

BOARD MEETING

Minutes of Board Meeting held at 5:15 pm 21st January 2010, Learning Centre, Canal Head Kendal

- Present: Mary Dowling (Chairman)
John Short (Vice Chairman)
Peter Bland
Peter Thompson
David Vatcher
Joan Chadwick
Charles Howarth
Frank Hodson
Robin Brown
Peter Woof
Sheila Meades
- Officers: Peter Thomas
David Stubbs
Rebecca Lord
Sue Boulton
Jacqui Blenkinship
John Mansergh
- Guests: David Sykes – SLDC
John Sykes – Project Manager
Brenda Gray
- Apologies: Christine Chadwick

NO	<u>TITLE OF MINUTE</u>	ACTION
	<p>The Chairman commenced the meeting by welcoming David Sykes, Assistant Director (Community Investment & Development) SLDC, John Sykes, Stock Options Project Manager, John Mansergh, Business Improvement Manager and Sheila Meades, Co-optee to SLH Board.</p> <p>The Chairman requested that the Part 2 agenda item 'Management Fee' be taken first as David Sykes had another meeting to attend .</p>	
840	<p>MANAGEMENT FEE</p> <p>The Chief Executive said that the Management Fee discussions had reached a positive outcome.</p> <p>David Sykes reported that the 2010/11 Revenue Budget would be presented at the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 2nd February and then to Cabinet on 10th February. This was an opportunity for the Board to consider and comment on the draft HRA budget. This report had previously been discussed at Tenants' Committee on 14th January. The HRA budget included a contingency of £50K and a working balance of £600K.</p> <p>David Sykes reassured Board Directors that even though it was proposed to carry</p>	

forward the asbestos survey to the following year this would not impact on health and safety as proper protocols were being observed and it was primarily a question of trying to understand liabilities of stock investment.

ACTION

SLDC were happy for SLH to have full management control of the MRA (Major Repairs Allowance) fund from 1 April 2010.

Robin Brown thanked David Sykes for all his work and the co-operation of the SLDC team.

Robin Brown asked if the term 'rent free' weeks could be changed as he felt the terminology was misleading as the rent was calculated over a period of 48 weeks and was not in fact 'free'.

The Director of Operations commented that 'rent free' period was commonly used throughout the social housing sector.

David Sykes said that this issue would be clarified for the Cabinet.

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Sheila Meades asked about the funding for the external painting which was to be directed towards other more immediate repair requirements. Jacqui Blenkinship replied that this allowance would be used to treat the worse case scenarios but it was difficult to quantify what needed to be done at this stage.

The Chairman asked if the business could be run on this budget and the Chief Executive replied that service levels can be maintained although SLH would still have to be prudent with a degree of rationing of non priority repairs and must focus on improvements to efficiency.

The Chairman said that a lot of good work had gone into a potentially workable budget and thanked David Sykes and Brenda Gray for their hard work.

David Sykes added that restructuring within South Lakeland District Council had resulted in Service Heads taking a more active role in the preparation of their annual budgets, however specialist financial advice continued to be available to assist where necessary.

RESOLVED:- That the Board note the progress in the preparation of the HRA budget and in the Management Fee negotiations with SLDC and Tenants' Committee

841 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

John Stanton had sent his apologies to the December meeting.

Subject to the above amendment the minutes of the last meeting were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman of the meeting.

842 MATTERS ARISING

Minute 817: Robin Brown, David Vatcher and John Short expressed their interest in access and initial training on the Covalent system

CAT

Minute 820: The Chairman said that Board Champions for the Delivery Plan would be picked up at the 1-2-1's with Board Directors which were currently taking place

Minute 821: The Chief Executive said that he was attending the National Federation of ALMOs meeting shortly and the TSA would be attending that

meeting.

ACTION

Minute 824: Sheila Meades asked if the meeting with Bramalls and their PR had taken place to communicate the good partnership and successes with the partnership. The Chief Executive replied that due to the bad weather the meeting had been postponed but would be rescheduled shortly.

PT

John Short added that it would be more appropriate for future SLH newsletters to contain large amounts of information about the stock options as opposed to anti social behaviour issues.

PT

Minute 827: The Board noted the Tenants' Committee recommendation of 10 December 2009 about Family Fun Days and the reinstatement of Area Discussion Groups. John Short reported that the matter would be considered further by Tenants' Committee.

CAT

John Short thought it would be useful for the SIG dates to be circulated.

The Chief Executive said that a report would be brought back to the next board with regard to the grounds maintenance contract.

