



**HIGH PEAK COMMUNITY HOUSING LIMITED
COMPANY NUMBER 4983817
BOARD MEETING**

27 October 2010

Present: Agnes Bradley (Chair), Linda Baldry, Graham Fox, Peter Glover, Linda Leather, Kerry Martin, Anthony McKeown, John Pritchard, Awaad Rashed, Mike Watson, Chris Webster,

In Attendance: Mark Ford, Mike Coppock, Jason Hawkes, Louise Pearce, Linda McAlinden (Minutes).

Also in attendance Jason Good, Chris McKeirnon, Emma Copsey

1. **Apologies** – Margaret Nield, Simon Rogers, John Moss. Board members requested a letter of get well be sent to John Moss.

2. **Expressions of Interest**

Other than that which might reasonably be expected from tenants and Council nominees, **no Expressions of Interest** were declared.

3. **Minutes of last meeting / Matters Arising / Follow-Up Action Summary**

The minutes of the last meeting were proposed by Mike Watson and seconded by Awaad Rashed as a true and accurate account of the meeting held on 28 July 2010.

The confidential minutes of the last meeting were proposed by Graham Fox and seconded by Anthony McKeown as a true and accurate account of the meeting held on 28 July 2010.

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

Follow up Actions

In reply to a query regarding the Community Centre at Gamesley it was reported that discussions were still underway as to the direction in which this was to go. An initial briefing has been done for the executive team and a further update will be brought to the next meeting.

With regards to the Housing Benefit question details from the CSR were still being digested but a piece of joint working with HPBC has been started and will be reported back as soon as possible. It was noted that it might be useful to include the Citizens Advice Bureau in on any discussions.

4. Election of Vice Chair

Following the resignation of the Vice Chair in the summer the board were reminded that the company's Memorandum and Articles of Association did provide for there to be two Vice Chairs. Therefore the board were asked to decide how many Vice Chairs they felt should be elected.

After a brief discussion Linda Baldry proposed and Anthony McKeown seconded that two should be elected, and that these should be given a more meaningful role within the scope of the Board.

The board were informed that 3 members had expressed an interest in the position. Peter Glover, Awaad Rashed and Chris Webster. Each gave a short statement as to why they would like to be Vice Chair and the board voted.

Each member present had 2 votes. 12 slips were returned, but one only had one vote registered therefore the results were from a total of 23 votes as follows:

Peter Glover	7 votes
Awaad Rashed	6 votes
Chris Webster	10 votes

Peter Glover and Chris Webster were duly elected as the Vice Chairs of the company.

5. Chair's update

The Chair reported that she had made two visits recently to different areas of the business. The first had been to Carelink to see how and where this operated. Her conclusion was that this will be a massive project to bring them on site at Furness Vale. Physically moving and accommodating them on site would be a challenge but also the whole way this area operated was in need of radical reorganization, rotas, working practices, culture etc. It was recognised that part of the issue was an uncertainty in the future of the Supporting People funding. Substantial costs would be incurred in all aspects of this move but it was felt that this would be a crucial undertaking and would cement the feelings of all being part of the same company.

Members expressed their concerns over the suitability of the Furness Vale site for

security at shift turn round times and accessibility. They were assured that all this would be taken into account whilst carrying out the feasibility work and also account would be taken of the future of Supporting People funding and older persons services.

The Chair had also visited Peveril House in Buxton and informed board members that this occupied a prime site in Buxton. A business plan was being drawn up to present to the Council to reclaim these two Victorian villas and convert into useable and acceptable accommodation. A meeting is being held with an architect on 28 October 2010. This will feed into a full options appraisal being carried out by HPBC.

Board members were supportive of this and stated that it was important not to miss this opportunity.

A Board member gave a detailed briefing of their meeting with the Midlands ALMO Board members which had been held earlier in the month. He reported that the host ALMO was a sizable organisation which had been able to make some efficiencies, in a variety of areas including addressing the company's sickness culture. He also noted that the meeting had taken place prior to the CSR and the Chief Executive of Sandwell Homes had been concerned that they had a significant number of tenants on 100% rebate and they will soon have to pay something. He further stated that there had been a representative from the National Housing Federation who stated that they were having difficulties in getting Chief Executives of ALMO's to reply to their emails when requesting information so in future they would be sending them to the Chairs' of ALMOs for them to encourage a response from their Chief Executives.

High Level Performance Summary

6. Company Overview

a. Management Accounts

The board were informed that this paper had been produced in the absence of the Head of Finance. The Chair of Audit and Resources had raised valid concerns regarding the information. It had been decided to withdraw the report and a meeting had been set up with the Chair of Audit and Resources to go through the Management Accounts, and a full report would be given at the next meeting.

