

HOUSING AND CUSTOMER SERVICES WORKING GROUP

**Thursday 11th October 2012
Committee Room 1, Civic Centre
Commencing at 6pm**

Agenda

1. **Apologies (Please send your apologies to Erica Fredericks – tel: 01903 737547 or e-mail: erica.fredericks@arun.gov.uk)**
2. **Declarations of Interest**
3. **Minutes and Matters Arising from the Housing & Planning Working Group meeting on 15 August 2012 (attached)**
4. **Coastal West Sussex Local Investment Plan – (Cabinet Report for the Cabinet Meeting on 15th October attached)**
5. **Customer Services, presentation by Lead Officer - (Background notes attached)**
6. **Review of Terms of Reference & Work Programme – (Report including Terms of Reference & Work Programme 2012/13 attached)**
7. **Tenants Scrutiny Workshop on 21st September 2012 – (Copy of the Tenant Scrutiny Event Agenda, Presentation and Workshop notes attached)**
8. **Council Housing Stock & Expansion opportunities – (Report attached)**
9. **Next Meeting – 11 December 2012**

Copies to: Cllrs:
Bicknell
Mrs Bower
Brown
Chapman
Clayden
Edwards
Mrs Goad
Mrs Harrison
Haymes
Mrs Oakley
Oliver-Redgate
Oppler
Mrs Pendleton
Squires
Dingemans (Cabinet Member)
Elkins (Cabinet Member)
Bower (Cabinet Member)
Gammon (Deputy to Cabinet Member)

Officers: Jackie Follis (Lead Officer)
Brian Pople (Lead Officer)
Frank Hickson
Erica Fredericks
Nigel Lynn

**Electronic
Copies to:** Nigel Croad
Harriet Shelley

HOUSING AND PLANNING WORKING GROUP

Minutes of a meeting held on 15th August 2012 at 6pm (to be agreed at the next meeting of the Working Group)

Present: Councillors; Clayden (Chairman), Edwards (Vice-Chairman), Bicknell, Mrs Bower, Chapman, Mrs Goad, Mrs Oakley, Mrs Pendleton, Squires

Also

Present: Councillor Elkins (Cabinet Member Housing), Councillor Bower (Cabinet Member Planning & Infrastructure) and Councillor Gammon (Deputy Cabinet Member Housing)

Officers: Housing Project Manager, Democratic Services Officer

RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet;

Review of Housing Allocations Scheme

The Housing & Planning Working Group recommends that Cabinet approve the Revised Housing Allocations Scheme, including the arrangements for reviewing existing applications, with consideration to the amended report provided.

Draft Tenancy Strategy & Tenancy Policy

The Working Group recommends to Cabinet that the Draft Tenancy Strategy be approved and implemented from 1st October 2012 and the Draft Tenancy Policy be approved and be implemented from 1st January 2013.

Overview Select Committee;

Joint Scrutiny Review of Health Inequalities and Homelessness

- Note the progress made to date with implementing and/or developing actions to address the recommendations of the Joint Scrutiny Review of Health Inequalities and Homelessness.
- Agree that a further communication be sent to the Secretary of State for Health, the Registrar of the Royal College of General Practitioners and the Coastal West Sussex Clinical Commissioning Group to seek a response to the letters sent in March 2012. Any or all responses to be circulated to the Working Group and further actions reported to the Working Group for approval.
- Agree that arrangements are made for the Arun Wellbeing and Health Partnership, Arun and West Sussex Local Strategic Partnerships to consider the report of the Joint Scrutiny Review.

17. APOLOGIES

17.1 Apologies had been received from Councillor Mrs Harrison and Councillor Haymes.

18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

18.1 There were no Declarations of Interest.

19. MINUTES & MATTERS ARISING FROM THE HOUSING AND PLANNING MEETING 13TH JUNE 2012

19.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 13th June were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

20. REVIEW OF HOUSING ALLOCATIONS SCHEME

20.1 Following a request by the Chairman the meeting agreed to a change in the order of the agenda and moved to agenda item number 6 concerning the Review of the Housing Allocations Scheme.

20.2 The Housing Project Manager presented his report which explained the background to the review of the Housing Allocations Scheme, highlighted the key changes to the scheme proposed, following the review, and set out proposed implementation arrangements.

20.3 Members were referred to section 4.1 of the report which outlined the principle changes to the Allocations Scheme. An area of immediate impact was identified as those applicants who have no immediate need of housing, for example applicants within "band D", being removed from the Housing Register. Members were advised that a letter had been sent to affected applicants. It was also pointed out that any applicant who works, takes part in training or does voluntary work will be given priority.

20.4 Members discussed the report and its recommendation. Points raised were;

- The Review of the Housing Allocations Scheme is one element of a larger piece of work in Housing and will become an integral part of a number of policies. It was agreed that it was helpful to view the Allocations Scheme in the context of a wider set of work.

- Succession policy was discussed noting that elements of the Tenancy Strategy include succession. It was emphasised that policy must allow Officers to exercise discretion in individual cases. The Housing Project Manager confirmed that an appeals procedure is available and policy would not prevent Members from seeking a review.

- Members were concerned that clear guidance be provided to clarify for applicants undertaking voluntary work what constitutes volunteering to avoid possible misunderstanding.

- It was pointed out that page 18 of the Allocations Scheme at paragraph 10.7.10 may incorrectly refer to "children at Secondary School" and the Housing Project Manager agreed to investigate this.

- Suggestion was made that a seminar be arranged for Members to gain knowledge of Housing Policies and their synergy with other policy changes from Central Government. It was noted that Councillor Chapman, the Housing Project Manager and the Assistant Director of Customer Services will meet to discuss

ways of communicating change to residents whilst providing Members with a good perspective of Housing Policies and their working relationships.

- It was agreed that it is very important to keep residents informed of all changes with appropriate notice.

20.5 Following consideration of the report's recommendations it was agreed with the caveat that an amended report be submitted to Cabinet to address the issues discussed in minute 20.4., as follows:

The Housing & Planning Working Group recommends that Cabinet approve the Revised Housing Allocations Scheme, including the arrangements for reviewing existing applications, with consideration to the amended report provided.

21. WORK PROGRAMME REVIEW

21.1 The Chairman confirmed that at the next meeting the Housing and Planning Working Group will become the Housing & Customer Services Working Group and a new Terms of Reference and Work Programme will be considered.

21.2 The Housing Project Manager requested Members to volunteer to attend a Tenants Scrutiny Workshop on Friday 21st September. It was confirmed that Councillors; Clayden, Mrs Oakley, Mrs Bower and Mrs Pendleton will attend. In addition Councillor Elkins, as Cabinet Member for Housing, will also attend.

22. JOINT SCRUTINY REVIEW OF HEALTH INEQUALITIES AND HOMELESSNESS

22.1 Information tabled at the meeting: Arun Wellbeing & Health Partnership Terms of Reference, Local Action Plan to support Promoting Health Equalities and Arun Voluntary & Community Organisations Services for Homeless People & Rough Sleepers.

22.2 Attention was drawn to paragraph 4.8 of the report recognising that some fundamental changes are expected to Community Services from 1st April 2013.

22.3 Members expressed their dissatisfaction with the organisations/person(s) who had not responded to the letters sent to them, by Arun District Council, in March 2012. It was agreed that a reminder letter be sent and all responses circulated to Members. It was agreed that the Housing Project Manager will contact local Members of Parliament to seek their help in obtaining a response from the Secretary of State for Health and request that the Wellbeing Partnership to focus and lead on this issue.

22.4 Members discussed whether there was some scope for a local solution by contacting local General Practitioners for their support. It was generally agreed that a National response was important before proceeding with local arrangements.

22.5 The Working Group agreed to recommend to the Overview Select Committee:

- Note the progress made to date with implementing and/or developing actions to address the recommendations of the Joint Scrutiny Review of Health Inequalities and Homelessness.

