

Coventry Partnership Housing Theme Group Minutes

Tuesday 28th August 2007

Attendees (members):

Richard Monk (RM) - Chair	Whitefriars Housing Association
Stewart Fergusson (SF)	Midland Heart Housing Association
Clive Benfield (CB)	Benfield Homes
Stephen Rudge (SR)	Housing Policy and Services, CCC
Ayaz Maqsood (AM)	Housing Strategy, CCC
Vijay Asi (VA)	Asra Midlands Housing Association
June Morley (JM)	Coventry Partnership
John Stanway (JS)	Housing Association Development Group
Chris Smith (CS)	Community Empowerment Network (CEN)
Carole Bray (CB)	UHCW
Miles Lamour (ML)	Core Strategy Group
John Payne (JP)	Neighbourhood Management
Rob Haigh (RH)	City Planning, CCC
Bob Wilson (BW)	University of Warwick
Catherine Ewing (CE)	Housing Strategy, CCC

Apologies

Niall McChesney	City Development, CCC
Tim Brown	De Montfort University
Lesley Wearing	Touchstone
Susan Green	Deeley Homes
John Bolton	Community Services, CCC

1) Minutes and matters arising

CS raised concerns from CEN over the agreement in item 9 of June's meeting that Community Feedback should be removed from the agenda for the coming year. Following this the group agreed that Community Feedback could remain on the agenda, if items were raised under it.

RM noted that agenda topics have now been set for the coming year. The subject of housing pathways will be picked up in June 2008, when the meeting theme is 'holistic redevelopment of the city'.

The outcome of the Village Green hearing is expected in September. There will still be a further stage for appeal following this.

2) Energy Efficiency Housing Projects in Coventry - Developing a Coherent Strategy

SF presented the item 'Energy Efficient Housing Projects in Coventry' to the group:

- In 2005, the UK emitted over 550 million tonnes of carbon dioxide. Nearly 50% was a result of energy use in buildings
- The government ambition is for carbon emissions to be cut to 60% of 1990 levels by 2050. This will require all new housing to be zero carbon.
- Zero carbon is rated at level 6 in the code for sustainable homes; housing associations are currently being pushed towards meeting level 3.
- Key features of a passive house include good insulation, use of solar energy, energy, efficient window glazing and frames, solar collectors to provide energy for hot water, etc, all of which provides good value for money.

- Good practise can be draw from projects across Europe. Within Coventry a demonstration project is currently being developed by Midland Heart at Whitely Village. Furthermore, two projects are also being planned to refurbish existing stock to passive home standards: Whitefriars "No Fines Star Blocks" and Midland Heart's 19th century terraces.
- In terms of national policy issues, the eco-homes agenda could potentially be linked into the post-Decent Homes programme. However, there will have to be further debate around volume versus cost.

SF informed the group that building costs at Whitely Village were estimated to be 8.5% higher than that of a non-passive home.

CB noted that energy efficiency is not yet a successful selling point on the general market, and therefore buyers will be unwilling to pick up these extra costs. Passive housing standards in the private development sector will need to be enforced by government regulation, preferably via Building Control rather than the local authority Planning Department.

In line with this, SR highlighted the recent Housing Green Paper, which had suggested making the Code for Sustainable Homes mandatory for all new build homes.

In relation to existing stock, SR noted that work towards the Decent Homes Standard in the private sector would involve an emphasis on improving energy efficiency. The council has recently completed a thermal heat air survey of the city to identify homes which are particularly inefficient in terms of insulation. JM noted that the police might be interested in this data.

BW noted Warwick currently manage 5,000 bed spaces on campus. Much of this accommodation is to be refurbished, with the aim being to achieve sustainable homes level 6. Much work has been done on carbon management, with projects including the dumping of heat into associated properties. It was noted that unlike the private sector, the university would look to use sustainability standards as a marketing tool.

CB stated that there is currently only one accommodation block on the new hospital site; it is likely energy efficiency will be factored in once further accommodation is developed. This additional accommodation may be developed through a joint venture with a local housing association.

