

# Minutes of the Cambridge sub-Regional Housing Board (CRHB) held on Friday 3 April 2009

## 1. Introduction and Apologies

### Present

Liz Bisset (LB)	Cambridge City Council (Chair)
Alan Carter (AC)	Cambridge City Council
Jane Hollingworth (JH)	East Cambridgeshire District Council
Dan Horn (DH)	Fenland District Council
Steve Clark (SC)	Forest Heath District Council
Steve Plant (SP)	Huntingdonshire District Council
Frank Mastrandrea (FM)	Huntingdonshire District Council
Stephen Hills (SH)	South Cambs District Council (Vice Chair)
Niki Hollingworth (NH)	St Edmundsbury Borough Council
Trevor Baker (TB)	Cambridgeshire County Council
Polly Jackson (PJ)	Cambridgeshire County Council
Sue Beecroft (SB)	Cambridgeshire Horizons
John Onslow (JO)	Cambridgeshire Horizons
Nigel Howlett (NH)	RSL representative
Sarah Ireland (SI)	RSL representative
Naisha Polaine (NP)	RHAG
Graham Tomlinson (GT)	EERA
Barbara Wilcox (BW)	Cambridgeshire County Council (Item 3)
Sheryl French (SF)	Cambridgeshire Horizons (Item 3)
Kathy Brown (KJB)	Cambridge City Council (taking minutes)

### Apologies

Jo Webb (JW)	EERA
Colin Wiles (CW)	RSL representative
David Keeling (DK)	RSL representative
Tricia Smith (TS)	Go-East
John O'Mahony (JOM)	Homes & Communities Agency
Carole Herries (CH)	St Edmundsbury Borough Council

### Action

## 2. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

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|---|-----------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ LAA PIs to be circulated. SB still working on the note about methodology for revised targets.</li> </ul>   | <b>SB</b> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Market condition information - TB still working on a breakdown by local authority.</li> </ul>  | <b>TB</b> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CH to bring to a future meeting information on the Council setting up their own mortgage scheme.</li> </ul>  | <b>CH</b> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Information requested from Richard O'Driscoll re extra care schemes. LB to contact him to reinforce the need to consult CRHB on the new extra care strategy (draft was due end March 2009).</li> </ul> | <b>LB</b> |

## 3. LAA theme: Environmental Sustainability – presentations by Barbara Wilcox and Sheryl French (to be circulated following the meeting)

### Introduction to Environmental Sustainability and the Cambridgeshire LAA

- This is primarily about people - protecting the eco system, providing pleasant, safe and healthy surroundings for people, and materials which are sustainable for the future.

### Links between Environmental Sustainability and the Growth Agenda

- A carbon appraisal has been carried out on the long-term delivery plan and a climate change action plan for growth has been developed. There are number of principles including building communities close to places of work; renewable energy; water; waste; green infrastructure.

### Discussion

- Renewable Energy Survey – SF encouraged colleagues to complete. This can be found at [www.cambridgeshirehorizons.co.uk/energysurvey](http://www.cambridgeshirehorizons.co.uk/energysurvey).
- LB - Do people understand how we contribute to the 80% reduction in carbon emissions by 2080.
- NH - Need to take a strategic approach to what is appropriate depending on size of development.
- SC - Houses are being built closer to business, however, retail is moving out of town with a reduction in town centres - we currently design for cars.
- NP - Private sector aren't incentivised by developing eco-friendly units.
- SF - A question in the survey is asking if people are prepared to pay more for sustainable development.
- JO - We need to get the planning policy right. Need to look at design - bike sheds at places of work, teleworking in new-builds for future need.
- SH - What is proposed means us living our lives differently; need to educate people but policy and frameworks need to back up the proposals, to get people buy-in.
- GT – a new regional project team is being set up to explore eco retrofitting of housing stock – CRHB members are encouraged to contact GT if they are interested in participating ([graham.tomlinson@eera.gov.uk](mailto:graham.tomlinson@eera.gov.uk)).
- Work with residents of new developments to encourage recycling, how to make the most efficient use of their home, etc could result in a greater than 80% reduction in carbon emissions. It would be useful to see the case study of Arbury Park and Orchard Park where this has been done.

