

## **Sandwell Partnership**

### **Notes of a Meeting of the Executive Board of the Sandwell Strategic Housing Forum**

**14th January, 2010 at 9.30 a.m.  
Meeting Rooms 2 and 3, Urban Living HQ  
4th Floor, Hawthorns House, Halfords Lane, West Bromwich**

**Present:** Councillor Simon Hackett (Chair) (Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council [MBC]);  
Ally Allerson (Greets Green Partnership – Executive Director);  
June Beddows (Sandwell Private Landlord Forum - Business Advisor);  
Peter John (Sandwell MBC – Urban Regeneration - Director of Partnerships and Housing);  
Paul Jones (Riverside Homes – Assistant Director) (Chair Housing Development and Regeneration Thematic Working Group);  
Jan MacMillan (Sandwell Community Involvement & Participation Services [SCIPS] - Company Secretary);  
Neeraj Malhotra (Sandwell Primary Care Trust - Public Health Specialist) (Chair Housing and Health Thematic Working Group);  
Brian Oakley (Sandwell Homes – Chief Executive);  
John Selway (Sandwell Private Landlord Forum – Member).

Adam Carey (Urban Living);  
Patricia McCullagh (Spatial Planning).

**Apologies:** Dr Chris Handy (Vice-Chair) (Accord Housing Association – Chief Executive);  
Gary Bowman (Sandwell Partnership – Partnership Director);  
Dr Derrick Campbell (Race Equality Sandwell – Chief Executive);  
Alan Dean (Sandwell MBC - Adult & Community Services – Head of Health & Well Being);  
Tonia Flannagan (Voluntary Community Sector Representative);

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John Garrett (Sandwell MBC - Adult and Community Services – Executive Director);

Dominic Harman (Persimmon Homes (West Midlands) - Managing Director);

Kim Mocroft (Sandwell MBC – Urban Regeneration - Economic Regeneration & Skills Division – Community Development Unit);

Adnan Saif (Urban Living – Chief Executive);

Andrea Pope-Smith (Sandwell MBC - Executive Director Adult & Community Services).

Philippa Smith (Sandwell MBC – Urban Regeneration – Spatial Planning Division - Principal Planner).

**In attendance:** Julie Bridgwater (Sandwell MBC - Urban Regeneration - Partnerships and Housing Directorate - Community Involvement Manager) (Vice-Chair Community Regeneration Thematic Working Group);  
Neville Rowe (Sandwell MBC - Urban Regeneration - Partnerships and Housing Directorate) (Chair Research and Demographic Change Thematic Working Group);  
Nicola Sinclair (Sandwell MBC – Urban Regeneration - Partnerships and Housing Directorate – Principal Research Officer) (Vice-Chair Research and Demographic Change Thematic Sub-Group);  
Steve Smith (Sandwell MBC – Corporate Services - Partnering & Improvement Division - Service Manager, Partnering & Improvement);  
Kate Walker (Sandwell MBC - Corporate Services – Strategy & Communications Unit – Senior Press and Public Relations Officer).

**Officer Support:** Stephen Gabriel (Sandwell MBC – Urban Regeneration - Partnerships and Housing Directorate - Strategic Manager);  
Maureen Christian (Sandwell MBC - Corporate Services - Partnerships and Housing Division - Partnerships Officer).

**Apologies:** Sara Woodall (Accord Housing Association – Chair of Community Regeneration Thematic Group);  
Steve Lodder (Sandwell MBC – Urban Regeneration - Partnerships and Housing Directorate - Private Sector Housing Manager);  
Kirsten Casey (Sandwell MBC – Urban Regeneration - Partnerships and Housing Directorate - Housing Partnerships Manager);

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Laura Coburn (Sandwell MBC - Corporate Services - Partnerships and Housing Division - Assistant Partnerships Officer);

Nick Laws (Sandwell MBC, - Corporate Services - Partnerships and Housing Division – Commissioning & Performance Manager);

Kate Jenkins (Sandwell MBC – Corporate Services - Partnering & Improvement Division - Thematic Liaison Manager);

Dawn Reeves (Director, Inspira Consulting – West Midlands Improvement & Efficiency Partnership).

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**Notes of Last Meeting**

The notes of the meeting of the Executive Board held on 12th November, 2009 were received and approved, subject to the amendment of the last paragraph of Note No. 45/09 (Revised Health and Housing Strategy), to reflect the fact that fuel poverty is dealt with specifically by the Warm Homes Policy which was itself referenced in the Revised Health and Housing Strategy.

With regard to Note No. 46/09 (Draft Private Sector Housing Strategy), on questioning, the Director of Partnerships and Housing SMBC stated that the Private Sector Housing Strategy would be submitted to the next meeting of the Executive Board to be held on 4th March, 2010 or to the following meeting thereafter on 13th May, 2010.

He undertook to ensure that the Sandwell Private Landlord Forum was involved in the consultation process on the Strategy.

