



Housing Sub Committee

North Tyneside Council

Friday, 13 September 2019

Monday, 23 September 2019 0.01, Quadrant, The Silverlink North, Cobalt Business Park, North Tyneside **commencing at 6.00 pm.**

Agenda Item	Page
1. Apologies for Absence	
To receive any apologies for absence.	
2. Appointment of Substitute Members	
To be notified of the appointment of any Substitute Members.	
3. Declarations of Interest	
You are invited to declare any registerable and/or non-registerable interests in matters appearing on the agenda, and the nature of that interest.	
You are also invited to disclose any dispensation in relation to any registerable and/or non-registerable interests that have been granted to you in respect of any matters appearing on the agenda.	
Please complete the Declarations of Interests card available at the meeting and return it to the Democratic Services Officer before leaving the meeting.	
4. Minutes	1 - 4
To consider the minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2019.	
5. The Role of the Armed Forces Officer	5 - 6
To receive a report on the role of the Armed Forces Officer.	
6. Tenancy Agreement Sub-group	7 - 10
To receive a report on establishing a sub-group to look at tenancy	

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agreements.

Circulation overleaf ...

Members of the Housing Sub Committee

Councillor Linda Darke
Councillor Joe Kirwin
Councillor Alan Percy
Councillor Matthew Thirlaway
Councillor Linda Bell
Councillor Erin Parker-Leonard
Councillor Matt Wilson

Councillor John Hunter
Councillor Andy Newman (Chair)
Councillor Margaret Reynolds (Deputy Chair)
Councillor Joan Walker
Councillor Pam McIntyre
Councillor Frances Weetman

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Housing Sub Committee

Monday, 22 July 2019

Present: Councillor A Newman (Chair)
Councillors L Darke, John Hunter, A Percy, M Reynolds,
M Thirlaway, J Walker, P McIntyre, E Parker-Leonard,
M Wilson and P Oliver

Apologies: Councillors L Bell and F Weetman

HO1/19 Appointment of Substitute Members

Pursuant to the Council's constitution the following substitute member was appointed:

Councillor P Oliver for Councillor L Bell

HO2/19 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest reported.

HO3/19 Minutes

It was **agreed** that the minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2019 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

HO4/19 Affordable Homes Programme

The Sub-committee received a report which summarised the delivery of affordable homes in 2018/19 and updated on the plans for 2019/20. Since the inception of the Affordable Homes Programme in 2013, the total number of new affordable homes delivered stood at 1,430. To date during 2019/20, 50 new affordable homes had been delivered and plans were on target to deliver a total of 200 homes during the financial year. A breakdown of the delivery of the overall programme was provided in Appendix 1.

The report detailed the different delivery methods for providing affordable homes and where the contributions to the overall target were delivered. The Council had directly delivered 26 affordable homes in 2018/19, with 20 new build homes delivered at the site of the former Dudley and Weetslade Club and the conversion of the council building at Perth Gardens into 6 flats. The Council had already completed 22 new homes in 2019/20 on the former sites of Bonchester Court and Beadnell Court. The report detailed a number of Housing Revenue Account schemes that had been approved by Cabinet on 28th May 2019.

In relation to working with Registered Providers, it was noted that 10 affordable homes were delivered in 2018/19 including 6 new build homes at Glebe Crescent, Forest Hall and 4 at Western Terrace, Dudley.

In 2019/20, 13 new homes for clients with learning difficulties would be delivered by Home Housing at Charlton Court, Monkseaton. This was due to be completed in July 2019. The Authority was working with Bernicia to assess the feasibility of developing affordable homes at Castle Square in Backworth. The potential scheme would see Bernicia deliver 30 new affordable homes and improved open green space. The Sub-committee was informed that Registered Providers remained keen to develop homes in North Tyneside and were looking to source their own land in order to provide new homes.

In relation to empty homes, in 2018/19 the team dealt with issues relating to 25 long-term problematic empty homes, 4 of which were returned to use as affordable housing units. In addition over 860 owners were contacted directly to offer assistance in dealing with their empty homes, with assistance provided to the owners of 50 long term empty properties to help return them to occupation.

