

DRAFT Notes



Cambridgeshire Sub-Regional RPs and Enablers Forum Friday 18 January 2019 - 10am – 12pm

1. Introductions and Apologies

Introductions

Nigel Howlett	CHS group (chair)
Julie Fletcher	SCDC
Helen Reed	Cambridge City Council
Jenna Brame	West Suffolk
Lisa Davis	West Suffolk
Rob Kirkham	Muir
Mark Hanks	Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing (MTVH)
Alex Francis	CPCA
Fiona Coulson	Clarion
Clare Bishop	bpha
Becky Ashley	Homes England
Sue Beecroft	Co-ordinator for Housing Board (notes)
Helen Fortune	Longhurst
Uzma Ali	SCDC
Tracey Harrison	SCDC

Apologies

- John Lefevre (will be inviting Isobel Wright as John is retiring)
- Alex Fury, Muir (Rob Kirkham in Alex's place)
- Sabrina Wolston from Clarion moving role within Clarion
- Cherise Berridge at Stonewater – inviting Nicola Hillier from Stonewater for future meetings but Nicola sent apologies for today's meeting
- Frank Mastrandrea, HDC
- Juliet Drewett, HtBA
- Ian Jackson, Longhurst (Helen in his place)
- Jessica Wickes, Peterborough CC & Fenland DC
- John Walton, Luminus

2. Matters arising from the last forum on October 2018, Nigel Howlett

Not circulated yet but will do imminently

Discussion about RPs role in adaptations to properties – not much progress but still on the agenda will bring back to a future meeting – RPs not being asked to build many adapted properties but LAs always under pressure to spend less on adaptations.

Uzma - In SCDC looking at a way forward using the housing register, met Sam Lee from the county who works with younger people needing adaptations, looking to see how SCDC can help. Work in progress. Still doing the work, can't give numbers yet. Though Uzma later added think about 130 people.

JF – homelink getting a new software contractor, need to re-input the application data, so will be working to improve data on needing adaptations. Also looking at what stock do RPs have that is adapted already?

West Suffolk – have extracted people on homelink and put on a separate register, so when developers ask can see what is most needed re adapted properties. About half way through the project, Clarion has helped – thanks. About 120 people so far identified, with any physical disability or wheelchair. Finding more need in the bigger towns so trying to secure bungalows there on some sites.

Thinking the new home-link software should help with this. **Julie will raise it with Home-Link. Would help to show if a household has mobility or a mental health issue.**

City is doing something similar – Ruth and Sam are specialist housing advisers, been identifying people needing adaptations and working with the C HDA to develop the homes needed.

Fiona C - S106 for Cambridge City football club – GF wheelchair property needed – and someone has been identified who needs it. Success!

3. Presentation on Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2019-24, Julie Fletcher & Helen Reed

- Slides (SB upload to CI page)
- Have run presentation with other partners e.g. developers.
- Over 100 responses now, encourage all to respond.
- Hope to adopt in March / April 2019.
- Look out for a joint design SPD due out for consultation later in the year.
- Q&A
- Village design statements – do they link with NH plans? Yes will form part of the NH plan. 8 villages working on it, with some funding, and team of advisors supporting so it's part of the NH plan.
- Housing for essential local workers – CPCA has looked at who that might include. Will that be considered as part of affordable housing? City and SCDC may differ – SCDC looking at it not being traditional AH, looking at working with e.g. Wellcome Trust – may be different things in different places and at different times. If a firm is not involved will probably focus on the traditional pub sec workers issues as evidenced. It's an approach rather than a definition at the moment. City councillors not as keen as SCDC to develop homes for specific groups of workers – may look to give priority to help support parts of the economy. AF spoke with Sarah Ireland about it – LEP looked at skills and salary levels – hard to know how to manage e.g. if someone gets a rise or changes job. But if there is a part of the economy struggling might be able to do something like a local lettings policy to give a priority. Just ideas. **SB to find out more about his work.** Tricky as it's a changing area.
- MHVT Could there be a place for agricultural sites being converted to accommodation to house the workers – reuse of buildings? Could work well with a local lettings plan.
- NH – if range of tenures involved moving money towards “less affordable housing” this would reduce the number of genuinely affordable. JF – not the aim, look for the AR and Social rent and S/O. But might also be some starter homes or discounted market homes, depends how it's packaged on each site. Still see shared ownership and AR are one package, but if and RP wants to bring a bigger mix and helps meet some need, SCDC would look at it. Mainly thinking about larger sites.
- FC can now develop social rent again. If mix of tenures helps x-subsidise that should be a good thing. Middle income homes want to secure from developer contributions.
- SCDC is looking for affordable to be within LHA rates. If there was an element of some other tenure, would want it written into the s106.
- NH – is anyone monitoring what for-profit providers are doing / delivering locally? Might be short term tenancies, can put the rents up as tenant changes, long term may mean 5 years for them so different terms to other RPs who have a much longer time frame.

