

Minutes of a meeting of the **Tower Hamlets Homes Board**  
Held on **Tuesday 28 July 2010** from **6.30 pm – 9 pm**  
in the Wyn Garrett Resident Resource Centre, Raynham House,  
Massingham Street, E1 4EB

**Members Present:**

Chris Creegan (Chair) - Board Member  
Sheila Beeton - Board Member  
Shahanara Begum - Board Member (left at 8.45pm)  
Paul Bridge - Board Member  
Ian Fincher - Board Member  
Cllr Judith Gardiner - Board Member  
Shamsul Hoque - Board Member  
Neil Isaac - Board Member  
Abdool Kara - Board Member  
Iain Lawson - Board Member  
Sukkanya Siva - Board Member  
Cllr Amy Whitelock - Board Member

**Officers Present:**

Gavin Cansfield - Chief Executive (CE)  
Barbara Brownlee - Director of Housing & Customer Services (DHC)  
Jamie Cansfield - Director of Strategy & Performance (DSP)  
Les Warren - Director of Finance & Resources (DFR)  
Debbie Okutubo - Business Support Manager  
Sesi Afewu - Committee Officer

**In Attendance:**

Graeme Bennett - Audit Commission (Item 1)  
Derek England - Member of the public

...

Item No	Description	Action	Status
<b>1.</b>	<b>Audit Commission</b>		
1.1	Board received a presentation from the Audit Commission which covered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the inspection judgements and what is different about ALMOs;</li> <li>• expectations on good governance; and</li> <li>• housing inspection process.</li> </ul>		
1.2	A brief discussion followed and Board members brought up the issue of spending review process. A Board member expressed a view that the organisation needed to have a much clearer position on this after the CSR announcement in so much as this was possible.		
1.3	Board members were advised that once the list of critical dates had been received from the Audit		

Item No	Description	Action	Status
1.4	Commission this would be promptly passed on to them. Board members were asked to contact the Director of Strategy & Performance if they had any questions regarding the inspection.		
<b>2.</b>	<b>June 2010 Inspection Readiness Check</b>		
2.1	The Board received a presentation on progress with preparation to inspection which focussed on the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the difference a year makes;</li> <li>- June Inspection readiness check;</li> <li>- PMC review; and</li> <li>- joint working with Council.</li> </ul>		
2.2	The Board noted the good progress made on inspection preparation work. Members also highlighted the importance of having conversations with residents to get their views and the importance of focusing on diversity, which was a critical area closely scrutinized by the Audit Commission. The discussion also touched upon the need for working closely with the Council on the HRA and other areas such Veolia and front counters.		
2.3	Members offered their support and asked that the Board be contacted if any assistance was needed outside the Board meetings during this busy time.		
<b>3.</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence and Introductions</b>		
	Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. Mizanur Chaudhury.		
<b>4.</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>		
	Sheila Beeton, Shamsul Hoque, Ian Fincher and Iain Lawson declared personal interests in that they were tenants or leaseholders of properties managed by Tower Hamlets Homes.		
<b>5.</b>	<b>Questions from Members of the Public</b>		
	There were no questions from the public.		
<b>6.</b>	<b>Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on 11 May 2010</b>		
	The minutes of the Board meeting held on 11 May 2010 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.		
<b>7.</b>	<b>Matter Arising</b>		
	None raised.		

Item No	Description	Action	Status
<b>8.</b>	<b>Chief Executive's Report</b>		
8.1	<p>The Board received a report from the Chief Executive updating on the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- identifying future options for THH;</li> <li>- progress report on the Improvement Partner;</li> <li>- update on Diversity;</li> <li>- report on the Staff Conference;</li> <li>- review of the Repairs Service;</li> <li>- progress with Decent Homes Pilots; and</li> <li>- an update on Leaseholder Collection rates.</li> </ul>		
8.2	<p>The CE responded to members' questions concerning a range of issues including consultation with residents, diversity data collection, and information the organisation had about sublets and vulnerability issues. As regards women only consultation, it was noted that some work had been done but more was still needed. On Diversity monitoring the board took note that providing personal information by residents concerning diversity issues was optional. However, in instances when residents did not wish to disclose that information it was still important to ensure that these residents interests were protected.</p>		
8.3	<p>With regards to subletting it was noted that the Assistant CE of the Council Legal Services was investigating the ability of THH to share data with colleagues in the Council.</p>		
8.4	<p>On horticultural services, it was noted that the Connaught situation was being monitored very carefully.</p>		
8.5	<p>On Staff Conference it was noted that the Chair and Sheila Beeton attended for part of the day. The event had demonstrated lots of commitment and enthusiasm from staff and how far the organisation had come in its journey.</p>		
8.5	<p>The CE also reported on the work that THH were carrying out with the Council to ensure that there was prudent management of the capital programme partly within the current financial year but more specifically for 2011/12. It was reasonable to assume that there would be a loss of Supported Capital Expenditure and, as yet, the plans for replacement funding, most likely through reform of the HRA, were not clear. On that basis caution was being taken with any project that involved a financial commitment that spanned both the current and next financial period.</p>		
8.6	<p>The Board <b>noted</b> the contents of the report.</p>		

