

Denise Moses  
Chair of  
Tenants Advisory Group, (Carlisle Housing Association)  
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Carlisle City Councillor Mike Boaden  
Chair of Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee  
Carlisle City Council  
Civic Centre  
Rickergate  
Carlisle

12<sup>th</sup> July 06

Dear Mr Boaden, - Re- Carlisle Housing Association (CHA).

As Chair of TAG I have been asked by the group to advise you as chairman of your group that monitors CHA, of our concerns as to how CHA are operating at this present time.

1. On 16<sup>th</sup> February 06 a Council meeting was held to receive *Performance Information* from CHA, (*Report Ref DS. 03/06*). Since then our group has asked CHA for copies of this information to assist us in our monitoring role, we have been denied this on several occasions for differing reasons, the latest being that the information that was presented to your group was inaccurate. We believe that it is important that your group is made aware that the information provided is inaccurate because the City Council not only makes certain decisions based on this information, but also makes this factual information available to other interested 'Stakeholders' to act on including funding and grant assisting bodies.
2. CHA have recently changed their repairs response times, which were originally agreed as part of the 'Offer Document Promises' in the 'LSVT of 2003'. These new proposals were unanimously rejected by our 'Repairs Liaison Committee' as providing no better a service to our tenants. Mr Patrick Leonard chose to ignore our views and went over our heads directly to the tenants giving them just 7 days to reply. This resulted in less than 10% of the tenants responding realising a result in real terms of less than 7% of the tenants in favour of the new proposals. CHA have then turned this figure around by stating that they have 84% of Tenants, **that responded** in favour of the new proposals so they therefore have a clear majority to implement the new proposals. This clearly shows that CHA are prepared to manipulate figures to suit their needs and not those of the tenants, prepared to not only ignore but refuse to 'Consult' properly with Tenant representatives and allow for a full and proper consultation time. CHA will now use these contrived percentages to contact the City Council and

deceive them into having the terms of the 'Offer Document' amended in order to act in the *best interest of the 'Tenants'*. This is not acceptable to our group and nor do we believe should it be acceptable behaviour to the City Council. It is also interesting to note that any new Residents Associations that wish to form HAVE TO prove that they have 20% involvement by CHA Tenants to be recognised, there is an old saying "That what is good for the Goose is good for the Gander" except, apparently, where CHA are concerned.

3. Last year CHA applied direct to the 'Shareholders' at their AGM to have the majority of the 'Rules of Association' amended, there were no consultations with the recognised Tenants / Residents Associations, no consultation with the Leaseholders Group, The Carlisle & Rural Tenants Federation or TAG, even the shareholders had only 14 days notice to study the implications of a very complicated legal Document which left them with no opportunity to go back to their Residents Associations, that had elected them, to seek advice. Again this was simply ratified by the City Council.
4. In January this year CHA wrote to all tenants requesting applications for 'Tenant Board Members', **and simply appointed** 3 of the applicants in direct contravention of the 'Offer Document' promises that the Tenants would **elect** their own representatives. At this years AGM the 3 'appointed' Tenant Board Members should resign and stand for re-election. This does not appear to be happening as the AGM is in September and CHA have not advertised the 'Elections' through the Tenants / Residents Associations so that they can elect their own representatives. This process usually takes several months to prepare as the Associations meet at best on a monthly basis and CHA have to seek approval from the Riverside Group of any potential Board Members before election at the AGM. So again the Tenants and their representatives will not be consulted. CHA will simply ignore the Tenants rights and **again appoint who CHA want**.
5. A Member of our Group has been requesting for several meetings now the 'Neighbourhood Investment Plans' for each of CHA's 18 recognised Neighbourhoods Estates, again we have received several reasons for them not being available with the latest being that the 'Regeneration Department' are now updating them. Firstly these form part of the 'Master Plan' as detailed in the much lauded '*Carlisle Housing Association 2 Years on Document*' published in January 2005 which states that the master plan was prepared in association with the Tenants, their Representatives and Communities, this clearly was not the case as we have not even seen them and now they are being updated and again with out our input. The other inconsistency is that these neighbourhood investment plans detail CHA's spending plans in their first 'Five Years' and we are now in year 3 and CHA are clearly already acting on these outdated plans, so why the secrecy? Again what has happened to Tenant Involvement? In a recent Tenant Newsletter, CHA have asked for Residents

views on the next Five Year Plan, so it is absolutely clear that we will have no say in the first Five Year Plan.