- Agree that a further communication be sent to the Secretary of State for Health, the Registrar of the Royal College of General Practitioners and the Coastal West Sussex Clinical Commissioning Group to seek a response to the letters sent in March 2012. Any or all responses to be circulated to the Working Group and further actions reported to the Working Group for approval.
- Agree that arrangements are made for the Arun Wellbeing and Health Partnership, Arun and West Sussex Local Strategic Partnerships to consider the report of the Joint Scrutiny Review.

23. COUNCIL HOUSING STOCK AND EXPANSION OPPORTUNITIES

23.1 The Housing Project Manager presented his report on Council Housing Stock & Expansion Opportunities outlining the options, other than building new properties, which can be pursued to provide additional Council homes.

23.2 Members considered the report and discussed with the following salient points raised;

- It was suggested that properties that have been empty for a long term could be utilised, if suitable and of the right standard. An advantage being additional income, through the New Homes Bonus, for the Council. It was agreed that the Housing Project Manager will provide Members with details of the number of long term, empty homes in the area.
- The differences between being able to provide Affordable and/or Social rents was discussed with Member agreement that the focus should be on the provision of Social Rents.
- It was emphasised that all solutions must be cost effective for the Council.

Members agreed the report's recommendation as follows;

23.3 the Working Group noted the options for increasing the Council's Housing Stock as set out in the report and agreed that more investigation is undertaken into the options outlined with a further Report submitted for consideration at the next meeting.

24. TENANCY STRATEGY & TENANCY POLICY

24.1 The Head of Housing Management presented his report which updated the Working Group on the response to the public consultation on the draft Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy and any changes required following that consultation.

24.2 Members confirmed that applicants involved in personal appeals can be accompanied by an advocate but not legally represented to reduce costs for the Council.

24.3 Members discussed the report's recommendation and agreed 1 and 3, removing 2 as follows;

24.4 The Working Group noted the responses to the public consultation on the draft Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy. The Working Group recommends to Cabinet that the Draft Tenancy Strategy be approved and implemented from 1st

October 2012 and the Draft Tenancy Policy be approved and be implemented from 1st January 2013.

25. NEXT MEETING- 11 October 2012

The meeting concluded at 7.55pm

ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO AND DECISION OF CABINET ON 15 OCTOBER 2012

REPORT

SUBJECT: Coastal West Sussex Local Investment Plan – Arun’s investment priorities

REPORT AUTHOR: Andy Elder

DATE: 11 September 2012

EXTN: 37714

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report seeks Cabinet approval for the investment priorities (set out in Appendix 1) for inclusion in the Coastal West Sussex Local Investment Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet approves the Council's investment priorities for inclusion in the Coastal West Sussex Local Investment Plan as set out in Appendix 1 to this report.

1. BACKGROUND:

The Coastal West Sussex and Brighton & Hove Local Investment Plan (CLIP) was developed jointly by the following local authorities, and completed in February 2011:

Adur District Council
Arun District Council
Brighton & Hove City Council
Chichester District Council
Worthing Borough Council
West Sussex County Council

The Partnership of CLIP originally comprised six local authorities that together worked to ensure that any future investment was aligned to local priorities and supported growth in homes, jobs and communities. CLIP was set within the framework of the two strategic partnerships in the sub-region, the Coastal West Sussex Partnership and Brighton & Hove’s Strategic Partnership. These organisations champion the sustainable development of coastal communities and the City of Brighton & Hove.

Since the original Local Investment Plan was prepared by the CLIP authorities in February 2011, a great deal has changed in both the policy and funding environment established by the Coalition Government and in the local strategic context. The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) has therefore requested that the CLIP be revised to take account of any revised local authority investment priorities. This is now being done without the involvement of Brighton and Hove City Council who have decided to produce their own Local Investment Plan.

For the revised CLIP, authorities have been asked to focus on housing projects that can be completed by March 2015 in order to meet the HCA's national funding timetable. Although there is a focus on projects that can be completed by March 2015, forthcoming strategic sites have also been flagged up, as Registered Providers are starting to look at future pipeline programmes, and it will be helpful for them to be aware of the CLIP's priorities.

In 2011 the Government introduced an Affordable Rent product which gives social landlords the flexibility to charge rents up to 80% of market levels. In addition, social landlords are able to re-let up to 50% of void properties at the new 'affordable' rate. The coalition hopes that the increased revenue will enable social landlords to increase their borrowing and thus develop the 170,000 affordable homes which the government has targeted.

The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) which administers the programme has stated that it will no longer publicly fund affordable housing on Section 106 schemes, and where grant funding is provided, the new affordable rented housing rents must be set at "affordable rent" levels (up to 80% of market rents). This is likely to impact upon the viability of schemes and increase the pressure on local authorities to provide financial assistance or contribute land to deliver affordable housing. Overall, the reduction to the Affordable Housing Programme is expected to have a significant impact on the development of affordable housing throughout the lifetime of the CLIP.

2. PROPOSAL(S):

It is proposed that the Council continues to work with its CLIP partners in developing a revised Local Investment Plan and includes the investment priorities set out in Appendix 1 as part of the new plan.

3. OPTIONS:

There is an option for the Council to withdraw from the Local Investment Plan process and not to be part of any revised CLIP. However this might mean the authority misses out on future funding from the HCA.

4. CONSULTATION:

Has consultation been undertaken with:	YES	NO
Relevant Town/Parish Council		✓
Relevant District Ward Councillors		✓
Other groups/persons (please specify)		

5. ARE THERE ANY IMPLICATIONS IN RELATION TO THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL POLICIES: (Explain in more detail at 6 below)	YES	NO
Financial	✓	
Legal	✓	
Human Rights/Equality	✓	
Community Safety including Section 17 of the Crime & Disorder Act		✓
Sustainability	✓	
Asset Management/Property/Land	✓	

Technology		✓
Other (please explain)		
6. IMPLICATIONS: <p>The CLIP sets out a clear vision for local authority investment priorities for housing and other infrastructure projects. The HCA has requested that all local authorities actively engage in the Local Investment Plan process to help enable the delivery of our respective investment priorities.</p>		
7. REASON FOR THE DECISION: <p>To approve the Council's investment priorities for inclusion in the revised CLIP.</p>		
8. BACKGROUND PAPERS: <p>Appendix 1 – Arun's investment priorities for the CLIP Equality Impact Assessment - CLIP</p>		

**ARUN'S INVESTMENT PRIORITIES FOR THE
COASTAL WEST SUSSEX LOCAL INVESTMENT PLAN 2012 – 2015**

APPENDIX 1

SCHEME NAME / ADDRESS	NUMBER OF UNITS	POTENTIAL COMPLETIONS BY MARCH 2015	POTENTIAL COMPLETION AFTER MARCH 2015	PLANNING SECURED	Notes
Courtwick, Littlehampton	162	40	122	Yes	Planning permission secured for 600 homes including 162 affordable. Viridian in position with developers. Scheme to be marketed for potential start in 2013. Potentially 40 affordable homes by 2015.
Covered Market – Littlehampton	15	15		Yes	Hyde Martlet scheme being progressed with development tenders being appraised in September 2012
Arun Foyer	Not known			No	Not currently being progressed.
Arun Community Land Trust	Not known			No	Initial discussions with some Parish Councils but no schemes agreed as yet
Toddington Nurseries Littlehampton	252	0	252	Yes - outline	Total scheme of 1260 to include potential 252 (20%) affordable housing. Unlikely to deliver affordable units before March 2015.
Rural programme	20	10	10	No	Programme commencing with sites being identified in Slindon. Hyde Martlet preferred Registered partner
Lyminster by-pass	N/a			N/a	Capital infrastructure investment required to be repaid once housing developments completed
Arun council homes development	30	30		No	Programme being determined with initial sites currently being assessed for development potential

