

**Minutes of Meeting held at 5:15 pm 20<sup>th</sup> July 2006 at Fell Close, Ulverston**

- Present: John Stanton – Chair  
Mary Dowling – Vice Chair  
Ian Metcalfe  
Ron Pritchard  
John Short  
David Vatcher  
Robin Brown  
Peter Thompson  
Joan Chadwick  
Gwen Murfin  
Kathy Sykes  
Chris Jones
- Officers: Garry Ronson  
Sue Boulton  
Peter Thomas
- Apologies: David Stubbs
- Guests: Brenda Gray (Portfolio Holder)  
Paul Hughes (Bramalls)
- Observer Graham Donning

NO	<u>TITLE OF MINUTE</u>	ACTION
<b>0384</b>	<b>MINUTES OF LAST MEETING</b>  The minutes were accepted as a true record of the proceedings.	
<b>0385</b>	<b>MATTERS ARISING</b>  There were no matters arising.	
<b>0386</b>	<b>DECENT HOMES IMPROVEMENT PLAN</b>  The Chief Executive introduced Paul Hughes, who had been invited to the Board at the request of Board Directors to explain the steps Bramalls were taking to improve customer satisfaction. Paul spoke about the main areas of concern with satisfaction which were the time taken to do the work, quality of work, (complaints mainly about electrical and plastering work) and lack of communication in not following through complaints.  Paul then explained the improvements that were being made to increase customers' satisfaction. In future, instead of trying to open up 15 properties per week, this number would now be reduced - instead of properties taking 6 weeks to complete this now would be reduced to 4 weeks by carrying out bathroom and kitchen works at	

the same time. This new sequence would be used in Sedbergh. Although this would slow the programme down, Paul was confident the programme would not overrun. Possibly, in a years time, a 3<sup>rd</sup> team would be used to gain momentum. **ACTION**

He said that a new Contracts Manager, Peter Robinson, had been employed who had a vast amount of local knowledge and that coupled with Lisa Chant's knowledge of the tenants and areas would help ensure the remaining programme should run much more smoothly. After listening to tenants' complaints specifications had now been revised offering more choice of colour tiles, and when replacing bathroom suites Bramalls would ensure that tenants' own tiles were not damaged. Every operative now had attended a customer care induction course and received an identity card, which had to be worn at all times.

Paul summed up by saying that that Bramalls had forged a good partnership with SLH and the main aim was to achieve excellent customer satisfaction, good quality and get things right first time

Robin Brown asked about how dissatisfied people were dealt with once Bramalls had gone off site. Paul said that after a year, every resident would be written to, to see if they were happy with the work. If anyone raised any concerns these would be dealt with by the site manager and then an RLO would visit and check the tenant was now happy.

Mary Dowling questioned the 75% customer satisfaction target and the Chief Executive said that this was an initial target set by the Core Group which was expected to quickly increase. The Chief Executive said that a new higher target would be set for Sedbergh and reviewed at each subsequent contract to achieve 90% satisfaction.

The Chair thanked Paul for his update on the customer satisfaction action plan.

RESOLVED:- That the Board endorses the improvement measures adopted to improve customer satisfaction with the Decent Homes programme subject to an update at the next meeting.

### **387 REPORTS FROM TENANTS' COMMITTEE**

John Short said that the roadshows had gone down well and that tenants especially in rural areas were pleased to see that they had been included.

### **388 PERFORMANCE REPORT**

Robin Brown queried BVPI73 – average number of days taken to complete non-urgent repairs and asked why in 2004/5 it was 8.3 days and the target for 2006/7 was 9 days? The Chief Executive replied that these targets had been set in consultation with staff, and considered by the Board and Tenants' Committee. In this case a reliable appointment, turning up when promised and cost effectiveness was balanced against the speed of attendance when agreeing the target.

### **389 DELIVERY PLAN**

The Chief Executive pointed out that this document was a 'live' document and Helen Lawler added that the stakeholder conference was to take place in September.

RESOLVED:- That the report be noted.

**390 STRATEGIC PLANNING – DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN**

**ACTION**

Helen Lawler gave a short presentation on the strategic planning process and the options faced by the company. Helen referred to stepping outside the 'comfort zone' and identifying a handful of ideas which are transformational and visible.

The Vice Chair said that SLH shouldn't lose the focus of attaining 3 stars and Peter Thompson added that SLH should not forget the future once the DHP programme has finished.

