



COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Committee Report

Public

Date of Meeting: 12th February 2009

Title: PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN CARLISLE CITY
COUNCIL AND CARLISLE HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Report of: Director of Development

Report reference: DS.15/09

Summary:

This report gives an update on progress to date on work being undertaken through the Partnership Agreement between Carlisle City Council (CCC) and Carlisle Housing Association (CHA).

Questions for / input required from Scrutiny:

Input relating to the role of the Agreement and work being undertaken.

Recommendations:

That the Partnership Agreement and the work being progressed through it should be continued.

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Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: None

1. Background

- 1.1 Carlisle Housing Association (CHA) was formed on 9th December 2002, following a Large Scale Voluntary Transfer from Carlisle City Council. In the Transfer Contract under the Fifth Schedule, clause 2.3 in relation to Information and Liaison CHA agreed:

For an initial period of five years from the completion date to attend six monthly liaison meetings with the Council (or more frequently if required) and provide all appropriate information in order that the Council may satisfy itself that the Association is fulfilling its obligations under the Transfer Contract and assisting the Council in fulfilling its obligations in relation to housing and its enabling and strategic housing role.

- 1.2 Following the initial five-year period the relationship between the Council and CHA has developed into a partnership. Work started in late 2007 to agree a Partnership Agreement between the two organisations, which would be the framework for future working. The draft document was consulted upon and taken through the political process in February and March 2008. The Partnership Agreement has been operational from April 2008.

2. Work Areas

- 2.1 The Partnership Agreement covers the following work areas:

- Community Investment fund
- Neighbourhood/Ward walks
- Respect Agenda/Anti social behaviour
- Raffles Vision
- Neighbourhood Plans
- Aids and Adaptations
- Supporting people
- Vulnerable Persons
- Choice Based Lettings
- Homelessness/Nominations Agreement
- Provision
- Mortgage Rescue
- Housing Benefit
- Housing Strategy and Decent Homes

- The Environment
- Promoting partnership Working

2.2 Work has been progressed under these work areas. Tasks have been identified under each work area within the Action Plan attached as Appendix one together with completion dates. The action plan also gives the current position on work as reported to the review meeting at the end of September 2008.

2.3 Specific areas of work to highlight to date following the Action Plan update are:

Neighbourhood/Ward Walks – Discussions have been held but further talks are needed to try and put an agreed timetable of walks together.

Aids and Adaptations – Both organisations have met to look at the levels of need and available budgets further to the proposals in the Action Plan. The new process needs to be finalised before 1/4/09.

Vulnerable people/Nominations– Process for letting properties to those in need now reviewed and working well.

Choice Based Lettings – Cumbria bid has been successful. Project is now being developed countywide.

Mortgage Rescue – The Government national mortgage rescue scheme started on 1/1/09 has been looked at through a liaison group including the CCC, CHA, Eden Housing Association and Eden District Council. Work on running the CHA scheme in parallel is being taken forward.

3. Review Meetings

3.1 These are held on a 6 monthly basis and attended by a manager from each organisation, the Portfolio Holder from CCC and a board member from CHA. Attached at Appendix two are the minutes of the first review meeting held on 30/9/08. A second review meeting is due to be held in March 2009.

Appendix I - Draft partnership agreement action plan

Community Investment Fund (CIF)	Tasks	Persons Responsible	Completion Date	Current Position
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding for the CIF scheme provided by CHA in years 1-5 post transfer to be continued into 2008 / 2009. Carlisle City Council to nominate a representative to participate in the CIF approval / appraisal panel process. 	1. CHA to review current CIF procedure and undertake an impact assessment and set up a new procedure for future CIF funding. CHA to consult with Carlisle CC on targets, outcomes and mechanisms.	HOGD HSM	1 st September 2008	Report to CHA board 11 th September. Some amendments required taking in group funding.
	2. Carlisle CC to commit appropriate representation on future approval procedures.	HSM	Ongoing	CCC will provide representation when required and if meetings can be notified.
	3. External funding officer to agree to meet nominated CHA officer on a quarterly basis / as required.	EFO NRO	1 st September 2008	The CIF Review and resulting new policy would be presented to O&S as soon as practicable after our September Board meeting. Neil Griffiths would continue to represent the City on our Approval Group additional meetings with NRO's would not be necessary. Quarterly reports would be made to Board and O&S (if required) detailing financial commitment / spend, outcomes and other points of interest.