Gypsy and Traveller Pitches	Unknown			No	<p>The exact number of pitches required will be set out in study commissioned by West Sussex authorities and due for completion early 2013.</p> <p>A further sites study is also being commissioned which will propose specific locations for new public sites</p>
Hothamton and Regis Centre sites Bognor Regis	Nil – regen scheme			No	<p>The scheme could result in investment of up to approximately £40 million and the creation of approximately 220 jobs on the Regis Centre and 230 jobs on the Hothamton site.</p> <p>A planning application is expected by September 2013 with a start on site expected in 2014.</p>
West Bank Littlehampton	To be agreed subject to viability appraisal			No	<p>The West Bank of the river Arun in Littlehampton is a Brownfield site with some existing residential and light industrial uses.</p> <p>The vision is to create a 1,000 home mixed-use scheme to propel the regeneration of Littlehampton and establish the harbour as a leisure destination.</p> <p>Initial feasibility work shows that a development of this scale would be feasible but would require significant</p>

					<p>upfront infrastructure investment to overcome highlighted development barriers (road access, contamination, flood risk).</p> <p>There is an informal consortium of the landowners who are looking for promote the scheme, supported by public sector stakeholders and there is a DRAFT policy within the DRAFT Local Plan supporting a holistic regeneration scheme.</p>
St Martins Littlehampton	Nil – regen scheme			No	<p>St Martin’s car park in Littlehampton is at the back of the town centre. The Littlehampton Vision (2004) clearly highlights this site as a potential development opportunity.</p> <p>The recent Leisure strategy highlights the need to use the site to diversify the offer of the town centre given the hard times it is likely to face.</p> <p>A feasibility study will be commissioned this year which will lead into a development competition to select a preferred partner.</p> <p>The exact uses within this scheme are unknown but are likely to consider: bars, restaurants, leisure (gym, cinema), retail and a significant proportion of residential.</p>

COASTAL LOCAL INVESTMENT PLAN

Equality Impact Assessment

For the local authorities of

West Sussex, Arun, Chichester, Adur and Worthing

September 2012

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Step 1 - Scoping the equality impact assessment (EIA)

The EIA should consider the impact or likely impact of the CLIP in relation to all areas of local authority remit, including human rights.

Name of the policy / strategy
Coastal Local Investment Plan (CLIP)
What are the main aims, purpose and outcomes of the CLIP and how does it fit in with the wider aims of the organisations
<p>The CLIP is primarily an Investment Plan for the HCA and local housing authorities. It concentrates on the delivery of housing but recognises the vital links between housing, economic viability, health, education, transport and other infrastructure issues. It is assumed that the identified sites for housing will be delivered with the infrastructure required to support the development.</p> <p>The plan focuses on the short term housing priorities that are deliverable within a 4 year period 2011 - 2015, but where appropriate it also highlights longer term objectives (8 years +).</p> <p>An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a way of determining whether a policy (or proposed</p>

policy) impacts on different groups of people in different ways. It should be embedded in the normal policy making process.

The benefit of conducting an EIA for the CLIP is that we can:

- Take into account the needs, experiences and circumstances of specific groups of people who will be affected by the CLIP investment priorities;
- Identify any inequalities people will experience if the CLIP investment priorities are not funded;
- Identify any gaps in the CLIP investment priorities which will lead to greater inequalities in the sub-region;
- Think about the ways in which we can achieve the aims of the CLIP which will not lead to inequalities in the sub-region; and
- Increase transparency in the things that we do and improve the public's confidence in the fairness of the CLIP investment priorities.

There is a recognition and appreciation that many groups and communities within the CLIP sub-region have specific housing needs. Housing provision is a vital part of developing sustainable communities – if people cannot find homes that meet their needs and what they can afford, they may have to live in inappropriate circumstances or leave the sub-region.

Housing therefore underpins the other priorities of the CLIP such as, inequalities and deprivation and environmental and sustainable growth by ensuring that the investment priorities are inclusive, taking into account the needs of all people and groups in the sub-region.

The CLIP recognises the different needs and aspirations of different groups within the sub-region and the importance of reflecting these in our investment priorities. For example it recognises the need to plan for the consequences of an ageing population, by providing supported and extra care housing, and ensuring better access to healthcare and community facilities.

There is also recognition in the CLIP investment priorities of the need to plan for more balanced and integrated communities. In order to do this it is necessary to provide the right mix of housing and infrastructure to cater for people at different stages in their life cycle, and with different incomes and needs. This will require providing more affordable housing, more family housing, facilities for children and young people, community and religious meeting places and a wider range of employment opportunities for people of working age.

List the main activities relating to the CLIP and identify who is likely to benefit from it

Main activities-

- development of affordable housing (persons in housing need)
- provision of specific types of new housing for particular groups (elderly persons, disabled people, gypsies travellers and travelling show people)
- support services for vulnerable people (mental health clients, ex-offenders, learning disability clients, young care leavers)

Beneficiaries are likely to include older people, people with disabilities, students, those from ethnic minorities and migrant workers. These groups have been identified as being disadvantaged in the sub-regional housing market or as having specific housing needs which are intended to be addressed by the CLIP investment priorities.

What do you already know about the relevance of the CLIP? What are the main issues you need to consider?

Some things to consider:

- How is the CLIP likely to affect the promotion of equality in the areas of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, or human rights?

- How do you think that the CLIP will meet the needs of different communities and groups?
- What consultation has already been undertaken which is relevant to the development of the CLIP?
- Are there any examples of existing good practice in this area?
- Do you think that the CLIP presents any problems or barriers to any community or group?

Government guidance in the form of Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3) states that local authorities should plan for a mix of housing to reflect the different types of households that are likely to require housing over the plan period. This includes the accommodation needs of specific groups such families and older and disabled people.

The identification of the housing mix required is based on evidence such as the West Sussex Coastal Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

Living as independently as possible is considered essential to ensure vulnerable households have a high quality of life. Households unable to access support to maintain their independence are more likely to disengage with services and suffer ill health. This may be detrimental to education and employment opportunities, resulting in further inequality and isolation.

By recognising the different needs of different groups the CLIP will make a contribution to eliminating discrimination. It recognises that capital investment for new development is not just about housing numbers but about building communities. The CLIP acknowledges that supporting infrastructure must relate to the needs of a diverse population and provide benefit for all residents and communities throughout the sub-region. Providing a wide range of support solutions to maximise independent living for vulnerable households is therefore a key priority for the local authorities operating across the CLIP area.

The CLIP reflects the need to plan for the needs of all groups. For example the investment priorities will promote standards regarding the proportion of new housing that is accessible to

<p>wheelchair users. In the planning for future infrastructure the aim is to address the needs of the wide range of different groups, including those with disabilities. It is also proposed to improve access to health facilities, particularly for disadvantaged groups.</p>
<p>What data, research and other evidence or information is available which will be relevant to this EIA?</p>
<p>The West Sussex Coastal Strategic Housing Market Assessment contains information of the housing mix required for the sub-region.</p> <p>West Sussex County Council have adopted the HGO Model developed for the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) to assess the need for supported housing across a range of client groups.</p>
<p>What further data or information do you need to carry out the assessment?</p>
<p>None</p>

Step 2 – assessing the impact of the CLIP

What evidence do you have about how the CLIP will affect different groups and communities in relation to equality and human rights?

When considering the development of the CLIP, you need to think about internal and external audiences and all areas of our remit.

How does/will the CLIP and resulting activities affect different communities and groups?

Guidance note. Some things to consider:

- Is there any potential for, or known, adverse or positive impacts of the CLIP?
- You should consider how the CLIP might affect communities with small populations; people affected by discrimination in multiple areas of equality (age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation); specific interest groups such as small businesses, voluntary sector agencies and other service providers.
- Are there examples of good practice that can be built on?