In response to a query it was stated that since the move to Furness Vale connection to Integra had been better but there had been some issues regarding the hardware at HPBC. The new ICT contract was now in place and whilst they had not been able to fully rectify the situation they had been very good at diagnosing what the faults were. Consultants were currently being employed to look at the purchase order processing facility at £800+ per day. The system is now stable and cheaper consultants are being investigated. The Board were reminded that this had been budgeted for.

Board members sought assurances that the costs were being monitored, and were informed that the ICT Service Level Agreement had not yet been signed as a full cost of HPCH share of the business had not yet been agreed. It was hoped that this would

be resolved soon.

A board member did state that the contract with Northgate had only been in operation since the beginning of October and they had so far been working very well.

It was requested that congratulations and thanks be passed on to the Head of Finance for all the work that had been done in securing the Credit Union. This was no mean feat and certainly would not have been achieved without his drive and commitment. It was noted that there might be some further funding available for start up loans, but this would only be available in the Glossopdale area.

b. Performance

No questions on this area.

c. Capital Programme

It was queried how the traffic lights could be on green in the report, when some projects did not have workmen on site or had had no spending. In response it was stated that all steps had been done but HPBC were reassessing the Capital Programme in light of the CSR and once the go ahead is given HPCH can get on site immediately.

Board members were assured that all necessary guarantees were being obtained from contractors where appropriate.

A board member had been asked to pass on the thanks and congratulations from some tenants in Whaley Bridge for the work that had been done on their kitchens. The contractors had been excellent, worked well and cleanly and nothing had been too much trouble.

d. Team Plans

Board members were assured that the issues around the floor at Furness Vale were being addressed. Solutions were being investigated, in all probability staff will need to be decanted to New Mills whilst it is rectified.

It was noted that the lift has been manufactured. Wires which are required to be moved will be moved in the next couple of days and the lift will be installed in the next two weeks.

Congratulations and thanks to the Head of Business Services for the work done with regards to retaining the Customer Service Excellence standard and in particular the work done on the Scrutiny Panel. Board were reminded that this was cutting edge and was on the Cabinet web site as an example of best practice.

The annual report had been submitted to HQN and positive feedback had been received.

Board members discussed and noted the report.

7. **Summaries and Minutes from sub group meetings**

The Chair stated that she wanted this to have a more important role in the meeting. There was a lot of good work being done in the sub group meetings and was not always acknowledged during a full board meeting. She therefore asked that the Chairs of these groups give a fuller report back than normal on what had been discussed and decided during their respective meetings.

Audit and Resources sub group.

The Chair of this group started with a plea for more members. The group only had three members and there were difficulties in being quorate.

He stated that the main areas of business discussed at the last meeting were:

- Scrutiny of the Statutory accounts for recommendation to the board of acceptance and signature. Board were informed that they were clean accounts. There had been a few issues which were minor and had been sorted out with staff and confirmed at the meeting as satisfactory.
- The group were concerned with the implementation rates of Internal Auditors' recommendations. He assured the board that he had asked for this to be addressed and for Managers to attend future sub group meetings if they had audits being presented.
- There was an amendment to the audit plan to include some educational provision for staff
- The group had had a discussion with the auditors without members of staff present and there was nothing to report from this.
- The group were recommending to full board that they accept the risk map
- The group had also discussed that in future SLA's should be treated as per a contract.

In response to a query it was noted that the CCJ reported to the group had been cancelled off HPCH's record. The insurance company had accepted that this had been their fault and had paid the amount outstanding and requested the matter expunged.

The full board agreed to

- **adopt the Financial Report as presented, at the board meeting on 27 October 2010**
- **accept the revised annual plan, reports and action plan.**
- **amend the strategic risk map in light of the briefing and to also include reference to the Bribery Act as a control mechanism.**
- **Note the minutes**

Asset Management sub group.

The Chair of this sub group stated that the format of the reports to this group had been discussed and changed. They were keen to ensure that the company were carrying out and fulfilling their obligations as a Landlord.

- The group had reviewed the Asset Management strategy and were impressed

with the standard of the document.

- Their performance indicators were satisfactory, but some clarification on figures had been requested which would be presented at the next meeting
- The capital programme had been discussed
- With regards to gas servicing the target had been changed to read 100% and a request was made for a split to be made in the presentation at the next meeting on those where the company have tried to gain access.
- He also wanted the board to note that the Voids standard had been discussed and established that there was only one void standard which had recently been reviewed in consultation with tenants and staff. As this standard had been enhanced it may be that an increase in the budget would be required – he asked that the recommendation to board reflect that the increase **may be necessary** and not **will be necessary**.
- In order to act fast when an opportunity presented itself for developing, the company needed to be recognised as part of a group for developing. So would advocate close working relationship with HPBC or a.n. other RSL. It was commented that the Head of Strategic Housing had asked the company to look at the possibility of developing on some HRA land. The Chair of the Board asked the Chair of Asset Management sub group, now Vice Chair, to find out more on this issue. A board member added a note of caution that whilst they welcomed any move towards development, the company should ensure that consultation with tenants and residents should be undertaken at the earliest stages possible.

