



STRATEGIC HOUSING PARTNERSHIP BOARD

15 February 2008
Severn Room, Business Development Centre

PRESENT:

Richard Webb	Telford & Wrekin Council (T&WC) - Chair
John McNulty	Bournville Village Trust
Paul Donohue	T&WC
Bernie Lewis	Wrekin Landlords' Association
Paul Williams	National Housing Federation
Lloyd Bradshaw	Beth Johnson Housing Group
Carl Longland	T&WC
Katherine Kynaston	T&WC
Chris Winter	T&WC
Rob Hoof	T&WC
Jim Kerrigan	T&WC
Christine May	T&WC
Susanne Fitzpatrick	T&WC (Minutes)

APOLOGIES:

Cllr Jacqui Seymour	T&WC
Jean Teichmann	Bromford Housing Group
John Broadhead	The Wrekin Housing Trust
Mike Atherton (email)	T&WC
Jeremy Crabb	Telford & Wrekin PCT
Rob Kilby (email)	Housing Corporation

1 **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

RW took the chair and welcomed all attendees, following which introductions were made.

2 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received as recorded above.

3 & 4 **MINUTES OF LAST MEETING (29 November 2007) AND MATTERS ARISING**

Two updates were received, ie:

- Item 6, HMA: the final version will be available at the end of March
- Item 9, Southwater Development: no further news on the consultation

The minutes were then approved as a correct record.

5 **INTEGRATED HOUSING PROJECT**

CL gave an overview of the newly-formed Project Team tasked with achieving 40% housing growth within the borough, and whose focus for the next three months will be scoping the project, defining objectives and producing a project plan (see slides **attached** to the minutes).

It is recognised that housing demand continues to outstrip supply, housing completions remain historically low, affordability has worsened, and in the last ten

years, social housing waiting lists have risen by 60% and use of temporary accommodation has doubled. The Local Government White Paper calls on local authorities to 'place shape' ie consider the *needs* of the borough when planning housing.

Although Baroness Andrews requested an extra 40,000 properties across the region, CLG are focussed on Telford achieving the 1325/year target and delivering affordable homes to ensure the long-term economic prosperity of the town.

CL highlighted the need for corporate (and individual) plans/strategies to align as a vehicle by which to regenerate and reinvigorate the town, and is keen to meet individuals, RSL's and house builders to gain a deeper understanding of their frustrations and formulate ways in which they can be alleviated. The successful development of the borough will not be achieved by dealing with housing in isolation, but by considering prosperity, growth and skills with equal dynamism.

Noted that the Planning Delivery Grant has historically been used to obtain government funding – however, this is changing. It is the Government's intention to reward councils for the number of houses they deliver which, in turn, will form the basis on which they will be judged. In light of this, CL encouraged members to maximise the bids which they submit for regional funding.

The key issues to date include:

- Plugging the affordability gap: many planning consents exist across the borough, yet are not implemented – why?
- Deliverable skills: the 2012 Olympics will draw construction workers to the south-east, leaving a 'vacuum' throughout the country. Given that the intention is to develop and expand the town by 40%, the importance of attracting skilled workers must rank high on the development agenda
- Availability of public funding: there is a need for dialogue with the housing community in order to gain an understanding of the positive/negative aspects of developing in Telford: does the availability of public funding play a part? Do S.106 Agreements pose a particular problem?
- Alternative delivery options: if builders are failing in their delivery, can this be achieved by other means?

CL welcomes feedback on his presentation and draft proposals, which will feed into the project plan currently under development.

RW thanked CL for his comprehensive presentation and congratulated the team on their new appointments.

Comments on CL's presentation

- JMcN asked how the 'engagement' process will be achieved in practice. CL responded that he is happy to meet with individuals, RSLs and house builders in order to gain a deeper understanding of any frustrations they may have
- JMcN explained that developers restrict the amount of stock which they release onto the open market at any one time so as to retain some level of *control* regarding price, and CL is keen to meet with developers to explore ways in which this anomaly might be rectified. PW suggested Tim Motton (NHBF) could prove a useful contact in order to establish the required linkages

- In response to a query from LB, CL explained that the Integrated Housing Project has been established to link economic development with housing development in order to deliver the best results for the town effectively and quickly
- BL asked whether CL is focussing on new builds or can empty properties be utilised to lower the 23,500 target? CL confirmed the intention is to bring together regeneration of existing stock in addition to developing new stock
- JMcN expressed concern re: the lack of engagement with EP which he considered to be *“integral to the delivery of housing development in the borough”*. In order to bring development proposals to fruition, land needs to be available at the right place as it is this which ultimately determines its viability. If EP perceive financial and planning processes to be in place, they may be more inclined to become part of the developmental equation and in due course, larger plots of land may come forward.

