

# LEWISHAM HOMES

## Minutes of the Lewisham Homes Board meeting held on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2007, Civic Suite, Catford

### Present

**Board**

Julia Cotton (Chair)  
Alan Barker  
Lawrence Britton  
Robin Cross  
Nick Joslyn  
Linda Wallace  
Marion Nisbet  
Andrew Park  
John Paschoud  
Margaret Renshaw

### Apologies

**Board**

David Gannicott (Vice Chair)  
Terry James  
Moira Stanton

**Lewisham  
Homes**

Juliet Knott (Director of Housing)

**Lewisham  
Homes**

Andrew Potter (Chief Executive)  
Sandy Canham (Head of Service Improvement)  
Susan Again (ALMO Project Support Officer)

**London  
Borough  
of  
Lewisham**

Lesley Seary (Executive Director of Customer Services)  
Adam Barrett (Head of Resources – Regeneration)  
Peter Gadsdon (Head of Strategy and Performance)  
John Egan (Group Accountant)  
Tim Burrows (ALMO Finance Officer)

<p><b>1</b></p>	<p><b>Welcome, introductions and apologies</b></p> <p>Julia Cotton welcomed everyone to the Board. Julia informed the Board that as there were two Andrews on the Board, Andrew Park will be referred to as Andy, and Andrew Potter will be referred to as Andrew.</p> <p>Apologies were received from David Gannicott, Terry James, Moira Stanton and Juliet Knott.</p>	<p>Action by</p>
<p><b>2</b></p>	<p><b>Minutes and matters arising</b></p> <p>There were matters arising from the minutes of the Lewisham Homes Board Awayday held on 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> January:-</p> <p>Robin Cross referred to page 4 of the minutes and noted that the Housing Revenue Account report had been circulated to Housing Panels where it was received very badly. Lewisham Homes will need to improve it's consultation strategy.</p> <p>At the top of page 9, 'compete' should read 'complete'.</p> <p>At page 11, Trowers and Hamlins to complete legal assurances.</p> <p>Linda Wallace asked about the recruitment of Director of Property Services.</p> <p>Andrew Potter commented that Mike Hallimond, the Interim Director of Property Services was no longer a member of staff at Lewisham Council.</p> <p>Alan Barker asked for an update about Paulette Jackson.</p> <p>Andrew Potter said the legal team have drafted a letter to Paulette explaining why she was not able to become a Board Director.</p>	

The minutes of the Lewisham Homes Awayday was proposed and seconded by Lawrence Britton.

### **3 Resident Board members update**

Alan Barker began by saying that the Somerville Estate Panel really appreciated Board members attending the 'fun day', which took place on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> December. Alan said he wanted to see more Board members become active and visible at Housing Panel events.

Alan added that the Northwest Lewisham Panel thought there were pro-active staff in the Kender office, but they were not sure about their office accommodation and their positions at the Kender office.

Marion Nisbet said that freeholders were unhappy about not receiving any correspondence related to Lewisham Homes. Julia said that freeholders would not receive such information as they are not part of Lewisham Homes.

Marion felt that people talking about Lewisham Homes was good for publicity.

Lawrence Britton gave feedback on the Tenant and Resident Association (TRA) meeting he attended on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2007. He said that it was a low turnout due to the weather. However, issues on the estates, such as repairs and caretaking had not been resolved. Lawrence was concerned that tenants had been promised deep cleaning in their communal areas, and that so far, caretakers had not kept to their schedule of cleaning.

Margaret Renshaw gave feedback on the Sayes Court TRA meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2007. Margaret reported that tenants said that the repairs problems had not been resolved. However, the problems Cornbury House had, have now been resolved.

Linda Wallace wanted to find out what will be done about all the repair problems being presented at TRA meetings.

Andrew Potter said that addressing the problems with repairs will take some time. Quick wins are important as Lewisham Homes has to appoint a senior management team, introduce a new culture, and procure new repairs contracts before any sustainable improvements will be demonstrable.

Linda added that management of customers is also essential.

#### **4 Management fee – Andrew Potter**

Andrew Potter informed the Board that he had not agreed a fee with Lewisham Council. The Council have accepted the need for improved services and will release some capital investment over the next three years to invest in the business. Discussions are being held over the fee and we hope to agree shortly.

