



STRATEGIC HOUSING PARTNERSHIP BOARD

29 November 2007
Severn Room, Business Development Centre

PRESENT:	Cllr Jacqui Seymour	Telford & Wrekin Council (T&WC) - Chair
	Richard Webb	T&WC
	Paul Donohue	T&WC
	Philip Leather	Nevin Leather Associates
	Michael Barker	T&WC
	Lloyd Bradshaw	Beth Johnson Housing Group
	Beverley Woodhead	The Wrekin Housing Trust
	John Pay	T&WC
	Chris Winter	T&WC
	Jean Teichmann	Bromford Housing Group
	Alan Bishop	Transforming Telford
	John Acres	Redrow
	Susanne Fitzpatrick	T&WC (Minutes)
APOLOGIES:	John McNulty	Bournville Village Trust
	John Broadhead	The Wrekin Housing Trust
	Mike Atherton	T&WC
	Emma Pierce-Jenkins	T&WC
	Bernie Lewis	Wrekin Landlords' Association
	Jeremy Crabb	Telford & Wrekin PCT
	Paul Williams	National Housing Federation
	Rob Kilby	Housing Corporation

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Cllr J Seymour welcomed all attendees and introductions were made.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received as recorded above.

3 & 4 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING (21 September 2007) AND MATTERS ARISING

Item 4: a number of issues have been identified since Redrow's presentation on which JA is liaising with CW

The minutes were then approved as a correct record.

5 LAA AND NEW OUTCOME INDICATORS

John Pay (JP) updated the Board on the new round of Local Area Agreements (LAAs), the second generation of which the government sees as the preferred delivery plan for community strategies, focussed on a small number of 'priorities for improvement' that reflect both national and local

priorities - in effect, a 'contract' between T&WC and government to deliver their national priorities locally. The government will then assess the draft local priorities for improvement against *their* perspective on what the priorities for the borough should be, and align them with the headline indicators to identify whether they align or differ. Whichever is the case, government will then work to develop and agree with GOWM, the final 35 local improvement priorities for formal submission to CLG in January 2008.

Discussion took place on JP's report '*The New Local Area Agreement – Our Priorities for Improvement*', following which three key issues were identified:

- *Homelessness* – preventative work; tackling worklessness and attracting skilled workers into the local economy; building to 'Decent Homes' standard
- *Housing provision/growth/development* – number of houses built/percentage of affordable housing (and national/local indicators to support this); temporary accommodation indicators
- *Housing affordability* - dependent on whether planning applications can be processed to accelerate the programme of development within the borough

JP suggested members identify targets against which the council will be monitored. Noted that if the authority *under-performs*, government can put 'interventions' in place (although details of the penalties are not yet known).

JA agreed that 'housing growth and development' should feature as one of the key priorities as developers programme work up to ten years in advance. He considered that the recent shortfall in construction in Telford is due, in the most part, to the lack of land availability allied to the fact that local landowners hold land back in order to achieve the best price.

In summary, PD agreed that the focus should be on the three key priorities outlined above, and that discussion in a wider context be held to determine how to progress matters so as to achieve a balanced approach locally, "*where a sense of community prevails, rather than solely an increase in the number of housing units*".

6 HOUSING MARKET ASSESSMENT – KEY FINDINGS

PL presented the key findings of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). These include:

Key trends

- rising population, with smaller households/more people living alone
- incomes for full-time employees have risen to the regional average but there is evidence of polarisation between households

- higher public sector stock/smaller private rented compared to the national average
- decline in new house building and below RSS target
- vacancies low
- prices rose sharply in 2002-2004, then more slowly
- affordability has worsened 'substantially'
- a significant increase in demand for social rented housing but less so due to people moving into the private rented sector
- projected household growth of 23k for 2004-2026 – significant increases in single and older people

The key conclusion is that the need for affordable housing is growing and has doubled since the last Study in 2005.

Taking account of projected supply (re-lets from existing stock) and reducing the backlog over a five-year period, there is a projected shortfall of 745 affordable homes/annum, of which social rented housing is 405 and other forms of affordable housing (intermediate) is 340 - getting the right *type* and *quality* of housing is vital.

The following points were raised during the discussion:

- The focus appears to be for flats/apartments, though the reason for this is unclear
- Developers have approached WHT seeking to dispose of their housing stock: however, the Trust are not accepting any flats/apartments as there is insufficient demand
- The redevelopment of the Southwater/Town Centre area is seen as 'significant' in attracting a 24 hour economy
- The strongest migration linkages for Telford are with Bridgnorth, Shrewsbury and North Shropshire – Telford is not perceived as a prime location for international migration
- Noted that WHT is receiving an increasing amount of requests for Polish translations for the 'Choose Your Home' scheme
- MB stressed the importance of achieving the right 'mix' of affordable housing – are we estimating numbers accurately? He considered the challenge to be working with partners regarding delivery, and aim to "*do the best we can despite all the barriers*". Once the level of housing provision has been set, buy-to-let investors can buy off-plan, thereby preventing prospective buyers from accessing the housing market. JA explained that Redrow includes a covenant to preclude this practice

- Young people are tending to buy later, whereas the number of middle-aged house buyers is on the increase, possibly due to inheritances etc

