



## Better Places to Live Steering Group

Minutes - March 30<sup>th</sup> March 2010

### Present

Anne Freimanis	Theme Lead
Tony Jackson	Theme Lead, Chair
Julie Evans-Hughes	BPL Programme Manager
Duncan Jones	Waste Partnership
Ian Orton	HACO
Richard Protheroe	Herts Head of Housing Group
Graham Cowell	Environment Agency
Andrew Weaver	Herts Head of Housing Group
Ian Potter	Constabulary
Steve Harvey	Ground works
James Doe	HIPP
Jon Tiley	FPU, HCC
Rob Rees	CMS, HCC

### Apologies

David Scholes, Ann Janz, Alison Page.

#### 1. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

Agreed as accurate

#### 2. Herts Forward Update

The focus of the Core Group (March meeting) included a discussion on the Climate Change Strategy paper and Community Cohesion Strategy. In addition the CAA Refresh work and proposed summer workshops were discussed.

The current format of the BPL Herts Forward quarterly report discussed in terms of lack of completed data. JEH advised that this was due to a variety of reasons such as a lack of central data collection process, information not being reported at county level and ownership issues.

**Action:** JEH to explore alternative options for data collection and update as necessary.

### **3. BPL Action Update**

Short presentation given by JEH on work undertaken since in post. This included a summary of some of work recently completed, changes made to the action plan and intended plan developments to include workstreams breakdowns.

Updated action plan distributed to group and work to continue in developing plan with leads on an ongoing basis.

### **4. LAA Review & Refresh**

CAA Handout – Document distributed to group discussed in terms of challenges faced in delivery, resolution and need to formulate plans. Meeting taking place after BPL 30 March to discuss work required to resolve red flag status.

AJ and AF have met up with new lead Edwina Childs and will continue to forge links with Audit Commission. Intended in near future EC will attend BPL meetings. Further updates to follow as necessary.

LAA2 Refresh Work – Discussed in context of recent work completed on NI154 [net additional homes provided] renegotiation with Go East. Historical trajectories reflected optimistic view of housing with impact of recession not fully being recognised. BPL undertook work at district level to gain a snapshot of developments and key site this successfully led to the targets for Hertfordshire being lowered to:-

2009/10 = 2,400 and 2010/11 = 2,600.

Noted that Dacorum and Welwyn & Hatfield have no housing targets at present. Additionally that BPL will need continue to maintain the key sites information in order that a Hertfordshire perspective be retained in the future.

Housing targets discussed as being on track in view of small/medium sites being delivered and target being a realistic reflection of housing delivery.

Red Flag- JD briefly discussed the draft improvement plan (Planning for Housing) completed in response to red flag by HIPP. This distributed to group for reference. Further discussions and work on plan intended in due course.

Action: [JD to meet with JT and JEH to further discuss.](#)

Collaborative work being undertaken in Hertfordshire discussed i.e. shared data, LDFs, SCS (Sustainable Community Strategy). Discussion continued to consider how success could be demonstrated. Benchmarking with other areas seen as being a means to learn lessons from others. Additionally, LSP's seen as the being the mechanism for good practice sharing and illustrating success.

### **5. Audit Commission Workshops**

Impending summer workshops discussed in relation to purpose and expectations. First, anticipated in June 2010. AF advised that ongoing discussions taking place with the Audit Commission to ensure workshops are fit for purpose and proactive.

## **6. Rural Affordable Housing (Community Engagement)**

TJ began discussion on rural affordable housing and challenges it presents. Importance of winning hearts and mind discussed as well as parish links, housing allocation to locals and infrastructure. Feedback from group reflected that differing policies may be in place, supply of land key and use of greenbelt all factors to consider. Agreed at the present time it would be useful to gain details of local allocation policies.

**Action:** IO to gain information on Hertfordshire in terms of if districts have local allocation policies.

## **7. Flexicare Housing**

TJ provided overview of Flexicare scheme within Hertfordshire and discussed this as example of good practice. Benefits include individuals remaining in own home, cost savings to districts and quality of life benefits. Sue Fox advised as HCC lead in project.

Challenges in county discussed in scaling down property in rural community setting as well as a variety of initiatives within Hertfordshire for elderly/vulnerable. These included:

Groundwork Green Aider Project – This is a project funded by Watford Police and NHS East & North Herts PCT in Watford/Dacorum. Aims to help elderly and vulnerable people to care for their gardens.

