

PART 1
BOARD MEETING



Minutes of Meeting held at 5:15 pm
19th April 2007 at Little Aynam House, Kendal

Present: Mary Dowling – Vice Chair
Ron Pritchard
Peter Thompson
Joan Chadwick
Gwen Murfin
John Short

David Vatcher
Graham Donning
Robin Brown

Officers: Sue Boulton
Peter Thomas
David Stubbs
Garry Ronson

Apologies: John Stanton – Chair

Observers Paul Jones
Christine Chadwick
Peter Bland
Brenda Gray

NO	<u>TITLE OF MINUTE</u>	ACTION
	The Vice Chair opened the meeting by welcoming Christine Chadwick, Paul Jones and Peter Bland	
475	MINUTES OF LAST MEETING	
	The minutes were accepted as a true record of the proceedings.	
476	MATTERS ARISING	
	Gwen Murfin asked if Marianne Hood had met with Tenant representatives to review the Tenants Compact. John Short said that Marianne had met with Tenants' Committee on 22 March and that further dates to meet with Marianne Hood were being organised. The review would be finished by the end of May 2007.	
463:	David Vatcher asked what date in May training was arranged and it was confirmed that the training would be held on 16 May.	
464:	Gwen Murfin asked if the Chief Executive would be looking at opportunities to manage Almshouses with regard to the long-term options of the ALMO? The Chief Executive replied that the strategic options review would include consideration of diversifying the business.	

477	REPORTS FROM TENANTS' COMMITTEE	ACTION
Item 264	John Short reported that a training session had been organised for Tenants' Committee on Housing Law for 3 May and on 17 May, the Deputy Ombudsman would be providing training at Little Aynam House. All Board Directors are welcome to attend these training events.	Directors to note training dates

478 APPOINTMENT OF BOARD DIRECTORS

The Vice Chair asked the Board to approve and formally appoint Christine Chadwick as an Independent Director, Peter Bland as the Tenant Board Director and Paul Jones as a co-opted member.

Both Christine Chadwick and Paul Jones left the meeting whilst the matter was considered.

Robin Brown recommended that the Board should have approved the appointments and co-option of any person onto the Board. Graham Donning said that it would have been better to receive a recommendation to the Board to have a co-optee and Gwen Murfin agreed.

The Chief Executive said that at the previous meeting the Board had delegated its powers to deal with the appointment of the Independent Board Director in accordance with its Articles of Association.

The Vice Chair said that improvements to the procedural aspects would be "taken on board" and procedures would be improved.

Christine and Paul re-entered the room.

The Board were then happy to accept Christine Chadwick, Peter Bland and Paul Jones as co-optee for one year.

The Board then approved the appointment of Christine Chadwick and Peter Bland as Independent and Tenant Board members respectively and Paul Jones as a co-optee for one year.

The Vice Chair requested that a summary of Paul and Christines' background and experience would be circulated with the board papers. SAB

RESOLVED:- That the Board formally appoint Christine Chadwick as Independent Board Director, Peter Bland as Tenant Board Director and to co-opt Paul Jones onto the Board for a period of one year.

479 CUSTOMER ACCESS STRATEGY: AMBLESIDE AREA

The Chief Executive reported that surveys had been undertaken which showed that Lakes tenants, rarely/or never used the Ambleside area office. Tenants expressed a preference to be contacted by telephone or through home visits. Area offices are best located convenient to tenants homes and as 40% of Lakes tenants live in Windermere there is potential to utilise Broad Street for surgeries. Mobile offices are another option under investigation. A Steering Group was to be set up look at wider issues of access and setting up the customer helpdesk. Pro rata fewer tenants surveyed in Lakes wanted to/or used local offices compared to Kendal and Ulverston areas.

