

Committee of Management for the National Code of Standards for Large Student Developments

Minutes of the Committee of Management Meeting

held at 11.00am on 26th May, 2005, at The Place, Ducie Street, Manchester

Present: Mr Neil Marsden (Chair and ANUK), Mr Martin Blakey (Unipol), Mr Gavin Duncan (Opal), Mr Ian Fletcher (ANUK), Mr Dennis Hopper (University of Leeds), Ms Vicky Lovegood (Unipol), Mr Jeff Preen (Liberty Living), Mr John Ripley (Victoria Hall), Mr Tom Stevens (CUBO), Mr Simon Williams (Unite).

In Attendance

Mr Simon Kemp (Unipol); Mr John Kenny (Moorefield Domain)

Apologies

Mrs Claire Powrie (AMOSSHE), Mrs Jayne Conboye (ASRA), Mr Andrew Griffiths (CIEH), Mr Gary East (Leeds Metropolitan University), Mr John Daniels (ODPM), Mrs Lindsey Fidler-Baker (NUS), Mr Andrew Cardy (UUK), Mr Mark Allen (UPP)

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 25th February, 2005 were APPROVED as being a true and accurate record of that meeting.

Matters Arising

- i) Information concerning whether the DfES have nominated a representative to sit on the CoM is still required. It was agreed that the National Code Administrator should contact ODPM about this, as well as establish exactly who to write to with regards to gaining Housing Act approval for the National Code.
- ii) NUS have designed the lay out for the National Code document, copies of which will be circulated to members of the CoM. It was noted that Agnes Gautier will shortly be leaving NUS and the CoM wished to thank her for her assistance in developing the National Code. NUS were asked to confirm to the National Code Administrator the dates of their summer training events, especially the one at which a session on the National Code is to take place; progress in developing a welsh-language version of the National Code; and the name of the person they wish to appoint to be their representative on the complaints tribunal.
- iii) The Chair reported that he had completed his assessment of the National Code from the perspective of the Health and Housing Safety Rating System and does not feel it will have any impact. He did suggest that the Code might require some amendments in respect of space heating, management of noise and complying with requirements set down by local housing authorities – where these apply to high density developments.

- iv) The appointments of Mr Paul Rowlinson and Mr Simon Williams as Chairs of the RSL and Private Sector sub-groups, respectively, were approved.

Matters for Discussion

- 1) Relations with Universities UK and their Code of Practice –** A paper detailing recent development with UUK and their proposed Code of Practice was discussed. MB flagged-up a number of issues which remained outstanding, including the definition of what was a University development. He reported that another meeting had been arranged with UUK and ODPM for June 2nd, at which it was hoped ODPM would suggest a definition. This would then be circulated to members of the CoM for consultation.

It was agreed that the National Code Administrator should circulate to the CoM the section in the 2004 Housing Act relating to the meaning of ownership. It was also agreed that any decisions to support the UUK Code should be decided by the CoM.

The CoM agreed the four point strategy proposed in the paper:

- Devise an acceptable definition of university controlled and managed accommodation
- Put together an operational protocol between ANUK and UUK
- Iron out any inconsistencies between the two Codes
- Inform both ANUK's and UUK's membership about the outcome of the new system

It also agreed to increase UUK's representation on the CoM to three places, with nominations made directly through UUK rather than directly to the CoM. It is envisaged that this may include representation from the professional bodies within the HE sector, who were previously able to nominate themselves directly to the CoM. Co-options to the CoM will still be allowed.

- 2) Progress to Date –** The National Code Administrator introduced the paper detailing latest membership details and reporting on a visit to the ASRA Conference.

The CoM agreed the proposal that details of all the developments covered by the National Code should be posted on the ANUK website. The Chair proposed that the remaining organisations which had expressed an interest in joining, but had not yet submitted the correct documentation, be given until June 30th to do so.

- 3) Promoting the National Code to Local Authorities –** The Chair introduced a paper setting out a strategy for promoting the Code to Local Authorities and invited discussion.

The CoM generally supported the proposals but suggested that care be taken not to imply that LHA's might wish to introduce differential pricing policies for owners who had signed-up to the National Code, as ODPM

would not support such an idea. Another suggestion was that it might be better to delay the campaign until after approved status had been achieved.

- 4) Publicising the National Code to Students and Parents** – The National Code Administrator tabled the text for a poster, which it was envisaged would be posted up in a central area of all developments covered by the Code, and invited comments. It was agreed that members of the CoM would think about it and then email ideas back. The CoM agreed to the proposal of submitting an article on the National Code to *The National Student* publication, for inclusion in the September edition, and to make a contribution of £150 towards the costs of the publication. MB raised the possibility that the *Daily Mail* might be interested in sponsoring the National Code and the CoM agreed it was worth considering. DH asked whether any consideration had been given to the appropriate use of the National Code logo and proposed that a protocol be devised.
- 5) Presentation of National Code Certificates** – The proposal to produce certificates for developments covered by the National Code was approved, as was the idea of an awards ceremony to which the Minister for Housing and Planning should be invited to present the certificates. The CoM agreed that a representative of each of the organisation which had signed-up to the Code by June 30th be invited to receive the certificates for each of their developments covered by the Code. The National Code Administrator was asked to agree a date in consultation with ODPM and to notify members of the CoM as soon as possible.
- 6) Audit Framework Discussion Document** – DH introduced the paper setting out ideas for the audit and compliance checking framework. Following discussions DH agreed that management standards would be checked annually by each member, not each development. The CoM agreed to progress to the next phase of the process, which entails testing the approach with pilot properties and refining if necessary, as well as developing a set of central guidance notes and criteria for verifiers. The CoM also agreed that Mr Andrew Griffiths and Mr Martin Blakey become members of the working group, and that nominations be sought from two other members of the OCG.
- 7) Future Development of the Code** – MB highlighted some possible future developments in both the content and the scope of the National Code. These could include:
- Revising the section on security to put more emphasis on human resources as opposed to barriers. The Home Office might assist by devising an approved security standard;

- Amending the clause relating to late buildings to take account of greenfield universities;
- Introduce a new section dealing with energy policies;
- Agree a definition of pastoral care and devise an appropriate benchmark standard;
- Layer the existing Code and create different levels of membership, based upon amenity levels within developments.

SW thought that by attempting to set standards for additional areas of provision then there was a danger of undermining choice and stunting innovation. MB replied that these proposals were not about standardisation. It was agreed that some ideas on possible definitions of pastoral care would be circulated to members of the CoM via email

AOB

- i) SW reported that the private providers had formed an association with the aim of working together in respect of the National Code. A briefing paper outlining some of their concerns had been written and it was agreed this should be considered at the next meeting.

Date of Next Meeting – Thursday 1st September. Unite have kindly agreed to arrange a venue in Bristol. The meeting will begin at 11am and finish no later than 2pm. A working lunch will be provided.