

EAST OLDHAM LOCAL BOARD

Thursday 5 June 2008 at 6.30pm
St Thomas Primary School, Coleridge Road, Sholver,
Oldham OL1 4RL

Members Present:

Val Smith; Shadab Qumer; Stephen Fairbrother; Kevin McCarthy; Stephen Hopper; Mohammed Masud; Linda Dawson

FCHO Officers Present:

Joanne Bentley; Jan Wade; Ged Riley; Huw Watkin; Andrew Heugh; Lynn Phillips (Minute Taker)

Invited Guests:

Kathryn Simpson

Members of the Public Present

Cath Roberts, 25 Wells Rd (Sholver TMO)
Angela Cosgrove (Tenant Inspector)
Sue Ingham, 10 Gaskell Rise (Sholver TMO)
Terence Booth, Egerton St (Tenant Inspector)

Members Absent:

There were no members absent

Meeting Convened At:

Kevin McCarthy took the Chair and convened the meeting at 6.35 pm

Item 1 Apologies:

Joanne Goodall is taking annual leave.

Item 2 Declaration of Interests:

There were no declarations of interest.

Item 3 Items of Urgent Business:

John Anchor has retired from his position as Councillor. He is considering membership of the East Oldham Local Board as an Independent Member, although at the moment he has many other commitments that demand his time.

The Chair and Joanne Bentley requested thanks be sent to Jackie Stanton for her service to the Board.

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| Item No / Title | 4. Approval of Minutes and Recommendations from last meeting held on 24 April 2008 and Matters Arising |
| Purpose | To agree the minutes as a correct record and discuss matters arising. |
| Recommendations | The Board is recommended to approve the contents of the minutes and recommendations from the meeting held on 24 April 2008. |
| Relevant Debate | Item 4: Lay-by at Higginshaw Village. The lay-by is felt to be in the right place by officers, although tenants disagree. |

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| | <p>There is no money available to alter the lay-by, so the lay-by will remain as it is.</p> <p>Item 5: New fencing at Derker. Val Smith asked has this been resolved. Jan Wade replied that the issue has been resolved. The street lighting at Gower Street has also been completed.</p> |
| Resolution | The minutes were approved by the Chair and seconded by Val Smith, as a true and accurate record |

Item 5 – Public Questions

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| Name (Where known) | Sue Ingham, 10 Gaskell Rise (Sholver TMO) |
| Question | <p>Can the light at Swift Road be repaired? Joanne Bentley explained the column can not be repaired. She has contacted the PFI street lighting team regarding the other lights.</p> <p>Sue Walker has commissioned a report regarding street lighting on the Sholver area. She has requested £45k for the work and. Sue will compile a thorough report, and this will be forwarded to Andrew Heugh. Andrew warned there is not a lot of money available in the capital programme, although the request is on-going. Andrew is enquiring if the lighting replacement/repair could be phased. Val Smith replied the whole estate is poorly lit. Val asked about solar power lights. Andrew is of the opinion they do not work well enough. Andrew added solar can be explored. A clearer picture is needed to phase the work, as the capital programme is over stretched. A detailed survey is needed. Steven Fairbrother asked if an engineers report can identify if the lighting can be identified as an emergency.</p> |
| Response | Members noted that Andrew Heugh will progress the issue of poor street lighting on the Sholver estate. |

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| Name (Where known) | Terence Booth, Tenant of Egerton St |
| Question | <p>Terence asked why there are four Main Board members on the Options Appraisal Panel. Val Smith explained initially there were not four Main Board members, but as other panel members dropped out, the Main Board Members were invited. There has been difficulty getting Local Board Members to join the panel due to the time commitment. There is concern about there being four members, but Terence Booth declined to elaborate why. Terence Booth and Joanne Bentley discussed the composition of the panel.</p> <p>Kathryn Simpson added that should a future panel be sought, then all tenants would be invited to be members.</p> |
| Response | Members noted the discussion. |