- PfP and Sage have signed a national agreement.
- For profit orgs not mentioned in the strategy but there is an emphasis on local management and maintenance, still have to use home-link and stick to LHA rates. But need to think about how this will be monitored. NH – we would comment on that aspect to make sure s106s are genuinely delivered by for-profit agencies.
- Clare Bishop - How do you monitor what the rent level is? Via home-link. But need to be able to check it still complies with the s106 i.e. it's still within the LHA rate. Other LAs pick this up by monitoring who's charging how much for same size properties.
- Becky A – some RPs are also working at 80% where this is over the LHA rate – so can't assume it's all for profits.
- One RP is excluding service charge from the affordable rent – in the East MIDs – but general agreement that's not the legal definition.

4. Update from Homes England, Becky Ashley

1 year anniversary of Homes England.

Who we are

We're the government's housing accelerator. We have the appetite, influence, expertise and resources to drive positive market change. By releasing more land to developers who want to make a difference, we're making possible the new homes England needs, helping to improve neighbourhoods and grow communities.

Our offer

We have an ambitious vision to make the housing market work. But we cannot deliver this alone. That's why it's our job to work with partners across the sector.

Our mission

Our mission is to intervene in the market to ensure more homes are built in areas of greatest need, to improve affordability. We will make this sustainable by creating a more resilient and diverse housing market.

Where places have ambition, potential for growth and a clear plan, we'll combine our tools to partner with them and support delivery.

We plan to give places the longer term certainty they need to leverage their own investment, alongside private finance, to increase affordability.

Over the next five years, we will work with more local authorities, with big ambitions, to get more homes built.

This is set out in our new five year Strategic Plan.

6 themes:

- Unlock public and private land where the market will not, to get more homes built where they are needed
- Ensure a range of investment products are available to support housebuilding and infrastructure, including more affordable housing and homes for rent, where the market is not acting
- Improve construction productivity
- Create a more resilient and competitive market but supporting smaller builders and new entrants, and promoting better design and higher quality homes
- Offer expert support for priority locations, helping to create and deliver more ambitious plans to get more homes built

- Effectively delivery home ownership products, providing an industry standard service to consumers.

Mentioned new Homes England offices being built using Modern Methods at Northstowe.

Actions: RPs who have not profiled out their indicative allocations, really need to be profiling them so can see the plan to the end

HE wants to discuss RPs pipelines with RP partners and timely discussions if there are problems or if there are opportunities. Range of offers how they can help with land, funds and skills.

Will be another spending review next year so need that dialogue to inform what the Ministry is told. Keen to get RPs market intelligence. Also what the LAs need are and what they are seeing in a changing market.

Also looking for case studies to share “the good stuff” that is being done. Best time can be around scheme completion. Might also be some “problems overcome” case studies at the end of a scheme. How were barriers overcome? Can be part of the story alongside scheme opening and press release etc. Adds a good learning experience.

Case studies are on the HE website. All specialist case studies got the housing LIN. Partner events are continuing – next one on 7 Feb.

Q&A

If there is a general query, who should people go to?? Becky not the only avenue – she suggests locally, there are some new staff in programme support team. New staff coming in April.

Community housing – Frances Peck; Rural and community led – Nick Enge; Specialist hsg - Everisto **(sue add to email contacts)**

Community led housing could include G&T site, provided its community led. LA could support the g&ts to do this. But it’s not open to RPs to bid, LAs only can bid for the revenue funding. CLT network is on the cusp of launching a fund for community led hubs, giving advice to CLTs. G&Ts can work with LA or RP. Would need to work out who the legal entity is, and for revenue it needs to be a legal entity.

JF - Almshouses sometimes want to develop a site – they might be a community led org but depends f they clear on who is the community. HE might support a CIO - Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Social rent – restricted – prospectus amended – only in areas of high affordability – LA areas are set out where agreement by MHCLG. Outside those areas, same parameters exist for social rent as previously i.e. could be an exception where regenerating and preserving the right of existing tenants – but not funding as standard through the programme.

