

MINUTES

7th July 2010

7:00pm Third Floor Board Room, Sutton Gate



BOARD OF MANAGEMENT SUTTON HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

Present: Mike Davis (Vice Chair), Michael Baldwin, Ken Morgan and Terry Haswell

Staff: Andrew Taylor, Joanne Cambra, Sara Tutton, John Gallagher, Brendan Crossan, Diane Richards and Liz Bosch

LBS Representative: Simon Latham

Also attended as observers: Beverley Brigden (secretary of SLA) and Margaret Onions (tenant and member windows replacement group and reading panel)

1. **Apologies**

Findlay Macpherson (Chair), Dilys Lee, Enid Bakewell, Samantha Bromige, Lesley O'Connell, Ryan Drew and Sharon Prospere.

MD welcomed Mohammed Sadiq to the meeting. MS was interviewed before the board meeting and the panel appointed MS to the Board subject to the council's agreement. SL stated that the council should be able to confirm his appointment within two weeks through a DDN.

2. **Minutes of the last meeting and Matters Arising**

No matters arising.

The minutes were agreed as being an accurate record.

3. **Approval of Annual Accounts 2009 ~ 10**

BC stated that the audit of the annual accounts had been completed. The accounts and the audit finding report had been viewed and agreed by the Audit & Risk Committee.

MB reminded board members that once they approved the accounts, they accepted full responsibility for them.

MD commented that it had been an exceptionally good year for performance. He also noted that the pension reserve had shifted significantly in terms of the deficit.

BC explained that this was an actuarial calculation rather than an actual deficit and that the pension fund is due a re-evaluation in the Autumn.

MB said this had also been raised at the Audit and Risk Committee. They noted that SHP consisted mostly of younger staff and therefore there would not be an immediate impact.

KM asked how the statement in appendix 2 item B, regarding the significant assumptions, had been validated.

AT responded that he had discussed them with the Council's finance officers and Baker Tilly had validated. By approving the accounts the Board would also be accepting that the assumptions were reasonable.

BC commented that page 23 of the accounts specifies the assumptions made by the actuaries when doing the pension calculations.

The Board agreed the recommendations as stated in the report:

- (i) The Board approved the annual accounts for the year ending 31st March 2010.**
- (ii) The Board authorised the chair to send the Letter of Representation to Baker Tilly UK Audit LLP.**

4. Resident Involvement

JC presented her report on Resident Involvement. SHP wants to consider the effectiveness of the current approach to customer involvement and its alignment to key priorities. JC mentioned that currently it was difficult to establish how effective customer involvement methods were and how they linked to outcomes. Therefore she asked the Board to agree ahead of the October Board meeting that views are gathered from residents and recognised groups on the questions posed in section 6 of the report and to approve SHP undertaking research into the effectiveness, diversity and accessibility of current resident involvement. The original report stated that this would be done before the September Board meeting, but JC felt this would not give enough time and suggested October instead.

MB expressed concern that the four questions were not broad enough. He wanted to ensure that all residents would have a chance to offer input. The report did not mention the Sounding Board and he felt their views were important. He also noted the mention of the term 'recognised groups'. He commented that some residents are not part of a 'recognised group' but may still have an individual view. MB commented that the Equality & Diversity implications had been omitted from item 8. JC agreed this was an oversight.

KM asked that the research covers how SHP is identifying residents' needs, how they can engage all customers and how they can engage customers who do not come to us.

JC commented that the questions in the report were only meant to be the start of the discussion. The report for the October Board meeting will include improvements and changes to ensure resident involvement strategy is robust for the future and to ensure that individual voices are heard and ensure spending is in the right areas.

There have already been a number of activities to start the discussion.

MD asked for clarification of point 7.2 about research into the effectiveness and diversity of resident involvement. JC explained that the current system had no methods to gauge diversity of large scale events like the St. Helier Festival.

AT stated that residence involvement needed to be based on factual evidence in future rather than anecdotes. We need this evidence to show what got people engaged and where SHP should feed resources to get maximum engagement. There is a divergence of views now by residents on where money should go so we need to base decisions on evidence rather than perception.

JC will look at which events staff should attend based on where this would be most valued. Resident Involvement plans and events should be qualitative rather than quantitative, especially in current economic climate. This research will allow us to put our resources in the right places and maximise the opportunity.

TH was hopeful that Residents' Associations would get a chance to put their views forward. He commented that neighbourhoods and RAs are not just made up of SHP tenants and wondered whether any funding would come from the council for this area in future. SL acknowledged TH's point and would register this with the council's Community Neighbourhood Manager. He believes that a cash outlay is not the most likely way forward; however there may be some information during consultation for charging for care services which will look at the number of tenants with caring responsibilities who have a disability. He will empower his staff to ensure that their views are captured and will discuss with JC.

AT said it would be a challenge to get the council to fund RAs; but it was easier to get funds from the council for specific customer involvement events like the St. Helier Festival.