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| Item No / Title | 6. Options Appraisal Update – Presented by Kathryn Simpson |
| Purpose | To update Local Board members of progress on the Housing Stock Options Appraisal process following the presentation made at the last Board meeting. |
| Recommendations | To note the content of the presentation. |
| Relevant Debate | <p>Terence Booth asked what response has been received from tenants. Kathryn Simpson replied that there has not been too much negative feed-back, although there have been many other questionnaires issued recently. Terence asked why is money being spent on the appraisal if FCHO has no money? Kathryn Simpson replied it is a government led process, implemented by the Council.</p> <p>Val Smith added that the response from Sholver has been poor because tenants feel that their future is already decided.</p> <p>Kevin McCarthy informed the meeting of the feedback he has received about the surveyors, and how issues have been resolved. i.e. the inspectors have been asked by tenants if they will get a new bathroom, and then rumours start. Salford had a response of 13%, Trafford 5%. Oldham has had a response of over 20%, so this is an indication of tenant interest.</p> <p>Kathryn Simpson asked those present to report back if they hear of any surveyors saying inappropriate things to tenants.</p> <p>Mohammed Masud asked for literature to be supplied for those tenants who find English difficult. Kathryn Simpson explained the Council's corporate policy and that staff can translate. It is not policy to produce whole documents in another language. Mohammed Masud replied that vulnerable tenants can be mis-led. Katherine Simpson suggested the team may speak to the wardens again to ensure the message is on track.</p> |
| Resolution | Members noted the content of the presentation. |

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| Item No / Title | 7. Performance Contract – Quarterly Update including Repairs |
| Purpose | To update members on the quarterly performance figures. |
| Recommendations | The Board is recommended to note the contents of the report. |
| Relevant Debate | <p>Responsive repairs: Stephen Hopper asked how long a broken door would take to repair, from reporting the repair to completion, because he has been waiting for three months. Ged Riley explained the process and offered to take Stephen's details to chase the repair up. Ged Riley added the backlog has now gone, and the service will be taken forward, looking at the longer term. Stephen Hopper asked how much the new IT server is costing. Ged Riley replied the server will cost £68k. Joanne Bentley added that the existing server is now inadequate.</p> |

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| | <p>Val Smith stated that the decision to buy Northgate was the Council's decision, and the Council has paid for the system to be developed. This could then be sold on to other authorities.</p> <p>Kevin McCarthy praised Ged Riley and his team for the excellent result in clearing the backlog.</p> <p>Voids: As Linda Dawson is a new Councillor, Ged Riley explained what a void is and the targets to be met. Terence Booth added that the void turnaround time should be short as most of the capital work has been completed.</p> <p>Joanne Bentley explained that performance in many areas is good and targets have been achieved. The Sholver team is performing extremely well.</p> <p>Rents: Mohammed Masud challenged rent collection. Joanne Bentley explained there are some difficult arrears cases in Higginshaw Village which affect East Oldham's performance. Mohammed and Joanne discussed the number of people on Housing Benefit and prevention advice is vital to prevent eviction. East Oldham have a dedicated arrears team that focus on early intervention. Kevin McCarthy challenged the figure and Joanne Bentley explained the reasons behind this i.e. the introduction of the Agresso system and the 53-week year. Work is ongoing to improve the total rent arrears figure for the area.</p> <p>Steven Fairbrother enquired about the waiting list: The 11,500 on the list is the total number of applicants. Joanne Bentley explained the system is now choice-based, so applicants presently in private rented accommodation can apply for a FCHO home.</p> <p>Val Smith enquired about Apollo and gaining entry to a tenant's home. Val Smith said that when Apollo arranges a visit, they do not specify a.m. or p.m., so tenants have to stay in all day. Joanne Bentley will feed this comment back.</p> |
| Resolution | Members noted the content of the report. |

