

Copeland Homes Steering Group: membership & terms of reference

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Councillor Clements
LEAD OFFICER: Julie Betteridge
REPORT AUTHOR: Laurie Priebe, Strategic Housing Services Manager

Summary:

The Company Secretary of Home Housing Group has initiated a discussion around the membership and terms of reference of Copeland Homes Joint Steering Group. The Strategic Housing Panel is requested to determine answers to the issues listed in paragraphs 2.1 to 2.3, and to instruct officers to reply accordingly.

Introduction

- 1.1 The Copeland Homes Joint Steering Group (JSG) was set up in succession to the Copeland Homes Board when the latter's term expired in 2010. It comprises representatives of the Home Group, their residents and the Council
- 1.2 The JSG's terms of reference included overall responsibility for the following five points:
 - "To receive reports on the progress of the Investment Programme.
 - To monitor the performance of the contractors and sub-contractors employed to undertake the works.
 - To comment on the designs and plans for the works, and to make recommendations to Home in respect of the same.
 - To consider any proposed variations to the phasing of the Investment programme, and to make recommendations to Home in respect of the same.
 - To monitor the Community Investment Fund."
- 1.3 The Company Secretary of Home Housing Group has asked two questions about membership and has also made a proposal to amend the terms of reference.

2 Information

- 2.1 In light of the local elections he asks for confirmation that the Housing Portfolio Holder and Chair of the Strategic Housing Panel will continue to represent the Council on the JSG.
- 2.2 He also asks whether another representative of the Council, who stood down as a Councillor, will continue to represent the Council on the JSG. He points out that the JSG's terms of reference do not preclude this.
- 2.3 He proposed that a sixth point be added to the terms of reference, as follows: "To consider the impact of internal and external change on Home's promises under the Stock Transfer Agreement."

3 Comment

- 3.1 Members are requested to determine the answers to the questions in 2.1 and 2.2 above. Officers' understanding is that the Council may choose its representatives from persons who are not necessarily elected members.
- 3.2 In regard to the proposal in 2.3 officers' comment is as follows. External change is largely, but not only, attributed to housing and related legislation; central government policy particularly in regard to finance and resources; and other changes to the economic environment. These may, and often do, impact on customers of affordable housing services. They include Home's current residents and those who wish to become residents. Officers are not persuaded that consideration needs to include internal change unless such change is necessitated by external forces.
- 3.3 Officers are also not persuaded that consideration needs to be limited to Home's promises under the Stock Transfer Agreement.
- 3.4 Officers make no recommendation on the question whether the JSG needs to consider the impact of change at all, since it was not included in the original terms of reference. However, if members are minded to accept the principle, officers would suggest that the proposal be further amended to read as follows: "To consider the impact of change on services provided to Home Group's customers."