

URH Board Minutes – Part A 19 November 2008 at 6.30pm Loughborough Community Centre

Present:-

URH Board

Edith Yembra, David Schwarz, Cllr Alex McKenna, Christine Jacobs, Helen Charlesworth-May, Selena Ellis

URH Officers

Nilavra Mukerji (CEO), Clara Odamo, Tim Mathias (Minutes), Phil Morris, Andrew Walker

Observers

Lloyd Lewis (Manager – Loughborough EMB), Dan Howcroft (Manager – Blenheim Gardens), Mark Browne (Manager – Roupell Park)

Apologies

John Pepin, Cllr Clive Bennett, Anton Manickim, Jean Slater, Maya Schram, Ann Hoad, Lia Conceicao, Mary Simpson, Anton Manickim

1 Introductions

- 1.1.0 Please note that this meeting was not quorate. The rules state that two resident members should be present – only one resident member for tonight's meeting. Three resident representatives were expected for tonight's meeting, however two apologies were received in the last hour.
- 1.1.2 Phil Morris informed the meeting that that after a period of thirty minutes, the Chair could adjourn the meeting to another date, which would go ahead even if only member attended. The agenda was reviewed, one urgent decision is required on item 9 – Tender Acceptance for Roof Renewal. It was agreed that a separate meeting will be called for this item. (Please see details under item 9 below.) The remaining items can be discussed in full, but cannot be formally approved until the next meeting.

2 Declarations of Interest

- 2.1.0 There were no declarations of interest.

3 Election of Chair

- 3.1.0 Phil Morris informed the meeting that the post of Chair had to be held by either an Independent or a Resident board member. Historically, a Resident member has been appointed to the post.
- 3.1.1 Selena Ellis volunteered for the post of Chair, this nomination was accepted unanimously.

- 3.1.2 Edith Yembra volunteered for the post of Vice-Chair, this nomination was accepted unanimously.
- 3.1.3 Please note these two posts are Chair Designate and Vice Chair Designate until these appointments are confirmed at the next quorate board meeting.

4 Minutes & Matters Arising from the meeting on 15 October 2008

4.1.0 Minutes

4.1.1 The Minutes were agreed unanimously, no amendments.

4.2.0 Matters Arising

4.2.1 Action Point 1 - Email asking for a tenant volunteer

4.2.2 A volunteer still has to be agreed. An email was sent on 28th Nov 08.

4.3.0 Board members

4.3.1 It was noted that there are still a few vacant posts on the board. For the resident posts the TMOs have to provide a nomination.

Action Point 1	By whom	When
Provide nominations for the post of resident member for Loughborough/ Roupell Park	M Browne, L Lewis	17 Dec 08

4.3.2 The vacant post of independent member is appointed by the URH Board. It was agreed to delegate this task to Nilavra Mukerji, who will perform a skills analysis and report back to board.

Action Point 2	By whom	When
Provide skills analysis for the post of independent director	Nilavra Mukerji	19 Dec 08

4.3.3 David Schwarz and Selena Ellis volunteered for interview panel. Cllr Clive Bennett will be asked to volunteer.

Action Point 3	By whom	When
Email Cllr Clive Bennett regarding independent interview panel	Tim Mathias	1 Dec 08

5 Chief Executive Officer Report

5.1.0 Nilavra Mukerji introduced this report.

5.2.0 Loughborough management arrangements

5.2.1 Deeds for the new arrangements have been drafted.

5.2.2 The LEMB board meeting was not quorate last week, however enough preparatory work has been done to call a general meeting in December.

5.3.0 Decent Homes consultation

5.3.1 Consultation meetings have commenced.

- 5.4.0 Loughborough service delivery
 - 5.4.1 Details are contained in the report.
- 5.5.0 LEMB Parking Policy
 - 5.5.1 David Schwarz voiced concerns about the proposed new parking contract arrangements – this could restrict access for tenants in arrears.
 - 5.5.2 Nilavra Mukerji replied that the parking contract was legally enforceable, this is an approach that has become increasingly popular amongst Registered Social Landlords. The software that the parking contractors use make it easy to revoke a permit. This approach has been proven to be very effective.
 - 5.5.3 Mark Browne stated that both Blenheim Gardens and Roupell Park have a similar parking policy. At Roupell Park they enforce a strict policy – no tenant in arrears is eligible for a permit. The problem, as he sees it, with the proposed Loughborough policy is that there is some room for interpretation. A blanket policy is easier to enforce. In part, a parking policy should reflect the availability of spaces on the estate. At Roupell Park there was a shortage of parking spaces, therefore it was decided that tenants without arrears should receive some benefit.
- 5.6.0 TMO allowances
 - 5.6.1 Edith Yembra enquired about the ongoing TMO allowances dispute. Nilavra Mukerji confirmed that apportionment of savings amongst the various TMOs (both URH and non-URH) is a key issue. Phil Morris added that there are a number of discrepancies within the financial models, this will only become more complicated as time goes on. It is recognised that these negotiations, along with additional factors such as the disputes over the delegated fuel budget, have created severe financial conditions for the TMOs.