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Neighbourhood / Ward Walks (inspections)	Tasks	Persons Responsible	Completion Date	Current Position
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbourhood walks currently being carried out by CHA and Ward walks being carried out by Carlisle City Council. • Both organizations to commit to invite representation from partner organization for both schemes from 2008 onwards. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree the overall programme of patch walks / ward walks jointly, where possible undertake patch walks as part of the overall ward walks. Ensure that communication with tenants & ward members takes place as part of this process. 2. Set up a system to enable combined diarying ahead of inspections with scope for both joint / specific actions, with responsibilities defined – named individuals. 3. Set up a consistent process/recordings method for both patch/ward walks, where possible including shared performance indicators. 4. The outcome of patch walks and ward walks to be communicated to key named individuals in both organizations with a joint format for informing people about outcomes. 5. Agree any joint promotional procedure for inspections and ensure relevant information or data is shared as appropriate. 	<p>HOO</p> <p>HOES</p>	<p>1st September 2008</p>	<p>CCC have agreed to ward walks being joint & led by the City Council, but due to resource shortages unable to draw up a timetable.</p>

Respect Agenda / Anti Social Behavior	Tasks	Persons Responsible	Completion Date	Current Position
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both organizations to commit to work in partnership on a number of initiatives in relation to the reduction of anti social behaviour in the district. Initiatives include the development of the anti social behaviour unit and the multi agency partnership. CHA and Carlisle CC to support the crime and disorder reduction partnership through membership of the task groups and involvement in development and delivery of partnership projects to reduce crime and anti social behaviour on CHA estates. CHA to continue to provide information to Carlisle CC in relation to progress of the delivery of estate management and tenancy enforcement services. 	1. CHA and Carlisle CC to promote joint approach to Botcherby regeneration and subsequently to agree to any joint funding bids in relation to ASB related issues on Botcherby.	HOGD TBA	Ongoing	Applicable when Required.
	2. Both organizations to commit to involvement in CDRP, the ASB unit and in MAPPA.	HOO / TSM HSM	Ongoing	Strategic & Operational groups currently attended by Council members & staff from Carlisle City Council.
	3. CHA agree to provide Carlisle CC with PI's in relation to ASB if required.	HOO HSM	If required	Available when required

Raffles Vision	Tasks	Persons Responsible	Completion Date	Current Position
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To continue to work in partnership in relation to the progression of initiatives associated with the Raffles Vision. 	1. CHA to provide letter of support to Carlisle CC for DH funding bid.	HOGD HEO	May 1 st 2008	Provided at time of bid by HOGD. – complete
	2. Carlisle CC provide update report to CHA on Raffles progress, providing information on any future recommendations by 1 st Sept 08.	HEO HOGD	September 1 st 2008	The Extra Care Scheme off Low Meadow was awarded over £4.7m of funding by the DOH on 22 / 7/08. CCC Interviewing prospective Partners for additional affordable housing site 2/10/08.
	3. CHA to provide Carlisle CC with information (if required) regarding progress leading to achievement of 100% decent homes by April 2010.	HOGD	Ongoing	Estimated 86 % by end of 2008.

Neighbourhood Plans	Tasks	Persons Responsible	Completion Date	Current Position
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carlisle CC to support the development of new neighbourhood initiatives at CHA including the provision of appropriate demographic data to support the revision of neighbourhood plans. 	1. CHA producing neighborhood plans between 2008 -2014 Carlisle CC to support process, by providing data and information when require and CHA to involve Carlisle CC in the consultation process.	HOGD HEO	Ongoing	Botcherby strategy on going and commenced. Neighborhood Investment strategies being carried out by J Blenkinship – should be complete by March 2009.
	2. CHA to ensure that the data from the patch walk process to be included in the neighbourhood plans.	HOGD	Ongoing	If required

