

Incommunities Housing Limited

Housing Association Board

At the meeting of the Board held on Thursday 8th October 2009 at Trust House, 5 New Augustus Street, Bradford the following members were:-

Present:

Dave Procter	Judith Courts
Ralph Hewitt	Steve Pickles
David Green	Alex Brown
Chris Greaves	Wayne Parkinson
Amanda Topham	

In Attendance:

Geraldine Howley	Group Chief Executive
Jez Lester	Assistant Chief Executive (Asset Management)
Adrienne Reid	Assistant Chief Executive (Neighbourhoods)
Louisa Clarke	Director of Finance
Peter Newbould	Company Secretary/ Director of Legal Services
Jason Pollard	Governance & Regulation Officer (minutes)

(Meeting commenced at 6.05)

Action

1.0 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

1.1 Ralph Hewitt nominated Dave Procter as Chair; this was seconded by David Green. No further nominations were received.

All Board Members were in favour of the nomination and Dave Procter was duly elected as Chair.

1.2 Appointment of Vice Chairs

1.3 Two Vice Chair positions were available, Ralph Hewitt nominated, and Alex Brown seconded Judith Courts for one position, and Ralph Hewitt nominated and Steve Pickles seconded David Green for the other position.

All members were in favour of the nominations and Judith Courts and David Green were duly elected as Vice Chairs

2.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2.1 Apologies were received from Doris Sunter and Neera Tyagi

The apologies were accepted

3.0 INTRODUCTIONS AND WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

3.1 The Chair welcomed Amanda Topham to her first Board meeting and congratulated Judith Courts, Wayne Parkinson and Ralph Hewitt on their re-selection to the Board

4.0 APPOINTMENT TO COMMITTEES AND PANELS

4.1 Members were elected to the following panels and committees:

Audit Committee

Chris Greaves
Judith Courts
Wayne Parkinson

Repairs Service Panel

Alex Brown
Steve Pickles as deputy

Schedule 1 Committee

Judith Courts
Chris Greaves
Alex Brown
Neera Tyagi
David Green

Appointment Committee

David Procter
Alex Brown
Ralph Hewitt
Chris Greaves to deputise

Performance Sub Group

Dave Procter
Alex Brown
Judith Courts
Steve Pickles

Proposed by Ralph Hewitt, seconded by David Green. All Members were in favour of the above nominations

5.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

5.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 23rd July and 9th September 2009

were considered and agreed as a true record.

Proposed by Judith Courts, seconded by Steve Pickles. All Board Members present agreed them to be a true record

6.0 MATTERS ARISING

6.1 Minutes 23 July 2009;

- Item 14.9: Clarification on a response from the council, is still awaited. Incommunities currently re-house 84% of family households that receive a priority rating, when it should be around 70%. The Council is applying pressure on other housing providers to reduce this.
- Item 15.2: A successful consultation programme has been held with leaseholders on service charges and they welcomed the transparency of approach

6.2 Minutes of 9th September the meeting commenced at 3.50 hours

7.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST HOSPITALITY AND GIFTS

7.1 The Chair advised the Board that the Gifts and Hospitality register for July, August and September had been reviewed and approved.

8.0 SCHEDULE 1 EXEMPTIONS

8.1 The Board was advised of two exemptions agreed by the Schedule 1 Committee, one relating to the Housing of employees and/or their relatives (Exemption 3) and the second that related to the employment of an employees relative (Exemption 1)

RESOLVED –

The Board ratified the decisions made by the committee.

Approved by Ralph Hewitt, seconded be David Green all Members present were in favour.

9.0 MINUTES FROM COMMITTEES AND PANELS

9.1 Members received, for review, the issues log and the minutes of the Committees and Panels that have been held since the last board meeting.

9.2 Members requested that all future minutes of meetings do not name Members or Officers when recording areas of debate

9.3 The Chair asked that all minutes be prepared and ready seven days after a meeting has taken place.

9.4 Shipley an upgraded offer for land that held significantly more value

than the original valuation is still awaited.