After successfully securing a grant commitment from Homes England of £0.347m, work continued to achieve the target of 10 properties for 2019-20. A total of 9 properties had been surveyed and instruction given to the Councils legal team to negotiate and enter into appropriate leases. Refurbishment was due to start on 2 properties in Park Road, Wallsend in August 2019. Opportunities were being explored to tackle rogue landlords and the Empty Homes Programme would continue to target the properties which had the greatest impact on communities within North Tyneside and which supported vulnerable housing markets.

The Sub-committee was informed that delivering affordable housing through planning obligations was central to meeting the need for affordable housing in the Borough. Section 106 Town and Country Planning Act 1991 Agreements were used by the Authority to secure up to 25% affordable housing on the majority of relevant sites (developments with 11 or more units). A total of 197 new affordable homes were delivered through S106 agreements in 2018/19 and in quarter 1 of 2019/20, 12 S106 affordable homes had been secured against a target of 124. The market for housing remained strong across North Tyneside and the delivery of affordable homes should increase once the strategic sites at Murton and Killingworth commenced development.

The report informed Members of the work of the North Tyneside Development Company in the delivery of affordable homes. It was noted that to increase the pace of delivery, the Company had pursued an acquisition strategy buying homes from the open market across the borough. This had been successful and the Company purchased 13 homes in 2018/19 bringing the total number of homes owned up to 35. The Company's Business Plan would see a further 15 homes purchased by 31st March 2020. So far in 2019/20 the Company had purchased 3 homes and had offers accepted on a further 3. These properties would all be for affordable rent.

The report highlighted that good progress had been made in delivering specialist homes through the Specialist Housing Project. Planning permission had been granted at Oswin Road, Forest Hall for two residential buildings comprising a total of 16 supported living apartments. The site would be developed by Mersten Limited for clients with mental health issues. Planning permission had also been granted for 32 specialist homes on land north west of Brierdene Way in Backworth.

The presenting officer informed the Sub-committee that the delivery of affordable homes continued to be a success in North Tyneside and the target of delivering 200 new homes in 2019/20 was on course. Confidence remained that the programme would deliver the target

of 3,000 affordable homes by 2024. A member of the Sub-committee asked why the target for this year (2019/20) was lower than any other year in the programme and how the increased targets over the following 4 years would be delivered. It was explained that the number of homes delivered by volume builders was expected to be higher from 2020/21, so this was reflected in the targets for that and subsequent years. It was noted that the Authority did not have ultimate control over the number of affordable homes built by volume builders, but that the targets were set in relation to developments that had planning permission.

Members of the Sub-committee asked for further clarification or further information to be provided in relation to the following:

- the number of affordable homes to be provided on a private development at the south end of Norham Road;
- parking considerations at the site of the 32 specialist homes north west of Brierdene Way;
- the number of Council homes delivered in the 10 years prior to the commencement of the affordable homes programme; and
- whether any discussions had been raised as to the possibilities of an increase in borrowing in order to accelerate the quantity of affordable homes being delivered.

The officer in attendance undertook to provide a written response to the Sub-committee on the above matters.

It was **agreed** to note the report.

HO5/19 Work Programme 2019/20

The Sub-committee received a report which presented Members with potential topics for inclusion in the 2019/20 work programme. As part of the process for establishing the 2019/20 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme, suggestions had been sought for potential topics that the Sub-committee could look at. As in previous years, the focus of overview and scrutiny would be on policy development.

Following discussions with the Chair and Deputy Chair of Housing Sub-committee and senior offices, the following topics had been identified as possible areas for the Sub-committee to consider over the coming year:

- Sale of Council land
- Feedback from consultation on changes to the Lettings Policy
- Construction Project (with potential to focus on specific areas)
- Affordable Homes Programme
- Operation of the Trading Company

Members were given the opportunity to raise other topics relevant to the remit of the Sub-committee for inclusion in the work programme. Members were reminded that the remit of the Sub-committee continued to include the statutory duty to scrutinise crime and disorder matters. In consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Sub-committee, it had been determined that this duty would be undertaken via meetings with the Council's Community Safety Team and the Police and Crime Commissioner.

