



Minutes of the meeting of the CENTRAL AREA HOUSING BOARD held on THURSDAY 1 JULY 1999 at 7.30pm

Present: Councillors Conchie, Gibbs and O'Sullivan

Tenants'

Representatives:

C Allum	-	Downs Barn Residents' Association
J Blake	-	Central Milton Keynes Residents' Association
G Byfield	-	Conniburrow Community Association
B King	-	Bradwell Common Residents' Association
R Manser	-	Downs Barn Residents' Association
P Warner	-	Bradwell Common Residents' Association

Officers: L Ellen (Senior Housing Officer), J Bate (District Housing Manager), C Jones (Tenants' Participation Officer) and W Marsden (Senior Committee Manager)

Also Present:

I Fraser	-	Fishermead and Oldbrook Residents' Association
D Chandler	-	Eclipse (UK) Ltd
P Edgehill	-	Eclipse (UK) Ltd
D Donovan	-	Wheldons

1.0 ELECTION OF CHAIR

RESOLVED -

That Mr J Blake (Central Milton Keynes Residents' Association) be elected Chair for the Council year 1999/2000.

2.,0 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED -

That Mr B King (Bradwell Common Residents' Association) be elected Vice Chair for the Council year 1999/2000.

3.0 PROCEDURE - MINUTES

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Area Housing Board held on 18 March 1999 be approved as a correct record.

4.0

BOROUGH WIDE HOUSING BOARD

The Board considered its representation on the Borough Wide Housing Board.

RESOLVED -

That the following representatives of the Central Area Housing Board be appointed to the Borough Wide Housing Board.

Representative:

C Allum (Downs Barn Residents' Association)

J Blake (Central Milton Keynes Residents' Association)

B King (Bradwell Common Residents' Association)

5.0

INTRODUCTION TO RESPONSIVE REPAIRS TERM CONTRACTOR

Mr D Chandler and Mr P Edgehill from Eclipse (UK) Ltd attended the meeting. Eclipse (UK) Ltd are the Responsive Repairs Term Contractor for the Central Area.

Councillor Conchie asked why the Responsive Repairs figures were not presented by MKC Housing Officers. John Bate replied saying that the figures were included in the District Housing Manager's report.

Councillor Conchie asked why the contractor's figures and the Housing Officer's figures differed, and stated that it would be useful for the Area Housing Board Members to have both sets of figures. Councillor Conchie was interested in the void figures and said that a total tally of void figures should be produced showing when voids are given to the contractor and when they are completed.

The representatives from Eclipse UK Ltd were thanked for their attendance.

6.0

HEATING CONTRACTOR

Members were introduced to Mr D Donovan, a representative from Wheldons, the Heating Maintenance and Repairs Contractor for the Central and Bradville/Greenleys areas. The representative from Wheldons pointed out that with regard to the plug and talk machinery for deaf people, this facility was in place in Central Control and not with the contractor.

Councillor Conchie asked what was the Council's policy on anti-discriminatory practice in the Housing Contract, and the District Housing Manager promised to send a copy with the Minutes.

Brian King handed a letter to Wheldons concerning a disabled family with four children who did not have heating or cooking facilities.

Councillor Conchie said that information was required on the total number of service calls, the number of second call outs and emergencies.

RESOLVED -

1. That the District Housing Manager provide a copy of the Council's Policy on Anti-Discriminatory Practice in the Housing Contract, to be sent out with the Minutes.
2. That the District Housing Manager provide information on total number of service calls, the number of second call outs and emergencies, and this be sent out with the Minutes.

7.0

NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS

1. George Byfield mentioned a graffiti problem on Conniburrow estate which was mainly being caused by children of one family; and that consideration should be given to some form of vetting procedure.
2. Isabel Fraser said that the same problems were being experienced on Fishermead and Oldbrook estates. Partnerships between Housing Associations and the Council should be strengthened as well as enforcement of responsibilities. Brian King said that the Tenancy Agreement must be enforced. John Bate replied saying that some 15 tenants had been evicted since Christmas and the Council was enforcing the Tenancy Agreement.

Brian King said that it was important that minor offences should also be covered in the Tenancy Agreement. Isabel Fraser thought that new methods of dealing with matters should be investigated, eg broadening out partnerships.

Linda Ellen, the Senior Housing Officer, to provide a written reply to Brian King and Isabel Fraser.

3. Isabel Fraser raised the matter of Care in Community properties where people had been placed by Social Services; and she asked what were the procedures, for example, criteria, monitoring and networking with Social Services.

Linda Ellen said there was liaison between MKC and Social Services over this, and I Fraser to discuss with the Emergency Social Work Services Team Manager.

4. George Byfield thanked the District Housing Manager for liaising with the police in rounding up abandoned vehicles etc.

Richard Manser stated that Downs Barn was next door to a Housing Association whose properties were in a poor condition, and there had been a noticeable increase in graffiti.

John Blake asked how you exercise control over homeless; Linda Ellen replied saying that matters were referred to the Housing Needs Manager. Linda Ellen to pick up a specific problem from John Blake.

Board Members asked that each Residents' Association receive information on what properties are Council owned and Housing Association owned. John Bate to check on the data protection position.

