



Minutes of the meeting of the BOROUGH WIDE HOUSING BOARD held on THURSDAY 27 JANUARY 2000 at 7.30 pm

Present: Councillors I Wilson and Woodcock

C Allum	-	Downs Barn Residents' Association (Central Area Housing Board)
J Blake	-	Central Milton Keynes Residents' Association (Central Area Housing Board)
G Greaves	-	Hanslope Residents' Association (Netherfield/Newport Pagnell Area Housing Board)
A Laing	-	Saints/Racecourse Residents' Association (Bletchley Area Housing Board)
J Marling	-	Lakes Estate Residents' Association (Bletchley Area Housing Board)
B Moore	-	Hanslope Residents' Association (Netherfield/Newport Pagnell Area Housing Board)
P Prop	-	Tinkers Bridge Residents' Association (Netherfield/Newport Pagnell Area Housing Board)
A Richardson	-	Beanhill Residents' Association (Netherfield/Newport Pagnell Area Housing Board)
M Simm	-	Fullers Slade Residents' Association (Bradville/Greenleys Area Housing Board)
H Taylor	-	Greenleys Residents' Association (Bradville/Greenleys Areas Housing Board)

Officers: D Nickless (Head of Neighbourhood Services), D Jones (Strategic Director Neighbourhood Services), J Bate (District Housing Manager), C Jones (Tenants' Participation Officer) and W Marsden (Senior Committee Manager)

Apologies: Councillor Harnett

1.0 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED -

That Ms J Marling (Bletchley Area Housing Board) be appointed Vice-Chair for the remainder of the Council year 1999/2000.

2.0 MINUTES

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes of the Borough Wide Housing Board held on 11 November 1999 be approved as a correct record.

3.0 MATTERS ARISING

Alan Richardson expressed his dissatisfaction that following the request he made at the meeting of the Netherfield/Newport Pagnell Area Housing Board on 13 January 2000, the Chair of Policy and Resources, or in his absence, the Leader of the Council were not at the meeting of the Borough Wide Housing Board.

Derek Nickless said that Pat Scrimshaw who had given a presentation on Best Value Out of Hours Services at the last Borough Wide Housing Board meeting on 11 November 1999 had submitted a report to the meeting of the Best Value/CCT Sub-Committee on 17 January 2000. Derek said that the recommendations would be acted upon by the Strategic Director Neighbourhood Services.

It was noted that Hazel Taylor was not present at the Borough Wide Housing Board meeting on 11 November.

4.0 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT 2000/01

Derek Nickless said that the results of the consultation exercise carried out at the special meeting of the Borough Wide Housing Board would be included in the document being prepared for discussion at the Housing Committee meeting on 1 February 2000. The recommendation from the special Borough Wide Housing Board meeting that the level of rents should be increased by 18%, were included in the report to the Housing Committee.

Alan Richardson stated that he was disappointed that Councillor Long had not attended the meeting to answer a recent newspaper article which had stated that the rent increase should be at a 12% level. Alan said that recommendations for sheltered review would save £1.5m and he felt that the administration was asking the old and disabled to fund the increase.

Derek Nickless said that the Housing Committee on 1 February 2000, would consider a range of proposals and that no officer recommendations were being submitted to the meeting. The special Borough Wide Housing Board meeting had not made specific recommendations about service aspects. Alan Richardson said that with a 12% rent increase, service charges would have to go ahead. Derek Nickless responded that the models presented by the Finance Manager were about the rate at which money is put back into the repairs fund. Alan Richardson said that in order to restore the Repairs Budget, a 12% increase in rent levels this year would mean that the rent levels would have to rise by another 10% the following year and another 10% the year after.

Reference was made to the fees and charges for 2000/01 which was contained in the Housing Revenue Account report which was to be discussed at the Housing Committee meeting on 1 February 2000. Derek Nickless worked through the various fees and charges contained in the report. Councillor Woodcock again reiterated that the Housing Committee would make the relevant decisions and pointed out that Councillor Long was not a Member on the Housing Committee.

Derek Nickless said that with regard to outstanding monies on the Minor Estate Improvement Grants, the Finance Manager had indicated that

remaining monies would not be lost if they were unspent by 31 March 2000. A financial position regarding Minor Estate Improvement Grants is to be circulated to the respective Chairs of the Area Housing Boards. It was mentioned that the Housing Committee would decide on 1 February whether a sum of £20,000 would be included as a global figure for Minor Estate Improvement Grants.