David Vatcher said that possibly accommodation could be used in Windermere and suggested that the travelling time and expenses for officers would be increased

without an office. Graham Donning said that perhaps it would be cheaper for officers to be based in Kendal and face to face contact was vitally important. **ACTION**

RESOLVED:- That the Board approve in principle the closure of the Ambleside area office, subject to a further report on alternative and improved access arrangements including alternative access arrangements for tenants in the Lakes area.

480 2006-07 DELIVERY PLAN YEAR END REPORT

The Chief Executive reported that the key outcomes SLH had hoped to achieve in 2006/07 had been set out explicitly in the plan and were delivered. It was a good year for completing what SLH said it would do, on time and within budget.

Robin Brown questioned whether monthly meetings with SLDC were taking place and the Director of Finance replied that monthly meetings were held between himself and SLDC accountancy staff and the Chief Executive added that he met with Ian Ellery on a monthly basis.

A few minor amendments were noted to the plan. - Review of VFM, response maintenance market testing and the review of HR policies should have been a mixture of 'green' and 'red'.

Paul Jones was pleased to see that the objectives were SMART but disappointed that there was lack of progress on the first two tenant participation tasks in view of the importance of this function. If these were a low priority perhaps they should have been shown at the end of the section? Paul Jones also noted that there was nothing specific to raise the take up of direct debits which as an issue would be high on the Audit Commission check list.

In response the Director of Operations replied that with regard to the hard to reach action plan, it had taken longer than anticipated to gather the information during the course of the year on disabilities and ethnicity but now that this had been identified progress is being made. At the end of the previous year, cashiers had been closed and Direct Debits and payment cards were promoted. This did not appear in the Delivery Plan, as it was an ongoing process.

The Board commended SLH on the level of achievement against the Delivery Plan objectives.

RESOLVED:- That the Directors noted the Delivery Plan progress for quarter 4 2006/07

481 2007/08 DELIVERY PLAN

The Chief Executive commented that SLH can always improve and the 2007/08 Delivery Plan reflected a more thorough and comprehensive approach. All tasks agreed with staff would be assimilated within the document with links by a 'golden thread' to outcomes and efficiency, from the very top to the individual on the front line. This was work in progress and a KLOE group had now been set up to identify the improvement gap. This in turn would feed into the plan through additional tasks.

Robin Brown asked about how much had been given away in prize draws and do incentives work? The Director of Operations replied that responses always improved if a cash draw was offered. **DS**

The Vice Chair suggested that the Board re-look at the over-arching objectives for service areas and Robin Brown suggested that this task be added to the Committees **SAB GR/DS**

RESOLVED:- That the Board approve the 2007/08 Delivery Plan subject to receiving amendments and regular updates.

482 DECENT HOMES PROGRESS REPORT

The Director of Operations reported that since Bramalls introduced a 3rd stream of work there had been a reduction in satisfaction levels, but this issue was now being addressed.

Gwen Murfin commented on the long break that Bramalls had taken off over Easter which meant that ongoing improvements to homes were delayed.

Peter Thompson commented on the forecast missing from Milnthorpe and there seemed to be a hefty overrun. The Director of Operations replied that all the various contracts had not yet been set out in detail and it was not possible for an overspend. He was looking at supply chain procurement issues and any savings were ploughed back into the DHP. The Chief Executive added that SLH were actually doing more than the basic compliance for Decent Homes.

Peter Thompson noted that dissatisfaction was evidenced particularly with regard to appointments not being kept and the Director of Operations said that this problem was not acceptable and was being addressed by re-organising the programme.

Gwen Murfin had received good reports about Lisa Chants' efforts to smooth out any problems and Joan Chadwick said that her recent experience had been relayed to Lisa to help any future programmed works.

RESOLVED:- That Directors note the DHP progress for quarter 4 2006/07.

