

Report of	Meeting	Date
Corporate Director (Business) Introduced by the Executive Member for Business	Executive Cabinet	25 th June 2009

RESPONSE TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK GROUP – CHORLEY COMMUNITY HOUSING

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To respond to the findings and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny inquiry report on Chorley Community Housing (CCH)

RECOMMENDATION(S)

- That the Executive Cabinet endorses the response attached to be received by Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

(If the recommendations are accepted)

- To inform Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the Executive's response to the recommendations made by the O&S Inquiry on Chorley Community Housing.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- None

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Put Chorley at the heart of regional economic development in the Central Lancashire sub-region		Develop local solutions to climate change.	
Improving equality of opportunity and life chances		Develop the Character and feel of Chorley as a good place to live	√
Involving people in their communities		Ensure Chorley Borough Council is a performing organization	√

BACKGROUND

6. In the Autumn/Winter of 2008 an Overview and Scrutiny Task Group conducted a scrutiny inquiry to investigate whether the promises made by Chorley Council and provided under contract by Chorley Community Housing were being delivered to the tenants. Four of the six promises were investigated in detail:

- 1) Delivery of home improvements
- 2) Service improvement
- 3) Tenant involvement in decision making
- 4) Regeneration

7. The report containing a number of recommendations was presented to Executive Cabinet in January 2009. Outlined below are the responses to each of the 13 recommendations.

1. The format of the report monitoring progress on all six promises made to tenants should be amended to include the targets, achievement against the target, sufficiently detailed evidence to support this and actions to be taken where the target has not been met. Perhaps short, medium and long term targets could be identified. Any tenant perception and satisfaction surveys and tenant complaints should be included with this report.

The recommendation for more detailed performance information on delivery against targets is supported. CCH are aware of this request and have said they would provide performance management information where readily available provided it is not commercially sensitive. As part of the quarterly meeting with CCH, the Corporate Director (Business) will seek to ensure the information outlined is provided by CCH and if required invite the Operations Director to attend Overview & Scrutiny.

2. The Council don't accept that the amendments to the business plan, due to the recent restructuring, has no impact as it is linked to the promises made to tenants and financially to the eventual size of the VAT shelter. For these reasons the Council feel it is appropriate that Chorley Community Housing provide, not the detail, but updated information with regard to the business plan.

CCH are obliged under the contract to provide information on the scale and payment profile of the VAT shelter. The Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation) is currently pursuing this information with CCH's Finance Director.

3. It is noted that the provision of affordable homes is a key issue and progress on this should be monitored closely. Adactus are requested to produce a plan (by a date to be determined by the Executive Cabinet) on how the targets will be delivered and funded. An updated plan is to be received by the Council every six months.

As part of the Council's action plan to ensure affordable housing provision within the Borough, the Corporate Director (Business) is working in partnership with Adactus to deliver affordable housing including drawing up a delivery programme.

4. The report monitoring progress on all six promises made to tenants should be presented to the Executive Cabinet every six months by the Council's contract management officer in addition to the performance of key partnerships report.

A progress report on delivery of the six promises provided by CCH has historically been attached to the performance of key partnerships report presented to cabinet

every 6 months. The additional information outlined in recommendation 1 should further strengthen this report.

5. That an updated list of contact details for Chorley Community Housing staff be sent to Customer Services at the Council every six months. Other information relevant to Councillors be sent to Democratic Services at the Council, e.g. refurbishment projects being delayed or new initiatives.

Updated contact details re CCH staff has been included in the forward plan of items for 'in the know'. To date, CCH have provided updated contact details re their staff during the inquiry circulated via 'in the know' and a further update is expected shortly which can also be accessed via the link on 'in the know'. Re other relevant information of interest to members, Democratic Services contact all partners including CCH on a regular basis for such information for inclusion in 'in the know'.

6. The reporting and monitoring systems between Chorley Community Housing and Lancashire County Council should be strengthened, in particular requests for work on the highways.

A copy of the final O&S Inquiry report will be forwarded to Lancashire County Council for them to act upon.

6. Contractors undertaking work on behalf of Chorley Community Housing should carry an ID badge at all times in line with the approach taken by Chorley Community Housing staff and have an increased level of supervision.

CCH were informed of this recommendation and the CCH Director of Operations has confirmed that this recommendation has been implemented.

8. To support the Council's Neighbourhood Working arrangements by strengthening the reporting and monitoring systems between the Council and Chorley Community Housing.

This recommendation could have been supported more easily if the streetscene services were still provided through a contract arrangement between Chorley Council and CCH (see recommendation 10). However, CCH are members of the Neighbourhood Teams which operate across the borough and this mechanism will be maintained to ensure streetscene standards are achieved across Chorley.

9. Contractors should provide tenants with information to enable tenants to contact them throughout the course of work being undertaken on their property.

CCH were informed of this recommendation and the CCH Director of Operations has confirmed that this recommendation has been implemented.

10. To collect and monitor tenant satisfaction before, during and after work is undertaken on their property.

CCH were informed of this recommendation and the CCH Director of Operations has confirmed that this recommendation has been implemented.

11. To secure an updated service level agreement with Chorley Community Housing for the provision of streetscene services.

The Council submitted a tender earlier this year to continue to provide grounds maintenance and street scene services for CCH. Unfortunately the tender was unsuccessful and was awarded to Adactus with effect from 1st April 2009. However, we will notify CCH of any feedback, issues etc. we are made aware of re the Streetscene Service for them to act upon

12. It is recognised that strong residents associations supports a cohesive society and the Council and Chorley Community Housing need to work together towards this. Councillors with social housing in their ward are encouraged to participate in and support residents associations and be in contact with the social housing provider.

This view is supported and it is highly likely that councillors with social housing in their ward already contact the social housing provider and participate in and support residents associations. However, a reminder of this positive message will be included in the next edition of 'in the know'

13. The Development Control Committee focus Section 106 agreements on rented houses rather than shared ownership.

S106 agreements need to be flexible to reflect the needs of the community and the current market situation.

8. The Executive would like to thank the Task Group for their report and recommendations which will help guide the Council in their scrutiny of CCH and their delivery of the promises.

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

9. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Corporate Directors' comments are included.

Finance		Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal		No significant implications in this area	X

JANE MEEK
Corporate Director (BUSINESS)

There are no background papers to this report.