

REGENERATION SERVICES COMMITTEE AGENDA



Thursday 20 November, 2014

at 9.30 am

in Committee Room B,
at the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.

MEMBERS: REGENERATION SERVICES COMMITTEE

Councillors S Akers-Belcher, Cook, Cranney, Dawkins, Hargreaves, Morris and Payne.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

2. **TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS**

3. **MINUTES**

3.1 To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2014 (*previously published*)

4. **KEY DECISIONS**

No items.

5. **OTHER ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION**

5.1 SHOUT (Social Housing Under Treat) – *Assistant Director, Regeneration*

6. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

6.1 Proposed Collective Energy Switching Scheme – *Assistant Director, Regeneration*



- 6.2 Quarterly Report – Adult Education – *Assistant Director, Regeneration*
- 6.3 Culture and Information Services Quarterly Report – July- September 2014 – *Assistant Director, Regeneration*
- 6.4 Quarterly Building Control Report April - June 2014 – *Assistant Director, Regeneration*
- 6.5 Quarterly Housing Report April- September 2014/15 – *Assistant Director, Regeneration*

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

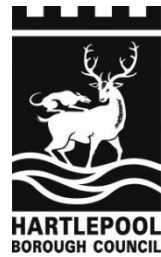
FOR INFORMATION:

Date of next meeting – Thursday 18 December 2014 at 9.30 am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.



REGENERATION SERVICES COMMITTEE

20th November 2014



Report of: Assistant Director (Regeneration)

Subject: SHOUT (SOCIAL HOUSING UNDER THREAT)

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

Non Key.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 That Members consider Council supporting the SHOUT (Social Housing Under Threat) campaign which was launched in June 2014 (see **Appendix 1**).

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In Hartlepool 23% of the housing stock is social housing and this is let on a mixture of different tenancy agreements to tenants and all rents are affordable compared with the private sector market in the town. This differs from other areas nationally where the pressure to increase rents to 80% of market rents (Affordable Rents) means many of the residents are unable to pay.
- 3.2 SHOUT is a Campaign for Social Housing, to remain, Affordable, Flourishing and Fair and a “manifesto to save and extend social rented housing” has cross political party support. The SHOUT aim is to raise awareness by building and maintaining social rented homes at social or affordable rents which residents can afford. This is important nationally but in particular in Hartlepool which has a large section of the community on lower incomes. The rents of social homes must be kept affordable to counter the challenges faced by welfare changes, pressures from right to buy, pressures on Registered Providers to find other ways to fund development and remodeling of stock other than Government funding via the Homes and Communities Agency.
- 3.3 SHOUT is campaigning for genuinely affordable, flourishing and fair social housing sector and the key aims are –

- To see 100,000 new social rented homes built each year as part of delivering the 200,000 or more total new homes the country requires.
- This programme should be funded through removing or easing the current restrictions on Council borrowing for housing, a significantly larger social housing grant programme, and a robust regime for private developer contributions.
- All social rented homes lost through the Right to Buy, voluntary sales and conversions to 'Affordable Rent' should be replaced on a like for like basis where there is need.
- The Government should set a target of surplus public land to be made available for social rented housing at low cost and develop robust mechanisms for releasing land and assembling sites in local areas.
- Any new town or garden city programme should contain a significant proportion of social rented housing.
- Social housing rents should continue to be based upon an affordability formula.
- Social rented housing should be properly regulated to encourage high quality management with tenants involved.
- The 'Affordable Rent' programme, in its present format, should be wound down in favour of a social rented housing programme. Registered Providers should refuse to sign up to the 'Affordable Rent' programme in its present format in those areas of the country where 'Affordable Rents' are transparently unaffordable.
- Social rented housing should be viewed as a tenure of equal status to others. It meets needs that other tenures cannot and is a tenure of choice for millions of people. This choice should be acknowledged and supported.
- National and local politicians should be encouraged to take the lead in affirming the positive value and purpose of social rented housing, and challenging the demonisation and stigmatisation of social housing and social housing residents.

4. PROPOSALS

- 4.1 That the Council supports the national SHOUT campaign to protect social housing at affordable rents for all residents of the local borough.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 There are no equality or diversity implications.

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

- 6.1 There are no Section 17 Implications.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 That Members consider Council support of the SHOUT campaign.

8. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 To support the SHOUT campaign to protect social housing at affordable local rent levels that all residents are able to afford in the borough, and to protect social housing provision for future generations who may need access to this type of accommodation.

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SHOUT

SOCIAL HOUSING UNDER THREAT

The Campaign for Social Housing



Affordable, Flourishing, Fair

A Manifesto to Save and Extend Social Rented Housing



The Campaign for Social Housing

*"I decided that as this housing plan had to be implemented through a plannable instrument that the only plannable instrument lying ready to hand were the great public authorities" **Aneurin Bevan, 1948***

*"Our target remains 300,000 houses a year" **Harold Macmillan, 1951***

Affordable, Flourishing, Fair

A Manifesto to Save and Extend Social Rented Housing

Launched 18th June 2014 in Westminster

© Published by SHOUT – Social Housing Under Threat – the Campaign for Social Housing in June 2014.

ISBN 978-1-906149-28-4

SHOUT was founded in January 2014.

SHOUT was instigated by the Right Hon. John Healey MP

SHOUT Founding and Steering Group Members

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Alison Inman

Tim Morton

Kate Murray

Tom Murtha

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Colin Wiles

Thanks to Trident Social Investment Group for providing the cover photograph of their urban village in the centre of Birmingham.

Contents

The Key Aims of SHOUT	4
1. Introduction and Background	5
2. Definition	7
3. History and the Post-War Consensus	8
4. Our Political Position	12
5. The Role of the Social Housing Sector	13
6. Comparisons between the Social Rented Sector and the Private Rented Sector	15
7. Dispelling Myths	19
8. Our Core Beliefs	21
9. Conclusions	22

Charts and Tables

Chart (1) – Housing Completions by Tenure in England (1946-2013)	10
Chart (2) – Ratio of Average House Price to Average Earnings	11
Chart (3) – Percentage Change in Tenure (In England 1979-2013)	15
Table (1) – Change in Numbers of Housing Benefit Claimants by Rented Sector (2008 to 2013)	16

The Key Aims of SHOUT

SHOUT IS CAMPAIGNING FOR A GENUINELY AFFORDABLE, FLOURISHING AND FAIR SOCIAL HOUSING SECTOR. THESE ARE OUR DEMANDS:

- **We want to see 100,000 new social rented homes built each year as part of delivering the 200,000 or more total new homes the country requires.**
- **This programme should be funded through removing or easing the current restrictions on council borrowing for housing, a significantly larger social housing grant programme, and a robust regime for private developer contributions.**
- **All social rented homes lost through the Right to Buy, voluntary sales and conversions to 'Affordable Rent' should be replaced on a like for like basis where there is need.**
- **The government should set a target of surplus public land to be made available for social rented housing at low cost and develop robust mechanisms for releasing land and assembling sites in local areas.**
- **Any new town or garden city programme should contain a significant proportion of social rented housing.**
- **Social housing rents should continue to be based upon an affordability formula.**
- **Social rented housing should be properly regulated to encourage high quality management with tenants involved to the degree they choose.**
- **The 'Affordable Rent' programme, in its present format, should be wound down in favour of a social rented housing programme. Registered Providers should refuse to sign up to the 'Affordable Rent' programme in its present format in those areas of the country where 'Affordable Rents' are transparently unaffordable.**
- **Social rented housing should be viewed as a tenure of equal status to others. It meets needs that other tenures cannot and is a tenure of choice for millions of people. This choice should be acknowledged and supported.**
- **National and local politicians should be encouraged to take the lead in affirming the positive value and purpose of social rented housing, and challenging the demonisation and stigmatisation of social housing and social housing residents.**
- **Future governments should set out long-term strategies for housing, including supply, in order to bring stability and certainty to UK housing markets with the aim of reducing the ratio of wages to house prices and rents over a defined period.**

1. Introduction and Background

It's time to say enough is enough. We need a genuinely affordable, flourishing and fair social housing sector.

Social housing has provided decent, affordable homes for millions of people over the past 150 years. Starting with nineteenth century philanthropists like George Peabody and Joseph Rowntree over five million council and housing association homes have been built over the past 150 years, providing safe, secure and affordable homes for millions of families who had often been living in overcrowded, insecure and insanitary conditions. The social housing sector has a great deal to be proud of.

Yet over the past few decades social housing has been attacked, denigrated and dismantled by a succession of governments, relegated to a tenure of last resort, its occupants often stigmatised by parts of the media and some politicians as scroungers and workshy layabouts. Instead of investment in bricks and mortar, governments have increasingly subsidised rising rents rather than affordable homes. Home ownership has been promoted as the 'natural' tenure of choice.

The social rented housing sector has shrunk considerably over the past thirty years. In 1981 councils and housing associations owned 5.2 million rented homes in England. By 2012 this had fallen to 4 million, a loss of 1.2 million homes, mainly as a result of homes being sold under the Right to Buy and not replaced. This has been the most lucrative privatisation ever, bringing in more cash than all the other transfers of public assets to the private sector put together, yet the receipts have often been wasted, often used to prop up public spending elsewhere rather than replacing each home sold with a new one. The boost to owner occupation or home ownership brought about by the Right to Buy is also unwinding as many sold homes have now been recycled into the buy-to-let market, and many private tenants are on housing benefit, being paid an average level of benefit that is much higher than if the property had remained in social ownership. 40 per cent of the Housing Benefit bill now goes to private landlords.

Today, the supply of new social rented housing has dwindled and the Right to Buy, voluntary sales and conversions of empty social housing to 'Affordable Rents' are systematically reducing the remaining stock. Councils have been prevented from building significant numbers of new homes even though they have huge resources at their disposal.

A report by the Smith Institute in 2013 found that, for some housing providers:

“The growing emphasis on the commercial aspects of the business is moving the sector away from its social roots. For others it is liberating, allowing greater autonomy and more opportunity to cross-subsidise submarket rented housing...the general view is that there will be very little new conventional low-rent social housing without grant.”¹

The latest HCA prospectus for the National Affordable Homes Programme 2015/2018 confirms that the provision of new social rented housing is at an end:

“Social rent provision will only be supported in very limited circumstances” (para 204) and “...Government policy does not support the argument that only rents at or close to social rent levels are capable of meeting local needs – particularly when support for housing costs through Housing Benefit and Universal Credit is taken into account. (para 92).²

We believe that this is short-sighted as well as financially, socially and morally wrong. Social rented housing has a proud and noble record of providing affordable and decent homes for millions of people. It rescued millions of people from appalling housing conditions and allowed them to lead dignified and useful lives. It created stable and successful communities throughout the country and helped to keep the housing benefit bill low. Social rented housing was created because the market had failed to provide decent, affordable housing for working people. The market is still not working, as evidenced by the greatest housing crisis in almost a century.

There has been an insufficiently strategic and determined response by some parts of the social housing sector. Some providers have responded tactically to each successive shift in policy, not reflecting sufficiently, in many cases, on the long-term implications of their social business objectives.

The latest public attitude surveys show that 80 per cent³ of the British public believes there is a housing crisis, and the case needs to be made for a significant portion of new supply to be social rented housing.

It's time to say enough is enough. We need a genuinely affordable, flourishing and fair social housing sector.

¹ Social Hearted, Commercially Minded - A Report on Tomorrow's Housing Associations, the Smith Institute, 2013

² <https://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/ourwork/affordable-homes-programme-2015-18>

³ <http://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/3129/80-per-cent-agree-UK-has-a-housing-crisis.aspx>

2. Definition

We use the government's own definition of social rented housing:

*"Social rented housing is owned by local authorities and private registered providers (as defined in section 80 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008), for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime. It may also be owned by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with the Homes and Communities Agency."*⁴

Target rents are based upon a complex formula that reflects local wages and local property values. But they adhere to the principle that people should pay a rent that is affordable within the context of local market rents.

