

FIRST CHOICE HOMES OLDHAM

ROYTON & SHAW LOCAL BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 23rd June 2005, Chester Place, Royton, 6:30pm

Present: Les Herring (Independent Representative), Cllr Rod Blyth (OMBC Council Representative), Cllr Bernard Judge (OMBC Council Representative), Cllr Steven Bashforth (OMBC Council Representative), Margaret Kelly (Tenant Representative), Mark Doyle (Tenant Representative), Alwyn Stott (Tenant Representative).

In Attendance:

Mike Beaman (Area Service Manager for Royton & Shaw, FCHO)
Steve Yorke (Director of Management & Operations, FCHO)
Hilary Devereux (Enlighten Consultant)
Rachel Mills (Quality Assurance and Performance Manager, FCHO)
Nick Summerscales (Tenant Participation Officer for Royton & Shaw, FCHO)
Nimisha Mistry - MINUTES (Tenant Participation / Board Support Assistant, FCHO).

Public: Eric Crowther – Tenant and Oozewood Quarterly Forum Member.

1. WELCOME, INTRODUCTION AND APOLOGIES.

Steven Bashforth chaired the meeting and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies had been received from Cllr Angela Farrell, Maureen Peters and Barbara Stringer. A few moments silence was taken for Tony Farrell who sadly passed away recently. An idea to commemorate Tony Farrell in the local area was discussed. Mike Beaman proposed that the Environmental Scheme to provide fencing to the front of the bungalows on Smallbrook Road could be dedicated to Tony due to it being located close to his home.

AGREED: That Smallbrook Road bungalows would be an ideal scheme, and this will be discussed at the next meeting.

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

The items below, which were not on the agenda, were dealt with at the request of the chair:

2.1 PETITION

The petition referring to car parking spaces in Royton was circulated at this point for the board to note.

2.2 NOMINATION FOR NEW ROYTON & SHAW LOCAL BOARD CHAIR

The chair invited those member;s present to submit nominations for the Chair's role. Whilst it was suggested that this should be deferred to the next meeting to give those not present an opportunity to vote, on a show of hands called by the Chair, it was agreed that this matter be dealt with at this meeting

Accordingly, Margaret Kelly was nominated and was seconded by Les Herring, Alwyn Stott and Mark Doyle.

AGREED: Margaret Kelly to be the new chair of the Royton & Shaw Local Board. This to be held effective from the next meeting.

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

There were no declaration of interests.

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

The minutes of the meeting held on 19th May 2005 were agreed as a correct and accurate record.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

A tenant present from Oozewood Estate enquired about the football pitch near to the estate. The tenant stated that resurfacing the pitch and having swings would improve the area. Mike Beaman informed the tenant that there was the possibility of some work being done in the area which was discussed at the last meeting but the possibility of external funding was also being explored.

The board agreed that the resurfacing of the pitch was an expensive job and the best way to try and secure external funds would be for a constituted group to apply for funding. Nick Summerscales explained that there is a quarterly forum in the Oozewood area but all attempts to develop it into a constituted tenants association has been faced with a lack of interest from the area and poor turn out at meetings. Les Herring asked if part funding could be raised if FCHO was willing to put up some money too? Cllr Bernard Judge advises that, with support from the area, it might be possible to apply for funding. However, there would be more chance of success with support from a properly constitutes tenants association.

6. LOCAL BOARD FUNCTIONS & POWERS

Hilary Devereux from Enlighten gave feedback from the review of FCHO Governance, recently completed with the FCHO Boards. Hilary reported that the boards felt that there was a lack of clarity in regards to the local board's role and their relationship with the main board. She informed the Board, that as a result of the consultation, there had been revision of board powers and functions and the board constitution which should help the Boards develop and be clearer about their duties and make their powers and functions more real and effective especially in relation to their respective local areas.

Hilary also emphasised the importance of monitoring local objectives and becoming a more challenging tool in the area. Hilary further reported that Local Boards did seem to have taken this on board already especially in relation to local areas performance and environmental issues.

