

Royton & Shaw Local Board Annual Plan 2007/8

The Chair's Message

Welcome to the annual plan for Royton and Shaw. The plan sets out our priorities for the year ahead as well as reporting on our achievement of the previous year.

The year ahead will see a big focus on the Respect Agenda. This is a real priority for FCHO and a detailed report is included in this plan. The Board will also be paying particular attention to improving performance in a number of areas as well as overseeing a number of environmental improvements through their environmental budget.

Of course, key to our work will be hearing your issues or views and responding to them. We take this responsibility very seriously.

Finally, I would like to thank all our staff for their hard work in the previous year, as well as thank all our customers for their continued support.

Margaret Kelly,

Chair: Royton & Shaw Local Board.

A message from the *Chief Executive*

First Choice Homes Oldham has now been in existence for five years and during this time, a close working relationship has been fostered between Board Members, staff tenants and those other agencies that we work with to deliver services. The Local Board which looks over your area comprises of Tenants, Independent Members and Councillors.

The Board will oversee the progress that is made on this plan and their local knowledge and commitment is vital to ensuring the plan is delivered on your behalf.

Best Wishes.



Hugh Broadbent.



To contact you local housing office please call 0161 620 6471
www.fcho.co.uk

Annual Report 2006/7

Royton and Shaw Local Board have been working hard over the last twelve months to ensure that the service you receive from First Choice Homes Oldham is of the highest standard.

There has been a continued focus on improving the access to our services and also the quality of our estate based services. The increased emphasis of ensuring that Housing Officers are out on the estates has resulted in increased contact with our customers through new tenancy visits, annual visits and estate walkabouts.

A key to improving the physical environment has been the successful joint partnership working of the local housing teams, the decentralised caretaking teams and Streetscene. A number of 'Clean Up' days have been organised recently and have proved extremely successful. Further 'Clean Up' days are planned over the forthcoming 12 months.

The Formal Estate Walkabouts attended by FCHO staff, Board members, Councillors, local tenants and residents and key partner agencies are still proving extremely successful.

The proposed timetable for the next round of Formal Estate Inspections that have been agreed by the local Board are as follows:

24th October 2007 1.30pm - Haggate and Royley

23rd January 2008 1.30pm - Smallbrook Estate



Access to services initiative

LOCAL BUDGETS FOR AREA TEAMS

Local budgets have been identified to enable housing teams to work closely with tenant and residents to continue to improve the quality of life on FCHO estates.

The funding is part of the 'access to services' initiative that has seen housing staff working with residents to identify local problems and develop strategies to address them.

During the last 12 months there has been increased resident involvement in estate walkabouts and a key concern has been environmental issues. Feedback on environmental concerns resulted in FCHO funding a winter programme to prune and cut

overgrown shrubs. This was supported by litter pick and clean up campaigns through the FCHO caretaking team.

The three local housing teams have been given an additional £30,000 each to spend on improving the environment. For the first time Housing Officers will have their own budgets to enable them to work with tenants and residents on small projects that will make a difference. This may involve funding clean up days, shrub or grass replacement or community planting schemes.

A further £5,000 has been allocated to each team to support community development. Previous bids have included funding to arrange fun days and a Christmas party for local children. You don't have to be a

member of a tenant or residents group to make a bid but you must have a plan of what you want to do, how much it is estimated to cost and tell us how it will benefit your community. For more information contact your Tenant Participation Officer on the number on the front page of this newsletter.

A further £3,500 has been allocated, per area, to develop customer service. Not only does this allow us to invest in our offices but gives us the opportunity to recognise when we have not met our standards and be able to say thank you for customers' patience.

The Local Boards will be responsible for monitoring the budget to ensure that we spend the money effectively and for the benefit of our customers.

Your Local Board's key priorities for the year ahead



PRIORITY 1: ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

This priority links to the following FCHO Key Objectives:

- Delivering excellent customer services
- Building cohesive, sustainable communities
- Learning from customers and partners

In response to feedback from our tenants and residents we will ensure that:

- All complaints are progressed in an effective and timely manner and regular updates provided
- We will work with our partner agencies to develop a joint approach to resolving anti social behaviour and nuisance
- Support is provided for victims of unacceptable behaviour

Criteria for success:

- 90% of complaints to be commenced within 5 working days
- 100% audit of cases to monitor standards and quality
- Complainants to be contacted, a minimum of once a week, regarding the progress of the case.