Aids and Adaptations	Tasks	Persons Responsible	Completion Date	Current Position
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both organizations to commit to review the facilitation of aids and adaptations for CHA tenants after 2008, in order to streamline the process and 	1. CHA to review current budget commitment to aids and adaptations and to consult with Carlisle CC regarding the outcome.	ALM	September 1 st 2008	CHA budget commitment now set

ensure best practice is delivered for service users.	<p>2. Both organizations to commit to meet to agree a new proposal.</p> <p>3. Both organizations commit to adopting new process.</p>	<p>HSM HOO / ALM</p> <p>HSM HOO / ALM</p>	<p>September 1st 2008</p> <p>April 1st 2009</p>	<p>Meeting with CCC Grants staff arranged for 7/10/08 to review the aids & adaptations procedure.</p>
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Supporting People	Tasks	Persons Responsible	Completion Date	Current Position
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carlisle CC to work in partnership with CHA regarding any bids that may be required for developing supported housing services. 	Carlisle CC and CHA agree to ensure they keep each partner informed about forthcoming developments in relation to supported housing services	<p>HSM HOO / ALM</p>	Ongoing	Information being exchanged where developments are taking place.

Vulnerable Persons	Tasks	Persons Responsible	Completion Date	Current Position
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carlisle CC to support CHA in the provision of information in relation to the development of a strategy for older people, young persons and other vulnerable groups. Both organizations to commit to review all possible access solutions to enable the most vulnerable applicants with specific needs, or disabilities to be provided with housing solutions 	1. CHA to consider holding a register of adapted properties	HOO	September 1 st 2008	Commenced, in progress much bigger task than anticipated.
	2. Carlisle CC and CHA to develop a procedure for dealing with applicants with complex needs.	HHM HOO / TSM	July 1 st 2008	Pilot scheme being implemented, review needs to be undertaken
	3. CHA and Carlisle CC to commit to work in partnership to review design options for future developments. CHA provide Carlisle CC with a detailed investment plan on housing for older persons.	HOGD HEO	Ongoing & before April 1 st 2010	Will be undertaken as required
	4. CHA needs to consult with Carlisle CC in relation to the development of strategies relating to vulnerable persons	HOO HEO	Ongoing	Draft older persons strategy to CHA board approved 11/09/08, awaiting further feedback from CCC, however comment received regarding provision of alarm monitoring services.

Choice Based Lettings (CBL)	Tasks	Persons Responsible	Completion Date	Current Position
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both organizations (alongside other local authority and Housing Association partners) to support the review of the recent failed Cumbria bid to the CLG for funding to implement an effective CBL system within the sub-region. 	<p>1. CHA and Carlisle CC agree a strategic joint approach to supporting proposed (2nd) sub regional bid for CBL.</p>	<p>HOO / TSM HSM</p>	<p>October 1st 2008</p>	<p>S / Lakes still taking the lead on bid CHA & CCC still working together as part of the larger group of RSL's. Bid likely to meet new mid October deadline.</p>
	<p>2. Carlisle CC and CHA to review options to ensure arrangements in place from Oct 2008 if bid not successful (policy must be in place by 2010).</p>	<p>HSM HOO / TSM</p>	<p>October 1st 2008</p>	<p>May not be required, subject to above.</p>

Affordable / social housing provision	Tasks	Persons Responsible	Completion Date	Current Position
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both organizations to agree to work in partnership in relation to the development and delivery of proposals for new build homes, housing corporation bids and meeting housing need in accordance with the district survey to meet housing market assessments 2006-11. Where planning issues may exist, both organizations to agree to ensure effective dialogue takes place, so as not to hinder the progress of the timely delivery of schemes in order to meet housing need requirements. 	1. CHA to provide a list of potential schemes for new development through housing corporation RME.	HOGD HEO	September 1 st 2008	CHA has written to HC outlining potential pipeline schemes.
	2. Carlisle CC to arrange joint meeting with Housing Corporation.	HEO	July 1 st 2008	Meetings with Capita, CHA and CC ongoing on 3 monthly basis
	3. CHA to arrange regular meeting with other land holders and Carlisle CC (housing and planning).	HOGD	April 2008 onwards	Complete
	4. CHA to arrange regular liaison meetings with Carlisle CC and other partners (inc. Adult Social Care) in relation to CHA sheltered housing redevelopment project & to keep Carlisle CC informed of progress on redevelopment plans.	HOGD	Ongoing and up to April 2010	
	5. CHA to attend future community overview and scrutiny committee to consult regarding the CHA Asset Management strategy, development strategy and older person strategy.	HOGD HOO	July 2008	Completed
	6. Carlisle CC and CHA to develop a joint move on accommodation strategy.	HHM	December 1 st 2008	
	7. Carlisle CC to support CHA on possible social home buy bid to Housing Corporation.	HOGD HEO	April 1 st 2009	11

