

EAST OLDHAM LOCAL BOARD

Thursday 1 November 2007 at 6.00pm
Groundwork Environment Centre, Shaw Road, Higginshaw,
Oldham OL1 4AW

Members Present:

Jackie Stanton; Val Smith; John Anchor; Stephen Fairbrother; Kevin McCarthy; Stephen Hopper; Shadab Qumer;

FCHO Officers Present:

Joanne Bentley (Area Service Manager); Nick Cumberland (Regen); Ady Brierley (Repairs Manager); Huw Watkin (Area Building Surveyor); Rachel Mills (Head of Customer Service); Dave Thomas (Repairs Manager); Lynn Phillips (Minute Taker)

Invited Guests:

Glenn Swindell, Keyring

Meeting Convened At:

Joanne Bentley welcomed members to the meeting and thanked Abdul Khayal and Jackie Stanton for their roles as Chair and Vice Chair during the past 12 months. Jackie Stanton requested she take the Chair for the meeting and for the election of Chair and Vice be discussed at the end of the meeting.

Jackie Stanton took the Chair and convened the meeting at 6.30 pm

Item 2 - Apologies:

Apologies received from Jan Wade, Tenant Participation Officer.

Members Absent:

Mohammed Shahid

Item 3 - Declaration of Interests:

Val Smith and Jackie Stanton declared interests regarding Item 8: the Alt and Sholver Partnership update.

Item 4 - Items of Urgent Business:

There were no items of urgent business.

Item No / Title	Item 5 Approval of Minutes and Recommendations from last meeting held on 13 September 2007 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 13 September 2007.
Matters Arising	Joanne Bentley advised that the repairs to the drainpipe at Higginshaw Village had been completed and would chase the outstanding repair of smelling sewage. Members had requested the cost of the Higginshaw Beatsweep. Joanne provided the cost £15k.

	<p>Item 8: should read Higginshaw Road and not Higginshaw Lane.</p> <p>Item 5 of public question time: Joanne Bentley agreed to investigate further.</p>
Resolution	N/A

Item 6 – Public Questions:

Name (Where known)	Terence Booth, tenant of Egerton Street
Question	Terence Booth requested an update regarding the lifts at Walshaw Street and Gower Street. Jackie Stanton mentioned that this had been raised at Main Board and agreed for the installation of the lifts to be carried out from this year's Capital Programme. No start date has been agreed.
Response	N/A

Item No / Title	Item 7 Keyring
Purpose	Verbal update from Glenn Swindell – Key Ring
Recommendations	N/A
Relevant Debate	John Anchor said initial concerns of Littlemoor residents have not been realised. Kevin McCarthy asked how Key Ring is financed: by government funding, and Supporting People. Ady Brierley asked how volunteers are recruited. They are recruited through the press and local publicity. All are CRB checked every two years.
Resolution	Stephen Fairbrother and Jackie Stanton thanked Glenn for an interesting presentation.

Item No / Title	Item 8 Alt and Sholver Partnership: Update Report
Purpose	To provide members with an update on the Partnership's work to deliver the Sholver Neighbourhood Plan.
Recommendations	Members are asked to note the contents of the report.
Relevant Debate	<p>Stephen Fairbrother commented that feedback from the consultation process will take place by the end of January 2008, and requested a follow up report to the Board at January's meeting.</p> <p>Val Smith asked if a geological survey had been done. Nick Cumberland replied it is being undertaken.</p> <p>John Anchor asked what the boundary of the consultation patch was: he has received representations at his home. Nick Cumberland will make the plan with the red line available to Members. Nick stated packs are being distributed to everyone living within the red line. The packs will also be available on the web site. John Anchor commented that he has received enquiries from people who do not have received the packs but are directly affected. Area E is the first phase and residents adjacent to this area should receive packs. John Anchor suggested packs should be available in public areas i.e. doctors surgeries.</p>

	<p>John Anchor added some people living on the periphery might not have been consulted at the early stages. Nick Cumberland added residents in the centre of the plan are having packs delivered first. John Anchor questioned why the packs could not be delivered in one day. Resourcing was discussed. John Anchor asked that the Board Members also receive a copy of the pack.</p> <p>Joanne Bentley asked whether they had been inundated with calls following the distribution of the packs. Nick Cumberland replied that a reasonable number of people have called but it hadn't been a "hot line". Val Smith had received complaints from people who have not received packs.</p>
Resolution	Members noted the contents of the report