Nick Joslyn asked if there were any principal areas for concern.

Andrew said that I.T (Information Technology) and accommodation were the main areas of concern.

**Decision: Andrew Potter to agree the management agreement fee before the date of the next Board meeting.**

#### **5 SLA's (Service Level Agreements) – Tim Burrows**

Tim Burrows informed the Board that all the SLA's had been reviewed by consultants. The performance of SLA's will be monitored continuously once the systems are in place.

Linda Wallace commented that the figures presented in the report were astonishing, and added that that no value for money assessment had been taken.

Adam Barrett said that the SLA's had been conducted under Michael Irvine.

Linda wanted to find out who the consultant was that was checking the SLA's.

Tim Burrows said that the consultant was Barry Simons, who had carried out a desktop review and provided comments on most of the SLA's.

Andrew Park had concerns about getting good standards of service.

Lesley Seary said that SLA's were built into the Delivery Plan and the Management Agreement. Council staff have regular meetings on SLA's.

Lesley assured the Board that Andrew Potter is committed to reviewing SLA's that are of most concern.

John Paschoud asked what commitments Lewisham Homes has to the SLA's. He wanted to know what freedom there was to act on issues, and felt it was important to clarify what the real freedom to act upon is.

Andrew said that it depends on the SLA. For example, in I.T, Andrew felt it best to work with the Council and ensure agreements and services to carry out various work.

John suggested a risk analysis being carried out and had concerns about the Property Services SLA.

Tim Burrows said that the Property Services SLA would come under Office Accommodation. Andrew added that many offices would be consolidated over the next 12 months.

Andrew Park said he would be keen on seeing the risk assessment when it is available.

**Decision: Andrew Potter to finalise SLA's for this year and next.**

	<p><b>Actions: Andrew Potter to produce risk analysis and include SLA's in the business plan.</b></p>	<p><b>AP</b></p>
<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b>Lewisham Homes banking arrangements – Tim Burrows</b></p> <p>Tim Burrows informed the Board of the banking arrangements that need to be set up, to enable Lewisham Homes to be operational. Tim asked the Board to endorse the actions taken by officers in setting up the Lewisham Homes bank account with the Co-operative Bank.</p> <p>Andrew Park wanted to find out about Lewisham Homes relationship with the Co-operative bank, as he had concerns about social exclusion and residents who did not have bank accounts.</p> <p>Tim said there were no problems. Adam Barrett said the Council was happy with the Co-operative bank.</p> <p>Julia commented that Co-operative Bank was the most ecological bank.</p> <p><b>Decision: The Board took a unanimous decision to set up a Lewisham Homes bank account.</b></p>	
<p><b>7</b></p>	<p><b>Strategic Service Improvement Plan – Peter Gadsdon</b></p> <p>Peter Gadsdon discussed the Lewisham Homes performance management framework, the key indicators and the process for target setting. He recommended that Board members note and comment on the progress lead officers had made in implementing the Service Improvement Plan. The Board were also asked to comment on the key performance indicators developed to track improvements in Lewisham Homes services.</p> <p>Robin Cross asked how are the actions and tasks tracked and assessed as complete. The comments on progress listed in the left column of page 15 of the Strategic Service Improvement Plan, did not seem to match the 'rag status'</p>	

	<p>which showed complete.</p> <p>Peter added that on page 19 of the Strategic Service Improvement Plan, the blue handwriting is the hyperlink which provides evidence of completion.</p> <p>Julia felt that the hyperlink indicated the discrepancy between council officers, tenants and residents.</p> <p>Nick wanted to find out how were residents feelings measured.</p> <p>Julia suggested that this would take the form of annual satisfaction surveys or mystery shopping.</p> <p>Lesley suggested monitoring performance on a quarterly basis.</p> <p><b>Action: Key performance indicators to be validated in the business plan.</b></p> <p><b>Action: Slippages to be noted at the beginning of Service Improvement Plan.</b></p>	<p>AP</p> <p>AP</p>
<p><b>8</b></p>	<p><b>Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget and Rent Setting – Adam Barrett</b></p> <p>Adam Barrett asked the Board to note the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) report which deals with the setting of rents and achieving a balanced HRA budget for 2007/8.</p> <p>Adam informed the Board that the Council retains responsibility for the setting of the rent. The HRA provides the framework from which the management fee is taken to fund the responsibilities that Lewisham Homes has under the Management Agreement with the Council.</p>	

Adam also added that the Mayor and Cabinet report sets out the proposed increases in rent and other charges, the outcome of the tenants consultation exercise and reviews the forecast position and options for achieving a balanced budget.