You may wish to consider how the CLIP will be delivered or communicated.

Age

In the Coastal West Sussex Housing Market the population aged over 65 and over was 97,200 in 2006. By 2026 there are expected to be 6,000 more people aged 65 and over, representing a growth of 6%. Whilst this growth rate of over 65's is not very large, the total number of people aged 65 and over in the Coastal West Sussex Housing Market is significant as a proportion of the population of this Housing Market overall and therefore the emphasis for the CLIP investment will be on how to continue to meet the needs of these groups.

Quantifying the gap between the supply of supported housing designated for older people and demand is difficult. There is also a need for a better understanding of preferences and choice available. Furthermore the access and take up of adaptations, telecare provision, and home improvement support is intrinsic in estimating the need for supported housing units.

Disability

<p>The local authorities in the CLIP sub-region support disabled people to live independently through a series of grants and loans for aids and adaptations.</p> <p>There is an issue around the supply of suitable affordable housing for people with disabilities, and the effectiveness of the allocations systems and the use of the existing supply are also important (e.g. wheelchair applicants have fewer properties to bid for in the Choice Based Lettings scheme than general needs applicants). The need to increase the supply of ground floor and adapted properties should be a specific action for the CLIP local authority housing strategies.</p> <p>The CLIP local authorities are aware that we do not have sufficient information about existing or predicted specialist supported housing need. A new database is being developed for use throughout West Sussex which will better enable the ability of the local authorities and our partners to plan strategically for the needs of disabled people.</p> <p>Local Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) demand in the CLIP sub-region is likely to exceed the available resources during the lifetime of this local investment plan 2011-15. We will therefore need to plan to concentrate our resources on those most in need and explore alternative options for the client with our social care partners. Requests for additional and increased funding based upon demand will continue to be made to central government and the HCA</p> <p>People with disabilities tend to experience lower incomes with a greater proportion being on benefits. As a consequence this investment plan will have a positive impact on people with disabilities.</p>
<p>Gender (male, female, transgender)</p>
<p>Gender impact is not specially addressed in the strategy. It aims to benefit men and women equally, but there may be areas where those affected by the strategy are disproportionately of a particular gender – for example lone parents are more likely to be female. This is recognised as a justified/legitimate impact which is not driven by the CLIP.</p>

Gender reassignment
No issues identified.
Race (this includes Gypsies and Travellers)
<p>Evidence suggests that those from ethnic minorities are disadvantaged in the housing market and so would benefit from measures to improve the sub-regional housing provision.</p> <p>No significant evidence of new communities from Eastern Europe affecting housing demand (source: West Sussex Coastal SHMA).</p> <p>Local authorities are required to make provision for sites/pitches to meet identified needs of Gypsies / Travellers and travelling show people. The West Sussex Gypsy and Travellers Study (2006) is referred to in the Coastal Housing Market Assessment (2009). The West Sussex authorities will consider the findings of this study as part of their current review of housing need and sites study.</p>
Religion or belief
Lack of local infrastructure (e.g. faith buildings) or support networks for ethnic minorities and other vulnerable client groups may be an issue to address.
Sexual orientation (Gay, Lesbian, bi-sexual – currently only applies to employment and Civil Partnerships)
There is limited information and data available from official sources on the size of the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender) community/communities and any particular

housing needs or requirements they may have.

Human rights

Gypsies belong to an identifiable ethnic group whose traditional ways of life are protected by the Human Rights Act. This has to be balanced with the needs of the wider community. The CLIP seeks to meet the needs of this group whilst balancing this with wider community needs.

By promoting inclusive communities and addressing the needs of a diverse community the CLIP protects and promotes human rights.

Additional comments/Other excluded communities and groups

Tackling poverty, reducing inequalities and narrowing the gap between the more and less deprived areas is a shared goal across the CLIP partnership. Significant pockets of deprivation exist across the CLIP area and are in stark contrast to the high standards of living and quality of environment enjoyed by the majority of residents.

Housing and Customer Services Working Group 11 October 2012
Briefing on Customer Services at Arun

Customer Services can be defined as covering most of what we do for our local community. For the purpose of the Housing and Customer Services Working Group however the Customer Services portfolio covers our corporate approach to delivering Customer Services in a 'joined up', consistent and customer focused way. The attached structure chart shows where Customer Services sits in the structure. The Customer Services staffs who are directly managed by the Head of Human Resources staff work in the Contact Centre, the 'Pod' (general reception) at the Civic Centre and the 'One Stop Shop' at Bognor Regis Town Hall. Details of staffing are given below.

Contact Centre

Opening hours	Monday to Thursday	8.45 – 5.15
	Friday	8.45 – 4.45

Delivers front office services:

- Council Tax and Benefits
- Cleansing
- Environmental Health
- Planning and Building Control
- Elections
- General Enquiries
- Switchboard Service

Role	Number	FTE
Contact Centre Manager	1	1.0
Contact Centre Supervisor	2	2.0
Contact Centre Advisor	12	10.8
Contact Centre Support (switchboard & advisor)	1	0.93
Contact Centre Systems Support	1	0.54
Switchboard Operator	1	0.64
Total	18	15.91

Civic Centre Reception (Pod)

Opening hours	Monday to Thursday	8.45 – 5.15
	Friday	8.45 – 4.45

Delivers front line services:

- Any enquiries which are not specific to Council Tax, Benefits, Housing or Planning
- Environmental Health
- Cleansing
- Car Parking
- Elections
- County Help Point
- General enquiries

Council Tax, Benefits, Housing and Planning have their own front desks in reception at the Civic Centre

Role	Number	FTE
Customer Liaison Officer	2	1.54
Total	2	1.54

Bognor Regis Town Hall 'One Stop Shop'

Opening hours	Monday, Wednesday, Thursday	8.45 – 5.15
	Wednesday	9.30 – 5.15
	Friday	8.45 – 4.45

Delivers front office services:

- Housing
- Council tax and Benefits
- Environmental Health
- Cleansing
- Car Parks
- Elections
- Planning
- County Help Point
- General enquiries

Role	Number	FTE
Bognor Regis Town Hall Manager	1	1.0
Customer Liaison Officer	7	5.2
Total	8	6.2

Communication Channels

There are a number of different ways in which we communicate with our customers, the main channels are face to face, telephone and the website with other options such as facebook and twitter which we have been using more recently.

Our aim is to deliver services via the most cost effective channel whilst maintaining quick, easy and appropriate access for customers. A key aim is to resolve customer queries at the first point of contact.

Other Information

The Contact Centre opened approximately 5 years ago and its operation was reviewed by the Central Services Working Party in 2010.

The new Civic Centre Reception opened in January 2011. Whilst minor changes have been made to the way it works since this date there has been no formal review of its overall operation.

A Customer Access Strategy was developed 2/3 years ago which developed the approach which has been called "Click, Call, Come In", aimed at moving our customers to the most cost effective communications channel. Whilst there is performance data available on the use of different channels, there are concerns that the data is not accurate.

We have Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software which we use to manage a number of our interactions with the public. The software (Lagan) is not fully integrated with the majority of services in the Council, although there is full integration with Cleansing. Lagan was purchased by Councils across the County through the Better Together Partnership and West Sussex Chief Executives have just agreed to extend this for a further year until March 2014. There have been issues around reliability. The County has 'refocused' the project, bringing in an enhanced project team and moving the software to a new server.

Where are we now?

