

Coventry Partnership Housing Theme Group Minutes

29th April 2008

Attendees (members):

Richard Monk (RM) - Chair	Whitefriars Housing Group
Stewart Fergusson (SF)	Orbit Housing Association
Stephen Rudge (SR)	Housing Policy and Services, CCC
Niall McChesney (NM)	City Development, CCC
Ayaz Maqsood (AM)	Housing Strategy, CCC
Lynda Bull (LB)	Community Services, CCC
Mary Woods (MW)	Midland Heart Housing Association
Carol McKenna (CM)	Coventry University
Tim Brown (TB)	De Montford University
June Morley (JM)	Coventry Partnership
Clive Benfield (CB)	Benfield Homes Ltd
Ernie Taylor (ET)	Deeley Homes
John Payne (JP)	Neighbourhood Management
Vijay Asi (VA)	Asra Midlands Housing Association
Liam Nagle (LN)	Housing Strategy, CCC
Catherine Ewing (CE)	Housing Strategy, CCC

Attendees (guests):

Pat Niner (PN)	CURS
Marin Browne (MB)	Outside UK
Lyn Taylor (LT)	Outside UK

1. Apologies

Bob Wilson, Giddy Kalsi, Cllr Gary Ridley, Carole Bray, Roger Griffiths

2. Minutes and matters arising

SF noted that January's minutes should have listed him as representing Orbit housing association, not Midland Heart.

NM updated the group on the current position of the RSS. The Draft Revision of the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy was submitted to the Government in December 2007, to be followed by a three-month period of public consultation. The Regional Assembly then received a letter from the Government in January 2008 which expressed concern about the Region's housing proposals in the light of its agenda to increase house-building across the country. It asked the Government Office for the West Midlands to commission further work to look at options that could deliver higher housing numbers and proposed the extension of the consultation period to May 2008.

However, the Government Office for the West Midlands has only recently commissioned the work. This is expected to be completed in October 2008, leading the Regional Assembly to extend the consultation period on the RSS Draft Revision until December 2008.

No decision has been made at the moment on the implications for our timetables for plan preparation.

3. Housing Market Assessment – Martin Browne, Outside UK

Outside UK were commissioned by the four local authorities in the C2 sub-region, Coventry, Nuneaton and Bedworth, North Warwickshire and Rugby, to produce a Housing Market Assessment report, providing sub-regional analysis of housing demand and housing need to inform local policies and strategies.

MB gave an overview of the report, which identifies the following recommendations:

Evidence strongly supports maintenance of existing policies and targets and these should be robustly maintained and monitored

In North Coventry & Bedworth need to:

- Encourage owner occupation appropriate to local circumstances
- Support the private rented sector
- Seek development of larger properties and family housing

In South Coventry need to:

- Address under supply of social and other affordable housing and ensure the area does not become unaffordable for local people

Need for affordable housing:

- Coventry requires **304 affordable dwellings per annum**

Tenure:

- Scope for shared ownership/shared equity products, particularly in housing markets demonstrating acute affordability pressures

Size:

- Need for 3+ bed properties (particularly larger family dwellings) and supported housing, including bungalows

Findings will now be fed into the LDF and updated Housing Strategy. The Theme Group signed off the research as completed.

4. **Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) – Pat Niner, CURS, University of Birmingham**

PN introduced the item, stating that local housing authorities are now required to assess Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs, and reflect these needs in housing and planning strategies.

Coventry worked in partnership with Birmingham and Solihull to complete the study - at regional level this is one of the 6 sub-regional GTAAs, which will provide the evidence base for Phase 3 of the West Midlands RSS Revision concerning Gypsy and Traveller sites. The RSS will set the number of pitch allocations each local authority must provide for in their Local Development Framework. PN gave an overview of the report's findings:

Gypsies And Travellers On Sites:

- Most people (77%) said they were 'local' to the area
- Just under two-thirds of households include someone in paid work (Self employment is much more common than employment, mostly in building trades)
- Less than a quarter said that they travelled for a period in the year, and very little change foreseen for the future
- 19% had suffered discrimination in the area

Gypsies And Travellers In Housing:

- Tenure: 46% owner-occupiers; 26% private tenants; 28% social tenants
- No-one living in a flat or maisonette
- A minority demonstrate cultural aversion to housing and/or isolation from community
- Less likely than on sites to say they were 'local' to the area (49%)
- Over three-quarters of households include someone in paid work
- 56% owned a trailer – higher in private sector
- Over half said that they travelled for a period in the year, and very little change foreseen for the future
- 10% suffered discrimination in the area

Gypsy And Traveller Sites:

- Local authority sites – both sites under-occupied, need refurbishment and have management problems
- Private sites – most are family sites with good amenity provision.
- Long-term unauthorised sites – all in Solihull; 3 family sites developed without planning permission, 1 on council land; poorer amenity provision but quite positive resident ratings

Recommendations from the report state that Coventry is not required to provide additional pitches. However it is expected that the existing site, Siskin Drive, will be refurbished and remodelled to provide fewer, larger pitches and amenity units which better meet modern design standards. The Theme Group signed off the research as completed.

5. Coventry's Local Area Agreement, National Indicators

LAA's set out the priorities agreed between central government and a local area (the local authority and Local Strategic Partnership) and other key partners at the local level. 198 targets have been set out and will be monitored by central government; Coventry has picked 35 of these as priority issues (plus 17 targets for education). Two of these targets relate to housing:

- NI 154 Net additional homes provided
- NI 155 Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)

6. Major Housing Projects in the City – update on progress

NDC

RM informed the group that the recent consultation event was well attended. Work is now moving forward towards submission of the planning application.

Swanswell

RM advised that the proposed Special Delivery Vehicle would not be taken forward. Delivery of the development will instead take place in smaller sections, providing an opportunity for local developers to be involved. Work is also underway to look at the Coventry and Warwick hospital site.

Stoke Aldemoor

This project is likely to focus on environmental refurbishment rather than major demolition. RM noted that servicing works in the area would possibly be brought forward in the schedule, helping to lift the area.

Paragon Park

Discussions are underway regarding the possible relocation of the scrap metal works.

7. Any other business

AM informed the group that there would be a Housing Fair on Friday 25th July 2008 in the Lower Precinct, sponsored by the Theme Group. This event will be a departure from previous Housing Conferences, looking instead to provide an opportunity for Coventry's citizens to meet with a range of providers of housing related services and products, and to learn about housing options in Coventry. More information will be available at the next meeting.

Consultant Guy Wardle is currently undertaking a review of Coventry Homefinder. This will be brought back to the group when completed.

The group were informed that Stella Manzie, Chief Executive of Coventry Council, is leaving the authority for a position with the Scottish government.

8. Dates and times of future meetings

25th June 2008 2-4pm

25th September 2008 2-4pm

25th November 2008 2-4pm