PT

Charles Howarth reported that he had received an email from Tony Naylor asking to review the maintenance contract but the meeting had gone ahead without Tenants' Committee representatives.

David Sykes said that he would investigate this matter further.

DS

843

STOCK OPTIONS – PRESENTATION BY JOHN SYKES

John Sykes introduced himself to the Board and reported there was an amendment to the original report that had been circulated which was that the Stock Option Consultants would be appointed by the end of March to take into account the self financing offer by the government. The presentation covered the future investment needs of the housing stock, government policy towards council housing, the future funding options to ensure long term investment in council housing and the risks and benefits associated with various scenarios.

The Chairman asked about the improvement line on the stock condition survey and John Sykes replied that the stock condition would look at the existing stock and the supply and demand.

John Sykes said that at this stage it was important that opinions should not be formed on the most appropriate option and that representatives of the Project Board, 2 Councillors, 2 SLH Board Members, 2 Tenant Committee members, 2 SLH staff reps and 2 SLDC staff reps would work together to make the final recommendation. A Steering Group had been held today with John Mansergh appointed to lead the Communications Group. It was essential that the March SLH newsletter contained information on the stock options as clear communication was the essence of this review. It was vitally important that the SLH maintenance team and Scheme Managers and Mobiles understood the process so that they would be able to respond to tenants. The Chief Executive said that a briefing day had been organised for 10th February to get this message across to all SLH staff.

David Sykes left the meeting.

The Chairman asked about the earliest stage for the option appraisal and John Sykes replied that by the end of June there should be a good idea of the most

favourable financial option.

ACTION

Robin Brown asked that as SLDC were going through a restructure process was there evidence of commitment to see this option through. John Sykes commented that he felt that the timescales and deadlines shown in the project plan would be achieved.

The Chairman thanked John Sykes for the very useful presentation on these important issues and commented that updates would be given at future boards. A copy of the presentation would be circulated to Board Directors.

CAT

John Sykes left the meeting.

844 CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

Ambleside Gas Supply

The Chief Executive thanked John Short who worked in conjunction with the Scheme Manager and other SLH staff in liaising between United Utilities and residents when the gas supply was cut off in Ambleside.

Tenants Committee thanks

The Chief Executive informed the Board that Tenants' Committee had formally passed on their thanks to the on call repairs staff who worked around the clock responding to the high demands created by the freezing weather over Christmas and the New Year.

Robin Brown asked if the frozen pipes were an inherent fault within these properties. Jacqui Blenkinship said that this problem was no worse than any other landlord's properties. The Chief Executive said that some background heating on pipes had been fitted in certain locations since the last cold snap.

Joan Chadwick commented that these were exceptional circumstances and asked if there was a problem with the lagging of the pipes. The Director of Operations replied that as the weather was so exceptionally cold that condensate pipes from some boilers had frozen but a few of these properties had been identified for remedial measures to prevent the recurrence of this problem.

School Knott

Jacqui Blenkinship said a meeting had been arranged with Councillor Kathleen Atkinson to talk through the current issues prior to a meeting with residents on 8th February. John Short would be present at this meeting but asked that if he was unavailable another tenant representative would be required. John Short nominated Peter Bland for this position and this was accepted.

Business Improvement Managers

The Chief Executive welcomed John Mansergh to the Board meeting. John has corporate responsibilities for policy, performance and business development and operational responsibilities for administration. Sandy Ryder whose responsibilities will include financial administration and governance commences work on 8th February.

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

845 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

ACTION

The Chairman reported that 1-2-1's with Directors were now taking place and would be reported to a future board once completed.

846 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

Rebecca Lord reported that she had no concerns over the accounts and that there should be a small surplus at the year-end.

December accounts would be presented at the next Finance & Procurement Committee meeting.

Jacqui Blenkinship reported that she was looking at capital items through the voids and was picking up on legitimate capital repairs.

The Chairman asked if there was additional expenditure as a result of the cold weather and Jacqui informed the board that these figures were being collated at the moment.

John Stanton asked if the Senior Management Team were confident with the accounts and that the projects outturn would be achieved. The Chief Executive said that he was confident that all the known factors have been taken into account in producing the projections.

847 RESIDENTS' QUESTIONS

There were no Residents' questions.

848 TENANTS' COMMITTEE REPORTS

John Short reported that Tenants' Committee were very enthusiastic over David Sykes' talk on the Management Fee as David was very clear and concise and there was now a better understanding of HRA issues.

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

849 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

850 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

4th March 2010 at Little Aynam House

The meeting then continued with Part II items.