

BOARD MEETING

Minutes of Board Meeting held at 5:15 pm 5 March 2009, Little Aynam House, Kendal

- Present: Mary Dowling (Chairman)
John Stanton
Joan Chadwick
Charles Howarth
Frank Hodson
Peter Thompson
David Vatcher
Peter Woof
Peter Bland
Christine Chadwick
- Officers: Garry Ronson
Sue Boulton
Alison Kinnon
David Stubbs
Jacqui Blenkinship
- Guests: Brenda Gray
- Apologies: John Short (Vice Chairman)
Peter Thomas
Robin Brown
Paul Jones

NO	<u>TITLE OF MINUTE</u>	ACTION
	Mary Dowling asked that the Board's sympathy and sadness be formally recorded on hearing of the death of Dr Charles Batteson who passed away on 25 January 2009. Charles Batteson was a Council nominee founder Director of SLH Board in 2003.	
720	MINUTES OF LAST MEETING	
	The minutes were accepted as a true record of the proceedings.	
721	MATTERS ARISING	
	The Board considered the Action Proforma relating to the last meeting and noted the progress made on various items. The following were highlighted for specific mention:	
	Minute 711: Peter Bland reported that Tenants' Committee wanted the sale or transfer of suitably identified land to be retained by SLDC/SLH for new build.	
	Minute 711: Brenda Gray commented that that there was a local government framework in terms of identifying land and all SLDC land was being	

looked at with the expectation that land on SLH estates might be earmarked for the long term. David Vatcher added that SLH needed to be kept informed by SLDC with regard to SLH having an interest in land.

ACTION

Brenda Gray reported that the Stock Options PID would be available for the next Board as it was going to Cabinet on 8th April. The Chairman added that she had received a reply to this effect from Lawrence Conway, SLDC and confirmed that this matter would be discussed at the next SLH Board meeting.

PT

Minute 711: The Chairman reported that the general themes coming out of the 1-2-1 sessions with Board Directors would be brought back to the Board for consideration.

MD/SAB

Minute 718: Brenda Gray reported that it was now too late for SLDC to be assessed under the CPA rating which had now been changed to the CAA, but there had been several noted improvements and David Sykes was investigating this and more information would be available later.

722 RESIDENTS' QUESTIONS

No residents' questions had been received.

723 SCHOOL KNOTT SHELTERED SCHEME

Jacqui Blenkinship reported that on the completion of the current decent homes programme, School Knott Close would be the only non-decent properties left. The minimum cost to make these properties decent would be about £200K but this would not address the space standard or unpopularity issues of the bedsits in the block. A lot of consultation was still being carried out but a three stage investment option had been proposed to be considered by the Board.

John Stanton said he was surprised that School Knott had not been included in the DHP programme but the Director of Operations responded that SLDC had a long standing bedsit policy which predated the DHP and that School Knott Close had been removed from the DHP works early on in the knowledge that SLDC were due to carry out an options review of the scheme. Other schemes that had previously had bed-sits such as Gowan Lea, West Ing, Birthwaite had already been modernised.

David Vatcher asked if grant money would only be available if the site was sold and Jacqui Blenkinship replied that if the land was released to SLH, SLH needed to access funding from the Homes and Community Agency. Peter Thompson asked how robust the construction budgets were and Jacqui replied that the figures were based on current estimates from Johnsons.

The Director of Operations reported that SLDC had been sent a copy of the Board report and that they requested it be made clear to Board Directors that the School Knott Steering Group had not had the opportunity to agree the stage 2 proposal and should do so and that the proposal to leave the sheltered designation flexible at this stage should be made clear. Also that on the stage 3 proposal SLDC would like this deferred so that it can be considered as part of the district-wide review of development opportunities on Council estates later in 2009.

The Chairman read out an email from Robin Brown giving his support for the development of School Knott but not to allow the property to go to an RSL. Robin also asked the Directors to be aware of the effect of loss of rents and for how long the properties would be empty.

The Chairman then read out an email from John Short expressing his concern that Tenants' Committee had not received any information about School Knott Close apart from the board paper. The Director of Operations commented that lessons had been learned from the Gowan Lea modernisation and it was important that tenants from School Knott itself had been consulted from the outset in regard to the options.

- RESOLVED:-
- 1) That Tenants Committee receive regular briefings with regard to the School Knott development
 - 2) That the Board approve the proposed three stage investment option for School Knott Close; progressing stage one to completion (decency work to 1 School Knott (warden's accommodation) during the 2009/10 Bramall 'mop up' decent homes work; stage two (remodelling of existing bedsits to create self contained flats) to project planning and consultation to include the School Knott Steering Group and stage three (development of surrounding SLDC owned land from 2012 onwards) to be considered as part of the district-wide review of development opportunities
 - 3) That the Board seek approval from SLDC to cease lettings at the School Knott Close scheme to facilitate stage two, at the appropriate time, and agree potential home loss and disturbance payments.

724 REPORTS FROM TENANTS' COMMITTEE

The Chairman asked that the Board's thanks to Don Brookes be recorded for all his hard work and commitment as a founder member of Tenants' Committee and to wish him well.

725 CHIEF EXECUTIVE VERBAL REPORT

Meeting with Tenant Services Authority (TSA)

The Director of Operations reported that the Chief Executive had met with Phil Morgan who is responsible for implementing a new TSA standards framework and pointed out that if the KLOEs were to be substantially reviewed by the TSA, this would have an impact on SLH's new performance management system (SHAIP) which was partly based on KLOEs.

Scheme to manage empty private sector homes

The Director of Operations reported that he, Alison Kinnon and Lynne Gilbertson (SLDC Empty Homes officer) had visited the scheme at Bolton and that talks between SLH and SLDC on this issue were at an early stage. Any proposals would be brought to the Board.

