

HOUSING CONSULTATIVE GROUP

MONDAY 3 DECEMBER 2001 AT 2.00 PM

PRESENT: The Executive Portfolio Holder for Health and Well Being:
Councillor Bloxham (Chairman)

Councillors Mrs Bowman, Farmer, Mrs Fisher, Hodgson B and
Joscelyne.

ALSO

PRESENT: Mr P Anson - Assistant Director, Riverside Housing Group
Mr J Adams and Ms R Notman - Tenants' Advisory Group (TAG)
Mr C Simpson - PEP North
Mr D Thomas - City Treasurer
Mr D Steele - Accountancy Manager
Mr T Bramley - Director of Housing
Mrs L Dixon - Housing Transfer Project Officer
Ms I Davison - Unison Representative
Mr A Pateman - Liberal Democrat and Independent Political
Research Assistant
Mr J Shires - Labour Political Research Assistant
Mrs M Durham - Committee Clerk

HCG.16/01 WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed Mr Adams and Ms Notman to their first meeting of the Housing Consultative Group.

HCG.17/01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Mr J Zitron, HACAS Chapman Hendy.

HCG.18/01 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Pursuant to Minute HCG.15/01 (LSVT - Member Briefing), the Director of Housing advised that a briefing paper was due to be circulated to all Members that afternoon.

Subject to the above, the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2001 were received.

HCG.19/01 COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The Housing Transfer Project Officer presented report H.109/01 concerning the Communications Strategy and Consultation Plans which would guide the stock transfer consultation during the period to the ballot.

The Strategy appended to the report took account of all the comments and suggestions which had been made on the draft and represented a jointly agreed approach to the delivery of a comprehensive programme of consultation in Carlisle over the coming months. The Strategy had also been amended to reflect the guidance and requirements of the Housing Transfer Guidance for the 2002 programme which had been issued by the DTLR.

The Housing Consultative Group noted the Communication Strategy as appended to report H.109/01.

The Executive Portfolio Holder for Health and Well Being undertook to recommend that the Council Executive approve the Strategy at its next meeting to be held on 17 December 2001.

HCG.20/01 HOUSING TRANSFER PROJECT PLAN

The Director of Housing presented a joint report with the City Treasurer (H.110/01) providing an update on the Project Plan for the housing transfer process in terms of preparations for both the City Council and Riverside Group.

The Director outlined in detail the key decision-making points contained within the Plan commenting that, in order to fit the cycle of Housing Consultative Group/Executive meetings around those, it was recommended that the meeting of this Group scheduled for 25 February 2002 be moved back by one week to 4 March 2002.

The Director then provided details of certain key events which were running behind schedule, together with variances potentially affecting the transfer date or project delivery and responded to Members' questions.

In conclusion, he commented that the timetable was now definitive and it was therefore recommended that it be signed off by the Executive.

In considering the matter, Members congratulated the Director of Housing and staff involved in the production of what was an excellent Project Plan.

The Housing Consultative Group noted progress against the Project Plan, and agreed that the meeting of the Group scheduled to take place on 25 February 2002 be moved back by one week to 4 March 2002.

The Executive Portfolio Holder for Health and Well Being undertook to recommend that the Executive note and sign off the Housing Transfer Project Plan at its meeting to be held on 17 December 2001.

HCG.21/01 'DUE DILIGENCE' ITEMS – UPDATE FROM RIVERSIDE GROUP

Mr Anson presented report H.114/01 concerning progress on a number of the 'Due Diligence' items identified as outstanding at previous meetings of the Housing Consultative Group, namely rents, Careline, stock condition, housing demand and land ownership. He added that there remained a number of areas where further work was required and Riverside would update this Group accordingly in due course.

With regard to the new rent structure, the Director of Housing commented that the HRA figures were now available and it was his intention to report to the Executive with a long-term strategy from the point of view of both the City Council and Riverside Group.

Mr Anson, the Director of Housing and the City Treasurer then responded to Members' questions.

The Housing Consultative Group noted progress made in respect of the 'Due Diligence' items.

The Director of Housing would report on the new rent structure to the next meeting of the Executive.

HCG.22/01 TENANTS' ADVISORY GROUP

The Housing Transfer Project Officer presented report H.113/01 concerning issues being examined by the Tenants' Advisory Group (TAG) and Priority Estates Project (PEP) since the meeting of the Housing Consultative Group on 12 November 2001.

She commented that the TAG had been discussing a number of issues and outlined their views in respect of the following:

Resident involvement on the TAG

It was recognised that the interests of tenants and, to a lesser extent leaseholders, were paramount and the views of City Council tenants should guide discussions with Riverside. The TAG fully backed the approach whereby when an issue had to be voted upon, only tenants would vote.

Shadow Board and Members

The District Auditor had clearly advised that there was a potential conflict of interest for tenant/leaseholder Shadow Board Members on the TAG. Two members of the TAG were to be recommended as Board Members for Carlisle Housing Association and there was concern as to how their dual roles may be perceived by the wider body of tenants. The issue would be discussed further at their next meeting.

TAG representatives on the Housing Consultative Group

As a result of the above, the TAG had nominated two new representatives to the Housing Consultative Group, namely Mr J Adams and Ms R Notman, both of whom were Council tenants and attended meetings of the TAG.

The TAG had received an update from Riverside with regard to the Right to Manage, Possession Ground 8 and Possession Ground 11. They had also begun to look at the second policy review area (the constitution of the new RSL) and that would be debated further at the next meeting.

The Housing Consultative Group noted the views of the TAG as detailed in report H.113/01.

HCG.23/01 RECRUITMENT TO THE SHADOW BOARD OF CARLISLE HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Mr Anson presented report H.111/01 prepared by Riverside Group Officers on proposed Shadow Board Members for Carlisle Housing Association (CHA).

He outlined the selection process, which had been open and transparent, and provided details of the proposed Shadow Board Members. Since preparation of the report, interviews had taken place which had resulted in the appointment of Mr Derek Hampson and Ms Susan Gilbertson to the two remaining tenant positions on the Shadow Board.

He added that a training and support package was being developed for Shadow Board Members, including a visit to Head Office and a meeting with the Group Board.

The Housing Consultative Group noted the position with regard to the make up of the Shadow Board of the proposed Carlisle Housing Association.

HCG.24/01 APPOINTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS ADVISERS

The Housing Transfer Project Officer presented report H.108/01 concerning the proposal to appoint Communications Advisers to the Council on the housing transfer process.

The report had been considered by the Executive on 26 November 2001 at which time the recommendations were agreed.

The Housing Consultative Group noted the position with regard to the appointment of Communications Advisers to the Council.

[The meeting ended at 2.55 pm]