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/definitions-of-general-housing-terms>

3. History and the Post-War Consensus

One of the very first local authority schemes, the London County Council's Boundary Estate (built in 1900 to replace the appalling slum of the Old Nichol) set a standard for high quality, spacious accommodation at affordable rents. Since then, most social rented housing has generally been provided at a higher standard and provided more space than many private sector properties. There have been some mistakes over the years, and the failure to expand supply has led to the rationing of social housing to the most vulnerable and needy households, with consequences for community sustainability. Most social housing, however, is of good quality in highly livable neighborhoods.

From a standing start in 1945 the post-War Labour and Conservative governments increased house-building to nearly 300,000 homes a year in England by 1954, of which almost 200,000 were social rented homes.

The 1951 Conservative manifesto stated:

"Housing is the first of the social services. It is also one of the keys to increased productivity. Work, family life, health and education are all undermined by overcrowded homes. Therefore a Conservative and Unionist Government will give housing a priority second only to national defence. Our target remains 300,000 houses a year."

When Harold Macmillan was made housing minister in 1951 he treated it as 'a war job' and boosted UK production to 354,130 per annum of which 239,580 were council houses and only 92,420 were private.

The Labour manifesto for the 1964 election said:

"Labour will also increase the building of new houses, both for rent and for sale. While we regard 400,000 houses as a reasonable target, we do not intend to have an election auction on housing figures."

During the 1960s building started to rise again, to a peak of over 350,000 homes by 1968 in England, of which 150,000 were social rented and 200,000 private. Private house builders have never since exceeded their 1968 achievement of building 226,070 homes. For 35 years after the war Labour and Conservative governments competed with each other to build the most homes. They both understood the importance of housing as the bedrock of stable civic and neighbourhood life, and recognised the importance of house building for national economic growth.

Council estates were genuinely mixed communities and renting from a council or housing association had no negative connotations.

Rents and house prices were also relatively low. In 1968 unemployment stood at 2.5 per cent (it is now 7.6 per cent) and an average house cost 2.6 times an average income – it is now double that. House prices have increased at roughly four times the rate of general inflation since the seventies, and this has added to the pressures upon the social housing sector. Social housing in 1968 was far more affordable than it is now. The welfare bill was around 6 per cent of GDP. It is double that now while wages are shrinking. In 1968 many more people could afford to live a decent, productive life without recourse to benefits. Social housing tenants could save and spend as a result of having surplus cash in their pockets. This brought benefits to their local communities as well as the wider economy.

However, it was also during the sixties that local authorities were encouraged to adopt untried building techniques and systems in order to maximise the number of homes that could be built for a fixed amount of grant. This led to tower blocks, brutalist estates such as the Heygate in Southwark and the tragic collapse at Ronan Point.

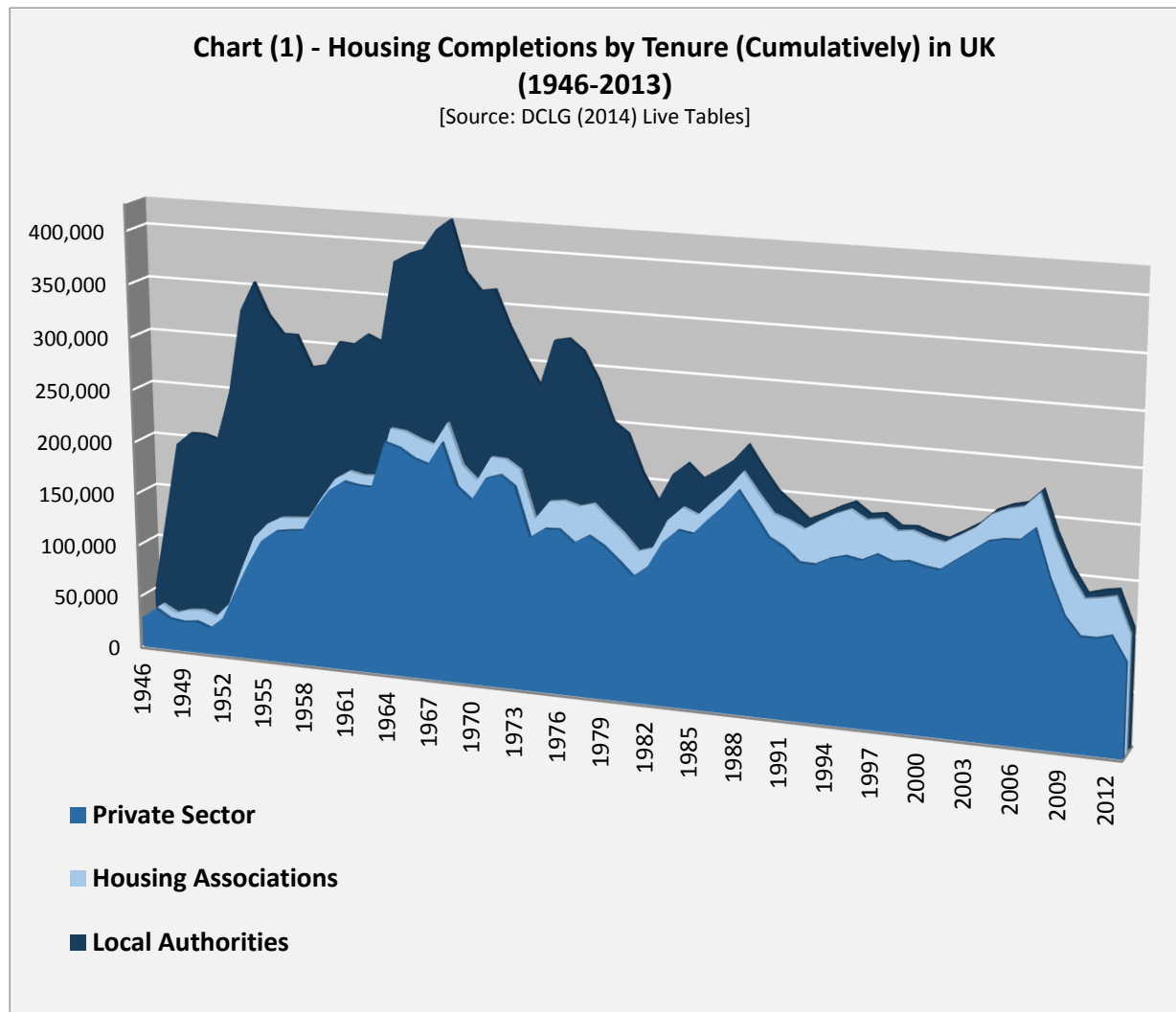
Chart (1) over the page, using house building data in England from the Department of Communities and Local Government, summarises the rise and fall of house-building in the post-war era. It has been a game of two halves. In the first half, political parties vied with each other to build homes. In the second half, social rented house-building by local authorities effectively disappeared, but the 'gap' in supply has never been filled by the private sector and housing associations. The private housebuilding industry itself is now saying that the target of building 200,000 homes a year is 'impossible'. This makes the case for state intervention even more compelling.⁵

Government funding to housing associations has failed to make any significant impact and private housebuilders simply do not respond to increases in demand for their product – their supply is inelastic. As a result, house prices have risen at four times the rate of inflation. This graph shows that it was house-building by local authorities that made a difference. It was the extinction of social rented house-building by local authorities, without any effective alternative mechanism for building at the same scale that became the underlying cause of the present housing crisis. A similar level of public funding for house-building is now required to restore some balance to housing markets. In simple terms, the present housing crisis began when local authorities stopped building large volumes of council houses.

⁵ Knight Frank Annual Survey of Housebuilders 2014, <http://www.knightfrankblog.com/global-briefing/news-headlines/delivering-200000-homes-every-year-not-achievable-under-current-conditions-housebuilding-survey/>

We want to restore the political consensus that existed during this post-war period from 1945 to 1979.

We believe that a very significant step increase in homebuilding, in all tenures, is vital for the future economic and social future of this country. But new social rented homes should comprise a significant element of new house-building – at least 100,000 homes a year.

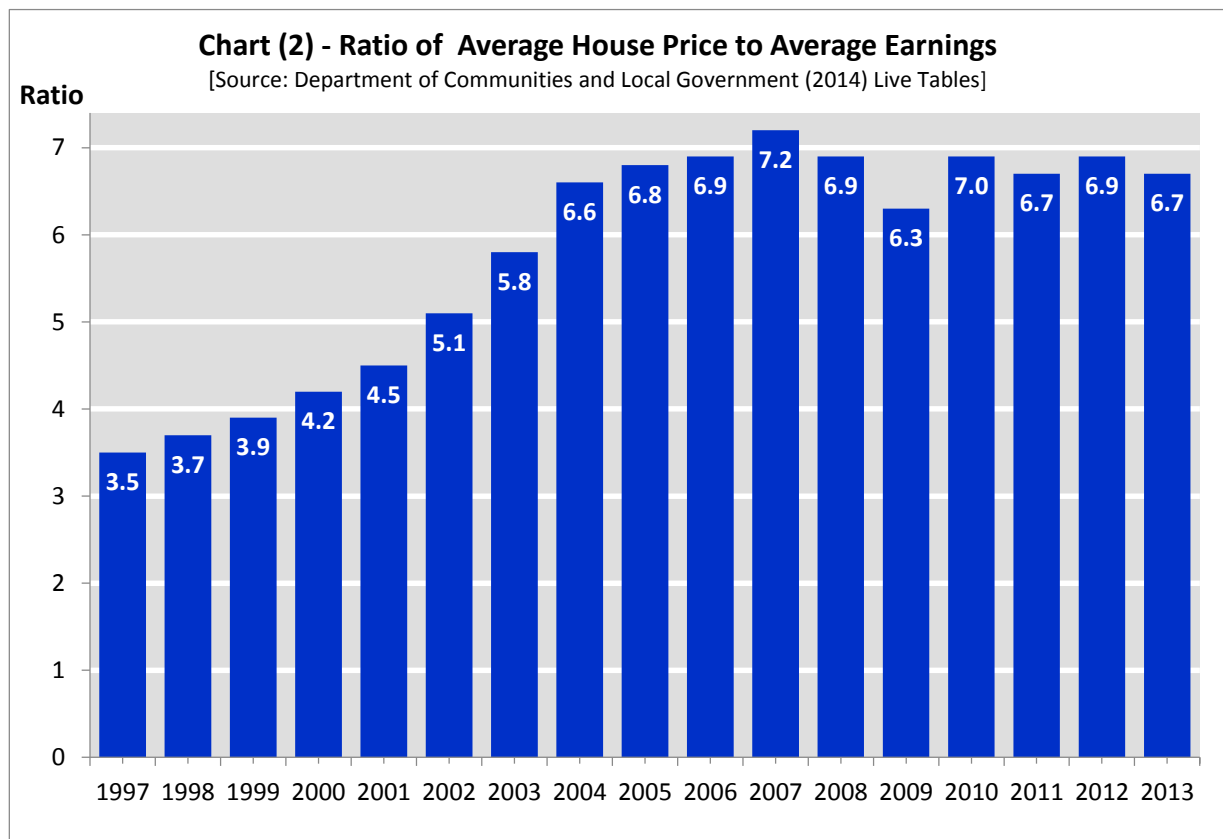


Analysis by the Resolution Foundation⁶ concludes that 1.3 million low and middle-income households face housing costs more than 35 per cent of household income – nearly all of them private renters or owner-occupiers. Over the last 10 years, the proportion of people under 35 renting privately has increased from under 30 per cent to over 50 per cent, while the proportion in social rented housing has declined slightly. In half of local authorities, a couple with one child, earning £19,000 a year, and living in a two bed home would face housing costs more than

⁶ Home Truths: How affordable is housing for Britain's ordinary working families? The Resolution Foundation 2013

35 per cent of household income. In a third of local authorities, a couple earning £22,000 a year would face similar excess housing costs, and in 16 per cent of local authorities, even a couple earning £28,000 a year would face similar excess housing costs.

Chart (2) illustrates how the housing affordability problem is embedded in the home ownership market with the average house price to average earnings ratio of 6.7 to 1 even after four years of housing market slowdown. The ratio is nearly double that of fifteen years ago.



A new report⁷ by Compass and the Human City Institute reveals a worsening financial position for low-income households, especially those living in social housing, with debt a growing problem as incomes are squeezed. Reliance upon high-cost credit is also increasing. Thirty-four per cent of social housing tenants say that their financial circumstances are poor or very poor. And just 4 per cent describe them as very good.

