

BOARD MEETING

Minutes of Board Meeting held at 4:30 pm 13th August 2009, Little Aynam House, Kendal

- Present: Mary Dowling (Chairman)
John Short (Vice Chairman)
Joan Chadwick
Charles Howarth
Frank Hodson
- Officers: Peter Thomas
David Stubbs
Sue Boulton
Rebecca Lord
- Guests: Brenda Gray
Helen Smith, SLDC
Joyce Sedgwick, SLDC
Chris Porritt, Beever & Struthers
Richard Graham, Beever & Struthers
- Apologies: Peter Bland
Robin Brown
Christine Chadwick
John Stanton
Peter Thompson
Peter Woof
David Vatcher

| NO | <u>TITLE OF MINUTE</u> | ACTION |
|------------|--|---------------|
| | <p>The Chairman welcomed Chris Porritt and Richard Graham from Beever & Struthers Chartered Accountants and also Helen Smith, Head of Finance and Joyce Sedgwick Accountant, SLDC.</p> <p>Best wishes were also sent to David Vatcher, Robin Brown and Peter Bland for a speedy recovery.</p> | |
| 773 | MINUTES OF LAST MEETING | |
| | The minutes of the last meeting were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman. | |
| 774 | MATTERS ARISING | |
| | Minute 762: The Chairman asked if progress had been made on providing further information for additional clarity on repairs costs. Rebecca Lord replied that example reports had been exchanged with Christine Chadwick, and more detailed information would be provided with the management accounts in due course. | |

Rebecca Lord reported that Management Accounts for March 2009 were presented to give more detailed information on the operating deficit for the year than would be presented in the year-end statutory accounts. The Chairman asked if the reserves of £98,000 were committed. Rebecca Lord replied that South Lakes Housing now held only £1,161 of uncommitted reserves.

Helen Smith commented that the HRA had closed with reserves £29,000 higher than expected. This would to be used towards the 2009/10 revenue costs of the housing stock options.

RESOLVED:- That the Board note the Management Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2009.

ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2009

The Chief Executive asked the Board to consider and approve the Letter of Representation and the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March and receive the Audit Management Letter.

Chris Porritt reported that Beever & Struthers were initially concerned at the start of the audit process about the problems associated with the year-end deficit but were reassured by the care and attention taken by the Chief Executive in informing them at the earliest opportunity. Once the audit started, confidence was regained, partly due to the interest and action taken by the Board and Chief Executive. The quality of the Accounts was good with no amendments which was very reassuring.

Chris Porritt commented that the Letter of Representation was a standard letter and was similar to the one produced last year for South Lakes Housing.

With regard to the Draft Audit Management Letter, 'the letter of comfort' from the Council regarding the pension scheme deficit had now been received and this issue would be removed from the Key Audit Issues.

CP

Chris Porritt then gave an explanation on the format of the Draft Audit Management Letter which gave the Board a full overview of the audit approach.

Chris Porritt then discussed the Annual Report and Financial Statements which he commented was a condensed report. The Chairman then asked the Board for any comments or questions.

With regard to the Annual Report and Financial Statements, John Short asked that he be referred to as Vice Chairman on page 10. The Chairman asked that the Chairman's Statement be changed to "two stars with excellent prospects" on page 3 and finally on page 2 that the Co-Opted Members read 'Co-option ended 16.3.09.'

RL

The Chairman congratulated the Accountant on the clarity of the paperwork.

RESOLVED:-

1. That the Board approve the Chairman signing the Letter of Representation to Beever and Struthers
2. That the Board receive the Audit Management Letter from Beever and Struthers
3. To approve the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March subject to the minor amendments noted above.

The Chairman thanked Chris Porritt and Richard Graham and Rebecca Lord for their work. **ACTION**

777 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Council house building

The Chief Executive reported that following a government invitation to consider bidding for social housing grant, both he and Jacqui Blenkinship had met with SLDC to put forward proposals to help evaluate this opportunity. However after careful consideration it was decided that there not a clear rationale for putting in a bid at this time.

Housing Stock Options

At the meeting on 8th July the Council's Cabinet approved the commencement of the stock options project along with the appointment of a Project Manager. SLH was notified this week that SLDC would shortly seek written quotations in order to select and appoint the Project Manager. It was also important that the appointment of the Independent Tenants' Advisor (ITA) was made in the early phase of the process to ensure that the stock investment options could be properly understood and debated by tenants in an objective way.

