigation into 'Employment and Training Opportunities for Young People Aged 19-25', recommendation (a)(iii) read:-

"That Hartlepool Borough Council liaise with prime providers of the Work Programme to develop a process to ensure the dissemination of information in relation to the success of the DWP Work Programme in Hartlepool to the Council and the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum, once available"

¹ DWP, 2011

² Triage, 2012

- 2.4 Subsequently, representatives from the DWP's Work Programme have been invited to attend this meeting to provide an update in relation to progress of the DWP's Work Programme in Hartlepool.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Members of the Forum consider the views of the representatives from the DWP's Work Programme, seeking clarification on any issues where relevant.

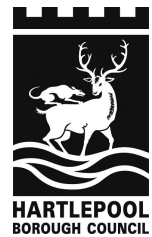
Contact Officer:- Laura Stones – Scrutiny Support Officer
Chief Executive's Department - Corporate Strategy
Hartlepool Borough Council
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BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

- (i) Department for Work and Pensions (2011), The Work Programme, Available from: <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/policy/welfare-reform/the-work-programme/>
- (ii) Triage Central Ltd (2012), Who we are, Available from: <http://www.triagecentral.co.uk/>
- (iii) The Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum's Final Report Employment and Training Opportunities for 19-25 Year Olds considered by Cabinet on 30 April 2012

**REGENERATION & PLANNING SERVICES
SCRUTINY FORUM
21st March 2013**



Report of: Assistant Director (Regeneration & Planning)

Subject: QUARTERLY HOUSING SERVICES REPORT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the quarterly Housing Services report considered by the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration & Neighbourhoods on 8 March 2013 (see **Appendix 1**).

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This report provides an update on progress and benchmarking across key areas of the Housing Service during Quarter 3 2012/13 and updates the last report presented to the Regeneration & Planning Services Scrutiny Forum on 17 January 2013.

3. SECTION 17 OF THE CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998 CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 Hartlepool Borough Council recognises that Community Safety affects all our lives, people, communities and organisations. The key areas of Housing Services are all developed with the reduction of crime and anti social behaviour in mind.

4. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 Impact Assessments have been carried out on all Housing Services strategies that are relevant to this report.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 That Members of the Forum note the content of the report and where appropriate seek clarification.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 There are no background papers.

7. CONTACT OFFICER

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**REGENERATION AND
NEIGHBOURHOODS PORTFOLIO**
Report to Portfolio Holder
8th March 2013



Report of: Assistant Director (Regeneration and Planning)

Subject: QUARTERLY HOUSING REPORT

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

1.1 Non Key

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 To update the Regeneration & Neighbourhoods Portfolio Holder about progress across key areas of the Housing Service relating to empty homes, enforcement activity, selective licensing, Disabled Facilities Grants, housing allocations and housing advice & homelessness prevention during the third quarter of 2012/13.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 This report provides an update on progress and benchmarking across key areas of the Housing Service during Quarter 3 2012/13 and updates the last report presented to the Portfolio Holder on 7 December 2012.

4. EMPTY HOMES UPDATE

4.1 The Housing Services team along with partners Housing Hartlepool are progressing with the implementation of an Empty Homes Pilot scheme as part of the incentive approach to bringing empty homes back into use. This scheme operates a lease and repair model where properties are refurbished and then managed in the long term by Housing Hartlepool. Refurbishment works were completed on 19 properties as part of the first phase and of these 10 properties are already tenanted with tenants identified for the remaining properties. A further 24 properties have been inspected and specifications produced as part of phase 2 and of these owners have signed up with work commenced on 13 properties. The remaining 11 properties will shortly be receiving offer letters.

