

MINUTES OF THE CITY HOUSING CONSULTATION GROUP MEETING HELD ON 31 JANUARY 2003 AT CARDINAL SQUARE, 10.00AM-1.00PM

PRESENT

Dennis Rees,	Derby Association of Community Partners - DACP and Chair of Derby Homes
Gwen Stubley	DACP
Nita Murphy	DACP
Ken Whitehead	DACP - part-meeting
John Millar	DACP
Sylvia Hyde	DACP
Elaine Jackson	DACP - part-meeting
Helen Cross	Derby City Council - DCC - part-meeting
Jonathan Geall	DCC - part-meeting
Sue Glithero	DCC - part-meeting
Cllr Richard Gerrard	DCC
Phil Davies	Derby Homes - DH
Maria Murphy	Derby Homes - part-meeting
Shaun Bennett	Derby Homes - part-meeting
Richard Smail	Derby Homes
Fiona Henchley	Panel Assistant, Derby Homes

Apologies - Lyn Gadsby, Ray Bradbeer

Dennis welcomed everyone to the meeting and wished Elaine a Happy Birthday.

1. The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as accurate.

2. MATTERS ARISING NOT COVERED ON THE AGENDA

Grove House. Phil said of the 10 tenants needing to be moved out 1 has gone. Fours offers were made this week to remaining tenants, there will be 4 next week and the other tenant's case is being looked at. There has been of consultation with the individuals concerned and the aim is still for Grove House to be empty by the end of February.

3. TO AGREE ANY LATE ITEMS

a. Times/dates of meetings clashing - Gwen.

PART A - RETAINED HOUSING SERVICES

4. DERBY HOMES DELIVERY PLAN 2003/04

Sue said the Delivery Plan - DP is important to the Council because it measures the performance of DH against targets that will stretch them and because the properties are still owned by the Council.

Jonathan then reviewed the DP for 2002/03 and circulated the 'Review of Derby Homes Delivery Plan 2002/03 - Derby City Council's View' and went through it with the meeting, beginning with a congratulation of DH's achievements over the period. Copy attached. Jonathan summarised DH performance over the year and explained that while the Top Ten Standards were not in the DP, they are a useful measure because tenants identified them.

Helen then circulated the performance indicators document for 2003/04 and went through it, saying the indicators are currently provisional, discussions are on-going and, once completed, targets will be agreed. Helen explained that funding for the Council is partly dependent on DH achieving the targets. Some new performance indicators are being proposed to give more detail on specific areas of work to allow progress on achieving the Housing Strategy Objectives to be monitored. The new indicators are highlighted in grey on the attached document. The meeting felt a split in the adaptations performance indicator is needed between major and minor adaptations of properties. At this point DH staff offered to leave the meeting so the Council could discuss the relationship between DH and their tenants in privacy and to see if the tenants agreed the indicators flagged up are reflecting tenants' concerns. The main concern expressed to the Council, by those tenants present, is the delays in Housing Benefit. Cllr Gerrard said this is a concern, there is no quick fix, but the staff and budgets are being put in place and the backlog should be gone by Spring. Dennis said he is pleased to see leaseholder issues will be included in monitoring.

It was also highlighted that the potential performance indicators have increased to 50 this year, from 21 last year, and this is a

considerable increase. Whilst every effort is being made to get the monitoring done by IT methods there is some concern about the amount of time that will be needed to get this information. Possibly the Service Users' Group could be used to do some one-off exercises. DCC also said some of the information required could already be appearing in Management Reports and could simply be pulled out. DH would also like the use of the Council IT specialist.

To conclude the indicators need to go to the Board on 28 February 2003 and to Council Cabinet on 18 March 2003 - therefore any comments, queries or thoughts by any of those present need to be passed to Jonathan by 7 February 2003.

Dennis thanked Jonathan, Helen and Sue for attending the meeting and their presentations.

ACTION: Additional comments to Jonathan Geall by 7 February

5. RIGHT TO BUY SCHEME IN DERBY - PREVENTING FRAUDULENT APPLICATIONS

John said this issue had been raised with him by a Panel Chair and was causing concern and he had wanted the agenda to flag the issue up with the numbers of Right to Buys - RTB in Derby. Jonathan said during 2000-01 234 properties were sold, 285 during 2001-02 and in 132 in the first half of the current year. Jonathan has spoken to Housing Options and briefly outlined the current procedure for RTB applications. He agreed this agenda item has raised some issues that will be followed up with Housing Options and other departments. It was noted that RTB is tenant empowerment but, as a consequence, weakens the tenant base and also removes properties from the Housing stock.

Concerns were also expressed about firms who canvass tenants urging them to buy their Council property. This concern is that the tenant is charged a fee. The RTB procedure/information is freely available to tenants and they do not need to pay a private company. It is felt a short, 'punchy' leaflet should be produced to promote this information. Nita suggested door labels that say 'Do not want to buy' for those who are getting fed up with firms knocking on the door and asking if they do. An article about RTB changes will be put in Derby Homes News. Cllr Gerrard announced that the Council is considering lobbying the Government to extend the revised RTB provisions to parts of Derby.