9.5 Aire Wharfe, an apology had not been recorded within the minutes

9.6 Issues Log

- The issue of local budgets were split between areas, some wanted them in place others felt budgets were no longer an LMT issue and that resources should be looked at and addressed under the asset management review. Members agreed to await the outcome on the current consultation programme to determine the way forward
- The asset management strategy and consultation will consider the way forward on fencing and environmental work
- The Chairs are meeting and will feed into future logs
- Rent Statements have proved complex and whilst there are quick wins that have been put in place difficulties remain in providing a plain english explanation on Housing Benefit payments

RESOLVED –

That the Board noted the issues log and the minutes of other meetings.

Proposed by Alex Brown, seconded by Judith Courts. All Members present were in favour of the resolution.

10.0 LMT FEEDBACK FROM THE CHAIR

- 10.1 The Board received a report of the Chair of the HA Board to consider feedback from the LMT meetings he attended. This was then summarised
- 10.2 The Chairs meeting has been established but did not discuss the log on this occasion due to the focus being on appraisals and how they are to be administered
- 10.3 The LMT Conference is to take place on the 31st October with a further one to be held in January
- 10.4 Members referred to elements of the LMT Terms of Reference and discussed areas of consultation on changes to specifications and local priorities that should but haven't been presented for consultation.

**Assistant Chief
Executive (Asset
Management)**

RESOLVED –

That the Board noted the report

15.0 LMT CHAIR/DIRECTOR FEEDBACK

- 15.1 The LMT Chair and the Director of South Bradford LMT provided an overview and summary of what was happening within the committee and the areas it serves

- Resident consultation is a major function of the LMTs at all levels
- Obtaining views rather than imposing what is perceived to be wanted
- Involvement with local neighbourhood walkabouts
- Involvement with other partners to take services further
- Providing feedback to the HA Board on areas of improvement

15.2 Members discussed other initiatives such as incredible edible and how areas of waste land can be better used

15.3 The Board recognised the importance of the work undertaken by the LMT's and express appreciation for the successes that were being achieved in the South area

11.0 REPORT OF THE GROUP CHIEF EXECUTIVE

11.1 The Board received a report of the Group Chief Executive to update the board on key events. This was then summarised.

11.2 Members were updated upon the Governance Standard and how it is to be showcased across the country

11.3 Confirmation that the Audit Commission action plan has received and approved by the TSA has been received.

11.4 Extensive lobbying on a negative rent increase is continuing

11.5 The shadow cabinet are currently listening to views on housing but aren't yet indicating the direction of their housing policies.

RESOLVED –

That the Board noted the report.

12.0 REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (NEIGHBOURHOODS)

12.1 The Board received a report informing it of issues relating to Neighbourhood Services. This was then summarised.

12.2 Members discussed the service implications and the requirement to have a 24/7 manned concierge operations centre if the service is to be centralised.

12.3 Members asked for a full appraisal that provided details of efficiency savings and the cost of providing a central responsive service in comparison with the current arrangements

12.4 Members raised the issue of Open Moves signs that were now erected outside local offices but had no meaning to Members of the public

Assistant Chief Executive (Neighbourhoods)

12.5 Members discussed the leansystems approach to be taken with the telephone response service to improve on quality of service

RESOLVED –

That the Board:

- (i) Agreed the general approach to review the concierge service**
- (ii) Noted the action required in respect of the CAA conversation**
- (iii) The Board were assured that the team is taking the appropriate action to improve performance**

Proposed by Chris Greaves, seconded by Steve Pickles. All Members present were in favour of the resolution

13.0 ASSET MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT

13.1 The Board received a report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Asset Management) to inform the Board on progress in delivering the 2009/10-improvement programme, the performance of gas servicing and the performance of Incommunities buildingservices. This was then summarised.

13.2 Members felt that residents were confused about what opti-time is and what it means to them and requested wider publicity of the system be made available.

Assistant Chief Executive (Asset Management)

RESOLVED –

That the Board noted the report

14.0 DIRECTOR OF FINANCE REPORT

14.1 The Board received a report of the Director of Finance to consider the financial position at the 31st July 2009, which was then summarised.

14.2 Members were advised of interest savings and the negative impact that it made to loan covenants. Negotiations will have to take place generally for housing providers to overcome this

14.3 Members were advised that the Business Plan and Budget had been a consideration of the Group Board at their away weekend when they had looked at all the pressures that would be facing the Board over the forthcoming months

14.4 Members sought and received assurance that the projected overspend will be brought back in line with the budget before the end of the financial year.