Mortgage Rescue	Tasks	Persons Responsible	Completion Date	Current Position
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both organizations to work towards developing a pilot for a mortgage rescue scheme in 2008/9 	1. CHA to draft criteria for eligible persons set up procedure and tenure numbering and liaise with Carlisle CC and Cumberland B S.	HOGD HSM	July 1 st 2008	Complete. Awaiting draft criteria.
	2. Carlisle CC to review the possibility of bidding for internal resources (Capital Funding).	HSM	September 1 st 2008	Review ongoing regarding internal funding. Government has launched a national mortgage rescue scheme.
	3. CHA to gain approval to above process (Board/SMT)	HOGD	June 1 st 2008	Complete
	4. CHA to agree lease with Cumberland B. S for shared equity option.	HOGD	June 1 st 2008	Complete and on-going with dummy applications currently.

Housing Benefit	Tasks	Persons Responsible	Completion Date	Current Position
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carlisle CC to commit to work with CHA in order to achieve a service level agreement for the effective delivery of housing benefit applications, in order to ensure housing debt is kept to a minimum. 	<p>I. CHA and Carlisle CC to review and update existing SLA which is now several years old.</p>	<p>HOO</p> <p>HBM</p>	<p>1st September 2008</p>	<p>Delayed, however e – mail sent to Elaine Turner 23/9/08</p>

Housing Strategy and Decent Homes	Tasks	Persons Responsible	Completion Date	Current Position
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CHA to support Carlisle City Council on taking a leading role on initiatives in relation to both the Carlisle Housing Strategy and the Homelessness Strategy. Both organisations agree to share information and expertise in supporting the initiative of providing decent, affordable homes with an emphasis on warmth and thermal efficiency and eliminating fuel poverty. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> CHA to continue to attend CHSPG meetings on a 6 monthly basis and provide support as deemed appropriate – on issue of empty homes/ decent homes/ supporting vulnerable people. (see also homelessness). 	<p>HOGD</p> <p>HOO</p>	Ongoing	Ongoing
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> CHA to provide an affordable warmth (/ similar) improvements for its properties - settling appropriate environmental issues. 	HOGD	April 1 st 2009	<p>TRG corporate objective. KD to speak to J Hayes as to Group perspective and actions in order to inform CHA move forward.</p>

The Environment	Tasks	Persons Responsible	Completion Date	Current Position
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both organizations to agree to work collaboratively both through open dialogue and through existing neighbourhood forum meetings where the aim will be to improve the environment, recreation facilities and open spaces in neighbourhoods where there are issues of shared concern. Both organizations to commit to working together in order to come up with a range of solutions to ensure there is a better control of fly tipping on estates and to meet the requirements of effective household waste disposal in accordance with new recycling laws. 	<p>1. CHA to develop an action plan which identifies environmental issues for Botcherby, to be used as a template to be rolled out to other estates by April 09, to consult with Carlisle CC as part of the Botcherby regeneration process and feed in the outcomes of patch/ward walks into process.</p>	<p>HOGD TBA</p>	Ongoing	<p>Strategy currently under preparation.</p>
	<p>2. Both organizations will continue to contribute to neighborhood forum process as required</p>	<p>Various Various</p>	As required	

