

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

3 MAY 2005

FINAL REPORT – INVESTIGATION INTO MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL'S GREEN BUDGET IN THE CONTEXT OF THE HOUSING STOCK TRANSFER

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. To present the findings of the Environment Scrutiny Panel following its investigation into Middlesbrough Council's Green Budget in the context of the Housing Stock Transfer.

INTRODUCTION

2. The Green Budget is a term that is open to wide interpretation and as a starting point requires some explanation in order to arrive at a working definition. At its simplest it refers to the design, management and operational maintenance of landscaped areas.
3. The streamlining of various maintenance budgets to that of a single pot Green Budget was a result of a former scrutiny investigation carried out during the period October 2000 to February 2001.
4. On 15 November 2004, this Authority transferred the ownership and management of its entire Housing Stock (approximately 12,000 properties) to Erimus Housing Limited.

5. As a result of this transfer, various pockets of housing land previously maintained by the Authority, funded via the Housing Revenue Account also transferred over to Erimus Housing Limited.
6. Subsequently a Service Level Agreement (SLA) has been drawn-up between this Authority and Erimus Housing Limited as part of the initial transfer negotiations for the Authority to continue to provide the maintenance of such land for a period of one year.
7. Given that not all pockets of land transferred over to Erimus Housing Limited due to the high proportion of 'right to buy' Council house properties. The Authority still has approximately 51% of the original identified land to maintain in addition to the SLA resulting in a service budgetary pressure for the future.
8. In light of these recent changes there are areas of ambiguity for which this Scrutiny investigation will be able to provide some clarification.

AIM OF THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

9. The overall aim of the Scrutiny investigation is to review the roles and responsibilities, resources, public interface and standards of service provision of the Green Budget in the context of the Housing Stock Transfer.

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

10. The following Terms of Reference for the review are proposed:-
 - (a) To re-visit the Environment Scrutiny Panel's Scrutiny investigation into the Green Budget undertaken during October 2000 to February 2001 in relation to the implementation of agreed recommendations;
 - (b) To gain an up-to-date understanding of the Green Budget in the context of the Authority's recent Housing Stock Transfer;
 - (c) To examine how the maintenance services are managed in relation to whole estate and curtilage land transfers;
 - (d) To examine how the public access such services in an open and transparent way; and
 - (e) To examine the current budgetary provision for present and future service delivery.

MEMBERS OF THE PANEL

11. The membership of the Panel were as detailed below:-
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Councillors Cole (Chair), Clark, Elder, Heath, J A Jones, Lancaster, Regan, Rogers (Vice Chair) and K Walker

METHODS OF INVESTIGATION

12. Members of the Panel met formally between 15 December 2004 and 20 April 2005 to discuss/receive evidence relating to this investigation and a detailed record of the topics discussed at those meetings are available from the Committee Management Systems (COMMIS), accessible via the Council's website.
13. A brief summary of the methods of investigation are outlined below:-
 - (a) Evidence received from Key Officers from the Authority's Environment and Neighbourhood Services Department;
 - (b) Site Visit to various areas of Middlesbrough to see the issues with regards to this topic;
 - (c) Executive Member for the Environment;
 - (d) Executive Director for the Environment and Neighbourhood Services;
 - (e) Representative from the Housing Stock Transfer Negotiating Team;
 - (f) Representative from Erimus Housing Limited;
 - (g) Evidence provided by Housing Hartlepool and Hartlepool Borough Council on a site visit to compare their maintenance provision and best practice;
14. The Panel also obtained a variety of guidance documents to assist in the Scrutiny Process.
 - (a) Environment Scrutiny Panel's former investigation into the Green Budget of Middlesbrough Council undertaken during the period 31 October 2000 to 20 February 2001.
 - (b) Maps detailing the land transferred over to Erimus Housing Limited together with those pockets of land retained by this Authority.
 - (c) Service Level Agreement with Erimus Housing Limited.

