

**Coventry Partnership Housing Theme Group Minutes**  
**22<sup>nd</sup> September 2009**

**Attendees:**

Richard Monk (RM) - Chair	Whitefriars Housing Group
Stephen Rudge (SR)	Head of Housing Policy & Services, CCC
Ayaz Maqsood (AM) – Advisor	Housing Strategy Manager, CCC
Sarah Perry (SP)	Coventry Partnership
Clive Benfield (CB)	Benfield Homes
Lucky Khnom (LK)	Orbit Heart of England
Martin Gallagher (MG)	Deeley Group – Deeley Construction
John Payne (JP)	Neighbourhood Management
Chris Carrington (CC)	Warwick University
Carole Bray (CBr)	University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire
Tim Brown (TB)	De Montford University
Kim Fawcett (KF)	Housing Strategy, CCC

**1. Apologies and Introductions.**

Apologies were received from Stewart Fergusson (Orbit Heart of England), Cllr Nigel Lee, Brian Walsh (Director of Community Services, CCC) and Niall McChesney (Planning, CCC)

**2. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising**

The Community Cohesion Strategy is to be launched on 3<sup>rd</sup> December (not 3<sup>rd</sup> Sept as recorded in the minutes of the last meeting on 23/06/09). The document is available to view on the website <http://www.coventrypartnership.com/equalitiesandcommunitiesdocuments> and consultation is ongoing until 13<sup>th</sup> October 2009.

**3. Tour of development sites**

For this meeting, a tour of some development sites in the central areas and North/North-East of the City had been arranged. These minutes give descriptions of the sites that were visited and notes of discussions that took place. The meeting began at St Peter's Church, Charles Street.

**St Peter's Church**

Lucky Khnom (Orbit) gave a tour of this development along with representatives from the developers, Fosse Homes.

This development is the conversion of a former church building into 17 x 2bed and 3bed apartments. It was originally intended to be available for private sale, but there were difficulties due to the housing market downturn. Orbit Heart of England has now purchased all 17 apartments for social rent, with funding from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). They are due to be available for letting by the end of this year.

The development includes many original features such as a stained glass window in one communal area, arched windows in the apartments, and also has features such as balconies in the top floor apartments and high-specification kitchens. A sensitive allocations policy is planned.

**Raglan Street**

After leaving St Peter's Church, the group was driven past Orbit's development on Raglan Street. This block of 16 apartments was completed in 2008 and includes 4 apartments that are fully

wheelchair accessible. These replace apartments that were demolished at Cygnet/Orwell Courts in order for the City College development to take place.

Coventry City Council put a significant amount of funding into these units through the Strategic Housing Regeneration Fund (SHRF). The Council's Cabinet has decided to discontinue the SHRF programme due to the financial pressures on the council and it is now no longer available for new schemes.

### **Thomas King House**

The minibus stopped outside Thomas King House and Richard Monk (Whitefriars) gave an explanation.

As part of the City College development and the Swanswell Regeneration scheme, Whitefriars has demolished 7 tower blocks out of 11 originally in the area. The remaining tower blocks have been refurbished, with the exception of Thomas King House.

Thomas King was to be demolished but is now due to be refurbished instead. It contains 128 flats with good space standards and has been used for NASS resettlement. It would be difficult to provide replacement units if Thomas King House was demolished. The blocks in this area of Hillfields were difficult to let before the regeneration work started, but now the area has become very popular.

The work will ensure that Thomas King House meets the Decent Homes Standard (a standard that all RSL housing should meet by 2010). 90% of Whitefriars housing now meets Decent Homes.

The minibus then took the group past the **Coventry and Warwickshire Hospital Site** which will be a very significant development site in the Swanswell Regeneration area. Parts of the site are still currently being used by the Hospital.

### **Salvation Army Homeless Facility**

Ayaz Maqsood (Housing Strategy Manager) gave an explanation of plans for the site at Harnall Lane.

The Salvation Army Homeless Facility on Lincoln Street is due to be replaced as part of the Swanswell regeneration plans. It is a direct access facility for homeless single males and has 99 bedrooms. It is no longer suitable and does not reflect the aims of supporting single homeless people to move on independently.

The car park on Harnall Lane is to be the site of the new facility. It will contain 80 units in a cluster arrangement. There will be communal facilities and training facilities with support provided to help people to achieve independence, life skills and solutions to their housing problems. The units will be intended for short stay only (up to 6 months).

There have been some design issues regarding a culvert that crosses the site, and also the height of the building, which has been resolved by stepping from 2 storeys near existing buildings, up to 5 storeys. Funding has been secured from the Homes and Communities Agency National Affordable Housing Programme 2008-11, Places for Change, and Coventry City Council. Work will start on site in March 2010, with anticipated completion in March 2011.

### **Foleshill Depot**

(Also known as Central Depot, Swansell Depot) The group was driven past this site off Foleshill Road.

The site is part of the Swanswell regeneration area, and will be the first large residential scheme. The site has been cleared and remediation works have been completed. There will be emphasis on

market housing, eco-housing, some live-work units etc. Development may start next year depending on developers, market conditions, and whether HCA funding can be secured.

