

**FIRST CHOICE HOMES
SADDLEWORTH & LEES LOCAL BOARD**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 3rd August 2005**

PRESENT:

Councillor Brian Lord, Chair; Jean Bradley, Tenant Board Member
Mary McLeverty, Tenant Board Member; Edith Bentley, Tenant Board Member
Linda Pepperill, Independent Member

APOLOGIES: Councillor Val Sedgewick; John Hudson, Council Representative
Winnifred Dillon, Independent Member

IN ATTENDANCE:

Kath Miller, Housing 21; Michelle Baker, PFI;
Steve Yorke, Director of Management and Operations;
Nayan Joshi, Tenant Participation Officer; Lynn Phillips, Minute Taker

The meeting commenced at 7.00pm

1. WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Winnifred Dillon.

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 MATTER
TO BE DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING**

There were no declarations of interest.

**4. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 22ND
JUNE 2005**

Jean enquired about the production of the 'who's who' directory. Steve agreed to investigate. Jean also asked about the allocations policy, and wanted clarity regarding the link between the Council's policy and local lettings. Cllr Lord moved that the Saddleworth & Lees lettings policy be an item on the next agenda. All were agreed.

5. UPDATE IN TENANT ELECTIONS

Nayan Joshi presented. An open day took place on July 29th for any interested and prospective tenant members. There was nil attendance to the meeting held on 27th July 2005. Due to lack of interest, the Tenant Participation Team will contact tenants from the FCHO database to encourage self-nomination for Saddleworth & Lees.

6. ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Cllr Lord asked for an update on the environmental improvements identified at previous recent meetings. Mary commented that the trees at Hood Square had not been cut back sufficiently. Residents still have to keep internal lights on during the day. Mary added that cuttings had not been cleared away after the pruning, resulting in an elderly resident clearing them away herself.

7. PROGRESS ON PFI

Cllr Lord introduced Kath Miller and Michelle Baker to the Board and members of the public present.

Steve commenced by saying the overall project was very complex. The signing of the contract between FCHO, the Council and Housing 21 was imminent. There have been some delays with planning permission and cost estimates. These must be agreed and approved by the Government. Changes in the programme have been submitted and hopefully will be approved by the Government on 16th August 2005. Some tenants had indicated that they did not want open plan kitchens and Extra Care Schemes. Many tenants had been visited on an individual basis during April and May. Steve Yorke spoke from the report of the issues raised by tenants, including the construction of nine flats on the garage site at Hood Square. He also stated that Housing 21 was committed to a one to one dialogue with tenants.

Kath Miller confirmed the focus of the discussion would be on Old Mill House. She informed the meeting that the Housing 21 team were shortly to be relocated to permanent offices on Yorkshire Street.

With reference to Old Mill House, refurbishment was provisionally scheduled for the end of year 3. Immediately after the contract was signed, year 1 decants will commence. The full refurbishment for the borough will take over 4 years to complete.

Kath said she was aware of some issues with Old Mill House. There was a need for more storage space, and open plan kitchens had been amended. Further, she informed the meeting that a drop in session was to be organised to show residents the amended plans. Decant arrangements had been made at Lido House, Lees House, Spring Lees Court, and Hood Square. Support would be given, e.g. full removal, a handy man, Tenant Liaison Officers. Tenants would be able to discuss alternative decant arrangements should they prefer to decant elsewhere.

Within the scheme, a general split preferred was 20% of two bed properties and 80% one-bed properties. The refurbishment would offer an opportunity to increase two bed accommodation. At the point of refurbishment, the proposed split will be reviewed.

Delay had been due to many changes and only recently has planning issues been resolved. Old Mill House would be designated an Extra Care Scheme. Kath stressed Extra Care Schemes were not nursing homes but provided increased flexibility throughout a tenancy. Kath added that Housing 21 were aware of tenants views and encouraged those present to attend the forthcoming drop in sessions. Jean asked for confirmation that Housing 21 representatives, not consultants would be in attendance. Kath confirmed that Housing 21 staff would be running the sessions and explained the principle of Extra Care Schemes.

Further, Kath stated that due to structural changes, all residents of Old Mill House would require decanting. She asked tenants if the issues causing concern was the Extra Care facility at Old Mill House or decanting in general. In reply, the tenants said that they felt too old to be up-rooted and were worried they won't have flats to return to, as some flats at Old Mill House are to be demolished.

A tenant enquired about home loss payment. Kath explained and clarified legislation, with all individual cases being assessed at time of decants.

Cllr Lord asked when would Extra Care start to operate? Kath replied that six months before decants start, an Extra Care Court Manager would be appointed, and will then keep in contact with all Old Mill House residents when they temporarily move. This will ensure continuity.

8. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING:

Wednesday 14th September 2005, 7.00pm at Uppermill Civic Hall.

The meeting ended at 8.45pm.