JT asked whether the private rented sector will become an aspirational tenure if people cannot afford to buy outright. PL considered this will not be the case as people seem to prefer retaining an element of control over their housing options and buying when they are financially able

- Table 6.2: PL clarified that there will be a number of houses that either fall vacant or become vacant due to people moving up the property ladder

MB suggested that when the sites at Ketley, Lawley and Lightmoor come available, the proportion of sites coming through the development process will help bridge the gaps in affordable housing, *“though we don’t have any influence as to who goes into them”*

- Table 6.6: PL explained that the difference between the intermediate/social split is the way in which the proportions of income to house price would vary

CW thanked PL for his comprehensive presentation, a sentiment echoed by JS. Members were given until 21 December to forward any further comments to CW (chris.winter@telford.gov.uk or tel: 01952 381901). Subject to any revisions, the final report will be circulated in the New Year.

Government guidance says the report must be updated on a regular basis so that it becomes a process of continual review. Noted that the Housing Strategy will be drafted by spring 2008: it will form the basis of further discussion at a future date.

7 UPDATE ON THE HOUSING & PROSPERITY INITIATIVE (HAPI)

RW’s report *‘Update on the Housing and Prosperity Initiative’* gives an update on work being undertaken by the council and its partners to pursue the objective of building 26,500 new homes by 2026 (RSS Option 2). The council’s Cabinet has endorsed Option 2 on the basis of clear linkages between housing/economic growth and a focus on brown field sites.

MB reported that the LDF Core Strategy has been declared sound up to 2016 and a project team has been established to map out key work streams, milestones, partnerships requirements and consider resource implications.

JA asked why sites have not come available through the planning process and what can be done to escalate the procedure? He suggested that in order to achieve the 2026 target, Telford needs to look *beyond* the current strategic sites of Lawley, Lightmoor and Ketley. MB confirmed that this is the intention, but because the LDF has been prepared with a ‘strategic’ viewpoint, the Inspectors were not convinced the *detail* is clear.

Discussions are ongoing with English Partnerships and the Housing Corporation to formalise governance arrangements and work streams that

can be taken forward on a multi-agency basis.

8 UPDATE ON LDF AND CORE STRATEGY

MB reported that the Planning Inspector had found the council's core strategy to be 'sound' and that based upon evidence available at the time of the Inspector's examination, the plan is adopted up to 2016: associated development plan documentation needs to reflect this time-line. A review of the plan will need to be undertaken in due course.

The plan allows for the development of 13,000 new homes in Telford, 600 in Newport and 170 in rural areas (primarily Tibberton, Water's Upton and High Ercall), actual numbers for which will be marginally lower due to prior completions. The plan now requires to be formally adopted by the council - it cannot be changed but *can* be corrected.

The Regional Spatial Strategy will undergo Examination in Public in 2008: by autumn 2008, the final report will be received and the regional planning body will approve its content. It is unlikely the RSS will reduce its housing numbers – indeed, it may apportion them in a way so as to raise allocations throughout the region.

RW thanked MB for his update, and welcomed him back after a period of ill health.

MB asked that members' thanks be extended to EP-J for her dedication and commitment to finalising this work, as she is leaving the authority on 30 November. Members' thanks were duly recorded in appreciation of EP-J's valued contribution to the Board. Her successor has been appointed and will commence in post in February 2008.

9 PRESENTATION ON SOUTHWATER/TELFORD TOWN CENTRE

AB gave a presentation on the proposed redevelopment of the Town Centre which has been bought by Apollo Real Estate and Hark Group for £442m. Apollo and Hark are now working with Transforming Telford/TWC/AWM/EP to upgrade the Centre as part of a wider regeneration initiative: it will add more retail and leisure facilities, develop residential space and provide links from public transport, the M54 and M6 motorways.

The focus is to develop an area which complements Telford's existing and developing 'core' to appeal to investors, residents and visitors: this presents a "*huge opportunity*" to develop an 18-hour, 7 day/week sustainable heart in the Town Centre.

Given the configuration of the Southwater area, the residential development will feature predominantly apartments - 300-400 in the core area - with the remainder in the wider area including Hollinswood and Malinsgate and possibly Old Park and Central Priorslee.

BW commented that from a social housing viewpoint, houses would be more in demand than apartments: whilst AB accepted this view, he believes that

family housing can be provided in close proximity to the Town Centre, thereby bridging this gap.

The Southwater area offers a “*quick, strategic first site*” to link with the civic area and Town Park which butts up to the shopping area and encompasses a residential area. Later phases of development are already being discussed with Apollo and Hark. MB commented that “*though great opportunities exist, we need to get it right first time*” and asked that the developers ensure the *economic* goal does not outweigh the provision of *community* facilities.

JS thanked AB for his presentation. Copies of Transforming Telford’s brochure outlining their proposals for the development of the Southwater area were circulated. Further information can be viewed on their website – <http://www.transformingtelford.co.uk/latest-news/93/>.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

JA reported that he will no longer be able to represent Redrow at future meetings. The Board extended their thanks to JA for his contribution to the Board.

11 DATES FOR MEETINGS 2008

- 15 February – Severn Room, Business Development Centre
- 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.