

STRATEGIC HOUSING PANEL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 15 JULY 2010

Present: Councillors G Clements, Chairman; J Bowman; J Jackson; A Jacob; J G Sunderland and Mrs C Watson

Officers: J Betteridge, Head of Development Strategy; L Priebe, Housing Services Manager; D Cochrane, Housing Policy Manager; J Hughes, Regeneration Strategy Manager and C Willoughby, Member Services Technical Support Officer

Apologies for absence: Councillor R Pitt.

SH 17 Minutes of the Meetings

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2010 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

SH 18 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Clements declared a Personal Interest in the agenda items due to being a Board Member of Copeland Homes.

Councillor Sunderland declared a Personal Interest in agenda item 7 (Strategic Housing Improvement Action Plan) due to being a Private Landlord.

SH 19 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)

The Regeneration Strategy Manager presented to the Panel on the Copeland Local Development Framework Preferred Options – “What’s the best way forward for Whitehaven”.

Members were advised that the Local development Framework (LDF) will replace the old ‘Local Plan’, will run through to 2027 and will consist of several documents.

These will be:

- Core Strategy
- Development Management DPD (Development Planning Document)
- Cumbria Wind Energy SPD (Supplementary Planning Document)
- Pow Beck Valley SPD
- S106 Planning Obligations SPD
- Whitehaven Town Centre and Harbourside SPD

The Panel was advised that National Policy, Regional Policy, Community Strategy, Britain’s Energy Coast, Nuclear issues,

Evidence base and Public Consultation would feed into the Core Strategy.

With regard to work already undertaken, in May 2009 an Issues and Options paper was completed. In September 2009 a summary of comment received was published.

Work on the Evidence Base continues.

Other studies to be undertaken include:

- Infrastructure Deficit Plan
- Open Spaces Study
- Housing Needs Survey
- Settlement Audit
- Renewables Potential
- Economic Development Assessment

The presentation concluded with a brief overview of Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA).

During the discussion that followed, Members suggested that pressure was needed on Housing Associations to rebuild on strategic regeneration sites after demolition.

It was further suggested that working closely with developers at an early stage was the way forward.

RESOLVED - That the presentation be received.

SH 20 Strategic Housing Improvement Action Plan

The Panel reviewed the Strategic Housing Improvement Action Plan and updated it accordingly.

It was requested that a percentage complete figure be shown where an action had not yet been completed and that for consistency, either the job title or the staff's initials be shown. It was suggested that these be done on the Monitoring Report and also on the Covalent system.

RESOLVED – That

- a) the 2010/11 Improvement Action Plan be considered and approved;
- b) Actions SH1.4, SH2.3, SH2.5 and SH4.1 be signed off as completed;
- c) Reporting be bi-monthly on completed actions and by exception on any under performance against the plan.

SH 21 Strategic Housing Duties and Powers

As requested at the last meeting of this Panel, a table showing the Council's Housing Duties and Powers has been prepared and was considered.

Members were impressed with the thorough document produced by the Housing Services Manager.

It was requested that a further column be added to the table to indicate whether the function stated was 'Mandatory' or 'Discretionary'.

RESOLVED - That

- a) the report be noted;
- b) an additional column be added to the table to indicate whether the function stated was 'Mandatory' or 'Discretionary'.

SH 22 **Copeland Homes Steering Group: Membership & Terms of Reference**

Members were informed of recent developments with the proposed Copeland Homes Steering Group, which is to replace the Copeland Homes Board.

Members were very encouraged by the positive developments and requested that a response be formulated and sent to Andrea Thorn, Head of Housing & Community Services at Home North West.

It was suggested that the response include that the Panel:

- welcomed the doubling of Tenant representatives on the Copeland Homes Steering Group;
- welcomed the inclusion of the Community Investment Fund;
- would like the Steering Group to have responsibility for all housing stock and housing in the Borough;
- would like to see a geographical spread of tenant representatives.

RESOLVED - That

- a) the report be received;
- b) it be delegated to the Strategic Housing Panel Chairman, Head of Development Strategy and the Housing Services Manager to formulate a response to Andrea Thorn, Head of Housing & Community Services at Home North West and to provide a copy of the response sent to the next meeting of this panel.
- c) An update following the Copeland Homes Board meeting on 22 July, be brought back to this Panel in either August or September 2010.

SH 23 **Copeland Strategic Housing Re-Inspection**

Members received for information a copy of a letter dated 29 June 2010 received from the Audit Commission.

Following discussion, it was suggested that for the avoidance of doubt, a reply be sent listing the actions Copeland Borough Council had taken on the issues raised.

RESOLVED - That

- a) the letter from the Audit Commission dated 29 June 2010 be noted;
- b) it be delegated to the Strategic Housing Panel Chairman, Head of Development Strategy and the Housing Services Manager to formulate a letter of response to the Audit Commission and a copy of the reply be brought to the next meeting of the Strategic Housing Panel.

SH 24 Any Other Business

Members were advised that the Audit Commission had undertaken a 'Short Notice Inspection' of Home Group covering:

- Responsive Repairs
- Gas Servicing
- Resident Involvement

Responsive Repairs and Gas Servicing were found to be 'very weak' in all respects.

Resident Involvement had weaknesses and strengths equally balanced.

It was noted that Copeland Borough Council's new Chief Executive had offered help to Home group in the form of a suitably qualified Officer.

A copy of Home Group's press release was also circulated to Members

The meeting closed at 4:10 pm

Chairman

Date