6 Procurement Strategy

- 6.1.0 Andrew Walker introduced this item.
 - 6.1.1 The board is being asked to approve the draft documents before they undergo consultation with our partner TMOs and Lambeth Council. The final documents will be presented for approval at the January board meeting.
 - 6.1.2 These documents represent a complete suite of documents that should satisfy the Audit Commission, and also allow URH to procure building projects in a timely fashion. Supplementary documents will be worked up over the next few weeks.
 - 6.1.3 David Schwarz commented that the principles are fine, are there any measures to encourage local involvement?
 - 6.1.4 Andrew Walker replied that this would depend on the type and value of the contract being tendered, but of course as social landlords we would encourage local employment, social responsibility and work with the third sector.

- 6.1.5 Agreed to bring this item back to the next board meeting for an on-going review.

7 Asbestos Policy

- 7.1.0 Andrew Walker reminded the meeting that this was developed from the Blenheim Gardens template, many thanks are due to that office.
- 7.1.1 URH and the TMOs must have a consistent approach to dealing with asbestos. URH would like to adopt this policy and ensure that it is implemented across all areas. There are current concerns regarding the handling of asbestos elsewhere in Lambeth, therefore it is important that this is embedded as soon as possible.
- 7.1.2 Cllr Alex McKenna confirmed that the Council has set up an Asbestos Commission. They are currently looking at a scheme that took place on Central Hill, and are in process of developing a report.
- 7.1.3 Andrew Walker stated that URH has been working with building services, an important issue that has come to light of these discussions is the need to develop a policy to deal with low grade asbestos.
- 7.1.4 Andrew Walker reminded the meeting that although it is assumed that surveys have been carried out in the past, we have still been unable to obtain information on URH properties. It may be necessary to commission a survey.
- 7.1.5 It was agreed to give initial approval to this document. The TMO managers were asked to ensure that this report is presented to their boards as soon as possible, before returning to the URH board for final approval, either to the December or January board meeting.

8 Capital Programme Update

- 8.1.0 Andrew Walker introduced this report.
- 8.1.1 The problems previously experienced obtaining Purchase Order numbers have now been sorted out.
- 8.1.2 At Waltham a ballot regarding the type of windows is being carried out.
- 8.1.3 URH is currently on course to spend this year's allocation. Andrew Walker is also working on valuation reports.
- 8.1.4 Andrew Walker was asked to provide a summary forecast cash flow with the next report.

9 Tender Acceptance Approval

- 9.1.0 Tenders have been invited for the flat roof renewals at Roupell Park (Albury Lodge & Deepdene Lodge) and Waltham (Burford House, Colwall House, Goffton House & Waltham House).
- 9.1.1 This was a sealed tender bid. The recommendation is to accept the lowest priced tender from Cobden-Davies roofing and building services.
- 9.1.2 Section 20 notices have already been served on leaseholders. This has resulted in one query, this concerned methods of payment, the respondent did not suggest an alternative contractor.

- 9.1.3 Please note that as this meeting was not quorate, a final decision could not be taken. All of the members present were satisfied with the conclusions of the report. It was decided to call another meeting later in the week to allow any absent board members to have an input into this decision. A meeting was called for Friday 21 November at 9.00am at Blenheim Gardens, with both Selena Ellis and Andrew Walker in attendance. Invitations were emailed out to all absent members on 19 November. (A copy of this email is attached as an appendix.)
- 9.1.4 Following this, Andrew Walker & Selena Ellis attended Blenheim Gdns on 21 November, none of the absent members took the opportunity to attend so this contact was awarded to Cobden-Davies.

10 Service Improvement Plan

- 10.1.0 Clara Odamo introduced this report.
- 10.1.1 This report is being presented in a new format, following a review by Nilavra Mukerji and has had full input from the TMO managers.
- 10.1.2 A SIP working group has been set up. This includes each of the managers, Clara Odamo, Alexandra Asare and Nilavra Mukerji.
- 10.1.3 URH will be looking at some form of external assessment next year.
- 10.1.4 Future reports will concentrate on incomplete tasks.
- 10.1.5 Nilavra Mukerji informed the meeting that the detail on some areas still needs to be worked up – for instance Income Management.
- 10.1.6 It is also important to develop a proper sign off procedure, to ensure that all tasks are completed satisfactorily.
- 10.1.7 Selena Ellis pointed out that it is important to ensure that each of the TMO boards is properly resourced.

11 Performance Indicators

- 11.1.0 Tim Mathias introduced this item.
- 11.1.1 This report has been substantially revised to incorporate top quartile threshold information, and to allow each manager to comment on performance where necessary.
- 11.1.2 The report as it stands has a number of indicators highlighted in red. Rent Collection and Void turnaround at Loughborough remain the priority.

12 Any Other Business

- 12.1.0 Selena Ellis
- 12.1.1 There is a proposal to move the board meeting to the fourth Wednesday in the month.
- 12.1.2 No members had any objections to moving the board appointment. However, it was noted that Waltham sometimes have their board meeting on the last Wednesday in the month. Tim Mathias will contact Waltham to discuss.

12.1.3 There was a general discussion as to the future content of board meetings. Helen Charlesworth-May was of the opinion that there was a need to perform a more detailed review of performance, time should be set aside for a sub committee.

12.1.4 Helen Charlesworth-May

12.1.5 Helen Charlesworth-May made enquiries about Anton Manickim. It is understood that he is recovering well following his operation.