It is only social house-building, with rents set at genuinely affordable levels that can help to end this crisis of affordability.

⁷ Beyond the Margins: Debt, Financial Exclusion and Social Housing, Compass and the Human City Institute. June 2014

4. Our Political Position

Our campaign aims to be cross-party. Senior figures from the Labour, Conservative, Liberal Democrat and Green Parties support our campaign.

We want to restore the cross-party consensus on housing that existed prior to 1979. Both of the main parties have been responsible for good and not-so-good housing policies since 1979. Labour introduced many positive measures after 1997, including significant spending on decent homes which has put most of the current social stock into sound condition, and boosting the standard of local authority housing management through the ALMO programme. The outgoing Labour government and the incoming coalition reformed Housing Revenue Accounts, allowing local authorities to run their own affairs and build new homes for the first time in decades. The coalition has implemented the National Planning Policy Framework.

But none of this has reversed the collapse in overall house-building that occurred from the 1980s onwards. The Right to Buy has now been boosted without like for like replacement and the coalition has pushed through the 'Affordable Rent' programme that will increase the rents for new homes provided by social landlords up to 80 per cent of market rents, leading to many households becoming trapped in poverty.

A new political consensus means returning to sensible levels of investment in bricks and mortar to provide rented homes at genuinely affordable rents. This will help to reduce the £24 billion that is spent annually on housing benefits – the second largest item of welfare spending after state pensions.

5. The Role of the Social Housing Sector

Over the past forty years many housing providers, together with their trade and professional bodies, have largely failed to make the case for housing investment. The sector has had some successes, for example in evading the Right to Buy for charitable housing associations and the reform of the HRA which devolved debt to individual local authorities, but such victories have been rare. Many adverse changes have been introduced by stealth, by central diktat and regulation, drip by drip. It is only when you stand back and view the bigger picture that you can fully understand the scale of the damage done to social housing.

For example:

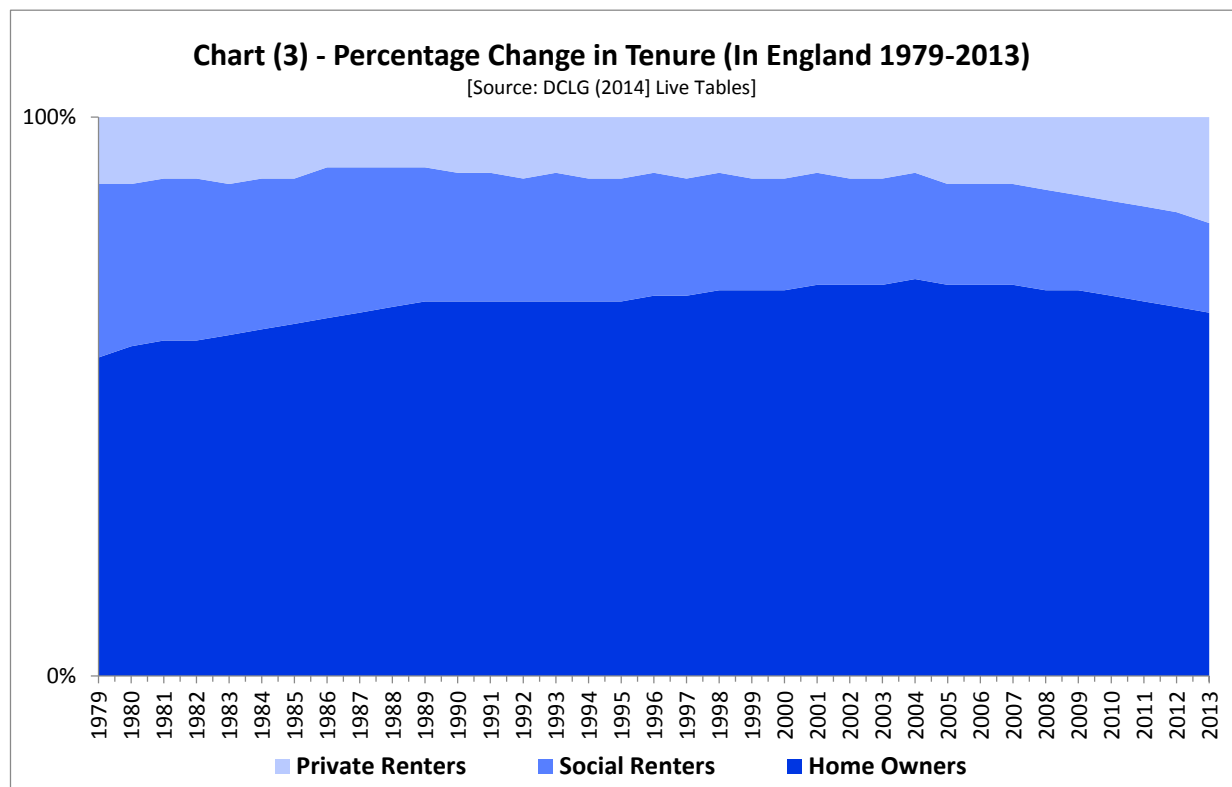
- As a country we have failed to build enough homes, leading to house prices and rents increasing much faster than inflation. Our sector has failed properly to make the case for housing and to oppose the ideological attack upon social housing.
- The Right to Buy, at large discounts, led to the loss of valuable assets that had been created over a period of generations. These properties have not been replaced. Ironically, many of these homes are now being let to poor working people on high rents, requiring them to claim much higher levels of housing benefit than if the properties had stayed in the social housing sector.
- Falling grant rates for affordable housing and the introduction of private finance has led to higher rents and saddled landlords and tenants with unsustainable levels of debt. Housing associations have failed to fill the gap in supply that followed the end of council house building from the late eighties onwards.
- Stock transfers and mergers have created some very large, unaccountable and undemocratic housing associations spread across, in some cases, hundreds of local authority boundaries, creating a pattern of stock ownership that is irrational and inefficient.
- For the past thirteen years the government's rent setting policy has increased social housing rents beyond inflation.
- Some housing providers have paid lip service to tenant and resident involvement. In reality, tenants have had almost no influence upon fundamental changes that have affected their status and security.
- The move to fixed term tenures threatens to take away security from tenants and hinders social development and community sustainability.

- Welfare reforms, such as the social sector size criteria, cause harm to individuals and threaten community stability.
- The ‘affordable homes’ programme has replaced the provision of new social housing with rents set at up to 80 per cent of market rents. For London this means an average rent of £191 per week for a three-bed family home. Rents at this level are simply unaffordable to people on low incomes and will condemn them to life in a benefit-dependent poverty trap.
- Increasingly, housing providers have diversified and engaged in providing new homes in intermediate and private sector tenures, partly to cross-subsidise more affordable homes, partly because they have been encouraged to go down this route by successive governments, and partly for their own reasons. Housing providers, driven by their boards and senior executives, competed with each other to create larger and larger organisations, sometimes without a clear understanding of the detrimental impact that this was having on the nation’s housing stock. Although shared ownership, intermediate rent, student housing, outright sale and other schemes have contributed to the overall supply of housing they detract from the affordable housing sector’s core product – social rented housing. These alternative tenures are not a substitute for social rented housing. Without social housing as its core product, housing providers may end up being little different to private providers.
- The economic argument for social house building is clear. Building affordable homes offers one of the best multiplier impacts of any form of public investment – according to the National Housing Federation every affordable home built generates an additional £108,000 in the economy and creates 2.3 jobs.⁸ The annual cost of propping up high rents in the form of housing benefit is now £24 billion per year, of which 40 per cent is now paid to private landlords. In comparison, the annual investment in new ‘affordable’ homes is around £1.2 billion a year. Making a long-term switch of public spending from housing benefit into bricks and mortar would make social and financial sense.

⁸ <http://www.housing.org.uk/publications/browse/budget-2013-submission>

6. Comparisons between the Social Rented Sector and the Private Rented Sector

The private rented sector is now larger than the social rented sector. The graph below shows the changing trends in tenure since 1979 with the rise and then decline of home ownership, the long-term fall in the number of households living in social housing and the re-birth of private renting.



While the number of social renters has seen a steady decline since the early 1980s, the number of private renters was fluctuating between 1.7 million and 2 million. This turned into a notably and consistent rise from around the turn of the century. In almost any other market this trend could be associated with an increase in demand and therefore popularity, but we do not believe this is the case, as we demonstrate below.

6.1 Decent Homes

As part of its report on housing circumstances in England, the English Housing Survey monitors the number of non-decent homes in the country. According to the latest figures the total of non-decent homes in 2012 was 4.9 million or 22 per cent of the entire housing stock. The

highest proportion of non-decent homes is found in the private rented sector - 33 per cent.⁹ In the owner occupied sector it is 20 per cent and in the social rented sector it is just 15 per cent. This means that the level of non-decent homes is twice as high in the private rented sector as in the social rented sector.

6.2 Housing Benefit

The housing benefit bill has been rising in real terms for over 40 years, from £1.1 billion in 1970/71¹⁰ to the £24.6 billion now.¹¹ From 2008/09 the bill started rising more rapidly as a result of an increasing number of claimants. This increase was concentrated in the private rented sector, as table (1) below illustrates with a rise of 56 per cent in the private rented sector since 2008.

**Table (1) –
Change in Numbers of Housing Benefit Claimants by Rented Sector
(2008 to 2013)**

	Private Rented Sector Claimants	Social Rented Sector Claimants
November 2008	1,054,810	3,109,584
November 2013	1,645,507	3,337,696
Percentage Change 2008-2013	56%	7.3%

Source: Department of Work and Pensions

This means that almost 40 per cent of the total housing benefit bill - £9.5 billion - now goes to landlords in the private rented sector, even though the sector accounts for only 33 per cent of total claimants.¹² This is because the weekly benefit paid to tenants renting in the private sector was £105.51 at November 2013, compared to only £82.10 for social housing tenants (£76.20 for local authority tenants).

⁹ While the proportion of non-decent homes in the PRS has decreased since 2006, it is worth noting that the absolute number has actually risen. This could be attributed in part to the overall increase in the size of the sector.

¹⁰ Together at Home. IPPR report

¹¹ Guardian article - UK housing benefit bill will soar to £25bn by 2017

¹² Figures from DWP tables.

This means that each private rented sector tenant claims £23.41 more per week; this amounts to a difference in November 2013 of more than £154 million.

With rising rents across the private sector and without more homes in the social rented sector this cost to the taxpayer will only grow.

The Department for Work and Pensions predicts that private tenants will be the sole driver behind the increasing housing benefit bill over the coming years.¹³ This is just one reason why SHOUT is campaigning for more social housing to be built, and recommended to the Lyons Review that 50 per cent of any new homes built be in the social rented sector.

6.3 Social Value

Many landlords in the social rented sector invest in community cohesion, employment and training, and health and well-being initiatives, with the National Housing Federation's 2012/13 survey showing social landlords investing £750m annually in such community initiatives. These social landlords have the capacity and the will to use part of their income stream to reinvest in the communities where they operate. This rarely happens in the private rented sector.

89 per cent of landlords in the private rented sector are private individuals and, of these, 97 per cent have fewer than five properties in their portfolio.¹⁴ Due to the overwhelming prevalence of small-scale operators, there simply is not the same capacity in the private rented sector to invest in better communities.

If just half the number of tenants in the private rented sector were housed in the social rented sector this could provide an extra £9.2 billion per year¹⁵ in income for social housing providers to help them invest in the future of our country's communities.

6.4 Stability

A recent report has found that moving schools within the school year has a detrimental impact on children's educational attainment.¹⁶

The English Housing Survey reveals the average (mean) length of residence for social renters was 11.3 years, while for private renters it was 3.8 years, almost three times less. The social rented sector provides more stability for households than the private rented sector.