Beverley Brigden brought forward a discussion from the SFTRA Executive Committee. Residents had said that there were mixed messages and confusion from SHP staff who had told residents they were unsure of their roles now. SFTRA had thought that changes should not have been made yet at this point in consultation and asked for clarification of the current position as there was concern that some services would no longer be provided. JC first asked for staff that were identified as making these comments to speak to her. She responded that the consultation with residents was regarding services and outcomes but that staff positions are an internal SHP decision. AT confirmed there had been no changes to resource levels in the Resident Involvement area. TH expressed concern regarding response time and availability of staff in customer involvement team. KM said this was a serious issue. JC and TH to discuss and JC will review and respond.

The Board agreed the recommendations as stated in the report:

- **For the Board to invite views ahead of the October Board meeting from residents and recognised groups on the Questions posed in section 6 of the report**
- **For SHP to undertake research into the effectiveness, diversity and accessibility of current resident involvement.**

5. Electrical Testing

JG presented the Electrical Testing report and outlined the options for an accelerated electrical testing programme. He distributed a corrected page 5 at the meeting to replace the original pages due to an error on the page.

The recent service review of planned and cyclical maintenance highlighted a backlog of testing of domestic electrical installations. There is not an explicit statutory requirement in this respect. However there is guidance from the IEE that recommends 10 years as the maximum period between tests. SHP understood the importance of ensuring all properties have a compliant test certificate and JG outlined the three accelerated electrical testing programme options identified in the report to achieve this. JG recommended that option one be discarded as it would not progress things as quickly as the other options. He stressed that there was no right or wrong choice, but that a balanced plan needed to be chosen which took into account the timeline, budget implications, any duplication of work already planned under the capital programme and any extra disruption to residents who might need work done at two separate times.

JG commented that other ALMOs are in similar positions to SHP and that when making a choice between options it was crucial to manage the transition to full compliance over a manageable period of time. ST mentioned that this was discussed at the South East ALMO group and that the Health and Safety Executive advisor stated that there was an understanding that the finance to solve the problem was not always instantly available and that ALMOs should show plans are in place to deal with the issue.

JG felt that option 2 was the best way forward for SHP. BC suggested that with option 2 the additional funding needed is affordable and achievable and that this year's additional expenditure could be covered. This was the most affordable option.

TH requested that any plan adopted prioritises the most vulnerable people and homes such as the elderly and the oldest homes that have never been tested including those of non-standard construction. JG agreed fully with this and stated that testing would be done on a risk factor basis. Both the property and the person in property will be looked at when deciding priority. MD asked what sources of information and factors would be used to make these decisions. JG cited the Stock Survey, Decent Homes survey, information from the

Board & Repair Work and information from HCRM on the occupants of the property including disabilities and age and any other relevant sources.

MB noted that we were talking about tenants only. He sees a need to advise leaseholders about this issue for their information. JG agreed this would happen. MB also suggested that this issue should be added to the corporate risk register which was agreed. BC will ensure this is actioned.

KM stated he preferred option 2 and asked how many properties would be brought forward in this option. JG referred him to the appendix where he states the number of properties. KM also queried whether SHP was compromising any other Health & Safety work by using these funds. JG assured him we were not.

JG said that there would be six month follow up reports to the board on this area due to its importance. MD complimented JG for a thorough report. He asked that, in addition to six month reports, one or two performance indicators could be added to the current list so they could be seen at each board meeting. ST said this would be added to Health & Safety indicators. MD noted that any opportunity to expedite this work in future should be treated as high priority.

The Board agreed the recommendations as stated in the report:

- (i) To note the contents of the report**
- (ii) To agree option 2 as the preferred option for an accelerated electrical testing programme**
- (iii) To receive a further report in early 2011 to advise on progress with the electrical testing programme and the impact of the Government's comprehensive spending announcements on the Decent Homes programme.**

In addition the Board agreed to receive update reports on progress every six months and to consider performance at each Board meeting through appropriate PIs.

6. Health and Safety Annual Report

ST has completed her first year as health and safety advisor and the report is now more extensive. ST is pleased to report:

- A wide variety of H&S training events
- Increased recording of accidents and incidents (due to better recording as opposed to increased incidents)
- A robust asbestos database that was praised by the audit commission
- Fire and Gas Safety are complete
- Sutton Gate is a safer place

ST said there would be discussion of sickness and absence in BC's HR annual report and more emphasis on sickness and absence due to

stress or workplace accidents. ST asked the board to agree the Five Star H&S work plan for 2010/11.

TH commented that although there was only one 'Resident slip, trip, fall' reported that he knows there are incidents not reported. He suggested there was an issue with ease of reporting and recommended that forms be available in communal areas especially near known trouble spots. ST will explore a way forward on this. KM asked how we check that contractors are H&S compliant. ST replied that this was a feature of the contractors' monthly review meetings and that Construction Design Management (CDM) training had been given. The London and South East ALMO forum are looking at creating a common suite of performance indicators for contractors in this area. TH highlighted the need to look at sub-contractors in this discussion. JG said that there is a H&S plan for each project which includes site audits and that sub-contractors are covered. He discussed the need to ensure a loop of learning from past experience and mentioned the Apollo Homes pilot. MD said he was leading a review of one bathroom project via the Decent Homes Monitoring Group and would look at this. TH asked if the insurance covered sub-contractors and JG confirmed it did.