Partners:

We will work with our partners to ensure a joined up approach:

- Greater Manchester Police
- OMBC Community Safety Unit
- OMBC Youth Service
- OMBC Education Services
- OMBC Crime and Disorder Partnerships
- Voluntary Sector



PRIORITY 2: THE ENVIRONMENT

This priority links to the following FCHO Key Objectives:

- Delivering excellent customer services
- Building cohesive, sustainable communities
- Learning from customers and partners

In response to feedback from our tenants and residents we will ensure that:

- We publicise all formal estate walkabouts
- We monitor the performance of our grounds maintenance contractor
- We involve tenants and residents in projects to improve the environment

Criteria for success:

- A minimum of 26 formal estate walkabouts, across the borough, each year
- 75% of tenants and residents satisfied with the neighbourhood and environment
- 100% spend of local environmental budgets

Partners:

We will work with our partners to ensure a joined up approach:

- OMBC Streetscene
- Tenant and Resident Associations
- Greater Manchester Police
- Groundwork
- Voluntary agencies
- OMBC Education Services



PRIORITY 3: REGENERATION

This priority links to the following FCHO Key Objectives:

- Build cohesive, sustainable communities
- Deliver affordable decent homes
- Provide excellent customer services

In response to feedback from our tenants and residents we will ensure that:

- We consult with tenant and residents on environmental improvement schemes
- We keep tenant and residents fully informed on any capital programme in their area
- We provide clear information on who tenant and residents can contact with any queries or concerns.

Criteria for success:

- 100% spend of the capital programme (the money we have to undertake planned improvement schemes to FCHO homes)
- 100% spend of environmental improvements budget (the money we have to make sustainable improvements eg fencing to flats)

Partners:

This priority links to the following FCHO Key Objectives:

- OMBC Regeneration
- Tenant and Resident Associations
- Emmanuel Whittaker



Give respect Get respect

Respect Agenda

What is Respect?

Respect is the Government's Action Plan to ensure that local agencies, local Government and local communities work effectively together to tackle anti social behaviour. It's about showing tolerance and dignity for one another so that communities can live peacefully together.

It is not just about crime such as burglaries and car theft, it is more about vandalised fencing, smashed bus shelters and gangs of teenagers hanging around street corners. It's about the things that make people feel threatened and unsafe in their own community.

Oldham is a Respect Action Area, which means that OMBC sign up to key commitments of the Respect Action Plan.

What does this mean to FCHO?

FCHO have signed up to the "Respect Standard for Housing Management". This signifies that we want to provide an effective response to anti social behaviour, build stronger communities and support residents who want to work with us to tackle anti social behaviour.

How will we do this?

There are six key commitments within the Respect Standard. FCHO have an Anti Social Behaviour Working Group which consists of tenant and leaseholder representatives, officers from other Agencies such as the Community Safety Unit and officers from FCHO. The group has undertaken an analysis to look at the six commitments and what we need to do to meet them.

Commitment 1 - Accountability, Leadership & Commitment

This means having very clear reporting processes so that residents know where to go and who to talk to about problems. It means we need to listen to residents, take action then say what we've done.

Commitment 2 - Empowering & Reassuring Residents

This is about Housing staff being seen out on the estates and having a visible presence there. This doesn't just mean Housing Officers, it means Caretakers and Repairs Operatives too as often they are the first to know when there are problems.

Again it means telling residents what has been done. A good example of this is where leaflets are distributed when an Anti Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) is in place.

Commitment 3 - Prevention & Early Intervention

Early intervention can often stop a problem escalating. There are a number of agencies who can carry out intervention work but the one we work with most is National Children's Homes Oldham (NCH). NCH will work with families whose tenancy is under threat to help them address behaviour and they can help with things such as getting children to school on time and diverting behaviour from anti social activities.

Commitment 4 - A Tailored Service for Residents

This is a step away from the traditional approach of issuing diary sheets and involves arranging the service to meet the needs of the resident. This might be meeting them in a local Library or cafe to talk about evidence or it might mean putting them in touch with others who have been witnesses for support and advice.

Commitment 5 - Protecting Communities through swift enforcement

Evicting someone really only moves the problem onto someone else's doorstep, but it is essential to take swift action when its needed. This doesn't necessarily mean possession proceedings; it might mean an injunction, a demoted tenancy (from secure to introductory) or an ASBO with a support package to back it up.

Commitment 6 - Support to Tackle the Causes

One of the key themes within Respect is parenting. Oldham is to have its own Parenting Co-ordinator and a number of Agencies will have representatives trained up in parenting skills. FCHO has secured a place for one of our Swift Court staff to receive this training.

We are also developing the Respect Our Community Awards (ROC). This will be a fund which communities can apply to for funding for projects which link to the Respect Agenda. Work is underway to develop this and attract further funding from Local Businesses to support this important aspect of Respect.

What Next?

We will continue to work closely with our partner agencies to develop multi agency working to tackle these problems. A major training programme is underway to make sure we raise the levels of skills of our Housing Management staff to meet the challenges of Respect. And most importantly we will continue to talk to residents about their perceptions of the service and how we can work together to effectively tackle anti social behaviour.

"Respect cannot be learned, purchased or acquired: it can only be earned"