¹³ UK housing benefit bill will soar to £25bn by 2017 – Guardian article

¹⁴ Private Landlords Survey 2010

¹⁵ £89 per week average rent x 52 weeks x 2,000,000 homes

¹⁶ Between the Cracks - RSA

A Shelter commissioned online survey by YouGov showed that 66 per cent of private renters would like the option to take up a longer (up to 5 year) tenancy.¹⁷ This indicates a substantial interest from tenants in the private rented sector in putting down roots and planning a more stable future. Furthermore, households with dependent children are now more common in the private rented sector than in the social rented sector. Whether with a couple or a lone parent dependent children are part of 32.2 per cent of private rented households compared to 30.6 per cent in social housing.¹⁸

The stability that can positively influence a child's development and wellbeing is not only provided by the social rented sector but also desired by tenants in the private sector. A commitment by the current and future Governments to building more social housing will provide growing families and future generations with the stability needed to thrive.

6.5 Civic Society

Tenants in the private rented sector are less likely to be engaged in their community or in civic society. Private renters are less likely to know their neighbours, volunteer, or vote than people in other tenures.¹⁹

According to the Electoral Commission's most recent research barely half (56 per cent) of people living in private rented homes were registered to vote. This compares with over three quarters (76 per cent) of those living in social housing.²⁰

In addition, social housing providers are also more active in the community than private landlords, often providing many different opportunities for tenants to contribute to community development through voluntary activities.

¹⁷ Homes Fit for Families – Shelter

¹⁸ English Housing Survey

¹⁹ Homes Fit For Families – Shelter

²⁰ For reference 87% of owner occupiers are registered to vote

7. Dispelling Myths

The stigma attached to social housing is damaging to social tenants and landlords. Much of the media portrays welfare dependency as synonymous with social housing and this view has stuck in the public mind. According to an anonymous civil servant:

“David Cameron thinks social housing means sink estates while Osborne just sees Labour voters”.

The absence of a clear enough commitment from Labour to a positive shift in policy on social rented housing suggests that its leadership is also mindful of this set of negative attitudes.

In the minds of the public, social housing creates welfare dependency. This is untrue. Reliance upon benefits is the offspring of dependency, not its parent. Dependency is caused by lack of well-paid work, by unaffordable rents and house prices, by low wages and high living costs. The welfare system merely props up the consequences of dependency.

The ‘Affordable Rents’ programme will add to this dependency because few households in the southern half of England, where housing needs are the greatest, will be able to afford the high rent levels without recourse to benefits. The greatest increase in welfare benefits has been among those who are in work, due to falling wages and rising rents. Investing in bricks and mortar and reducing rent levels makes economic, fiscal and social sense.

Moreover, people like Mick Philpott are no more representative of social housing tenants than Harold Shipman was representative of doctors. The affordable housing sector has clearly failed to get across the message that, in the overwhelming majority of cases, social housing provides decent accommodation for decent people, the ‘hardworking families’ that the Prime Minister constantly refers to.

This is supported by an independent analysis of the economic status of heads of social housing households²¹ which shows that social tenants are far from the economically inactive group portrayed in the media. Setting aside the one third of social tenants who are fully retired and in receipt of pensions, the analysis reveals that 55 per cent of tenants are economically active with 36 per cent working full-time, 15 per cent working part-time, 3 per cent self-employed and 1 per cent in full-time education or training. Some 15 per cent are unemployed and 18 per cent are not working for domestic reasons, usually related to child rearing and supporting

²¹ Human City Institute (2014) from HCA/TSA national survey data (2008/09) based upon 19,000 face-to-face interviews with social tenants across England. Income figures have been adjusted with CPI.

‘hardworking families’. A further 15 per cent are permanently sick or disabled and supported by the social rented sector.

The same analysis uncovers how the majority of social tenants survive on low incomes. Over 50 per cent have net household incomes²² below £10,400 per annum. Just 6 per cent have incomes above the £26,000 benefits cap. Two thirds have no savings and, of the other third that do, 49 per cent have savings below £1,000 and 73 per cent below £3,000.

The sector has failed to tell this compelling story and how social landlords house tenants on low pay and experience disadvantage related to their domestic circumstances, disabilities or illness. You have only to read the moving tale told by former Home Secretary Alan Johnson in his recent memoir (‘This Boy’) to understand that social housing has literally saved lives.

Social housing tenants make a huge contribution to building sustainable communities alongside their social landlords. Tenants talk to government through their representative organisations: TAROE, the NFTMO, CCH and TPAS. In 2009 23,000 tenants took the time to tell the Regulator what the national standards for social housing landlords should be. Social housing tenants serve on Boards, run scrutiny panels helping to drive up standards in housing management, select contractors and as tenant management organisations manage around 250 estates regularly out-performing their host landlord across a range of measures,²³ as well as running numerous community groups providing mutual aid and support to their communities.

We have to challenge this demonisation of social housing and the stigma that goes with it. We have to tell stories, stories of struggle, and hardship and decency.

This is the challenge.

²² Incomes of all household members including all benefits (except housing benefit) and after deductions for tax, national insurance and pension contributions. In other words, the income a social tenant household survives on.

²³ Tenants in Control: An Evaluation of Tenant-led Housing Management Organisations. Price Waterhouse London: HMSO, 1995, and Commission on Cooperative and Mutual Housing (2010) Bringing Democracy Home, and Human City Institute (2013) More than Markets: Cooperative and Mutual Housing in the UK.

8. Our Core Beliefs

- Nothing is more important than secure, affordable housing as a bedrock for stable families and neighbourhoods. For those who can work, it offers the chance to have a meaningful and remunerative life. For those who cannot work, or can no longer work, it offers the chance for dignity, peace and to contribute to their communities.
- Social rented housing is a tenure of choice for many people. With an ageing population, in particular, a high proportion of elderly people welcome the security, affordability and independence of social housing, which frees them from worries over repairs and the upkeep of their property.
- Social rented housing represents an immensely valuable and surplus-creating asset that should be held in trust for the nation for the benefit of current and future generations. Its assets should be used to achieve a social purpose and save the taxpayer money.
- Social rented housing should be the principal form of tenure built and managed by registered housing providers, since their purpose is to provide homes for the poorest and most vulnerable households. Other forms of intermediate housing may be suitable for higher income groups. The 'Affordable Rent' model is not an appropriate form of tenure for people on low incomes.
- Social rented housing cannot be provided without adequate levels of initial investment by national or local government.
- There must be at least one for one replacement of social rented housing sold off under the Right to Buy or through voluntary sales.
- A greater supply of social rented housing allows local authorities and housing associations to meet wider objectives in terms of housing needs and mixed communities.
- If no one stands up to support social housing it could disappear altogether over the long term, and the country, in our view, will become a poorer and less civilised place.

9. Conclusions

A genuinely affordable, flourishing and fair social rented sector is not the sole answer to the country's housing problems, but it has an important part to play in a mixed and balanced housing market.

Our vision is of a country that is at ease with its housing self, where each of the three main tenures stands on an equal footing and no tenure is seen as inferior or superior to others. Our vision is where the three main tenures are the tenure of choice for those who live in them.

- **A social housing tenure** – where tenants value decent homes at affordable rents that allow them to work without recourse to benefits, where low rents allow people to contribute to their local economy and save for the future, that frees people from the pressures and responsibilities of ownership.
- **A smaller private rented sector** – where tenants value the independence and flexibility of the tenure, freeing them from the pressures and risks of ownership.
- **An owner-occupied sector** – where owners accept the risks and responsibilities of ownership and welcome the opportunities for long-term asset growth.

Within such a housing market there should be freedom of movement, wherever possible, between the three tenures. A vibrant social housing sector can add to the stock of new homes and relieve pressure upon the other two tenures, helping to restore balance and stability to the housing market as a whole. The construction of new social housing creates jobs, stimulates the economy and helps to reduce the housing benefit bill. By charging affordable rents, social housing allows people to live more comfortably, to avoid dependence upon benefits and to contribute to their local community and local economy.

The public mood is shifting in favour of housing. Recent polls show that the lack of decent and affordable housing is one of the key concerns for voters. In London, 80 per cent of voters say that the capital is in the grip of a housing crisis. The case for a massive boost in house-building, with social rented housing at its heart, is unassailable.

It's time to make the case for a major expansion of social rented housing and to protect existing social housing.

It's time to say enough is enough. We need a genuinely affordable, flourishing and fair social housing sector.



The Campaign for Social Housing

www.facebook.com/pages/SHOUT-The-Campaign-for-Social-Housing/584137758345466

REGENERATION SERVICES COMMITTEE

20th November 2014



Report of: Assistant Director (Regeneration)

Subject: PROPOSED COLLECTIVE ENERGY SWITCHING
SCHEME

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

For Information only.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 To provide details of a further Collective Energy Switching scheme

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 At the meeting of the Regeneration Services Committee of the 18th September it was agreed to approve the promotion of a second Collective Energy Switching scheme and that details of the proposal be reported back to Committee

4. PROPOSALS

4.1 It is intended that the new Energy Switching scheme will be launched on 2nd December 2014 and the auction will take place on 3rd February 2015. Offers will be sent out to participants on 13th February and the process will close on 16th March 2015.

4.2 The scheme will utilise the current NEPO framework for Collective Energy Switching schemes which was awarded to iChoosr.

4.3 Staff from the contact centre will receive training from iChoosr enabling them to assist any resident who does not have access to the online switching process. A dedicated phone line will be provided to enable residents to contact those staff dealing with the switching scheme. Staff will then assist members of the public to complete the required process. Information about the Energy Switching scheme will be provided at Community Centres, Libraries etc.

- 4.4 A link on the Councils website will direct those residents using internet access directly to the switching homepage. The Press & Public Relations office will help to provide links to the media

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 There are no equality or diversity implications.

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

- 6.1 There are no Section 17 Implications.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 It is requested that Members note the report.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 Fuel Poverty and Collective Energy Switching Report, Regeneration Services Committee of the 18th September 2014.

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REGENERATION SERVICES COMMITTEE

20th November 2014



Report of: Assistant Director (Regeneration)

Subject: QUARTERLY REPORT – ADULT EDUCATION

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

1.1 For information only.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 The purpose of the report is to update members about the work of the Adult Education service for the current academic year.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 This report provides an update on the activities of the Adult Education service from the beginning of the academic year 2014-2015. At the present time the academic year has just started and the total number of learners often changes within the first 6 weeks. A clearer picture will be available at the end of term 1.

3.2 The Adult Education service is fully funded through allocations which are received from the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and the Education funding Agency (EFA) as well as income from fees.

3.3 The tuition fees for courses were increased slightly for 2014-2015 and the service will monitor the numbers participating to see if this has made a difference to the enrolments. To date it is too soon to get an accurate comparison with the last academic year.

3.3 Table 1 shows the figures for the engagement of learners to date for the current academic year in some key groups.

Category	Oct 2014
16 -18	10
19 - 24	154
25+	649
BME	5%
Disability	22%
Skills courses	326
Community Learning	200
ESF project	390
Total enrolments	916

- 3.4 The Adult Skills Budget (ASB) is an allocation provided for the delivery of a range of skills provision. This type of provision includes Vocational Qualifications (NVQ), English and Maths, Apprenticeships, and other listed qualifications. It also includes the delivery of short qualifications in e.g. Interview Skills to support unemployed adults. This also includes the provision of traineeships for those aged 19-23.
- 3.5 For the academic year 2014-2015 the ASB allocation has decreased by 27%. This will lead to a reduction in the numbers of learners who can be supported through skills provision.
- 3.6 Table 2 shows the number of enrolments in some key types of skills provision for the current academic year.

Aspect	Oct 2014
English and Maths	127
NVQ's	137
Other Qualifications	117
Traineeships	6
Apprenticeships	6
Total enrolments	393

- 3.7 The Community learning (CL) programme is designed to reach those adults who are farthest removed from learning or the labour market. The programmes concentrate on working in partnership with a range of agencies to engage with the most disadvantaged. This could be in a range of ways and a range of provision.
- 3.8 Table 3 shows the enrolments in some of the key aspects of the community learning provision in the current academic year.