3) Local Development Framework Update

RH gave an update on the Local Development Framework and Core Strategy Preferred Options.

- The Housing Theme Group provided feedback on the Core Strategy Issues and Options last year. The Issues and Options report has since been developed in line with requirements from Government Office, but the theme group's comments still hold good within this revised version.
- The city council's current position is that growth should be employment led, focusing on the north-south corridor between Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire. Any housing element should include the development of 'executive' housing to help attract people into the city. At the same time affordable housing development targets are to be revisited.
- The consultation period closes 8th September 2008. The Preferred Options will be published late 2007, and final submission for independent examination will take place mid-2008.

- The current consultation document comprises of structured questions focused around 8 options. The theme group agreed to submit an updated reply.

4) **Sub-regional Housing Market Assessment**

AM updated the group on the sub-regional Housing Market Assessment work currently being undertaken by the Housing Strategy team, alongside colleagues from Nuneaton and Bedworth, North Warwickshire and Rugby (the C2 sub-region). The assessment is required following the publication of government guidance in March, and will feed into the Regional Spatial Strategy and Local Development Framework. It is thought that Housing Market Assessments, which rely heavily on secondary data, will eventually replace traditional Housing Needs Surveys.

The steering group has recently appointed consultants Outside UK, and the project is in the initial stages of data collection, with a completion date of December.

Interim figures should be available for discussion by late October.

5) **Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment**

The AM updated the group on the progress with the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment, which is required by central government and will feed into the Regional Spatial Strategy. Coventry is working with colleagues from Solihull and Birmingham, and the steering group has recently appointed consultant Pat Niner from CURS.

It was noted that Coventry currently has capacity on its serviced traveller site.

6) **Major Housing Projects in the City – update on progress**

Swanswell

- AM is to present the housing paper produced for the Swanswell Masterplan to the Residents Consultation Group.
- Concerns were raised in relation to the procurement structure, as the special purpose vehicle method will prevent local developers/housing associations from being involved. It was noted that a consortium of Housing Associations in the city and the Housing Strategy team have already approached the Swanswell Project Team in the hope of gaining increased involvement in the implementation of the Masterplan.
- The group agreed that a further informal conversation with Duncan Elliott would be a useful way to move forward. This is to be done both through the city council (SR) and the Swanswell Steering Group (RM).

Canley

- The single consultation document is to be released in the imminent future

NDC

- Financial and commercial close has been reached; now awaiting signatures from development consortium

Stoke Aldemoor

- SR informed the group that he has been in conversation with Lesley Wroe (Planning Manager, CCC) regarding arranging a meeting with Whitefriars, Sphinx and the council to discuss issues including section 106.

Paragon Park

- It was agreed Niall McChesney should report back on this scheme at October's meeting.

7) Communications Issues

CS issued an open invitation to the CEN workshop on older people's issues, which is being held in December. The contact for this is Isabelle Wrangles.

SR updated the group on the Choice Based Lettings system, which is on course to go live on 28th September 2007. Bidding will therefore begin on 3rd October 2007.

8) Any other business

JP highlighted a recent project aiming to bring people with learning difficulties, who are currently housed around the region, back into the city. AM noted that Housing Strategy are involved with this project.

JM highlighted the Partnership's work to develop a Sustainable Communities Strategy, which will replace the Community Plan. SF recently presented some of the significant housing issues to the Progress Impact Evaluation (PIE) group. The theme group is now to submit a statement on the key housing priorities.

SF queried when the postponed sub-regional event (cancelled in July) was likely to be rearranged. AM suggested the event would be rescheduled in line with the publication of the Housing Market Assessment early next year.

RM requested that a flyer from British Gas be circulated with the minutes.

A response to the Communities England consultation has been developed by the housing strategy team and will be submitted as the Theme Group's response.

RM also noted that he would re-work a housing article in a draft newsletter developed by the communications team, and circulate to the group for comment.

9) Dates and times of future meetings

9th October 2007 10am-12pm
Theme: Stoke Aldermoor
SH/6 Conference Room