

Minutes of a meeting of the **Tower Hamlets Homes Board**  
Held on **Tuesday 12 May 2009** from **6.30 – 8.45pm**  
in Toby Club, Vawdrey Close, London E1

**Members Present:**

Chris Creegan (Chair)	-	Independent Representative
Sheila Beeton	-	Tenant Representative
Paul Bridge	-	Independent Representative
Ian Fincher	-	Resident Representative
Cllr. Fazlul Haque	-	Council Representative
Cllr. Shafiqul Haque	-	Council Representative
Cllr. Alex Heslop	-	Council Representative
Shamsul Hoque	-	Tenant Representative
Neil Isaac	-	Independent Representative
Cllr. Denise Jones	-	Council Representative (for part meeting)
Abdool Kara	-	Independent Representative
Iain Lawson	-	Resident Representative

**Officers Present:**

Gavin Cansfield	-	Chief Executive (CE)
Jamie Carswell	-	Director of Strategy & Performance (DSP)
Sayeed Kadir	-	Director of Asset Management (DAM)
Abraham Nomafo	-	Director of Housing & Customer Services (DHCS)
Les Warren	-	Director of Finance & Resources (DFR)
Debbie Okutubo	-	Governance Manager
Ann Lucas	-	Interim Decent Homes Manager (for part meeting)

**In attendance:**

Jackie Odunoye	-	Client Representative
Patrick Mulrenan	-	Inspector from the Audit Commission
Barbara Brownlee	-	Consultant, Pinnacle Consulting (for part meeting)

Item No	Description	Action	Status
<b>1</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence and Introductions</b>		
1.1	Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. Ohid Ahmed and Naomi Goode		
1.2	The Chair welcomed Patrick Mulrenan, the lead Inspector from the Audit Commission the meeting.		
<b>2.</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>		
2.1	Sheila Beeton, Ian Fincher, Cllr. Alex Heslop, Shamsul Hoque, Iain Lawson declared personal interests in that they were tenants or leaseholders of properties on estates managed by Tower Hamlets Homes.		

Item No	Description	Action	Status
<b>3</b>	<b>Questions from the Public</b>		
3.1	There were no questions from members of the public.		
<b>4.</b>	<b>Minutes of the Board meeting held on 10 March 2009</b>		
4.1	The Minutes of the Board meeting held on 10 March 2009 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.		
<b>5.</b>	<b>Matters Arising from the Minutes</b>		
5.1	With regards to Minute 9.3, Action (ii) – relating to the Business Plan, it was noted that the ethnic Community we serve is reflected in Corporate documents, i.e. the Business Plan, and is one of the five objectives in the People Strategy.	CE	Ongoing
<b>6.</b>	<b>Decent Homes Procurement</b>		
6.1	A report outlining the preferred procurement approach for the Decent Homes Programme was presented to the Board.		
6.2	It was noted that the discussion to date had centred on the benefits and drawbacks of the Restrictive Tender and Competitive Dialogue approaches.		
6.3	Both approaches were discussed in detail.		
6.4	It was stated that the relevant sections in the Council, including the Client representative, were in agreement with the approach outlined in the paper.		
6.5	Board members endorsed the report and commented that it was a detailed report that had addressed concerns raised in the past.		
6.6	Board members commented that Gershon savings to be made needed to be made clearer.		
6.7	In response to a question, it was noted that pilot projects were ahead of the Decent Homes Procurement, and therefore did not fit into the approaches being described.		
6.8	With regards to recruiting local and BME contractors, it was explained that the emphasis was on employing local labour rather than		

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	contractors. Also, that it was a European procurement hence targeting BMEs as a single strand would be very limiting.		
6.9	It was clarified that the government was injecting new funds for environmental works to create greener estates. The Client representative confirmed that the Council was pursuing this with the Homes and Community Agency.		
6.10	Clarifications were sought and given regarding the Framework Agreement.		
6.11	It was noted that Repairs Contract could be linked to the Decent Homes Procurement Framework and advertised in the OJEU advert.		
6.12	It was noted that the LAPN so far, had been unable to demonstrate VFM.		
6.13	It was noted that Parent Company guarantee was a requirement under the Decent Homes Procurement Framework as a safeguard against bankruptcy. Also, that further work would only be given to contractors, if they were able to continue to meet the standard of works expected.		
6.15	The Board <b>agreed</b> that:		
6.15.1	The preferred procurement route for the Decent Homes programme was Restricted Tender to appoint a number contractors under Framework Agreement; and		
6.15.2	Competitive Dialogue would be used for more complex transformational projects as and when they became available or when the frameworks are re-procured.		
	Ann Lucas left the meeting after the item above.		
<b>7.</b>	<b>People Strategy</b>		
7.1	The People Strategy document, setting out the objectives and activities which would create the culture change to drive service improvement was presented to the Board.		
7.2	It was noted that the People Strategy was discussed in detail at the Organisational Development Committee and recommended by the Chair of the Committee to the Board.		