Promoting Partnership Working	Tasks	Persons Responsible	Completion Date	Current Position
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each organisation to agree to be supportive of opportunities which arise to promote partnership working through joint media ventures and initiatives. Both organisations to commit to reviewing specific actions which arise from this document through the proposed regular strategic liaison meetings. 	1. To agree dates and more detailed protocols for appropriate Officers, Councilors and Board members to attend future review meetings – 12 months ahead.	HOO HSM	September 1 st 2008	First meeting planned 30/9/08
	2. Appropriate officers attending these meetings to review/ monitor progress on partnership action plan.	HOO HSM	Ongoing	
	3. CHA and Carlisle CC Marketing. Officers to meet and provide a joint statement / action plan regarding future joint media venture/initiatives.	CM CME	September 1 st 2008	Delayed due to staff absence

Job titles

CHA

HOGD Head of Growth & Development
 HOO Head of Operations
 NRO Neighbourhood Regeneration Officer
 TSM Tenancy services Manager
 ALM Assisted Living Manager
 CME Communications & Marketing Executive

Carlisle CC

HSM Housing services Manager
 HOES Head of Environmental Services
 HEO Housing Enabling Officer
 HHM Housing & Hostels Manager
 HBM Housing Benefits Manager
 CM Communications Manager
 TBA post to be arranged

Appendix Two - Partnership Agreement Action Plan

Six month review meeting 30th September 2008

Present Paul Taylor (Carlisle Housing Association's (CHA) Head of Operations), Simon Taylor (Carlisle City Council's (CCC) Housing Manager), Councillor Luckley (CCC Portfolio Holder for Housing), Rita Notman (CHA Board Member) Laura Smith (minutes).

I Review of Partnership Agreement Action Plan

I.1 It was noted that an Action Plan had been drafted to provide the detail below the objectives of the Partnership Agreement, the work had been completed by CCC's Jeremy Hewitson and Simon Taylor alongside CHA's PT and Kim Doran.

I.2 It was agreed that the objectives would be reviewed individually to assess additional activities which were required.

I.3 Community Investment Fund (CIF)

I.3.1 It was noted that in regard to funding of the CIF a procedure was now in place for an agreement to be made on an annual basis.

I.3.2 It was agreed that CCC would decide whether it was suitable for Kim Doran to make regular presentations to CCC's Overview & Scrutiny Committee regarding the progress of the CIF. ST

I.4 Neighbourhood / Ward Walks (inspections)

I.4.1 It was noted that progress was limited in this area. PT reported to the group that he had come across some obstacles both at CHA and CCC. One of the main issues is that CCC's lead in this area is Les Tickner's Team who have several conflicting demands on their department. Currently an agreement is trying to be sought in order to move forward effectively. In addition land ownership is an ongoing issue as is grounds maintenance.

I.4.2 It was agreed that it would be suitable to look at impartial process mapping, drawing both sides together aligning the processes from both perspectives. In the first instance Councillor Luckley and ST agreed to liaise with Les Tickner and other CCC colleagues to look at how to move forward. OL/ST

I.5 Respect Agenda / Anti Social Behaviour

I.5.1 It was noted that progress is expected in the next six months within this area. The current focus on Botcherby particularly the presence of a neighbourhood office is having a positive impact on the ASB in the neighbourhood.

I.5.2 It was agreed that a decision would be deferred on the most suitable method for CHA to communicate to CCC regarding Pls in relation to ASB.