Aspect	Oct 2014
Family Learning	22
Volunteering	20
Leisure and Personal Development	84
Employability	64
ICT	16
Short Tasters	64
Total Enrolments	270

- 3.9 The Tees Valley Workforce Skills project is a European Social Fund (ESF) funded project delivered in partnership with the other Tees Valley local authorities. It is funded to deliver training to employees of small companies in the Tees Valley In the current academic year there are 390 employees on programme.
- 3.10 In order to ensure that all the provision is fully accessible to all a range of support measures are put in place. These measures include providing where appropriate the provision of crèche, transport and 1-1 in class support to those individuals who may need extra support to allow them to participate in learning
- 3.11 Table 4 shows the type of support which has been delivered to date

Type of Support	Oct 2014
Childcare	10
Equipment/Materials	6
Transport	2
In class	11
Other	13
Total	42

4. CASE STUDIES

- 4.1 To date this year here have been some interesting case studies.
- 4.2 In August 18 unemployed learners attended a Sector Based work academy developed in partnership with Job Centre Plus and a Hartlepool employer. This programme included skills such as interview skills.6 of these have now progressed to a full time traineeship and are guaranteed a job when they complete.
- 4.3 5 learners who gained a level 2 qualification in Supporting Teaching and learning last year have returned to further their studies at level 3 .All of them are attending a placement for 3 days a week in local schools.

- 4.4 This year for the first time the service introduced ‘Taster’ courses. These were short 3 week course which gave learners a brief introduction to qualifications in vocational areas such as Health and Social Care, Business Administration and Childcare. 100% of the learners in the tasters have progressed onto the long programs.
- 4.5 Within the ESF project the service has developed a new distance learning package in Healthy and Social Care in partnership with a care provider in the Tees Valley. This training package will be delivered to a total of 170 employees and was developed at the request of the employer.

5. PROPOSALS

- 5.1 The report contains no proposals and is for information only

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The service is fully funded by the SFA and EFA so there are no funding implications for the Council. The allocations which are received are subject to the successful delivery of learning outcomes.

7 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 There are no equality or diversity implications.

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

- 8.1 There are no Section 17 Implications

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The academic year has just started and it is not possible yet to determine the full picture of the enrolments for whole year. There has been a 27% decrease in the allocation for the Adult Skills budget so it is expected that the number of learners recruited will be less than last year. There has also been a decrease in the allocation from the EFA for the funding of 16-18 year olds.
- 9.2 In addition there have been many changes in the number and type of qualifications which are now fundable through the ASB. This will lead to a further possible decrease in ASB learners but may lead to an increase in CL learners.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 Members are recommended to note the contents of this report.

11. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 To ensure that members are informed of the current activities across the Adult Education service

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REGENERATION SERVICES COMMITTEE

20th November 2014.



Report of: Assistant Director (Regeneration)

Subject: CULTURE AND INFORMATION SERVICES QUARTERLY
REPORT – JULY- SEPTEMBER 2014

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

1.1 For information.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 The purpose of this report is to inform and update members on the work of the Culture and Information Services Section for the period 1st July – 30th September 2014.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Culture and Information Services cover a wide range of functions and venues across the Borough. These venues include: Burbank Community Centre; Central Library; Hartlepool Art Gallery; Hartlepool Maritime Experience; Headland Library; Museum of Hartlepool; Owton Manor Community Centre and Library; Seaton Community Centre; Seaton Library; Masefield Centre; Town Hall Theatre and Throston Library.

3.2 The Services provided include both on-site and outreach elements and advice, support and guidance to community groups working in these areas.

4. UPDATE ON PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES

4.1 Culture and Information Services have achieved a number of outputs during the period July - September 2014 and the following highlights some of these key achievements and work streams.

4.2 Libraries

- **Children's Service**

- The number of engagements with children for the period July-September 2014 was 7592. This relates to library led activities such

as read & rhymes, library skills and author visits. Visits to the library to borrow books are not included in this figure. This is a 3.8% increase on the same period in 2013.

Key contributions were;

- *Summer Reading Challenge.*
 - 1387 children participated in the 2014 Summer Read, with 1242 children completing the challenge of reading six books during the summer holidays. The number of children completing the challenge is 31 higher than in 2013.
- *Seaside celebrations & the Mayor's Summer Fun Day.*
 - The Library team hosted a number of outdoor activities during the summer with craft activities, storytelling and photographs from the Library Service's local history collection.
- *Summer programme.*
 - All libraries participated in a six week programme of children's activities.
 - Events included art and music workshops, animal workshops and a mobile planetarium.
- *Volunteers*
 - Libraries were successful in a funding bid to provide opportunities for young volunteers to participate in the delivery of the Summer Reading Challenge.
 - A launch event was held in the Central Library for young people to come along and find out more about volunteering. Fourteen young people attended this initial event and all signed-up as volunteers.
 - The volunteers assisted children to register with the Summer Read Challenge, helped them with their book choices and provided support for the delivery of the summer activities in the Central Library and branch libraries.
 - At the end of the summer a Celebration event was held for the volunteers and many requested the opportunity to volunteer in next year's challenge or to do more regular volunteering.
- *Arts Award Discover*
 - 30 children completed the nationally recognised Arts Award Discover qualification. The content and delivery of the activities involved in attaining the award were designed in-house by qualified library staff.
- *Natural England.*
 - As part of the launch of Natural England's recently published children's book 'Migration Day' events were held in all Hartlepool Libraries during the week of the 18th August 2014.
 - Natural England funded all the events which included a free copy of the book to every child who attended the events. The book

describes the epic journey of the one of Teesside's summer visitors – the Common Tern. 188 children took part in the activities.

- **Educational Support**
 - Library staff delivered a number of story sessions using sensory story sacks and large format books as part of High Tunstall School's summer programme for children with special needs.
- **Book give-away**
 - A joint literacy promotion between the Reading Agency, Penguin Random House and Good Morning Britain culminated in the gifting of copies of the popular 'Diary of a Wimpy Kid'. Hartlepool Libraries gave away 50 copies of the books alongside the provision of linked craft activities. The campaign attracted a number of new families into the library.
- **Author Piers Torday**
 - The Library Service continued to attract high profile authors with a visit from Piers Torday on the 30th September 2014.
 - The author spent the morning with children of West Park School delivering a session to 90 children followed by a workshop for 30 children.
 - A further activity was held at the Northern Lights Academy which was attended by 180 children from three schools. Approximately 90 books were sold across these events.
- **Digital Inclusion**
 - Use of the Peoples Network computers is stabilizing at just over 10,000 hours of use per quarter. 10,235 hours of use in the period July – Sept 2014 represents 15,923 individual sessions.

No. of hours of usage	2013/14	2014/15
April – June	9,031	10,594
July-September	9,748	10,235

- **Enquiries**
 - The Library Reference & Information department recorded 9710 enquiries in the period July- September 2014. This is an increase of 28% on the same period in 2013.

Enquires	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2012-13	6444	6106	5858	6105
2013-14	6032	7577	6857	7790
2014-15	8469	9710		

- **Hartlepool History Then & Now**

- The Reference and Information Officer gave a talk to 70 people from the U3A association on the Hartlepool History Then & Now project and website.
- Library volunteers continue to identify and scan photographic images from the Museum Service's photographic collection. 4000 images have now been catalogued.
- Usage of the website continues to grow in both terms of users and images viewed.

	Users	Sessions	Page Views
April	3,161	4,305	44,855
May	3,324	4,320	44,611
June	3,304	4,189	38,911
July	3,397	4,316	43,324
August	3,550	4,615	43,380
September	3,724	4,749	45,340

- **Exhibitions – Central Gallery.**

- 5 exhibitions were hosted in July-September 2014 including the exhibition 'Hartlepool Men in WW1' to mark the centenary of the commencement of the Great War.
- The exhibition was based on the memorabilia and WW1 artifacts held in the private collection of a local historian. The exhibition was supplemented by research by library staff and featured as a major article in the Hartlepool Mail.

- **Events Programme 2014**

- The Library Service continues to provide author events, workshops and awareness days as an integral part of the Universal Library Offer.

Key activities include:

- **Headland Heritage Festival**

- The library engaged with approximately 250 people at the Headland Heritage Festival in July 2014.

- **Steetley**

- 60 people attended the first public showing in Hartlepool of the documentary entitled 'Machines once used now lie neglected – the final years of Steetley'. The audience comprised of many former Steetley workers. The director and one of the ex-workers featured in the film answered questions after the showing. The event was supported by an exhibition of photographs.

- *Enterprising Libraries*
 - 8 organisations attended the Enterprising Roadshow in July 2014 offering advice and guidance to the public on new business start-ups.
 - This was followed by a 'Women into Business' event in September where 15 expressions of interest in new business start-ups were recorded. It is too early to ascertain whether these expressions of interest transferred into business start-ups.
- *Book Launches*
 - Continuing its support of local writers the Library Service hosted launch events for two new books over the summer.
 - Michelle Birbeck, who attends the Central Library's writers group, launched *The Stars are Falling* which is a science fiction novel aimed at young adults.
 - Rachael Dixon launched the final title of her Sunray Bay Trilogy. Rachael from County Durham chose to launch her book at the Central Library following the successful launch of her second book at the same venue last year.
- *Author Event*
 - AD Garrett: Criminal Fictions and Forensic Facts.
 - The event with co-authors Margaret Murphy and Prof. Dave Barclay was attended by a full- capacity audience of 50 people.
- *Reading Groups*
 - Throston Grange Reading Group hosted a party to celebrate the release of the latest Bridget Jones book. The groups successfully applied for a 'party pack' from the Reading Groups are for Everyone website. 20 reading group members from across Hartlepool attended the event.
 - In co-operation with the staff from Hartlepool College of Further Education's Resource Centre the library has established a College Reading group. 18 people were recruited during the College's Fresher's Fayre with 8 attending the first meeting. The group will meet 2 to 3 times each term throughout the year.
- **Community Support**
 - The Library Service host a number of community support sessions, below is a sample of branch library activity between July and September 2014;
 - Owton Manor Library host a Job Club run by the Adult Education service. 38 people have accessed the service in the period July-September 2014.
 - A total of 51 people have attended the weekly Stop Smoking Sessions held at Seaton Carew Library.
 - The weekly Baby Clinic in Seaton Carew Library had a total attendance of 334.

4.3 Community Centres

- In the second quarter of the 2014/2015 financial year the total number of attendances at the community centres was 8619 which was an increase of 1169 on the same period in 2013/14.
- In Owton Manor Community Centre, a new regular booking has been made by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs.
- The table below provides a comparison of attendances at the community centre's from 2013/2014 to 2014/2015.

Community Centre Performance Indicators 2013/2014 & 2014/2015
--

Year	Quarter 2			Annual		
2013-14	Target	Total	Difference	Target	Total	Difference
3 centres	5464	7450	up 1986	22197	32542	up 10345

Year	Quarter 2			Annual		
2014-15	Target	Total	Difference	Target	Total	Difference
3 centres	8324	8619	up 295	33,000	-	-

4.4 Arts & Outreach

- **Arts & Outreach:**
 - Cultural Ambassadors Scheme:
 - A total of 143 young people engaged in the Young Cultural Ambassador Programme between July & September
- **Town Hall Theatre:**
 - A total of 16 shows/events were held in the Theatre between July & September
 - Visitor Figures: July to September 2014 3,402 (5,394 same period 2013)
- **Events:**
 - Two events were delivered between July & Sept attracting a total of 14,000 visitors, these were Seaton Celebrates and the Mayor's Fun Day in partnership with voluntary community organizations.

- **ISAG:**
 - Six events were considered between July & September
- **Hartlepool Art Gallery:**
 - Events/Activity:
 - Two events between July & Sept attracting 1614 attendees, these were the CCAD Graduation Ceremony and the King Crummet Craft Fair.
 - Six Dabble in Art sessions between July & September attracting 162 people
 - Exhibitions:
 - Hartlepool Art Gallery:
 - Two exhibitions between July & September, these were 'From Warships to Friendships' and 'Lives of Our Times'
 - Hartlepool Art Gallery - Emerge Space:
 - A total of three exhibitions between July & September, these were: Dyke House School, Blooming Art and Manor College.
 - Summerhill Emerge:
 - A total of two exhibitions between July & September, these were local artist Bob Watson and the North East Wildlife Photography Competition.
 - Projects:
 - July
 - A young person's 12 week outreach project happened at Throston Youth Centre - The work produced by the group will exhibited in Hartlepool Art Gallery 6th September – 8th November 2015 as part of the Times of Our Lives Exhibition.
 - Visitor Figures:
 - July - Visitor Figures 6050
 - August - Visitor Figures 4167
 - September - Visitor Figures 4336
 - Hartlepool Art Gallery Visitor Figures: from July to Sept were 14,553. This was down from 18,028 in 2013.