FINDINGS

SETTING THE SCENE IN MIDDLESBROUGH

15. Based on the evidence presented to the Panel, the following information was received:-
16. A Scrutiny of the Green Budget had been undertaken in 2001 and the Scrutiny Panel had made numerous recommendations. One such recommendation was for a Single Green Budget.
17. It was noted that responsibility for parks and open spaces had moved from Leisure Services into Streetscene Services within the Environment Group.
18. The Panel discovered that there were still outstanding issues that needed to be addressed including operational issues and the incorporation of budgets into the Streetscene Service.
19. The Panel heard that at the time of the transfer of Grounds Maintenance Scoped Properties to HBS, a number of properties and land spaces were also transferred. Responsibility for those areas fell to HBS, however, complaints and service requests are still received by the Council as most members of the public considered all public land to be Middlesbrough Council land.
20. Members acknowledged that there were no common minimum standards of maintenance of non-scoped properties and the budget holder made decisions as to how the premises were maintained.
21. It was explained to the Panel that the Single Green Budget excluded land funded through the Housing Revenue Account and that the Housing Stock Transfer had taken place knowing that green budget/HRA issues would need to be resolved.
22. The Panel were advised that present levels of service were achieved through ad-hoc trading activities and there was a risk that present standards could not be maintained if ad-hoc trading activities declined.
23. Members also noted that the Council was not able to advertise for work in the same way that private companies did.

24. The Panel was informed that Erimus Housing had taken approximately 50% of land maintained by the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) as part of the housing stock transfer. The remaining 50% of land was to be maintained by the Council.
25. It was noted that at the time of the transfer, only 27% of HRA land had an attached budget.

26. Members noted that Erimus Housing had agreed a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Middlesbrough Council to continue providing its services for one year.
27. The Panel heard that if Erimus were to increase specifications, members of the public might witness different specifications and standards in transferred land and that this may result in a demand for equivalent standards for Council land. It was noted that would have obvious resource implications.

FORMER INVESTIGATION INTO THE GREEN BUDGET OF 2000/2001

28. The Members received clarification on the current budget position of the Service and were advised that full details of cuts made to the Service were contained within the report compiled by the previous Scrutiny Panel in 2001. Approximately 38% of the total budget had been cut over a ten-year period.
29. The Panel examined the previous Scrutiny Panel's findings and the changes made to the Service since the time of that report. The key recommendations of this report were:-
 - (a) Creation of a Single Green Budget
 - (b) Landscape Design Standards should be developed for Middlesbrough.
 - (c) Street Furniture Design Standards should be introduced.
 - (d) Further consideration should be given to the level of funding within the Green Budget.
30. The Panel was interested to hear that there were still additional areas of funding that required consideration including Parks and Open Spaces (enclosed public space), Grounds Maintenance Scoped Properties, Non Scoped Properties, Minimum Standards and regulation of those Standards.

UNDERSTANDING THE GREEN BUDGET IN THE CONTEXT OF THE AUTHORITY'S RECENT HOUSING STOCK TRANSFER

31. The Panel was advised that the Council's housing stock was transferred to Erimus Housing, a newly registered social landlord, in November 2004. This included the TUPE transfer of all employees involved in the delivery of the housing service.
32. The Panel heard that Erimus Housing are monitored by the Housing Corporation, who insist that all works are tendered for on a 12 month basis to ensure their independence from the local authority and to seek value for money.

33. Erimus Housing also advised the Panel that there was insufficient time to examine if they could take the grounds maintenance at the time of the stock transfer, as this would involve a TUPE transfer of staff.
34. The Panel was advised that in light of the Council keeping the grounds maintenance a financial estimate had been built into the budget. This was calculated at £206,000 in the first year.
35. The Panel learnt that this sum was for the originally identified maintained land of 27% and not the actual amount of land that was maintained of 50%.
36. Members discussed the technicalities of the land transferred under the Housing Stock Transfer, where it was noted that it had been assumed 27% of land would be retained by the Council following transfer and that funding to maintain the land would have to be identified. As a result, the Council made provisions in its medium term financial plan.
37. However, shortly before the actual transfer of stock, changes were made to the transfer agreement and revised calculations equated to the Council being responsible for maintaining approximately 50% of land resulting in a budget deficit.
38. In light of this, Members heard that when the HRA transferred to Erimus Housing there was a significant resource deficit of approximately £190,000 to maintain the land that remained with Middlesbrough Council.
39. Members were advised that the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) amounted to approximately £55 million and that the annual budget for ground maintenance and litter picking was approximately £550,000 to £600,000.
40. The Panel was informed that with regard to the actual green budget itself the present level of service was not funded through Revenue Budgets and that there had been no revenue growth in relation to the expansion of Middlesbrough's open space in terms of demographic growth.
41. Members were advised that funding streams for the green budget were made up of approximately two thirds received through the revenue budget and one third through ad-hoc trading activities. Council overheads were repaid out of this budget which equated to approximately £90,000.
42. The Panel learnt that present levels of service were achieved through ad-hoc trading activities and there was a risk that current standards could not be maintained if ad-hoc trading activities declined. It was acknowledged that the Council was not able to advertise for work in the same way that private companies did.

