

AT A MEETING
of the
**CPA HOUSING IMPROVEMENT
PLAN WORKING GROUP** held at
the Council House, Walsall on
Friday 14th January, 2005 at 6.00 p.m.

PRESENT

Councillor C. Ault
Councillor D. Pitt
Councillor R. Walker

Sue Byard
Paul Hanson
Mark Inglis
Jason MacGilp
Kathy McAteer
Shirley Williams

6. Election of Lead Member

Councillor Ault was elected as Lead Member for the duration of the meeting.

7. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Coughlan and Barton.

8. Declarations of Interest and Party Whip

Councillor Pitt declared a personal non prejudicial interest as the brother of the portfolio holder for Housing and Community Safety.

Councillor Walker declared a personal non prejudicial interest as the partner of the portfolio holder for Housing and Community Safety.

9. Notes of the Meeting held on 22 November

The notes of the previous meeting were confirmed as a correct record.

10. CPA Housing Improvement Plan

Paul Hanson introduced an update on the above plan. Work had been done to revise the improvement plan and the purpose of the meeting was to seek comments and endorsement from members.

A number of processes had been implemented:

The whole process of the improvement plan was being project managed.

A performance management approach was being taken.

A critical friend had been appointed to advise if the plan would be acceptable to the audit commission, in terms of the process and the individual deliveries contained in the plan.

Paul Hanson went through each of the key themes of the plans explaining some of the detail and seeking comments and questions.

The key themes were: -

1. Access, Customer Care and Involvement
2. Diversity
3. Housing Strategy and enabling
4. Housing register and nominations
5. Homelessness and Housing Advice
6. Private Sector Housing
7. Performance Management

Enquiries from members included requesting the figures and targets on homelessness and it was agreed that these could be provided for a future meeting.

More information was provided on the DFG/OT issue; with Walsall Housing Group doing some of its own minor works; unqualified posts had been recently filled; attempts were being made to deal with those that had waited longest. The council's capital strategy, which is going to the next cabinet, includes an additional £4 million in the next financial year and £3 million per year for the following four years. More information would follow on this at the next meeting.

Councillor Ault emphasised the need to keep the needs of the customer at the heart of the plan and he felt that the plan was promising and that staff were optimistic that it would be achieved.

It was noted that nearly all actions were highlighted in green and it was important to provide the evidence of this as a reality check and this would be monitored by the working group.

11. Feedback from Members

It was agreed that full feedback from members following their meetings with members would take place at the next meeting and a decision on the key focus and outcomes to pursue would be agreed.

12. Next Steps for the Working Group

It was agreed that there were two key tasks for the work group

1. Regular monitoring of the CPA Housing Improvement Plan.
2. Agreeing a work programme to tackle the areas raised at the last meeting.

In addition Councillor Ault requested baseline performance data for the 2004/05 year when it became available.

Finally, it was agreed to meet approximately once per month until the inspection and a schedule of meetings would be produced.