

## Cheshire Regional Consultative Committee

### MINUTES

of the meeting held on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2010

**Present:** Eric Jones, Alan Winchester, Margaret Frain, Bill McQuinn, Philip Bradley, Rachel Shearin, Janet Ellis, Grant McKenzie, Bridie O'Reilly, Sheila Clarke, Bill O'Hara

**Regenda –** Alex Morrish, Peter Weightman, Vicky Lyle, Marcus Johnstone, David Wride, Geraldine Porter

**Apologies:** Andrei Szatkowski, Stan Snowdon, Jean Fagan, Sylvia Holland, Brian Campbell

		Action
	<p>The Chairman welcomed the staff members from Regenda:- Peter Weightman – Planned Contracts Manager, Vicky Lyle – Financial Inclusion Coordinator, , Marcus Johnstone – Worklessness Coordinator, David Wride – Responsive Procurement Manager</p>	
<b>1</b>	<b>Minutes</b> – of the previous meeting were approved.	
<b>2</b>	<b>Matters arising</b> - none	
<b>3</b>	<b>Credit Unions and Financial Inclusion</b> – Vicky introduced herself to the Committee and explained what her role was within Regenda and referred to the paper included in the notes which showed what had been set up so far and some of the initiatives which had been started and some which were still on-going. She explained that the various leaflets were aimed at people at different times of their involvement with Regenda from application to full tenancy and beyond. A form, 'Can you afford it?' was to be sent with application form, setting out all the costs incurred when moving into a property. Further leaflets were given at sign up and at the first tenancy visit (these cover most aspects of money management). Leaflets were also available through the arrears process (See further information in the Financial Inclusion section in the meeting notes). Staff at Regenda had received training and should be able to deal with most enquiries if people phone for assistance. They can refer them to the correct agency or send out the appropriate leaflet. She also discussed Home Contents Insurance. She was working with various companies and other housing associations to get the best deal for residents. Currently the best deal was with Ebeco particularly for people at the lower end of the scale and in poor areas. She discussed Social Tariffs for Utilities and said that the majority of people were not aware how much money they could save applying for a Social Tariff. Eric re-iterated this point and Rachel pointed out how much money could be saved by changing to a water meter. Janet asked about sheltered	

accommodation and Alex said that negotiating new utility contracts for schemes was a priority for the new procurement officer. Vicky was also working hard to get special deals set up with Credit Unions to help with the Government's Savings Gateway scheme (if you save up to £25 per month the Government will top it up with £300)(*update 26/6/10 – this scheme has been cancelled by the new Government*). Credit Unions will help with 'moving in' loans, white goods scheme, etc. At the moment a test scheme was being set up in the Oldham area and, if successful will be extended throughout the Regenda regions where possible. All this information was on the Regenda website but Vicky would welcome any queries or information on money matters from Committee Members. She was based at the Oldham office.

#### **4 Asset Management Budget**

Peter Weightman introduced himself as Planned Contract Manager part of the Asset Management Team, which was separate from the day to day maintenance team. John Royle heads up the department. Peter looks after planned and cyclical contracts and Gary Rostron deals with service contracts (lifts, gas, gardening, etc.) There were seven surveyors in the team. They tender, procure and manage planned maintenance contracts (windows, kitchens, roofs, central heating) from a list of approved contractors.

They have a budget of £8m across the group but each subsidiary has its own budget. The budgets are set year on year and are not more than one year in advance. The work is based on Stock Condition surveys (done either in-house or by consultants). When a survey is carried out the information is fed into Lifespan – a software database – from which reports can be pulled off. So far 40% of Templar properties have been surveyed – the rest is cloned from that information. It is an inexact science. He hoped that 20% would be surveyed each year on a 5 year cycle. Unfortunately Asset Management could not let people know well in advance when kitchens, bathrooms, etc, would be replaced. Sometimes there were budget cuts which affected the programme as some of the Asset management work was deemed non-essential, and sometimes a surplus needs to be spent quickly as this year when £800k had to be spent quickly. Money cannot be moved from one company within the group to another. The Templar budget for 2010/2011 is £1m compared with £670k for 2009/2010. Peter said that he would try to notify residents well in advance when work was to be started. His team were pushing to get long term budgets in place – at least three years. Regenda had to comply with Decent Homes (Government minimum standard). Templar don't have any properties which have failed Decent Homes. They are now working towards achieving the Warmer Homes/Greener Homes standard. The emphasis is on affordable warmth (double glazing, central heating boilers, insulation (loft and cavity wall). Electrically heated homes were often considered to be difficult to heat and Asset Management are

