

**Minutes of Meeting held at 5:15 pm 19<sup>th</sup> October 2006 at Yewbarrow Lodge, Grange-over-Sands**

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

NO	<u>TITLE OF MINUTE</u>	ACTION
	<p>The Vice Chair started the meeting due to the late arrival of the Chair by saying that the AGM was postponed until 20<sup>th</sup> November, the venue to be arranged.</p> <p>The Director of Finance said that this was due to a delay to the FRS17 pension deficit information which SLH received from the Pension Fund Actuaries. The Vice Chair asked if a penalty had been incurred and the Director of Finance replied there had been no penalty.</p>	
<b>417</b>	<b>MINUTES OF LAST MEETING</b>	
	<p>412 Insert "ISO9002"</p> <p>Subject to this amendment the minutes were accepted as a true record of the proceedings.</p>	CAT
<b>418</b>	<b>MATTERS ARISING</b>	
409	John Short reiterated that Kathy Sykes had still not received any formal Board induction training. The Business Support Manager replied that Kathy Sykes' induction would have taken place by the next Board meeting.	SB
409	David Vatcher said he had attended a Parish Council meeting with regard to the Anti Social behaviour which was not centred on the Ambleside council estate and that the police were in control of the situation.	

413 The Portfolio Holder said that a decision on the Aids and Adaptations work in Windermere would now be made at the December Cabinet. **ACTION**

The Vice Chair handed over to the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

#### **419 REPORTS FROM TENANTS' COMMITTEE**

John Short referred to Tenants' Committee minutes matters arising and expressed Tenants Committee wish for a better working knowledge of 'How the Council works'. John Short also referred to Any Other Business and said that Kathy Sykes had been unanimously selected to represent Tenants at the Board.

John Short also said that the Chair of Tenants' Committee had mentioned receiving late Board papers. A debate took place as to how this could be improved. A suggestion of fewer meetings was mentioned as well as changing the Tenants' Committee meeting date. The Vice Chair proposed that a person should scan the papers and highlight any items that need urgent attention.

Management Team

#### **420 STRATEGIC PLANNING – DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN**

Robin Brown commented that the objective 'operate within budget' had been omitted as a key objective from the Business Plan.

PT

The Chief Executive proposed that the HR change strategy would be incorporated into the Business Plan, subject to consideration by the HR Committee and the Board.

SB

RESOLVED:- That the Board approve the Business Plan 2006-10 subject to the amendment.

#### **421 PERFORMANCE REPORT**

Robin Brown asked why the average number of days to receive payment from debtors had remained static. The Finance Director replied that this was not merely commercial invoicing and that there was insufficient resource at present to tackle this problem.

The Vice Chair commented on the reduction of days lost through sickness absence and commended staff on the good progress.

A question was raised about the percentage of females in the top 5% earners. Chris Jones pointed out that the target was a set government figure.

Peter Thompson questioned the proportion of homes which are non decent. The Chief Executive explained that the percentage does not show a steady reduction as a significant number of new properties might fall within the non decent category at different points in the year. Additionally 85% of homes had now been re-surveyed. Our forecast nevertheless show the target will be achieved by year end. The Chief Executive then said that the average number of days take to relet dwellings had not improved as a decision had been made to carry out decent homes work if the property became empty where the Decent Homes programme was being carried out. This was cost effective for the programme and would be less disruptive to the new tenant.

Robin Brown referred to an arrangement in Barrow where offenders were used to remove graffiti. The Director of Operations said that SLH used the Probation services for cleaning gardens and painting for the elderly. Enquiries would be made about utilising offenders for this service.

DS

The Director of Operations spoke about the difficulty of having 5 working days to prepare this report as the quarter ended on 31<sup>st</sup> of the month and the Vice Chair questioned if the indicators were capturing the most useful information. The Director of Operations said the indicators contained all key and local government targets but that it was important to prioritise the indicators.

Robin Brown suggested to revise the presentation and analysis for the next quarter. The Chief Executive explained that there was a task in the Delivery Plan to provide accompanying analysis and to identify trends from Quarter 3.

RESOLVED:- That the Directors note the performance for quarter 2 2006/07.