Social Rent funding can only go thru the programme if HE is funding it – can use RCGF but can’t put nil grant funded or RCGF through the HE CME system – just record through the RCGF forms.

HF – Do you know when Wave 2 will come? – waiting to be announced. Hope it will be soon but have been expecting it for a while.

NH – working on scenarios for Brexit = BA working on the business plan. Have launched strategy. Working on a new operating g model but still a process of internal change as have expanded and need to organise in a way that is fit for purpose. Looking at offices and operating areas, internally. Also looking at what if, for business plan, what to ask for in next spending review. Market is moving a great deal, big disparities between the regional areas. Mindful of this as a national organisation.

HE looking to move to Northstowe in May 2019, ideally.

Clare; Comment on 34% of programme of being nil grant – commit a lot of capacity to s.106 sites – but this is delivering much-needed homes. And does take a lot for work, it’s not just simple to deliver without effort. If no s106 sites not much AH would be delivered. BA slide was showing that much of the housing being delivered is coming through s106 sites- not meant to be a criticism.

Land led deals can take longer, and difficulties of Brexit mean these may be coming forward more than other sites. BA – yes and we hope LA will use its role to deliver what is most needed and is appropriate to that individual site. Want RPs to bring forward land and sites, to bring development skills to the table and take opportunities as a sector to take up land and funding to go beyond s.106s.

FC – parts of the region don't have much s106 because they just don't come forward – so it varies – BA yes appreciate it is a varying picture and HE needs to be flexible, as do the RPs. Encourage not to lose the skills needed to bring forward sites for development.

5. Update from Combined Authority, Alex Francis

AF working with CLG on a statutory instrument to enable funding for Affordable Rent – no date for the remedy yet. “Late spring”? So from then will be able to affordable rent bids.

In meantime can look at social rent, HE won't look at FDC or PCC as high affordability pressure areas, whereas CPCA will.

AF keen to look at schemes with RPs to see how to engage with the group and see if there are schemes which won't fit with HE timetable etc. Maybe longer burn schemes, maybe things which would gain from a different form of investment. Can invest using loans, joint ventures, partnering with LA housing companies or RPs. Buying land / sites and agreeing with RPs to deliver the homes.

Want to offer support without being too programme-bound.

New housing and community committee now meeting, papers which monitor what goes to CPCA, will meet quarterly, will see papers on schemes where not confidential, and go on the website.

You can find papers here <http://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/about-us/committees/housing-and-communities-committee/>

CPCA looking into its own devt company, then might be able to take some of the risk on land.

Don't have fixed grant rates. Varies a lot between sites. Current environment is leading to flexibility.

JF – for s106 would CPCA help by funding something at SR rather than AR? AF - If the case can be made for need for AR, and esp if can deliver more homes, have yet to go through a site like that.

MHVT asked about mixing s106 and dev contribution and CPCA funding on a site – AF happy to test but have not been through that yet. Asks for examples they can take a look at.

6. Update from Enablers

- Cambridge City: Consultations done on Ida Darwin site (Tracey)
- East Cambs – think may be getting some enabling staff – more detail to follow
- Fenland & Peterborough
 - Headlines from Peterborough:
 - The last Inspector's hearing session to examine the Peterborough Local Plan finished in November 2018. On 17th December a letter was received from the Local Plan Inspector setting out modification required to make the Local Plan Sound and suitable for adoption by the Council. These modifications were not substantial and Peterborough is pleased with the response to date.
 - The Inspector has concluded that we should use the lower Local Housing Need figure as set out in the Submission version of the Plan, and that we do not need to include the additional growth from Cambridgeshire that had previously formed part of our housing numbers.
 - The Council is now consulting on the modifications to the Local Plan from 10th January for six weeks. The Inspector's final decision could change in response to the consultation outcome. We will then receive the Inspector's Report setting out her final findings shortly after and we hope to adopt the Plan in Spring 2019.