The report highlighted that the Sub-committee was able to establish a sub-group to carry out an in-depth investigation into a particular area. One suggestion had been put forward in relation to sofa surfing and hidden homelessness. The Chair invited members of the Sub-committee to put forward any suggestions they had. It was noted that a request had been submitted from a Councillor for the sub-committee to look at debt recovery, in relation to Council tax and rent arrears.

It was suggested that it would be useful to look at tenancy agreements to see if they were working and if any improvements could be made from looking at examples from other authorities. This could be undertaken as an in-depth investigation and include looking at the practices of the enforcement team and prevention support that was in place for people struggling.

It was **agreed** to include the topics suggested in the work programme for 2019/20 and receive a future report in relation to the establishment of a sub-group to look at tenancy agreements.

Meeting: Housing Sub Committee
Date: Monday 23rd September 2019
Title: The Role of the Armed Forces Officer

Author: Laura Potter, Armed Forces Officer Tel: 0191 643 7732
Service: Housing
Directorate: Environment, Housing and Leisure
Wards affected: All

1. Purpose of Report

North Tyneside Council employed a permanent, full time Armed Forces Officer in October 2018. This report provides an overview of the support that is being provided to the Armed Forces Community in North Tyneside.

2. Recommendations

To note the information provided and to consider whether members wish to receive regular updates on the service provided by the Authorities Armed Forces Officer.

3. Details

The role of Armed Forces Officer was created to strengthen delivery of the Armed Forces Covenant across North Tyneside for the serving and veteran armed forces community. A major aspect of the role is to enable the direct provision of support to those who serve or have served in the armed forces, and their families.

The Armed Forces Officer works with services across the Authority and with partners to ensure that members of the Armed Forces Community are treated fairly and that North Tyneside Council continues to honour the commitment set out in the Armed Forces Covenant.

The Armed Forces Officer also acts as a single point of contact for all armed forces related enquiries into the Council and coordinates services in accordance with the objectives of the Armed Forces Covenant.

The following activities are undertaken to help achieve these outcomes (this is not an exhaustive list as other appropriate support activities may be undertaken if necessary):

Support for Council Residents

-SSAFA Case Working

Rent arrears for existing council tenants, potential council residents, at risk of eviction living in the area that have private tenancies, brown and white goods.

-Homelessness

Referring to military charity such as supported accommodation for veterans who have complex needs Avondale, SPACES, NCCP.

-Mental Health

Referring and signposting to specialised military charities TILS, Combat Stress, Veterans at Ease, Forward Assist.

-Substance Misuse

Establishing effective pathways with the local drug and alcohol service.

Armed Forces Forum

North Tyneside Council leads and maintains a large outward facing AF Forum with representation from the Local Authority, (Housing, Leisure, Adult Social Care, Public Health), AF charities and public sector (Northumbria Police & NHS NT CCG), private sector (Capita, Morrisons, and NT Business Forum) partners and the local military (RN, Army & RAF). Having signed the AF Community Covenant in 2012 the Forum pledged their support once again with a new AFC signing in October 2018 reinforcing our support to the AF Community Support for NTC Staff

Developing Policies

Guaranteed interview scheme being developed to including serving reservist. Recognising their barriers to employment.

Support for serving Armed Forces

Advertisement of local reserve units

Support for North Tyneside Council Employees Armed Forces Communities

Intranet Forum for Council employees.

4. Background Information

The definition of a veteran is anyone who has served in the military for 1 day. This definition is set out by the Armed Forces Covenant which North Tyneside Council signed in 2012. Previously, North Tyneside Council was previously affiliated to Armed Forces Outreach Scheme (AFOS) which relies on grants from the Armed Forces Covenant on a regular basis. North Tyneside Council recognised the need to support their Armed Forces Community and the importance of having continuity with this support, and decided to fund their own Armed Forces Officer in 2018.