Consultation on Cross Domain Regulation

The Chief Executive reported that the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) only regulated Housing Association but that the government was now consulting on powers that would allow the TSA to also regulate councils and their ALMOs. The TSA would set common, broad standards for all social housing and encourage the introduction of agreed local standards. The consultation closes on 30th October 2009.

RESOLVED:- That the Board note the Chief Executive's report

Helen Smith and Joyce Sedgwick left the meeting.

778 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Council House Building

The Chairman thanked Brenda Gray for all her efforts to support SLH's desire to build.

Briefing paper on consultation document issued by the government

The Director of Operations had written a briefing paper on the Consultation Document issued by the Government about allocations of social housing which was handed out at the meeting. Any questions were to be referred to the Director of Operations.

All to
Note

The Director of Operations clarified that this paper enforced the fact the Choice Based Lettings were legal and above board. The paper was aimed primarily at the Local Authorities but opinions were also being sought from RSL's and ALMOs by 23rd October.

Board Away Day

The Chairman reported that there were a few items that needed to be discussed with the Chief Executive and Management Team arising from the Board Away day and

proposed to bring this matter to the next board meeting.

Co-optee

The Chairman announced that there was a possibility of a co-optee joining the Board and asked the Board to be aware that a formal panel might need to be drawn up to evaluate the co-optee before being taken to the Board for approval.

Walkabouts

A sheet was handed out with the walkabout and roadshow dates around the area and informed Directors that Tim Farron would be attending the Rinkfield walkabout on 2nd September.

Start times and places for the walkabouts and roadshows would be emailed to Board Directors.

CAT

Nominations for Chair and Vice Chair

The Chairman reported that she had been re-nominated as Chairman and John Short as Vice Chairman.

Peter Bland was nominated by Tenants' Committee for a further term and Christine Chadwick had indicated her willingness to stand as Independent Board Director for a further term.

Nominations for a Council representative would be made at the next Council meeting.

RESOLVED:- That the Board note the Chairman's report

779 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS TO JUNE 2009

Rebecca Lord, Accountant, reported that the overall year-to-date position at the end of June 2009 showed a surplus of £141,005 and that the format of the Management Accounts had been changed to emphasise different areas of business. New procedures had been implemented since April with regard to spending for the repairs contractor and voids contractor.

The Chief Executive added that that the painting programme was under review and expenditure was being deferred where it was reasonable and possible to do so to create working balances.

John Short commented that it was essential to select carefully the painting contracts to be deferred as delays may lead to a large workload for the future.

The Chairman asked if the figures in the report could be relied upon and the Chief Executive confirmed that this was the case.

The Chairman concluded that it was a reassuring first quarter outturn and suggested that a Finance and Procurement meeting be set.

CAT

RESOLVED:- That the Board note the financial position at the end of June 2009.

780 QUARTER 1 DELIVERY PLAN, PERFORMANCE PLAN AND DHP PROGRESS REPORTS

Deferred until the next board meeting.

781 OPEN DISCUSSION

None.

782 RESIDENTS' QUESTIONS

Deferred until the next board meeting.

783 TENANTS' COMMITTEE REPORTS

Two recommendation reports were received from Tenants' Committee . The first report item 6.2 referred to the following office bearers following the Tenants' Committee AGM - Chairman, Margaret Pritchard; Vice Chairman Joan Chadwick and Treasurer John Short. The Committee had nominated Peter Bland to serve as a Director for a further term.

The second recommendation 6.2.A referred to items 5.2 and 6.4 being deferred until the next Board.

784 AUTHORISED SIGNATORIES

The Director of Operations reported that since the departure of the Finance and Treasury Manager and the subsequent re-organisation of the staffing structure that the current list of bank signatories be reviewed.

RESOLVED:- That the Board authorise Sue Boulton and the new Business Improvement Manager to be bank signatories.

785 POLICY REVIEW: FORMER TENANT RENT ARREARS

Deferred until the next board meeting.

786 POLICY REVIEW: CONFIDENTIALITY DATA PROTECTION AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY

Deferred until the next board meeting.

787 DRAFT POLICY MINUTES

Deferred until the next board meeting.

788 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

As the accounts had been approved the Chairman asked the Board to release the notice of the AGM for

Wednesday 23rd September 2009 in the Georgian room, Town, Hall, Kendal commencing at 5:15 pm.

The Chairman then thanked Chris Porritt and Richard Graham who then left the meeting.

789 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

AGM - Wednesday 23rd September in the Georgian Room, Kendal commencing at 5:15 pm