43. Members were advised that where land had been transferred to the ownership of Erimus, the Council was still responsible for the first three metres of verge and also highways and litter picking.
44. The Panel was informed that Erimus Housing had agreed a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Middlesbrough Council to continue providing its services for one year. Following the expiration of the one-year SLA, Erimus would be free to choose whether to continue to contract the work to the Council or another service provider.
45. It was said that Erimus Housing planned to review the SLAs in May 2005 and was likely to be based on the following:-
 - a) Assessment of the needs of Erimus Housing.
 - b) Option Appraisal relating to whether the services should be delivered in house or externally.
 - c) Should services be outsourced, a tendering exercise would be required, including an invitation to the Council to compete.
46. Erimus Housing advised the Panel that it was difficult to determine the success of the SLA, due to the short period of time since the transfer. However, Erimus Housing had been working on a "first 100 days" project and both Erimus and their tenants were pleased with the findings.
47. Members were advised that the SLA in place with Erimus was deemed to be working to full efficiency and that Streetscene had shown that they had managed the change process very well. However, it had meant that they were stretching current resources and that additional resources were necessary to maintain and improve its current standards.

EXAMINATION OF HOW THE MAINTENANCE SERVICES ARE MANAGED IN RELATION TO WHOLE ESTATE AND CURTILAGE LAND TRANSFERS

48. The Panel was advised that the Council was responsible for measuring the quality of the work it carried out for Erimus Housing.
49. Members expressed concern in that if Erimus were to increase specifications, members of the public might witness different specifications and standards in transferred land and demand equivalent standards for Council land that would have obvious resource implications.
50. The issue of Right to Buy properties was also discussed and possible problems which might arise in the future with regard to design and maintenance standards in relation to expectations from tenants, residents and Council tax payers.

51. The Panel learnt that it was too early in the Housing Stock Transfer process to understand if there was significant impact on service provision, but that Middlesbrough Council wanted to work jointly with Erimus to ensure that differing land specifications between Council land and Erimus land did not become evident.
52. The Panel was advised that although no major problems had currently been identified it was important to work together with Erimus in order to avoid possible problems in the future, particularly relating to design and maintenance standards.
53. It was acknowledged that the actual transfer of housing stock had been a strategic decision and the Housing Revenue Account, which funded maintenance of some of the land, had only been a minor issue at the time of transfer.

EXAMINATION OF HOW THE PUBLIC ACCESS SERVICES IN AN OPEN AND TRANSPARENT WAY

54. The Panel was advised that, in partnership with HBS, the Authority's Contact centre is the single contact point for receipt of telephone complaints and service requests.
55. Members' attention was drawn to the issues arising from the housing stock transfer in terms of management of land responsibility with regard to customer complaints and service requests.
56. Although responsibility for those areas fell to HBS, complaints and service requests are still received by the Council as most members of the public considered all public land to be Middlesbrough Council land.
57. The Panel acknowledged that Members of the public currently contacted the Contact Centre with any complaints or requests. However, due to the Council not having a responsibility to deal with issues concerning Erimus land Contact Centre staff needed to be made aware of land issues and be able to redirect enquiries to the appropriate body.
58. In contrast to point '54' Members were advised by Erimus Housing that tenants of Erimus should contact Erimus direct with any grounds maintenance issues.

