

MINUTES

MEETING: Anti Social Behaviour Study Group

DATE: Wednesday 31st May 2006

TIME: 10.30 a.m.

VENUE: Reception room Town Hall South Tyneside

CHAIR: Greg Johnston South Tyneside Council

Apologies:

Rod Baker – Sedgfield BC
Helen Moody – UNITE
Alan Russell – South Tyneside BC
Jane Hill – Middlesbrough BC
Stuart Brown – Castle Morpeth

Chris Walton – Wear Valley DC
Dave Owen – South Tyneside BC
Alison Newbould – North Yorkshire Police
Mandy Walker – Middlesbrough BC

Present:

Simon Page – NHC
Leah Blacklock – NHC
Sarah Mtango – NHC
Michael Cowie – Sunderland Housing Group
David Jones – Chester-le- street
Simon Riley – Doncaster MBC
Libby Griffiths – Housing Hartlepool
Clive Ledner – Accent Group
Richard Mitchell – Three Rivers Housing
Malcolm Woodhall – Tynedale DC

Greg Johnson – South Tyneside
Paul Noddings – Tristar
Gilly Marshall – Erimus Housing
Clare Tierney – Gateshead BC
Monica Marron – Middlesbrough
Jocelyn Sirs – Housing Hartlepool
Suzanne Harker – Blyth Valley Housing
Clare Hart – Blyth Valley Housing
Carolyn Crean – Stockton Council

1.0 Minutes of last meeting

1.1 The minutes of the meeting of the 13th December 2005 were agreed as an accurate record.

2.0 Matters Arising

2.1 There were no matters arising.

3.0 Election of Acting Vice Chair

3.1 It was agreed that Michael Cowie from Sunderland Housing Group would take-up the Vice Chair position.

4.0 Presentation, James Ferguson, Tyne & Wear Arson Team

4.1 James gave a presentation on the work that Tyne and Wear Arson Team are involved with in the South Tyneside area. The key message that came across was the need for effective partnership working and for partners to talk to each other on a regular basis. The approach taken is to prevent the common situations that lead to arson attacks like built up rubbish, abandoned cars, fly tipping etc.

4.2 Key initiatives were for the new Housing group to have Arson Task Force requirements written in, and for wheelie bin action. In addition, once a month the team do an update with the DVLA on vehicles that are a problem. A sticker is also displayed on bin offenders reminding them to put them back in after the bin has been emptied.

4.3 Alongside preventative work the arson team is involved in a lot of investigation working outside of south Tyneside to identify up and coming problems. The way ahead is to work with street wardens, court room and investigation scenarios in schools, crimestoppers etc.

4.4 A few questions were asked.

Q1 - Police used to withdraw abandoned cars and it is now difficult to move them. What happens in South Tyneside?

A - The council removes them as they are signed up to the scheme. The first procedure is to find out if there is an owner and then the LA can lift it, although they can lift them anyway if they are a danger and go straight to scrap man to be cubed.

Q2 - What are the trends in hoax calls?

A - In Tyne and Wear they do call challenging in order to determine this a bit better. Not sure on actual trends.

Q3 - How does this fit in with Community Safety Partnerships?

A - We work primarily with Community Safety and ASB group on both a strategic and practical basis, with staff sitting in the fire service. It has been successful especially in Cleadon Park where we have been able to target rubbish etc.

5.0 Alistar McIntosh HQN

- 5.1 Alistar gave a presentation on how the new Respect Housing Management Standard will be regulated. First of all alongside the amended KLOEs it was Alistar's understanding that the 'Respect Diagnostics' will happen.
- 5.2 This standard largely concerns the work of the Home Office/DCLG/Audit commission and is influenced by concerns raised around crime and ASB. Of most prominence is the IPPR think tank that found that burglary affects more people in social housing.
- 5.3 The Home office wants to see a lot more empowerment of tenants and the Audit commission argue for better local data.
- 5.4 One of the major issues is around commitment 3 in the standard around support needs for new tenants. It is common knowledge about their support needs but funding isn't always there so this needs looking at.
- 5.5 A number of questions were then asked:

Q1 – Will starter tenancies (introductory) still be an option in the future as the Law Commission review proposals plans are for two types of tenure that does not include this?

A – Something to find out.

Q2 – Is the standard going to be compulsory?

A – No but I would hope it was

Q3 – If it is voluntary is there a lot of point to signing up?

A – Voluntary could pose a problem in completing sign up

One area that will be of importance is a target to sustain 70% of tenancies through the homelessness route.

- 5.3 There is a huge potential for benchmarking here and sharing good practice as eviction is a major problem. Prevention is the theme throughout inspection and consistency will be the problem in getting ASB measured. There will be much to learn off the 3 star landlords.
- 5.4 We need to check progress as nothing is new and prioritise the good practice with implementation

6.0 Crime and ASB Conference

- 6.1 Simon advised the group that he was starting to pull together ideas for the Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour in December and wishes to have more input from the wider group in influencing it's content.
- 6.2 In light of this 5 volunteers put their names forward to give their services. They were: Paul Noddings, Michael Cowie, Claire Tierney, Gilly Marshall and Sharon Dalton

7.0 Safer Estates

- 7.1 The agreement is at the stage where it can soon be circulated as a draft and there is not a lot to do. However there is work to do on the issue of data protection. In particular the role of a nominated representative needs firming up.

8.0 Private Landlords – Mandy Reed

- 8.1 Mandy Reed gave an update on the work with private landlords that the private rented project in Gateshead is responsible for.
- 8.2 There are 9 staff in the heart of the private rented sector in Gateshead. There is an issue over funding as this is not secure. In general terms the new requirements for licensing properties has scared a few landlords.
- 8.3 The scheme we run is a accreditation scheme which comes with a lot of perks for the landlord. This includes discounted insurance, advertising, and a tenant vetting service. Tenants will not be accepted onto the scheme unless they are vetted by safer estates agreement. We will however try to help tenants who are not accepted onto the scheme.
- 8.4 Some landlords are targeting professionals and those with no debt which is sometimes a problem for people looking in the private rented sector. A rent deposit scheme is also operated by us to help those who cannot afford the deposit.
- 8.5 In terms of tackling ASB there has not been a great deal of information available to private landlords. The problem of eviction is that they often do not have anything attached to it. There needs to be an ASBO attached. There is also a problem with people jumping ship from social tenancies with the belief that it is easier to get a tenancy in the private sector when this is not the case.

8.6 There needs to be some way of constantly addressing poor behaviour for the future. With this in mind the Respect Agenda is lacking initiatives for the private sector.

9.0 Future Speakers

9.1 It was suggested to try and get the project 'under the bridge' along as they offer floating support to those with drug/alcohol abuse and have been funded £250k in which to do this in South Tyneside

9.2 It was also suggested that we find out some more on the SNEN 101 number to find out if it has been successful. It is due to be launched in Northumberland on the 3rd July, so it will be interesting to know how it is set up and how information is passed on.

9.3 Finally it was suggested that an update on Tolerated Trespassers will be of use.

Next Meeting 5th September 2006 Gateshead Civic Centre Council Chambers