From Jessica Wicks, Assistant Research and Information Officer & Housing Enabling Officer

- Huntingdonshire
 - Local Plan: Inspector reported saying plan was not sound but could be made so by changes. We then incorporated the changes and has gone out to consultation. Hopefully that will mean nothing too controversial since we're following Inspector recommendation and adoption in May/June 2019.
 - CPCA: affordable rent issue is impacting on what we can put to them and needing to resolve problems for those that already had funding; mostly all in HDC have been sorted by Homes England funding. In addition to above we're securing HE funding for some schemes that might otherwise have gone to CPCA.
 - NPPF 2018 – some signs of developers pressing in particular for Discounted Market instead of shared ownership.
From Frank Mastrandrea, HDC
- South Cambs: Local Plan in place, have first neighbourhood plan for Great Abington accepted and is now a SPD. Looking for exception sites if RPs know of any
- West Suffolk – brief update from Lisa, adaptations work is proceeding as mentioned above with Jenna's help. Pleased one RP who was pursuing above LHA rents has now come into line with other RPs in the district.

7. Update from the Housing Board, Sue Beecroft / Nigel Howlett

Cross-keys is on the MAPPA group
 Better liaison between housing districts and county on supported need – cuts to funds now been delayed
 Homelessness Trailblazer funding has been extended
 DAHA funding extended, support for accreditation in place for another year. Offer is out there.

8. Help to Buy update, Juliet Drewett, bpha HTB Stakeholder Manager

FIGURES

- Shared Ownership figures (information is anonymous) can continue to be obtained by Housing Associations and Local Authorities from the backend of the Help to Buy East and South East website. If you don't have access them please get in touch with Juliet at Juliet.drewett@bpha.org.uk

ROADSHOWS

- Roadshows are on hold until further notice. If you would like me to assist with any of your own, then please get in touch with me.

MARKETING

- Just a reminder that we are able to share your Facebook and Twitter posts (we have circa 2500 FB followers and around 1500 Twitter followers)
- If you have any case studies we can add them to our website (we have circa 75k visitors to it per month)

From Juliet Drewett, Help to Buy Stakeholder Manager (Cambs, Suffolk, Norfolk, Beds, Bucks & Herts).
 Mobile: 07850 731895. Email: Juliet.Drewett@bpha.org.uk
 Facebook: search for Help to Buy East & South East Twitter: @helptobuyEaSE

9. Any other business

Any issues Lewis and Brigit could help with. Please send any other issues through if people think of them
 DAHA update (via note)
 This seems a good time to share with you the great news that Cambridgeshire's bid to the MHCLG was successful and so we now have until March 2020 to continue to support housing providers in the county to assist their staff and residents who are experiencing domestic abuse and to achieve accreditation. This

means that I can extend the following invitations to you:

1. Join our Eastern Region Domestic Abuse Housing Operational Group (currently 19 organisations) I have attached a flyer.
2. Make use of our expertise and free online toolkit to pursue accreditation (we are happy to attend to give a presentation to senior management)
3. Host a workshop at your organisation on one of DAHA's 8 priority areas or attend a suite of free workshops.

The eight priority areas are:

- Policies & Procedures
- Case Management
- Risk Management
- Equality & Diversity
- Perpetrator Management
- Partnership Working
- Staff Training
- Publicity and Awareness

Further information about the accreditation is available here <https://www.dahalliance.org.uk/accreditation>

The Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance's (DAHA) mission is to improve the housing sector's response to domestic abuse through the introduction and adoption of an established set of accredited standards. DAHA was launched in September of 2014 and embeds the best practice learned and implemented by its three founding partners Peabody, Standing Together Against Domestic Violence and Gentoo and is the first accreditation of its kind for housing providers in order to improve their response to domestic abuse. It is part of the Government's "Ending Violence against Women and Girls Strategy: 2016 to 2020" and has been publicly backed by MHCLG.

In order to attain accreditation housing providers can use our free online toolkit to assess their own current practice. I encourage you to take a look even if you are not considering accreditation at this time. You only need to enter your email and create a password to be able to access the free templates and guidance provided for you without any commitment to any further action.

So far 9 housing providers and 1 Local Authority have achieved DAHA accreditation. We have 31 going through the process nationally including 2 from Cambridge who are almost through the process and I'm sure would be willing to share with you their experiences of this.

Please let me know if you have any questions or would like further information. I look forward to hearing from you.

From Sharon Crosby, DAHA Development Manager, Standing Together. Mobile 07592 505083
www.standingtogether.org.uk

10. Dates of future meetings - All to be held at SCDC's offices, all 10.00-1300

17 May 2019

20 Sept 2019

13 Dec 2019