We are about to start a fundamental review of Customer Services and our Customer Access Strategy. At the time of writing this report the project team has not yet had its first meeting. The scope of the project needs to be well defined as it could potentially include nearly everything we do as a Council. Initial discussions suggest a number of areas of work which should be our priority, although this will be much clearer by the next time the Housing and Customer Services Working Group meets. Areas identified at this stage are:

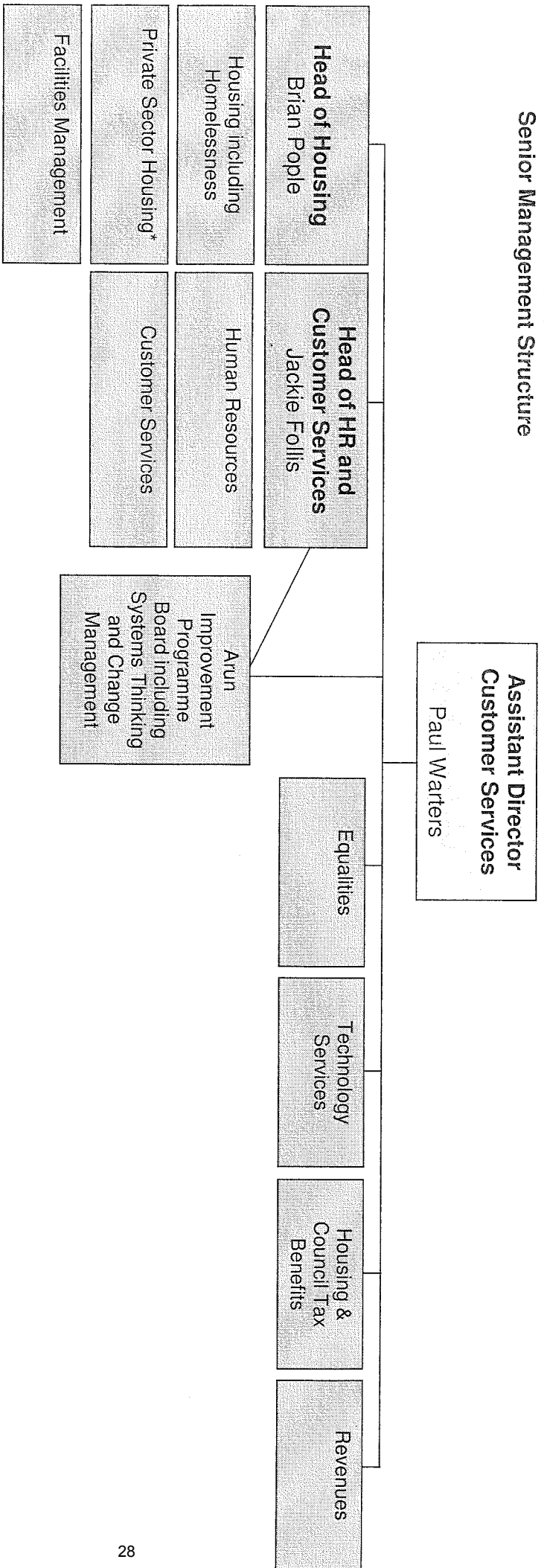
- Investigate why, when and how customers want to access our services (including data from individual service areas).
- Understand the differences between the different channels in terms of how they work for customers and determine our future approach, including where this can be more consistent across channels.
- Review our overall approach to Customer Services and identify future software requirements to support this approach. Needs to be completed by April 2013 to potentially allow for procurement.
- Review the working between corporate Customer Services and individual services and where this may need to change.

Recommendations

Members are asked to consider whether there are particular areas which they would like included in the project plan for the Review of Customer Services.

It is proposed that the detailed project plan is presented to Members for discussion at the meeting of the Housing and Customer Services Working Group on 11th December.

**Arun District Council
Senior Management Structure**



* includes Pest Control, Gypsies and Travellers, DFG's, Energy Efficiency, Drainage, Public Health Enforcement

ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

HOUSING & CUSTOMER SERVICES WORKING GROUP – 11 October 2012

Recommendation Paper

Subject : Review of Terms of Reference and Work Programme

Report by : Liz Fatcher, Head of Democratic Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following the report to the Council meeting on 5 September 2012 on the review of responsibilities of the Working Groups, Members are asked to consider revised Terms of Reference for this Working Group's operation. Members are also asked to agree a revised work programme.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended to Full Council that:

1. the revised Terms of Reference, as set out at Appendix 1, be approved; and
2. the Head of Legal and Administration be given delegated authority to make the required changes to Part 3 – Responsibility for Functions in the Constitution as well as any further consequential amendments required.

It is also recommended that the Working Group agree a revised work programme for the remainder of the Council year.

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 At the Council Meeting on 5 September 2012, proposals to change the current arrangements for the three Working Groups were considered to change the name and remit of this Working Group to the Housing & Customer Services Working Group. As a consequence, Members need to consider revised Terms of Reference and to review the work programme for the remainder of the Council year.

2.0 PROPOSALS

2.1 Revised Terms of Reference are set out at Appendix 1 to the report. The main changes reflect the new responsibilities and lead officers for the Housing & Customer Services Working Group.

- 2.2 A revised work programme reflecting these new responsibilities is attached as Appendix 2.
- 2.3 The Working Group is asked to approve the necessary changes to its Terms of Reference and Work Programme.

Contact: Liz Fatcher ext 37610

Background Papers: None

**HOUSING & CUSTOMER SERVICES WORKING GROUP
TERMS OF REFERENCE [OCTOBER 2012]**

Working Group	HOUSING & CUSTOMER SERVICES
Established	Originally established at the Full Council Meeting on 24 March 2011. Revisions to responsibilities agreed by Full Council on 5 September 2012.
Membership	Membership as at April 2012 (Confirmed at Annual Council on 9 May 2012) Cllrs; Bicknell, Mrs Bower, Brown, Chapman, Clayden, Edwards, Mrs Goad, Mrs Harrison, Haymes, Mrs oakley, Oliver-Redgate, Oppler, Pendleton, Squires Quorum – 4 Members
Chairman/Vice-Chairman	The Chairman and Vice Chairman will be elected at the first meeting of the Working Group in each municipal year.
Aim of Working Group	To consider policies and strategies and to review performance and other issues relating to the Housing and Customer Services Portfolios. The Working Group may be requested to consider issues by referral from the Overview Select Committee, Full Council and Cabinet. The Working Group may also determine its own work and propose items to be included in the Work Programme. The Working Group will not consider issues dealt with by existing Committees or Sub-Committees of the Council unless items are referred to it by such a Committee. It may, however, consider any outcomes from such Committees.
Work Programme	The Work Programme to be agreed and reviewed by the Working Group. Terms of Reference to be reviewed annually by the Working Group.
Reporting arrangements	Working Groups can report into the Overview Select Committee, Cabinet, and Full Council
Open to the public?	Yes
Term	Ongoing
Programme of meetings	Regular meetings will be held at least once per meeting cycle. Agreed dates for 2012/13 are: 13 June 2012, 15 August 2012, 11 October 2012, 11 December 2012, 27 February 2013 and 18 April 2013
Consultation programme	Consultation to be carried out as required and agreed by the Working Group.
Research/documents	As required.
Lead Officers	Brian Pople and Jackie Follis
Support Officer	Democratic Services Officer (EF)

