

STRATEGIC HOUSING PANEL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 19 JUNE 2012 at 10:00am

Present: Councillors Jon Downie (Vice Chairman in the Chair); Reg Heathcote; Alan Jacob; Peter Stephenson and Paul Whalley.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors George Clements and Sam Pollen.

Officers: Laurie Priebe, Housing Services Manager; Kate Skillicorn, Housing Research and Policy Officer; Julie Betteridge, Head of Development Strategy (for items 7-9 only) and Clive Willoughby, Member Services Technical Support Officer.

Also present: Allan Dickson, Cumbria Stock Condition Surveys Project Manager.

SH 01/12 Minutes

RESOLVED - That the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 April 2012 be signed by the Vice Chairman as a correct record, subject to minute 55/11 being amended to show that it be delegated to the Chairman to sign off the draft Year 2 Delivery Plan of the Copeland Housing Strategy.

SH 02/12 Copeland Housing Sector Stock Condition Survey

This item was introduced by the Housing Services Manager who advised Members that this survey was commissioned in 2011 by all six Cumbria District Councils acting as a purchasing consortium, with Barrow-in-Furness as the lead partner and contract manager.

Members were then referred to the Executive Summary found on pages six to eight of the Private Sector Housing Stock Condition Survey report (which was Item 6, Appendix A of the Agenda) produced by Opinion Research Services.

It was noted that the previous survey took place in 2006, however, comparisons between the two reports were difficult as after 2006 the national calculation of the Housing health and Safety Rating Scheme was changed. The effect altered the number of properties classified with Category 1 Hazards (these being the most serious).

A brief question and answer session followed, where Allan Dickson, Cumbria Stock Condition Surveys Project Manager also provided some further background information.

The Panel was advised that a presentation of the Private Sector Housing Stock Condition Survey report would be made on 23 July 2012 to which all Members of the Council would be invited.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

SH 03/12 Copeland Empty Homes Policy 2012-2015

The Housing Services Manager advised members that the draft Copeland Empty Homes Policy 2012-2015 had been updated and was attached as Appendix A to Item 7 of this Agenda and thanked Kate Skillicorn and Julie Betteridge for the work they had put into it.

It was asked if the report had been seen by the Section 151 Officer, which it had not, nor had it Monitoring Officer comments and the actions had to be risk assessed. Members asked if future reports to Strategic Housing Panel could have these included prior to being brought to the Panel.

RESOLVED – That the Copeland Empty Homes Policy 2012-2015 be recommended to Executive as a component of the Copeland Housing Strategy.

SH 04/12 Cumbria Choice Lettings Outcomes 2011/12

Members were advised by the Housing Services Manager that Cumbria Choice Lettings went live in May 2011 and therefore for the first time a virtually full year report had become available.

It was also stated that the Project Board's review is likely to complete in July 2012 with a subsequent report to this Panel at the August meeting.

Further statistics would be brought to the Strategic Housing Panel in future years.

In the discussion that followed, Members welcomed the more accurate figures this report provided.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

SH 05/12 Disabled Facilities Grants

The Housing Services Manager provided The Panel with an overview of The Cumbria Housing Executive Group's Progress Update – DFG Integration Project report dated April 2012 written by Robert Cornwall, DFG Coordinator Cumbria.

It was stated that this report needs very careful consideration and consultation with service users, their representatives and other stakeholders prior to any recommendations being made.

In the brief discussion that followed, it was stated that at this stage there was too little knowledge and it was suggested that consultation with stakeholders take place.

It was also suggested that Robert Cornwall be invited to attend a future meeting of this Panel when further consideration could be given to it.

Members were advised that a preparatory report and timetable would be circulated by email to the Panel.

RESOLVED – That

- a) the report be noted,
- b) Robert Cornwall be invited to attend a future meeting of this Panel,
- c) a preparatory report and timetable be circulated by email to the Panel and
- d) This item be brought to a future meeting of this Panel for further consideration.

The meeting closed at 11.50am

Chairman

Date