

# **FIRST CHOICE HOMES OLDHAM**

## **ROYTON & SHAW LOCAL BOARD**

**Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> August 2005, Laburnum Avenue. Shaw,  
6:30pm**

### **Present:**

Cllr Angela Farrell (OMBC Council Representative)  
Cllr Rod Blyth (OMBC Council Representative)  
Les Herring (Independent Representative)  
Maureen Peters (Independent Representative)  
Margaret Kelly (Tenant Representative) - Chair  
Mark Doyle (Tenant Representative)  
Alwyn Stott (Tenant Representative)  
Barbara Stringer (Tenant Representative)

### **In Attendance:**

Mike Beaman (ASM for Royton & Shaw, FCHO)  
Nimisha Mistry - MINUTES (Tenant Participation / Board Support Assistant, FCHO).

#### **1. WELCOME, INTRODUCTION AND APOLOGIES.**

The Chair, Margaret Kelly welcomed everyone and opened the meeting.  
Apologies had been received from Terry Brophy and Nick Summerscales.

#### **2. ANY ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS INTRODUCED BY THE CHAIR.**

There were no items of urgent business.

#### **3. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ANY CONTRACT OR MATTERS TO BE DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING.**

There were no declarations of interests.

#### **4. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2005.**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2005 were agreed as a correct and accurate record by Les Herring and Mark Doyle.

#### **5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

**Item 13: Access to Services** – Mike Beaman informed the board that the Royton & Shaw Housing Offices Wednesday closure commenced 3<sup>rd</sup> August. Mike reiterated that the Housing Office would still answer phone calls on a Wednesday even though the Office is closed. Margaret Kelly asked Mike how the first office closure went, Mike said that it had gone well and Housing Officers had been out on the estates. The housing office had received quite a few phone calls and Mike reported that at least two staff will be needed in the office to attend to these call in the future.

The board asked how many officers will be going out onto the estates. Mike replied by saying that he will try to develop a systematic approach where housing officers and customer service advisors will do mini estate walkabouts more regularly to make the process more organised. Mike said that Wednesday will still be used for training up to 10.00 am, with the option to make them run a little longer as the office will not be open to

the public. The Board felt that staff being around on the estates will be much better for the tenants as they would get to know who their relevant Housing Officer was which should make the service better. Mike said that he would check how the next 3-4 weeks go with the new arrangements and feed back to the board at the next meeting. The board **AGREED** to this.

## **6. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public present at the meeting.

## **7. REPORT FROM FORMAL ESTATE WALKABOUT**

Mike Beaman fed back for Nick Summerscales, Tenant Participation Officer, on the Formal Estate Walkabout that took place on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2005 on Gravel Hole estate, Royton. Mike reported that the walkabout was well attended and included 2 x PCSOs based at Royton police station. Apologised were conveyed to Alwyn Stott who was given too short notice of the change of details.

Mike said that a lot of the problems highlighted from the walkabout were not due to FCHO which was a positive factor. However, a lot of these issues could be helped by FCHO services too. The Board asked if the name of the estate for the walkabouts could be put on the front of future newsletters to make it clearer. Mike also said that the work on the estate will be used as a springboard to try and get some tenant involvement structures in the area. The Board **AGREED** that this would be a good idea.

The board **AGREED** for the content of the report to be noted.

## **8. LOCAL BOARD FUNCTIONS & POWERS**

Mike Beaman led on this item from Sue Walker, Board Support Officer on the local board functions and powers report which provided information to board members of the main powers and responsibilities of the local board. The report required the board to note and agree the content of the report, to discuss how best to ensure the powers and responsibilities are used and supported. Mike drew attention to Appendix 1 of the report which detailed the main revised powers as have been put together with the board and Enlighten.

The board discussed this report as great length; the main points are listed below:

The boards had reservations about agreeing the content of the report with regards to the implications it would have on the board. The board felt that many of the powers would be too hard for the board to agree as there were other factors that need to be considered.. The board were also concerned with the amount of work that is required if the report was agreed. On the surface the powers seem straight forward but if these are looked at further there is a lot of work to be done but no allocated resources, structures, budgets, time, time scales or tools to carry out the powers, responsibilities and functions effectively. The boards felt this was an impossible task.

