

TONBRIDGE & MALLING
HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCY
Advisory Group Meeting
13 May 2009

Present:	Names Chris Thomas Pension & Disabilities Service Cllr Cure Councillor Cllr Balcombe Councillor Lesley Wheal HIA Caseworker Aric Goss HIA Surveyor Linda Hibbs Private Sector Housing Mgr Robin Cahill Supporting People West Kent Albert Jullians HIA Client Helen Ryan HIA Administration	To Action
Apologies:	Names: Pauline Nix Age Concern Alison Batchler Tonbridge Volunteers Susan Levitt Malling Volunteers Rowena Love Age Concern David Eaton Project Manager Hazel Skinner Private Sector Housing Nicola Tallon KAB Viv Fuller CROP Charles Stuart CROP	
1) Previous Minutes	Chris Thomas welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced all members. The previous minutes were discussed and agreed.	

<p>2) Matters Arising:</p>	<p>A question was raised regarding the contractors list and Aric Goss explained that in touch now have a central list which covers all the HIA area so we now have more choice for contractors.</p> <p>Linda Hibbs discussed that they had won £55,000 in the housing services bid. Cllr Cure said that the amount of DFG grants were a worry and that there was not enough money to meet these at present. He said that the shortage of funds for this is a concern and we need to write to central government regarding the problems with this.</p> <p>Chris Thomas asked if we could find out what happens in other areas with DFGs. Lesley Wheal is going to find out in the Tunbridge Wells area and report back to group.</p> <p>Linda Hibbs said that we won our full bid amount but in the early months of this financial year, a quarter of the budget was taken up by the backlog from the end of last financial year. Cllr Cure then said that maybe it should have been a greater bid.</p> <p>Linda Hibbs explained that when the bid went in the council had to be able to afford 40% of bid but now this has changed. Cllr Cure said this needs to be addressed as it is holding up disabled peoples grants for help that they need.</p> <p>Linda Hibbs said that unfortunately, Occupational Therapists are also slowing down the process for these grants as they are going through a restructure.</p> <p>Robin Cahill said that the senior management were the first to be restructured and then the OT's and Care Management. It was hoped it would be finished by the end of may.</p> <p>Linda Hibbs said that the OT's were going to be split over area's but not sure how yet. Chris Thomas wondered if we have a service level agreement with the OT's but Linda Hibbs said no we haven't.</p> <p>Lesley Wheal explained that with the Adult side of the disabled grants the OT's refer them in quite quickly but it is the Children's side of the service that has a backlog of many months.</p> <p>Cllr Cure said that in someways it was more important for a child and he would report this problem to the new cabinet member for the Child Family and Education Dept.</p> <p>It was agreed to invite Gill Crouch OT to our next advisory group meeting to discuss this further.</p>	<p>LW</p> <p>CC</p> <p>HR₂</p>
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3) Project Managers Report	<p>Lesley Wheal read the Project Managers Report in David Eaton's absence. Overall the agency is performing very well and in touch is pleased with the start they have made.</p> <p>On 18 May the HIA moved into the new offices in Kings Hill. The full address is in touch, Mid & West Kent HIA, 2 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent, ME19 4AQ. 01732 525520.</p> <p>It is hoped that we will have a formal launch soon and all members will be invited.</p> <p>Our Annual Report will be produced within the next few weeks for April 2008 to March 2009.</p> <p>Linda Hibbs asked about the changes to the Advisory Groups. Lesley said that a way forward had not yet been decided. Chris Thomas said that maybe this would be a time to step down from his responsibilities as chairman.</p> <p>Robin Cahil said that he would welcome perhaps one meeting across the areas.</p> <p>Chris Thomas said that all areas would need to be represented equally to provide a balance. Aric Goss said that sharing knowledge across the areas could have benefits but all local authorities work very differently.</p>	
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<p>4) Technical Report</p>	<p>Aric Goss outlined the details in his technical report. Quarter 4 was a more successful quarter and our speed of service is now better as all members of staff are now in post now. The KPI stats have improved overall. The Caseworker to Surveyor target has not yet been met but this is mainly due to the current backlog. This will be improving over the next quarter.</p> <p>Aric Goss explained that he is now working on the more complex cases which include children's cases involving large scale works and these will reflect in the figures next quarter. Chris Thomas said perhaps the KPI targets could be changed to accommodate planning issues and complex cases. Cllr Cure said that perhaps these figures could be broken down further for these cases. It was decided that if a child case is clouding these figures then it could be highlighted and explained separately.</p> <p>Cllr Balcombe asked if we are given priority when putting planning or building requests in. Aric explained that usually building permissions is about 8 wks and planning is about 14 wks.</p>	
	<p>It was also reported that we had 9 cases aborted due to clients moving and works not being feasible for example stairs being too narrow for a stairlift.</p> <p>Aric Goss also said that our Approved Contractors were working well and our clients are happy with works carried out.</p> <p>Chris Thomas wanted to thank Aric for his efforts for the agency and said continue the good work.</p>	

<p>5) Agency Round up</p>	<p>Chris Thomas said unfortunately not many agencies were present but he would start with Pension & Disability Carers Service.</p> <p>He explained that there is lots happening with the state pensions and carers credits. He said that they were making things more simple to get a state pension and more fair for people who care for other people. There is to be a gradual increase of womens pension age to 65 then to 68.</p> <p>With Carers Credits if you care for a child you will get credits.</p> <p>Chris Thomas explained that Annette Hughes Partner Liaison Officer at Ashford will pass all the information on the voluntary organisations so that they are aware of help available.</p> <p>Chris Thomas also spoke about Community Care Grants and Cllr Cure said that they are not being promoted enough. Chris Thomas said that he will pass some literature to Cllr Cure via Lesley Wheal.</p> <p>Cllr Cure reported that the Tonbridge & Malling Volunteer Bureau is opening up a service in Snodland. This will be based in the Wolfe Centre every other Wednesday morning starting on 3 June.</p> <p>Robin Cahill reported that the older person review has now been completed. They have been looking at discrepancies in the way their services are provided and found considerable differences in costs involved,</p> <p>There has been an increase in older people floating services and they have all gone live now.</p> <p>There has also been recent reviews of West Kent Housing Association, Town & Country HA and Russet Homes older peoples services and these are all now improving.</p>	<p>CT</p> <p>CT</p>
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	<p>The 5 Year business plan is now almost concluded. This is for the period of 2010 to 2015 which is 2 years over the official end of the project of 2012. There is a strong belief that this will continue.</p> <p>22,000 people benefit from the budget in Kent and it is hoped that this will continue. A recent audit carried out has found the programme a success.</p> <p>There was then a discussion on future planning and building locally.</p>	
6) AOB	<p>Albert Jillians then asked about replacement soffits and fascias and Linda Hibbs explained that grants are available for this type of works. Lesley Wheal will contact Albert Jillians soon regarding this.</p> <p>Gardening services were also discussed and age concern do offer a gardening service for £12.00 per hour. Helen Ryan is to discuss this with David Eaton to see if it can be offered within the Handyperson Service.</p>	<p>LW</p> <p>HR</p>
	<p>At the next meeting it was agreed to discuss the changes to the advisory group and the terms of references need to be consulted. It was noted that when the group changes Chris Thomas will step down from Chairman duties.</p>	
Date of Next Meeting	<p>The date of the next meeting was set for Wednesday 19 August at 10.00 am at the new in touch offices 2 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent, ME19 4AQ.</p>	