APPENDIX 1

- 4.2 The Councils Empty Property Purchasing scheme is progressing well. To date 24 properties have been acquired with work completed on 7 of these properties. There are agreed sales with a further 10 owners and legal instructions to purchase have been issued. 115 valuations/inspections have been completed in total. The scheme is currently being delivered to programme and within budget. Progress reports on this scheme will be provided to Portfolio Holder on a quarterly basis through the Housing Services Quarterly report and to Council on a four monthly basis in line with the Council decision.
- 4.3 A key action within the Empty Homes action plan was to bring 10% of empty properties back into use and to identify properties suitable for enforcement action. In order to demonstrate this ongoing work a table of the top 20 empty properties has been developed and this will monitor progress and assist in implementing the most appropriate form of enforcement action. The table includes properties which have been empty for the longest time and those in key strategic locations (identified within the empty homes strategy). Each individual case is assessed on its merits and appropriate informal action taken followed by enforcement action. All properties have been inspected, photographed and an empty property assessment form completed.
- 4.4 As properties are brought back into use they are removed from the list and additional properties added to create a rolling list. Of the original list 5 properties are being addressed through the pilot scheme, 2 have been purchased by the Council and 8 have been brought back into use through negotiation with the owner.

Table 1 – Current Top 20 Overview

Property Purchasing Scheme	1
Pilot Scheme	4
Enforcement Action Required	6
Dialogue/Negotiation Ongoing	9

- 4.5 Table 1 summarises the status of the current top 20 at the end of quarter 3. Compulsory Purchase Order enforcement action has recently been approved on 2 properties within the current top 20, enforced sale for unpaid Council tax is being pursued in 2 cases and 2 additional properties are currently being considered for potential enforcement action. Of the 9 properties where negotiation is ongoing 6 have only been added to the list in December 2012.
- 4.6 In total 54 properties were brought back into use within quarter 3. The cumulative figure for 2012/13 is now 135 properties brought back into use. This exceeds the annual target of 75. This figure records any intervention by the Council which has resulted in a property being brought back into use. This can range from informal discussions and awareness raising, with owners through to enforcement action and site visits. The work of the Housing Standards Officers has contributed significantly to this achievement. 33 Properties are currently within the S215 process with direct action commenced on 2 properties.

APPENDIX 1

- 4.7 Regeneration of Baden Street is ongoing. In terms of the empty homes, during this quarter, the Council's Facilities Management section have completed work on 1 property and the tenants have now moved in. This is the third qualifying empty property brought back into use since the scheme was initiated. Work has begun on a second property and refurbishment work is due to commence on a further 5 properties. The Council has acquired 1 property on Baden Street through the Empty Property Purchasing Scheme and the Council has agreed sale with 1 other property owner (recorded in the statistics above). The Council has also received approaches from a further 2 owners who are considering the option to sell. Work is in progress with the remaining owners who have opted to seek independent quotations for the work to their property. A number of owners have also recently changed managing agents with the intention of improving the management of their properties going forward. Intensive work has been ongoing throughout the quarter with the owners/managing agents of 6 properties; the refurbishment work to these properties is expected to commence in Q4. With the suite of ongoing initiatives, it is anticipated that the initial target of 11 properties refurbished will be achieved. Intensive work continues with the remaining owners.

5. ENFORCEMENT UPDATE

- 5.1 The enforcement update encompasses a number of key areas, including housing conditions, housing related statutory nuisance and problematic empty properties.
- 5.2 Table 2 sets out the service requests that have been received by the enforcement team during the first two quarters of this year. Previous year's figures are shown in brackets for comparison purposes.

Table 2 – Enforcement Team Service Requests

Request Type	Number and % of Total Number by Quarter 2012/13							
	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
Disrepair	(65) 52	19%	(56) 43	20%	(61) 75	42%	(60)	
Empty & Insecure Property	(30) 53	20%	(58) 45	21%	(48) 24	13%	(40)	
Empty property report	(0) 0	0%	(0) 0	0%	(2) 0	0%	(0)	
Empty property Nuisance	(31) 44	16%	(23) 11	5%	(16) 8	4%	(4)	
Unauthorised Encampment	(4) 1	0.5%	(5) 2	1%	(0) 0	0%	(0)	
Nuisance from Adjacent Property	(13) 6	2%	(3) 36	17%	(7) 27	15%	(60)	
Nuisance from Occupied Property	(86) 92	34%	(83) 66	30%	(42) 34	19%	(20)	
Filthy & Verminous	(3) 0	0%	(0) 0	0%	(5) 4	2%	(0)	
Defective Drainage	(23) 14	5%	(16) 10	5%	(6) 4	2%	(5)	
HMO Advice	(3) 3	1%	(4) 3	1%	(1) 3	2%	(1)	
Immigration Visit	(5) 2	1%	(2) 0	0%	(4) 0	0%	(7)	
Total Number of Requests	(263) 267		(250) 216		(192) 179		(197)	