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

The Director of Operations said that an agreement had been reached with the Environmental Agency with regard to Summerlands septic tank and a letter setting out costings, requirements of the Environment Agency and payment methods was hand delivered just before the Easter break, preceded by letters sent in August and December 2006. A public meeting was called by Residents after the Easter break on Tuesday 10th April which was attended by the Director of Operations, 2 representatives from NPS and SLDC. MP Tim Farron chaired the meeting and the local press was present. From this meeting a list of resident questions was produced by the MP and sent to SLDC, SLH and NPS. A second meeting was organised for Monday 16th April to which answers to the questions had been prepared. The Environmental Agency attended this meeting too. SLDC clarified the matter of the charge on the property when sold and this amount would not be subject to interest, so if a property was sold in say 15 years time the amount charged would still be £6,500.

The Vice Chair asked if any lessons were to be learnt from this and the Director of Operations replied that perhaps more consultation was necessary, but consultation had been hampered as it was unknown for some time which scheme was going to be used and approved by the Environmental Agency.

Brenda Gray questioned the syntax of the letter as it suggested that if legal access was not given, legal action could be taken. The Director of Operations replied that this was insisted upon by the SLDC Legal adviser and SLDC could be prosecuted by the Environmental Agency if the work was not completed on time.

RESOLVED:- That the Board note progress

ACTION

484 CLEANING SERVICES TO WATERSIDE, JENNINGS TERRACE, BISHOPS COURT, KENDAL, AND HELM CLOSE

The Director of Operations said that this report was scheduled for the Finance & Procurement Committee meeting but a decision needed to be taken before the scheduled June meeting to waive the Financial Standing Order Section B.

Robin Brown suggested that the Standing Order limit be increased to £25,000.

The Director of Finance said that a review of Standing Orders would be reviewed at the next Finance & Procurement meeting.

GR

Graham Donning enquired about the reputation of the successful contractor and the Director of Operations replied that Ultracare had carried out work in the past and work was satisfactory.

RESOLVED:- 1) That Financial Standing Order Section B be waived in this case to appoint Ultracare Property Management.
2) That the June Finance & Procurement meeting review the company Standing Orders financial limits.

485 PREFERRED SUPPLIER FOR THE SUPPLY OF A NEW FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (NFS)

Robin Brown recorded his thanks to Sue and the NFS Project team for all their hard work. Both Castle Computer Services and Orchard Information Systems offer credible, affordable and low risk options that satisfy the business requirements of SLH. The Project Board concluded that the appointment of Castle Computer Services Limited was the best approach with the final deciding factor that Castle were identified as future proofing the system as far as possible. The Director of Finance added that site visits had been carried out at sites run by Castle Computers and there was a high degree of satisfaction.

Paul Jones commented that from his experience of visiting a large number of local authorities Orchard was a highly effective and popular system. There was a discussion about the nature of the system and it was confirmed that it was the Open Accounts system under consideration not the housing management application.

The Vice Chair asked Christine Chadwick and Paul Jones to provide any comments to Sue Boulton or Robin Brown outside of the meeting.

Robin Brown asked for the Project Board's recommendation to be approved and after further discussion the matter was put to a vote and the following resolution approved by a majority.

RESOLVED:- 1) That the Project Board formally approves the appointment of Castle Computer Services Limited as the preferred supplier
2) That the Project Board authorise the commencement of contractual negotiations with the preferred supplier
3) That both the preferred supplier and the other supplier be made aware that should a successful negotiation of the contract not be achievable then the other supplier remains a viable alternative

486 FINANCE & PROCUREMENT MINUTES

RESOLVED:- That the minutes be accepted.

487 ANY OTHER BUSINESS ACTION

Gwen Murfin questioned the supply of security systems, such door alarms, fire extinguishers for the elderly residents living in council properties.

Gwen Murfin pointed out that the SLDC Telephone directory was out of date in respect to SLH staff. SAB

Gwen also commented on how confusing the rent free weeks were to tenants especially as there was 5 rent free weeks this year.

P Thompson gave his apologies for the next meeting

488 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 31st May 2007 at Little Aynam House, Kendal