

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Partnerships, Planning and Policy	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	22 March 2010

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY INQUIRY - CHORLEY COMMUNITY HOUSING

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To update the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the progress made following the Executive's response to the recommendations made by the O&S Inquiry on Chorley Community Housing in June 2009.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

- To note the progress on the various recommendations
 - Given there has been a restructure at Chorley Community Homes since the Inquiry took place, to consider inviting CCH to a future meeting of the O&S Committee to enable CCH to provide evidence to members that changes to working practices and staffing levels arising from the restructure will not adversely impact on the delivery of the tenant promises.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

- To report the progress of the recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

(If the recommendations are accepted)

- To ensure members have the opportunity to question and seek assurance from CCH that service standards for tenants as set out in the tenants promises will not be reduced

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

7. 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

The CCH inquiry report was considered by Executive Cabinet in June 2009. This report provides an update on progress made against the recommendations.

INQUIRY RECOMMENDATIONS - UPDATE ON PROGRESS

8. The CCH Inquiry generated 13 recommendations. At the time of the inquiry, CCH gave immediate assurance that three of the recommendations relating to the contractors installing the new kitchen and bathrooms had already been implemented. See below:

- 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.
- Contractors should provide tenants with information to enable tenants to contact them throughout the course of work being undertaken on their property
- CCH to collect and monitor tenant satisfaction before, during and after work is undertaken on their property.

9. Of the remaining 10 recommendations the progress is outlined below.

Recommendation	Progress
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.	CCH were reasonably receptive to this request and stated that they would provide performance management information that was readily available and not commercially sensitive. Some more detail on the number of kitchens and bathrooms completed has been provided and the CCH Operations Director at the quarterly meeting with the Council has outlined changes that have been made to improve the operation of the refurbishment programme. However, since the Inquiry, there has been a further, more recent restructure at CCH and members may consider inviting the Operations Director to a future meeting of the O&S committee to discuss the impact on CCH performance and tenant satisfaction.

Recommendation	Progress
<p>The Council did not 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.</p>	<p>CCH are obliged under the contract to provide information on the scale and payment profile of the VAT shelter. The Director of Transformation is currently pursuing this information with CCH's Finance Director.</p>
<p>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 on how the targets will be delivered and funded. An updated plan is to be received by the Council every six months.</p>	<p>Adactus and the Councils Housing Team meet every 4-6 weeks to discuss the programme for affordable housing & in particular, the delivery of the 200 homes as part of the contract. As at 24/2/10, Adactus confirmed that 91 units have either been delivered or will definitely be completed May 2011. There are a number of other schemes which will count to the Councils affordable target but will not be part of the 200 commitment.</p> <p>Adactus have demonstrated their commitment to delivery in Chorley, having been the partner on 6 out of 8 schemes in 2009/10 and delivered the majority of homes in this year. They have also been committed to delivering the Chorley Purchase & Repair scheme within a short timescale.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>Updated contact details following the Inquiry were included in 'in the know' and Democratic Services contact all partners on a regular basis for such Information for inclusion in 'in the know'. Once all appointments have been made to the new structure at CCH this will also be included in 'in the know'.</p>
<p>The reporting and monitoring systems between Chorley Community Housing and Lancashire County Council should be strengthened, in particular requests for work on the highways.</p>	<p>A copy of the final O&S Inquiry report was forwarded to Lancashire County Council for them to act upon.</p>

Recommendation	Progress
To support the Council's Neighbourhood Working arrangements by strengthening the reporting and monitoring systems between the Council and Chorley Community Housing	Chorley Community Housing have engaged in Neighbourhood Working, however there have been some issues regarding communication and responsiveness which the Council are currently discussing with CCH in order to resolve asap.
To secure an updated service level agreement with Chorley Community Housing for the provision of streetscene services.	The Council submitted a tender last year to continue to provide grounds maintenance and street scene services but the contract was awarded to another provider.
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.	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, we can remind members of this message periodically through 'in the know'
The Development Control Committee focus Section 106 agreements on rented houses rather than shared ownership.	The Cabinet maintain the position that S106 agreements need to be flexible to reflect the needs of the community and the current market situation. In recent times the recession has led to a slow down in the housing market and few developers coming forward. However, some developers with our support have been successful in attracting NAHP grant funding to support affordable housing delivery.

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

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

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

DIRECTOR NAME Lesley-Ann Fenton

DIRECTOR DESIGNATION Director of Partnerships, Planning & Policy

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Lesley-Ann Fenton	5323	12 th March 2010	***

Background Papers			
Document	Date	File	Place of Inspection
Response to Overview & Scrutiny Task Group – CCH	25 th June 2009		Chorley
Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Jane Meek	5323	25 th June 2009	