

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE WREXHAM TENANT AND MEMBER PARTNERSHIP HELD AT HOUSING SERVICES, RUTHIN ROAD, WREXHAM, ON MONDAY 26 JANUARY 2009**

**MEMBERS**

**Representing Wrexham County Borough Council**

Councillor	R W Caldecott	Councillor	R Alun Jenkins
"	* T Alan Edwards	"	O Arfon Jones
"	Terry Evans	"	Carole O'Toole
"	Mrs June Fearnall (Chair)	"	* J R Skelland
"	* D J Griffiths	"	Malcolm Williams

**Representing the Wrexham Tenants**

Ms Sonia Benbow-Jones	*	Ms Dorothy Mitchell
Mr Charles Devlin		Mr Eric Moore (Vice-Chair)
Mrs Jacqui Finn		Mr Joe Skerritt
Miss S B Honkova	*	Mr Brian Stapley
Mr C R Lloyd	*	Mrs Dilys Torrens

\*Absent

**Also present:** Councillor L Barrie Price

**1 Welcome**

The Chair welcomed those present to the first meeting of the Partnership for 2009, and conveyed her best wishes for the New Year.

**2 Membership**

The Chair informed the Group that Councillor R W Caldecott had replaced Councillor J W Coleman, OBE on the Partnership as he had been suffering from ill health. The Partnership conveyed their best wishes to Councillor J W Coleman, OBE.

**3 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors T Alan Edwards and D J Griffiths, also Ms Dorothy Mitchell, Mrs Dilys Torrens and Mr Andy Lewis.

**4 Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 December 2008 were submitted.

**AGREED - That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 December 2008 be received and confirmed as a correct record.**

## Matters Arising

### (i) Minute 3 - Minutes - Matters Arising - Tenant Conference

The Chair informed members that a report providing further detail of arrangements for the Tenant Conference, to be held on 17 September 2009, would be submitted to the Partnership in March.

## **5 Overall Performance of Landlord Services**

The Landlord Services Manager submitted a report (CHPPO/09/09) informing members of the overall performance of the services provided by Landlord Services as at end of December 2008.

Tracy Gibson, Housing Operations Manager, and Paul Allen, Property and Repairs Manager, gave a presentation which outlined the following:

- Rent arrears - back on track despite a 4% increase in rent;
- Number of properties in each area with rent arrears;
- Waiting list levels;
- Cases dealt with by the Enforcement Team, including a pilot scheme in Gwersyllt;
- Processes for claiming back court costs following evictions;
- Joint working with the Police;
- Enforcement action comparisons between Wrexham and Flintshire;
- Future work to be undertaken on the Wales Housing Management Standards for anti social behaviour;
- Referrals to the Tenancy Support Service;
- Void properties, and details in respect of a framework contract introduced to deal with long term voids, such as fire damaged properties;
- Repairs performance - consistent figures for response times, and targets being met;
- Asbestos surveys - have led to an average 1 day increase per property for the time taken to complete repairs;
- Tenant satisfaction surveys - results of the December survey showed that tenants were generally satisfied with the quality and cleanliness of work and attitude of employees, but highlighted the need to focus on communicating better; and
- Right to Buy sales - the number of sales were extremely low, with only 3 properties being sold since April 2008.

Members thanked the Officers for their presentation, but expressed concern that tenants were able to pay their rent using a credit card, which could lead to debt problems. Officers stated that tenants were entitled to have the option of using credit cards, but stated that they would investigate the number of tenants choosing to pay their rent via this method.

**AGREED - That the report and presentation be noted.**

## **6 Housing Capital Programme 2009/10**

The Landlord Services Manager submitted a report (CHPPO/14/09) advising Members of the proposed housing capital programme for 2009/10 along with the outline forward funding for 2010 to 2012.

Fred Czulowski, Landlord Services Manager, introduced the report, highlighting the following points:

- The levels of contribution from the Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) and the Contribution from Housing Revenue Account (CERA) were still subject to WAG confirmation and Executive Board agreeing the HRA budget for 2009/10.
- A report would be presented to the Executive Board in February asking them to approve the provisional Housing Capital Programme for 2009/10 subject to the final subsidy settlement and the agreed HRA budget.
- It was proposed that the commitment to concentrate on keeping properties wind and watertight with fuel efficient heating would be continued over the next three years.
- The programme for door entry systems was bigger than in the previous year as it would also include communal doors and entrances to flats.
- Investigations were currently underway in respect of transferring some of the responsibility for Hanmer Pumping Station to Welsh Water.
- The Council had responsibility for upgrading digital TV aerials on communal systems for flats. It was reported that these works were progressing well.

In response to a question, Officers confirmed that the Welsh Housing Quality Standard was a key strategic aim of WAG. A Task and Finish Group had been looking at this issue, and a report was due to be presented to the Social Affairs, Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee at the end of March. It was expected that very few of the Council's properties would achieve all elements of the Standard, but the percentage of achievement for each element could be calculated.

### **AGREED -**

- (i) That the report be noted;**
- (ii) That the Executive Board be recommended to approve the provisional Housing Capital Programme for 2009/10 subject to the final subsidy settlement and the agreed HRA budget for 2009/10; and**
- (iii) That a report highlighting the percentage of achievement for each element of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard be presented to a future Meeting of the Partnership.**

## **7 Fire Prevention in Council Housing**

The Landlord Services Manager submitted a report (CHPPO/17/09) advising Members and tenants of the ongoing works and commitment to prevent fires that occur throughout the Housing stock.

Paul Allen, Property and Repairs Manager, presented the report outlining the Council's policy that all properties have either mains operated smoke detectors installed, or a specialist fire detection system. He also described the ongoing contract for the testing of the mains operated smoke alarms in all of the general needs properties which was carried out on a three yearly cycle. Members were advised that action was currently being taken against those tenants who denied access for testing and servicing of smoke alarms.

Members were invited to ask questions of the Officer. During discussion of the report the following issues were highlighted:

- Explanation sought regarding the cause of fires in external areas such as garages - Officers confirmed that when fires in areas such as these occurred, the cause was not always identified, because on occasions, fires were started through anti social behaviour.
- Clarification with regards to stairway lighting during a fire - Officers had been approached by a local company who produced cables which were fire proof, which would enable stairway lighting to remain on in the event of a fire.
- Completion of risk assessments - the Fire Service carried out regular inspections of HMO's and warden schemes.

A Member suggested that the Fire Service be invited to attend a future Meeting of the Partnership, as they had been unable to attend today. Although there was no duty on the Fire Service to report to the Council, it would be helpful to share information between both Authorities, especially if there were problems being caused by particular tenants. Officers advised that links were established with the Fire Service and that protocols were being developed.

**AGREED -**

- (i) **That the report be noted; and**
- (ii) **That the Fire Service be invited to attend a future Meeting of the Partnership.**

**8 Social Affairs, Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee Work Programme**

The Social Affairs, Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee Work Programme was submitted for information.

**AGREED - That the Social Affairs, Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee work programme be noted.**

**9 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The next Meeting of the Partnership would be held on Monday 16 March 2009 at 10.00 am in Housing Services, Ruthin Road.

Councillor Mrs June Fearnall  
Chair