Housing & Customer Services Working Group - WORK PROGRAMME 2012/13								
Working Group Meeting Date:	13-Jun-12	15-Aug-12	11-Oct-12	11-Dec-12	27-Feb-13	18-Apr-13		
Agenda Prep Meeting on:	23-May-12	26-Jul-12	17-Sep-12	19-Nov-12	04-Feb-13	25-Mar-13		
Final reports to IPS by 11am:	29-May-12	30-Jul-12	24-Sep-12	26-Nov-12	11-Feb-13	01-Apr-13		
Agendas to post room by Thursday 2 pm:	31-May-12	02-Aug-12	27-Sep-12	29-Nov-12	14-Feb-13	04-Apr-13		
Reports to OSC meeting on:	24-Jul-12	20-Sep-12	20-Nov-12	22-Jan-13	19-Mar-13	TBC		
Reports to Cabinet meeting on:	18-Jun-12	10-Sep-12	12-Nov-12	14-Jan-13	11-Mar-13	TBC		
Reports to Full Council meeting on:	11-Jul-12	05-Sep-12	07-Nov-12	11-Mar-13	20-Mar-13	15-May-13		
Item	Lead	Origin					COMMENTS	
Consider WG's Terms of Reference	PA	ToR	13-Jun-12					
Work programme - set and review	PA		13-Jun-12					
Quarterly Portfolio performance reports	PA		13-Jun-12 (Q4 11/12)			11-Dec-12		
Feedback from Site Visit of Council Garage Sites, Council Housing Stock and land that may be appropriate for new Council builds.	FH	WG	13-Jun-12				Site Visit on 23rd April	
Council Housing Stock development & Expansion opportunities	FH	FH		15-Aug-12	11-Oct-12	11-Dec-12	27-Feb-13	
Joint Scrutiny Review of Health Inequalities & Homelessness	PA	FH	13-Jun-12	15-Aug-12		11-Dec-12	18-Apr-13	Agreed at meeting on 21.3.12 for this item to be on the first agenda of H&P WG for the 2012/13
Planning Policy for Traveller Sites	KR	KR	13-Jun-12					
Review of the Housing Allocations Scheme	FH	SZ		15-Aug-12				
Tenancy Strategy & Policy	FH		13-Jun-12	15-Aug-12				Extra WG meet held on 3/5/2012
Review of Enforcement Service	KR	KR	13-Jun-12					
Review of Planning Performance Indicators and Targets	KR	KR	13-Jun-12					

Working Group Meeting Date:			13-Jun-12	15-Aug-12	11-Oct-12	11-Dec-12	27-Feb-13	18-Apr-13	
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Reports to Full Council meeting on:			11-Jul-12	05-Sep-12	07-Nov-12	11-Mar-13	20-Mar-13	15-May-13	
Item	Lead	Origin							COMMENTS
Coastal West Sussex Local Investment Plan	AE	AE			11-Oct-12				
Report back on Tenants Scrutiny Workshop in September 2012.	FH	FH			11-Oct-12				
Tenants Scrutiny of Housing Services	FH	FH				11-Dec-12	27-Feb-13	18-Apr-13	
Housing Tenants Complaints Arrangements	FH	FH				11-Dec-12	27-Feb-13		
Cold Weather Shelter Provision						11-Dec-12			

Programme for Tenant Scrutiny Event

21st September 2012

Venue: Council Chamber, Arun Civic Centre, Littlehampton, BN17 5LF

- 9.30 – 9.40 Welcome and introduction to the day
- 9.40 – 10.00 The need for change
- 10.00 – 11.00 Presentation by Reading tenants
- 11.00 – 12.00 Presentation by Hyde tenants
- 12.00 – 12.10 Video by SOHA
- 12.10 – 1.30 Lunch & networking
- 1.30 – 1.45 Developing plans for the future - Review of the morning & introduction to small group sessions
- 1.45 – 3.15 Group sessions
- 3.15 - 4.15 Feedback and Discussion
- 4.15 – 4.30 Taking this forward
- 4.30 pm End of event

Arun District Council Tenant Scrutiny Event

The need for change

Jackie Burns

21 September 2012

The new approach

- The system for regulating housing services has changed dramatically
- The regulator's role is now limited to setting standards and only intervening in the event of serious failures
- The statutory duty is to regulate in a manner that minimises interference

The new approach

- The aim is to 'empower tenants'
- The Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard has been revised to place greater emphasis on landlords involving tenants in scrutinising their performance
- Landlords are required to ensure that tenants are given wide opportunities to influence and be involved

How does this work?

This approach, called co-regulation, puts tenants in the driving seat giving them:

- the ability to 'scrutinise' housing services and
- shape services to meet local needs and priorities

Consumer standards

- Tenant involvement and empowerment
- Home
- Tenancy
- Neighbourhood

What makes tenant scrutiny work?

- **Clearly defined and real power**
- **Tenant led and independent**
- **Clear roles and responsibilities with capacity to deliver**

What makes tenant scrutiny work?

- **Decisions based on freely available and commissioned information**
- **Embedding scrutiny in performance management arrangements**
- **Accessible**

What does this mean for Arun ?

- There is a need to review the way tenants are involved in monitoring and shaping services
- Tenants & Elected Members will need to expand their role
- This an opportunity to build on the work of the ATLO (Arun Tenant & Leaseholder Association) and to develop the work that began in 2010 with the Local Offer

How are tenants involved now?

- Consultation and participation through ATLO
- Telephone and postal surveys
- Local residents' groups
- Joining focus groups
- Contractor selection for major contracts, such as responsive repairs
- Estate walkabouts with neighbourhood and maintenance officers

How could this be developed?

- A representative tenant and leaseholder forum to act as the main consultative body for the Housing Service
- A Tenant Scrutiny Group to undertake a programme of service reviews whose recommendations feed into the Council's decision making processes
- Tenant groups to monitor performance & complaints, shape services and policy development

It needs team work!

The council will need to provide:

- support and training for tenants, Elected Members, staff
- the performance information needed for effective scrutiny

Tenants, Elected Members & staff will need to invest time & effort

Performance information

- regular reports on voids, repairs, etc.
- mystery shopping
- estate walks
- repairs contractor reviews
- customer surveys, etc.

How could this be developed?

- A menu of opportunities for resident involvement, offering a range of activities to meet a variety of interests and time commitments, both at neighbourhood and council-wide levels

Newydd HA

- Created structure – year 1
- Developed role of residents – year 2
- Created Scrutiny Panel – year 3
- Training & support
- Provided independent support
- Dedicated staff support
- Free range to choose areas to scrutinise
- Reviewing progress after each review

Any Questions ?

T.A.C.T.

**Tenant And Council
Together**



Reading Borough Council's view

- TACT – Tenant and Council Together
- It's a Partnership
- It's an opportunity to strengthen all of your involvement structures
- Don't lose anyone - 'talent pool'
- It's a learning curve for everyone – keep talking

Gary Saunders - Who am I?

- Involved for 10 years
- Began by joining the Disability Access Group
- Member of the Federation for 5 years
- Joined the Tenant Scrutiny **STEERING** group in 2011

The Scrutiny Steering Group

Made up of 5 tenants, 3 RBC officers and 1 independent mentor

Agreed:

- Recruitment and selection process
- Terms of reference
- Code of conduct

How did we advertise?

- Flyers to everyone on RBC's Sounding Board
- Advert in the Annual Report
- T-shirts and road shows
- Posters
- Neighbourhood (Housing) officer contacts
- Open days
- Application form
- Interviews

What support have we had?

- Tenants were initially sceptical ...
- But Housing Services have provided us with all the information requested in whatever form we wanted
- The Tenant Participation team assists with room bookings, administration, communication etc
- An Independent mentor provides support and training

Why ‘appearance of estates’?

- Provided different ways to carry out investigations
- Tenants will be able to see visible results like block cleaning, litter management, fly tipping, graffiti and improving pride on estates
- As it was first review, we wanted to do all the investigation ourselves – we got to see a range of estates across Reading

Lessons learned

- Keep all members informed of what’s going on
- Keep all reports – they can be used again for training or revisited for next review
- Use the other structures such as working groups and mystery shopping – you are not alone, use what you have
- Make sure you know your expenses policy and IT requirements

Mark Mayes - Who am I?

- Tenant of Reading Borough Council for 4 years
 - Became a mystery shopper for RBC in 2011
 - Joined the Tenant Academy (12 week free training programme run by Housing Services)
 - Applied for and was selected for the scrutiny panel in November 2011
-

Why scrutiny?

The satisfaction of knowing that RBC can be scrutinised by a voluntary tenants panel, TACT.

