

Minutes

Oldham Strategic Housing Board

29 January 2009

Crompton Suite

13.00- 15.00

Present:

Cllr McCann	Councillor
John Cockerham	Northern Counties housing Association
Andrew Brown	Contour Housing Association
Mark Glynn	Housing Market Renewal
Steve Yorke	First Choice Homes Oldham
John Rooney	OMBC Housing Strategy
Nick Cumberland	OMBC Housing Strategy

Apologies:

Cllr Uddin	Councillor
Cllr Judge	Councillor
Hugh Broadbent	First Choice Homes Oldham
Tom Flanagan	Regeneration Directorate

A SECTION OF MINUTES

1 Terms of Reference

Cllr McCann was elected Chair and John Cockerham was elected Vice Chair.
Cllr McCann asked that people send a nominated deputy to meetings if they can't attend.

Agreed that the meeting needed to focus on high level priorities and we need to keep a wider partnership focus through forums and partnership events.

Cllr McCann expressed the importance in the group working together to pull in one direction. It is important to get added value out of the group.

Agreed the group can help to influence the housing agenda at the Safe and Strong Communities Board. Mark Reynolds is the representative on the Board.

The group will review the outcomes/progress towards on the Housing Strategy on a quarterly basis.

It was agreed to change the time of the meetings to commence early evening in order that other members could attend.

JC asked if brief updates from the sub groups of the Partnership could be provided in summary format to future Board meetings. This could be circulated around partners and help share activity and progress.

ACTION: NC to circulate revised partnership structure showing linkages below the Strategic Housing Board.

ACTION: NC to revise Terms of Reference and circulate before the next Board.

ACTION : NC to prepare a template to collate brief updates from key partnership groups

ACTION : NC to revise times and dates of Board meetings

2 **LAA Performance Indicators**

JR explained the current progress. Very good progress being made on Homelessness indicators. The Bond scheme is working very well and this is something we could be further developed.

Improved homelessness figures are as a result of a number of factors. There is not one action alone which has made the most difference. Joined-up working and early prevention and advice are seen as contributing to the key improvements.

The tier 1 targets around numbers of affordable homes delivered (gross) (NI 155) and tier 2 target on net additional homes provided (NI 154) are down significantly. This is as a result of the economic downturn, however, with developments being pushed into quarter 4, the affordable housing target for 08/09 could be achieved. There are real concerns over future year performance and there was an opportunity for the Partnership to provide a business case for more realistic. It was agreed that the Chair/Vice Chair would sign off renegotiated targets.

MG explained the Pathfinder is going to consider new approaches to stimulate development which might mean relaxing their tenure mix levels and allowing economically mixed developments. This could mean a number of RSLs agreeing to take properties off a developer once a trigger point is reached. It is important to spread risk in these uncertain times.

All agreed we need to be planning for the upturn in terms of site assembly to ensure that we attract developers as soon as the market picks up.

Housing Projects

JR updated the meeting on the ongoing projects funded through the Housing Block.

There were concerns from the group that the Nitestop project is delivering very small numbers for £35,000 funding. It was considered that the project didn't appear to provide value for money. MG asked if a different organisation could provide service at a better cost.

All agreed the need to be more flexible on allocating the resources and being able to move it reactively to projects which are making a real difference and delivering outcomes.

JC explained that OHIP have resources and there could be an opportunity to combine some of these resources to add capacity to projects/services delivering successfully.

It was agreed that the Chair/Vice Chair would meet to sign off decisions to reallocate funding between projects for 2009/10.

ACTION: JR to provide details of renegotiated national indicator targets for 'new

affordable homes' and 'net additional homes' targets

ACTION: Ann Marie McGinn to provide full details to Chair/Vice Chair to consider which projects to take forward. JR to arrange meeting.

3 **Housing Conference Feedback**

NC provided a review of the Housing Conference and the workshop sessions. Feedback from the event has been positive and it has raised the profile of Oldham with some high profile speakers/attendees.

All agreed it was a positive event and looked at a wide range of issues and not just the usual 'housing need' type concerns. It is very important that views and comments are fed into the Strategy so that people can see how they have been able to influence the process.

It was seen as a partnership event, and not just a Council event. The Chair thanked OHIP and Regeneration for their contribution in funding the event.

4 **Housing Strategy Update**

NC updated the meeting on the Housing Strategy.

The new strategy is a concise document of no more than 30 pages. It will contain a small number of high level priorities and signpost people to detailed actions plans and priorities in specialised strategies.

The draft strategy will be electronically circulated to the group and partners for comments and the final draft will be brought to the next meeting of the Strategic Housing Board.

All welcomed the opportunity to be involved and agreed this is crucial to its success. All welcomed the proposed format of a concise and 'customer' friendly approach.

The process for delivering the strategy are:

Jan: Housing Conference
Feb: Consultation with members, consultation on website
Mar: Consultation on emerging strategy with Strategic Housing Board (SHB) and partners
April: Final consultations and editing. Final draft to SHB
May: Cabinet for approval

ACTION: NC to circulate the web link for online consultation to the group and partners

ACTION: NC will arrange meetings with individual partners to discuss specific actions in the action plan to ensure buy in.

5 **Stock Options Update**

JR/ SY provided an update on the process leading to ballot of tenants prior to stock transfer of FCHO-managed homes.

The current timescales for the process are as follows:

- Appointing legal/financial advisors

- Mar/June develop the offer document for tenants
- Easter, meet tenants
- July, finalise offer documents
- Offer documents out to tenants in Aug/Sept
- Ballot, Autumn
- Transfer, April 2010

A small team is in place in the Council to coordinate the process from the Council's side and the main customer-facing activity, including home visits, is being co-ordinated through FCHO.

SY confirmed that staff were overwhelmingly supportive of transfer and that it's vital to understand what tenants are saying as early as possible in the process. Every tenant will be visited three times to understand their views.

The challenge at the moment will be to improve performance in the run up to the ballot, whilst making savings of £1.4 million.

There was discussions around the need to get strong governance structures in place. This is particularly important in the current economic conditions as financial institutions will be looking to minimise risks at every stage.

6 **RSL Review**

JR explained that a draft report should be circulated to all RSLs in February. Meetings will be arranged with individual RSL's in March to discuss outcomes and actions plans. It has been a long and complicated process and it is very important that there are tangible and beneficial outcomes at the end of it.

MG stated that it would be useful to use this group to discuss RSL general development plans to make best use of our resources.

JC explained that OHIP will be considering the report at the next Board meeting in March and will be looking at how it might shape their future direction and be used to help them align with the Housing Strategy priorities.

ACTION : JR to arrange for report to be submitted to next OHIP meeting in March

7 **Any other business**

Consultation on the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment is starting on 02 March 2009. This will run along consultation on the Core Strategy. All partners advised to get involved.

ACTION: NC to circulate the links to the group for consultation

ACTION : NC to develop forward plan of items for review/ sign off at future Board meetings

8 **Date of next meeting** (All meetings at 16.30- 18.30)

29.04.09 (Oldham Housing Strategy 'sign off)

14.07.09 (Private Sector Housing and Affordable Housing Strategy)

27.10.09 (Stock Options Appraisal)