

**Minutes of the  
CAMBRIDGE sUB-REGIONAL HOUSING BOARD (CRHB)  
held on Friday 4 April 2008**

**1. Introduction and Apologies**

**Present**

Liz Bisset (LB)	Cambridge City Council (Chair)
Tim Mills (TM)	Fenland District Council (Vice Chair)
Alan Carter (AC)	Cambridge City Council
Steve Plant (SP)	Huntingdonshire District Council
Stephen Hills (SH)	South Cambs District Council
Carol Herries (CH)	St Edmundsbury Borough Council
Pete Whittall (PW)	Forest Heath District Council
Sue Beecroft (SB)	Cambridgeshire Horizons
David Keeling (DK)	RSL representative
Nigel Howlett (NH)	RSL representative
Colin Wiles (CW)	RSL representative
Trevor Baker (TB)	Cambridgeshire County Council
John Onslow (JO)	Cambridgeshire Horizons
Jean Clark (JC)	LDP Partnership (Item 9)
Helen Reed (HR)	Cambridge City Council (Items 1 and 2)
Kathy Brown (KJB)	Cambridge City Council (taking minutes)

**Apologies**

Jane Hollingworth (JH)	East Cambridgeshire District Council
John O'Mahony (JOM)	Housing Corporation
Solma Ahmed (SA)	Go-East
Frank Mastrandrea (FM)	Huntingdonshire District Council

**Action**

**2. Minutes of Last Meeting/Matters Arising**

Agreed as a correct record.

Matters outstanding/arising

- Intermediate rents – JOM still to circulate information.
- Land disposal – meeting with County arranged for 11 April. Sub-regional attendees are: Tim Mills, David Keeling, Schuyler Newstead. SH volunteered Schuyler to collate sub-regional views and any examples.

**JOM**

**SH/SN**

**3. BME Monitoring Update – Helen Reed**

- CRHB approved the recommendation that monitoring for CBL is amended on the basis set out in the circulated report.
- Therefore, monitoring will start through CBL, which gives a good picture of people coming into the housing system.
- Other than the census groups, migrant workers and faith groups will also be monitored. It was decided not to monitor disability and language as this would be too complex at this stage and is moving away from the original driver of improved BME monitoring to gain funding.
- To await confirmation on the 2011 Census categories before proceeding, to ensure consistency.
- One-off cost to be confirmed and to be absorbed within the CBL budget if possible, if not bring back for agreement on how to distribute the cost.

Deleted: .

- After monitoring has been up and running for 6 months, CBL Chair to bring back a review including usefulness of expanded BME categorisation.

#### 4. New CLG Guidance on Housing Strategies

- Note circulated by SA.
- GO is expecting a sub-regional strategy as well as individual local strategies. Draft should be ready to be circulated to CRHB in June, followed by the final in September.
- Local strategies must tie in with the Community Strategy.

SB

#### 5. Local Housing Companies (feedback from event on 31 March)

- Note circulated by SA.
- For CLG, primarily about accessing local authority land not yet identified in any housing programme.
- Minimum recommended size is 500 units, therefore, it was suggested that in the sub-region, no LA has sufficient land to do it alone and we'd need to work sub-regionally to benefit. Do we want to explore something over and above the HC programme? AC/TM/Mike Knight to consider further.
- It is suggested that it is a 20% more efficient way of delivering homes - matching local authority land value with private sector (developer/RSL/financial institution) a requisite. Fourteen pilots are in various stages of set-up. A requirement that LA input does not count against PSBR.
- What does it mean for us? Revisit this in the future after the meeting with the County on the Land Disposal Policy.

AC/  
TM/SH

#### 6. LAA links, targets set and future monitoring

There are two housing targets that we need to link into.

The LAA and the CYPP projects require collated performance information from all the district authorities in Cambridgeshire on a quarterly basis. JH was able to collect the quarter 3 data from everyone but one partner authority. Unfortunately due to the time this took it was not ready in time for the County Council's deadline, but will be sent on.

JH does not have any admin support and the time taken in chasing up this information has been considerable. LB asked for the Board to consider their resource availability. The County and Horizons both said they could possibly help with this task. To confirm at the next meeting.

SB/TB

#### 7. Protocol – the way forward

- The aim was to sign up to it before the Homes and Community Agency was set up. However, this has been superseded by the timetable for the HCA being brought forward.
- The recommendation is that we sign up to the investment aspects of the protocol, which will inform the HC action plan. Bring final draft back to June CRHB.
- This has been a useful piece of work.

SB

#### 8. Enhanced Housing Options Opportunity – Alan Carter

- This is an opportunity for the sub-region to bid for £320,000 over the next 3 years, starting 08/09. It is recommended that the sub-region submits a bid to express its interest. The deadline is 25 April.
- AC is willing to lead the work required to put in the bid, with the assistance

of a (possibly virtual via e-mail) working group. The Board members were requested to send through names of officers to join a working group for this piece of work.