## **4. Regional Linking – Naisha Polaine, Graham Tomlinson**

- Following consultation, the Regional Spatial Strategy and Regional Economic Strategy are merging to form a Single Regional Strategy. RHAG wants to ensure there is a strong transition voice for housing moving forward.
- NP has been Chair of RHAG for one year. This is the officer group supporting and giving technical advice to the Sustainable Communities Panel of EERA, and has a number of themed sub-groups.
- NP asked if the regional housing structure was working for the sub-region. There was a general consensus that it was.
- A consultation paper is out stating why change is needed at regional level, and includes a set of proposals. It has been sent formally to Chief Executives and Leaders of EERA's member councils. CRHB members are encouraged to discuss their views with their CExs and/or Leaders. The website address for the consultation is: <http://www.eera.gov.uk/Who-we-are/future-of-eera>.
- EERA confirmed after the meeting that sub-regions cannot respond direct to the consultation documents. Individual districts can comment via their CEx and/or Leader as above, and to RHAG via SB.
- Each region is required to have a Leaders Board. This is a challenge for who it should be for the sub-region due to the large mix of unitaries, counties, districts, as each LA cannot have its own representative.
- The Leaders Board and the RDA will develop a single regional strategy.
- HCA want a "single conversation" within each authority, but that doesn't mean there will be an investment plan for every authority. There is a question about the future plans for investment planning .

**All**

## 5. SHMA Review – Polly Jackson

- The report provides an update of what has been happening since the launch of SHMA in June 2008.
- When new chapters are launched, the footer on each page will identify the version number and date published to ensure readers are certain they are using the most up-to-date version.
- Hometrack continues to provide very useful information and has been used to update the affordability chapter.
- A new chapter has been written about first time buyers, following the disappearance of 100% mortgages and other changes to the mortgage market.
- Estate and Lettings Agent Survey has been improved. Face to face interviews were held in 2008 rather than a written survey, which have proven beneficial in finding out more about the market.
- Huntingdonshire's Examination in Public included a session about housing need and the SHMA. This went through smoothly without too much of a challenge, with the Inspector accepting our approach.

## 6. Progress on the “single conversation”, HCA update on progress for pilots. Draft Prospectus for Growth – County or sub-region? Growth or broader housing agenda?

- HCA wish to have a “single conversation” with every authority.
- Horizons are keen to see Cambridgeshire as a pilot for the “single conversation”.
- The HCA will be pragmatic in choosing pilot authorities, to get a good balance of issues across the region; and select those who want to work with the HCA. The decision on pilots will be announced after the budget, in May/June.
- The draft prospectus (which has been to the Horizons Board) aims to develop thinking.
- The HCA does not have a fixed view on boundaries so need to be told by each sub-region what works best for them.
- The Sub-Regional Housing Strategy adds other housing issues to reinforce the Prospectus (which focuses on Growth), which is to be taken through the LAA process and publicised more widely to raise awareness.
- LB, as Chair of CRHB, would like to either co-sign the letter from Alex Plant to the HCA requesting that the sub-region signs up to being a pilot, or add in a phrase that the Sub-Regional Housing Board endorses the approach being taken.
- Need to revisit the housing sub-region and the effect of LAAs on “boundaries” for our work at a future meeting. This would be best after Suffolk's reorganisation is announced on 15 July 2009.

SB/LB

## 7. Local Housing Allowances

- It was agreed to respond individually and to share responses.
- The Rent Service contacted PJ who provided them with all the information she held on rents for the SHMA.
- AC added that the City is intending to lobby CLG.

## 8. Work Plan

- A revised work programme will be sent round following the meeting.
- The next two meetings will focus on (May) the ARK report on s106 wording project and (June) health theme of LAA, and County's extra care and older peoples strategies.