- 5.3 The majority of service requests fall into three main areas:
- Disrepair
 - Empty Properties
 - Nuisance
- 5.4 Overall the number of service requests received by the team has reduced by 17% compared to the previous quarter and by 7% compared to the same quarter in 2011/12.
- 5.5 The number of disrepair cases has increased in the third quarter compared to the previous quarter and the previous year. This increase is not unexpected as the number of complaints about damp and cold housing tends to rise in the winter months. In this quarter, 2 Housing Act 2004 improvement notices were served and 5 Environmental Protection Act 1990 notices were served in relation to premises which were prejudicial to health. During this quarter, works were arranged on 1 property where the owner had failed to comply with an Environmental Protection Act notice.
- 5.6 Complaints regarding empty properties have also reduced when compared to the same quarter last year and the last quarter. It is likely that the reason for this is the proactive work undertaken in relation to the empty homes strategy, area surveys and section 215s has had a major impact. 6 notices were served to require the securing of empty dwellings and 6 notices were served requiring the abatement of nuisance associated with empty properties e.g. to remove rubbish from within the property boundaries.
- 5.7 The overall number of service requests relating to nuisances (both occupied and empty) reduced significantly from the previous quarter.
- 5.8 In addition to the reactive work carried out, the team undertakes proactive work in relation to identifying problematic empty and nuisance properties through area based targeting in a number of areas, including the Carr/Hopps Street Regeneration area, Oxford Road and Cornwall Street areas. Officers continue to undertake proactive inspections of the Selectively Licensed properties (as detailed in table 3).
- 5.9 From 2007, when mandatory licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) was introduced, to 31 March 2012 there were 15 premises licensed as HMOs in Hartlepool. These licences remain in force for 5 years, unless there are circumstances that require a variation or revocation. 5 licences became due for renewal during quarter 3 and 3 renewal applications have been processed and proposed licences issued. The remaining 2 properties have been inspected and applications are being processed.

6. SELECTIVE LICENSING UPDATE

- 6.1 Housing Standards Officers have inspected a further 50 properties within the Selective Licensing areas this quarter, bringing the total for the year so far to

79, of this total 26 were found to have defects which have required a schedule of work to be issued to the licence holder.

- 6.3 106 properties were licensed in the first three quarters of this year bringing the total number issued to 690 although 11 of these have since been revoked for various reasons including;
- Change of ownership
 - Change of management agent
 - Property no longer licensable

Table 3 summarises the Selective Licensing activities undertaken.

Table 3 – Selective Licensing Activity

Licensed Properties	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13 Q1-Q3
Total number of properties licensed	44	482	52	106
Licences revoked	0	0	6	11
Gas/Electrical Safety				
Reminder Letters sent for Gas or Electrical safety Certificates		395	673	472
Notice Served for non supply of satisfactory Gas or Electrical Safety Certificate		139	422	225
Final Warning of court proceedings	0	0	0	101
Certificates Supplied following Reminder or Notice sent		257	492	492
Additional Enforcement				
Referred for legal action to commence		N/A	112	113
Called in for office interview and informal caution			12	15
Telephone interview and informal caution			88	98
Conditions complied with following contact			99	88
Housing Standards Inspections				
Inspection of Licensed Property completed	0	86	220	79
Schedule of Works Sent with recommendation for action for Licensed property	0	10	140	26

7. DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT (DFG) BENCHMARKING DATA

- 7.1 The Council continues to benchmark its service against other Local Authorities in the North East as part of the North East Adaptations Group.

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- 7.2 The benchmarking is undertaken by monitoring the overall time taken from first contact (the date a person first approaches Social Services with a need for help and assistance) to certified date (date that the works are confirmed as completed).
- 7.3 During 2011/12 the Council's overall time taken averaged at 154 days. At the end of Quarter 1 2012/13 the Council completed 24 DFGs which took 139 days, compared to an average completion time of 159 days (average of 9 North East local authorities that provided data) from first contact to certified date. During Quarter 3 35 DFGs were completed which took 139 days. Limited benchmarking data is available for quarter 3 but it would appear that from this data the Council is continuing to perform well when monitored against the other North East local authorities.
- 7.4 At the end of Quarter 3 there were 80 applicants on the waiting list for a DFG.
- 7.5 During Quarter 3 the Council was notified about an extra £107,000 funding received from the Government. In addition £167,000 funding has been received in early January 2013 from the Primary Care Trust. This additional budget will be used to reduce the current waiting list.

