

FIRST CHOICE HOMES OLDHAM

ROYTON & SHAW LOCAL BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 15th September 2005, Chester Place,
Whittaker Street, Royton, 6:30pm

Present:

Cllr Angela Farrell (OMBC Council Representative)
Cllr Rod Blyth (OMBC Council Representative)
Cllr Steven Bashforth (OMBC Council Representative)
Cllr Bernard Judge (OMBC Council Representative)
Maureen Peters (Independent Representative)
Terry Brophy (Independent Representative)
Lynn Pertoldi (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).
Ahmed Imran (Housing Team Leader for Royton & Shaw)
Catherine Yates (OMBC)
Sgt Russ Magnall (Greater Manchester Police)
PC David Bull (Greater Manchester Police)

1. WELCOME, INTRODUCTION AND APOLOGIES.

The Chair, Margaret Kelly welcomed everyone and opened the meeting. People present went round the table and introduced themselves.

Apologies had been received from Les Herring (Independent Representative) and Sue Walker (Board Support Officer)

2. RATIFICATION OF NEW INDEPENDENT BOARD MEMBER

The Board discussed Lynn Pertoldi as an Independent Representative for the Royton & Shaw Local Board. Mike Beaman introduced her and outlined her interests. The Chair asked for a vote in order for Lynn to be ratified as the new Independent representative. All members of the board **AGREED** that Lynn will be the new board member.

3. ANY ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS INTRODUCED BY THE CHAIR.

There were no items of urgent business.

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

There were no declarations of interests.

5. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19TH MAY 2005.

The minutes of the meeting held on 4th August 2005 were agreed as a correct and accurate record by Cllr Steven Bashforth and seconded by Maureen Peters.

6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising from the last minutes.

7. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public present at the meeting.

8. THEME: ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Mike went through the Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour Procedure Guidelines which were included in the papers. Mike explained that just by the logos on the papers and through the procedures it is evident that FCHO, OMBC and Oldham Community Safety Unit work in partnership on Anti Social Behaviour. Mike described what is classed as ASB, roles and responsibilities and timescales for actions.

Margaret Kelly asked if it was possible to fast track the reporting of anti-social behaviour cases and if the process has been improved at all? Mike said that progress can be perceived as slow, but there are certain procedures that have to be followed such as compiling evidence and giving the perpetrator the opportunity to resolve the problem. There is also a reluctance from some tenants to complete diary sheets. In order to make the process quicker, tenants and staff need to be proactive with procedures and those affected by ASB need to have confidence in the process. Cllr Bashforth commented that a reason why diary sheets are not being completed could be due to the fact that it seems that no action is being taken. Mike replied that without sufficient evidence any case would fail in court.. Also tenants should be kept informed that help is available to fill in these diary entries. PC Bull said that maybe tenants need to be better informed about when and what will happen with realistic timescales. Also tenants are not informed that their names will not be given in court which can be a big barrier.

Cllr Blyth asked when dealing with an ASB case, whether the first point of contact was a letter or personal contact? Catherine explained if the case is a violent one the case will probably be dealt with on the same day in court. But in other cases the court will want to know that all reasonable steps have been taken to sort out the situation and the tenants have been given adequate chances to change their behaviour. Cllr Blyth asked if the first steps would be by letter or personal visit as many people disregard letters and would respond better to the personal touch. Catherine commented that the risk element for staff needs to be taken into consideration here too. Ahmed Imran commented that tenants are asked to come into the housing offices to discuss matters..

Lynn Pertoldi asked whether the tenants are given simple easy to follow realistic steps that they can refer to when looking at what is to be expected when they make a complaint against someone. Ahmed informed the board that an information leaflet is issued to the complainants. Terry Brophy asked if tenants are given a list of timescales in which they can expect action to be taken? The board said that the information needs to be clear that the process is not quick and could be protracted depending on the circumstances of the case.

Margaret Kelly commented problems with successful cases may also be caused by the fact that people cannot contact the police on the advertised number. Margaret said that getting through to the police on the 872 5050 number was difficult, she found it easier to go round to the police station.

Maureen Peters asked how many warnings tenants get before action is taken? Catherine said that the courts normally require a minimum of 3 x warnings letters.

Cllr Blyth said that the allocation of properties should be looked at too as different aged people have different perceptions on what qualifies as a lot of noise for example. One way to deal with future cases would be to be more pro-active and think about such issues at the point of allocation of properties. Mike commented that this is a very interesting issue and whether the board would like to discuss this as a theme for a future board meeting, the board **AGREED**.

A question was asked why the demoted tenancies route has not been taken? Mike said that these have been tried. Catherine commented that although this route seems a lot easier, it actually still has to go to the courts so similar evidence will need to be collected and the procedures taken are similar to that of going for possession. The board commented that in this case the wording in the procedure should reflect this as it is misleading.