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7.3	Board members commented that it was a well thought out report.		
7.4	In terms of the wording on the legal implications section, Board members wanted to know if there were future implications they needed to be aware of.	DSP/DFR	July ODC
7.5	With regards to the Action Plan, Board members requested that target dates and owners be added to the plan.	DSP/DFR	July ODC
7.6	Board members commented that there needs to be a document/protocol on how the workforce would reflect the local community. Also, how the ethnic newspapers would be used to target local residents, needed to be explored further.	DSP/DFR	July ODC
7.7	It was noted that the workforce had remained relatively static but that there needed to be clear succession planning, including work with residents to skill them up so that they could apply for jobs as they became vacant.		
7.8	As a way of improving the skills base, Board members suggested that local graduates could be encouraged to apply for jobs through positive action.	DFR/DSP	Ongoing to Mar 10
7.9	There was further comment that Board members felt that the workforce should both reflect the community and understand the business.		
7.10	In response to a question it was noted that approximately 56% of Performance Development Reviews (PDRs) were completed in 2008/09, but the target for 2009/10 was 100%.		
7.11	There was a question regarding last year's budget. It was noted that the training budget for last year did not include Organisational change, which was reflected in this year's budget.		
7.12	It was agreed that the element in the budget that related to the cost of restructuring would be forwarded to Board members outside of the meeting.	DFR	May 09
7.13	Board members were advised that the Workforce development plan would be presented to them in July.	DSP	July 09

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7.14	With regards to the Equality Strands, it was noted that ODC monitored the recruitment and retention of staff against the strands; also, it was a requirement of the Single Equalities Act to monitor the strands.		
7.15	It was noted that there needs to be a clear offer to staff and that this needs to be a segmented offer.		
7.16	Pertaining to the Corporate Risk register, it was highlighted that risk numbers 9, 10 and 14 were particularly relevant to the strategy.		
7.17	Also, that the strategy will be cross referenced with the Service Improvement Plan (SIP).		
7.18	It was suggested that there needed to be sections on Grievances, Disciplinary, Capability, Productive working and work-life balance for SMT and downwards included in the Strategy. Furthermore, the Board's role with regards to grievance appeals and Hearings needs to be clarified. As it would be relevant if grievances are taken out on an SMT member.	DSP/DFR	July 09 ODC
7.20	Also, the breakdown of £320k highlighted in the report needed to be included in the report to ODC.	DFR	July 09 ODC
7.21	The potential risk of people hours and cost if grievances did happen need to be highlighted in the implications section.	DSP/DFR	July 09 ODC
7.22	The role of the Board with regards to culture change needs to be reflected in the Strategy.	DSP	July 09 ODC
7.23	Following discussion, Board members commented that the Strategy provided a good starting point. Furthermore, that THH would be an excellent employer and excellent deliverer of services, which are intrinsically linked, with the implementation of this Strategy as excellence would be embedded.		
7.24	The Board <b>approved</b> the Strategy, subject to		
7.24.1 7.24.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the above discussion being implemented; and</li> <li>the ODC reviewing the Strategy once it was updated.</li> </ul>	DSP/DFR	July 09 ODC
	Denise Jones and Barbara Brownlee arrived during discussion of the above item.		

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<b>8.</b>	<b>Risk Management – Corporate Risk Register</b>		
8.1	The Corporate Risk Register covering organisational risk priorities till July 2009 was presented to the Board.		
8.2	It was stated that the Risk register had benefited from comments from the sub-Committees, Strategic Management Team (SMT) and Organisational Management Team (OMT).		
8.3	The high level risk areas in red were discussed, with officers explaining what steps and mechanisms were being taken to mitigate against them. Also, that the risks could be seen as opportunities and these are reflected in the report.		
8.4	A discussion ensued.		
8.5	A number of areas were identified as areas that needed to be included in the register, they included:		
8.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• gas servicing;</li> <li>• safety of staff visiting residents homes;</li> <li>• accessibility to one stop shops for our residents;</li> <li>• audit of void properties;</li> <li>• Anti-social behaviour (ASB) including squatting;</li> <li>• sub-letting; and</li> <li>• Service Level Agreements (SLAs).</li> </ul>	DFR	Sept 09
8.7	Board members suggested that the relationship with the Council was presently at staff and lead member level, and there needed to be wider membership with all Councillors. It was noted that ideally, this needed to be facilitated by the end of July 2009 after the indicative inspection in June.	CE	July 09
8.8	Regarding areas highlighted in 8.6 above it was noted that the Council was in the process of recruiting Enforcement Officers and this should mitigate against the risk of high level anti-social behaviours. Also, that through partnership working, the Council had been advised that there needed to be transparency around the ASB SLA.	DHCS	Ongoing till Mar 10
8.9	With regards to voids, it was reported that work was ongoing which included tracking void reports to escalate turnaround times. Also, Stock Audits was part of the Service Improvement Plan in Housing and Customer Service. One of the milestones in the SIP was the indicator measuring unauthorised occupancies and the outcomes from them.	DHCS	Sept 09