4.5 Museum of Hartlepool, Collections and Learning
Voices of Bombardment Exhibition opened on 20th September.

4.6 Hartlepool Maritime Experience

- Admissions were up 4%, income from admissions 1% compared with the same period 2013/14. Retail down 1%. Up selling to a 5 for 1 admission ticket (pay one increased admission visit 4 times free) have seen an increase of 44% for the same period last year.
- HME hosted, for the second year, the Big Lime Triathlon event on 21st September.
- HMS Trincomalee hosted the BBC Antiques show for archive footage, in co-operation with HBC.

4.7 First World War Project

- **Marketing**
 - The current value of the marketing contract is now £85,822, this is against a total output in this area of £100,000.
- **Exhibition**
 - The Tees Valley touring exhibition has visited the following venues:
 - Rediscover Shop Stockton
 - Middlesbrough Central Library
 - Yarm 1914 Commemoration Group Event
 - Kirkleatham Museum
- **Loans Boxes**
 - The loans boxes for Hartlepool have been used by freelancer Theresa Easton she used the boxes with children at Throston Youth Centre and High Tunstall School.
 - Captain Cook Museum Middlesbrough - South Bank Primary, St Pius X, St. Josephs Middlesbrough.
 - Head of Steam Darlington – schools in Bishop Auckland and Darlington.
 - Middlesbrough Archives are using them for in-house educational visits, waiting for list of school visits from them
- **Updates on timeline for Outreach Events and Community events supported**
 - Redcar 28th June; 5th July; and 1st August.
 - Stockton, John Whitehead Park, Billingham 19th July.
 - Sunderland Air Show, 25th-27th July.
 - Middlesbrough, Stewart Park 6th August.
 - Tramsheds WW1 plane touring Middleton Grange Shopping Centre & Kirkleatham Museum.
 - Remembering our War pod attended Headland Heritage Festival 12th July with and leaflets to promote project.
 - First World War Mail Art Trench Art Project began at Throston Youth Centre.
 - Remembering our War Hartlepool outreach event 19th Sept at Rossmere Youth Centre over (261 attended) and a further 600

passing public were handed leaflets and sign posted to other project events in the Tees Valley.

- Remembering our War pod attended at Durham DLI WW1 event Palace Green 13 & 14th Sept with pod and leaflets sign posting public to remembering our War projects and upcoming events, 5000 attended.

- **Outdoor Theatre Performances**

- First performance took place at Preston Hall Stockton on 27th September. Over 1,000 people attended.

5. SUMMARY

- 5.1 This report highlights some key areas of work and progress made over the past three months.

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

- 6.1 There are no implications under Section 17.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 There are no equality and diversity issues in this report.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 That the Regeneration Service Committee notes the content of the report and the progress made across key areas of delivery within the Culture and Information service.

9. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 To inform Members of the range of recent activities of the Culture and Information section and the ongoing contribution to the Council's strategic priorities.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 There are no background papers.

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REGENERATION SERVICES COMMITTEE

20th November 2014



Report of: Assistant Director (Regeneration)

Subject: QUARTERLY BUILDING CONTROL REPORT
APRIL - JUNE 2014

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

1.1 For information only.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 To update the Regeneration Services Committee regarding the key areas of the Building Control Service including the fee earning and statutory enforcement activity, during the first quarter of 2014/15.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 This report provides an update on progress and performance of the fee earning element of the Building Control Service and the provision of the statutory enforcement element during the first quarter of year 2014/15.

4. PROPOSALS

4.1 The report contains no proposals and is for information only.

5 BUILDING CONTROL FUNCTION

5.1 Building Control is the process of ensuring building work complies with the Building Regulations. The Building Regulations are national Regulations, applicable throughout England and are set by the Government to ensure minimum standards for the safe construction of buildings. These Regulations cover aspects such as structural stability, fire safety, means of escape, access for all, ventilation and thermal insulation. They ensure the health, safety, comfort and welfare for people living in or using buildings.

- 5.2 The Building Control Service consists of two elements, fee earning and the statutory enforcement element which the Council must provide.
- 5.3 The Council's Building Control service operates in a highly competitive market and competes directly with private building control bodies for work. Persons carrying out building work are required by law to comply with Building Regulations and submit applications for most types of building work (both commercial and domestic). Applications for work required to comply with the Building Regulations submitted to the Council are generally 'fee earning' except for those works which are solely for disabled facilities. The Council's market share for the reported period is 83% and although this has dropped 5% from last years overall figure it remains well above the current national average of around a 60%.
- 5.4 The Council's Building Control Service actively markets itself in this competitive market and earns fees by professionally appraising submitted applications to ensure they comply fully with the Building Regulations. In addition to the plan appraisal element the Council's Building Control Service as part of the process and its fee earning risk, assesses the appraised projects and carries out suitable inspections on site through to the completion of work.
- 5.5 The Building Control team deals with all types of applications from small single storey domestic extensions to multi million pound commercial developments and schools. The Council must cover all costs of the provision of this fee earning work but cannot make a profit on such work.
- 5.6 As well as the fee earning element the Building Control service is responsible for all enforcement issues in relation to Building Regulations. The Council is responsible for enforcing the Building Regulations as private building control bodies cannot. This enforcement can cover unauthorised work as well as work that does not comply with the Regulations and associated guidance.

6. FEE EARNING PERFORMANCE

- 6.1 Three types of 'fee earning' application can be submitted – Full Plans, Building Notice and Regularisation. Full Plans applications, as the title suggests consist of existing and proposed plans, calculations and specifications submitted prior to work commencing and are fully appraised by the Building Control surveyors. In addition these jobs are fully risk assessed and inspected as work progresses through to completion to ensure compliance. Building Notice applications are usually submitted just prior to work starting and although generally they have no plans with them they are fully risk assessed and inspected as work progresses through to completion to ensure compliance. Regularisation applications can be submitted to regularise previous unauthorised work and are fully checked to ensure the work complies both by submission of requested details and site inspections.

- 6.2 The total number of new Full Plans, Building Notice and Regularisation applications submitted for the reported period was 102. These applications brought in a total fee income of £19,836.55
- 6.3 The total number of new individual building work starts for the reported period was 97. These starts brought in a further fee income of £21,557.22
- 6.4 The total number of inspections carried out by surveyors for the reported period was 678 (23.7% increase on last quarter figure of 548).
- 6.5 The Building Control Service has approved 80% of the applications submitted in the reported period.

7. ENFORCEMENT UPDATE

- 7.1 In addition to the fee earning element the Building Control Service carry out inspections of unauthorised work and work not complying with the Building Regulations.
- 7.2 In line with the Council's Building Control enforcement policy the surveyors as part of their duties to carry out site inspections of building work as it progresses carry out many pre contravention inspections. By spotting work that contravenes or may become a contravention if work progresses in a particular way the sections surveyors discuss and resolve matters with owners and builders before costly legal action may be required through the Magistrates Court.
- 7.3 A pre-contravention is when a site inspection is undertaken and the work carried out is found to be incorrect or the proposed work is incorrect and the surveyor has just cause to ask for the work to be corrected or agrees an alternative construction to ensure the work ultimately complies with the Building Regulations.
- 7.4 The Council's enforcement policy reinforces the best practice to resolve such matters prior to needing to progress to a more formal and costly legal approach.
- 7.5 The enforcement update encompasses a number of key areas, including non-compliance issues found by the surveyors during chargeable plan appraisals and site inspections and unauthorised work which Building Control have been notified by neighbours, those selling houses, via other Council sections or those seen by the Building Control Surveyors whilst inspecting other properties. In the first quarter several smaller contraventions have been found during plan appraisals and resolved after a detailed first response to the agents resulting in compliant amended plans and details being submitted allowing for approval.
- 7.6 Several major and minor contraventions have been found whilst inspecting work on site by the team's surveyors and have been successfully resolved with either the owner or the builder in a professional and timely manner.

8. RETURNED QUESTIONNAIRES FOR PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND MARKETING

- 8.1 For all applications submitted and all projects completed the Building Control Service send out questionnaires giving our customers the opportunity to rate the service and add any particular comments they wish either good or bad. This also gives the Building Control Service an opportunity to fine tune its services as part of our overall marketing strategy.
- 8.2 The choice of ratings for the customers to rate the service range from very poor to very good and for the reported period the ratings are as follows:
Plan appraisal service 100% very good or good
Site inspection service 100% very good or good
- 8.3 The Plan Appraisal Service and Inspection Services have had some additional comments made by our customers such as:
- *Very helpful. Always available over the phone for advice*
 - *I gather from my architect that everything was straight forward and efficiently handled.*
 - *It would be helpful if on-line applications were available*
 - *Mr. Rutter's knowledge (very good)*
 - *James Rutter came to site and very good with his advice and helpful attitude*
 - *Garry Hutchison was a great help at first point of contact and Mark Taylor was very helpful*
 - *(very good) response to calls and inspections. Help and information*
 - *Ability to contact them – named officer – and the knowledge of any property held by the team / officer has surprised me!*
 - *Individual who completed was friendly and professional*
 - *It took nearly 3 years after work completed*
 - *File capacity at Hartlepool poor 8mb max*
 - *Very fast response, and very informative*
 - *Everything was so simple. Thanks*

9. IMPACTS OF NEW LEGISLATION

- 9.1 The Government has not introduced any significant new legislation in the reported period.

10. BUILDING CONTROL REPORTS ON THE FORWARD PLAN

- 10.1 There are currently no Building Control reports on the forward plan.

11. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

11.1 There are no equality or diversity implications.

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

12.1 There are no Section 17 implications.

13. RECOMMENDATIONS

13.1 Committee members to note the contents of the report and the progress made across key areas of the Building Control Service for information purposes.

14. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

14.1 To ensure that Committee Members are informed about key activities across the Building Control Service.

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

15.1 There are no background papers to the report.

16. CONTACT OFFICER

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REGENERATION SERVICES COMMITTEE

20th November 2014



Report of: Assistant Director (Regeneration)

Subject: QUARTERLY HOUSING REPORT APRIL-
SEPTEMBER 2014/15

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

1.1 The report is for information.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 To update the Regeneration Services Committee about progress across key areas of the Housing Service relating to empty homes, enforcement activity, Selective Licensing, Disabled Facilities Grants, housing allocations, the impacts of Welfare Reform and housing advice & homelessness prevention during the first two quarters of 2014/15. The report also outlines the activity ongoing with regards to Housing Management Services, 2015/18 Affordable Housing Allocations and review of Housing Strategies.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 This report provides an update on progress and benchmarking across key areas of the Housing Service during Quarters 1 and 2, 2014/15 and updates the last report presented to the Regeneration Services Committee on 31 July 2014. The report also outlines ongoing activity around the development of Housing Services.

4. PROPOSALS

4.1 The report contains no proposals and is for information only.

5. EMPTY HOMES UPDATE

5.1 The target for bringing long term empty homes back into use during 2014/15 is 60 and a total 35 properties were brought back into use during the first two

quarters of the year. The Council is therefore on track to meet this target by the end of the financial year.

- 5.2 In line with the Empty Homes Strategy the Council continues to take forward enforcement activities to encourage and enforce owners to bring long term empty homes back into use. The enforcement activity is informed by the Council's 'Top 20 empty homes' list.
- 5.3 During the first two quarters of 2014/15, the Council has commenced Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) activity on one property; this is likely to take a minimum for 18 months to deliver. This is the third CPO taken forward for long term empty properties. Of the other two properties where CPO action was used, one has been purchased by the Council and is undergoing refurbishment whilst the second is undergoing refurbishment through the lease scheme.
- 5.4 During Quarter 2, one property has been acquired through the enforced sale route and is currently undergoing refurbishment through the Council's Empty Property Purchasing Scheme. Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Section 215 action is currently ongoing in relation to 10 properties to improve the visual appearance.
- 5.5 The Council continued to acquire properties through the Empty Property Purchase Scheme throughout Quarters 1 and 2 of 2014/15 and the target of purchasing 100 properties through this scheme has been met. To date 33 properties have been let and the remaining properties are in various stages of refurbishment. All properties will be fully refurbished and ready to let by 31 March 2015. Refurbished properties have been let at 80% of market rent and have proved popular with local residents.
- 5.6 In September 2014, the Council held an open day at a newly refurbished property on Duke Street, which was attended by 70 people. This gave residents the opportunity to view the standard and condition of the properties being offered to let by the Council and publicised the service. A second open day will be held in the Oxford Road area in November 2014 to advertise upcoming properties.
- 5.7 The target for the Every Home Matters lease scheme for this current financial year is 22 and to date there are 22 owners signed up. Refurbishment works are progressing well and are on target for completion by March 2015. To date 49 properties have been refurbished and re-let through this scheme and funding has been secured by Thirteen Group through the Homes and Communities Agency for the continuation of the scheme from 2015-18.
- 5.8 The Baden Street Improvement Scheme is nearing completion with 15 properties refurbished and re-let (six of which were acquired, refurbished and let through the Empty Property Purchasing scheme). Refurbishment works are ongoing on five properties and these are due to be completed by the end of the financial year.