The Chair suggested a working group be set up to discuss the future for SLH and to steer strategic direction. The membership of the group was agreed as follows:

**Gwen Murfin  
David Vatcher  
Mary Dowling  
Kathy Sykes**

RESOLVED:- That the Board approve the Draft Business Plan for preliminary consultation with staff and the Council with a view to adoption in September 2006 for formal consultation leading to the Stakeholder Conference in September 2006

**391 INFORMATION ON NEW LETTINGS**

John Short said that a document had been circulated at Tenants' Committee identifying that 47% of all lettings are provided to homeless persons nominated by the Council.

Angela to circulate document to Directors.

CAT

RESOLVED:- That the contents of the Annual Report of CORE data be noted.

**392 TELECARE INIATIVE**

Ron Pritchard expressed his concern about who was going to respond to call outs when an average charge of call out was £56.00. The Chief Executive stressed that presently the Telecare initiative was for the supply and maintenance of equipment only. However this could lead to further services being provided in the future.

RESOLVED:- That the Board approve the extension of use of dispersed alarms to all South Lakeland residents.

**393 2005-06 FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS**

The Finance Director said that despite a tight deadline the accounts were produced on time and were now waiting to be audited by Beevers and Struthers.

The Directors added their thanks to Garry and his team.

RESOLVED:- That the Board note the financial performance of SLH in its second year of trading.

**394 BEEVER & STRUTHERS LETTER OF ENGAGEMENT**

RESOLVED:- That the Board approved the revised letter of engagement to the Company's auditors and new reporting compliance.

**395 BANK SIGNATORIES**

RESOLVED:- To replace Trevor Woodward with David Stubbs, Director of Operations, as a bank signatory.

### 396 STAFF RESOURCES FOR FINANCE AND BUSINESS SUPPORT

The Finance Director explained that there were 2 major projects to be undertaken in 2006/7 and that extra resource was needed. He proposed engaging a modern apprentice, additional hours for existing staff and also possibly utilising some consultancy support.

Graham Donning said that there was a Provincial fund for providing new employment which may help support the costs of employing an apprentice. GR to check with SLDC.

GR

RESOLVED:- That the Board approves the expenditure of £14K in 2006/7 to engage a modern apprentice and to fund additional hours for existing staff.

### 397 CONTRACT MONITORING REPORT FOR MAJOR CAPITAL AND REVENUE PLANNED MAINTENANCE SCHEMES APRIL 2006-MARCH 2007

RESOLVED:- That the Board note progress.

### 398 POLICY REVIEW: RENT COLLECTION AND ARREARS, RIGHT TO BUY

RESOLVED:- That the Board accepts the recommendation of the Policy Committee and adopts the revised Rent Collection and Arrears Policy and Right to Buy Policy.

### 399 BOARD RECRUITMENT

The Business Support Manager said that this report had been taken to the HR Committee and Tenants' Committee and was submitted as a discussion paper. The Vice Chair wanted to try and clarify the arrangements for the position of Directors who may be due for re-election, as, if this was the case, advertising for these posts needed to be carried out before the next AGM in October. The Business Support Manager emphasised that one Director must retire at the next AGM as set out in the Memorandum of Association. Robin Brown asked if it was possible to suspend the standing orders for this year in order to retain the experienced directors at this critical time in the company's development.

It was suggested the Board receive the Memorandum & Articles of Association via email and that this be added to the website.

CAT

RESOLVED:- That the Director of Finance was to investigate if it was possible to defer replacement of directors for 1 year and if this was not possible, to advertise externally for an Independent Director.

GR

SB

For SLDC recommended appointments clarification is to be sought from the Memorandum & Articles of Association of the requirements for the retirement/re-selection process

That HR Committee determine a policy for recruitment of co-optees.

To adopt the Board Membership Policy and Board Information Pack.

### 400 FINANCE & POCUREMENT MINUTES

RESOLVED:- That the minutes be accepted.

**401 POLICY COMMITTEE MINUTES**

RESOLVED:- That the minutes be accepted.

**402 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

John Short reported problems with the users not receiving emails. The Business Support Manager said that there was a problem with the migration of the service to South Lakes Housing office and that this problem had now been sorted by SLDC.

**403 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

7<sup>th</sup> September at 5:15 pm, Little Aynam House, Kendal

Meeting closed at 21:00