A question was asked about Anti Social Behaviour Contracts. Catherine explained that with such contracts, the behaviour of youths is discussed with parents so they are aware of what their children are doing. PC Bull went on to say that ABCs have been very effective and in dealing with larger groups of youths. Around 80% of the youths improve their behaviour. Speaking to the parents also serves as a deterrent.

Some questions were also asked about the noise monitoring equipment as a means of involving Environmental Services. Mike said that victims of noise nuisance would still be required to complete diary sheets. The perpetrator has to be informed beforehand that the noise monitoring equipment will be installed within a 3 months period. The threat of this alone often resolves the nuisance..

Sgt Russ Magnall also said that in relation to ASB caused by quad bikes that the action being taken is that if ASB is seen to be done, the bikers receive one warning which is well documented and then the bikes can be taken off them. He said that action taken by Nick Summerscales from FCHO Tenant Participation Unit has helped address tenants' concerns about contacting the police. An additional telephone number has been established. Barbara Stringer said that she had some problems with quad bikers but the police dealt with it very swiftly and was really impressed.

9. LOCAL BOARD FUNCTIONS & POWERS

This item was forwarded from the last meeting to be re-discussed. Mike asked the board whether they would like a special away day, networking with another board or some consultation to discuss further the local board powers and functions. Cllr Rod Blyth said the regardless of which method is used, FCHO officers would have enough expertise to help the board discuss this. Information such as sample reports on the types of decisions the board are being asked to make and illustrations of monitoring devises. Mike said her would put together a matrix to make the process clearer and in put information on what the board are currently doing at present.

The Board **AGREED** that the session will be held on a Saturday in four weeks time from 10am till 12pm with brunch to be made available at the meeting. Mike **AGREED** to look for a venue and inform the board members via letter.

10. ACCESS TO SERVICES

Mike Beaman gave a verbal update on Access to Services. Mike informed the board that he will present the board with a brief report on the impact on the changes. For now Mike informed the board that the office closures had been faced with some complaints from customers about closing on Wednesdays, he explained that this may have been due to the

publicity failing to give adequate notice. The majority of tenants were aware of the changes, however, council tax payers who normally visit the office monthly were caught out.

Mike also informed the board that one customer had suggested that since the offices are now closed on Wednesday, whether they office can remain open throughout lunch on Thursday as it is such a busy day? The board expressed that this would be a good idea to consider, Mike said that the only problem would be staffing as they are already stretched, but would consider as part of a future review of the service.

The board also commented the new leaflets need to be put into the housing offices. Mike said that new office signs will be going up too as the current ones are too small and can not be seen when the office is closed. Both the board and staff present **AGREED** that already the customers and estate were reaping the benefits of the office closures.

11. VENUES FOR FUTURE BOARD MEETINGS

Mike informed the board that he and the chair had looked at the proposed new Shaw venue of Matthias Pilling House in Shaw, and the venue is ideal for the local board. Nimisha pointed out that Laburnum Avenue has already been advertised as the venue for the next planned local board. The Board **AGREED** that the next meeting should be held at Laburnum Avenue, but future meetings in Shaw should be held at Matthias Pilling House.

Alternative venues for Royton were discussed also. Cllr Steven Bashforth informed the Board that if there were any problems with Whittaker St Tenants Hall in the future, the building on the bowling green beside Royton Park could be used at no cost. Cllr Bashforth to find out more about this venue, for example, whether it is accessible, and who holds the keys.

12. DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

The board addressed the dates report from the Board Support section. Nimisha informed the board of the proposed dates until April 2006. The Board **AGREED** the dates proposed in the report as:

- Thursday 26th January 2006 at 6.30 pm – Matthias Pilling House, Shaw
- Thursday 9th March 2006 at 6.30 pm – Chester Place, Royton
- Thursday 20th April 2006 at 6.30 pm – Matthias Pilling House, Shaw

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mike Beaman and Margaret Kelly suggested issues from tenant and resident associations are a regular feature in future meetings. The board agreed this was a good idea.

Margaret Kelly also updated the board on Grounds Maintenance and that no matter has been resolved on this service yet and the SLA is being readdressed.

Margaret Kelly expressed deep concerns about co-operation from and poor communication with certain officers within Renewal Division. She gave examples concerning the Environmental Improvements work at Hartington Court, where frustration with officers has almost caused the break up of Hartington Court Tenants and Residents Association. As a board member, she was aware of similar problems in other areas. The board initially wanted the officer concerned or his line manager to account for their actions at the next board meeting, but finally **resolved** to send a letter outlining their concerns to the Director of Repairs and Renewal Division.

14. DATE & TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

Thursday 27th October 2005, 6.30pm at Laburnum Avenue, Shaw.