EXAMINATION OF THE CURRENT BUDGETARY PROVISION FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE SERVICE DELIVERY

59. The Panel was advised that the current 'Green Budget' was somewhere in the region of £6 – 8 million which included grounds maintenance, removal of fly tipping, litter removal, street cleaning, etc.
60. Reference was made to the £110,000 allocated for 'Boro in Bloom' and the Panel was advised that this would cover the creation of new flowerbeds across Middlesbrough, planting in both spring and summer and all year round maintenance. There would also be 100 large tubs containing plants and 150,000 daffodil bulbs planted.
61. The Panel was advised that the Council worked with a private company who obtained customers to sponsor signs on the roundabouts. The Council was provided with 50% of the income from the sponsorships.
62. The Panel noted that this contract was coming to an end and that the Service Area was keen to take over this work.
63. The Panel was informed that there were surplus monies in the Grounds Maintenance budget at the year-end. However, due to legal requirements, Middlesbrough Council had adopted a policy whereby surplus monies were returned to the corporate centre.
64. The Panel noted that a three-year rolling programme would be highly beneficial to the Service Area. This would allow for greater operational planning and allow for any ad-hoc trading to be put directly back into the Service.
65. The Panel was advised that this change would involve a major policy change, but should be considered once the Authority become an 'Excellent' rated Authority.
66. Members were advised that the Service had addressed problems by investing in new technology, plant and equipment and the introduction of an annualised hours scheme for workers.
67. Members of the Panel learnt that an apprenticeship scheme was currently being considered by horticultural services. The last people to be employed by the Service were in 1991 and it had become apparent that there was a need for new employees to be introduced and fully trained.
68. The Panel noted that a new service delivery ethos had been created which linked to public demand rather than strict CCT specification and the Service had actively pursued additional markets to supplement the impact of budget cuts and a management review had been initiated.
69. Members were made aware that all of these actions had resulted in CPA Audit assessing the service as good.

70. The Panel was advised that, once adopted, it was the Council's responsibility to maintain the trees, shrubs and street furniture at new developments and that this added to budgetary pressures of the Service.
71. The Panel learnt that a Sustainability Group for Officers was in the process of being established whereby representatives from appropriate departments would consult on proposed schemes/works being carried out.
72. It was noted that in recent years regeneration had been so great that Streetscene had stopped asking for commuted sums to assist with maintenance.
73. The Panel was advised that the specification of 1989 was significantly higher than the current 2004 specification.
74. The Panel heard that the impact of the cuts during the period 1989 to 2004 had seen a 75% reduction in staffing levels along with loss of morale and that this had been detrimental to the image of Middlesbrough. Resulting in loss of investment and increased unemployment and a declining population.
75. Members also noted that approximately thirty additional estates have been built since this time, but the Service had not received additional funding for this.
76. The Panel also learnt that the Service had an £80,000 reduction in its schools and social service budget.
77. The Panel heard that the current specification has meant that there are an increased number of complaints to both the Service and the Councillors. A major complaint is the increased fear of crime due to overgrown shrubs.
78. Following are some examples of the differences between the 1989 and 2004 specifications, as received by the Panel:-

Item	1989 Per Year	2004 Per Year
Cylinder mow to ornamental lawns	32	29
Edge grass to path of ornamental lawns	32	1
Edge grass to beds of ornamental lawns	32	1
Remove leaves from ornamental lawns	4	0
Amenity grass cutting	16	13
Half moon edge	1	Once every three years
Maintain summer flower bedding	18	9
Water summer flower bedding	4	2
Half prune rose beds	2	1
Plant bulbs	1	0
Apply fertiliser	1	0

Prune shrub beds	1	Once every four years
Collect leaves from shrub beds	4	0
Inspect, de-litter town centre planters	104	0
Prune town centre planters	1	Once every four years
Water town centre planters	8	0
Inspect and maintain trees	3	0

LOCAL AUTHORITY GOOD PRACTICE

As part of the Panel's remit, consideration was also given to making a comparison with another Local Authority on this topic.

In doing so, the Panel visited Hartlepool Borough Council and Housing Hartlepool on 15 March 2005. In summary Members found:-

79. That Hartlepool Council completed their Housing Stock of approximately 7,500 on 29 March 2004 to Housing Hartlepool.
80. That the site visit enabled the Panel to gain an understanding of how another Authority have dealt with any issues that have arisen due to the housing stock transfer, and how the problems were tackled.
81. That Hartlepool Council could not quantify the amount of land that was transferred with the housing stock transfer due to problems with the Land Registry, but this was currently being rectified.
82. That Housing Hartlepool have three service level agreements (SLA) in place with Hartlepool Borough Council these were for sheltered housing, communal areas and open spaces.
83. The sheltered accommodation specification was higher than the other two SLA's. Both parties agreed to keep the original specification for communal and open spaces to avoid any antagonism between residents.
84. Housing Corporation rules had to be adhered to in relation to SLA's and therefore each SLA was for a period of one year and had to go through a tendering procedure. Housing Hartlepool were hopeful that the Housing Corporation would understand that the working relationship between the two organisations was successful and allow Housing Hartlepool to work more independently of them.
85. Hartlepool Council had identified a TUPE list of horticultural staff who would transfer with the SLA's if Hartlepool Council was unsuccessful in future SLA bids.

