

# Minutes of the Cambridge sub-Regional Housing Board (CRHB) held on Friday 5 March 2010

## 1. Introduction and Apologies

### Present

Alan Carter (AC)	Cambridge City Council (Chair)
Stephen Hills (SH)	South Cambridgeshire District Council (Vice Chair)
Jane Hollingworth (JH)	East Cambridgeshire District Council
Karen Wickham (KW)	Fenland District Council
Steve Clark (SC)	Forest Heath District Council
Steve Plant (SP)	Huntingdonshire District Council
Carole Herries (CH)	St Edmundsbury Borough Council
Tom Purser (TP)	Go-East
Clare Milton (CM)	Go-East
Nigel Howlett (NH)	Cambridge Housing Society, RSL representative
David Keeling (DK)	BPHA, RSL representative
Kirsten Bennett (KB)	ACRE
Kathy Brown (KJB)	Cambridge City Council (taking minutes)

### Apologies

Paul Kitson (PK)	Homes & Communities Agency
Dan Horn (DH)	Fenland District Council
Sue Beecroft (SB)	Cambridgeshire Horizons
Frank Mastrandrea (FM)	Huntingdonshire District Council
Trevor Baker (TB)	Cambridgeshire County Council

## Action

## 2. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

- Travellers' Strategic Co-Ordination Group – instead of a wiring diagram SP circulated a revised Terms of Reference to the Board.
- SB to update the Board on how the Horizons website is progressing for collecting examples of good practice in respect of environmental sustainability.

**SB**

## 3. Cambridgeshire Together Rural Strategy and Action Plan

*Kirsten Bennett presented the Strategy.*

- The strategy is in its consultation phase (1 Feb – 23 April).
  - The aim of this Strategy is to refocus rural priorities, to give strategic direction, to create sustainable rural communities and plan for growth.
- KB took away comments made by the Board which included:
- Housing cuts across all areas of the draft strategy.
  - The Strategy has concentrated on build but there is a wider role, eg engagement with residents.
  - Exception sites are going well but there is still more to do in some areas.
  - “Local homes for local people” – it was suggested that the title should be changed to allow for greater flexibility, recognising the inter-dependency between the market towns; Cambridge City and the rural areas.
  - Need to ensure we have the targets right – break down.
  - Liaise with the Planning Officers, particularly when looking at unsustainable communities where new development is difficult; consider Community Land Trusts.
  - Care and support – a strategic approach to sheltered housing is needed which will cover a wide area and also create a community hub.

- Need for HCA to recognise that it is more costly to deliver rural homes and to achieve higher standards of energy efficiency.
- CRHB are keen to ensure they link into this work and the Rural Strategy should be considered when refreshing the Sub-regional Housing Strategy.
- It was suggested that Gypsy and Travellers be considered as part of this Strategy.

A Rural Housing Group is in place with RSL, LA and Enabler representatives. LAs would respond individually to the consultation. The best way for this is via the survey on the ACRE website.

Other notes from the discussion:

- Sub-regional Housing Strategy states a delivery of 150 rural housing units. All LAs are delivering reasonably well on new builds but we should also look at using empty homes, old farm buildings for example.
- Assessing need for the future – partially captured in SHMA, but not in depth for villages, however, Home-Link and the Housing Needs Assessment are good for this. Need at a local level can be identified but finding the land is often the difficulty. Parishes are on-board with this.
- HCA's Single Conversation with Forest Heath is definitely recommending CLTs.
- The Rural Strategy links to the LAA Safer and Stronger Board.

#### 4. Rural Housing

Discussed in previous item.

#### 5. Managing Growth – housing targets, CAA action plan

*Draft Cambs Horizons Board meeting agenda circulated.*

- CAA assessment process continues. It has been agreed with the Audit Commission that it will be updated where necessary. SB has circulated this via e-mail to CRHB.
- Housing Completions – the housing market has picked up with good starts on site.
- Newly refreshed and approved targets: NI 154 (all homes) – 3110 and NI 155 (completion of affordable homes) – 1146. 38% over a total of 3 years represents good delivery performance. What has been achieved is a stretching target, but it is hoped that the new target is also achievable.
- The LAA has set out some non-key indicators and CRHB agreed the group would monitor performance against the housing ones. AC to speak to SB about how we do this. In the future, it was suggested that CRHB should also look at wider performance issues across the sub-region.
- Clay Farm Appeal – the proposal by the developer to build 30% affordable housing at the start followed by 40% at a later stage was overruled by the minister who wanted 40% across the board. This is a tremendous result and decision. It is important to send out the right message to developers for other developments. It is clear that residual land viability assessment was the correct one to use, the affordable SPD endorsed that and the LA followed that route. Having a Cambridge Challenge partner at the table helped de-risk the development for the developer. The detail of the decision is available from AC.