- Impartial
 - Transparent
 - Have the best interest of tenants at heart
 - Ensure best practice from our landlord (RBC)
-

Process

- Independent mentor Richard Tomkinson from TPAS
- Agreed to rotate the chair for each review
- Carried out desktop review to shortlist area for review
- Carried out walkabouts and estate inspections
- Met to discuss findings and compile report

What was RBC's response?

- The final report including recommendations was submitted to senior managers
- They have now formally responded with an action plan for the recommendations they will be implementing
- We now have received a response laid out in fairly simple terms with an action plan and we are meeting with TACT to consider next steps

Training

- Attended the TPAS 'Hothouse' event in London
- Attended exchange visits and conferences on scrutiny
- Currently undertaking the TPAS scrutiny Level 3 accredited training

Any Questions?

Arun DC Tenant Scrutiny Event 21/9/12



The Hyde Group

Making a lasting difference

Resident Assurance Committees

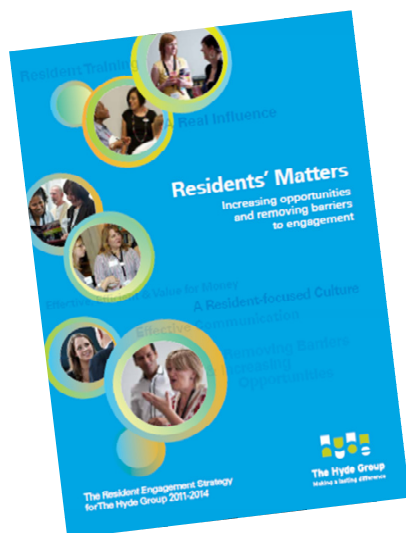
The journey so far...



Why set up a scrutiny model?

- Following Short Notice Inspection (2010)
- Resident focus groups held
- Feedback – *“we can’t see where we fit in”* and *“where can our voice be heard”*
- Action plan devised
- Head of Resident Engagement appointment
- Hyde Group Central Team appointed

What next?



The development of Residents' Matters – The Hyde Group Resident Engagement Strategy

- ✓ 1000 residents, staff and stakeholders involved in consultation
- ✓ Approved by Mike Gelling – Chair of TAROE (Tenants & Residents Organisations of England)

The six themes...

1. Removing barriers
2. Communication
- 3. A real influence**
4. Resident Training
5. A resident focused culture
6. An effective, efficient and Value For Money service



'A real Influence' = The Resident Assurance Committee

The timeline

Information days & recruitment drive (**May – August 2011**)

Interview skills training (**September**)

Applications & Interviews (**October**)

RAC formally established in **November 2011**

Training – 6 month programme with 6 modules (completed)

- Effective meeting skills & team building
- Intro to Social Housing
- Diversity & Inclusion
- Data Protection
- Induction to Hyde



'A real Influence' = The Resident Assurance Committee (cont'd)

- Main focus on scrutinising the performance and driving service delivery
- 7 RAC's across Hyde
- All at different stages of development
- In the South region there are also Area Panels which sit under the RAC
- The Resident Scrutiny Pack – developed with residents

The Resident Scrutiny Pack

- Extensive performance information – Hyde want to be as transparent as possible

1. Introductory page with:

Intro – relevant background info that may affect performance, external factors, low staffing etc

Summary – overall impression of performance, highlighting any areas of strength & positives

Issues & Actions – highlights areas of concern and how these will be addressed



The Resident Scrutiny Pack (cont'd)

2. Individual service area performance pages

- Access & Customer Care, Complaints, Lettings, Repairs & Maintenance, Estates, Rents & Service Charges, Resident Engagement
- Each page shows how service is performing against Service Promises & PIs
- Then additional info & local commentary

3. Info & definitions – shows where data is from & how targets are defined



Next steps...

- 360 degree appraisals this month
- Election of resident Chair and Vice Chair
- 2nd phase of training to include complaints and influence and negotiating
- Further recruitment drive for extra members – maximum membership 15 – current membership 10

Questions?



Scrutiny Event - 21st September 2012

Notes from workshop sessions 21st

Ideas and Methods the groups liked

- Tenants and leaseholders forum
- Street canvassing - outside schools, supermarkets etc
- Youth forum
- Enthusiasm (of reading)
- Scrutiny packs
- Wider group “talent pool”
- Mystery shopping
- Extended estate/area inspection regime - not necessarily with a resident from the estate
- Tenant inspectors
- Recruitment methods - visibility
- Conference open days, on ‘known’ list
- ‘How to’ packs - application forms - resident profiling
- Personal development potential - 2 way street - support
- Financial incentives
- Mystery shopper - lead to other involvement?
- RBC tenants same as Arun
- Soha YT video (website)
- Hyde established structure
- Two very different approaches/stages

What the groups didn't like

- Large structure of tenant involvement i.e. Hyde, Soha
- Too many letters/newsletters used as part of recruitment
- Over emphasis on time commitment
- Informal structures/meetings
- Daunting (new)
- Unclear about how we engage (diversity)
- Youth forum
- Mystery shopper
- Concerns about time commitment

What would help us?

- Resources
- Funding for expenses, training, childcare, support
- Staff - admin and “professional”

- Structure for resident involvement
- Training programme - comprehensive!
- Accommodation for meetings
- Understanding performance
- Independent expertise to support tenants
- Mentoring from other organisations or tenants
- Designated ADC staff members
- Budget
- Realistic resources
- Positive approach (staff/residents)
- Face to face
- All staff shared objective
- Resident representative to ATLO
- Incentives
- Clear language (non jargon)
- Publicity - local paper editorial
- Mystery shopper
- Incentives - cost neutral

What might hinder?

- Tenant apathy
- The wrong motive for being involved
- Negativity
- Non contributing/challenging residents
- Lack of resources
- Wrong mix of residents i.e. same age, culture
- Lack of the above
- Long lead in
- Member/staff/resident buy-in

What do we need to do to make it happen?

- Structure for resident scrutiny
- Governance arrangements - T.O.R
- Establish project group -Tenants, members and officers
- Project plan
- Resources - financial and human
- Recruitment programme - Publicise
- Strategy for resident involvement
- Pay expenses!
- Commitment from the council to make it happen
- Commitment

- Enthusiasm
- All party buy-in
- Editorials in partnership with papers
- Parish news
- Social media
- Road shows
- Community involvement
- Fun days (staff and tenant design)
- Training opportunities
- Explore new initiatives to engage youth - YT creative's et al
- Provide expenses and care service
- Champion
- Finance
- Staff resources
- Commitment by all
- Buy-in from top
- Make a difference
- Feedback - both ways

ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

HOUSING AND CUSTOMER SERVICES WORKING GROUP – 11TH OCTOBER 2012

Decision Paper

Subject : Council Housing Stock and Expansion Opportunities

Report by : Frank Hickson

Report date: September 2012

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Report sets out outline proposals for potentially repurchasing former Council homes sold under the Right to Buy and therefore covered by Buy Back (Right of First Refusal) requirements, purchasing existing and new private properties and opportunities to acquire land for increasing the Council's housing stock.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Housing and Customer Services Working Group

- 1) Notes the procedural requirements for repurchasing some former Council homes regulations under Buy Back (The Right of First Refusal (England) Regulations 2005).
- 2) Recommends to Cabinet that
 - a) The option outlined in the report for purchasing newly built homes, Council shared ownership properties, former Council and other privately owned homes to increase the Council's housing stock and acquiring land to build new Council homes be adopted.
 - b) The criteria outlined in paragraphs 3.2 to 3.7 for repurchasing former Council homes covered by the Housing (Right of First Refusal) (England) Regulations 2005 be adopted and applied to all purchases of Council shared ownership properties, former Council and other privately owned homes.

