

Minutes of a meeting of the **Tower Hamlets Homes Board**
Held on **Tuesday 19 February 2013** from **6.30 pm – 8.10 pm**
Room MP702, Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent, London E14 2EB

Present:

Barry Simons	-	Chair, Independent Board Member
Cllr Kabir Ahmed	-	Vice Chair, Council Board Member
Cllr Alibor Choudhury	-	Council Board Member
Shamsul Hoque	-	Tenant Board Member
Ann Lucas	-	Independent Board Member
Gavin Cansfield	-	Chief Executive (CE)
Jamie Carswell	-	Director of Investment Services (DIS)
David Thompson	-	Acting Director of Neighbourhood Services (DNS)
Les Warren	-	Director of Finance & Customer Services (DFC)
Stephen Mutton	-	Head of Communications & Governance (HCG)
Trevor Kennett	-	ASB Manager
John Coker	-	Council Representative (CR)
Sesi Afewu	-	Partnership & Governance Officer
Dave Keeley	-	Member of the public (items 1-11)

Item No	Description	Action
1.	Apologies for Absence	
	Apologies were received from Margaret Cox, and Cllr Rania Khan.	
2.	Declarations of Interest	
	Shamsul Hoque declared a personal interest in that he was a tenant of a property managed by Tower Hamlets Homes.	
3.	Questions from Members of the Public	
	None received.	
4.	Minutes of the meetings of the Board held on 10 December 2012	
4.1	The minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2012 were agreed as an accurate reflection of the discussions.	
4.2	The Board endorsed the decisions made at the December Board meeting.	
5.	Matters Arising	
5.1	Minute 5.2. Work to assess the comparative value for money of new build and extensions: it was noted that this work had been completed and would be brought to the March Finance & Audit Committee.	DNS
5.2	Minute 9.6. Developing external standard: it was noted that a report on this work would be provided to the July meeting of the Board.	DIS
6.	Business Plan 2013/14	
6.1	The Board received the report on the Business Plan for 2013/14	

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6.2	<p>which provided contextual information about the development of the Plan and the approval process.</p> <p>The following business plan priorities summarised in Appendix Two (along with proposed performance measures) were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Create places to be proud of: Deliver the Decent Homes Programme ○ Create places to be proud of: Strengthen neighbourhoods planning and delivery ○ Improve the quality of customer experience ○ Target our offer for older residents and those who need our help the most ○ Reduce the cost of service delivery ○ Invest in staff. 	
6.3	<p>The discussion focused on the priorities and BCIs and what would be done to ensure that they were monitored effectively. Members emphasised the importance of ensuring that the indicators were consistent and tallied with what was stated in the Business Plan. Overall, the Board was happy with the Business Critical Indicators.</p>	
6.4	<p>With regards to the 'Investing in Staff' priority, members were interested in how much the organisation spent on external courses/whether benchmarking was carried out and whether there were sufficient opportunities for acting-up and internal promotions for staff. It was noted that there was a budget of £500 per employee and a variety of opportunities, such as training and development courses, were available to staff. There were no regulations in place concerning 'tying-in' staff, who had completed development courses with the organisation, for a specific time period. The Board requested that greater emphasis be placed on the importance of developing staff and internal opportunities and promotions in the 'What We Will Do This Year' section.</p>	
6.5	<p>The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - commented on the Business Plan 2012/13 to 2014/15, and delegated any further amendments to the Chief Executive and Chair, for submission to the Council by 31st March 2013. - approved the Business Plan 2012/13 to 2014/15 subject to incorporating amendments agreed between the Chief Executive and Chair. 	
7.	THH Company Budget Report 2013/14	
7.1	<p>The Board received the Budget report from the Chair of Finance & Audit Committee setting out the company budget proposed for 2013/14 and highlighting the key elements of HRA income and expenditure budgets delegated to THH.</p>	
7.2	<p>It was noted that the HRA Budget for 2013/14 from which the THH Management Fee of £32.429m was payable had been</p>	

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7.3 7.4 7.5 7.6	<p>approved by the Mayor in Cabinet in February.</p> <p>The 2013/14 budget would deliver £1.33m of savings compared to 2012/13, and prepared to deliver Year Three of the Decent Homes Programme by allocating an additional £1.15m of resources to its management and delivery.</p> <p>The Board reviewed the report. An amendment agreed to the savings list in the 2013/14 Savings Plan in that the word 'staffing' be removed, so it reads "savings from reductions in the numbers of managers in the neighbourhood structure".</p> <p>Cllr Choudhury informed the Board that the Council would not now be disposing of Cheviot House. Officers agreed to consider the implications of this.</p> <p>The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • noted the 2013/14 management fee payable by LBTH of £32.429m • noted the HRA medium term outlook • approved the company budget in appendix 1 • approved the minimum reserve level of £2m indicated in section 9 • noted the 2013/14 delegated budget in section 10 	DFC
8.	Diversity Strategy 2012-14	
8.1 8.2 8.3 8.4	<p>The Board received the Diversity Strategy report which comprised the Diversity Policy, the Strategy summary and Action Plan.</p> <p>The Diversity Strategy built on what the THH had achieved through the 2009-12 Diversity Strategy, and outlined the evidence-based priorities moving forwards over a two year period. The Board noted that the focus had shifted from principles to actions and the discussion concentrated on how it could monitor the work to ensure delivery of outcomes outlined in the Action Plan. It agreed six monthly review of progress through Diversity Scorecard, and if necessary the monitoring method would be reviewed at a later date.</p> <p>With regards to the Strategy document, a member suggested that the foreword come from the Chair of the Board and the introduction from the CE. Members also commented on specific information in the report and an inconsistent use of some terms and asked that these be addressed.</p> <p>The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - approved the draft Diversity Policy, Diversity Strategy 2012-14 and Action Plan. - considered the options listed how it could monitor and ensure the delivery of outcomes as outlined in the Diversity Strategy 2012-14 Action Plan, and agreed that option b) 	