6. Our group have requested on many occasions to be given copies of CHA Board minutes and last year after 9 Months of arguing we finally received them, but again this year we are being deliberately denied them and again we are falling behind with the issuing of them and are being told that as we can not change what the Board have decided then it is pointless to provide us with them. Yet at the same time they are forcing us to change the way in which we 'Consult' with them in order to apparently have more say before decisions are actually made, clearly this is just talk in order to dupe the Housing Corporation into believing that they are working in 'Partnership' with us.

It is clear to our group that CHA are deliberately not working with our Groups, the Leaseholders or the Tenants and that we rely on the City Councils Monitoring of CHA to keep them in line, we believe therefore that we will need to work more closely with the City Council and in order to do this we will require the Council to take on board our views and allow us to either attend these 'Monitoring meetings' jointly with CHA or to be able to have independent meetings with the City Council where we can put the views of the Tenants forward in a constructive manner.

We look forward to the views of your group with interest.

Yours Sincerely



Denise Moses  
Chair of Tenants Advisory Group.

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## INTERNAL MEMORANDUM

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<b>From:</b> Housing and Health Services Manager	<b>Please ask for:</b> Simon Taylor
<b>To:</b> John Mallinson	<b>Extension:</b> 7327
<b>FAO:</b>	<b>E-mail:</b> simont@carlisle.gov.uk
	<b>Your ref:</b>
	<b>Our ref:</b>

17 August 2006

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### Community O&S Committee – Carlisle Housing Association

Further to your memorandum dated 10/8/06 and our subsequent telephone conversation I can update you regarding the letter that was attached from Denise Moses.

This letter has also been sent with a covering letter to the Chief Executive by Denise Moses. It has subsequently been forwarded to me for investigation.

In order to look into the issues further it has been arranged to see Denise Moses within the next two weeks in order to get the full details regarding the points that she raises. I have a meeting arranged with Carlisle Housing Association on the 8/9/06 to obtain their response to the points raised and to investigate further the issues. Following these meetings I will be in a position to provide a detailed response.

Carlisle Housing Association have confirmed to me that the Deputy managing Director and one other senior officer will be present at the committee meeting on 18/10/06.

**S Taylor**

Housing and Health Services Manager

## **CARLISLE HOUSING ASSOCIATION – LETTER FROM DENISE MOSES**

### **1. Relevant references in the Offer Document.**

1.1 The Offer Document (page 15) sets out various categories and targets for emergency, urgent and routine repairs which CHA indicated that they would seek to achieve. Emergency repairs are to be attended to within two hours and completed within twelve hours; urgent repairs are to be completed within three working days and routine repairs are to be completed within ten working days. The Offer Document also provides for cyclical maintenance and a range of improvement works to be carried out to the properties over a period. The Council has in the past agreed to a relatively minor variation to the nature of the improvement works to be carried out.

1.2 The Offer Document (page 9) states that there will be four places reserved on the CHA Board for Tenant Representatives. The election of the Tenant Members of the Board is determined by the AGM of Carlisle Housing Association. Any nominations for Tenant Board Members come from Tenants and Leaseholders and are then determined by the CHA Membership at the AGM. The Offer Document refers to the CHA Membership as including Board Members, The Riverside Group, the Council and another two Members from each recognised Tenant's/Resident's Representative Body. Each of the Members of CHA is able to vote on the appointment of the new Board Members.

1.3 In the Offer Document, CHA, confirm that they will work with Tenants and with recognised Tenants' and Residents' Groups to set up a framework for involving Tenants in decision making (see pages 29 and 30 of the Offer Document for details of participation/consultation framework).

### **2. Relevant obligations in the Deed of Covenant between CHA and the Council.**

2.1 CHA need the consent of the Council in writing to change the Rules of the Association in so far as they relate to Local Authority or Tenant Representation (see Clause 2.4).

2.2 CHA have to comply with the standards of service and rights for Tenants set out in the Assured Tenants Charter published from time to time by the Housing Corporation and other reasonable requirements of the Housing Corporation (see Clause 2.7).

2.3 CHA have undertaken to carry out repairs and improvements as per the timescales set out in the Offer Document (see Clause 2.11).

2.4 There is an obligation on CHA to consult Qualifying Tenants on any changes in matters of Housing Management (Clause 2.12.4).

2.5 There is an obligation on CHA to use all reasonable endeavours to fulfil all the various promises set out in the Offer Document (see Clause 2.12.6).

2.6 CHA have undertaken to adopt a framework for Tenants' involvement based on the Council's compact and to recognise Tenants' and Residents' Associations previously recognised by the Council, prior to the transfer including the Tenant Advisory Group, as long as these are all properly constituted and are representative of the views of Tenants, and also to provide a reasonable level of finance and support to assist such associations in representing Tenants' views (see Clause 2.14.1).