

STRATEGIC HOUSING PANEL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 15 FEBRUARY 2012 at 2:00pm

Present: Councillors George Clements (Chairman); Jon Downie; Sam Pollen and Peter Stephenson.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Reg Heathcote; Alan Jacob and Paul Whalley.

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

Also present: Councillor William Southward.

SH 38/11 Minutes

RESOLVED - That the Minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2012 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

SH 39/11 Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

Councillor George Clements declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 7 due to having had his property surveyed.

SH 40/11 Empty Homes Strategy

The Housing Policy Manager introduced the Empty Homes Strategy report to the Panel and stated that Local housing authorities in England and Wales had a statutory duty to monitor housing conditions within their area and to take appropriate measures to deal with unsatisfactory housing.

The draft Empty Property Strategy was then considered in detail during which Members questions and comments were welcomed.

RESOLVED – That the Empty Property Strategy document be amended to incorporate the comments made by Members and then issued for consultation.

SH 41/11 Progress Report on Private Sector Stock Condition Survey

The Panel was provided with a verbal update on the Private Sector Stock Condition Survey.

It was stated that approximately 1000 properties were being surveyed, which equated to about 10%.

A further report would be brought to a future meeting of this Panel.

RESOLVED – That the update be received.

SH 42/11 Plain Language Guide to Affordable Warmth Programmes

The Housing Research & Policy Officer provided an overview of the Plain Language Guide to Affordable Warmth Programme and made available leaflets on the Cumbria Warm Homes Project and the Winter Warmth Fund and Warm Homes, Hot Spots.

RESOLVED – That the update be received.

SH 43/11 £30k received from Government re: Repossessions

It was reported to the Panel that £30k had been received from Government to help people who were in the process of having their properties repossessed.

The suggestion was that loans of between £3k and £5k be given. This amount was in addition to the £50k received from the Homeless Prevention Fund.

SH 44/11 Member Training/Briefings

At the meeting held on 3 February, Home Group offered to provide training to Members on Choice Based Lettings. Since then, it has become clear that due to Home Group's reorganisation, this training would not take place for some time.

It was proposed that in-house Member Briefings and Training sessions be set up in the meantime. The Housing Policy Manager was asked to liaise with the Democratic services Manager to arrange.

SH 45/11 Housing Strategy Delivery Plan 2011-2015

The latest Housing Strategy Delivery Plan 2011-2015 was circulated to Members and a verbal update provided by the Head of Development Strategy.

It was stated that a full report would be brought to the April meeting of this Panel.

The meeting closed at 3.40pm

Chairman

Date