MD queried if we were satisfied with the continuing H&S arrangements once the gas mains are handed over for Durand Close and Corbett Close. JG said this had been reviewed in the Gas Safety Case.

MD asked whether working at heights had been reviewed. ST explained that this was being looked at this year and that ladders and scaffolding training is taking place in the next couple of weeks. MD congratulated ST and SHP on a very robust H&S regime. It was good to see the Chief Executive chairing the H&S Committee and a director leading operationally across the whole organisation. This is appreciated and he looked forward to seeing them carry on with the good work.

The Board agreed the recommendations as stated in the report:

- (i) Note the activities completed in 2009/10**
- (ii) Agree the 5 Star H&S Work plan for 2010/11**

7. Equality and Diversity Annual Report

Jo Cambra presented the report and emphasised that the report was themed using the same 5 headings as the draft IDEA Housing Equality Framework. JC said that SHP had made significant inroads and improvements to all five areas and that commitment had been shown across the organisation led from the board down. However there was still more to do and JC was disappointed that some targets were missed but that they should be met early this year and that targets had still been increased this year.

KM asked who was leading on the actions, how will they be monitored and how SHP will engage any specific community with especially low current engagement. JC responded that Andrea

Howlett and Sally-Ann Yeats were leading the actions, along with the board Equality and Diversity Committee and the staff committee. The action plans come from all teams' service plans and are therefore monitored by all line managers. SHP will be looking for patterns using profile data versus general population data to better inform our services.

MD commented that the report noted that the Audit Commission finding criticised the domestic violence approach and asked JC to respond. JC stated that domestic violence falls under the diversity KLOE and that it is managed under the tenancy team. This will be reported to the Board in September as part of the ASB and Hate Crime Report. However there has been increased signposting on the Internet for residents regarding domestic violence.

8. HR Annual report

The Board were reminded that the responsibility for HR was now with BC. He reported that it had been a successful year for HR and briefed the Board on the key achievements. These being

- The recruitment and selection procedure was reviewed and improved,
- A downward trend in staff turnover,
- A more customer focussed culture with job descriptions for all staff being adapted to include mandatory attendance at one customer involvement event a year,
- More effective use of policies and procedures.

BC explained that the six monthly HR Service Review update would also be presented to the Board in September.

MB commended the HR staff for their efforts and BC agreed that the HR staff were doing an excellent job. MD added that HR was shaping the organisation in ways that the Board agrees with and fully supports.

9. HRA Review and Business Plan

AT communicated that the Council's HRA Business Plan and response to the HRA reform consultation had been agreed at the Executive yesterday with very slight alterations. SL said that these changes were to the housing benefit section.

AT emphasised that the Decent Homes funding was critical to the long time financial viability for SHP and the Council.

SL added that SFTRA had also been consulted and that their views were totally aligned with the LBS/SHP response. MB informed the group that he had also commented back to the Council on the discussions from the Asset Management Group on the HRA review.

10. Monthly Performance Tracker

MD commented that he felt a few of the targets could be higher and specifically mentioned the 'proportion of telephone calls answered within 20 seconds' and 'number of working days lost to sickness.' BC

said this same point had already been raised by LBS and that he would review the targets when we have a full quarter of data, in a few days time.

MD praised the improvement in the sickness target. He also asked BC to look at the indicators that come to the Board on a monthly basis and review whether any could be dropped from the report with the reasons.

11. VFM & Financial Monitoring

BC noted that the capital expenditure report is now more detailed. KM stated that the budget for the 'internal management fees Decent Homes programme' was missing in Appendix 3 page 6. This will be corrected. He also queried what value for money we are getting from Cyntra. ST said that we have not done a formal VFM exercise but are satisfied it is meeting our needs. She anticipated that membership costs will drop by 50% next year. AT said that members regularly challenge Cyntra to ensure membership delivers value for money. He also explained that SHP chooses when it uses Cyntra, based on when it meets our needs and it is only used for certain parts of the Decent Homes programme.

12. Leasehold Windows Replacement Report

SL reported that the Council have agreed a way forward and have chosen scenario 4. The Council will now look at how and when to apply the changes. SL acknowledged that this took time, but that the elections delayed the decision and that they wanted to take the time to make a considered and meaningful decision. MD commended SL and LBS on the decision.

13. Customer Involvement Activities

TH expressed disappointment that the Clockhouse RA AGM was missing from the calendar. JC apologised and said she would look into this. TH asked if SHP would send staff to the AGM. JC said she would get back to TH with names of staff attending.

14. Any Other Business

AT told the Board that Jean Crossby would be standing down as chair of SFTRA in September. He offered his thanks and appreciation for all the hard work that she has done. MD added the Board's thanks and best wishes for Jean.

The Meeting ended at 20:45

Date of the next meeting: 1st September 2010 at 7pm
Venue: 3rd Floor, Sutton Gate

Chair	
Date	