**AC/SB**

#### 6. Gypsies and Travellers – accommodation assessment and County-wide Strategy

- A paper went to the Chief Planning Officers group on 4 March where a review of the Needs Assessment was approved.
- SB had suggested using up to £20k from the unspent SHMA budget for

this work, but with added contributions from LAs outside of the sub-region (Peterborough, Suffolk (StEds, Forest Heath) and Norwich (Kings Lynn, West Norfolk) who will benefit from the work.

- However it was noted that St Eds and Forest Heath have already contributed to the SHMA budget, and this means they are being asked to contribute twice. It was agreed they should not pay any extra.
- TB needs to ensure the survey is also specific to Suffolk.
- It was noted that health colleagues are planning to undertake a Gypsy and Travellers JSNA and TB to check that our Needs Assessment complements that work and that there is no duplication.
- Travellers Strategy – the proposal is to bring together all the evidence. SP to explore where the funding will come from.

**TB**

## **7. Work Plan**

This is being worked on for consideration at CRHB in May.

**SB**

## **8. Consultation / Publications**

No paper to discuss at this meeting.

### **9.1 Cambridgeshire Horizons**

- TIF is being replaced by the Urban Challenge Fund. Money is likely to be spread thinly and is nothing like the TIF package would have secured.
- A number of Quality of Life papers (green, water, carbon, climate) going to the Board.
- On 1 April, JO is moving to the County on a year's secondment as Acting Executive Director for the Environment, and will be succeeding Brian Smith. John Williamson (current Team Leader at Go-East) will be his replacement. CRHB thanked JO for his time and contribution to the work of the Board and his valuable links to the Chief Planning Officers Group and Horizons.

### **9.2 Homes and Communities Agency**

No representative was present.

### **9.3 Go-East**

- Private rented sector - new powers for LAs and tenants.
- HCA Gypsy and Traveller Site bidding round is open.
- LAA evidence base – TP is grateful for the work that went into this - looking at 5 year land supplies and robustness.
- New arrangements for housing at a regional level – TP to circulate a paper.
- Child Poverty Bill expects to receive Royal Assent before the Election. There is a duty for LAs to cooperate in the Needs Assessment of Child Poverty, gathering existing evidence across health, housing, etc. The duty is for each County to have a Child Poverty Strategy in place by April 2011. Consultation on guidance will be coming out.
- TP asked that if any LAs are looking at their housing allocation policies to let him know. This will be picked up at the Home-Link Board meeting.
- Norwich Unitary Council review progressing - a result is expected by the end of April.
- Suffolk Review – Sec of State, John Denham, has asked that Suffolk councils, local MPs, stakeholders and through a 'county constitutional convention' reach a consensus on the review.
- In Suffolk, a member steering group being set up to look at shared services.

**TP**

- DFGs – letters are due out.
- HCA's desktop exercise of delivery vehicles has been deferred to after the Election.
- EEDA are undertaking a similar review of LDFs that they fund.
- Boundary issues – SCDC and the City are talking about minor boundary changes around the City. This joint work could culminate in a paper going to the boundary commission in the next 18 months or so.

#### 9.4 Single Conversation (Alan Carter)

##### *Papers circulated*

- The draft Local Investment Plan was considered by GPB on 3 March.
- The paper considers the proposed process for development of the LIP (which follows a similar process to the approval of the Integrated Development Plan).
- It is a framework document that points readers to other reading documentation. It will help guide investment into Cambridgeshire beyond March 2011.
- GPB have agreed to take responsibility to ensure that the Single Conversation and LIP is linked into the planners.
- It was agreed that AC would feedback to CRHB and CRHB would comment on any drafts which would be fed back by AC.
- A possible future agenda item is to look at how other housing investment streams fit into the Single Conversation.
- Feed any comments on the draft LIP back to SB with a copy to AC.

**All**

#### 10 Any Other Business

- Mike Knight is retiring and was thanked for his contribution whilst at SCDC and in Cambridgeshire as a whole.
- The Housing Enablers had arranged a seminar on 1 March, where Ark Consultants and Adams Integra presented on the viability of sites to incite interest from planners and lawyers.
- The Strategic Housing Group will provide a Spotlight Review to CRHB in July.
- Extra Care Strategies – money is expected from Government this week.
- Renewable Energy - SP has two other contacts who are willing to work with LAs. Contact SP if interested.
- Cambridge City Council – consultation on the restructure ends 8 March. Five departments will reduce to three – with a focus on people, places and support. It is planned that new directors will be in post by July.
- Shared services – ASB teams from the City and SCDC have been in discussion about how better to share experiences and knowledge.

#### 11 Future meetings

The next meeting will start at 10am, on Friday 9 April 2010 (second Friday of the month) to be held at East Cambs DC.

##### 2010 Meeting Dates:

Normally held on the first Friday of the month, starting at 10am, to finish with lunch by 1.00pm.

7 May – Sanctuary Hereward

3 September - ECDC

4 June – ECDC

1 October – Sanctuary Hereward

2 July – Boathouse, Wisbech

5 November - ECDC

6 August – Sanctuary Hereward

3 December – Sanctuary Hereward