86. Environmental Services within Hartlepool were divided into three patches. Each area has its own dedicated team who deals with all disciplines in that area. There is a small amount of cross-boundary working.
87. Hartlepool Council does not look at their land independently of Housing Hartlepool land and will always ensure that there is a consistent and equal approach to the service level of all land.
88. Hartlepool have local area offices to deal with any enquiries, these enquiries are then referred to the relevant offices of Hartlepool Council or Housing Hartlepool. Although there is no SLA currently in place for this at the moment, Hartlepool Council runs this and both parties felt that this was very successful. It was also noted that Hartlepool were developing GIS technology which would be accessible through the Council's customer contact centre and eventually online giving real-time information for council issues including land ownership.
89. Apart from the Land Registry problem, no other problems were encountered. Both Housing Hartlepool and Hartlepool Council felt that this was down to a good working relationship prior to the housing stock transfer. It was also noted that Hartlepool Council undertook a lot of pre-planning for the eventual housing stock transfer and therefore the objectives of the transfer were very clear from the outset.
90. That since the HST Housing Hartlepool have carried out their own inspections and that both parties met up quarterly. Also Hartlepool Council submitted weekly returns informing of the work that had been carried out. The Panel heard that Housing Hartlepool and its tenants were very happy with the current service.
91. Hartlepool Council has started a process of replacing fast growing shrubs with slow growing shrubs for ease of future maintenance and budget constraints. Maintenance implications and alleviating fear of crime were explored when looking at these changes.
92. Hartlepool Council's Environment Team is involved from the outset in developments of land. The team is involved in planning approvals, work with the appropriate departments in the provision of open spaces and ensure that the specification is manageable.
93. Hartlepool Council works with new land developers as it was in the Council's interest to be involved at an early stage. Developers also pay 'commuted sums' over 10 years that is covenanted within the proposal documents.

94. Hartlepool Council had a shortfall in their budget after the housing stock transfer, but this shortfall was met by receiving funds from other internal accounts.

CONCLUSIONS

The Panel concluded:

95. That the service area is limited to a one-year accountancy system and that this system does not allow for well-managed operational planning.
96. That a major policy change to a three-year rolling programme should be considered once the Authority become an 'Excellent' rated Authority.
97. That a concentration of standards should be explored, for example, replacing fast-growing and thorny shrubs with slow growing shrubs or trees for ease of maintenance in the future, including litter picking, with capital investment used to facilitate the changes.
98. That in recent year's regeneration had been so great that Streetscene had stopped asking for commuted sums to assist with maintenance and therefore the present budget does not take into account any new developments. This gives a distorted view in which Streetscene has to manage the present ground maintenance provision, forcing the specification to be much lower than is desired.
99. That currently there is no cross-departmental working in relation to new developments or improvements and initiatives to ensure that long-term sustainability was achievable from Streetscene Service's perspective.
100. That there is a differing of opinions from both the Authority and Erimus Housing in relation to whom Erimus tenants currently contact with either complaints or service requests.
101. That the Authority's current contact mechanism does not allow for the contact centre staff/caller to gain real-time information whilst handling calls.
102. That the current specifications for environmental issues are substantially lower than in 1989.
103. The Panel notes that recommendations were made and agreed in the previous scrutiny review (2000/2001). However, little implementation has been made to address the issue in financial terms.
104. That the current budget provision for Environment is not sufficient when taking into account the Town's demographic/regeneration growth.
105. That there is a significant increase in the amount of customer complaints to both the Service and to Councillors, due to the current specification.

106. That this reduction in specification has resulted in a loss of image and possible loss of investment to Middlesbrough.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Environment Scrutiny Panel has taken evidence from a wide range of sources to assist in the formulation of recommendations. Therefore, the Panel recommends to the Executive that the following key recommendations will meet the Authority's vision and the Mayor's aspirations for the future as detailed in 'Raising Hope'.

