

**Minutes of HomesWest RSL/LA Meeting
Held on Monday 16 February 2009
At Sovereign Housing Group, Old Chapel Buildings,
635A Gloucester Road, Horfield, Bristol at 2.00 pm**

		Action																																																															
1.	Welcome and Introductions																																																																
1.1	JG opened the meeting. He welcomed Colin Molton, Regional Director – South West of the Homes and Communities Agency.																																																																
2	Present:																																																																
2.1	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;">Colin Molton</td> <td style="width: 15%;">CM</td> <td>Homes and Communities Agency</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mike Grist</td> <td>MAG</td> <td>Somer</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Caroline Hughes</td> <td>CH</td> <td>Arcadia</td> </tr> <tr> <td>James Gibson</td> <td>JG</td> <td>Sovereign</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mike Day</td> <td>MD</td> <td>Arcadia</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3"> </td> </tr> <tr> <td>Martyn Blackman</td> <td>MB</td> <td>Aster</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Simon Parks</td> <td>SP</td> <td>Sovereign</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Adrian Holloway</td> <td>AH</td> <td>B & NES</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Karen Ross</td> <td>KR</td> <td>South Gloucestershire</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Kerry Metcalfe</td> <td>KM</td> <td>South Gloucestershire</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Jon Shaw</td> <td>JS</td> <td>South Gloucestershire</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Versha Korcia</td> <td>VK</td> <td>Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3"> </td> </tr> <tr> <td>Barry Wallen</td> <td>BW</td> <td>Bristol City Council</td> </tr> <tr> <td>William Bryant</td> <td>WB</td> <td>North Somerset</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Jane Alderman</td> <td>JA</td> <td>Somer</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Nick Hooper</td> <td>NH</td> <td>Bristol</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tim Southall</td> <td>TS</td> <td>Bristol City</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Steve Blake</td> <td>SB</td> <td>Aster</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gill Gould</td> <td>GG</td> <td>Sovereign (Minutes)</td> </tr> </table>	Colin Molton	CM	Homes and Communities Agency	Mike Grist	MAG	Somer	Caroline Hughes	CH	Arcadia	James Gibson	JG	Sovereign	Mike Day	MD	Arcadia				Martyn Blackman	MB	Aster	Simon Parks	SP	Sovereign	Adrian Holloway	AH	B & NES	Karen Ross	KR	South Gloucestershire	Kerry Metcalfe	KM	South Gloucestershire	Jon Shaw	JS	South Gloucestershire	Versha Korcia	VK	Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)				Barry Wallen	BW	Bristol City Council	William Bryant	WB	North Somerset	Jane Alderman	JA	Somer	Nick Hooper	NH	Bristol	Tim Southall	TS	Bristol City	Steve Blake	SB	Aster	Gill Gould	GG	Sovereign (Minutes)	
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2.1	Apologies																																																																
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3.1	JG gave a brief to CM regarding Homes West – how it was made up, what it was about and details of the recent review.																																																																
3.2	Questions were then put to CM and below are the main points of the discussion.																																																																
	Private Finance - How can HCA assist us?																																																																
	Discussions going on to look at some of the blockages within the region. The first meeting scheduled to take place today with Regional Ministers, at which HW will be represented by John Bracey, FD of Aster. Short answer is the HCA do not have the answer currently, but it was suggested that we all pitch in with suggested areas of concern and solutions. There will be a number of papers on the financial issues being faced by the sector, and hopefully a paper coming out from the																																																																

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meeting being held today.

Will there be any opportunity for us to make representations?

The first meeting is today but this is just a scoping meeting to see where blockages are and for ministers to understand the problems. CM confirmed that RSLs should feed in their comments at any time. Today's meeting is specifically looking at development finance and finance for particular products. John Bracey has been talking to a number of finance directors across the region in preparation for this meeting.

The HCA have put together a schedule of initiatives where a solution could be found to get things moving forward again. The SW region put 5 schemes up for consideration, and there are now other schemes going forward. The HCA schedules have short, medium and longer term projects. The short term is very important to the HCA but also they are looking at medium term and longer term projects where they can move some barriers to development further down the track.

It is proposed that money lent by the HCA will be in the form of equity. The more HCA put in as up front funding the more they want to see returned as equity. This will help make sure that regulation checks and balances are there. The HCA will look at acceptable return on individual projects and seek to take a proportion of outturn sales values/profits. HCA are looking at larger schemes where possible.

HCA plan to ask people to fill in template for rationalisation and priorities of projects, but in the meantime VK is compiling a list so e-mail her with your ideas.

There is no definition of 'major' schemes, the HCA intend to focus on those over 100 units but that does not exclude smaller sites – if appropriate the HCA would consider schemes packaged together. Discussions on each project will take place and the HCA will decide whether the proposal is robust enough for them to fund.

Shared Ownership – will there be assistance in the future?

The Richard Hill letter of last September still stands. In summary it said that RSL's should come to the HCA with packages of schemes and that model is still open. The current grant flexibility depends on each individual scheme but this may not be the case in a year's time. You need to make the most of opportunities for funding now.

How are the HCA and TSA are working together?