### **Paragon Park**

This is another large site further north on Foleshill Road, where development plans have been delayed following the recession.

The site is currently vacant and the masterplan includes exclusive, professional housing. The developers are now requesting that the Section 106 agreement be renegotiated. There is the need to screen a nearby scrap metal yard, which cannot be re-sited elsewhere.

Richard Monk commented that whilst a lot of emphasis is put on increasing affordable housing for social rent or low cost home ownership, the Housing Theme Group also has an aim to increase 'aspirational housing' in the city. This is to attract and retain higher earners in Coventry, which will help the local economy, rather than higher-earners leaving the city for other areas.

### **Pridmore Road**

Lucky Khnom explained the Guild/Pridmore Road redevelopment, which was completed in 2007. It was a former council estate with many problems, which was demolished and redeveloped as a mixed tenure estate. It includes social rented, shared ownership and privately owned housing. The concept of tenure blindness means that there is no difference in the design, so it is not obvious which properties are rented or owned.

There is a community house on the development which is currently being managed by the YMCA and provides community and youth facilities, an IT suite, training facilities, and sports. Henley College is due to start running two adult evening classes in the near future.

The community house has been created from two properties, which can be reconverted into family houses in the future if necessary. It has been named 'The Priddy Place' by local children. Revenue funding for the community house comes from a variety of sources, and Orbit are allowing the YMCA to use it rent-free for three years.

### **Ribbon Court**

The minibus then drove the group to Ribbon Court, near the junction of Foleshill Road and Churchill Road.

Ayaz Maqsood explained that this is a development of 50 apartments for older people, with communal and community facilities. Ashram Housing Association will manage the scheme as an Intercultural Independent Living scheme. It has been designed to be suitable for different cultural needs, and will reflect the diverse nature of the Foleshill area.

The development has been funded by the Homes and Communities Agency. It is due to be completed in November 2009.

### **Sampson Close**

Lucky Khnom told the group about the Reduct partnership between Orbit, Midland Heart and Whitefriars, which is improving the energy efficiency of existing and new build stock using the Passive House concept. Passive Housing ensures that the fabric of the building reduces the energy demand as much as possible (through insulation, air tightness etc).

Sampson Close is the site for Orbit's planned new-build development to Passive House standards. It will be the first estate built to passive house standards in the UK. Orbit is not treating this as a special pilot or one-off scheme, but will be building more and more estates in this way so that it will

become the norm. Government targets are for all new build properties to be Zero Carbon from 2016.

The development will consist of 23 properties. Benefits to residents include reduced fuel bills, and health benefits etc from living in a warm, insulated and well constructed dwelling.

### **New Deal for Communities - Wood End, Henley Green, Manor Farm and Deedmore**

The group was taken on a short drive around the Wood End area to see the site of the first phase of development, some areas where properties had been demolished, and some properties that are due to be demolished in the future.

The group was then taken to the Moat House Leisure and Neighbourhood Centre where Tony Greenwood (Area Services Manager) showed the group the plans for the first phase of development.

Phase 1A1 will be constructed on the site of the former Deedmore School. Funding has been obtained for a combined heat and power plant and work on this will start in Jan 2010. Construction of the properties will then begin in May 2010. There will be 150 properties, 38 of which will be for social rent, 2 will be for shared equity for residents who owned properties that have been demolished for the redevelopment. All the other units will be for market sale.

Whitefriars and the HCA have provided security to the developer, that if the market sale houses do not sell, Whitefriars will rent the properties for market rent until such time as they can be sold. It is very important to the NDC scheme that a more mixed community is created, which includes mixed tenure.

Local residents have been kept informed of developments through door knocking exercises, a quarterly magazine, and also a consultation event is planned for 24<sup>th</sup> September.

The NDC Master Plan was approved in November 2008, and the Design Code for Phase 1 is due to be approved in the next month.

Richard Monk emphasised the importance of partnership working between all the different agencies and the developers to ensure that the redevelopment occurred as planned, even with the difficulties faced in the recession and housing market downturn.

### **Belgrade Plaza**

The group was then taken back to the city centre where Martin Gallagher gave an update on the Belgrade Plaza development.

The Belgrade Plaza development includes hotel space, retail and restaurant space, and residential. The Premier Inn hotel is now open, and restaurant units are due to be opened during October 2009. A Raddisson Edwardian Hotel is planned for the site, which will also provide conference facilities for the city.

So far 64 apartments have been constructed. These are still owned by Deeleys as sales had fallen through, and are now rented out instead. 51 of the 64 units are occupied only 5-6 weeks after advertising.

Phase 3 of the site was originally to be an apartment development, but plans have now been changed to 504 units of student accommodation, due to the difficulties selling apartments in the current housing market. There will be 12 apartments provided for Whitefriars as a replacement for 12 that were previously demolished to clear the site.

The minibus then returned to St Peter's Church and the meeting was concluded.

#### **4. Any Other Business**

RM and AM requested feedback on the format of this meeting. If the theme group members agree that it was useful, a meeting of the same format could be arranged once each year.

#### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING:**

**2.00pm – 4.00pm Friday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2009**

Conference Room, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor Spire House, New Union Street, Coventry CV1 2PW.