8. ALLOCATIONS SUMMARY

- 8.1 Choice Based Lettings (CBL) activity and performance continues to be monitored on a quarterly basis and compared with our sub regional partners by the Sub Regional CBL Steering Group.
- 8.2 The number of applicants who are 'live' on the system and able to bid (shown in table 4) decreased during 2011-2012 and at the end of the year was 2180 in Hartlepool. At the end of Quarter 1 this number increased to 2340 and has increased again during Quarter 2 to 2399 applicants. However, during Quarter 3 the number has fallen to 2311 and this reflects a decrease in the waiting list across the sub region. During Quarter 1 the number of Housing Hartlepool applicants on the waiting list wanting a transfer (from one Housing Hartlepool property to another) increased from 25% to 29% as a result of the number of current Housing Hartlepool tenants who under-occupy their property and need to move so that they are not affected by the under occupation charge that will be introduced in April 2013. This figure remains 29% for Quarter 3 (2012-13).

Table 4 – Total number of 'live' applicants (able to bid)

	Hartlepool	Sub Regional Total
Quarter 4 (2011-12)	2180	16193
Quarter 1 (2012-13)	2340	16615
Quarter 2 (2012-13)	2399	16461
Quarter 3 (2012-13)	2311	15273

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- 8.3 To ensure that applicants in the greatest need are given preference for an allocation of accommodation, levels of housing need are categorised into five bands. The numbers of applicants within each band demonstrates that since the end of Quarter 4 (2011-12) the number of applicants that fall within Band 4 – No or low level housing need – has reduced from approximately 75% of the whole waiting list to 68%. This means that there are an increased percentage of applicants whose level of housing need has put them into a ‘priority’ band (Table 5).

Table 5 – Total number of ‘live’ applicants (able to bid) within each Band

	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Total
Quarter 4 (2011-12)	145	425	60	1550	2180
Quarter 1 (2012-13)	190	512	54	1585	2340
Quarter 2 (2012-13)	200	497	56	1646	2399
Quarter 3 (2012-13)	173	507	46	1585	2311

- 8.4 Within Hartlepool, during Quarter 3, the number of decant applicants has decreased from 47 in Quarter 2 to 21. For the purposes of the CBL policy, a decant applicant is defined as one who is losing their home through a recognised regeneration scheme and they are awarded the greatest priority.
- 8.5 Some applicants within the three Priority Bands (1, 2 and 3) may also have cumulative needs (more than one housing need). This figure has increased significantly since 2011-12. Applicants with cumulative need due to a housing need in addition to under occupation have slightly decreased during Quarter 3 from 77 to 62 within Band 2 and from 37 to 30 within Band 1 since the first quarter.
- 8.6 Table 6 demonstrates that the majority of lettings continue to go to those on the waiting list rather than to Housing Hartlepool transfer applicants. However, the higher number of lets to transfers reflects the increased number of transfer applicants on the whole waiting list. One of the reasons for this increase is as a result of the number of current Housing Hartlepool tenants who under-occupy their property and need to move so that they are not affected by the under occupation charge that will be introduced in April 2013.

Table 6 – Lettings Information for Hartlepool

	Total no. lets	Direct Lets	Transfers
Quarter 4 (2011-12)	108	2	12 (11%)
Quarter 1 (2012-13)	151	0	22 (15%)
Quarter 2 (2012-13)	137	5	27 (20%)
Quarter 3 (2012-13)	146	3	29 (20%)

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- 8.7 Within the sub region the number of lets within each Band as shown in table 7, shows that more than one-third of lettings have gone to applicants within Band 4 and this is an increase on previous quarters.

Table 7 – Percentage lets to each Band (within Hartlepool)

	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Decants	Total no. lets
Quarter 4 (2011-12)	33%	25%	9%	33%	4%	108
Quarter 1 (2012-13)	34%	26%	6%	34%		151
Quarter 2 (2012-13)	35%	30%	3%	31%		137
Quarter 3 (2012-13)	30%	25%	9%	36%		146

- 8.8 The Sub Regional CBL Policy allows for cross boundary mobility as shown in table 8.