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8.10	Regarding one-stop shops, there was a presentation at the last Performance Management Committee (PMC) and the risks mentioned above were explored and discussed. They would however be revisited to see what difference has been made since the presentation.	DFR	Ongoing till Mar 10
8.11	It was suggested that responding to residents' enquiries seemed to be taking a long time and a number of them were out of target time. Officers suggested that there were engrained ways of working within existing staff, but this was being addressed through the PDRs and other relevant policies.		
8.12	The Board <b>adopted</b> the Corporate risk register subject to the updates highlighted above.		
<b>9.</b>	<b>Repairs and Maintenance Improvement Plans – Update and Way Forward</b>	DAM	July 09
9.1	A report updating Board members on the 100 Day Repairs Action Plan, which commenced in March 2009, was presented. A Repairs Steering Group had been established, which included all the key people and had Board representation, was making decisions on current actions and considering the way forward.		
9.2	It was noted that the Action Days were being publicised through a number of avenues as stated in the report.		
9.3	In response to a question, it was noted that the contractors being referred to, were the major contractors and not the specialists.		
9.4	Officers reported that should the paper be accepted by the Board, at the next Board meeting in July, the principles would be expanded and resource levels assessed.		
9.5	It was noted, that as part of the improvement plan, there was a 'Women only' repairs team operating. Repairs Steering Group had the role of taking on board the residents view point.		
9.6	Board members commented that Residents had started to feedback to Councillors that repairs are improving.		
9.7	There was a suggestion, that at the one day events mentioned in the report, Ward Councillors		

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	and Tenant Resident Associations could be given pre-notice, so that they could help in informing residents.		
9.8	In response to a question, it was noted that Contractors got paid on completion of repairs.	DAM	July 09
9.9	It was suggested that under Repair appointments, evenings and weekends should be part of the slots being offered.		
9.10	In response to a question, it was noted that Customer Satisfaction as a performance indicator, was one of the measures being used to pay contractors on completion of repairs. Board members commented that some residents who could not speak or read English were been told to sign completion forms and this needed to be guarded against.	DAM	July 09
9.11	It was noted, however, that these forms were used by the Contractors but not THH and would not be considered by THH; arrangements were in place for independent assessments of satisfaction.		
9.12	It was clarified, that the 71 outstanding repairs stated in the report had not gone out of the 28 day target.		
9.13	In response to a question, it was noted that Customer Satisfaction as a Performance Indicator, was one of the measures which will be used in future to pay contractors on completion of repairs.	DAM	July 09
9.14	It was asserted that as part of the ongoing improvement work, the Board Diversity champion needs to look at Equality and Diversity issues. To address this, it was suggested that a report with proposals should to be brought back to the Board.	DAM	Ongoing till Mar 10
9.15	Another suggestion to monitor the work of contractors was to have Estate Officers visit after repairs were done. Part of the questions to ask residents, could be if Contractors displayed the values of THH.	DAM	Ongoing till Mar 10
9.16	With regards to the current contracts, Officers explained that they will expire in 2010 and could be extended for up to another two years, but discussions with the Council was bearing towards extending it for another year. The Board would however take the final decision.		

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9.17	Board members suggested that the budget should be checked to ensure it could sustain the number of repairs that would get reported.	DFR	Ongoing till Mar 10
9.18	Following further discussion, it was <b>agreed</b> that:		
9.18.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A further report will be brought back to the July Board meeting addressing the points above;</li> </ul>	DAM/DHCS	July 09
9.18.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There will be a Board member briefing to inform Board members about progress.</li> </ul>	CE	July 09
<b>10.</b>	<b>PMC report to the Board from the 7 April Meeting</b>		
10.1	The Board noted the report back from the 7 <sup>th</sup> April PMC Committee in Item 10.1.		
10.2	With regards to Item 10.2, the Chair of PMC stated that 'Complaints upheld' needed to be removed from the Performance Indicators as agreed at the April Board Forum and be replaced with 'Complaints escalating from one stage to the next'.	DSP	PMC Jun 09
10.3	Also, as a way of improving the relationship between the Council and THH, Member Enquiries answered in target to be increased to 95%.	DSP	PMC Jun 09
<b>11.</b>	<b>F&amp;AC report to the Board from the 24 March and 28 April 2009 meetings</b>		
11.1	Minutes of the meetings held on 24 March and 28 April were noted.		
11.2	The Chair of Finance and Audit Committee (F&AC) commented that the accounts would be considered at the 23 June F&AC meeting and all members were invited to the meeting. Also, that our external Auditors, KPMG would be in attendance to answer questions.	All	F&AC Jun 09
<b>12.</b>	<b>Organisational Development Committee (ODC) Report from the Meeting on 17 March 2009</b>		
12.1	Minutes of the meeting held 17 March 2009 were noted.		

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<p><b>13.</b></p> <p>13.1</p>	<p><b>Board Forward Plan</b></p> <p>The upcoming items to the July Board meeting were noted.</p>		
<p><b>14.</b></p>	<p><b>Date, Time and Venue of next meeting</b></p> <p>The Chair advised all present that the next Board meeting was scheduled to take place on Tuesday 14 July 2009 at 6.30pm at Collinwood Hall, Collingwood estate, Darling Row, London. E1 5RR</p> <p>The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions and closed the meeting at <b>8.45 pm.</b></p>		

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**Chris Creegan**  
Chair

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**Date**