Andrew Park had concerns about saving £1million on repairs services, when more should be spent on repairs.

Lesley said that the budget was tight and they were not getting value for money on the repairs budget.

Alan wanted to know the impact the HRA report had on consulting with tenants.

Adam said that they had problems with downsizing costs, and downsizing the change agenda. There were also cost pressures on resources, however, there is £1.6 million in the one-off reserves in 2007/8.

Alan wanted to know what improvements were being made that would satisfy tenants.

Lesley informed the Board that the Council do not consult tenants on budgets.

**9 Scheme of delegation – Lesley Seary / Andrew Potter**

Lesley asked the Board to consider the executive matters that had been reserved for the Board. Board members were asked to agree to adopting the Schedule of Delegations that was set out in the report.

**Decision: The Board took a unanimous decision to adopt the executive matters reserved for the Board in the Scheme of Delegations.**

<p><b>10</b></p>	<p><b>Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement Framework – Sandy Canham</b></p> <p>Sandy gave an update on the Lewisham Homes Resident Involvement Compact Group’s work to date. The group has concluded that the structure for involvement in Lewisham Homes should include both formal and informal structure. This would provide for residents who do not have the time or confidence and/or confidence and/or opportunity to become involved via a Tenant and Residents Association.</p> <p>The group had also looked at resident training and would like to build on the training programme currently in existence. In particular providing the opportunity for some residents who wish to be involved in procurement and service reviews to receive the training needed.</p> <p>Nick Joslyn wanted to find out how this issue fits into the current strategy, which is the new way. For instance, the consultation approach.</p> <p>Sandy said that by making it inclusive and available to all.</p> <p>Andrew Potter added that there will be a communications strategy and a resident involvement team in Lewisham Homes.</p> <p>Julia asked if the Tenant Management Organisations had been considered, Sandy replied that the group had looked at the present compact and felt it lacked clarity on opportunities for TMOs to get involved at all levels. The group want this to be addressed in Lewisham Homes.</p>	
<p><b>11</b></p>	<p><b>Office accommodation – Andrew Potter on behalf of Peter Clark</b></p> <p>Andrew Potter notified the Board about the progress that had been made on acquiring a building for Lewisham Homes Headquarters. Council officers have identified a building – Holbeach House in central Catford, which will be able to accommodate 130 members of staff. Council officers are actively pursuing leasing it. Andrew anticipates that Lewisham Homes staff will move in early</p>	

Autumn.

**12 A.O.B**

Andrew informed the Board that Maureen Corcoran had accepted the offer of Director of Service Improvement. She will start at Lewisham Homes in April 2007.

Andrew discussed with the Board, the most suitable options for recruiting new resident Board members. The options were:

- 1) To recruit resident Board members from housing panels in the same way as current resident Board members were selected OR
- 2) To select residents from an open recruitment process.

Linda Wallace set out the reasons why resident Board members needed to be recruited immediately. These being that residents on the Board will be under-represented. Their input is highly valued and needed.

Julia said she would like two resident Board members on the same time limit as Board members when the resident Board members are replaced. She added that she does not want a two tier Board.

Andrew Park had concerns with the time limit and wished not to be committed to this issue so suddenly.

Lesley recommended referring to the Memorandum and Articles to check the time limits and how new Board members should be appointed.

Nick asked about the openness and transparency of the issue.

Andrew said it was important to provide the greatest opportunity and transparency for residents to apply and that selection is based upon the best

<p>person. This would also support the guidance in the KLOE (key line of enquiry).</p> <p><b>Action: Andrew Potter to seek legal guidance from Trowers and Hamlins, to provide formal advice on the process of recruiting new resident Board members.</b></p> <p>John Paschoud suggested nominating the Chair (Julia Cotton) to make a final decision at her discretion, but also considering decisions and advice offered by Board members.</p> <p>Julia thanked everyone for attending the meeting and brought the meeting to a close.</p>	<p><b>AP</b></p>
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