

MINUTES OF THE INTEGRATED HOUSING BOARD, 23 JULY 2007.

- Members Councillor Isidoros Diakides, Councillor Brian Haley, Niall Bolger, Stanley Hui, Neil Mawson, Jo Murphy, Matthew Pelling
- Present Anthony Adkin, Paul O'Callaghan, Nigel Long, Rowan Limond, Janice Robinson
- Apologies Councillor Kaushika Amin, Stephen Clarke, Deborah Cohen, Robert Edmonds, Pamela Moffat, Peter Norse, Fazia Rizvi, Chris Stylinanou, Clare Winstanley

LC1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR OF THE INTEGRATED HOUSING BOARD FOR 2007/08 (ITEM 1)

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Isidoros Diakides be appointed as Chair of the Integrated Housing Board for the next year.

LC2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR OF THE INTEGRATED HOUSING BOARD FOR 2007/08 (ITEM 2)

RESOLVED:

That Jo Murphy be elected as Vice-Chair of the Integrated Housing Board for the next year.

LC3. WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS (ITEM 3)

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting and asked each member to introduce themselves.

Apologies were received from:

Councillor Kaushika Amin
Stephen Clarke
Deborah Cohen
Clare Winstanley

-Rowan Limond substituted
-Anthony Adkin substituted

LC4. INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE OF THE MEETING (ITEM 4)

The Chairman outlined the role that the Board would perform within the wider context of the Partnership.

Given that there had been many significant developments over the last year in relation to Housing and that further new developments were expected, the establishment of the Board was timely. It was noted that Housing Services had recently achieved a three star rating from the Audit Commission and that it was anticipated that the ALMO would be awarded a two star rating with 'promising prospects for further improvement'.

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The inaugural meeting would be used to discuss structure and membership of the Board. The programme of work would be discussed and areas where reports were required would also be identified.

LC5. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND OBJECTIVES (ITEM 5)

The Board discussed the proposed terms of reference set out within the agenda papers.

In response to comments made in relation to the involvement that the Board should have in achieving strategies and targets, which were under the remit of other bodies, partners were advised that the Board would need to maintain a clear focus on the goals it was charged with delivering. Although there would be a degree of cross over between strategies, which would require a level of awareness of the work of other Theme Boards, in order to deliver the targets it was responsible for the Board would need to focus closely on these.

The Chairman suggested that a report should be brought to the Boards next meeting identifying cross cutting issues across the HSP in order to inform the Housing Strategy.

RESOLVED:

That, subject to reference being made to the LAA within the Boards Objectives, the terms of reference be approved.

LC6. MEMBERSHIP (ITEM 6)

The Board considered proposals regarding its Membership and it was noted that the proposals had previously been considered by Cabinet.

The Board was advised that a paper had been considered by the HSP at its last meeting regarding Community Engagement Systems. As part of the paper, it was proposed that each Theme Board should include three places for elected representatives and one place for HAVCO.

The Chair noted that two key area for the Board to consider were how user participation could be developed and the fact that at present the private sector was poorly represented. Mechanisms for representing the homeless and those in temporary accommodation also needed to be developed. It was suggested that the Board should establish a User Group to address this.

It was also suggested that representatives from residents associations should be used to fill the three places allocated to HACVO and that HAVCO be asked to consult with the Federation of Residents Associations.

There was a general consensus that either four or five places should be given to RSL's and that one of the representatives should be from a BME led RSL, one or two from the members of the RSLs Partnership and a further one or two from the RSLs Liaison Forum to ensure that smaller RSLs are also represented. The names of these representatives would be confirmed at the next meeting.

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The Chair noted that partners from the health sector had expressed a strong interest in working closely with the IHB. The PCT had been particularly concerned with how the Housing Strategy might help vulnerable people being discharged from hospital and how the strategy might link in with the Primary Care Strategy.

It was agreed that a representative from the Mental Health Trust should be allocated a place on the Board and that there should be further discussion with the PCT to clarify whether it wanted a separate place.

In response to concerns that at present links with the private sector were poor, the Board was advised that it was intended to re-launch the Private Landlords Forum. The Chair suggested that means of better engaging with older people should be identified and it was agreed that groups such as Care and Repair and House Proud should be used to engage with older people on housing issues.

Following discussion there was agreement that the Board should avoid any duplication of work by using community groups to engage with some of the vulnerable groups identified. In this way the Board could be used as a forum for more strategic discussion. There was a general consensus that a place should be reserved on the Board for private landlords once the Landlord's Forum had been reconvened.

The Board discussed the need to limit membership and it was agreed that there should be nominated advisors from groups such as Supporting People, and other groups as appropriate, rather than appointing representatives from further outside bodies and Council departments.

RESOLVED:

- i. That the Membership of the IHB (as set out in the report) be agreed, subject to the following:
 - The inclusion of three representatives from the Voluntary Sector (to be determined by HAVCO in consultation with the Federation of Residents Associations)
 - The inclusion of four/five places for RSL's
 - The inclusion of one place for representatives from a group representing BME residents
 - That a representative from the Mental Health Trust should be allocated a place on the Board and that there should be further discussion with the PCT to clarify whether a separate place should be allocated to the PCT
- ii. That a User Group should be formed to help establish mechanisms for engaging with the homeless and those in temporary accommodation.
- iii. That the Private Landlords Forum should be re-established and once it was established, a representative should be appointed from this group to the IHB.