Margaret Kelly said that, having attended the sessions held by Enlighten, she felt that what they had fed back was exactly what Board Members had said and was very pleased that such issues had been taken on board and addressed appropriately. The board agreed that they now felt more empowered knowing what their powers and duties were and knowing what difference they could make, especially as a tenant board member. Les Herring said that he felt that the work Enlighten had carried out had made governance more straight forward and easier to understand.

The Board thanked Hilary for attending the meeting.

7. PREPARATION FOR AUDIT COMMISSION INSPECTION

Rachel Mills, Quality & Assurance Manager, had attended the meeting of behalf of Andy Collins, the Policy & Performance Officer. Firstly, Rachel went through Royton & Shaw's new performance contacts as discussed from the last two local board meetings. She stated

that the new look local performance contract incorporates the local priorities from Royton & Shaw and would enable the Board to monitor the areas performance more effectively. The Board **AGREED** that the performance contact was an accurate record of what the Board had previously agreed.

Rachel then went onto discuss FCHO preparation on the lead up the inspection. She informed the Board of the documents requested by the inspectors, the self assessment that all FCHO services had undertaken and the pre-inspection procedures that were to come before the inspectors arrive on site at FCHO. Rachel explained that once the inspectors were on site, they may want to set up focus groups and interviews with staff, board members and customers to understand more about the service FCHO offer. It was empathised that this is a key role for FCHO board members as the inspectors will want to look at the governance arrangements and it will be the responsibility of board members to portray the governance message to them.

Margaret Kelly said that she felt that FCHO had come along way since the last inspection and had done really well. Les Herring went on to ask what rating FCHO expect to get, Rachel said with all the work staff, board members and customers have put in, she hopes it will be two stars with excellent or promising chances for improvement. Les Herring added that what ever the outcome, it will be based on the facts and therefore FCHO should remain positive.

8. FCHO PROGRESS

Steve Yorke, Director of Management & Operations had attended the local board meeting to feedback on FCHO progress and gave an overview on where FCHO had been in the past, what has been done in the past year and the way forward. The presentation had been delivered to all staff as well as all boards to ensure people were kept aware of the companies' progress. Steve went through the main achievements of FCHO from service performance, tenant and staff satisfaction levels and the company's financial situation. All feedback illustrates that the FCHO service is improving and becoming more and more positive. Steve went onto to discuss the importance of Governance and what the future holds for FCHO.

The Board asked questions around the loss of FCHO stock and whether this was due to Right to Buy. Steve explained that people are keen to go down this route as there is the idea that the council have a surplus amount of properties and that regardless of Right to Buy, Councils will always provide housing. This is not the case and the only way to sort this problem is to replace the loss of stock. Steven Bashforth said that as Right to Buy is an issues in itself, it would be best to put this as a future agenda item for the Board to consider. This was **AGREED**.

The Board discussed the improved service, however the some board members also reported bad feedback from the Apollo heating contractors leaving homes messy and not doing an effective job. Steve asked if these incidents had been reported, Mark Doyle reported back that they had Mike Beaman said he would look into this matter and feedback. Alwyn Stott reported that there had been issues in the area about rewiring too, as, the workers were not putting the wires back in the walls but securing them around skirting boards etc that was not appropriate for a house. Mike Beaman **AGREED** to investigate and requested that Alwyn provide further details as to with properties had been affected. Alwyn to find out the details of which properties this has happened in and feedback to Mike Beaman. The Board commented that despite these isolated incidents, services had generally been received positively.

9. SERVICE IMPROVEMENT BUDGET

Further to the last meeting at which the Board had been asked to consider their priorities in spending £45,000 from the Service Improvement Budget, Mike reported that, unfortunately, he had been unable to supply the costing for the improvement of communal areas.

However, after discussions, the Board **AGREED** that they do not see any reason why the decorating improvements that were agreed at the last meeting could not start. This was **APPROVED** by the Board.

