

STRATEGIC HOUSING PANEL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 19 DECEMBER 2013 at 10:00am

Present: Councillors George Clements (Chairman); John Bowman;
Reg Heathcote; Lena Hogg; Alan Jacob and Peter Stephenson.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Paul Whalley.

Officers: Debbie Cochrane, Housing Services Manager; Julie Betteridge, Head of Development Strategy and Clive Willoughby, Member Services Technical Support Officer.

Also present: Louise Barks, Home Group.

SH 14/13 Minutes

RESOLVED - That the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2013 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to minute number 10/13 being amended to show that Councillors Lena Hogg and Alan Jacob be appointed as Steering Group Members of Home Group and not Board Members.

SH 15/12 Order of Agenda

It was agreed that Agenda Item 6 (Local Lettings Policy) be deferred to the next meeting.

SH 16/13 Update from Home Group

Members were provided with an opportunity to ask questions to Louise Barks, Home Group.

These included

- properties for the homeless in Distington.
- the impact of Welfare Reform.
- Decent Homes Standard.
- The number of void properties in the borough.

Louise Barks was thanked for attending the meeting.

RESOLVED – That the updates be noted.

SH 17/13 Performance Monitoring Report

The Housing Services Manager provided the Panel with details of the six month operational activity.

Updates were provided for the key areas regarding housing across the borough and included Housing Advice; Rent Deposits; Full Homeless applications; Prevention; Domestic Violence; Disabled Facilities Grants; Empty Properties; Unfit Properties; Overcrowding & Immigration Inspections and Rent Deposit Property Inspections.

Following a brief question and answer session, Members passed their thanks on to the Housing Services Team.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted

SH 18/13 Position Paper and Financial Update on Disabled Facilities Grants

The Housing Services Manager advised the Panel that proposals through the Comprehensive Spending Review and development of the Care Bill had potentially changed the way disabled facilities would be delivered.

The panel was then provided with details of where funding came from and the potential implications of the proposals.

As discussions between DCLG, the County Council network and NHS were continuing Members were advised that they would be kept informed as the proposals progressed.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

SH 19/13 Discretionary Housing Payments

A document providing details of Copeland Borough Council's Discretionary Housing Payments made during 2013/14 was circulated to the panel.

It was noted that £94,263 was received from Government towards Discretionary Housing Payments for the financial year 2013/14. In July 2013 further funding of £16,493 was received to enable the Local Authority to assist those people directly affected by the Welfare Reform changes brought in.

It was further noted that as of 6 December 2013, Copeland had committed £77,734.52 (82%) of the original funding.
416 applications had been received for the financial year 2013/14, with 278 (67%) of these resulting in a payment being awarded and 138 refused (33%).

RESOLVED – That the report be noted

SH 20/13 Homelessness Action Plan

Copies of the ‘Copeland Homelessness Strategy 2013, Appendix Action Plan’ were circulated to Members and an overview provided by the Housing Services Manager.

RESOLVED – That Homelessness Action Plan be noted.

The meeting closed at 11:30am

Chairman

Date