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GREAT YARMOUTH COMMUNITY HOUSING BOARD

28th April 2008 – 5.00 pm

PRESENT:

Councillor Peck (in the Chair); Councillors Blyth, Cook, Linden, Cunniffe and Smith. Mr M Bowles, Mrs J Cosaitis and Mr R King, Tenant Board Members.

Mr D Gilbert (Director - Community Housing), Mr D Frowde (Technical Director – Community Housing), Mr S Baker (Housing Support Services Manager), Mr C Dove (Capital Projects Manager), Mr C Durrant (Housing Property Manager), Ms Hilary Rickwood (Community Housing Admin Assistant).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mr Bernie Poyser.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of 12th March 2008 were confirmed.

3. MATTERS ARISING

A member questioned if there had been any progress regarding the lack of local companies who had submitted an expression of interest. The Technical Director (Community Housing) confirmed that progress was being made on this matter.

**4. GREAT YARMOUTH COMMUNITY HOUSING PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
2007/2008**

The Director and Technical Director reported on the service's performance against its best value and local performance indicators for 2007/08.

In response to questions from Board Members, the Technical Director confirmed that Community Housing remained on target for all dwellings to meet the decent homes standard by December 2010.

During a discussion on BVPI66, the Director of Community Housing explained that the rent collection strategy placed the emphasis on arrears prevention and the provision of support and guidance, such as debt advice, with legal action being taken as a last resort.

Under the heading of Customer Satisfaction Levels, members raised concerns that Community Housing could be opening itself up to criticism unrelated to the project, thus

detrimentally affecting the levels of satisfaction. More information was requested about the percentages of forms returned. A member raised the issue of contractors parking on verges and the subsequent damage this could cause, together with the cost implications of rectifying such damage. The Technical Director advised that it was the contractors' responsibility to make good any such damage and that the Clerk of Works should ensure that this happened.

RESOLVED: The Board noted that, although performance was generally good, there were some areas where improvement was required.

5. MAJOR WORKS PROGRAMME DELIVERY 2007/08

The Capital Projects Manager provided an overview of the Capital Projects team and the Major Works Programme delivery for 2007/08 and described some of the difficulties that had been experienced.

The Capital Projects Manager went on to give an overview of the heating and electrical heating installations together with the adaptation works carried out for tenants with disabilities.

6. MAJOR WORKS PROGRAMME ASSEMBLY 2008/09

The Housing Property Manager provided an overview of the Major Works Programme assembly process and went on to describe how projects were prioritized within the finance available. Handouts were distributed for a more detailed explanation.

7. REVIEW OF SHELTERED HOUSING IN NORFOLK

The Director of Community Housing briefed the Board on the review of Sheltered Housing in Norfolk carried out by Norfolk Supporting People and went on to outline the possible implications for the capital programme. Whilst the Director of Community Housing supported the ethos behind the proposals, he expressed concerns at the county perspective implicit within the review and the consequent failure to give sufficient emphasis to the need for decisions to take local circumstances and priorities into account. The Director of Community Housing drew the Board's particular attention to the possibility of Supporting People funding being withheld from new tenants in the future if standards proposed in the draft review action plan were accepted as mandatory requirements, rather than guidelines. There, would, therefore, be pressures to commit capital investment in areas which did not reflect the priorities of the tenants and the Council. Norfolk Supporting People is currently consulting on the review, with a closing date for comments of 15th July 2008.

RESOLVED:

(i) The Board welcomed the review of Sheltered Housing in Norfolk and confirmed its commitment to ensuring that sheltered housing schemes remain fit for purpose and meet the changing needs of elderly people within the Borough.

(ii) Whilst endorsing the principle of working closely with partner organisations in the development of sheltered housing services, the Board resolved that the proposed standards for sheltered housing should be adopted as guidelines to be considered in conjunction with local needs and priorities.

(iii) The views of the Community Housing Board should be brought to the attention of the Corporate Management Board when it considers this matter.

8. COMMUNITY HOUSING EVENT

The Housing Support Services Manager gave an overview of the report and requested feedback from Board Members.

It was felt that the venue was not central enough for all residents and the Housing Support Services Manager explained the problems experienced in finding a suitable venue. It was also suggested that a yearly event could be held at various locations around the Borough thus giving a wider group of tenants the opportunity to attend.

RESOLVED: The Community Housing Board noted the report and supported the proposal for an annual event. It was felt that booking the venue early for next year could be advantageous. Any suggestions for venue should be made to The Housing Support Services Manager.

9. COMMUNITY HOUSING BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE

The Director of Community Housing briefed the Board on the need for an extra meeting to be scheduled into the timetable. Dates and times will be advised later.

10. FAMILY INTERVENTION PROJECT

The Director of Community Housing presented the business case for making a financial contribution to the proposed Family Intervention Project to work with families at risk of losing their homes due to anti-social behaviour. The Government's Youth Taskforce has agreed to provide significant funding to the three-year project but financial support is also required from local organisations.

RESOLVED: The Board agreed that a financial contribution should be made to the Family Intervention Project by means of a supplementary budget of £11,925 in 2008/09, with budgetary provision in each of the following two years, in accordance with the business case.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 19.10.