RESOLVED -

That figures showing unspent sums of monies for each Area Housing Board on Minor Estate Improvement Grants be presented to the next meeting of the Borough Wide Housing Board.

5.0

DIRECTORATE REPORT

The Board received a Directorate report from Derek Nickless the Head of Neighbourhood Services. Derek referred to the items contained in the Housing Committee News for Members and used this document as the Directorate report.

Alan Richardson referred to changes in the Housing Management Structure and said that tenants should have been consulted in this exercise. A report had been considered at the Neighbourhood Services Committee meeting on 9 November 1999 and the Committee had resolved that a more detailed report be submitted to the next Neighbourhood Services Committee meeting which was held on 20 January 2000. At the meeting on 20 January the Committee considered a report on the development proposals for an integrated local service and resolved that the detailed development work be delegated to the Strategic Director Neighbourhood Services and the report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

David Jones responded that the report was currently at an early stage and involved a fairly abstract discussion. The intention was to make a full presentation to the next meeting of the Borough Wide Housing Board when more detail is available.

Alan Richardson expressed concern that Social Services would ultimately take over housing, a fear which was not shared by the Strategic Director.

J Marling said the Housing Committee at its meeting on 30 November 1999, had resolved that area offices would not be closed, however, it now looked as if closures would take place. David Jones stated that it would be difficult to keep all housing offices open, there must be a debate about how much you put into the main office and the satellite offices. The Strategic Director Neighbourhood Services had a responsibility to progress on the management of any proposed structures and determine how objectives of an improved localised service could be met.

Alan Richardson stressed the importance of working with other partnerships and tenants had expressed the desire to be consulted.

RESOLVED -

That the Strategic Director Neighbourhood Services provide a presentation to the next meeting of the Borough Wide Housing Board.

6.0 TENANTS' COMPACT UPDATE

Clare Jones provided an update on the Tenants' Participation Compact, a copy of which is annexed to the Minutes.

The Board noted that the Tenants Participation Officer was seeking a recommendation about what expenses Tenant Representatives could claim.

RESOLVED -

That the Tenants' Participation Officer provide a full set of costings to the next Borough Wide Housing Board meeting on 13 April 2000.

7.0 FEEDBACK FROM AREA HOUSING BOARDS

- (a) Alan Richardson expressed his displeasure that the Bletchley Area Housing Board meeting had been changed from its original date. Alan said that there had been problems with the Bletchley Area Housing Board meeting their scheduled dates and this was something which did not appear to affect other Area Housing Boards.
- (b) Brian King referred to the bollard which had been stolen at the junction of Plumstead Avenue and Wandsworth Place. This had been pursued by the Senior Housing Officer as a possibility for an insurance claim. It had now been determined that there was not a crime number so therefore there was no insurance claim possibility. Brian requested that a new one be purchased at a cost of approximately £60 and the Borough Wide Housing Board agreed to this.

8.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

1. Barbara Moore requested that a notice board be provided for residents in Hanslope subject to the required costings and appropriate siting.
2. Charles Allum said the Housing Officer had not responded regarding the provision of smoke alarms in hallways where there was only one exit.
3. Charles Allum stated that he was concerned that as the Council was supporting the local Parish Council for schemes in Conniburrow there was a possibility that the Residents' Association might fold.

Alan Richardson said that George Byfield from Conniburrow had turned the facilities into a limited company and the Borough Wide Housing Board was not the place to discuss this, the question regarding residents' Associations was a separate issue.

4. The Board considered a request from Netherfield/Newport Pagnell Area Housing Board that their remaining Minor Estate Improvement Grant balances less the cost of the provision of a noticeboard at Hanslope, be put towards the overall cost of the Tinkers Bridge Residents' Association Scheme of providing a play area adjacent to the Meeting Place.

RESOLVED -

That the request from Netherfield/Newport Pagnell Area Housing Board that their remaining Minor Estate Improvements Grant balance less the cost of the provision of a notice board at Hanslope, be put towards the overall cost of the Tinkers Bridge Residents' Association scheme of providing a play area adjacent to the meeting place, be approved.

9.0

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting would be held on 13 April 2000 at 7.30 pm

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 9.30 PM