

Minutes

Oldham Strategic Housing Board

29 April 2009

Green Room

17.00- 19.00

Present:	Cllr McCann (Chair) John Cockerham Mark Reynolds Mark Glynn John Rooney Nick Cumberland Cllr Judge Alison Stuart	Councillor Northern Counties housing Association OMBC Housing Strategy Housing Market Renewal OMBC Housing Strategy OMBC Housing Strategy Councillor Oldham Housing Investment Partnership
Apologies:	Cllr Uddin Elaine McLean Andrew Brown Phil Jobling Hugh Broadbent	Councillor OMBC Economy, Places and Skills Contour Housing Association OMBC Regeneration First Choice Homes Oldham

A SECTION OF MINUTES

1 Welcomes and apologies

2 Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as an accurate record.

MG suggested a number of future agenda items:

- Impact of the Manchester Independent Economic Review and GM Strategy
- Public Public Partnerships in second wave HMR neighbourhoods
- Review of RSL review in 6 months time (OMBC and RSL perspective)

Action : NC to revise Forward Plan based on comments

3 LAA Performance Indicators

JR updated the Board on the Area Based Grant allocation for 09/ 10 being £ 150,000. Based on comments at the previous Board, De Paul Trust have been approached about reduced resources for Nitestop. A meeting on 30 April 2009 will confirm funding arrangements for 09/10. As outlined at the previous Board, the Chair and Vice Chair will be asked to approve Housing Block allocation funding details.

JR presented a paper on progress. Very good progress is still being made on the

Homelessness indicators and reducing empty homes has exceeded targets. A total of 281 net additional homes have been delivered against the RSS target of 289, which is good considering the economic downturn. However, the delivery of affordable homes is low, with only 60 units delivered against a revised target of 115.

MG raised concerns about the failure to meet affordable housing targets and suggested the Board focus more attention on ways to deliver affordable housing.

MR explained that, despite positive achievements around empty homes, there needs to be a more strategic approach to tackling them. A new strategic approach will be worked up to focus on gateways and areas of greatest density.

The Board agreed that housing should be used as the means to drive forward improvements in neighbourhoods, including improvements to commercial properties.

Action: JR to meet the commissioning unit to review project resources

Action: JR to provide a report for the Chair and Vice Chair on Housing Block proposals for 09/10

Action: MR to ensure a greater strategic focus on tackling empty properties

4 **Oldham Housing Partnership sub groups update**

NC circulated a report containing updates from the sub groups of the Strategic Housing Board. The report was very well received and provided an overview of the work being delivered through the Partnership.

There was discussion around the need to share some of the excellent work being delivered through the Partnership to the local press, including the reduction in homelessness and downsizing project.

MR explained that the success of the downsizing project was causing some difficulties, as a result of the investment required to re-let the properties made available.

Cllr McC/ Cllr J would support a bid to the Capital Programme to help the project.

There was discussion around the need to strategically consider schemes for support from the Homes and Communities Agency and the need to be able to switch developments between sale and rent to ensure schemes are completed successfully.

MR updated the Board on work to return empty properties back into use. This is seen as a key area of work and, despite encouraging numbers of properties currently being returned to use, a more strategic approach is being considered to ensure maximum effect and added value.

The Landlord Accreditation Scheme is proving successful, however, it is recognised that it is a self selecting group. The Board suggested a review of the current landlord accreditation scheme to ensure that resources are targeted at priority areas of need.

MR explained the benefits of working with the PCT on affordable warmth issues. A

proposal has been made for a joint funded strategy and co-coordinator role. It is important to get a dedicated resource, otherwise the Council risks missing out on substantial funding which is available in this sector.

Action: JR/MR to identify suitable positive stories to be sent to the local press

Action: NC to produce a quarterly housing news update for Members and partners

Action: MR to take forward a bid to the Capital Programme for money to help with the downsizing project

5 **Oldham Partnership Housing Strategy 2009- 2012**

NC updated the meeting on the Housing Strategy.

The new strategy is a concise document containing a small number of high level priorities and signposting people to detailed actions plans and priorities in specialised strategies.

The strategy is being branded through the Corporate Design Team and is intended to be an electronic document with only a small number of hard copies. The strategy is going to Cabinet in June.

The Board welcomed the strategy and agreed it is a very good document, concise and easy to read. The Board approved it going forward to Leadership and Cabinet.

Action: NC to circulate the action plan to the Board

6 **Worklessness Action Plan**

Alison Stuart from Oldham Housing Investment Partnership (OHIP) presented a paper on tackling worklessness. The paper sets out the context of the current situation and contains a clear action plan to tackle worklessness through the Housing Partnership. The action plan has three broad priorities.

- Signposting
- Customer engagement
- Research and information

Actions under signposting and research and information are progressing well, however some of the actions under the customer engagement are behind schedule. The action plan is being monitored quarterly and reported back to the OHIP Board and Strategic Housing Board.

The Board welcomed the paper and good partnership work taking place to tackle the issues around worklessness.

MG questioned the aspiration for social housing. The Hills Report implies that if you live in social housing you are less likely to have a job. Is it not if you don't have a job you are more likely to live in social housing? MG suggested the Board could consider what we want from our social housing stock and suggested it as a future agenda item.

Action: AS to engage HMR neighbourhood teams in worklessness training and seminar

Action: NC to add debate on social housing to forward plan

7 **Review of Registered Social Landlords**

JR presented a paper on the RSL review. The review recommends the OHIP staff should be managed through Housing Strategy in the future, but retain their independence. The process to develop Partnership Plans with RSLs has started.

MR explained it had been a positive process so far and is a useful means to highlight issues for both the Council and RSLs.

JC updated the Board from OHIP. OHIP see the review as a useful document to move forward and build on. He welcomed the paper from Housing Strategy on the proposals to bring OHIP into Housing Strategy. A special OHIP meeting has been arranged on 21 May 2009 to discuss the paper in more detail, and explore the alternative recommendations. It is taking slightly longer than hoped, but it is better to take longer and develop the partnership working than try and do it too quickly.

All agreed we need to move in changing times to ensure a clear delivery plan is developed and delivered and pooled resources are used most effectively.

The Board praised JC for all his facilitating role and moving it forward.

Action: JC to feedback from special OHIP meeting on 21 May 2009

8 **Any other business**

Gypsies and Travellers: NC advised the Board that AGMA had officially responded to the revised figures from 4NW as part of the consultation on the partial review of the RSS. The AGMA response is they do not agree with the figures put forward from 4NW and are unclear on the methodology. AGMA recommends 4NW use the figures derived through the AGMA commission.

Private Sector Housing Strategy: Initial stakeholder consultation is taking place on the Private Sector Housing Strategy on 6 May 2009. It is aimed to take the strategy to Cabinet in September 2009.

Stock transfer update: JR, the first round of visits to tenants has taken place. The Independent Tenant Authority is very pleased with progress to date and a ballot is scheduled for the Autumn.

9 **Date of next meeting**

29 July 2009, 17.00- 19.00, Room C, Oldham Business Centre. (Private Sector Housing and Affordable Housing Strategy)

27.10.09 (Stock Options Appraisal)