Aldwyck Housing – Advised that housing association have a variety of provision. This includes- sheltered accommodation, extra care housing and residential care for the frail elderly. Visiting support service for people living in the community who require an alarm and housing-related support.

References made to Gypsy & Travellers and Supporting People.

## **8. HIPP & HCTOA**

### HIPP-

Feb meeting discussed EERA's proposals for the revision of the East of England Plan and specifically the proposed lower level growth in housing to 2031. It was identified that there was a mismatch between the proposed housing and jobs growth aspirations.

Next meeting in May proposes to discuss S106's Community Infrastructure and provide a post election wash-up.

### HCTOA-

Advised that on 23<sup>rd</sup> April HCTOA session will be completed re: collaborative work on LDFs.

A Strategic Green Infrastructure study for the County has been proposed in order to co-ordinate the planning of GI across the County. Rob Rees involved in work.

Anglian Ruskin University are discussing with officers a programme of training on planning matters in the County.

Dacorum have completed a draft local investment plan [HCA single conversation for Herts]. This will be circulated to BPL for reference.

## **9. Heads of Housing Update**

Change of structure intended as of May to working operation of RSL Chief Executives Group and Heads of Housing Group. This has revisited how they groups work, terms of reference and addressed cross over of agendas. Intended Executive Group will meet every two months where as Heads Group every six months.

Advised Martin Lings post as LCBSR co-ordinator currently only funded until August 2010. Arrangements to be re-evaluated shortly. Suggested by RP that ML role could be extended to include work on red flag and all of Hertfordshire however to facilitate this funding will be required i.e. PRG.

**Action-** [Proposal to be put forward by RP/ML to BPL.](#)

Climate Change Strategic Framework for Hertfordshire "Meeting Tomorrows Challenges Today" published by the Hertfordshire Climate Change Partnership.

**Action-** [JEH to attach copy of document on meeting minutes for potential further consideration by BPL.](#)

Housing Conference taking place on 19<sup>th</sup> April.

## **10. Sustainable Development Update**

RR made reference to a recent request received for feedback on the East Of England Forum Draft Regional White Paper. The purpose of paper is to focus on the priorities for rural communities in the East of England against a changing backdrop of national, regional and local policy and organisational structures.

**Action:** [RR to pass document onto BPL group for reference.](#)

## **11. National drivers and Strategic Policies**

Regional Planning System- Advised that new regional planning system will be in place as of April 2010. This abolishes regional assembly and moves to a single regional strategy.

CLG website [www.communities.gov.uk]- The following papers flagged as being of interest to BPL.

- Planning for Town Centres: Practice guidance on need, impact and the sequential approach (Dec 2009).
- Consultation paper on a new Planning Policy Statement: Planning for a Natural and Healthy Environment (March 2009).
- Form and Function: A comparative evaluation of the effectiveness of the new unitary authorities and two tier structures - Theory of Change March 2010

Temporary Accommodation PI- Advised temporary accommodation indicator targets for 2011/12 is being reduced. This may lead to funding changes and the importance of securing funds and using accommodation will be key.

HRA Subsidy System – Intention is to dismantle the Housing Revenue Account subsidy system and replace it with a devolved system of responsibility and funding. It will provide more flexibility in finances and more transparency in the operation of the system. It wants to devolve control from central to local government. and in return, increase local responsibility and accountability for long term planning, asset management and for meeting the housing needs of local people

National Indicators- As part of the Smarter Government initiative, 18 national indicators have been removed from the NI set as of April 2010. The removal of the indicators has been targeted as those indicators where measurement at the local level has been problematic.

Waste Management- Two government consultations currently out looking at the definition of reusable waste and banning waste landfill.

New facility in Potters bar (Composting Ridge Facility) has been opened. The facility will process waste sourced from both the kerbside collection schemes (collected by local authorities) and Commercial and Industrial waste streams, including, green, cardboard and food waste.

Constabulary- Launched by APO April 2010 national toolkit for each police force to use with common approach to strategic growth.

## **12. AOB**

Agenda item for next BPL meeting to be post-election results and implications on BPL in the future.

Group advised that they can suggest any future agenda items by passing on details to JEH.

### **Future BPL Meetings- Wallfields, Hertford - Room 27**

15 <sup>th</sup> June 2010	2 to 4pm
28 <sup>th</sup> September 2010	2 to 4pm
15 <sup>th</sup> December 2010	10am to 12pm