Board members agreed to:

- **Note that the target for Gas Servicing is now set to 100%**
- **Note the budget for the Voids Standard may need to be increased**
- **Note the minutes**

Homes and Communities sub group

The Chair of this sub group stated that this had been a very interesting and productive meeting. He asked the board to note that:

- There are a series of consultation events happening this week linked to the 'shake on it' programme. These consultations are discussing the local offers and what these might be or mean to the tenants.
- The group had been given the Draft Homes and communities strategy to review and comment on and had given their feedback to the Head of the department.
- The tenancy health checks had commenced. This is a programme of review with tenants in order to ensure that appropriate checks and support measures are in place and that the company is providing the best service it can to its tenants. It provides the company with an opportunity to meet tenants and ensure that their properties are in good order and that they have no underlying issues. It has taken some time and money to set up but it is hoped that the outcome will be cost effective and offer value for money. It would also serve as a further channel of dialogue between HPCH and tenants.

In response to queries board members noted that the 'shake on it' initiative was

ground breaking and that as yet there is no best practice. On completion there will be an opportunity to benchmark. Lessons have been learned from this week and in future the 'e' bus may be used and different times and locations chosen to ensure that we maximise opportunities for tenants to input into such a key project.

All board members commended the new tenancy agreement and noted that this was the Council's document and that they had also commended and welcomed the document. In response to queries from the board it was stated that the company required all the clauses in order to cover eventualities, but discretion was used when implementing. It was noted that the document had been subject to significant scrutiny at Social Inclusion Select committee in addition to the tenant consultation that had already been undertaken.

A member expressed concern with the materials used and the manner in which they were delivered in the 'Whistle blowing' campaign. Feedback was that putting the leaflets in envelopes had been construed as specific tenants being targeted. Caution was urged for the next time.

Board members noted the minutes.

Governance Working Group

The Chief Executive thanked this group for the work they had managed to get through in such a short time, giving a clear steer on Governance and how the board wanted to proceed in various areas of governance, not least in the execution of the appraisal process.

The group had agreed to meet twice per year to ensure that procedures and policies remained fit for purpose and to address any outstanding issues.

Board noted the summary.

Quality and Performance sub group

This was presented by a member of the group who had been asked to step in as Chair as the Chair of the group was sick.

- The group had discussed the performance figures
- He felt that although the staff satisfaction figures were good there might be a drop following the move to Furness Vale. It was requested that any results under 80% were investigated and report presented back to the group
- He had promised the Head of Service that he would get the board to fill out the Health and Safety Questionnaire before they left.
- They had looked at the HR strategy and had no changes to suggest. As he was not present at the meeting the Chair of the sub group had stated he would liaise direct with the Head of Business Services with any comments and it was requested any comments be circulated to all the sub group members

Board noted the minutes and the recommendations therein.

8. Signing and adoption of the Financial Accounts 2009 / 2010

Following the recommendation from the Audit and Resources sub group Graham Fox proposed and Anthony McKeown seconded the proposal to adopt the statutory accounts and sign the letters to the accountants and the ISA. All board members agreed.

9. Approval of the Asset Management strategy

Following the recommendation from the Asset Management sub group the full board noted that the strategy now included development, a recommendation to work closely with HPBC and an assurance on the stock condition.

Linda Baldry proposed and Peter Glover seconded the proposal to accept the Asset Management Strategy. All board members agreed.

10. Annual Report from the Health and Safety Committee

This report was presented by the Health and Safety Champion, Anthony McKeown.

He asked that the board note:

- First draft at ensuring the company were carrying out its legal obligations with regard to Health and Safety
- The culture of the company is being reviewed to ensure that Health and Safety is included
- A re-branding exercise has been undertaken to ensure that all staff are aware
- Over the last 12 months outside consultants have been in to assess Health and Safety and gaps are now being addressed
- All outstanding actions are in the process of being resolved
- Health and safety committee are monitoring the actions
- Staff are being consulted on all levels
- Statistics may get worse as awareness grows and staff are being encouraged to report near misses and accidents
- Board members need to be aware of what their responsibilities are with regard to Corporate Manslaughter and be assured that checks, measures and monitoring is in place
- Is already being checked internally and will be checked externally as part of the ISO9000 audit.

Thanks were expressed to the Quality and Performance Manager for all the work that had been put into ensuring that this had been taken forward.

Board members noted the report.

11. Shared Services

This is a confidential item and the minutes for this can be found under separate cover.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.40 pm

Date of next meeting:	24 November 2010
Time:	6.00pm
Venue:	HPCH Head Office, Furness Vale

Signed: _____

Date: _____