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	was the most appropriate: six-monthly review of progress through the Diversity Scorecard.	
9.	Governance Review	
9.1	The Board received the Governance Review report which set out proposals regarding changes to the structure and terms of reference of the Board's sub-committees.	
9.2	The Board noted that the Remuneration Committee, in line with the Board's other subcommittees, would make recommendations to the Board rather than have decision-making powers.	
9.3	The discussion in the meeting centred on the proposed change to the Board quorum. It was noted that the change would allow the Board business to be transacted if either a Tenant or Independent Board member was present, but that the quorum (three) remained the same.	
9.4	The Board: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - agreed that Performance Management Committee (PMC) and Organisational Development Committee (ODC) are formally abolished; - agreed changes to the Remuneration Committee (RC) terms of reference; - asked Finance and Audit Committee to conduct a review of its Terms of Reference and report back to the Board later in the year. - noted the proposed change to the Board quorum. 	
10.	Performance Indicator Monitoring Report December 2012	
10.1	The Board received a report updating on the performance of THH against the monthly and quarterly business critical indicators to the end of December.	DNS/ DFC
10.2	The discussion focussed on indicators missing target more substantially: Satisfaction with outcome of ASB complaint, Number of evictions, Service charge collected and Historic improvement works charges collected, Satisfaction with outcome of complaint. It was noted that ASB cases were closed only when there was nothing else that THH could do, and efforts were made to close them with agreement of the ASB complainants. In taking a decision to close, focus was placed on how a case had been dealt with/satisfaction with officers to assess how the ASB service was performing.	
10.3	The Board noted that much work was being conducted to meet the 'Service charge collected' £13m target. With regards to evictions the BMs suggested that reporting on evictions be split between the ASB evictions and those resulting from rent arrears.	
10.4	The Board stressed the importance of understanding the drivers of customer satisfaction, good communications and the need to keep in touch with complainants and noted that these were an ongoing focus of complaints work. The changes to take place to	

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10.5 10.6 10.7	<p>the complaints procedure the following year were noted.</p> <p>The Board reviewed and commented on the Company accounts, and the Delegated Income and Expenditure to December 2012.</p> <p>It was requested that a permanent and agency staff wages breakdown be provided to the Board. A member also requested that in future reports it is made clear whether 'fair' percentages are included or not in satisfaction statistics and these should be included in the accompanying text.</p> <p>The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) discussed the performance against target of Tower Hamlets Homes on the December and quarter 3 business critical indicators. ii) noted the corrective action proposed for indicators not currently meeting target. 	DFC/DIS
11.	Implications of implementing the detailed recommendations made in the Resident Scrutiny report on the ASB Service	
11.1 11.2 11.3 11.4 11.5	<p>The Board received a report providing an assessment of the implications of implementing the recommendations made by residents in the 2012 scrutiny report.</p> <p>The progress made with implementing the recommendations was noted. The Board considered in more detail the following recommendations that required its guidance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - bringing back 'No Ball Games' signs on estates, - entering into an SLA with the Youth Service so that their Rapid Response Unit (RRU) could deploy Youth Workers to ASB hot-spots at THH request, - setting up an SLA with Tower Hamlets Environment Health dog nuisance team to deliver a dog fouling patrol and clear up service. <p>With regards to an SLA with the Council's Youth Service, the Board considered a number of issues: members felt there was a need to look at a more negotiated approach in terms of what the Youth Service could provide to the organisation. If issues could be resolved before they escalated in neighbourhoods there would be no need for calling in the RRU. The Board requested that a written report examining these issues be brought to the Board, incorporating both proactive work and reactive work. If there were resources required to implement joint working between THH and the Youth Service these should be set out within the report.</p> <p>With regards to ball games it was noted that there were some 'No Ball Games' signs on estates, and that THH had an approach of adopting signage where it could be effective, however bringing back of signs throughout all estates was not supported.</p> <p>Members emphasised the importance of working and communicating with other borough agencies. The Board noted that the ASB Manager attended Safer Community meetings chaired by the Service Head, Community Service and held every two weeks. The work done by these meetings involved allocating</p>	DNS

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11.6	tasks, providing feedback and monitoring of any actions, as well as looking at priorities for SMT meetings.	
	In response to a member's question, it was noted that 100% of the revenue generated by THEO's spot fines was retained by the Council, in line with statutory requirements.	
11.7	The Board supported and approved the recommendations made by officers in section 3 of the report, subject to the steer given over the course of the discussion.	
12.	Confidential Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 10 December 2012	
	The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2012 were agreed.	
13.	Matters Arising	
	None raised.	
14.	Minutes of the Finance & Audit Committee meeting held on the 12 December 2012	
	The minutes of the December FAC meeting were noted.	
15.	Any Other Business	
	None raised.	
16.	Date of the next Board Meeting	
	24 April 2013	
	The Chair thanked all present for their attendance and contributions and closed the meeting at 8.10pm.	

Barry Simons
Chair

Date