

Minutes of the Cambridge sub-Regional Housing Board (CRHB) held on Friday 7 November 2008

1. Introduction and Apologies

Present

Stephen Hills (SH)	South Cambs District Council (Vice Chair)
Alan Carter (AC)	Cambridge City Council
Jane Hollingworth (JH)	East Cambridgeshire District Council (taking minutes)
Dan Horn (DH)	Fenland District Council
Steve Plant (SP)	Huntingdonshire District Council
Niki Hollingworth (NH)	St Edmundsbury Borough Council
Nigel Howlett (NH)	RSL representative
Trevor Baker (TB)	Cambridgeshire County Council
Sue Beecroft (SB)	Cambridgeshire Horizons (taking minutes)
David Keeling (DK)	RSL Representative
John O'Mahony (JOM)	Housing Corporation
Colin Wiles (CW)	RSL representative
Tricia Smith (TS)	Go-East

Apologies

John Onslow (JO)	Cambridgeshire Horizons
Jo Webb (JW)	EERA
Steve Clark (SC)	Forest Heath District Council
Schuyler Newstead (SN)	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Jo Emmerton (JE)	Huntingdonshire District Council
Liz Bisset (LB)	Cambridge City Council (Chair)
Kathy Brown (KJB)	Cambridge City Council
Frank Mastrandrea (FM)	Huntingdonshire District Council
Carol Herries (CH)	St Edmundsbury Borough Council

2. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

- Minutes were agreed as a true record.
- LB to report to the December meeting on her meeting with Mike Davey.
- JH to contact Oxford to find out if the LHA situation is similar there.
- A half-day event to be organised to discuss potential for shared services.
- Sub-Regional Housing Strategy Districts to let SB know when the strategy has been through the political processes in each district. Hunts and South Cambs' politicians have endorsed the strategy.
- SH updated the meeting about PCT support for new extra-care schemes. There is in-principle commitment to the four urgent schemes and agreement to do strategic work for the medium and long term. Funding for the four urgent schemes will include assessments of progress on the closure of residential care schemes and assessments of numbers already receiving domiciliary care packages in their homes. A meeting is scheduled for 18 November at which we hope for some commitments and a clear communication protocol.
- Enhanced Housing Options – further delayed, awaiting communication from CLG mid-November.

Action

LB
JH
SP

All

AC

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3. Gypsy and Travellers Focus

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1. Site allocation criteria

Work has been done on site allocation criteria by Lambert Smith Hampton, mostly through the travellers' liaison officers. The brief was to produce a set of criteria and then to look at locations of potential sites in the County. This has been hampered since the resignation of the County's gypsy and traveller services co-ordinator. While this work was being carried out, CLG published new guidance about gypsy and traveller sites, and a third site scoring system has been circulated which was produced by Colchester BC. The RSS single issue review of gypsies and travellers went to examination in October, looking at the number and size of sites, and this subject is part of the Local Development Framework in each district, each of which has to consult its own population. Therefore this meeting cannot agree on a single approach.

CRHB wishes to express its disappointment on the outcome of the work of the consultants, which has not met the brief and suggests sites which do not meet the strategic objectives of any of the district councils nor of the County Council, and request that the consultants revise the work and produce something that is fit for purpose. CRHB also expressed concerns about the commitment of the County Council to effective joint working and requests the Travellers Steering Group to initiate a constructive dialogue on gypsy and travellers accommodation requirements with the County Council

SP to raise with Traveller Liaison Group and County Council and SB to raise with consultants

SB/SP

2. Revision and updating of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment

Agreed to wait for the RSS report and then decide whether to re-survey or revisit the assumptions and/or update the data in the existing survey. The only group on which there was insufficient work done in the 2005 survey was travelling show people. Agreed that the suitable budgets for this work would come from Housing Planning and Delivery Grant and possibly from some of the underspend on the SHMA and that work will be taken forward by the Gypsy and Travellers Steering Group.

SP will bring back a list of suitable representatives for the Steering Group to the next meeting of CRHB.

SP/DH

4. **The New Homes and Community Agencies Business Plan – presentation by John O'Mahony**

JO gave a presentation about the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), outlining the tasks and benefits of the new agency and the timetable for establishment. The HCA wants to establish a "single conversation" as the way of establishing ongoing relationships with local authorities, which comprehensively covers the whole range of issues in an area. The HCA is looking for a pilot sub-region to develop the "single conversation" approach for the future and to establish on what level(s) the "conversation" should take place. Cambridge sub-region expressed an interest in piloting the approach.

5. EEDA and Integrated Development Programmes

SB to present to the next meeting.

SB

6. CBL Update

There will be a sub-regional management board meeting this afternoon. SH will offer a summary report after this meeting. Fenland are due to go live in February. The six-month review of the scheme has started, the manager is in post, the development and refining of policies and procedures is ongoing. There have been some innovations – South Cambs have piloted moves in the London Coast and Country Scheme and the mutual exchange module went on-line 3 weeks ago. The Choice Based Lettings Scheme has generally been a very positive experience for all parties

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7. Older People's Strategy

- This had been due to go to the Board of Cambridgeshire Together in November but has been deferred. The new draft does not take into account the comments sent by CRHB. CRHB do not consider this document to be fit for purpose, citing, among other things, the lack of strategy, lack of direction, lack of links with other strategic initiatives including the JSNA and the BVFSR for sheltered housing. This meeting does not approve the strategy or the action plan. SP will try to arrange a workshop for us to make the document more robust before it goes to Cambridgeshire Together Board.
- All to note that the document should not be approved through the LAA process in its current form.

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SP

All

8. Gershon Drive for Efficiency in Housing (including CBL)

SP circulated a list of efficiency savings claimable as Gershon savings for information. Although Gershon is no longer applicable, these meet the new NI 179 *“Value for money – total net value of on-going cash-releasing value for money gains that have impacted since the start of the 2008-9 financial year”*. Other districts should look through to see if there is anything they haven't claimed which would apply, eg savings on doing the SHMA sub-regionally.

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9. Work Plan

This was revised.

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10. Consultation Register

Circulated

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11.1 Cambridgeshire Horizons

Housing Growth

11.2 Housing Corporation

Completions targets for current year are likely to be met but starts on site are down and the forecast for next year not so good. HCA will be looking at removing disincentives to housing supply to achieve completions targets.

11.3 Go-East

Event about mortgage rescue scheme planned for 14 November. The meeting expressed its thanks for the attendance of the new Go-East representative.

11.4 Regional Housing Advisory Group

No meeting since the board last met.

11.5 Sub-Regional Housing Association Meeting

- NH reported that the group is close to agreeing terms of reference for the sub groups for housing management and supporting people. The NH will bring a report to a future CRHB.
- RHAG has written to Alex Plant to express their reservations about a plan for a sub-regional tariff on new build.
- RHAG noted problems with lenders not lending on properties with staircasing limit - this is becoming a problem.

NH

11.6 Cambridge Sub-Region Strategic Housing Group

Nothing to report.

11.7 CLIP Sub-Group

JH missed the meeting due to broken railway line but will bring a summary report to next CRHB. The CLIP is proposing considerable/reductions in reporting requirements to CLG which is generally welcomed.

12 Any Other Business

No AOB.

13 Future meetings

The next meeting will be held at 10am, on Friday 5 December at Sanctuary Hereward, Ely.

Proposed 2009 Meeting Dates:

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

9 January (2 nd Friday) – venues tbc	3 July
6 February	7 August
6 March	4 September
3 April	2 October
1 May	6 November
5 June	4 December