Mike said that the task may not be as daunting as it appears. Some of the responsibilities are already being monitored by the board and can link in with the performance contracts, for example, monitoring decent homes work or performance monitoring. The board expressed concerns they had little control over the performance of contractors undertaking Decent Homes Work, yet would be responsible for the contracts.

The board considered the prospects of partner contractors attending a future meeting, so the board are in a better position to make decisions that affect their local board area. Angela

Farrell said rather than the contractors attending the meeting, it would be a better idea to ask Colin Greenwood, Director of Repair & Renewals, to attend the meetings, and this would be a better way to monitor the contractors.

The board said that this would be taking on a lot of responsibility and the details are much too big to be agreed now. The board need further clarification on when all the work needs to be done, what time scales, how main board would feed into these powers and to what extent the local board can make effective decisions. Also there are no policies and procedures to accompany this report so it is clear how the board are to be expected to do what the report details.

The board **AGREED** not to decide on this report and that a member of main board or the author of the report or someone more appropriate to come to the board and explain how the local board are meant to exercise and implement these powers and explain the implication and implementations of the report. The board can not be expected to carry out the contents of the report if they are not shown how. It was **AGREED** that this report to be brought to a future board meeting.

## 9. UPDATE FROM MAIN BOARD

Margaret Kelly as the main board tenant representative, fed back to the board from the main board from 19<sup>th</sup> July 2005. Margaret went through the de-brief notes which were included with the papers. Margaret went through information on the central re-housing team, PFI and the BME strategy action plan, and training for board members. On this issue the board felt that training requires a lot of time from the board members which is not always possible as board members work and have other commitments. The board said that they had said a long time ago that they were happy for the local board members to meet 30 minutes earlier and conduct a training session prior to the local board meeting.

The board **AGREED** that for future training sessions, trainers or training sessions to be done at the start of local board meeting in an informal way rather than board members go into the centre of Oldham which is not always easy for people to attend. The board said that this had been communicated to internal trainers, staff, skills audit, enlighten and external trainers too.

Mike Beaman reminded the board that training could be undertaken by himself, or other members of the Royton and Shaw team. This would be easy to arrange and go a long way to meeting training objectives.

Board members also said that as they have already filled in two skills audits, this information should be made available for the main board rather than board members filling another skills audit.

Margaret Kelly also fed back on what was said at the main board relating to inspection. The board asked what FCHO were expecting from the inspection. Margaret reported that Rachel Mills had given her presentation on this at the last meeting and it would be good if FCHO got higher than 2 stars with uncertain prospects. The board reflected that voids and re-lets do let the company down in terms of performance.

## 10. ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS FOR THE BOARD

Mike Beaman said that it would be a good idea for the board to consider what they would like to discuss at future board meetings. The local board had already covered a lot at this meeting. What the board **AGREED** is that at the next meeting the theme would be anti-social behaviour. It was also agreed that the police, Community Safety Unit, local officer

and other appropriate people to the meeting to discuss anti social behaviour at a local level. This session will also be used as a training session on anti-social behaviour.

Another issue that needs to be discussed at a future meeting would be the ALMO's future after 2007. Margaret Kelly said that it would be useful if members gave consideration to this matter and feed it back to the main board. It was **AGREED** that this will be discussed after the next local board meeting.

## **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **Inspection**

Mike said that if any board members are asked to be seen by the inspectors to be positive but truthful about FCHO. Mike said that it would be good if board members can focus on the achievements the board have made in the last 18 months and how far along the board have come in terms of progress.

Also Angela Farrell, Maureen Peters and Mark Doyle still need their local board name badges and name plates. It was also asked that the next local board letter to remind board members to bring the badges and plates for the next local board meeting.

### **One to one**

Mike also informed the board that one to one's will need to be done with the board in the next few weeks. It was **AGREED** that Mike will write to the board members with possible dates and board members to confirm which days and times they are available.

### **Venue**

Mike informed the board that he was looking into different venue for the Shaw meetings as Laburnum Avenue is too small. Mike is looking into Matthias Pilling House (off Milnrow Rd) as an alternative venue and report back to the board at the next board meeting. If the venue is changed for the Shaw meetings, maps will be sent out with the board papers.

## **11. DATE & TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Royton and Shaw local board would be held on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2005, 6.30pm at Whittaker St Tenants Hall, Chester Place, Royton.