I.6 Raffles Vision

- 1.6.1 A significant amount of progress has been made in regard to the achievement of 100% decent homes by April 2010. In fact discussions have started regarding what to do following the achievement of decent homes for instance increasing energy efficiency.
- 1.7 Neighbourhood Plans
- 1.7.1 It was noted that Neighbourhood investment strategies are currently being carried out by Jackie Blenkinsip. PT agreed to keep CCC informed of progress made. PT
- 1.8 Aids and Adaptations
- 1.8.1 It was noted that a meeting highlighted in the action plan to take place in September has been delayed between Alan Dixon and John Little. The meeting has been rescheduled to take place on 7th October it is hoped that a new proposal will be agreed during the meeting.
- 1.8.2 In regards to aids and adaptations CHA's is currently focusing on Westhill House, Freshfield Court and Morton Court.
- 1.8.3 It was noted that CHA is more than willing to take a leading role in Cumbria possessing both the resources and the capacity required to provide this service. CCC's representative agreed to keep this in mind.
- 1.9 Vulnerable Persons
- 1.9.1 It was noted that CHA manages a high percentage of affordable housing within the county (around 80%) with a limited turnover from other RSLs.
- 1.9.2 It was noted that in considering holding a register of adapted properties CHA has discovered huge cost implications as there are records missing of adaptations made prior to the stock transfer. A process has begun to record adaptations when properties become vacant and letters have been sent requesting this information with little success. Progress is building over time.
- 1.9.3 OL suggested the use of repair jobs to assist with the documenting of adaptations, PT agreed to look into producing a proforma for this purpose.
- 1.9.4 To achieve the aim of developing a procedure for dealing with applicants with complex needs, CHA has increased the number of referrals taken from CCC to 50% with CCC reviewing their duty process to homeless and others. It has been identified that additional efforts need to be made to achieve this aim.
A review meeting will take place shortly to review a pilot scheme which has been implemented.
- 1.9.5 It was noted that CHA has sent CCC a detailed investment plan on housing for older persons. CHA are currently awaiting comment.
- 1.10 Choice Based Lettings (CBL)
- 1.10.1 The progress of the sub regional bid fro CBL was briefly discussed.

1.11 Homeless / Nominations Agreement

- 1.11.1 PT identified that although CHA take 90% of all of CCC's homeless referrals there is no specific mention of CHA within CCC Homeless Strategy CHA would appreciate some recognition for the significant part they play in assisting CCC with their plan. ST noted PT's comments.

1.12 Affordable / social housing provision

- 1.12.1 It was noted that CHA would keep CCC informed of progress on redevelopment plans through a presentation to Councillors possibly through CHA's Board which includes Councillors.

1.13 Mortgage Rescue

- 1.13.1 It was agreed that as CCC is currently awaiting more information from the Government regarding the launch of a national mortgage rescue scheme the completion date for bidding for resources would be revised until February 1st 2009.

1.14 Housing Benefit

- 1.14.1 It was agreed that although there is a need to review and update the existing Service Level Agreement regarding housing benefit it is currently working and meets the needs of both organisations. Progress has been delayed however will be taken to ensure a review occurs.

1.15 The Environment

- 1.15.1 In relation to environmental issues a strategy is currently under preparation as part of the work being completed by Jackie Blenkinship.

1.16 Promoting Partnership Working

- 1.16.1 It was noted that PT and ST have agreed to meet on a quarterly basis to review the progress of the action plan. It was agreed that due to the current difficulties with the economy the next formal review meeting would take place in six months time. PT

- 1.16.2 PT requested that a picture of the signing of the Partnership agreement would be placed in CCC newsletter to complement the press release made within CHA. OL agreed to speak to CCC's marketing team regarding the inclusion. OL

2 Improvements in void performance

- 2.1 Following interest from CCC's representatives regarding the improvements in void turnaround times, PT invited Lesley Telford in to the meeting to share the accurate figures with CCC.

- 2.2 It was noted that in August 2007 there had been 253 empty properties comprising of 170 policy voids with 83 operational voids this figure has been reduced to 147 in August 2008 comprising of 87 categorised in options appraisal (sheltered housing stock) with 60

operational.

- 2.3 In addition the void turnaround time has been reduced from 52 days in August 2007 to 47.5 days in March 2008. This figures has improved further with last weeks performance reaching 27.8 days.
- 2.4 LT continued to inform the CCC representatives of CHA's Corporate Plan objective to raise all performance indicators above the national average. In relation to void properties the sheltered housing units in options appraisal is having an effect on the performance however a decision on there progress in this area is expected very soon.
- 2.5 It was noted that the average spend per void property is £3,000, with the cost of evictions and abandonments costing considerably more but remaining in the minor repairs category and effecting the void performance.
- 2.6 Currently £90,000 of rechargable repairs have been identified from April 08, a process of invoicing has begun.