Item No / Title	Item 9 Retained Sheltered Strategy
Purpose	This report makes recommendations about the future use of FCHO retained sheltered housing and seeks comment from Board Members regarding these proposals.
Recommendations	<p>The report recommends the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposals for the establishment of retirement schemes as contained in section three • Proposals to establish an alarm only service as contained in section four for the remaining stock • Proposals to establish a floating support service, eventually to be available across all tenures to be offered to current tenants of properties redesignated as alarm only, • Proposals for less popular sheltered housing stock as contained in section five • Comments are sought regarding these proposals from board members

Relevant Debate	<p>John Anchor commented the present situation and categorisation is clear. He was surprised to see Walshaw Street and Gower Street designated as 'scattered'. Rachel Mills replied demand for this scheme is not high and took on board the fact the schemes are close together but the demand is not there.</p> <p>Terence Booth asked how monitoring took place for Walshaw and Gower Street. Rachel Mills explained that these schemes were located on a steep slope and there has been low demand for properties that became available for re-letting.</p> <p>Decommissioned tower block stock: Terence Booth asked what a 'sensitive letting' is. Rachel Mills explained the 'buffer zone' and phasing. Alarm only and floating support will be offered and re-housing for those who need full support.</p> <p>Rachel Mills agreed to establish when the lifts at Gower/Walshaw will be started and provide the information at the next meeting. Shadab Qumer added he is sure demand will increase once the lifts are installed.</p>
Resolution	Members accepted the report with the above comments.

Item No / Title	Item 10 Performance Contract (Including Repairs) – Quarterly Update
Purpose	To update members on the Quarterly performance figures.
Recommendations	The Board is recommended to note the contents this report.
Relevant Debate	<p>Val Smith wanted to know why sub contractors are not told what the schedule is and should be penalised. Dave Thomas replied sub contractors notify FCHO if they have completed work at the point of completion, rather than when they submit an invoice.</p> <p>Dave Thomas also explained the IT interface problems. Val Smith said that she couldn't understand why people don't talk to people instead of relying on IT systems.</p> <p>John Anchor enquired about voids. The average has improved significantly but is still not good enough considering the 10,000 plus people on the waiting list. Ady Brierley replied that there has been a number of properties requiring capital works which have effected re-let time coupled with some long term sickness of operatives. John Anchor asked what the Main Board is doing about the sickness issue. Jackie Stanton replied this issue is being addressed across FCHO. Stephen Fairbrother asked if there is capacity to replace the sick people with temporary staff. Ady Brierley explained that this is the last resort due to the costs involved. Ady added that operatives were being asked to work their day off during the nine-day fortnight to help to reduce the backlog.</p> <p>Members expressed their concerns over sickness levels, and requested this be taken to the Main Board. Ady replied that previously his department's sickness record has been good.</p>

	<p>Joanne Bentley apologised for the absence of minutes for the sub group.</p> <p>Rent Arrears: Stephen Fairbrother asked about the tenants owing over £1000. Joanne Bentley explained that there was a reduction in people owing over £1k and that the team try hard to resolve arrears before they escalate, although FCHO are willing to evict in severe cases. Jackie Stanton added that the Council are pushing FCHO to improve rent collection. FCHO are very keen to improve this area of performance i.e. training for staff to improve confidence. Val Smith said she felt the Council are being unfair due to the access to services review and the closure of cash desks. Jackie Stanton disagreed with this, and explained that the closure of cash offices was a joint decision between OMBC and FCHO and added that there are more ways for people to pay.</p> <p>Joanne Bentley added that over 100 pay points have been opened. The increase in heat charges has been addressed with the installation of heat meters and as at last week, arrears were just short of the same figure at the same time last year.</p>
Resolution	Members accepted and noted the contents of the report.