Table 8 – Cross Boundary Mobility

	Area applicant moved from:	Area applicant rehoused to:	Number
Quarter 1	Hartlepool	Stockton	2
	Stockton	Hartlepool	2
Quarter 2	Hartlepool	Stockton	2
	Redcar	Hartlepool	1
	Stockton	Hartlepool	3
Quarter 3	Hartlepool	Stockton	2
	Middlesbrough	Hartlepool	1
	Redcar	Hartlepool	1
	Stockton	Hartlepool	4

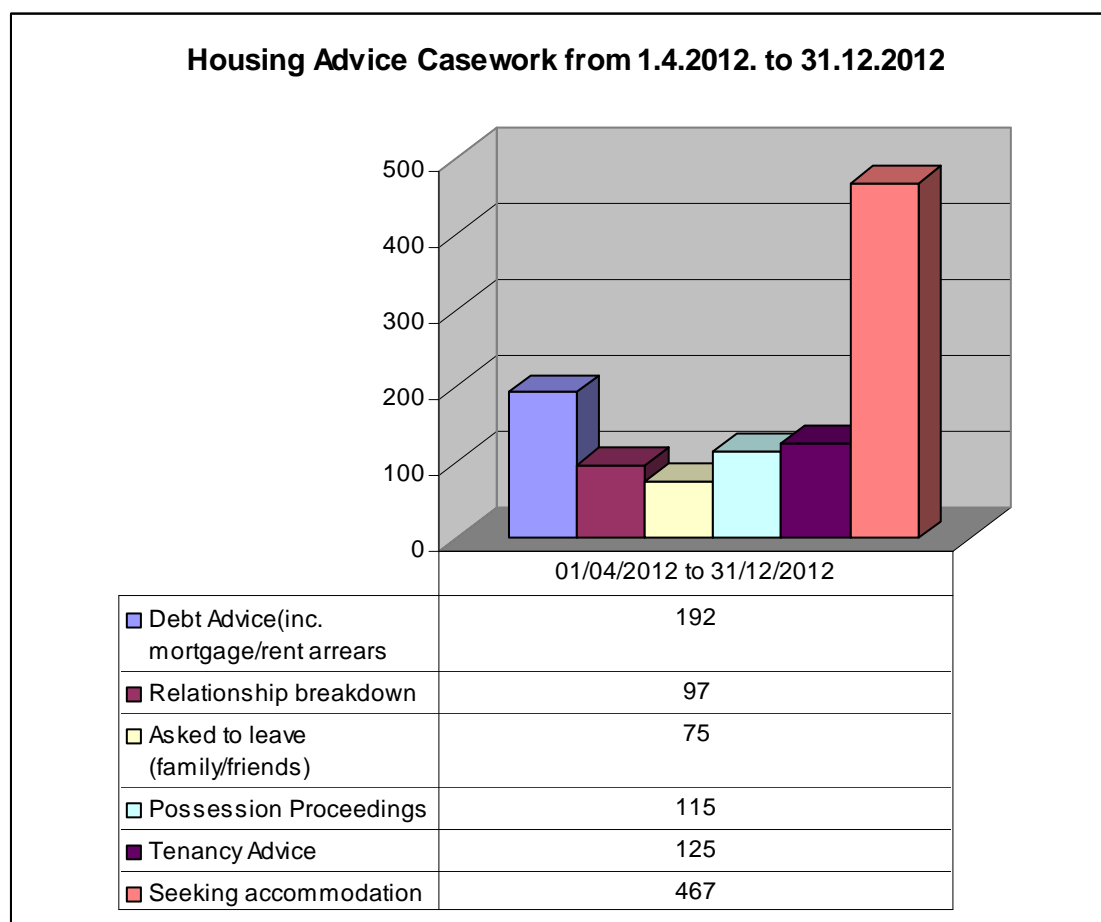
- 8.9 The percentage of properties let on 1st offer is also monitored across the sub region. During Quarter 1 (2012-13) this percentage decreased from 73% in Quarter 4 (2011-12) to 44%. However it has increased again to 62% during Quarter 2 and 61% in Quarter 3. This will continue to be monitored through regular liaison meetings that take place with Housing Hartlepool.
- 8.10 The current CBL Policy (revised January 2012) has undergone review and consultation took place following a range of measures contained in the Localism Act 2011 and the subsequent Code of Guidance issued by Department of Communities and Local Government in June 2012. Cabinet has considered the review and a new policy will be adopted across the sub region from April 2013. This new policy will have some local variations for Hartlepool, namely not awarding additional preference to those in paid employment and retaining three reasonable offers of accommodation for applicants.