Meeting: Housing Sub Committee

Date: 23rd September 2019

Title: Establishment of Tenancy Agreement sub-group

Author: Emma Fagan, Democratic Services Tel: 0191 643 5313

Service: Law and Governance

Wards affected: All

1. Purpose of Report

To seek approval for the establishment of a sub-group to undertake a piece of work in relation to tenancy agreements and to agree a draft scope for the study.

2. Recommendations

The sub-committee is recommended to:

- a) Agree the establishment of a sub-group;
- b) Appoint the membership of the sub-group, including a lead Member; and
- c) Agree a draft scope for the study and permit the sub-group to finalise this, making any necessary amendments, at the first meeting of the sub-group.

3. Details

- 3.1 At its meeting on 22 July 2019, Housing Sub-committee considered a report relating to the establishment of a work programme for 2019/20. Members were asked to put forward topics for inclusion in the work programme, including any suggestions that could be the subject of an in-depth investigation.
- 3.2 As part of this discussion, it was suggested that it would be useful to look at tenancy agreements, to see if they were delivering the best outcomes for the Council and tenants. Members suggested that a sub-group be appointed to carry out this work, which would include comparing North Tyneside's tenancy agreement with those from other local authorities.
- 3.3 It is suggested that sub-groups be established with a maximum membership of 5/6 members. This can be drawn from the membership of the sub-committee or be extended out to all non-executive members. It is anticipated that the first meeting will take place in late October/early November, with the purpose of meeting with lead officers to agree a final scope, work plan and timescales for completion.
- 3.4 A draft scope for the study is attached at Appendix 1. Members are asked to decide whether there are any other areas they would like included in the scope for the study. The sub-committee is also asked to appoint a membership for the study, including a lead member who would 1) agree the agenda for the meetings of the sub-group with the

relevant Democratic Support Officer; 2) chair meetings of the sub-group; and 3) liaise with officers over the content of the final report and recommendations.

4. Background Information

N/A

5. Appendices

Appendix 1 – draft scope for the study

Scoping Template

Name of sub committee/study group	Tenancy Agreements
Membership	To be arranged
1	Focus of study
	The purpose of the study will be to review the current tenancy agreement, with a view to determining whether it successfully delivers the best outcomes for the Council and for tenants.
2	Objectives
	To look at whether the tenancy agreement is successful in deterring tenants from causing damage to property; the extent to which enforcement action is taken against those that break the tenancy agreement and support that is provide to those that advise housing that they are struggling to meet the terms of their tenancy agreement.
3	Key questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does the wording in the agreement clearly set out what is expected and the consequences of breaking the agreement? - What monitoring is undertaken to ascertain whether tenants are abiding by the agreement? - What enforcement options are available and when these would be utilised? - How many applications are made to court to end tenancies? What costs are involved for the local authority? - What are the current levels of rent arrears and what processes are triggered when tenants fall behind? - How does North Tyneside's tenancy agreement compare to other local authorities? - How is anti-social behaviour recorded and at what point would enforcement action be taken? - Where tenants approach housing and disclose that they are struggling to meet the requirements of their tenancy, what support and advice is provided? - How are tenants made aware of this support?
4	Obtaining evidence
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussions with officers from housing - Looking at tenancy agreements from other local authorities - Any available outcomes of consultation undertaken with tenants

5	Support required by the group/sub committee
	Emma Fagan – Democratic Services Paul Worth – Senior Manager Housing Operations Dawn Statham – Area Neighbourhood Housing Manager Toby Hartigan-Brown – Housing Operations Management and Support
7	Date draft report required
	TBC
8	Date final report required
	TBC
9	Evaluation
	<p>Any recommendations reported to Cabinet will require a response within 2 months, under the requirements of Section 122 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. Cabinet will be asked to clearly state whether or not it accepts the recommendations and the reasons for this decision. Cabinet must indicate what action, if any, it proposes to take.</p> <p>If recommendations are accepted by Cabinet, the proposed action to implement the recommendations can be monitored by the sub-committee.</p>