- This money could be used for staffing resource to develop service infrastructure.
- CRHB supported this.
- Some suggestions for how the money could be spent were: link with Jimmy's Assessment Centre concept; land assembly officer to facilitate down-sizing programme; any match funding available through Investors in Communities; signposting protocol to employment advice agencies etc.

## **9. Consultation on the County Disability Housing Strategy – Jean Clark**

- One in five people in Cambridgeshire are disabled and there are significant barriers for disabled people to housing.
- Multi-agency group has been meeting to share information and has now drafted a strategy, which is out for consultation.
- Adoption: The strategy has been produced as guidance on good practice to which LAs can aspire and sign up to. RSLs may wish to refer to it as opposed to adopt it. LAs would need to take it back to members if they wished to endorse it.
- The Board were willing to engage in this and comments on the strategy and action plan were requested by 25 April.
- JC mentioned "My Safe Home" which provides options of the housing options available. Further information will be available.

## **10. Consultation Register**

- Current: County Disability Housing Strategy – consultation ends 25 April.
- A number of announcements listed in the circulated register were briefly discussed.

### **11.1 Cambridgeshire Horizons**

- Eco-towns – 15 sites have been shortlisted across the country: 8000 units at Hanley Grange (the Hinxtion Hall site) and four other sites are: Coltishall, Norfolk, two sites of up to 25,000 for them both in Marston Vale, Bedfordshire and 5000 in Elsenham, Essex.
- Horizons put forward the strong view to CLG not to have any sites in Cambs as it has the potential to slow down delivery of the existing programme, in terms of resource and infrastructure. Horizons have issued a press release expressing its disappointment that it appears CLG have not listened to their argument.
- Southern Fringe update – negotiation around s106 agreements. First major application is the Trumpington Meadows site where 40% of affordable housing is virtually guaranteed, this has been a great achievement with good partnership working. The next is the Countryside Clay Farm application.

### **11.2 Housing Corporation**

#### Feedback from NAHP 08-11 Seminar

- As a sub-region we have done particularly well, we are strong on delivery, have met all targets and HC are pleased with performance. We should expect to see a significant increase in investment, but the HC want to see an increased VFM (a lower grant cost per unit).
- New priorities are coming forward, need to pick up as part of the programme.

- Homes and Communities Agency timetable has been accelerated.
- We have been allocated a third of our funding for the 2008-11. This is £84 million, which equates to 893 homes.
- The Minister is keen to also support the less than 3000 homes development schemes.
- Differential sub-region allocations and what it means over the next few years. There is likely to be a rush of RME particularly in the sub-regions who have had a high initial allocation. There will be pressure between sub-regions.
- LB to circulate the presentation.

**LB**

### **11.3 Go-East**

- Detailed note circulated.
- National item 4: Review of the HRA Subsidy system – was not aware that there were going to be rent reviews this year. Will this impact on RSLs? The Board requested that SA clarifies whether the review includes RSLs, either at the next meeting or by e-mail.

**SA**

### **11.4 Regional Housing Advisory Group**

- All papers were circulated.
- SHMA presentation. Useful to cross-reference. EEDA was questioning if there was enough economic focus in the SHMAs. This may just be the way it was presented.
- S106 presentation - emphasis on agreements starting from nil grant.
- Private Sector Renewal Mixed Communities Programme - bidding programme will be launched at the end of May – need to ensure this is being picked up.
- Regional work plan is within the circulated papers.

**AC**

### **11.5 Sub-Regional Housing Association Meeting**

No meeting since the Board last met.

### **11.6 Cambridge Sub-Region Strategic Housing Group**

Nothing to report on.

### **11.7 CLIP Sub-Group**

No representative present.

## **12 Any Other Business**

- Allow time on a future agenda for discussion around the Older People's Strategy.

### OMS – Demography

- main concern is ageing, as opposed to migration. Want to do more work on migration between counties.
- Population figures on migration workers, internal presentation for the County. Looking like in-migration is levelling off or decreasing.
- Pool of workers, for agriculture and house building, is drying up. Cannot rely on eastern Europeans for house-building for the future.
- The Board felt it would be useful to have this as a future agenda item. TB to ask Julia Gummy if she could present to the Board.
- SB helping to run a course with EP next week to describe what affordable

**TB**

housing is – surveyors and those involved in development.

### **13 Next meeting**

The next meeting will be held at 10am, on Friday 2 May at East Cambs DC, Ely.

Future dates:

6 June – Hereward Housing

4 July – ECDC

1 August – Hereward Housing

5 September – ECDC

3 October – Hereward Housing

7 November - ECDC

5 December – Hereward Housing