It is very early days and the two organisations are still liaising on how they will work together to share information. HCA and TSA are having regular liaison meetings and information will be shared as we progress. HCA will feedback information about milestones to you.

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Single Conversation

The HCA have moved towards a Single Conversation, place-based approach to funding. It is about delivery of an investment programme which all partners – housing and non-housing – can have an interest in.

The HCA will be reviewing their strategy in every region to look at priorities and what interventions are required to solve problems.

The HCA are looking to the individual LA's to lead the process. It is proposed that the West of England will complete their Joint Investment Plan by July. If this is achievable the HCA will put significant resources into making their aspirations happen. The HCA have had a scoping meeting with the WoE, and a number of joint meetings and workshops have been planned to progress this.

The HCA will then implement a Joint Investment Framework from which they will be able to derive the finance investment in respect of priorities. Discussions will be about what is right for each individual place. The HCA will make suggestions but they will not impose solutions – it is not for the HCA to say who should be around the table and they are expecting the LA's to determine this in advance of any detailed discussions.

This process could take about one year to 18 months; will the status quo stand up until then?

CM - Yes

Is it appropriate for Homes West to communicate direct with HCA?

CM – Full engagement is important. Partnerships are better.

Do you feel that HCA will be in the position to co-fund a housing co-ordinator?

If there is a need for further capacity then we will look at it. Growth Points Funding may help with this.

CM said that he would be happy to come and talk to Homes West again at any time.

4 HCA Update

VK tabled a document setting out the allocations to the HW region to date. There is a further £11.5M to be allocated between now and the end of March 09.

VK confirmed that the allocations on her sheet are accessible to everyone. Every quarter there is an allocation statement made and a list of allocated schemes uploaded onto the HCA's website (**post meeting note:** the location of this schedule is not evident on the website, could VK please provide a link to all partners)

VK

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<p>Homebuy Direct is a Government funded scheme to deliver discounted market housing. The LA partners at the meeting confirmed that they did not consider this as a form of 'affordable' housing within their definition. It was suggested that the HCA could clarify the position formally to pre-empt inconsistencies in reporting.</p> <p>VK, CM, and SB left the meeting</p>	HCA
<p>5 Homes West Action Plan SP informed that a meeting had been held about 3 weeks ago and it had been decided to try and sign off the existing 2005-2009 Action Plan and create a further one from 2009-March 2011. The old Action Plan will show what actions have been achieved to date, and which actions are to come forward to the new Plan. The new Plan will identify the challenges facing us over the next couple of years, which will then evolve into the formal Action Plan.</p> <p>KR to convene a further meeting to translate the challenges to smart actions.</p> <p>It was agreed that the new Action Plan should be added to the next Homes West agenda.</p>	KR GG
<p>6 Sites Monitor TS said that a discussion was needed regarding the different databases used for this document as the current method wasted time. It should be achievable using Excel.</p> <p>KR gave the history of this document</p> <p>JG queried that as one of Housing Vision's recommendations was to appoint a HW co-ordinator, whether this could be one of their roles. JS confirmed this had been a consideration although full job roles have yet to be determined/agreed.</p> <p>TS said that it was important that we are operating this by the 2nd Quarter</p>	
<p>7 Treasury Report There is £33,476 balance and therefore no need for partners to top this up. There was a query over whether the schedule reflected the correct payments to Savills – MG to look into and confirm.</p>	MG
<p>8 Minutes of Last Meeting</p> <p>Item 5.3 – Transfer Schemes - completed Item 6.4 – Action Plan - completed Item 7.5 – CM invite - completed Item 7.6 – Turn around time for bids – still a bit slow – this will be raised as an issue for Versha Item 13.1 – This was premature and we are still called RSLs.</p>	

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	Item 12.1 –MD still to circulate the Hometrack report.	MD
9	Any Other Business	
9.1	Date of Next Meeting – 16 April to remain as a joint partnership meeting	
9.2	MG said that Tony Quigley from Sovereign has been trying to get people together to discuss marketing. The meeting was cancelled because it clashed with Home Ownership Conference.	
	KR – said that TQ was re-scheduling this. GG to check this. (<i>e-mail sent to TQ 24.2.</i>)	GG
	BW said that allocation procedures for intermediate rented units should be discussed, in addition to marketing, to ensure the Council can identify/collate data on occupiers of these units.	
	MG to circulate the letter that came through today regarding this. It is a more detailed local assessment.	MG
9.3	JG asked that following on from transfer meeting what is decision making process now for the way forward with Local Tier transfers. TS responded that he would like to see what a Development Agency proposal might look like to see how it could work taking into account the comments from the Housing Vision review.	
	KR said that they should include the "pro's" and "con's" of any transfer agreement changes.	
	JG to convene a meeting of homes west RSLs.	JG
9.4	TS said that the Housing Vision Report is now complete and he felt it was a job well done and we need to carry recommendations forward.	
	Dates of Future Meetings.	

16 February 2009	RSL's/LAs
6 April 2009	RSL's/LA's??
15 June 2009	RSL's
3 August 2009	RSL's and LA's
5 October 2009	RSL's
7 December 2009	RSL's/LA's
All meetings to be held at Sovereign in Bristol at 2pm	