CL explained his intention to develop a national exemplar such that when the newly-reformed Communities England (Housing Corporation) is established, Telford is heralded as a beacon for good working practice. PW added that AWM/RDF are key partners with whom to engage, particularly in relation to the housing function, and suggested Bashir Ahmed (housing team) and Rose Poulter from the Regional Assembly as valuable contacts. The Regional Economic Strategy’s Action Plan is now out to consultation which will underpin the SHPB’s objectives

RW suggested that the Integrated Housing Project feature as a standing item on future agendas.

6 STRATEGIC HOUSING LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT (SHLAA)

KK outlined her role as Development Plans & Sustainability Manager and gave a presentation on the SHLAA (**attached** to the minutes) from which the following comments ensued:

- A range of densities will be accommodated as part of the SHLAA, eg the distance between the development and the local district centre (low density), although the type of development will rest with the developer. KK is keen for this to be based on *evidence* rather than on *“fashions”*
- KK reported that other constraints will be taken into consideration when finalising the land allocation strategy so the process is transparent, agreement is reached with developers and that *“an informed judgement can be made as to which sites are developed, when and by whom”*
- KK advised against making erroneous assumptions: when sites are identified for development, a dialogue needs to take place with developers at the earliest time and the policy criteria applied in order to reach an equitable conclusion. It is unwise to promote opportunities which turn out to be undeliverable – *“it’s the speed with which things happen that needs to be worked on”*
- A stakeholder event is taking place on 11 March 2008, 2.00-5.00 pm in the VIP Suite, Civic Offices which will focus on the SHLAA. Invitations for this event will be sent out next week

RW thanked KK for her presentation and response to the Board's queries.

7 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK – UPDATE

KK reported that the planning strategy was adopted on 1 December 2007; submitting stage consultations on land allocations/Central Telford Area Action Plan (CTAAP) in April 2008. Formal consultation is scheduled for April 2008.

Significant changes have been made to the Development Control document. It is recognised that core strategies cannot address the wider issues, so the debate with government office regarding the inclusion of the Development Control document is ongoing.

A number of supplementary planning documents are currently in preparation:

- Affordable housing
- Green space
- Planning obligations (to establish a tariff based on assessment of infrastructure needs across the borough). KK would like to bring this to SHPB for discussion at a future date. It is likely that a separate tariff will be implemented for the Central Telford area with significant retail and residential development, linked infrastructure needs etc which will be linked to CTAAP in policy terms.

RSS Phase 2 document: close of consultation on increasing housing numbers in the borough is scheduled for the end of June 2008. Formal examination of the RSS is expected to take place in early 2009, although no definite time-line is known.

8 LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT – UPDATE

RW reported that approximately 50 indicators have been identified, with a particular focus on:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Indicator 156 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of households in temporary accommodation |
| Indicator 159 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supply of ready-to-deliver housing sites |
| Indicators 154 & 155 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Housing supply (total/affordable)• The debate on these indicators is continuing and may be contained within a larger 'pool' of indicators council-wide |

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- PD reported that the council's audit programme looks at partnership arrangements across the council and the SHPB has been selected as an example against which to measure effectiveness and the methodology for engagement, how/if this can be improved, and identify gaps and inconsistencies. PD advised members that Audit may wish to contact them to ascertain their views on this process
- RW will ensure that the LSP minutes are forwarded to the Board
- Housing & Regeneration Bill: PW reported that the NHF is highlighting concerns about the wording of the Bill and the potential loss of being independent, which would affect its ability to borrow or deliver the affordable housing to the same extent: there are also concerns about excessive powers of the Secretary of State to direct the work of Associations in their communities. NHF are campaigning to government to change the offending clauses of the Bill and have had some

success to date, with the acceptance that elements will now be reviewed. Three hundred amendments have already been considered to the Bill

- The 'Home Truths' document will be formally launched at the NHF's annual Stakeholder Conference on 28 February: PW invited the Board to attend. He is tasked with raising the profile in the political arena, and RW suggested David Wright MP may have an interest
- RW reported on the Sanctuary/Wrekin Housing Trust merger which will bring WHT and Beth Johnson residents under the Sanctuary (Midlands) umbrella. The consultation process with tenants and stakeholders is currently underway.

10 DATES FOR MEETINGS 2008

- **18 April – Severn Room, Business Development Centre**
- 13 June – Severn Room, Business Development Centre
- 12 September – Wrekin Room, Business Development Centre
- 14 November – Wrekin Room, Business Development Centre

All meetings will commence at 9.30 am prompt - representatives are welcome.