10. DRAFT CUSTOMER CARE REPORT

Mike Beaman led on this item from Natalie Lewis, the customer care manager. The report highlighted the customer care charter and service standards for both staff and customers. Mike asked if the Board approve the content of this report and if there were any questions. Margaret Kelly asked if Housing Staff always wear a name badge, Mike informed the Board that they do. The Board expressed that this was a very good report and it makes for a very good service standard. The Board **AGREED & APPROVED** the content of this report.

11. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS UPDATE

Mike Beaman circulated information on environmental improvements, Margaret Kelly asked that in future, this information be sent out with the papers rather than being presented on the night. Mike agreed to take this on board.

Mike informed the board that most schemes were coming on really well except for the scheme for Highlands Rd. The issue was that there was a need for parking improvements but the rights and cost of creating the bays was proving problematic. Mike presented two options: 1. to create 6 parking bays, 2. extra parking bays by increasing the carriage way. Mike said that he had strong reservations about following option 2 if no other parties were willing to contribute too. Residents would also need to be consulted about the scheme too. Mike informed the Board that once completed, this part of the scheme would be maintenance free. The Board **AGREED** to option 1.

Cllr Rod Blyth said there were a lot of parking concerns in the Royton & Shaw area and one way forward would be to make resident only parking bays. Steven Bashforth said that this issue can be looked at again on a later date. Margaret informed the Board that she had received a letter asking about whether or not if tenants were happy with the environmental plans which had been agreed. Margaret informed the group that this had not been agreed and needed correcting. Mike Beaman to action.

The Board **AGREED** that the schemes that have costs already allocated, these improvements can begin to start. The Board **AGREED** that improvements could begin on those schemes that had costs already allocated.

12. UPDATE FROM THE FORMAL ESTATE WALKABOUT

Nick Summersclaes provided feedback from the Formal Estate Walkabout from Queen St on the 27th April 2005. There was no Board attendance at this walkabout and Nick explained that this was due to Tony and Angela Farrell had double booked on this day unknowingly. Nick explained the main points from the newsletter regarding unadopted land near Longley St which is in need of a clean-up and explained that the best way to follow up on the findings is to organise a public meeting and use it as a stepping stone to developing a tenants group in order for change to be made in the area. There was also a lot of litter near Sumner St which has been acted upon too. There were some issues with the council's bulky items service available through telephone number 0161 911 4444 given in newsletter. It was said that this is not an effective service as it takes too long for the team to react to

collections. Nick explained of the importance of making sure that the findings from the estate walkabout be carried through properly, Mike Beaman said he will ensure the findings are actioned.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The items below were not on the agenda but were discussed as other business.

Skills audit feedback – Nick Summerscales gave out the Skills Audit forms from the remainder of the local board members who were yet to return them.

Rod Blyth explained that he was still not receiving mail for the local board and gave Nimisha Mistry his address again. To ensure papers were being received Nimisha Mistry **AGREED** to send papers by email or through internal mail and to follow mailed out papers with a phone call.

Fraudulent mortgage letters – Mark Doyle brought to the boards attention a letter from fraudulent mortgage company offering money to residents. Mike Beaman said that this is a very important issue which should be publicised in “Choice News”. The Board **AGREED** to this.

Access to services – Mike Beaman informed the Board that the role out for Royton & Shaw to be connected to the call centre will be 4th July 2005. The Board had previously agreed that the offices should be allowed to close each Wednesday a few weeks after the contact centre had been established to help facilitate this change. This could either be done on week commencing 24th July or 1st August. The Board **AGREED** that week commencing 1st August 2005 should be the start of the Wednesday office closures. Margaret Kelly said that this will need to be properly advertised both in the housing office and in the paper. Also, once these office closures are underway, there will be an important to show that the service is improved.

14. DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting will return to the original cycle of two weeks before the main board and not the published date from the agenda. Therefore it was **AGREED** that the next Royton & Shaw Local Board will be held on **Thursday 4th August 2005, 6.30pm at Laburnum Avenue, Shaw.**

Meeting closed at 9:00pm.