

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD

16 NOVEMBER 2010

ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY PANEL - PROGRESS REPORT

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. To provide members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board (OSB) with an update on the work of the Economic Regeneration and Transport Scrutiny Panel.

BACKGROUND

2. Since the last update report to OSB the Economic Regeneration and Transport Scrutiny Panel has met on one occasion, on 18 October 2010.
3. At that meeting the panel continued gathering evidence as part of its review into social housing.
4. Members received evidence from the Head of Area South for the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) on the issue of funding for social and affordable housing. The Housing Strategy Team Leader and Housing Needs, Homelessness and Advice Co-ordinator were also in attendance to outline how applicants for social housing are prioritised and allocated vacant properties within Middlesbrough.
5. In addition the panel received an update on the Preventing Repossessions Campaign and the work that has been undertaken by the Middlesbrough Partnership's Financial Inclusion Group.
6. The panel heard that since the launch of the Preventing Repossessions Campaign in March 2010 a total of £16,062 of Middlesbrough's £67,750 loan fund has been issued to prevent repossessions and 8 households have been assisted. It is anticipated however that there will be an increase in demand for assistance in the

coming months and the scheme continues to be promoted to a wide range of organisations.

7. The panel will continue with its evidence gathering on the topic of social housing at its next meeting on 9 November 2010 where the panel will receive evidence from the Benefit Manager on the potential impact of the cuts in Housing Benefit on Middlesbrough tenants.
8. A number of external agencies have also been invited to attend the meeting to discuss the potential impact of the cuts coupled with reductions in the funding used to provide homelessness prevention services.
9. The Homelessness Manager at Erimus Housing, the Youth Homeless Panel Co-ordinator from Community Campus and the Director of Services at My Sister's Place will be in attendance at the meeting. Information will be presented on the services that each agency is providing and the impact that these services are having on preventing homelessness within the town.

RECOMMENDATION

10. That the Overview and Scrutiny Board notes the content of the report and the updated position.

COUNCILLOR JOHN COLE

CHAIR OF THE ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY PANEL

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