

BOARD MEETING

Minutes of Board Meeting held at 5:15 pm 4th March 2010, Little Aynam House, Kendal

Present: Mary Dowling (Chairman)
John Short (Vice Chairman)
Peter Bland
Peter Thompson
David Vatcher
Joan Chadwick
Charles Howarth
Robin Brown
Sheila Meades

Officers: Peter Thomas
David Stubbs
Sue Boulton
Jacqui Blenkinship
John Mansergh
Sandy Ryder

Apologies: Christine Chadwick
Peter Woof

NO	<u>TITLE OF MINUTE</u>	ACTION
	The Chairman commenced the meeting by welcoming Sandy Ryder who was attending her first SLH board meeting.	
854	MINUTES OF LAST MEETING	
	The minutes of the last meeting were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman of the meeting.	
855	MATTERS ARISING	
	A training session on the allocations register and CBL training would take place at the end of March, early April.	DS
856	CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT	
	<u>New Management</u>	
	The Chief Executive reported that a joint presentation had been made to the Senior Management team meeting that day from John Mansergh and Sandy Ryder with regard to a corporate improvement plan using their fresh insights as new members of the management team. It was agreed that for clarity and to reflect their 'lead' responsibility that Sandy Ryder's job title is to be Finance Manager and John Mansergh's job title is to be Performance Manager.	
	<u>Stock Options Project Progress</u>	
	The Chief Executive informed the Board that good progress was being made with the	

project plan with all actions completed on time to date. Savills had now been appointed to undertake the stock condition surveys and the first meeting of the Project Board was to be held on 18th March at Little Aynam House. Mary Dowling and Robin Brown would represent SLH Board. Sheila Meades would serve on the Communications Group which would take place on 23rd March.

A newsletter would be sent out at the end of March setting out the options and why this work was being undertaken.

Tenants' Committee would be shortly selecting an Independent Tenant Adviser to provide tenants and leaseholders with independent help and support to guide them through the process.

Partnering Scheme of the Year

The Chief Executive reported that a joint entry with Bramalls had been submitted for the Housing Excellence Awards partnership of the year.

Sheila Meades asked if a local event had been planned with the end of the Decent Homes programme as this could be seen as an opportunity to inform tenants of the new phase of Stock Options or possibly could be an opportunity for the Communications Group.

JM

John Mansergh said costs had to be kept low but that this was a good idea and could be tied into other events such as the Tenants Conference which was due later this year.

Warm Homes Retrofit

Jacqui Blenkinship reported that the bid from the European Rural Development Fund for funding for innovative measures on hard to treat properties was progressing well with a chance of match funding from the Low Carbon Trust.

School Knott

Jacqui Blenkinship said a meeting had been held on 8th February with School Knott residents to explain that in order to do any work the building needed to be empty. A report would be brought back to the April board recommending levels of assistance with rehousing expenditure.

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

857 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman reported that 1-2-1's with Directors would be concluded next week and a report would be brought back to the April board.

MD

The Chairman asked if Directors wanted an Away Day for 2010 and it was agreed that an Away Day would be organised for the beginning of June at Kendal College.

CAT

858 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

Sandy Ryder reported that the majority of the surplus was due to timing issues but could confidently say that the year-end projections would be delivered.

One to one meetings had been arranged with budget holders and progress was being made with regard to the action plan following the internal audit review. By the end of June all control issues would be sorted and the Internal Audit Team would return in July to verify progress.

January bank reconciliation had been signed off and through this Sandy Ryder had learnt a lot about SLH processes and systems.

John Short queried the error on the Sun system and Sandy Ryder said that this was a system error which was now resolved. Sandy Ryder had still to review the Anite and Sun systems but confirmed that basically the system was fine.

Robin Brown added that he had had a meeting with Sandy Ryder and had every confidence in her handling the situation.

Peter Thompson commented that this was a decent surplus and Jacqui Blenkinship added that this had been created by putting the £250,000 painting into reserve. Next year this £250,000 would be offset against the £197,000 increase.

The Chairman added that monthly reports would be emailed to the board but recognised that this had been a tough year for the finance team and the Chief Executive added his thanks to the finance team for all their hard work.