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LC7. INTEGRATED HOUSING BOARD STRUCTURES (ITEM 7)

The Board discussed the structure of the Board and the framework of the HSP as a whole. It was recognised that there was a need to take an overview this framework and the targets and strategies that they were tasked with delivering.

It was noted that there were many existing groups and organisations that sat outside the HSP and that ways of including and consulting these groups would need to be established. Following discussion of this issue the Chair requested that a report was brought to the Boards next meeting regarding the establishment of a Landlords Forum.

There was agreement that it was important that the Board remained focussed on strategic issues and that senior representatives from each partner continued to attend meetings. The formation of groups like the Landlords Forum would help ensure that issues were raised within these groups rather than within the Boards meeting. Forums such as this could also be used as a means of taking forward issues discussed at the IHB.

RESOLVED:

That reports be brought to the Boards next meeting in relation to the following:

- i) The formation of a Landlords Forum
- ii) Details of the existing forums and options for working with these

LC8. DEVELOPING THE STRATEGIC HOUSING ROLE (ITEM 8)

The Board discussed the strategic role of Housing and how this should be developed by the Board. Given the high demand for housing in the Borough, and in London as a whole, developing a robust Housing Strategy was a key issue for the Council.

The Chair noted that the following challenging issues would need to be addressed within the Housing Strategy:

- Lowering the number of people in temporary accommodation in line with government targets
- Identifying funding streams to bring accommodation in line with the Decent Homes standard across sectors
- Responding to increasing opposition from residents objecting to further development and the lack of infrastructure to support a rapidly growing population
- The shortage of social and social rented accommodation available and the need to improve the image of social housing

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It was noted that the Council's current three year Housing Strategy was in its final year. Although it had been approved as being 'fit for purpose' by the Government, it was being reviewed, in order to reflect changes in relation to the ALMO and RSL's.

The next three year Housing Strategy would be overseen by the Board and there would be an emphasis on ensuring that it was properly integrated and joined up. It had been agreed that the strategy should be formed under the HSP in order to create a sense of ownership and commitment from all of the partner organisations.

An Action Plan was also being formed to take account of the following:

- Government Respect Programme
- Choice Based Lettings
- Development of the RSL's Partnership.
- Responses to new Guidance/Information/legislation from Central Government

The Chair noted that the following issues had been raised at the HSP:

- Decent Homes Scheme -using local students/trainees to work in the construction industry and jobseekers to renovate properties, to tackle issues of worklessness.
- Primary Care Strategy –giving consideration to the Primary Care Strategy published by the PCT when forming the Housing Strategy.
- Identifying Sites for Housing – a systematic approach should be formed for identifying potential housing sites and for monitoring progress in bringing forward sites in order to prevent delays.

LC9. KEY HOUSING ISSUES FACING THE BOROUGH (ITEM 9)

This item was discussed under item 8.

LC10. STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS CONTRIBUTION TO MEETING HOUSING NEEDS (ITEM 10)

This item was discussed under item 6.

LC11. WELL BEING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK (ITEM 11)

The Board received the draft Strategic Framework for Improving Adults' Well Being for 2007-10 and was advised that if members wished to make any comments on the document they should be passed onto Nigel Long by the end of August.

RESOLVED:

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That the draft Strategic Framework for Improving Adults' Well Being be noted.

LC12. MEETINGS PROGRAMME (ITEM 12)

The Board considered the Programme of Meetings for 2007/08 and the items included within the Programme for discussion.

The Board was advised that the timetable for the Mayor's Housing Strategy had slipped and would now be published in the autumn. This had caused some difficulties for officers as work was being carried out without the strategy being in place. To address this officer were putting together a draft strategy to work from during the interim period.

In response to a suggestion that the date of the next meeting should be changed to take place during the forthcoming Inspection in order to enable the inspectors to observe the Board in action, it was agreed that as the Board had not yet embarked on its Work Programme that would not be appropriate.

Following discussion regarding how members could work together to achieve targets, it was suggested that a session should be arranged outside the meeting, for Board members to consider their approach to the targets within its responsibility. There was a general consensus that it would be useful for partners to discuss the Board's targets and their own organisations targets, in order to identify areas where more joint working could take place to achieve targets.

The Board discussed the Green Paper that had been published by the Government that day, which was entitled: 'Homes for the Future: More Affordable, More Sustainable'. It was noted that an additional £3 billion had been allocated to provide 40,000 units of social housing. The increase of supply would mean that new mechanisms for bringing forward housing would have to be developed and provision for these would need to be made within the Council's Housing Strategy.

In line with the new priorities set out in the Green Paper, it was noted that the Board would need to consider carefully how equity shares and social housing would be provided. There was also an emphasis within the paper on providing sustainable homes and environmental issues such as assessment of flood risk and carbon emissions. All of these issues would need to be addressed within the Housing Strategy.

RESOLVED:

- i) That a date should be arranged for the Board to meet informally to discuss its targets and ways of achieving these through improved joint working
- ii) That the draft Meetings Programme be noted

Cllr Isidoros Diakides

Chair

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