Item No	Description	Action	Status
<b>9.</b>	<b>Director of Finance &amp; Resources Report</b>		
9.1	The Board received the Director of Finance and Resources report which sought the Board's approval of the company's financial statement for the year ended 31 March 2010 and provided monitoring information around revenue and capital budgets.		
9.2	It was noted that the financial statements had been reviewed by the July Finance and Audit Committee and KPMG had confirmed that the financial statements gave a true and fair view of the state of affairs of THH.		
9.3	<p>Three minor amendments made following the Finance and Audit Committee meeting were noted. These were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Statement of Internal Financial Control' – had been changed to 'Statement of Internal Control';</li> <li>• Date of 28 July 2010 had been added as approval date; and</li> <li>• FRS17 health warning had been added to Income and Expenditure account, as discussed at FAC, words supplied by KPMG to reflect the fact that profit was larger as result of pensions accounting requirements.</li> </ul>		
9.4	The KPMG's Audit Memorandum and Management Letter were also noted.		
9.5	Members asked about the increase in pension liability since the previous year. The Chair of Finance and Audit Committee explained the impact of the current interest rates on the pension deficit. It was noted that if the interest rates rose the Council colleagues would need to be asked in November regarding the pension valuation.		
9.6	The Board reviewed and commented on the operational risk register developed by the operational management team. Positive comments were made about the new classification used, that is: irritating, disruptive, disastrous, and catastrophic. It was noted that the risk 'change in Department for Work and Pensions benefits regulation resulting in detrimental impact on low income residents' should be classed as higher than disruptive.		
9.7	It was noted that the Capital Programme was reviewed by FAC and briefings to the Board would be the best way to update Board in future on that topic.	DFR	Ongoing
9.8	<p>The Board:</p> <p>(i) <b>approved</b> the financial statements of the</p>		

Item No	Description	Action	Status
	company for the year ended 31 March 2010; (ii) <b>approved</b> the management representation letter to KPMG; and (iii) <b>noted</b> the financial monitoring information and risk register provided.		
<b>10.</b>	<b>Neighbourhood Working – Update Report</b>		
10.1	The Board received a report updating on: - Customer Access; and - progress with developing neighbourhood working.		
10.2	The Board welcomed the report which provided the full picture of work undertaken and gave a sense of progress the organisation had made.		
10.3	The work highlighted by DHC included the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the opening hours including late and Saturday opening hours available for the first time;</li> <li>• the improvements are made within the existing resources;</li> <li>• regular neighbourhood action days are held;</li> <li>• over the next year the action plans would be developed in much more detail, with resident input to become a real drive to business; and</li> <li>• 91% of calls were answered which was a great improvement on previous performance in this area.</li> </ul>		
10.4	In response to members' questions the following issues were noted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Neighbourhood Housing Officers were supported by 'Neighbourhood Champions', senior managers with extensive experience in this area. Other officers, for example ASB and rent officers also provided support – 'Neighbourhood Friends'. As regards monitoring the performance, the neighbourhood action plans were reflected in team plans and through individual officer's plans;</li> <li>• Board members would be invited to future neighbourhood action days;</li> <li>• 27 newsletters had been developed and were delivered quarterly to every resident;</li> <li>• home visits were recorded on the Comino system;</li> <li>• more information regarding VFM would be included in the report in future;</li> <li>• THH had joined forces with the Council on the initiatives currently underway on the Ocean estate; and</li> <li>• in response to a suggestion that more agencies</li> </ul>		

Item No	Description	Action	Status
10.5	be involved in actions days it was noted that two agencies including the fire brigade were already involved and the number of stakeholders would be expanded. The Chair noted that DHC had been in the job for almost a year and commended her for the great work she had done within that time.		
10.6	The Board <b>noted</b> the report.		
	Shahanara Begum left after the discussion of the above item.		
<b>11.</b>	<b>Minutes from H&amp;S Committee held on 12 May 2010</b>		
	The minutes of the H&S Committee held on 12 May 2010 were noted.		
<b>12.</b>	<b>Minutes from PMC held on 7 June 2010</b>		
	The minutes of the PMC meeting held on 7 June 2010 were noted.		
<b>12.1</b>	<b>PI Monitoring report to May 2010</b>		
	The Performance Indicators report to May 2010 was also noted.		
<b>13.</b>	<b>Minutes of the FAC held on 6 May 25 May and 15 June 2010</b>		
13.1	The minutes of the FAC meetings held on 25 May and 15 June 2010 were noted.		
13.2	The Chair of FAC reported that this year's management fee was still not quite resolved but that the FAC was closely monitoring progress with this.		
13.3	A member noted that the May FAC minutes incorrectly recorded that a response regarding cost of communal boiler replacement works had been received.	DAM	
<b>14.</b>	<b>Minutes from ODC held on 18 May 2010</b>		
14.1	The minutes of the ODC meetings held on 18 May 2010 were noted.		
14.2	The Chair highlighted the fact that it would be important to receive a definitive report on the Comensura contract.		
<b>15.</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>		
15.1	The CE reported that a meeting had been held with the new Council representatives on the THH Board. It was noted that they had expressed interest in sitting on the following Board sub-committees:		

Item No	Description	Action	Status
15.2	PMC – Cllr Sirajul Islam FAC – Cllr Amy Whitelock ODC – Cllr Judith Gardiner  It was noted that Cllr Mizanur Chaudhury was yet to advise which sub-committee he wished to sit on.		
15.3	Sukkanya Siva agreed to fill the role of Engagement Board Champion.		
15.4	The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions and reminded all that by the September meeting the organisation would be in the critical stage of preparations to the inspection and that the attendance at the meetings was essential.		
<b>16.</b>	<b>Date and Time of the next Board Meeting</b>		
	Tuesday, 29 September 2010 at, 6.30 pm – 9pm. Board members to be advised of the venue.		

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Chris Creegan**  
**Chair**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**