Robin Brown asked about the progress of the painting programme for next year and Jacqui Blenkinship said that the minimum work required would be carried out. £75,000 was allocated for painting at Helm Close.

RESOLVED:- That the Board note the financial position at the end of January 2010

859 QUARTER 3 – DELIVERY PLAN, PERFORMANCE REPORT

Delivery Plan

A question was raised with regard to the 'Cog' symbol on the Delivery Plan. John Mansergh replied that once covalent training had been received the reports could be amended incorporating Directors' comments.

JM/CAT

The Chief Executive said that most priorities will be completed by year-end with very few exceptions.

Robin Brown asked about the review on flexible working for trades persons. The Chief Executive replied that at the Senior Management Team meeting that morning a decision had been made with regard to move this forward to a formal project on the responsive repairs service.

PT

The Business Support Manager reported that a programmer from Anite was due later this month to advise on the modifications to the schedule of rates. The Director of Operations added that we had underestimated the complexity of the technical issues.

The Director of Operations reported that with regard to the production of the in house energy performance certificates the format of the certificates had been changed and so a delay had resulted from re-submitting the portfolios.

Performance Indicators

The Chief Executive explained that with regard to the increase in sickness absence the short-term absences were nevertheless well controlled.

With regard to the customer satisfaction on gas Jacqui Blenkinship reported that Rogersons had now commenced the contract from 1 March. A meeting had been held with Rogersons on 3rd March with processes now jointly agreed between Rogersons and SLH staff. She was also able to report that recent benchmarking data indicated that the price being paid to Rogersons' was in the bottom half of the

Team Net Benchmarking Club.

ACTION

No records of solid fuel work was available and Jacqui Blenkinship was devising a form for this work to be carried out.

The CP12 system is a form produced by Gas Safe which is filled in by the service engineer on completion of servicing and a copy is handed to the tenant with a copy sent to South Lakes Housing . The CP12's will be run off on 29th March to check the year-end position for outstanding CP12's.

John Mansergh added that an article would be in the next newsletter about the new contractor and the gas servicing programme. Jacqui Blenkinship reported that there was a problem with gaining access to properties in Ambleside as only 2 properties had been accessed out of 29 . John Short said that maybe the reason was that letters had been sent out in February saying that the contractor would be calling 'week commencing'. He would try and find a copy of this letter and pass on to Jacqui Blenkinship.

J Sh

RESOLVED:- That the Board note the quarter three Delivery Plan and Performance Plan.

860 ANALYSIS OF MP ENQUIRIES 2009

The Chief Executive reported that an analysis of 73 MP enquiry letters had shown that the enquiries were predominantly in relation to being re-housed into council accommodation.

Sheila Meades asked what the relationship was like between SLH and the local MPs and the Director of Operations replied that there had been real progress in improving communication but there was always room for a better working relationship. Board Members requested an improved presentation for the summary of complaints to ensure that the detail and the totals corresponded.

PT

RESOLVED:- That the Board note the findings from the analysis of MP enquiries.

861 OPEN DISCUSSION

None.

862 RESIDENTS' QUESTIONS

There were no Residents' questions and the Chairman said that she would speak to the Chief Executive about this matter outside of the Board meeting.

PT/MD

863 TENANTS' COMMITTEE REPORTS

John Short reported that Tenants' Committee was a very 'fierce' meeting and was hoping that the Chief Executive would attend the next meeting. The Chief Executive said that he would be present at the meeting.

PT

John Short said that another Away Day had been re-arranged for 15th March 2010. He suggested that a meeting (similar to the one which had taken place following a previous Tenants' Committee Away Day) be convened after that event. The Chairman expressed her willingness to facilitate such a meeting.

MD

The Chief Executive said that John Mansergh was now responsible for tenant engagement in conjunction with communication in relation to the stock options. John Mansergh asked if he could attend the Away Day for 15 minutes to help in understanding their concerns and areas for improvement. John Short said this would

be the Tenants' Committee Chairman's decision. The Chairman asked that this request be put to Tenants' Committee in the spirit of company partnership working.