6. ENFORCEMENT UPDATE

- 6.1 The enforcement update encompasses a number of key areas, including housing conditions, housing related statutory nuisance and problematic empty properties.
- 6.2 Table 1 sets out the requests that have been received by the service during the course of the year to date. The previous year's figures are shown in brackets for comparison purposes.

Table 1 – Enforcement Team Service Requests

Request Type	Number and % of Total Number by Quarter 2014/15							
	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
Disrepair	47 (53)	22%	57 (55)	26%	(86)		(81)	
Empty & Insecure Property	32 (42)	15%	39 (38)	18%	(25)		(33)	
Empty property Nuisance	15 (12)	7%	28 (13)	13%	(4)		(14)	
Unauthorised Encampment	1 (5)	>1%	3 (4)	1%	(1)		(1)	
Nuisance from Adjacent Property	19 (30)	9%	20 (37)	9%	(17)		(25)	
Nuisance from Occupied Property	93 (43)	43%	58 (75)	26%	(41)		(72)	
Filthy & Verminous	2 (3)	1%	1 (2)	>1%	(0)		(2)	
Defective Drainage	3 (10)	1%	5 (10)	2%	(0)		(1)	
HMO Advice	3 (2)	1%	9 (4)	4%	(2)		(1)	
Immigration Visit	2 (3)	1%	0 (1)	0	(2)		(2)	
Total Number of Requests	217 (203)		221 (239)		(178)		(232)	

- 6.3 The majority of these service requests fall into three main areas:
- Disrepair
 - Empty Properties
 - Nuisance
- 6.4 The overall number of service requests received in the first two quarters of this year is comparable to the first two quarters of 2013/14.
- 6.5 Whilst the number of disrepair cases increased from 47 in Quarter 1 to 57 in Quarter 2, the total number for the first six months of the year was comparable to the same period last year.
- 6.6 In total, hazards were removed from 24 privately rented properties during the first two quarters of this year, including three requiring the serving of legal notices.
- 6.7 The number of complaints regarding insecure empty properties increased slightly in Quarter 2 compared to Quarter 1 but there has been no significant

increase on the previous year. The number of notices served to secure empty properties has increased significantly on last year with 12 served in Quarter 1 and 14 served in Quarter 2. Many of these notices were served in the Carr/Hopps Regeneration area following regular area based walkabouts.

- 6.8 Complaints about nuisance properties (both occupied and empty) accounted for more than half of the complaints received during quarter 1 (58%) and just under half during quarter 2 (48%). During the first quarter, rubbish accumulations and tipping of household items accounted for two thirds of these nuisance complaints compared to less than half in the second quarter. Complaints about overgrown gardens also featured highly, however enforcement options are limited and most cases rely on an informal resolution.
- 6.9 In addition to the reactive work carried out, officers have undertaken proactive work in relation to identifying problematic empty and nuisance properties and those with the potential to be dealt with using Section 215 powers, through area based targeting, including the Carr/Hopps Street Regeneration area, Belle Vue, Burbank Street, Everett Street, Oxford Road and Cornwall Street areas.
- 6.10 Mandatory licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) was introduced in 2007. This requires HMOs, three or more storeys in size with five or more occupants to be licensed. These licences remain in force for 5 years, unless there are circumstances that require a variation or revocation. Whilst a number of requests have been made for HMO licence application packs in the first half of the year, no further licences have been issued as properties fell outside of HMO licensing requirements. The total number of HMO licences in force at the end of Quarter 2 was 16.
- 6.11 Service requests relating to filthy and verminous properties account for a very small proportion of complaints dealt with but have the potential to have significant impact on both the resident and affected neighbours. During Quarter 2, officers were able remedy poor living conditions of a vulnerable home owner through a combination of support and enforcement which resulted in the removal of rubbish and cleansing of their home. Officers were then able to identify issues with property conditions and have been able to offer the resident financial assistance to carry out essential repairs to provide heating and hot water and improved security.

7. SELECTIVE LICENSING UPDATE

- 7.1 Although the first Selective Licensing designation came to an end on 30 April 2014 and there is no longer a requirement for any new licences to be issued, there were 693 remaining in force at the end of the designation and these will continue to be monitored and enforced until each individual licence expires.
- 7.2 Table 2 sets out when the remaining licences will expire.

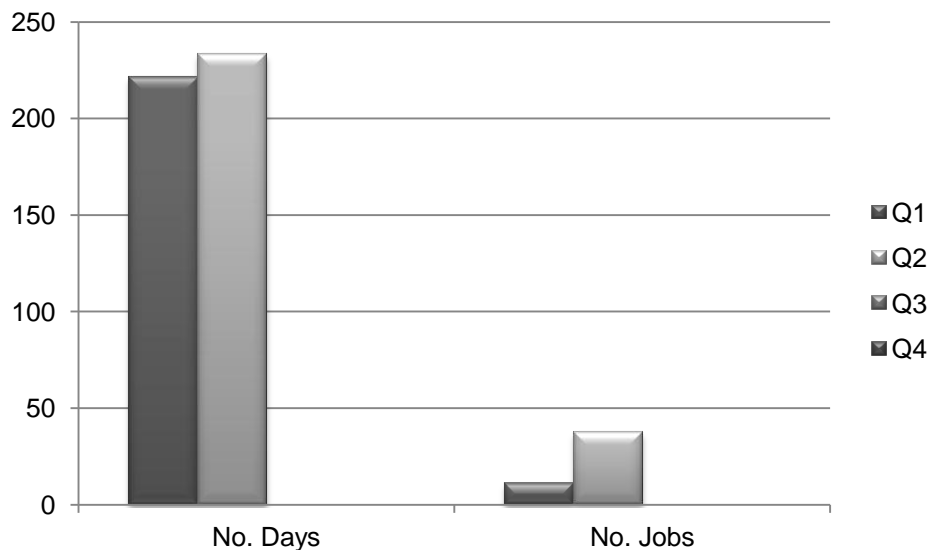
Table 2 – Selective Licence Expiry Dates

Expiry Period	Number of Licences due to expire within this period
2014/15	116
2015/16	394
2016/17	50
2017/18	128
2018/19	5

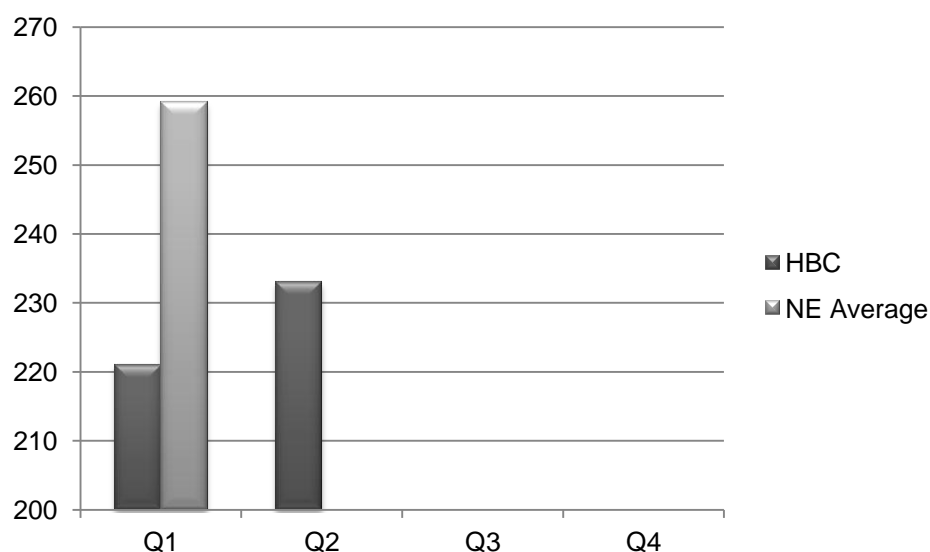
- 7.3 Consultation on proposals for a further designation for Selective Licensing within the town commenced during Quarter 2 and Committee will receive a report detailing the outcome of the consultation and the final proposals for a further designation to be considered at their meeting in December, in line with the decision making timescale.

8. DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS (DFG) BENCHMARKING DATA

- 8.1 During the first two quarters of 2014/15, 48 DFGs were completed in Hartlepool and the average time taken was 227 days. Figure 1 illustrates the time taken to complete DFG works in Hartlepool during the year.

Figure 1 - Time Taken to Complete DFG Works in Hartlepool – 2014/15

- 8.2 Benchmarking data is available from the other members of the North East Adaptations Group for 2014/15. Figure 2 illustrates Hartlepool's benchmarking data against the average time taken with the other local authorities who provide data.

Figure 2 – Time Taken to Complete DFG Works

- 8.3 At the end of Quarter 2, the number of applicants on the waiting list for a DFG was 105 at an estimated cost of £480,000. As previously reported the DFG budget for 2014/15 received from the Government is £451,155. The Council has also received £200,000 from the CCG Better Care Fund and £91,000 from Child & Adult Services. The total funding for 2014/15 is therefore £742,155.

9. ALLOCATIONS SUMMARY

- 9.1 Choice Based Lettings (CBL) activity and performance is monitored on a quarterly basis and compared with our sub regional partners by the Sub Regional CBL Steering Group.
- 9.2 The number of applicants who are 'live' on the system and able to bid increased in Hartlepool during 2013/14 and has continued to rise during 2014/15. This is set out in Table 3 and includes last year's figures in brackets for comparison purposes. 29% of the waiting list is made up from Housing Hartlepool applicants wanting a transfer.

Table 3 – Total number of 'live' applicants (able to bid)

No 'live' applicants	Hartlepool	Sub Regional Total
Quarter 1	2,620 (2,385)	16,383 (15,609)
Quarter 2	2,595 (2,552)	16,383 (15,365)
Quarter 3	 (2,516)	 (15,350)
Quarter 4	 (2,614)	 (16,073)

- 9.3 To ensure that applicants in the greatest need are given preference for an allocation of accommodation, levels of housing need are categorised into bands. Analysis shows that over the year the percentage of applicants whose level of housing need has put them into a 'priority' band has remained static, with around two thirds of applicants having no priority in Band 4. Table 4 shows the number of 'live' applicants within each band and the previous year's figures are shown in brackets for comparison purposes.

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

	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Total
Quarter 1	288 (206)	565 (548)	74 (58)	1,693 (1,573)	2,620 (2,385)
Quarter 2	279 (235)	539 (540)	83 (65)	1,694 (1,712)	2,595 (2,552)
Quarter 3	(225)	(543)	(62)	(1,686)	(2,516)
Quarter 4	(256)	(547)	(71)	(1,740)	(2,614)

- 9.4 At the end of Quarter 2 the number of decant¹ applicants in Hartlepool was 4.
- 9.5 Some applicants within the three Priority Bands (1, 2 and 3) may also have cumulative needs. During Quarter 1 the number of applicants in Band 1 with cumulative needs decreased to 28 from 52 at the end of Quarter 4. At the end of Quarter 2 this figure decreased further to 25. In Band 2, the number decreased from 66 to 53 at the end of Quarter 1 and rose slightly to 56 at the end of Quarter 2. At the end of Quarter 2 there was also 1 applicant in Band 3 with a cumulative need.
- 9.6 The number of bids made on advertised properties in Hartlepool during Quarter 1 increased by 14% from the last quarter of 2013/14 and there was a slight increase during Quarter 2. Table 5 shows the numbers of bids made per band within Hartlepool.

