

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE WREXHAM TENANT AND MEMBER PARTNERSHIP HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, WREXHAM ON MONDAY 17 DECEMBER 2007

MEMBERS

Representing Wrexham County Borough Council

Councillor	A C Bailey	Councillor	P Jeffares
“	J J Colbert	“	R Alun Jenkins
“	* Nick S. Colbourne	“	* P M Shone
“	* Terry Evans	“	J R Skelland
“	K H Hett	“	* Malcolm Williams

Representing the Wrexham Tenants

Ms Sonia Benbow-Jones	Ms Dorothy Mitchell
Mr Charles Devlin	* Mr Eric Moore
Mrs Jacqui Finn	* Mr Joe Skerrith
* Miss Natasha Hill	Mr Brian Stapley
Mr C R Lloyd	Mrs Dilys Torrens

*Absent

1 Welcome

The Chair welcomed Councillor J.J. Colbert to his first meeting of the Partnership.

2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Nick S. Colbourne, Terry Evans and Malcolm Williams; also Mr Eric Moore and Mr Joe Skerrith.

3 Minutes

AGREED - That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Wrexham Tenant and Member Partnership held on 29 October 2007 be received and confirmed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

Page 1 Minutes – Matters Arising Re Page 2 - Item 3(ii) – Mr Charles Devlin declared an interest given that his sister lived in one of the Airey houses referred to. It was also confirmed that the report back to the Partnership would now be submitted in March next year not January.

Page 3 - Item 4 – Management Report – Caia Estate Office – The Partnership were informed that once the Revenue Budget for 2008/09 had been agreed by the Executive Board in the

New Year a report would be brought to the Partnership regarding the Environmental Improvement Budgets for each Housing Estate Office.

Page 3 – Item 6 – Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme 2008/09 – It was noted that a report would be brought to the Partnership in January regarding utilisation of the rental income within the HRA.

4 Gwersyllt Estate Management Report

The Landlord Services Manager submitted a report (CHPPO/154/07) informing the Partnership of performance and issues arising in all key areas managed by the Gwersyllt Estate Office.

Christine Jones, Estate Office Manager introduced the report and gave a presentation which highlighted the following:

estate office structure.

properties managed totalled 1382

there had been 89 voids and 86 allocations during the period November 2006 to November 2007. It was noted that the old Llay Estate Office was to be brought back into the Gwersyllt housing stock and converted into a four bedroom dwelling.

rent arrears and action taken to recover the debt. Since 2004/05 the arrears had reduced by £66,549 (66%) and the target for the end of the financial year 2007/08 was £30,000.

environmental schemes/capital schemes undertaken included:

new balconies; communal door entry system and enhanced security gate and fencing to flats.

fencing schemes

parking schemes

new canopies and doors

possible future environmental projects included further fencing schemes and parking schemes to improve the visual impact of the area.

community involvement, i.e. Gwersyllt in Bloom; Christmas art competition and children's herb garden.

The Partnership welcomed the report and congratulated Christine Jones and her team for the excellent work undertaken by the Estate Office. Reference was also made to:

disabled access. This was only provided to ground floor flats at the present time.

replacement doors being fitted in properties when they became vacant so as to avoid tenants requiring to take time off work. It was reported that replacement doors were provided on a rolling programme in one area at a time to reduce costs. The target for all doors to be completed was March 2009.

home information packs (HIP) – the Partnership were informed that as Right to Buy properties were not being sold on the open market there was no requirement to provide a HIP. However, there was a requirement for the Council to undertake an energy performance assessment for the property, the cost of which would need to be met from the HRA. The Partnership requested that they be provided with costings.

environmental improvement projects undertaken by estate offices, such as fencing, off street parking, canopies etc, did go towards achieving the external works required as part of the WHQS.

AGREED - That the report be noted.

5 Home Swappers Exchange Scheme

The Landlord Services Manager submitted a report (CHPPO/155/07) advising the Partnership of the new exchange scheme for tenants.

Ms. Wendy Barnsley, Policy and Projects Officer, introduced the report and explained that Home Swappers was a local and national mutual exchange service for tenants seeking to swap their homes using internet facilities. The Council, as landlord, had joined the scheme during November 2007 and Council tenants were able to register free of charge. It was noted that the current mutual exchange register would close on 31 December 2007. All current applicants had been advised about the new scheme during week commencing 3 December and the need for them to re-register. All tenants would be informed about the scheme in writing and a press release issued in January 2008 advising them about this service.

Mr Mark Bates from Home Swapper gave a presentation to the Partnership which demonstrated how the scheme would work in practice and indicated that:

on registration by a tenant, the Home Swapper service would automatically search for potential swaps and send e-mail or texts to the tenant advising them when matches were found

if a tenant had no access to the internet (even through family, friends, library services etc) the Housing Service would supply a Home Swapper application form and register on their behalf. The Service would also receive e-mail notifications on a tenant's behalf and advise them by post when matches were highlighted by the Home Swapper service.

in all cases, when a tenant found a property they wanted to exchange to, they would still have to approach their local estate office to seek approval in the usual way and the six week rule would still apply.

AGREED - That the report be noted.

6 Digital Aerial Installations

The Landlord Services Manager submitted a report (CHPPO/156/07) informing the Partnership of the requirements to be prepared for the digital switch over in Wales.

Mr Lee Roberts, Senior Building Services Officer, introduced the report and gave a presentation which highlighted the following:

why the UK was switching to digital.

the digital switch over in Wales was expected to be completed by December 2009. The work to update communal TV systems for digital reception had started and First Line Digital the appointed contractors commenced work in November 2007.

the Council as a landlord was required to upgrade its communal aerial systems to be capable of receiving the digital signal after switch over.

problems with existing systems and works required to be undertaken to upgrade all communal aerial systems to Integrated Reception Systems (IRS).

progress and work undertaken to date.

the main focus would include sheltered units and 2/3 storey flats that had a communal analogue system. Any sold properties that were connected to the existing analogue system would be included in the programme. The owners/leaseholders of these properties would be consulted and charged accordingly should they wish to subscribe. the IRS would be tuned in to the strongest signal for that particular building. there was no charge to residents in sheltered units for undertaking these works. It was requested that further information be provided to sheltered units regarding the switch over to digital.

AGREED – That the report be noted.

7 Any other Business

(i) Tenants raised concerns about the availability of parking at the Guildhall and suggested that future meetings be held at the Housing Services Offices, Ruthin Road.

(ii) It was requested that an accurate figure with regard to door replacements be presented to the next meeting.

8 Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Partnership would take place on Monday 28 January 2008 at 10.00 a.m. in the Housing Services Offices, Ruthin Road, Wrexham.

Councillor A C Bailey
Chair