SB/KJB

## 9. Consultation Register

Items to note:

- Gypsy & Travellers Policy Proposed Changes – need to provide an “early warning” of bids for 2009/10 and 2010/11 to HCA by Tuesday 7 April - SB co-ordinating. Fenland, Huntingdonshire and South Cambs commented that they will not have a specific bid ready for 2009/10 but would welcome a “marker” bid for 2010/11. **SB**
- Government delivers £170m transport funding for new housing (CIF).
- New HomeBuy agents announced (Orbit for our sub-region). LAs felt they should have been involved in the evaluation process as the result has a direct impact on partnership working.
- Gypsy & Travellers - Simple Solutions for Living Together – useful paper to look at.
- Government announces £70m fund to support communities with migration. TB completed research on future patterns of international migration and effects on Cambridgeshire, possible links to the needs of migrant workers – TB to report back at the next meeting. **TB**
- Margaret Becket urges councils to take a stand on empty homes – figures on consultation register sheet to show level of empty homes across our region. Will be carrying out further work as part of SHMA to look at void levels across the sub-region - to come back to the Board at a future meeting
- Cambridge: Closing the Gap - a Centre for Cities report which makes an interesting read for the sub-region.

### 10.1 Cambridgeshire Horizons

Board meeting feedback – Prospectus and integrated delivery plan; Asset Backed Vehicles – continue to think about other ways of bringing land forward; Housing Growth Fund and approval of funds (awaiting confirmation) – funding from underspends will be put forward to struggling existing developments eg Orchard Park.

### 10.2 Homes and Communities Agency

NP had left the meeting; no representative present.

### 10.3 Go-East

- Update circulated with the agenda papers.
- Tricia Smith leaves GO-East today and will provide details of the new representative. LB to write to GO-East to emphasis the importance for CRHB to have a representative. **LB**

### 10.4 Regional Housing Advisory Group

SB circulated a summary note via e-mail. Please get back to SB with any comments or areas to bring up at future RHAG meetings. **All**

### 10.5 Sub-Regional Housing Association Meeting

No meeting since the Board last met.

### 10.6 Cambridge Sub-Region Strategic Housing Group (CSHG)

- SHMA discussed.
- Viability of affordable housing – new project – see below (Housing Enablers).
- New development surveys are starting in May. The order will be: Fenland

and Littleport; Suffolk; Cambridge City, to give the Cambridge City sites time to settle down.

## 10.7 Housing Enablers

- HomeBuy agent – meeting Orbit later in the month.
- HCA allocation for the end of the financial year – currently reviewing, many bids have been successful. Huge amount of work has been done by the Enablers and RSL partners which is paying off.
- St Edmundsbury, Forest Heath, Fenland and East Cambs are about to appoint a consultant to work on an economic housing viability assessment for affordable housing on s106 sites, following the Blyth Valley judgement.

## 10.8 CLIP Sub-Group

This is proving a very useful group for exchanging information and thoughts with the Government office. They are reviewing the amount of information they are requesting from Local Authorities and this is becoming less and less.

## 10.9 Growth Partnership Board

Most of the issues discussed here are fed into the Horizons Board which was covered earlier in the meeting.

## 11 Any Other Business

- Enhanced Housing Options – an extra £30k has been received from CLG to address the impact of the recession. CLG will forward a tool-kit within the next couple of weeks to guide how the money is spent. CLG has nominated Cambridge as the lead local authority locally.
- A fund is available to bid for development of choice based lettings systems – AC to lead on a bid for areas of work that were not funded through the Enhanced Housing Options programme.
- BPHA wished to thank everyone for the partnership working over the last year. They retain mortgage rescue and MyChoice portfolios.
- Gypsy and Traveller Group – this group is to be relaunched and SP will be attending.
- Key Worker Employers Consortium – unsure if still continuing.
- TB and Liz Robin have drafted a Job Description for a JSNA co-ordinator, which is 3 day a week post.
- TB reported that the EU Fundamental Rights Agency in Vienna, are researching Traveller and Roma accommodation across the EU. Pavee Point, a Traveller organisation in Ireland is doing the work on Ireland and Britain and using our survey as a case study.

## 12 Future meetings

The next meeting will be held at 10am, on Friday 1 May 2009 at Sanctuary Hereward, Ely.

### 2009 Meeting Dates:

First Friday of the month, starting at 10am – to finish with lunch by 1.00pm.

5 June – Sanctuary Hereward

2 October – East Cambs DC

3 July – Sanctuary Hereward

6 November – Sanctuary Hereward

7 August – East Cambs

4 December – East Cambs

4 September – Sanctuary Hereward