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Housing and Planning Working Group considered a report on options to increase the Council housing stock through Buy Back (Right of First Refusal) of Council homes sold since August 2005 and purchasing existing and newly built private properties on the open market at its meeting on 15th August 2012 and agreed that further investigation of the

options should be undertaken. A close examination of the regulations in relation to Buy Back (Right of First Refusal) and a more detailed investigation of open market purchase options outlined in the previous Report has taken place. An outline policy and procedure for dealing with Buy Back (Right of First Refusal) requests and open market purchases has been prepared but requires some further discussion, particularly with Legal Services, who will have an important role to play in the process.

2.0 BUY BACK (RIGHT OF FIRST REFUSAL)

2.1 The Housing (Right of First Refusal) (England) Regulations 2005 set out how Councils must deal with offers from Right to Buy Purchasers (where the restrictive covenant is included in their deeds) to take up the Right of First Refusal. The Regulations cover aspects such as:

- The service of an offer notice (to repurchase) from freehold and leasehold owners
- Acknowledgement of receipt of an offer notice
- Acceptance and Rejection Notices
- Nomination of another person/organization to accept an offer. Councils can identify another Social landlord such as a Housing Association to buy a property
- Disposal of property and requirement for further offer notice
- Time limit for the completion of the purchase

2.2 There are timescales laid down in the Regulations for completing the various stages. For example, where the Council agrees to repurchase but does not complete the purchase either within 12 weeks of serving an acceptable notice or within 4 weeks of written notification from the owner that he/she is ready to complete, then the owner may dispose of the property as they see fit and the Right of First Refusal Regulations do not apply to any subsequent sale.

2.3 The Regulations also set out what the content of Offer, Acceptance and Rejection Notices include.

2.4 An Offer Notice must:

- be in writing
- state the owner wishes to dispose of the property, giving its full postal address
- state there is a covenant requiring that the owner offers the property to the Council first

- in relation to the property to which it (the Notice) relates
 - (i) specify whether the property is a house, flat or maisonette
 - (ii) specify the number of bedrooms
 - (iii) give details of the heating system
 - (iv) specify any improvements or structural changes made since the purchase
- state the address on which the Council can serve notices/communicate with the owner

2.5 An Acceptance Notice must

- be in writing
- indicate clearly whether the Council is accepting the offer (to repurchase) or nominating another party (Housing Association) to accept it
- provide the full postal address and contact telephone number for the Council

2.6 A Rejection Notice must

- be in writing
- state that the Council is rejecting the offer to purchase the property

2.7 All Notices issued under these Regulations may be served by post or personal delivery

2.8 It should be noted that all Council Shared Ownership properties (Part Rent/Part Buy) have a clause in their lease which requires the shared owner to offer the property back to the Council before making it available for sale on the open market. These leases are not covered by the Buy Back (Right of First Refusal) arrangements but buying back these properties potentially offers good value as the Council already own an average 68% share.

3.0 APPROACH TO DEALING WITH BUY BACK (RIGHT OF FIRST REFUSAL) APPLICATIONS

3.1 There is no obligation for the Council to repurchase properties offered under Buy Back (Right of First Refusal) arrangements. The District Valuer can set a valuation if both parties cannot agree a price.

- 3.2 It is believed the basis of the Council's approach to Buy Back (Right of First Refusal) applications should be based on the following factors.
- 1) The availability of capital funds in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).
 - 2) Housing need and that demand is established for the type of property being offered and the area in which it is located.
 - 3) Additional cost for any refurbishment work is acceptable in the light of the purchase price agreed for the property.
 - 4) The purchase represents value for money.
 - 5) The Council may wish to buy back a property or properties for demolition to provide a building plot or where an adjacent piece of land in its ownership is landlocked, and the purchase offers the opportunity to develop new affordable housing.
 - 6) There will be no "appeal" process if the Council decides not to purchase a property.
- 3.3 Initial valuation and negotiation on price on behalf of Arun District Council would be undertaken by Chichester District Council as part of its arrangements to cover Estate Management functions for this Council. There would be additional costs incurred for this work. The vendor will be required to obtain their own valuation survey, if they wish to do so.
- 3.4 The Housing Department will undertake a condition survey of properties and the Vendor will be advised to have their own condition survey undertaken at their expense.
- 3.5 Where the Council wishes to repurchase a property and mutual agreement cannot be reached on the valuation, the matter will be referred to the District Valuer for a valuation. In this situation the costs would be shared between the vendor and the Council.
- 3.6 Stamp Duty is payable on these purchases and the Council would be liable to pay this.
- 3.7 It is believed that delegated authority will need to be put in place to agree purchases and it is suggested this be the Head of Housing in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing. This will enable purchases to be concluded efficiently and within statutory timescales.
- 3.8 Once the principals of delegation have been agreed, Full Council will need to resolve to approve that delegation and for the constitution to be amended accordingly.

4.0 PURCHASING OTHER PRIVATELY OWNED HOMES ON THE OPEN MARKET

- 4.1 The principles outlined in Paras 3.2-3.7 above should apply to purchasing other former Council and privately owned homes on the open market for consistency, fairness and efficiency.
- 4.2 Fees, such as Estate Agents costs, where applicable, will have to be met by the vendor.
- 4.3 Potential purchases will be identified either by direct contact from vendors or Agents and by using our own “intelligence” about properties available on the market.
- 4.4 Properties subject to Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) pursued by the Council for other reasons would be identified by the departments involved in securing the CPO. Stamp Duty would be paid based on the compensation paid (at market value) to the original owner.
- 4.5 Acquiring private properties at auction has been identified as carrying a number of impacts and risks for the Council.
- The process is labour intensive and involves Officers from a number of Departments
 - The process is not easy to manage or to control the time required to carry out investigations prior to and spent at the auction
 - Managing the bidding process at auctions
 - Property developers can bid for properties on the basis that any improvement/renovation works required could be done to a lower standard than the Council would undertake (i.e. quality of materials extent of improvement/renovation, Decent Homes Standard) and therefore could outbid the Council.
- 4.6 These factors should be considered when deciding whether to purchase any private properties at auction.

5.0 BUILDING NEW COUNCIL HOMES AND PURCHASING NEWLY BUILT HOMES FROM PRIVATE DEVELOPERS

- 5.1 It is also planned to use Housing Revenue Account (HRA) surpluses to build new Council homes, initially on land already within the Council's ownership but opportunities to purchase other land to build new homes on should also be considered, if appropriate. This may arise through Section 106 Agreements, as outlined in my report to the Housing and Planning Working Group on 15th August 2012.

5.2 Opportunities to purchase newly built homes from private developers or to purchase properties “off plan” (before they are built) may be offered to the Council. These offers should be considered in the light of available financial resources and the identified need for the properties offered. There may be competition from housing associations for these offers but it may also offer opportunities for joint developments of new homes with a Housing Association.

6.0 FINANCIAL ISSUES

6.1 A capital budget will need to be put in place for building new Council homes and purchasing existing properties. This should be based on an annual assessment of the capacity of the Housing Revenue Account to fund programmes of property purchase and new development.

6.2 Decisions will need to be made as to what rent levels will be set for all properties purchased or newly built.

6.3 Any budget set up for purchasing properties should include incidental costs associated with the purchase, such as conveyancing, valuation fees and stamp duty in addition to any renovation or improvement works that may be required.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 The proposed approach to operating a Buy Back Scheme, including Council Shared Ownership properties and purchasing former Council and other privately owned homes on the open market provides a manageable and practical approach for increasing the Council’s stock.

7.2 A “mixed economy” of options for expanding the Council’s housing stock can be developed by also utilising opportunities to acquire newly built or “off plan” (before they are built) homes offered to the Council. This may be in partnership with a Housing Association.

7.3 Opportunities to acquire land not already in the Council’s ownership for building new Council homes should also be considered and could provide additional new homes, again potentially in partnership with a Housing Association.

Background Papers: None

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