RESOLVED –

That the Board approved the management accounts to 31st July 2009 and noted the report.

Proposed by Ralph Hewitt, seconded by David Green. All Members present were in favour of the resolution.

16.1 CUSTOMER INVOLVEMENT POLICY AND STATEMENT

- 16.1 The Board received the report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Neighbourhoods) to consider the new customer involvement policy and involvement statement. This was then summarised
- 16.2 Members discussed the formation of multi-agency diaries listing service providers and key pitfall dates to avoid when considering events
- 16.3 Members felt Local Performance Indicators listed in section 9.5 of the report were more of a tick box exercise and to make things more meaningful they should be linked to outcomes

RESOLVED-

That the Board reviewed and approved the customer involvement policy and statement.

Proposed by Ralph Hewitt, seconded by David Green. All Members present were in favour of the resolution.

17.0 LEGIONELLA MANAGEMENT POLICY

- 17.1 The Board received a report of the Executive Management Team to consider the Legionella Management Policy. This was then summarised
- 17.2 Members asked that feedback on the implementation of the policy is included within the annual report on Health and Safety.

Assistant Chief Executive (Asset Management)

RESOLVED –

That the Legionella Management Policy was approved

Proposed by David Green, seconded by Chris Greaves. All Members present were in favour of the resolution

18.0 SERVICE CHARGE DE-POOLING

- 18.1 The Board received a report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Neighbourhood Services) to consider the issues relating to the de-pooling of rent and service charges. This was then summarised.

Action

18.2 Members were advised that the process ran the risk of being open to legal challenge and they must understand the level of risk. If the changes are accepted this does not pose a problem, but if challenged the charges would have to revert back to their original band

18.3 Members asked for an average cost of the provision of each of the level of charges for each service and how this will impact upon individual tenants over time.

Assistant Chief Executive (Neighbourhoods)

RESOLVED -

That the Board noted the report.

19.0 GROUP ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY REVIEW

19.1 The Board received a report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Asset Management), advising it on the progress of the current review of the asset management strategy. This was then summarised

19.2 Members were advised that the report was a first draft and that it would be subject to further consultation with the LMT's before a final report is prepared and returned to the Board in December

Assistant Chief Executive (Asset Management)

19.3 Members felt that all land other than that which has little use or value should be retained until values increase. Those to be offered for sale should only be done after a case by case assessment

19.4 Members agreed that LMT's should continue to make decisions on land for disposal under £10, 000 but anything above that level should be presented to the Board on a case by case basis

19.5 Members were advised that sold properties in areas considered for clearance could become subject to a judicial review and consultation needs to include everyone who is opposed to a demolition programme.

RESOLVED -

That the Board approved the recommendation to progress with the decanting of tenants and subsequent demolition of the following subject to any consultation including any one who may be opposed to demolition:

- **Dale Court Ben Rhydding**
- **Whinfield Close, Keighley**
- **Slade, Keebleand Kilner Houses and StClares Fagley**
- **Hendford Drive Fagley**

Proposed by ChrisGreaves, seconded by Ralph Hewitt. All Members present were in favour of the resolution.

20.0 FIRE SAFETY

- 20.1 The Board received a report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Asset Management) to inform them of the pro-active approach towards fire safety. This was then summarised.
- 20.2 Members discussed the use of Powerminster Gleeson to test fire alarms as part of the Gas service contract.

RESOLVED –

That the Board approved the in principle arrangement to enter into a Concordat Agreement with West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority relating to fire safety in flats and approved the delegated authority of the Chief Executive Officer to sign the contract upon its behalf.

Proposed by David Green, seconded by Alex Brown. All Members present were in favour of the resolution

21.0 USE OF THE COMPANY SEAL

- 21.1 The Board received a report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Business Service and Development) advising on the use of the Company Seal since the last board meeting.

RESOLVED-

That the Board ratified the use of the Company Seal

Proposed by Alex Brown, seconded by Dave Procter. All Members present were in favour of the resolution.

22.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 22.1 Members were advised of details provided by the National Housing Federation on the TSA's Standards Committee Consultation on Governance

23.1 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

- 23.1 10th December 2009, 5.30 for 6.00pm

(The meeting was brought to a close at 9.15pm)