

Minutes of a meeting of the **Tower Hamlets Homes Board**
Held on **Wednesday 29 September 2010** from **6.30 pm – 9 pm**
at Toby Club, Vawdrey Close, London E1

Members Present:

Chris Creegan (Chair) - Board Member
Sheila Beeton - Board Member
Paul Bridge - Board Member
Ian Fincher - Board Member
Cllr Judith Gardiner - Board Member
Shamsul Hoque - Board Member
Neil Isaac - Board Member
Cllr Sirajul Islam - Board Member
Cllr Denise Jones - Board Member
Abdool Kara - Board Member
Iain Lawson - Board Member
Sukkanya Siva - Board Member
Cllr Amy Whitelock - Board Member
Cllr Mizanur Chaudhury - Board Member

Officers Present:

Gavin Cansfield - Chief Executive (CE)
Barbara Brownlee - Director of Housing & Customer Services (DHC)
Jamie Carswell - Director of Strategy & Performance (DSP)
Sayeed Kadir - Director of Asset Strategy (DAM)
Les Warren - Director of Finance & Resources (DFR)
Alistair Sharpe-Neal - Inspection Lead
Debbie Okutubo - Business Support Manager
Sesi Afewu - Committee Officer

In attendance:

Six members of the public were present

Item No	Description	Action	Status
1.	Apologies for Absence and Introductions		
1.1	Apologies for absence were received from Shahanara Begum.		
1.2	The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.		
2.	Declarations of Interest		
	Sheila Beeton, Shamsul Hoque, Ian Fincher, Iain Lawson and Cllr Sirajul Islam declared personal interests in that they were tenants or leaseholders of properties managed by Tower Hamlets Homes.		

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3.	Questions from Members of the Public		
3.1	<p>The Chair provided answers to the following written questions that had been received from a member of the public:</p> <p>As the overseer of THH financial statements is the Board satisfied with the accounting for 2008/9 where THH is unable to say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much THH actually paid for the concierge service supplied to Maltings and Brewster House. • Why, if the amount was greater than £34,607 THH paid more than the Sector Guard contract. <p>Is there to be an Audit Commission visit in November and what contacts have been made with the commission in the way of early supply of information so that they can complete their report before the service is disbanded?</p>		
4.	Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on 28 July 2010		
4.1	The minutes of the Board meeting held on 28 July 2010 were agreed as a correct record subject to adding apologies for Cllr Denise Jones, Cllr Sirajul Islam and Cllr Mizanur Chaudhury.		
5.	Matter Arising		
5.1	Minute 8.3 Subletting. It was noted that advice regarding this issue had been obtained from the Council Legal Services.		
6.	Chief Executive's Report		
6.1	<p>The Board received a report from the Chief Executive updating on the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Connaught - STATUS Survey - Staff Survey - Management Accounts - Governance Development - Summary of THH Resident Panel progress - Decent Homes Pilots – Extension - Latham House - Diversity - Caretaking - Project Deep Clean 		
6.2	The CE highlighted work done around the Connaught's situation. Board members made positive comments regarding the handling of the situation and noted that		

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6.3	<p>the Board had been very well briefed on the issue. Some Board Members, Ian Fincher and Cllr Sirajul Islam, reported visiting a few households where residents were very satisfied with the level of engagement on this issue. The Chair thanked the staff for all the work done, and all the Board members who took particular interest in this matter.</p> <p>The Board received a presentation on the Status survey results. The rise in satisfaction levels in a number of areas were noted, as well as the issues that residents had drawn to the attention of THH as requiring improvement. The Board emphasised the importance of in depth analysis to understand the results better. Overall, members agreed that the results were good and should give the organisation a lot of confidence. The Chair commented that they were a reminder of how much the organisation still had to do but also a tribute to the work already done.</p>		
6.4	<p>With regards to Leaseholder Satisfaction survey it was noted it was important that a benchmarking exercise be carried out to get the right perspective and work on this was underway. Conversations regarding resident priorities would be taking place at the forthcoming residents event.</p>		
6.5	<p>Staff survey results were noted.</p>		
6.6	<p>The Chair of Finance & Audit committee reported on key finance matters arising from the last meeting of the Finance and Audit Committee. This included the fact that the Client have written to the ALMO seeking reassurance regarding financial control within year. THH have submitted a detailed action plan which includes work on voids, forecasting issues and the importance of keeping overspend under control. It was noted that the Client wished to see more detail on the action plan; Finance and Audit will be closely involved with this and the Board will be kept updated on progress with this work.</p>		
6.7	<p>The Board noted the contents of the report.</p>		
7.	Preparation for Inspection Update		
7.1	<p>The Board received an update on preparation for inspection. The Self- Assessment presentation formed part of the update and covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - current position, - planning and preparation, - Board preparation, 		