#### 422 DELIVERY PLAN

The Chief Executive discussed the red variances throughout the Delivery Plan. Joan Chadwick asked if the Tenants' Committee and Board would see the final list of projects for the environmental works for the Decent Homes programme for the £900K spend. The Chief Executive said the Board and Tenants' Committee would be notified and it was hoped to leave a legacy from the decent homes works bearing in mind that 'maintenance free' was an important factor.

RESOLVED:- That the Board is asked to note progress against the Delivery plan.

#### 423 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS – PERIOD 5

The Director of Finance said it was necessary to retain a surplus position and were in discussion with SLDC. Robin Brown said that he had heard the HRA revenue was in deficit by £42K, the Director of Finance was unaware of this figure. A question was raised about the Profit Focus Group and the Director of Finance said there had been no savings made on SLA's as yet but there had been good advice on supply chain and utilities.

David Vatcher suggested an extra column be added on to the Revenues Repairs budget to more easily illustrate total spend.

GR

RESOLVED:- That the Board note the financial position as at August 2006.

#### 424 RESPONSIVE REPAIRS TENDERING AND ORGANISATIONAL CHANGES

The Chief Executive reported that the repairs hot line was a success and there were lessons here that could be applied to handling general customer enquiries. The proposal was to place existing staff onto the Help desk and a detailed structure for the Business Support unit would be brought to the next Board.

SB

The Business Support Manager said that a meeting with the Trade Unions had been scheduled for 2 November.

The Vice Chair emphasised that with the TUPE regulations changing it was very important to get things right first time.

RESOLVED:- That the Board approve the proposed organisational changes which are set out in the report in order to implement a client/contractor structure and improve service delivery.

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

It was noted that the format of the Decent Homes quarterly report had changed and it was proposed to return to the original format for the next quarter. PT

The Chief Executive then said that the Department for Communities and Local Government had recently requested all Round 3 ALMO's to review their expenditure plans for delivering decent homes and consider extending the deadline beyond 2010 in order that more sustainable solutions could be reached.

The Chief Executive had responded explaining that we have worked with Bramalls to achieve a steady programme of work which has offered competitive prices and is not out of kilter with the capacity of the local building industry resources. Any delay could would inevitably mean more properties would become non decent and apart from the impact on residents the costs of achieving decency of the housing stock would increase. Most importantly promises had been made to tenants and there would be a loss of credibility

The Chief Executive had taken a report to Tenants' Committee meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> October and it was the unanimous view of Tenants' Committee that SLH should keep to the agreed timescale to deliver Decent Homes prior to 2010.

RESOLVED:- That the Board endorsed the commitment to the 2010 deadline and note progress.

**426 POLICY REVIEW: TENANT PARTICIPATION, EMPTY PROPERTY  
MANAGEMENT (Voids)**

RESOLVED: That the Board accept the recommendation of the Policy Committee and adopts the reviewed Tenant Participation Policy and Empty Property Management (Voids).

**427 POLICY COMMITTEE MINUTES**

The Chair said he was sorry to hear that Chris Jones was resigning and said that he would be especially missed in terms of his lead role on the Policy Committee. He was thanked for his contribution, particularly as Chair of Policy Committee.

RESOLVED:- That the minutes be accepted .

**428 HR COMMITTEE MINUTES**

Robin Brown noted the poor attendance at the HR Committee and said it was a growing matter of concern. The Business Support Manager pointed out that Ian Metcalfe had retired and Charles Batteson had resigned so that membership of this Committee would need to be addressed at the AGM. Board

RESOLVED:- That the minutes be accepted .

**429 FINANCE & PROCUREMENT MEETING**

Mary Dowling said she was not present at the last meeting.

RESOLVED:- That the minutes be accepted subject to the amendment.

**430 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Ron Pritchard spoke about the low attendance at area panels especially in the rural areas. Gwen Murfin suggested sending out questionnaires asking for any ideas. The Chief Executive proposed utilising the customer help desk, if this is introduced, to telephone customers to check if they were satisfied with work carried out and seek suggestions for improvement.

John Short asked Directors to make a note of 14<sup>th</sup> December from 3- 6 pm in the Resource Centre for the Tenants' Committee Xmas get together.

**431 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2006 at Little Aynam House.

Meeting closed at 7:10 pm.