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| Item No / Title | 8. Annual Plan |
| Purpose | To discuss the Local Board Annual plans for 2008-2009. |
| Recommendations | Board members are requested to discuss and suggest items for the Local Board Annual plans 2008-2009. |
| Relevant Debate | Val Smith stated that police officers are very rarely seen at Sholver. Policing is very poor. Joanne Bentley explained this is a Local Board issue but may be best addressed through the Community Council or through the Housing Team. ASB could be addressed through an increase of policing. |
| Resolution | Members noted the suggested items and await the presentation of the draft Local Board Plan. |

| Item No / Title | 9. Installation of lifts at Wallshaw Street |
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| Purpose | To inform members of the progress of the installation of the lifts. |
| Recommendations | Board members are asked to note the content of the presentation and the update. |
| Relevant Debate | <p>Tenders have been received from Britannic and Ansa, and presentations given. The differences between the two proposals were explained. Stephen Hopper asked which is the better lift between Ansa and Britannic. Andrew Heugh explained the technical differences between the two systems: hydraulic and traction, and how the weight of electric scooters would affect the performance of one system. There is not a great deal in price. There is a great deal of work to do after the system is selected i.e. fire-proofing between floors, minimising disruption, bin shoots, scooter parking, accommodation works etc. Huw Watkin explained the accountability of the selection process. Time scales of the installation were explained, although this along with the contract is yet to be decided. Writing to tenants was discussed. Consultation with tenants must take place i.e. to explain work in progress.</p> <p>The progress made so far is good news for the tenants. Andrew Heugh explained the specification, proposal and process to Mohammed Masud. The landings are not level: there are steps going up and down that add to the complexities of the project.</p> <p>Terence Booth asked if Andrew Heugh or Huw Watkin could explain the present situation to tenants. Steven Hopper asked about breakdowns: Andrew Heugh explained the protocols, service contracts and best value.</p> |
| Resolution | Andrew Heugh and Hugh Watkin agreed to meet the residents of Walshaw Street in order to provide a progress update. |

| Item No / Title | 10. Feedback from Waterhead Formal Estate Inspection |
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| Purpose | To inform members of the results of the inspection. |
| Recommendations | Member are asked to note the content of the presentation and comment accordingly |
| Relevant Debate | Jan Wade distributed the post-inspection newsletter. |
| Resolution | Members noted the content of the presentation and newsletter. |

| Item No / Title | 11(a) Items for future meetings |
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| Purpose | Board Members are invited to suggest possible items for future meetings. |
| Recommendations | The Board is recommended to note and discuss the contents of the forward planning timetable and suggest possible items for future meetings. |
| Relevant Debate | <p>Joanne Bentley suggested the following items:</p> <p>The next couple of meetings will see an up-date on the progress of the Sholver team and the Kite Mark.</p> |

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| | <p>An up-date on Higginshaw Village from Rob Broadbent.</p> <p>Alt and Sholver regeneration work and the Options Appraisal.</p> <p>Estate budget of £27k.</p> <p>Respect agenda up-date and report.</p> <p>Val Smith suggested that where money is available from elsewhere other than Oldham i.e. the Lottery, it should be applied for. Each estate can bid for additional money. Could the Local Board assist estates in applying for extra money? Joanne Bentley agreed Val's point is valid and something FCHO is very conscious of. Val Smith requested that FCHO's expertise could assist TRA's to apply for money. Kevin McCarthy agreed this is worth chasing up.</p> |
| Resolution | Members AGREED with the suggested future items. |

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| Item No / Title | 12. Any Other Business |
| Purpose | Members are invited to discuss items of further business. |
| Recommendations | |
| Relevant Debate | Painting Programme: there are no key areas within East Oldham that urgently require painting; more urgent areas are in West Oldham and will require the money being spent there. |
| Resolution | |

Item 13 - Next Meeting Date:

Thursday 17 July 2008 at 6.30pm
 Venue: East Oldham Methodist Church

Meeting Closed At:

Kevin McCarthy closed the meeting at 8.10 pm

Apologies to: Corporate Support Team
Telephone: 0161 770 3536 / 3571 / 3576
Email: fcho.corporate.support@oldham.gov.uk

Signed: _____

Minutes Agreed on: _____