- a) For the Authority to explore the one of the following options in order for the Service to allow any maintenance works to be carefully and efficiently planned for:-
 - i) To implement a three-year rolling programme.
 - ii) To enable the carrying over of surplus funds to the next financial year.
- b) For the benefit and ease of the citizens of Middlesbrough, a single contact point (Contact Centre) is identified and delivered for dealing with complaints and service requests. This will ensure that the joint working with Erimus is seen to be seamless.
- c) To continue the good-working relationship and set up a Steering Group with Erimus to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of such a Contact Centre.
- d) For a real-time database (CRM) to be identified and delivered to ensure that on contacting the 'Centre' queries can be dealt with efficiently. To expand this database for the Authority's compliance with E-Government Standards and enable it for online public services.
- e) For the Environment Service to produce a deliverable Strategy that identifies the environmental maintenance problems in Middlesbrough. This Plan should provide the procedure for, and benefits of rectifying these problems, and the budget required for this. One example is that there does not appear to be any flexible working within the Service Area and that staff should embrace cross-boundary working.
- f) For the Authority to agree that this Strategy is beneficial to Middlesbrough and provides the budget for it in its next budget setting process.

- g) For Streetscene to be consulted in the planning stages of any new developments within Middlesbrough and to negotiate any applicable sums for the sustainable maintenance of such developments.
- h) That the Town's street furniture is currently showing the Authority's old logo and should be updated and standardised throughout Middlesbrough.
- i) For the Authority's Procurement Policy for ground maintenance, be dependent upon quality and not price and therefore reintroduce the 1989 ground maintenance specification and that the Service Area's Green Budget reflects this upgraded specification.
- j) That funding should be made available for the creation of an appropriate horticulture apprenticeship scheme in conjunction with the 14-19 Agenda.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

107. The Panel is grateful to all those who have presented evidence during the course of our investigation. We would like to place on record our appreciation, in particular of the willingness and co-operation we have received from the below names:-

Councillor Bob Kerr – Middlesbrough Council's Executive Member for the Environment

John Richardson, Mike Wood, Keith Garland, Geoff Field, Les Wellburn and Mandy Burton – Middlesbrough Council's Environment and Neighbourhood Services

Ron Brown – Procurement Manager, Middlesbrough Council

Brenda Kirby – Erimus Housing Limited

Sarah Fawcett – Housing Hartlepool

Steve Carroll, Dave Frame and Albert Cope – Hartlepool Council

108. As Chair, I would also like to personally thank the Scrutiny Officer for her help and support with the Panel's work on this Scrutiny topic.

**COUNCILLOR GEOFF COLE
CHAIR OF THE ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY PANEL**

April 2005

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:-

- (a) Remit and Work Programme – Investigation into Middlesbrough Council’s Green Budget in the context of the Housing Stock Transfer – Report of the Scrutiny Officer to the Environment Scrutiny Panel of 15 December 2004.
- (b) Setting the Scene/Overview of the Green Budget in the context of the Housing Stock Transfer - Presentation of the Policy and Performance Officer, Environment Services to the Environment Scrutiny Panel of 12 January 2005
- (c) Environment Scrutiny Panel former investigation into the Green Budget of Middlesbrough Council undertaken in the period 31 October 2000 to 20 February 2001.
- (d) Discussion on the Site Visit to various areas in Middlesbrough – Report of the Scrutiny Officer to the Environment Scrutiny Panel of 4 February 2005.
- (e) Green Budget provision – Evidence from the Executive Member for Environment and Executive Director for Environment and Neighbourhood Services – Report of the Scrutiny Officer to the Environment Scrutiny Panel of 4 February 2005.
- (f) Report on Grounds Maintenance – Evidence from Erimus Housing to the Environment Scrutiny Panel of 25 February 2005.
- (g) Review of the Housing Stock Transfer Process - Evidence from the Strategic Commissioning/Procurement Manager – Report of the Scrutiny Officer to the Environment Scrutiny Panel of 25 February 2005.
- (h) Discussion on the Site Visit to Housing Hartlepool/Hartlepool Borough Council – Report of the Scrutiny Officer to the Environment Scrutiny Panel of 18 March 2005.
- (i) Review of Evidence Received to Date – Report of the Scrutiny Officer to the Environment Scrutiny Panel of 18 March 2005.
- (j) Review of Current Specifications – Evidence from the Policy and Performance Officer – Report of the Scrutiny Officer to the Environment Scrutiny Panel of 18 March 2005.
- (k) Minutes of the Meetings of the Environment Scrutiny Panel held on 15 December 2004, 12 January 2005, 4 February 2005, 25 February 2005 and 18 March 2005.

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