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7.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - stakeholder preparation, and - team preparation. <p>The members thanked officers for the work done on the Self-Assessment.</p>		
7.3	<p>The discussion centred around the current level of development and strength of the resident groups, communications with residents about the inspection with particular emphasis on the importance of reaching out to residents who were not involved as part of the engagement structure. The Board stressed the need to raise awareness of the upcoming inspection among residents. The Board noted the focus that had been already placed on conveying this message as the inspection gets closer; more information had been made available on the website, in newsletters, and resident groups had been provided with the self assessment summary.</p>		
7.4	<p>The Chair noted the huge amount of work that had gone into the document and thanked all involved in this work. He also drew the Board's attention to the importance of getting the balance right between inspection preparation and ensuring that we focus on the 'day job'.</p>		
7.5	<p>The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reviewed and noted the report; and - agreed the self- assessment document for submission to the Audit Commission. 		
8.	Tackling the Recession Locally		
8.1	<p>The Board received a report updating on the impacts of the recession and economic downturn, how the organisation was managing and the effects on its customers and managing the implications on the business.</p>		
8.2	<p>The DFR highlighted that work was already underway developing investment scenarios in the likely event of reduced decent homes funding. Additionally, expectations around performance levels and customer satisfaction levels will need to be taken against a backdrop of reduced levels of revenue expenditure from 2011-12 onwards.</p>		
8.3	<p>A brief discussion took place about the ability of residents to make choices relevant to them and their neighbourhood, and the recognition that this creates value of itself. The neighbourhood model in place in the organisation provides a framework to realise this ambition.</p>		

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8.4	Members sought more information regarding likely impacts of changes to the benefits system and in particular changes to the job seekers allowance. More generally, members signalled that they would be receptive to further analysis being undertaken on how the recession was affecting THH residents.		
8.5	In response to questions it was noted that on employment and creating new jobs THH's approach, as a medium size employer, was different to that of a large scale employer, such as the Council. It was noted that THH employed local residents via contractors and that a piece of work was well underway on the re-procurement of the main repairs contract where commitments around apprentices and local labour are being sought from tenderers.		
8.6	With regards to changes to security of tenure it was noted that a presentation on the HRA Reform had been provided by HQN to the September FAC and that the Chartered Institute of Housing would be presenting a piece to the Board at the next Board Forum in October. The CIH presentation will examine the future housing policy environment and THH's role within it.		
8.7	The Board noted the contents of the report.		
9.	Minutes from PMC held on 6 September 2010		
	The minutes of the PMC meeting held on 6 September 2010 were noted.		
9.1	PI Monitoring report to July 2010		
	The Performance Indicators report to July 2010 was noted.		
10.	Minutes of the FAC held on 20 July 2010		
	The exempt minutes of the FAC meeting held on 20 July were noted.		
11.	Minutes from ODC held on 13 July 2010		
	The exempt minutes of the ODC meeting held on 13 July 2010 were noted.		
12.	Any Other Business		
12.1	It was requested that the attendance sheet be provided to future Board meetings.	DFR	
12.2	The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and		

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	contributions and noted the date of the next Board meeting when Audit Commission Inspectors will be in attendance.		
13.	Date and Time of the next Board Meeting		
	Tuesday, 9 November 2010 at, 6.30 pm – 9pm at Keddleston Community Centre, Hollybush Gardens, Bethnal Green, London E2 9RP.		

Chris Creegan
Chair

Date