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9. HOUSING ADVICE AND HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION ACTIVITY

- 9.1 The Housing Advice and Homelessness service, based at the Housing Options Centre, carries out the Council's statutory duties in relation to homelessness and all aspects of housing advice. During the first three quarters of this year 3,732 customers have accessed the service by visiting the Housing Options Centre.
- 9.2 During the first three quarters of this year active casework has been carried out for 822 clients needing detailed advice and assistance to resolve their housing problem, this includes 206 households who with our assistance were prevented from becoming homeless.
- 9.3 During the first three quarters of this year we have accepted our statutory duty for 8 homeless households which has included 3 families facing mortgage repossession as all available options to save their homes had been exhausted. There has been a significant increase in mortgage advice casework and it is likely that this will continue to be a growing area of work as the impact of welfare reforms take effect.
- 9.4 Tenancy advice to both private landlords and their tenants has also seen an increase with requests for assistance ranging from landlords requiring advice on how to take repossession of their property due to default by the tenant, to tenants reporting mismanagement by landlords. There has also been a strong focus on undertaking pro-active work in order to raise standards of property management.
- 9.5 A series of factsheets has been produced by the Landlord/Tenant Officer, aimed at offering useful advice and guidance to landlords and tenants in the Private Rented Sector. In order to assist landlords to manage their properties effectively a range of 'model' template forms have also been developed. Production of these have been prioritised in order to tackle high profile, key issues in private rented housing, such as 'tenant referencing' and they have been circulated directly to all known landlords and managing agents operating across the town. Work will continue to develop a comprehensive range of these documents covering all aspects of tenancy management
- 9.6 Table 9 provides a breakdown of the enquiry types clients presented with during the year.

Table 9



10. HOUSING REPORTS ON FORWARD PLAN

- 10.1 RN 02/13 Hartlepool Housing Strategy End of Year (2012-2013) Report and Action Plan Refresh.** This is a key decision to approve the refresh of the Housing Strategy 2011–2015 Action Plan and the end of year report for 2012-2013. Cabinet will consider how the Housing Strategy and Action Plan have contributed towards the key housing priorities for Hartlepool for the period 2012-2013. Cabinet will further consider new actions that are proposed to be included from April 2013 which either build upon completed actions or have been developed to address new issues and priorities that have emerged.
- 10.2 RN 20/12 Selective Licensing.** This is a key decision to consider the findings of the evidence gathered from the consultation as prescribed by guidance together with a timetable of possible implementation of additional Selective Licensing areas in Hartlepool. The current designation of Selective Licensing was implemented in May 2009 covering 6 areas of the town and in September 2011 Cabinet agreed to delay their decision to extend the scheme into a further 9 areas for 12 months until a thorough evaluation of the evidence available from the existing scheme has been undertaken. This report will inform members of the outcome and evidence gathered from the consultation into introducing additional Selective Licensing areas in

Hartlepool which currently have selective licensing of private landlords operating in designated areas.

11. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

- 11.1 Impact Assessments have been carried out on all housing services strategies that are relevant to this report.

12. SECTION 17

- 12.1 Hartlepool Borough Council recognises that Community Safety affects all our lives, people, communities and organisations. The key areas of Housing Services are all developed with the reduction of crime and anti social behaviour in mind.

13. RECOMMENDATIONS/ REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 13.1 Portfolio Holder to note the contents of the report and the progress made across key areas of the Housing Service for information purposes.
- 13.2 To decide which, if any, other key areas need to be included in future reports, for information purposes.

14. APPENDICES AVAILABLE ON REQUEST, IN THE MEMBERS LIBRARY AND ON-LINE

- 14.1 There are no appendices attached to this report.

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 15.1 There are no background papers.

16. CONTACT OFFICER

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