5. Charles Allum stated that people should be notified by the Council when MKC is moving into an area to use herbicides. Alan Prockter, the Landscape Manager, to be invited to the next meeting of the Area Housing Board.
6. Clare Jones outlined her report which had been considered by the Housing Committee at its meeting on 29 June 1999 which provided an update on Tenant Participation Compacts. The Housing Committee also considered the problems surrounding meetings of the Area Housing Boards and Borough Wide Housing Board where a number of meetings had been inquorate. The Housing Committee resolved to make some alterations to the scheme of operations for Area Housing Boards and the Borough Wide Housing Board and an updated list is attached as **Annex A** to the Minutes.

Brian King said that representatives from the Area Housing Boards were willing to go out to rural areas to assist them in establishing Residents' Associations.

The Board noted that the Parish Conference will be held on 11 September 1999. The Conference was viewed as a good place to start to widen participation in structures by involving the Parish Councils, with the possibility of the Tenants Participation Officer attending.

7. The Board noted that the Housing Committee on 29 June had resolved that 62 Queensway be used as a Tenants Resource Centre on a trial basis for a period of 12 months.
8. The Board noted that the Housing Committee established three Housing Improvement Teams, with an emphasis on customer care, to cover the following services areas:
 - (i) Neighbourhood Nuisance and Tenancy Agreement
 - (ii) Disabled Adaptations
 - (iii) Voids and Repairs

Each Housing Improvement Team will comprise three Councillors from the Housing Committee, two Tenant Representatives from each Area Housing Board and one lead officer from Neighbourhood Services Directorate Team.

The following nominations were made from the Board:

Neighbourhood Nuisance and Tenancy Agreement - John Blake and Brian King

Disabled Adaptations - Charles Allum and Brian King

Voids and Repairs - George Byfield and Charles Allum

However clarification was needed from the Head of Neighbourhood Services as to the tenant eligibility. Board Members felt it important that the term "Tenants' Representatives" be relaxed.

8.0 DISTRICT HOUSING MANAGER'S REPORT INCLUDING MINOR ESTATE IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

The Board received a report from the District Housing Manager which outlined activities and performance in the Central Area Office.

The report confirmed the current figures for rent arrears, shared ownership, empty properties, benefits and repairs with those from one year ago.

The District Housing Manager stated that in future, there could be four District Housing Managers instead of the existing three although there was no timescale.

Brian King thanked John Bate and Linda Ellen for all their help and support in the past.

The District Housing Manager presented a list under the Minor Estates Improvements Grants attached as **Annex B** to the Minutes.

The following was noted with regard to the list:

1. That the scheme for blocking off alleyways in Bradwell Common be passed on to John Bates successor.
2. That subject to the scheme being feasible, metal goal posts be provided for youngsters to play football on the play area in Bradwell.
3. That the provision of Cycle Barriers is on Bradwell Common Boulevard adjacent to Burnham Drive.
4. That with regard to the provision of Ball Park, South Row, Central Milton Keynes, John Bate to speak to Bill Thomas regarding permission from Milton Keynes Parks Trust.

The bid from Conniburrow Residents Association for the conversion of area adjacent to the Meeting Place into the tennis court, with current indications that the main work would cost in the region of £14,000.

RESOLVED -

That a contribution of £10,000 towards the cost of the scheme, be approved.

The bid from Downs Barn Residents Association for new parking bays in Downs Barn, allowing for six vehicles, at an estimated cost of £6,500.

RESOLVED -

That the scheme be approved.

The Members of the Area Housing Board expressed disappointment at the withdrawal of Minor Estate Improvement Grant monies without consultation.

9.0

TENANTS COMPACT WORKSHOP

Clare Jones introduced this item. Board Members were aware that Local Authorities needed to implement Tenant Participation Compacts (TPCs) by April 2000.

Tenant Participation Compacts are locally negotiated agreements between Local Authorities and their tenants, and they will involve tenants in strategic and local decisions on housing issues. National standards will mean that, for the first time, meaningful comparisons between Local Authorities nationwide will be possible. Tenants rights to true involvement will be enforced by annual inspections from external auditors.

Progress towards the implementation of TPCs will form part of the Government Office's assessment of performance under the Housing Improvement Programme (HIP) process. It was thought that 10% of next year's HIP allocation would depend on how well MKC was doing on Tenant Compact. Local Authorities and tenants were therefore required to begin planning for this introduction of Tenant Participation Compacts, and it was essential to prove to the Government Office for the South East (GOSE) and the Department of Environment Transport and the Regions (DETR) that we are undertaking a fundamental review of existing systems.

The Area Housing Board was also asked to consider what they want to gain from the TPC, what the strengths and weaknesses of the present structure are and the possible changes to the present structure to improve it.

We must review its aims and objectives, and review the existing arrangements and how these meet, or do not meet the aims, and draw up an action plan together to implement TPCs. Hilary Armstrong said that she recognises that some Councils may not be able to put formal agreements in place by April 2000, but we must at least have an agreed objective and action plan.

The Board agreed to the formation of a group to review the present structures, Brian King and Isabel Fraser expressed interest, and the Tenants Participation Officer to convene as soon as possible.

Isabel Fraser stated that Milton Keynes did not have traditional housing estates, and mixed tenure which existed in Milton Keynes caused problems.

Councillor O'Sullivan stated that an additional problem was that the Standard Spending Assessment for Milton Keynes was two years out of date which cost this Council some £3m - 5m per year.

Brian King said that the frequency of meetings was important, and more frequent Area Housing Boards, perhaps bi-monthly, would be helpful.

10.0

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The date and time of the next meeting will be 14 October 1999 at 7.30 pm

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 10.10 PM