

REGENERATION SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

19 June 2017

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor Kevin Cranney (In the Chair)

Councillors: Stephen Akers-Belcher, Rob Cook, Kevin Cranney, Jim Lindridge and Brenda Loynes

Also present: Councillor Christopher Akers-Belcher

Officers: Andrew Carter, Assistant Director, Economic Growth and Regeneration
Jim Ferguson, Planning and Development Manager
Joanne Burnley, Principal Environmental Health Officer (Housing)
Angela Armstrong, Principal Democratic Services Officer

1. Apologies for Absence

None.

2. Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2017

Received.

4. Housing Services Enforcement Policy (*Assistant Director, Economic Growth and Regeneration*)

Type of decision

Key Decision – Test (i) and (ii) applies – Forward Plan reference No RN08/16.

Purpose of report

To seek approval of an updated Housing Services Enforcement Policy which set out a summary of the legal powers available to the Council when dealing with housing standards, empty properties, licensing of houses in multiple occupation, selective licensing, statutory nuisance and protection of tenants and set out the range of available enforcement options. The revised draft policy was attached at Appendix 1.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The report provided the background to the production of the Housing Services Enforcement Policy which was approved in October 2011. There had been subsequent procedural changes and the introduction of new powers and sanctions that needed to be incorporated into the policy. Approval was granted by the Committee on 13 January 2017 to undertake a consultation exercise regarding the updated policy which reflected these amendments. The results of this consultation were set out within Appendix 2 and warranted no changes to the draft policy. It was proposed that any further changes to the policy would be made as and when secondary legislation was introduced and/or guidance was produced under the authority delegated to the Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of this Committee, with any changes having a significant impact being presented to the Committee as appropriate.

Members thanked Officers for such a detailed and comprehensive report. In response to a question from a Member, the Principal Environmental Health Officer (Housing) confirmed that Officers had been making referrals to the Cleveland Fire Authority to install relevant alarms but this had been scaled back and procedures were in place should any enforcement issues with landlords arise in this regard.

Decision

- (i) The updated Housing Services Enforcement Policy attached at Appendix 1 was approved for adoption.
- (ii) Approval was given for any further changes to the policy to be made as and when secondary legislation was introduced and/or guidance was produced and that these changes would be made under the authority delegated to the Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Regeneration Services Committee.
- (iii) Where any changes have a significant impact, such as the level of Civil Penalties, separate reports would be presented to Committee as appropriate.

5. The Redress Schemes for Lettings Agency Work and Property Management Work (Requirement to Belong to a Scheme etc) (England) Order 2014 *(Assistant Director, Economic Growth and Regeneration)*

Type of decision

Key Decision – Test (ii) applies – Forward Plan reference No RN 03/17.

Purpose of report

To update Members on legislation which was introduced in 2014 to protect tenants living in privately rented accommodation. The Redress Scheme for Lettings Agency Work and Property Management Work (Requirement to Belong to a Scheme etc) (England) Order 2014, made it a legal requirement for all letting agents and property managers in England to join one of three Government approved scheme. This requirement, made under the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 became effective on 1 October 2014.

The report set out the requirements of the Order and the penalties for non-compliance and outlined the proposed approach to implementation to be adopted.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Order requires letting agents to be part of a Redress Scheme and it was proposed that the enforcement of the Order would be undertaken by Housing Services staff who have more regular contact with, and more detailed knowledge of, the property managers and letting agents operating within the Borough. In addition, it was proposed to adopt a monetary penalty structure to take into account the compliance of the relevant agent. The proposed structure was set out within the report.

It was recommended that any day to day decisions made about whether to issue a monetary penalty will rest with the Principal Environmental Health Officer (Housing) and that any requests to review the charge be approved by the Head of Service. It was proposed that any income generated would be used for the purposes of housing enforcement including the enforcement of the Order.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Principal Environmental Health Officer (Housing) confirmed that the cost of any enforcement would be met through the monetary penalties received.

Decision

- (i) The enforcement of the Order be undertaken by existing Housing Services staff.
- (ii) The proposed monetary penalty structure as set out in the report was adopted, unless there was a serious incident which justified a more substantial penalty.
- (iii) Any day to day decisions made about whether to issue a monetary penalty will rest with the Principal Environmental Health Officer (Housing) and any requests to review the charge be approved by the Head of Service.
- (iv) Any income generated be used for the purposes of housing enforcement including the enforcement of the Order.

6. Five Year Supply of Deliverable Housing Sites – November 2016 *(Assistant Director, Economic Growth and Regeneration)*

Type of decision

Budget and Policy Framework

Purpose of report

To provide an update on the five year supply of deliverable housing sites evidence which informed the production of the Publication Stage Local Plan.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The five year supply of deliverable housing sites assessment was attached at Appendix 1 and indicated that the Council was able to demonstrate 5.04 years worth of deliverable housing sites when assessed against the housing requirement in the Publication Local Plan. Work had commenced to update the assessment in order that it was as up to date as possible prior to the Examination-in-Public of the emerging Local Plan. Upon completion of the updated assessment, it will be reported to the Regeneration Services Committee and to the Planning Committee at the earliest opportunity.

In response to a query from the Chair in relation to the targets identified, the Assistant Director confirmed that the plan sought to provide housing in areas that were sustainable and deliverable.

Decision

That the assessment provided at Appendix 1 was noted.

7. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent

The Chairman ruled that the following items of business should be considered by the Committee as a matter of urgency in accordance with the provisions of Section 100(B) (4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 in order that the matter could be dealt with without delay.

Minute 8 – Grenfell Tower Disaster, London.

8. Grenfell Tower Disaster, London

A discussion ensued on the recent fire disaster at Grenfell Tower in London. The Assistant Director reassured Members that the Building Regulations examined issues including means of escape, structural stability and fire safety of all applicable building work and new developments and was done so in consultation with the Cleveland Fire Authority requirements as and when required.

Decision

The update was noted.

The meeting concluded at 2.30 pm

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

PUBLICATION DATE: 26 JUNE 2017