

**URH Board Minutes – Part A
17 September 2008 at 6.30pm
Loughborough Community Centre**

Present:-

URH Board

David Schwarz, Cllr Alex McKenna, Ann Hoad, Lia Conceicao, Mary Simpson, Selena Ellis, Christine Jacobs

URH Officers

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

Observers

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

Apologies

Carla Pall, John Pepin, George Pashley, Edith Yembra Cllr Clive Bennett, Anton Manickim, Jean Slater, Helen Charlesworth-May, Maya Schram

1 Introductions

- 1.1.1 Each member of the board introduced themselves to Nilavra Mukerji, who has just been appointed as the Interim Chief Executive Officer.
- 1.1.2 Nilavra gave a brief outline of their career to date, which has included senior positions with a number of ALMOs (including Lambeth & Hackney Homes), and as an inspector for Housing Quality Network.

2 Declarations of Interest

- 2.1.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3 Election of Chair

- 3.1.1 In the normal course of events a Chair is elected following the Annual General Meeting, this was held on 18 July. At this meeting it was decided to defer this election because the relationship between Loughborough EMB and URH was in the process of re-negotiation. The current Chair also sits as the Chair of Loughborough EMB and there could be a potential conflict of interest. It was agreed at the last meeting to defer this election. This was based on the assumption that Lambeth would have completed further legal procedures to define the relationship between LEMB and URH. This has not happened, so it was agreed unanimously to defer this election to the October meeting.
- 3.1.2 Phil Morris informed the meeting that Carla Pall has resigned as a Residents representative from the board. Roupell Park have been asked to nominate a replacement.

4 Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 July 08

4.1.0 Minutes

4.1.1 At the July meeting, the Annual General Meeting was held followed by the regular board meeting. There were two amendments to the Minutes:-

4.1.2 Please note that Christine Jacobs was present for both the AGM and the Board meeting.

4.1.3 Paragraph 3.1.0 of the AGM Minutes should read 'It was noted that Christine Jacobs has been nominated as a replacement Council **board** member in addition to Cllr Alex McKenna, Cllr Clive Bennett & Helen Charlesworth-May.'

4.1.4 With these amendments, both Minutes were agreed unanimously.

4.2.0 Matters arising

4.2.1 There were no action points recorded during the last meeting. However, two issues required clarification:-

4.2.2 Lia Concaicao pointed out that further detail had been promised around the new LEMB/ URH working relationship. Ann Hoad stated that they understood that Lambeth Council had yet to approach COG for advice. Salaries for all Loughborough employees will be covered by the TMO allowance, and will not draw on URH funds.

4.2.3 Ann Hoad stated that nobody came forward following the request made at last meeting (paragraph 4.1.0). They are disappointed that nobody took this opportunity.

5 Chief Executive's Report

5.1.0 This item was introduced by Phil Morris, who covered this post following Damian Roche's departure, until Nilavra Mukerji started this week. Please note that the report presented was prepared for Lambeth Governance Board.

5.2.0 Management Fee

5.2.1 Lambeth are convening a discussion regarding the URH management fee, to which at least nine different officers have been invited. Although a system to pay URH has been set up, it will be difficult to get payment agreed by the due date of 1st October.

5.3.0 Cyclical Maintenance

5.3.1 Paul Cooper has undertaken to investigate the painting history on each of the estates. Dan Howcroft from Blenheim Gdns and Mary Simpson for Roupell Park stated that, to the knowledge, no residents could remember any external declaration on their estates. Lloyd Lewis estimated that the last painting programme took place on Loughborough during 1999.

Action Point 1	By whom	When
Confirm details regarding the last TMO Cyclical Maintenance programme (if not	TMO managers	15 Oct 08

previously provided).		
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5.4.0 Loughborough EMB

5.4.1 Discussions regarding the new arrangements for Loughborough EMB are ongoing. A report on LEMB did go to the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee (a copy of which has been forwarded to all board members). Ann Hoad attended this meeting, and had raised objections to this report. The scrutiny panel has asked for a follow up report in January 2009.

5.5.0 Secondments

5.5.1 The two staff members seconded to URH will return to Lambeth at the end of September 2008.

5.6.0 Leasehold Services

5.6.1 Lambeth Leasehold Services are working through a number of problems at the moment, so it has been difficult to make much progress on related issues. A meeting is being held with a Lambeth consultant next week in order to discuss processes. Refunds are currently being processed, but it will not be possible to complete actuals on time, as further information needs to be provided by Lambeth Housing. A letter has to be sent regarding the delay.

5.6.2 Some debate was held regarding what the content of this correspondence should contain. Some members of the board felt that this delay was caused by Lambeth. Also, should an estimated completion date be included? Phil Morris stated that the letter is a standard legal template, and it would not be worth getting into who has caused this delay. It would not be helpful to put a deadline on the letter, as there are factors involved beyond the control of URH.

5.7.0 State of Housing Revenue Account

5.7.1 A Lambeth paper has mentioned 'revisiting TMO allowances', (p49, 10 Sept 08). No progress has been made negotiating allowances through Lambeth Council. It would certainly appear from the papers that have been presented that the Lambeth Housing Revenue Account is under significant pressure.

5.7.2 Of particular note, it seems that Lambeth plans to increase heating and hot water charges halfway through the financial year, which is highly unusual. No information on what will happen to heating & hot water charges for leaseholders has been received as yet. There is a significant issue for leaseholders, and serious consideration has to be given to advising leaseholders that actual's will be significantly greater this year.

5.8.0 TMO Allowances

5.8.1 There has been little progress. Various Lambeth papers have recently mentioned 'parity' of costs, but this has not been defined as a technical term. It is generally acknowledged that smaller organisations cost more to run than larger ones.

5.8.2 It is important for the board to note that the pre-conditions for inspection have not yet been met, although some progress has been made.

6 Service Improvement Plan – Update

6.1.0 Deferred until next meeting.

7 Performance Indicators

7.1.0 Tim Mathias introduced this item.

7.1.1 Rent arrears are the main source of concern, along with the continued high void rate at Loughborough. Customer Care statistics are also a cause for concern.

7.1.2 Lia Conceicao queried the BPSA E6 – average time for non-urgent repairs. Although this still remains on target, the figure has increased steeply in the last month. Tim Mathias undertook to perform a further analysis and will communicate directly with Lia.

Action Point 2	By whom	When
Provide detail on BPSA E6 report	Tim Mathias	15 Oct 08

8 Any Other Business

8.1.0 Phil Morris

8.1.1 Phil Morris asked for the board's approval to add Nilavra Mukerji onto the approved signatories list. This was agreed unanimously.

8.2.0 Lia Conceicao

8.2.1 In response to a question from Lia Conceicao, David Schwarz confirmed that they had resigned from the appointment panel for the post of Chief Executive. This was due to a potential conflict of interest.

8.3.0 David Schwarz

8.3.1 Suggested that a report on board attendance be brought to the next meeting. This was agreed.

Action Point 3	By whom	When
Submit report on board attendance	Tim Mathias	15 Oct 08