

Overview and Scrutiny Task Group - Chorley Community Housing

Wednesday, 9 July 2008

Present: Councillor Mike Devaney (Chair) and Councillors Alistair Bradley, Harold Heaton, Roy Lees, Marion Lowe, June Molyneaux and Rosie Russell

Also in attendance: Councillor Pat Haughton

08.07 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Kevin Joyce.

08.08 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

No Members declared any interests in respect of items on the agenda.

08.09 MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Task Group – Chorley Community Housing held on 10 June 2008 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

08.10 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No questions from members of the public were submitted.

08.11 CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENT

The task group considered the draft scoping document drawn up at the last meeting.

Members highlighted the areas the inquiry would focus on. In particular Members were concerned about the number of properties currently vacant, including those requiring renovation. Another key area would be the strategy and progress on delivery of forty new properties to be made available each year.

RESOLVED – That the scoping document be accepted subject to the amended list of witnesses.

08.12 INFORMATION ON THE CONTRACT BETWEEN CHORLEY COUNCIL AND CHORLEY COMMUNITY HOUSING

The task group received written information from the Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation) on the contract between Chorley Council and Chorley community Housing, including the promises made to tenants.

The task group group took five minutes to digest the tabled report and it was AGREED that the papers be considered further at the next meeting along with the report presented to the first meeting of the group was requested as part of the agenda for the next meeting.

The members stressed the need for facts and figures supporting the promises made to tenants. It was AGREED that the information be requested from Chorley Community Housing for the next meeting.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted and presented to the next meeting of the task group for further consideration.

08.13 COLLECTION AND CONSIDERATION OF EVIDENCE FROM MEMBERS AND THEIR CONSTITUENTS

The Chair invited Councillors to share issues raised with them by constituents.

Councillor Roy Lees advised that several concerns had been raised during meetings he had attended, including the provision of on-street parking. He undertook to send a note of the issues to the Democratic Services officer for inclusion in the minutes.

It was reported that a tenants questionnaire from Chorley Community Housing had been met with mainly negative responses. The details of this survey were requested, including details of the sample of tenants, questions, responses and any other survey information available.

Members heard that a particular neighbourhood officer was not attending meetings when invited or helping tenants when they had issues with neighbour tenants, even where the police have been involved. A dedicated anti-social behaviour team has been set up.

Councillor June Molyneaux advised she had spoken to a gentleman called Bert, who had helped to set up residents groups in the Adlington area in particular. It was reported that tenants could be supported better in creating their residents groups. Information on the attendance of Chorley Community Housing representatives at residents meetings, the process for meetings to happen, any buddy schemes for new tenant groups their frequency and future plans in this area was requested. Also, details of any meetings with residents that the task group can attend.

The task group discussed specific questions to ask a Chorley Community Housing representative who would be invited to attend the next meeting. Updated information on the promises tracking report was requested with supporting facts and figures that these have been delivered and progress on those not completed. Copies of recent newsletters to tenants were also requested.

1. Residents car parking spaces
 - Where and when will the spaces be completed?
 - Who decides where the spaces are located?
 - How will the strategy for parking within 5 years be delivered?
2. Vacant properties
 - How many were uninhabitable when Chorley Community Housing took over?
 - How many are habitable now?
 - How long and why are properties vacant?
 - When they will be ready to let?
 - What is the strategy for completing the renovations?
3. Residents associations
 - How many now are there now?
 - How do you know if they are working well?
 - How do you plan to support them in the future?
4. Anti social behaviour team
 - How does it operate?
 - How do tenants know about this service: who to contact, services available?
 - How are tenants vetted to reduce the risk of anti social behaviour?
5. Allocation of properties
 - How are they allocated pre and post tenancy?

6. Renovations
 - What is the policy to rehouse tenants whilst work is being done on their property?
7. Partial renovations
 - If a tenant is offered a new bathroom or kitchen and refuses how is this recorded by Chorley Community Housing?
8. Feedback from tenants
 - How do you collect, monitor and take action on feed back from tenants on work done their properties?
9. Affordable housing
 - What is the strategy and progress on the delivery of 40 affordable homes each year?
10. Neighbourhood caretakers
 - What are these and what do they do?
11. Rent
 - Do tenants pay increased rent after refurbishment?

Question for Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation)

- How can Chorley Council help Chorley Community Housing to deliver their annual target of 40 new affordable homes per year.
- What is the definition of affordable homes?

RESOLVED – That the questions be forwarded to the relevant officers

08.14 THE WAY FORWARD

RESOLVED –

1. **That a representative from Chorley Community Housing be invited to attend the next meeting to respond to the questions identified.**
2. **Details of any residents meetings scheduled would be given to members to enable them to attend prior to the next meeting.**
3. **The minutes of meetings be emailed to members as soon as possible so that they can action any points allocated to them.**
4. **Copies of previous reports would be presented on the agenda for the next meeting.**

08.15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, 5 August 2008 at 6.30pm

Chair