

**URH Board Minutes
19 March 2008 at 6.30pm
LG04, Lincoln House**

Present:

URH Board

Edith Yembra, Cllr Clive Bennett, Anton Manickim, David Schwarz, George Pashley, Mary Simpson,

URH Officers

Damian Roche, Clara Odamo, Tim Mathias (Minutes), Phil Morris, Kevin Creed

Observers

Dan Howcroft (Manager – Blenheim Gardens TMO),

Apologies

Carla Pall, John Pepin, Cllr Alex McKenna, Ann Hoad, Lia Conceicao, Helen Charlesworth-May, Selena Ellis, Maya Schram, Jean Slater,

1 Introductions

1.0.0 Each member of the board introduced themselves. Ann Hoad was unwell, and a new deputy chair has yet to be appointed. Edith Yembra was nominated to Chair the meeting. This was unanimously agreed.

2 Declarations of Interest

2.0.0 There were no declarations of interest.

3 Minutes & Matters Arising from the Meeting on 13 Feb 08

3.1.0 Minutes

3.1.1 The Minutes were agreed unanimously

3.2.0 Matters Arising

3.2.1 Paragraph 3.2.2. Repair Satisfaction Cards

3.2.2 Tim Mathias is still looking into the matter of repair satisfaction cards, and will report back to the next meeting.

Action Point 1	By whom	When
Repair satisfaction cards – are these sent out? Are only reports compiled?	Tim Mathias	April 08

3.2.3 Paragraph 7.1.7. TMO Allowance Dispute.

3.2.4 Damian Roche reported, that as indicated at the last meeting, the TMO Allowance Dispute has been settled. The four TMOs have all agreed to withdraw from the dispute. Lambeth Council is due to make payments next week. Damian Roche thanked Phil Morris, the TMO Managers and TMO Chairs for all their hard work.

3.2.5 It was confirmed that negotiations on the new Modular Management Agreements between the TMOs and Lambeth Council should now start.

4 Service Improvement Plan

- 4.1.0 Damian Roche introduced this item. At the last meeting Damian Roche presented a new Service Improvement Plan (SIP). This was based on the findings of the HQN inspection that took place recently. Damian Roche stated at the time that he wanted to cross reference against the previous SIP, in order to ensure that no key tasks were left out. Target dates were also going to be revised in line with the expected inspection date.
- 4.1.1 The Service Improvement Plan will now be presented each month, normally in the form of a shorter exception report, that will update members on each due and overdue task.
- 4.1.2 The Board requested that Damian Roche highlight the most important tasks – the ‘deal-breakers’.

Action Point 2	By whom	When
Highlight essential tasks within the Service Improvement Plan	Damian Roche	6 April 08

- 4.1.3 Enquiries were made regarding task 10, which was due to be finished during February 08. Damian Roche stated that following numerous delays, due to IT problems and Data Protection concerns, Respond software will soon be installed at URHs’ offices.
- 4.1.4 Further enquiries were made regarding task 13 – ‘Consider implementing complaints compensation scheme’. Damian Roche confirmed that this referred to only small nominal amounts e.g. £10-00 compensation should an operative miss a repairs appointment.
- 4.1.5 Damian Roche confirmed that the Audit Commission Inspection had been deferred, URH are currently expecting a date around Spring 2009. The dates within the Service Improvement Plan are based on this timetable.
- 4.1.6 Damian Roche wanted to impress on the board that there was still a significant amount of work to do. Previously financial issues have been a significant impediment to progress, it could be argued that the current position looks more favourable.
- 4.1.7 As regards the inspection date, Damian Roche stated that few ALMOs are absolutely confident of obtaining two stars when they enter into an inspection. The decision not to go for an earlier inspection was because of the risk of getting ‘knocked back’ further by means of a very challenging inspection. The National Federation of ALMOs advises ALMOs not to enter into an inspection if you are sure you will fail to achieve the required rating. An ALMO can also be accused of wasting Audit Commission time, should it become obvious that they were not ready to undergo an inspection.
- 4.1.8 George Pashley pointed out that URH was dependent on the TMOs to deliver real improvements, it is important that they understand their responsibilities. Damian Roche confirmed that some TMOs were more proactive than others. An away day is being planned for Chairs, Managers and Lead Officers of the four TMOs. It is accepted that there are aspects of the structure that need addressing.
- 4.1.9 Cllr Clive Bennett reminded the meeting (in the absence of Helen Charlesworth-May who often brings up this subject), that meetings of a proposed Performance Board had yet to commence.

- 4.1.10 It was agreed that this would be looked at again, an E-Mail will be sent out asking for volunteers to sit on the board. However, in the meantime a report on progress against SIP actions due for completion at the end of the previous month would be presented to each Board meeting.

Action Point 3	By whom	When
E-Mail asking for volunteers for Performance Board	Tim Mathias	6 April 08

- 4.1.11 Damian Roche informed the panel that a second staff conference is planned for the end of May 08. A residents' panel is also being set up to be launched in April.

- 4.1.12 Finally, Damian Roche asked the board to endorse the Service Improvement Plan. This was agreed unanimously.

5 URH Performance

- 5.1.0 Due to staffing problems within Lambeth Council, Performance Figures were not provided until earlier today, far too late to report to the board. Deferred to next meeting.

6 Gas Services

- 6.1.0 Kevin Creed introduced this item.

- 6.1.1 When the Housing Quality Network performed a mock inspection earlier this year, they criticised the methodology used within Lambeth to record annual gas services (CP12). The system that has been in use records the number of services done in the latest financial year. The inspectors argue that the proper criteria to record would be the number of properties that have had a CP12 completed within the last ten to twelve months. Under the revised figures none of the TMOs would achieve a 100% success rate. However, there are very few properties that are more than a few months out. The board should also note that there the contractors tend to send them to the TMOs in batches, so there is a delay in recording CP12s on the system.

- 6.1.2 Damian Roche pointed out that the contracts the TMOs hold, which are based on the Lambeth contract, may have to be amended. It is understood that Lambeth are currently working up a report, this should help plan future services.

7 Provision of Legal Services

- 7.1.0 Tim Mathias presented this report.

- 7.1.1 This report gives an outline of what Legal Services the TMOs currently use.

- 7.1.2 The main area of concern centres on Rent Collection at Loughborough and Roupell Park. Loughborough has pressing financial concerns, and does not really have the option of using any other solicitors other than Lambeth Legal Services. Roupell Park have recently obtained permission from their board to use the services of a private solicitor. Mary Simpson however confirmed that Roupell Park Board had taken a decision not to procure the services of Dove Solicitors but would review its decision.

- 7.1.3 David Schwarz stated that it would be useful if all the TMOs could use the same provider, and obtain a discount for bulk purchase. It was agreed that this was an area requiring further consideration and the Board agreed with David's suggestion that a single joint procurement should be undertaken when possible

8 Any Other Business

10.1.0 Phil Morris

- 10.1.1 Clarification is still needed from Lambeth Council as to who is the member responsible – so an AGM can be held. Additionally, Council cabinet responsibilities have changed recently, and we need to know which Councillor holds responsibility for URH. Damian Roche will take this issue up.