Table 5 – Bids per Band (within Hartlepool)

	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Total no. bids
Quarter 1	945 (641)	1,615 (1,675)	178 (162)	2,437 (2,799)	5,175 (5,277)
Quarter 2	832 (746)	1,603 (1,645)	171 (151)	2,681 (2,632)	5,287 (5,174)
Quarter 3	(552)	(1,589)	(84)	(2,336)	(4,561)
Quarter 4	(537)	(1,255)	(153)	(2,581)	(4,526)

¹ a decant applicant is defined as one who is losing their home through a recognised regeneration scheme and they are awarded the greatest priority

- 9.7 During Quarter 1, bidding activity increased slightly across the sub region. 30,841 bids were placed in total as shown in table 6, an increase of just over 2% from Quarter 4, 2013/14. However, during Quarter 2 bidding activity decreased. Last year's figures are shown in brackets for comparison purposes.

Table 6 – Bidding activity by type of property (within the Sub Region)

	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	5 bed+	Other property type (e.g. studio flat)
Quarter 1	10,158 (15,889)	12,611 (14,035)	7,013 (9,101)	507 (527)	49 (83)	503 (684)
Quarter 2	9,005 (12,495)	11,313 (12,217)	7,323 (7,109)	564 (517)	29 (61)	396 (262)
Quarter 3	(6,251)	(6,258)	(3,558)	(191)	(4)	(121)
Quarter 4	(11,015)	(11,392)	(6,816)	(433)	(80)	(442)

- 9.8 Table 7 demonstrates that the majority of lettings in Hartlepool continue to go to those on the waiting list rather than to Housing Hartlepool transfer applicants. Last year's figures are shown in brackets for comparison purposes.

Table 7 – Lettings Information for Hartlepool

	Total no. lets	Direct Lets	Transfers
Quarter 1	92 (162)	0 (0)	17 (40)
Quarter 2	87 (159)	0 (0)	16 (33)
Quarter 3	(138)	(0)	(27)
Quarter 4	(82)	(0)	(18)

- 9.9 The number of lets within each Band, as shown in Table 8, illustrates that just over half of lettings went to applicants within Band 4 during Quarter 1. However, during Quarter 2, just one third of lettings went to applicants within Band 4. Figures for the numbers of lets within each band for the previous year are shown in brackets for comparison purposes.

Table 8 – Lets within each Band (within Hartlepool)

	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Total no. lets
Quarter 1	28 (38)	10 (25)	5 (14)	49 (85)	92 (162)
Quarter 2	33 (36)	23 (31)	4 (11)	27 (81)	87 (159)
Quarter 3	(35)	(26)	(11)	(66)	(138)
Quarter 4	(18)	(15)	(8)	(41)	(82)

9.10 The numbers of offers that are refused are also monitored. During Quarter 1, the number of refusals of Housing Hartlepool properties decreased to 39 from 53 in the previous quarter, of those 14 stated 'dislikes area' (36%) and 5 'no longer wants area' (13%). No refusals were because the property was too large and just 2 were because the property was too small. During Quarter 2, the number of refusals increased to 59 of which, seven stated 'dislikes area' (12%) and 13 stated 'no longer wants area' (22%). No refusals were due to the property being considered too large but 11 were refused on the basis that the property was too small (19%).

9.11 The Sub Regional CBL Policy allows for cross boundary mobility as shown in Table 9.

Table 9 – Cross Boundary Mobility

	Area applicant moved from:	Area applicant re-housed to:	Number
Quarter 1	Stockton	Hartlepool	1
	Hartlepool	Darlington	1
		Middlesbrough	3
		Redcar & Cleveland	2
Quarter 2	Hartlepool	Redcar & Cleveland	1
	Stockton	Hartlepool	3

9.12 The percentage of properties let on first offer is also monitored across the sub region and this decreased from 93 % during the last quarter of 2013/14 to 75% in Quarter 1 and 66% in Quarter 2.

10. IMPACTS OF WELFARE REFORM

10.1 The impacts of welfare reform on demand for social housing and on tenancy sustainability and homelessness continues to be monitored in partnership with registered providers.

10.2 Figures on tenancy failure continue to be collected for the Homelessness Strategy. Housing Hartlepool reported in Quarter 2, that 103 starter tenancies had terminated in the last 12 months which represents 8.44% of

all terminations. Across Thirteen Group there has been an increase in vacancies.

- 10.3 Bidding activity continues to show that family houses are in low demand in certain areas of the town as reported in previous quarters.
- 10.4 Bidding activity continues to show that the average numbers of bids made on all property types have reduced since the same period in 2012.
- 10.5 Terminations from the social rented sector to the private rented sector continue to increase across registered providers.
- 10.6 During the first two quarters of 2014/15, 380 households terminated Housing Hartlepool tenancies, of which 31 were under-occupying their property. 11 households moved to the private rented sector.
- 10.7 As shown in Table 4, at the end of Quarter 1 there were 2,620 applicants on the housing register which shows that the housing register is remaining static.
- 10.8 Through the Low Demand Working Group and other external meetings, both locally and sub regionally, the Council is working with all registered provider partners to both understand and tackle the challenges since the introduction of the Welfare Reform Act.

11. HOUSING ADVICE AND HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION ACTIVITY

- 11.1 The Housing Advice and Homelessness Service relocated to the Civic Centre in June 2014, following the closure of the Housing Options Centre at Park Tower. Targeted publicity of the move and effective client communication has lead to the transition to the Civic Centre being accepted very well by customers and has had very little impact on the number of customers seeking assistance.
- 11.2 Housing Hartlepool's lettings team were also relocated from the Housing Options Centre in June and as their new offices at Titan House did not open until October they have provided an appointment service from the Civic Centre.
- 11.3 During Quarters 1 and 2, active casework has been carried out with 562 clients to resolve their housing issues. Table 10 provides a breakdown of the enquiry types clients have presented with, alongside the previous year's figures (shown in brackets) for comparison purposes. This shows that although there are fluctuations of numbers between quarters they are comparable with the same quarters last year.

Table 10 – Housing Advice Casework

Enquiry Type	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Debt Advice*	54 (35)	58 (73)	(54)	(64)
Relationship Breakdown	43 (25)	58 (52)	(36)	(22)
Asked to Leave	60 (30)	83 (61)	(42)	(87)
Possession Proceedings	98 (28)	87 (54)	(79)	(61)
Tenancy Advice	33 (19)	27 (30)	(29)	(44)
Seeking Accommodation	96 (114)	94 (141)	(123)	(111)
Total Enquiry Types	384 (299)	407 (411)	(363)	(389)
Total Clients	258 (251)	304 (315)	(252)	(264)

* includes mortgage and rent arrears

- 11.4 During the first two quarters of the year, homelessness was prevented for 151 householders, which was comparable with the same period in 2013/14. Table 11 provides a breakdown of the number of households where homelessness has been prevented per quarter with last year's figures shown for comparison purposes.

Table 11 – Homeless Preventions

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Households where homelessness prevented	73 (75)	78 (77)	(88)	(86)

- 11.5 Where casework has not resolved homelessness, a number of households have been accepted as statutorily homeless and provided with alternative secure accommodation. Table 12 provides a breakdown of those cases, with last year's figures shown in brackets for comparison purposes. Quarter 2 saw a major reduction on the same period last year.

Table 12 – Homeless Duty Accepted

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Households accepted as statutorily homeless	6 (6)	1 (14)	(4)	(11)

12. HOUSING MANAGEMENT SERVICES

- 12.1 The Finance and Policy Committee approved the proposal to internalise the management of the Council owned stock (82 new build units and up to 100 units purchased through the Empty Property Purchasing Scheme), into the

remit of Housing Services from April 2015. Work is ongoing during this transition period to prepare for the delivery of this new service.

- 12.2 Following this decision, the Finance and Policy Committee approved a separate report on 30 June 2014 for Housing Services to set up a Social Lettings Agency, as a complementary initiative to improve property and management standards in the private rented sector. The Agency will provide similar services to a commercial 'high street' letting and management agent, working closely with a landlord and tenant to help establish and sustain tenancies for the longer term.
- 12.3 The approval of these recommendations allows future opportunities for the delivery of Housing Services in Hartlepool to be delivered by the Council. The overall aim is to develop a more robust housing service, which provides the statutory services, additional core services and enhanced housing services; meeting the aims and objectives of the adopted Housing Strategy.

13. 2015-18 AFFORDABLE HOUSING ALLOCATIONS

- 13.1 Announcements have been made on the allocation of funding for the 2015-18 Affordable Housing Programme from the Homes and Communities Agency. Hartlepool Borough Council were successful in securing funding to return 60 empty homes back into use through purchase and repair.
- 13.2 Thirteen Group secured funding to deliver new build affordable units across the town including 15 units at Station Lane, 31 units at Raby Gardens and 26 empty homes through a lease and repair model. Endeavour have secured 16 units at Eskdale Road which includes 2 fully adapted disabled bungalows. Additional allocations were given to Stonham and Anchor to provide some new units in Hartlepool.
- 13.3 The delivery of this programme will be monitored by Housing Services through regular liaison meetings.

14. REVIEW OF STRATEGIES

- 14.1 **Housing Strategy 2015-20**
Development of the new Housing Strategy has commenced. The new Strategy will also incorporate the Council's Homelessness and Empty Homes Strategies which both expire in 2015. This will enable the Council and its partners to monitor and manage its strategic functions through the delivery of a single Housing Strategy for Hartlepool.
- 14.2 Consultation on the new Housing Strategy will be undertaken in various stages.
- 14.2.1 **Stage 1** - During September 2014, three consultation workshops were held at the Civic Centre and these were attended by Members, the Housing Partnership, Council officers, Registered Providers, private landlords, developers and the voluntary sector. The aim of the workshops was to

identify themes and issues affecting housing across all tenures. The issues raised across these priority areas will be used as the basis for public consultation and as background for development of the new Housing Strategy.

- 14.2.2 **Stage 2** – Public consultation is the next stage in the development process. This commenced in mid October 2014 and will end at the beginning of January 2015. Consultation will take place at public meetings and residents in Hartlepool will be asked to complete a questionnaire. The questionnaire will be available on paper and will also be on-line on the Council's website. It will give residents the opportunity to prioritise the issues that are important to them <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/HBC14HousingStrategy>
- 14.2.3 **Stage 3** - The results from the three workshops and the on-line public consultation will be used to develop the first draft of the Housing Strategy for 2015–2020. It is anticipated that this will be formally consulted on during March and April 2015 with all Members, the Housing Partnership, workshop attendees, Council Officers, residents and external partners.
- 14.2.4 **Stage 4** – following the consultation stages outlined above the second draft of the Housing Strategy and an Action Plan for delivery will be developed during May 2015 and is expected to be presented to Committee for approval in June 2015. The final Strategy will reflect the formal feedback received and the views, suggestions and issues that are raised at public events.

15. HOUSING REPORTS ON FORWARD PLAN

- 15.1 **RN33/14 – Proposal to designate a Selective Licensing Scheme**
Committee will be asked to consider the Proposal to Designate a Selective Licensing Scheme. Committee will consider the data analysis relating to the nine areas under consideration to designate a scheme alongside the findings of the consultation exercise.

16. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

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

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

- 17.1 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires local authorities to consider crime and disorder reduction in the exercise of all their duties, activities and decision-making. This means that all policies, strategies and service delivery need to consider the likely impact on crime and disorder. This legal responsibility affects all employees of the Council as well as those agencies that are contracted by, or that legally contract to work in partnership with the Council in the provision of services.

- 17.2 Hartlepool Borough Council recognises that Community Safety affects all our lives, people, communities and organisations. People need to feel safe and this means developing stronger, confident and more cohesive communities. Community Safety includes reducing crime and disorder and tackling anti-social behaviour, offending and re-offending, domestic abuse, drug and alcohol abuse, promoting fire safety, road safety and public protection. The key areas of Housing Services have been developed with the reduction of crime and anti social behaviour in mind.

18. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

19. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 19.1 To ensure that committee members are informed about key activities across the Housing Service.

20. CONTACT OFFICER

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