ACTION
J Sh

The Chairman said that it was important to continually develop and build better relationships although it may not always be possible to agree on every issue.

RESOLVED:- That the Board note Tenants' Committee minutes.

864 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

The Chief Executive reported that following a request for further information from Charles Howarth about the basis of apportioning costs of ground maintenance, he was of the opinion that SLDC would not change their views over the issue of apportionment of costs between the General Fund and the HRA.

In the Housing Options review decisions would be made around who is responsible for land/estates. It was commented that it is generally good practice for tenants to be on the selection panel for the appointment of major contractors.

Joan Chadwick said that all tenants could do now was monitor grounds maintenance vigorously.

Robin Brown asked the Chairman to write to SLDC to express the Board's disappointment at the lack of Tenant Committee involvement in the final stages of contractor selection.

MD

865 CHOICE BASED LETTINGS (CBL) UPDATE – CUMBRIA CHOICE

The Director of Operations said that progress had happened at a rapid rate with regard to CBL. The Director of Operations had attended a CBL Project Board last week and with Barrow and Allerdale joining the group this had brought in another £53K. There was a possibility that the Project Manager role would be extended for a few more months. The CBL system should be implemented by December 2010.

The biggest issue in the drafting of the policy was 'local connection' which had been discussed at the Overview & Scrutiny Committee yesterday and there had been no major changes suggested.

The Director of Operations said that if there was a tiebreak for a property, initially it would be a connection with South Lakeland and then Cumbria and then length of time on the list.

The Partnering Agreement was a fairly standard form and the CBL letter had gone out to over 3000 applicants. Information on CBL was now available on the SLDC and SLH website.

An event had been organised for stakeholders on Friday 16th April in the Bindloss Room, Kendal Town Hall from 1:30 pm – 4:00 pm. If anyone was interested in attending to let Angela Tunnicliffe know as places were limited.

ALL to note
CAT

David Vatcher asked about the local lettings policy and the Director of Operations said that if anyone applied with a connection to the village/parish there would be an opportunity for them to apply.

The Chairman added that the Equality and Diversity aspect was allowed within the government's own recommendations.

John Short asked if there was one main register for everyone to join the scheme. The Director of Operations replied that those already on the waiting list would be

transferred but would have to re-apply to decide which band they could bid for.

ACTION

Charles Howarth asked if SLH were contacting applicants about putting their name on the list and the Director of Operations replied that all applicants had been written to and once the scheme was in place would be contacted every 12 months.

David Vatcher commented that the onus was now on the tenant to apply for a property.

Sheila Meades commented that this had been discussed at Policy Committee and it was essential vulnerable people would not be disadvantaged by this scheme.

RESOLVED:- i) That the Board note progress to date
ii) That the Board accept the draft CBL policy for consultation purposes
iii) That the Board, subject to favourable legal opinion from SLDC, authorise the Chief Executive to sign the Partnering Agreement on behalf of SLH

866 PERSISTENT OR VEXATIOUS COMPLAINANTS POLICY

The Board were asked to adopt the new Persistent or Vexatious Complainants Policy.

RESOLVED:- That the Board accepts the recommendation of the Policy Committee and adopts the new Persistent or Vexatious Complainants Policy

867 DRAFT POLICY MINUTES

RESOLVED:- That the Board note the draft minutes

868 DRAFT FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES

RESOLVED:- That the Board note the draft minutes

869 REVIEW OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

The Business Support Manager reported that SLH's governance KPI's would be benchmarked against North West ALMOs and would be brought back to the next board.

SAB

A full review of the governance was needed but this would wait until after the Stock Options Review when a full review of the Memorandum of Articles would be undertaken.

The Chairman asked that an individual training plan for each Board Member be drawn up.

SAB

Sheila Meades was working with the Business Support Manager on reviewing the Board induction.

SAB/SM

The Chief Executive said that Sandy Ryder would be dealing with the Company Secretary side to the Board and the Business Support Manager would deal with the training and development of the Board.

The Chairman suggested that a brief report on company secretarial responsibilities be brought to the next Board.

PT

870 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

871 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

15th April 2010 at Little Aynam House

The meeting then continued with Part II items.