DS

Northgate OHMS update

Good news had been received from Northgate who took over the Anite housing management ICT system that it would not now 'de-support' the system until 2015. This was very important from SLH's point of view as the original date may have meant major ICT changes taking place at a crucial stage of the housing stock options review.

Local government services pay arbitration

The National employers had received notification via ACAS that the arbitration panel appointed to resolve the dispute over the 2008 pay award had ruled that an increase

of 0.3% should be made in addition to the final offer of 2.45%.

ACTION

The Chairman asked if this pay award which would be back dated from April 08 needed to be ratified by the Board. The Director of Finance was asked to look into this.

GR

The Board noted the items of the Chief Executive briefing.

726 OPEN DISCUSSION

The Chairman asked Directors about dates for the annual Away Day. It was suggested that July would be the best month.

RESOLVED:- That the Business Support Manager arrange the 2009 Away Day

SAB/CAT

727 2009-2010 DETAILED BUDGET

The Director of Finance asked the Board to approve the detailed budget which would allow working budgets to produce SLH's current high standard of service in all areas. The budget settlement had already been approved but the detailed budgets for budget holders had now been prepared. SLH have been successful in reducing costs over the past 5 years and achieving a £99k reserve which will help sustain the business in future years.

David Vatcher asked about the 'warrantable stock condition survey' and the Director of Finance replied that even though SLH had a lot of survey data, if SLH were to become part of the stock option with a view to transferring the stock, then a 'warrantable survey' would be required by the lenders. This means that if there was a funding gap, the banks would have a detailed survey of the stock to support their lending decision.

RESOLVED:- That the Board approve the 2009-2010 detailed budget

728 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

The Director of Finance summarised the accounting position up to the end of January 2009. The company was taking a prudent approach in trying to minimise the deficit of £34K, previously reported in the November accounts at £56k. The Chairman asked if there was a penalty for a deficit and the Director of Finance responded that there would not be a penalty as the company had accumulated reserves but that any deficit would reduce the amount of reserves available for future investment. The Director of Finance added that a report on 'VFM Repairs Service' was being presented to the next Finance & Procurement meeting on 16th March which illustrated the success in achieving efficiencies.

RESOLVED: That the Board note the management accounts for period to January 2009

729 QUARTER 3 – DELIVERY PLAN, PERFORMANCE REPORT AND DHP PROGRESS REPORT

The Director of Operations reported that all 3 quarterly reports were showing good progress.

The Chairman suggested that Board champions needed to be sought for the different service areas of the Delivery Plan.

PT

The Director of Operations stated that the mop-up programme for Decent Homes

started on 6 March and about 100 properties had been identified. In August the remainder of the Environment Improvements works would begin.

ACTION

David Vatcher commented on the continued increase in satisfaction on the DHP and the Director of Operations added that he had just received the February statistics which showed that Windermere had satisfaction rates of 96%, Ambleside 91% and Staveley 93% which was very good news.

RESOLVED:- That the Board note the quarter three Delivery Plan, Performance Plan, and DHP report

730 SHELTERED HOUSING SURVEY

The Director of Operations reported on the high levels of satisfaction which had increased from the previous year regarding sheltered accommodation and landlord services provided by SLH.

David Vatcher queried question 8.3 'Ever had cause for complaint about one of your neighbours?' which had increased and the Director of Operations agreed that this question was probably misleading and should in future say 'Have you had cause for complaint about one of your neighbours in the past year?' as otherwise all previous years' complaints would be taken into account.

DS

The Chairman asked if the sheltered survey suggestions were being acted upon and Peter Bland (Chair of the Grant Approval panel) said that lighting had been completed at West Ing last week.

The Director of Operations confirmed that progress on tenants' suggestions would be reported at a future Board meeting.

DS

RESOLVED:- That the Board note the findings of the 2008 survey of sheltered housing tenants

731 TENANT INVOLVEMENT UPDATE

The Housing Manager informed the Board that the Tenant Participation Action Plan now contained more detail as requested by the Board at the previous quarter.

Tenant Involvement Club members had undertaken mystery shopping and training had been given for tenants to become Void Inspectors. The Tenant Participation Strategy and Sheltered Housing Agreement had been signed off and Tenants' Committee had received two training sessions with an Independent Tenant Adviser.

David Vatcher asked who the members of the Customer Access Service Improvement Group were and the Business Support Manager replied that the group consisted of tenants, officers and the Contact Centre Manager from SLDC.

RESOLVED:- That the Board note the report

732 IMPROVING CUSTOMER ACCESS UPDATE

The Business Support Manager reported that this report had been brought to the Board to update Directors on developments in telephone access and integrated systems.

A VOIP network has been introduced which utilises broadband and has reduced telephone costs. The sheltered schemes are now connected to the SLH network allowing staff to access the SLH network and enabling free telephone calls to SLH.

David Vatcher enquired as the cost of these improvements and the Business Support Manager replied £16K

ACTION

Shortly an option to 'press 1 for repairs and press 2 for any other enquiries' will be introduced utilising the 0845 number with the 717717 telephone number being eventually dropped.

RESOLVED: That Directors note the progress in improving customer access to services

733 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

John Stanton asked that thanks be passed on to Paul Jones for all his hard work and useful contributions and to wish him well for the future as his co-option finishes at the end of March. MD

The Chairman asked that a Remuneration Committee be set up to consider Directors and the Chief Executive performance and remuneration as soon as possible. SAB

David Vatcher commented on the good news received from the SLH February newsletter sent to all Councillors with regard to the training initiatives which had been recognised by GMB and that SLH was to be congratulated on its example of best practice.

734 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 16th April 2009 at Little Aynam House, Kendal