<p><b>5</b></p>	<p>exploring new heating methods – solar panels, etc.. There was a six year cyclical painting cycle. Single glazing has been identified in Templar properties and they were looking to replace these shortly. Work had already been done on replacing central heating boilers in various properties and Bakers’ Villas were having their central heating boiler replaced very soon. Janet pointed out that there had been major problems with the heating at Bakers’ Villas and they hadn’t been dealt with satisfactorily. They had been waiting for a part since before Christmas. Peter said that he would pass on the concern to his colleague, Gary Rostron, to investigate with Hadfield &amp; Britain. Fire Risk assessments have been carried out at schemes with communal areas (signage, fire doors, etc.) Periodical electrical installations are being carried out to ensure that every property has a current, valid certificate (£1.8m budgeted for this). An energy appraisal is being carried out at Paddock Close, Kettleshulme. Consultants have been employed to do the survey on different heat sources. Eric asked how much it would cost to replace heating at 12-1400 properties which had electric storage heating. Peter didn’t know but said that when they brought gas in to one scheme in Liverpool it had cost £14,000. The option appraisal would cover all types of heating – solar panels, ground source heat pumps, gas. Rachel said that her electricity bill used to be £50 per month and now she is paying £85 per month!. Eric said that he had replaced his radiators with panel radiators, for very little cost, and the heating was very efficient. Bill McQuinn had done his own survey on heat pumps, etc. at Paddock Close and had found that there were grants available from the gas companies. Peter pointed out that the consultants who Regenda employed to carry out these surveys were totally independent of any of the utility companies.</p> <p><b>Care &amp; Repair</b></p> <p>Brian gave a brief introduction to the Care &amp; Repair scheme and said that it had been established in the 1970’s and started in Macclesfield in 1988. There were 400 agencies nationally and they had been set up to keep older/disabled people in their homes. The majority of the clients were over 60 (95% were aged 70-90). C&amp;R worked with Social Services to fit adaptations in disabled people’s homes. Occupational Therapists work with C&amp;R and they work with voluntary sector, family members, Local Authority, etc. They obtain Disabled Facilities Grants from local authority and appoint contractors from the approved contractors list. They will arrange a decant if necessary. They monitor the work. Brian then gave an example of one of their cases. A client, aged 78, had been in hospital and in care for six to seven weeks. He couldn’t go home because there was no hot water in his house. Care and Repair had organised the repair – which had cost £25. Six to seven weeks in care would cost £15,000. Another man, also 78, had a re-wire and a window replacement at his house He obtained a grant towards the work and C&amp;R applied to SAAFA for a top up grant of £2,800. A stay</p>	<p><b>PW</b></p>
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7	<b>T-PAS Membership</b> – this was to be put on the Agenda for the September meeting	<b>GP</b>
8	<p><b>Neighbourhood Update</b></p> <p>Alex submitted his report on the neighbourhood which was included in the papers submitted to the members of the Committee. He provided an update on the Local Services Review, reporting that the senior management structure had been streamlined and Sue Chadwick and Helen Marks were in their new Neighbourhood Officer roles; Sue at Macclesfield and Helen covering Trafford and areas of Tameside. Details of these changes will be communicated to all residents in the first issue of the new improved neighbourhood newsletter. The staff at the local office will soon have access to support from a new specialist Project Officer and Anti Social Behaviour roles should the need arise. He also pointed out the new set of Service Standards which had been introduced (Appendix 1) which sets out what residents should be able to expect at their schemes. The other significant item in the report was the fact that the Templar Older Person’s Neighbourhood Action Plan has been discontinued – the reasons why were detailed in the report. There had been a number of concerns about car parking and a general overview was contained in his report.</p>	
9	<p><b>Sheltered Accommodation update</b></p> <p>Nothing to report</p>	
10	<p><b>Gas servicing Core Group</b></p> <p>Alan reported that Bakers’ Villas was on the Pending Works Register for a new boiler. Janet said that there had been problems at Bakers’ Villas with heating repairs which were not being carried out because of the impending installation of the new boiler. Peter said that he would check this with Gary Rostron. Sheila raised the point that although Regenda residents had to have gas checks regularly on their properties and certificates were issued, leaseholders in the same blocks don’t have to have gas certificates. The Landlord was not obliged to carry out safety checks. It was suggested that Regenda may have a duty of care to all residents and it would be in their interest that leaseholders should have valid gas certificates. Gary Rostron was checking the position to establish the limit of our obligations.</p>	<b>PW/ GR</b>
11	<p><b>Website News</b></p> <p>Grant produced a paper which he distributed to all present entitled “Resident involvement – Better communications – Proposed trial idea”. It set out the possible costs and equipment required.</p>	

<b>12</b>	<b>Any other business</b>  There was no further business	
<b>13</b>	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>  <b>Informal meeting – Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2010 at Wilmslow Library at 11 a.m.</b> <b>Quarterly Meeting – Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2010 – Macclesfield Library at 10.30 a.m.</b>	