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**"The Executive - Working More Effectively"**

As requested the Director of Partnerships and Housing SMBC submitted a paper which set out proposals for the future structure of the Executive Board and its Thematic Sub Groups. At the Workshop held on 10th September, 2009 the following "Top 3 things" had been identified for the partnership to clarify/ act on:-

- \* to clarify ownership & accountability to the partnership;
- \* to empower Thematic Sub Groups to get on with the work – and them having the right people to deliver;
- \* the Executive Board needed to focus on action and removing blockages to delivery.

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The Executive Board considered what this might mean in practice for the Executive Board and identified that:-

- \* the Executive Board should actively challenge, support and identify barriers. Should action log activities focusing more on performance;
- \* to get the right people from the right partners with the right skills in the right place would mean that the Executive Board would have to be slimmed down;
- \* Thematic Sub Groups should be empowered to get on with their work and consideration should also be given as to whether they also have right people from the right partners with the right skills in the right place to be able to get on and deliver the Action Plan;
- \* the Chairs of the Thematic Sub Groups should own their groups' delivery plans, manage their agendas and report back to the Executive Board.

Board members also felt that more should be done to:-

- \* get the wider Sandwell Strategic Housing Forum to set the scope and scenarios within which the Executive Board should work;
- \* raise awareness of why the Executive Board was here, what it aimed to achieve, its priorities and what it had done;
- \* understand the impact of initiatives from a partnership perspective (and potential constraints/ savings and impact on outcomes);
- \* focus upon Strategic Housing Issues – influence/ decisions - The Chair of the Executive Board and the Chairs of Thematic Sub Groups to work on influencing strategy - Need to be clear about where we focus and who else we need to influence on what.

The Paper asked the Executive Board think about its' future purpose and role and how it could more effectively drive the housing agenda in Sandwell and the Executive Board approved in principle the proposal to refocus the make-up of the EB and the EB Thematic Sub-Groups.

It was recommended that in future the role of the EB should concentrate on:-

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- \* Ownership and accountability to the Partnership;
- \* Empowering the thematic sub-groups to get on with the work;
- \* Ensuring Action;
- \* Policy formulation and development; and
- \* Co-ordinating work with the other LSP Thematic Partnerships.

The Executive Board asked that the Chair hold further detailed discussions urgently with the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Thematic Sub-Groups and representatives of the current Homelessness Forum and the Equality Groups to review their terms of reference, to establish clear roles, remits, responsibilities and lines of accountability in order to deliver the priorities and actions in the EB Business Plan and that those discussions should look at the membership of these groups to ensure that all key agencies, including SCIPS, the PCT, the Police and Sandwell Homes are involved at all appropriate levels.

**It was agreed that:-**

- (1) the outcomes and recommendations from the discussions referred to above for the future organisation and operation of the SSHF and its constituent bodies be submitted for consideration of the next meeting of the EB to be held on 4th March, 2010;
- (2) in future the Chairs of the EB Thematic Sub-Groups should always be representatives of non-Council partner organisations.

The Chair of the EB asked that urgent action be taken to fill any existing vacancy of EB Thematic Sub-Group Chair or Vice-Chair and also asked officers to investigate whether it would be possible for him to be accompanied to future Sandwell Partnership Board meetings by the Director of Partnerships and Housing SMBC.

**Sandwell Strategic Housing Forum - Annual Conference**

The Director of Partnerships and Housing SMBC reported on attending delegates positive feedback responses to the Third Annual Forum Conference held on 27th November, 2009 at the West Bromwich Albion Football Club, the Hawthorns, West Bromwich, West Midlands. 80% of respondents had welcomed the shift away from workshops to questions & answers.

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The Forum agreed that the major challenges facing it were:-

- \* continuity of funding programmes;
- \* provision of new housing to meet affordable housing targets;
- \* the need for investment to tackle the condition of existing private sector housing stock;
- \* “health and housing”.

The Chair stressed that the emerging Business Plan should address the outcomes from the Forum Conference.

4/10      **Proposed 2010/ 11 Programme of Executive Board Meetings**

It was agreed that meetings of the Executive Board be held on the following dates, between 2.00 p.m. – 4.00 p.m. on Thursdays:-

13th May, 2010;  
8th July, 2010;  
9th September, 2010;  
18th November, 2010;  
13th January, 2011;  
10th March, 2011.

The Director of Partnerships and Housing SMBC was asked to ensure that meeting venues were again rotated within the partnership during 2010/11.

5/10      **“Risk Management” Implications From Today’s Meeting**

No Potential risks were identified today.

However, the Director of Partnerships and Housing SMBC was asked to report back to a future meeting on the steps taken to deal with a risk once it had been identified.

6/10      **“Anything to Shout About” From Today’s Meeting?**

Nothing was identified today.

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**Date of Next Meeting**

**It was agreed that** the next meeting would be held at 9.30 a.m. on Thursday 4th March, 2010.

(Meeting ended at 11.30 a.m.)

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