Item No / Title	Item 11 Annual Plans / Performance Information
Purpose	Performance Information by Joanne Bentley.
Recommendations	For information only.
Relevant Debate	Kevin McCarthy and Stephen Fairbrother are pleased with the format of the performance contract and happy for it to remain as it is. John Anchor asked who puts the Annual Plans together. Joanne Bentley explained that the Annual Plans were developed following consultation with customers and Board Members and that it was useful for the Board to see how they were fulfilling their responsibilities to challenge performance and receive reports on progress. The plan has been distributed to new tenants and is available in housing offices. Pages 3 & 4 seem Borough wide and not local. This may not be an interesting read for local residents.
Resolution	Members noted the information.

Item No / Title	Item 12(a) Feedback from Main Board
Purpose	To inform Local Board Members of the feedback from the Main Board Meeting held on 5 September 2007.
Recommendations	To note the contents of the report.
Relevant Debate	No relevant debate took place.
Resolution	Members noted the contents of the report.

Item No / Title	Item 12(b) Environmental Improvement Programme 2007/8
Purpose	To update members on the Environmental Improvement Programme for 2007-08 and request an urgent decision for inclusion of an additional environmental scheme on Derker Estate, Oldham.
Recommendations	Local Board Members are requested to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To acknowledge the progress of the Environmental Improvement schemes within this financial year 2007-08 • To consider and approve the inclusion of Higginshaw Road Lay By (Scheme 8) for inclusion this year. • To consider and approve the inclusion of an additional environmental scheme on Derker Estate, Oldham (New proposal).
Relevant Debate	Huw Watkin informed members of the progress of the Environmental Improvement Programme and asked the Board to approve the Higginshaw Lay-by Scheme. He also discussed that they had identified an under-spend from the Capital Programme which would source the fencing the fronts of the properties on Derker which wasn't able to be carried out from last year's programme. Huw also advised that there would still be £18,000 available to be carried over to the next financial year if it not spent on a new scheme this year.
Resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members acknowledged progress of schemes • Members approved the inclusion of Higginshaw Lay-by in this years schemes • Members approved the additional scheme on Derker Estate

Item No / Title	Item 13 Any Other Business
Purpose	Members are invited to discuss items of further business.
Recommendations	N/A
Relevant Debate	Oldham East Quarterly Networking Event is scheduled for Monday 12 th November at 6.30pm – 8.00pm at Groundwork. Potato pie supper will be provided. Shadab Qumer added that there is a finance meeting that evening and wouldn't be able to attend and John Anchor has a meeting regarding post office closures and sent his apologies also. Monday 19 th November at the Avant Hotel and Thursday 22 nd November at Link Centre: this is an opportunity to talk about the future of FCHO.
Resolution	N/A

Item 14 - Next Meeting Date:

Thursday 13 December 2007 at 6.30pm

Venue: St Thomas' Primary School, Coleridge Road, Sholver OI1 4RL

Jackie Stanton gave her apologies in advance.

Closed Session

Item No / Title	Item 1 Election of Chair and Vice Chair
Purpose	Members are invited to discuss items of further business.
Relevant Debate	<p>Jackie Stanton informed the meeting that Abdul Khayal has resigned his position as Chair of the Local Board, due to his commitments as Chair of the St Mary's Community Council and would also not continue as an Independent Member of the Local Board. There is now a vacancy for an Independent Member to the Board.</p> <p>Joanne Bentley then asked for nominations for the Chair.</p> <p>Val Smith nominated Kevin McCarthy as Chair, seconded by Jackie Stanton. There were no other nominations.</p> <p>Shadab Qumer nominated Jackie Stanton for Vice Chair, seconded by Stephen Fairbrother, there were no other nominations.</p>
Resolution	Members agreed: Kevin McCarthy to be the Chair and Jackie Stanton to be Vice Chair.

Item No / Title	Item 15 Forward Planning
Purpose	Board Members are invited to suggest possible items or 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>Stephen Fairbrother asked if Karen Hughes, Housing Team Leader for the Rents Team could attend in January to provide feedback on the performance of the rents team.</p> <p>Feedback Alt & Sholver Partnership was requested.</p> <p>Stephen Fairbrother also suggested ASB to be an agenda item for future meetings.</p> <p>Val Smith asked for Policing to be considered as a future agenda item.</p>
Resolution	N/A

Meeting Closed At:

Kevin McCarthy closed the meeting at 8.20pm

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

Signed: _____

Minutes Agreed on: _____