PART B - DERBY HOMES REPORTS

6. TOP TEN STANDARDS FOR HOUSING

Maria said this item has been brought forward from the last CHCG Sub meetings and said it needs to be finally agreed at the next Sub meeting so the standards, and their monitoring, can be put in place by the beginning of April. Maria said standards can be replaced with others if the tenants wish but does not feel that a standard should be replaced because it is working well or because it is considered difficult to achieve. If a target of 90% is being achieved then it can be put up. It has been suggested any anti-social behaviour complaint is responded to within 2 days with more information as to what action could then be taken. A copy of the standards will be sent out with the next Sub agenda and any other ideas from tenants can be included on this. The Management Committee will discuss this issue at the next meeting. It was also suggested SURG's role could be linked with the Top 10 standards to help provide monitoring.

ACTION: DACP to consider at Management Committee and CHCG Sub

7. TO RECEIVE/DISCUSS ANY RECENT BOARD REPORTS

Phil said there are no Main Board reports to discuss but he and Shaun updated the meeting on the three sub committee meetings held last night and the following issue were highlighted:

a) Resources Committee

- New DH personnel policies were approved
- A rent increase from £6.00 to £21.00 will be levied on all new tenants who go into sheltered or warden schemes. This will not affect those receiving benefit or existing tenants. However, it is appreciated this charge, as a result of the Supporting People legislation, might make properties more difficult to let. The Council now has a legal obligation to house homeless 16/17 year olds/young single mothers

b) Service Improvement Committee

- Laurie Storey gave a presentation about anti-social behaviour which it has been requested to be passed on to other Board members and DACP
- Board members have recommended Britannia Court be modernised and possibly some bedsits converted into bigger flats
- Car park problems - some tenants are experiencing problems parking in the spaces provided by the Council in areas where there is not much parking. Recommended to take to the Board to agree. Consultation will be carried out to see if residents want some restrictions put in place, ie a barrier. Any spare spaces could possibly be let out to help alleviate the problems in the area. Phil suggested this issue be taken up at CHCG Sub.
- CCTV for the Old Sinfen estate to be recommended to the Board and it is hoped, if successful, this will make a big difference

- by Derwent New Deal for Communities the proposal for security grills on windows/doors in Radnor Street in conjunction with the Burglary Reduction Team. Concerns about fire safety and appearance with the possible compromise of allowing the grills for windows and fitting improved composite doors. It is appreciated tenants in the area are very keen to have these security improvements.
 - In partnership with ADACTION agreeing a protocol for tenants, who consent, to be referred to ADACTION, Phil suggested a presentation from Lusia Green.
- c) Homes Pride Committee
- discussed disturbance payments and agreed to carry on with payments and review the amounts as some jobs do not involve as much disruption as they once did. It is hoped this will cut the payments in half. Shaun is applying for any energy efficiency grants available to help with the work being undertaken including a 'Help Scheme' with British Gas

Dennis thanked Phil and Shaun for their reports.

ACTION: Car parking on CHCG Sub agenda - Richard Smail
Lusia Green to be invited to a future CHCG meeting - Richard Smail

8. RENT HOLIDAY WEEKS - INFORMATION TO TENANTS

Dennis said the information saying when there are rent holiday weeks is on a small card which elderly people might not notice. Phil said efforts will be made to ensure people are aware of the rent holiday weeks and leaflets will be put on cash counters. A competition, at some point, was also suggested to encourage people in arrears to pay up.

ACTION: To produce leaflets to advertise rent holiday weeks in March and April

9. DERBY TENANTS RESOURCE CENTRE - NEW PREMISES

John circulated Ken's report on the Canal Street premises to the meeting and this was discussed. The feeling of those DACP members present was, that with the scale of work needed to bring the premises up to scratch, this venue should not be pursued. All thanks to Ken for all the hard work and time he has put in. It was suggested the DACP urgently get in touch with CVS to ask what is happening to their old property or to see if there is any chance of sharing their new premises. DACP were asked to make sure that the Management Committee were made aware of this recommendation.

10. PARTNERING ARRANGEMENTS - AN UPDATE

Shaun circulated his Strategic Partnership update to the meeting and went through it. Work on Phase 1 should start on April 1st. Shaun thanked all who had taken part and given up their time. Full details of the work to be done should be distributed in February, all local Offices will have a copy as will Panel Chairs, Councillors and Board members. It is also hoped to set up a mini call centre at Cardinal Square to respond to the enquiries that tenants will have.

11. LATE ITEM - CLASHING DATES/TIMES OF MEETINGS

Richard said steps are in place for a weekly liaison between DACP and the Community Initiatives Team to make sure this doesn't happen and it is hoped the clash Gwen outlined is a one-off and shouldn't be happening again.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was agreed for Tuesday 25 February 2003, at 2.00pm, at Cardinal Square.

ACTIONS

Additional comments to Jonathan Geall by 7 February
DACP to consider at Management Committee and CHCG Sub
Car parking on CHCG Sub agenda - Richard Smail
Lusia Green to be invited to a future CHCG meeting - Richard Smail
To produce leaflets to advertise rent holiday weeks in March and April