



CHESHIRE
PEAKS & PLAINS
HOUSING TRUST

Minutes of the meeting of the Trust's Board held on 16 June at 6.30pm at Ropewalks, Macclesfield

<u>Present</u>	David Gooda	Chairman
	Jacqui Sinnot-Lacey	Director of Customer Services
	Roger West	Board Member
	Diana Thompson	Board Member
	John Narroway	Board Member
	Louise Booth	Board Member
	Jim Crockatt	Board Member
	Margaret Pickup	Board Member
	Sheila Coulson	Board Member
	David Kent	Board Member
	Mike Page	Board Member
	Don Ellis	Board Member
	Olivia Hunter	Board Member
	Greg Bones	Director of Resources
	Tim Pinder	Chief Executive
	Lucy Nolan	Assistant Management Accountant

1. Introduction

The Chairman welcomed everybody to the meeting and updated Board on what he has been doing since the last meeting, attending the NHF Conference and an evening meeting at Old Trafford with neighbouring housing authorities.

Board members gave a variety of useful examples of their activities since the last meeting including:

- Involvement in keeping the local area tidy.
- Working with Community Crime Fighters.
- Working with the Fire Service who focus a lot of their work on implementing preventative fire measures – are currently looking at high rise

- Attendance the Grounds Maintenance Forum
- Intergenerational work with a local school and some older tenants
- Development of community centre

It was also stated that Nigel Bennett and Chrissie Buckley are going to visit the Wythenshawe and Stockport areas to see what facilities are available in the local community centres with a view to developing a community centre in Hurdsfield. The three local councillors on the Board asked to be involved in this.

2. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Kevin Richardson and Jan Hennessey.

3. **Minutes of last meeting**

The Board Decided

144) The minutes of the meeting held on 28 April were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

4. **Update from Audit Committee**

MP reported on the meeting which took place on 7 May 2009. He stated that he felt that the contribution made by Internal Audit was useful and also the input and preparation made by Liz Holmes was very good.

A remit for the committee is currently being drafted and it is thought they this may result in committee being the Audit/Risk Committee as the outcome of the meeting sees the role focusing on the control framework and risk management as well as internal and external audit.

It was stated that as it is evident from the work conducted by internal audit the Trusts control framework is improving and reliance can be placed on these controls therefore the committee will focusing on exceptions and any fundamental issues or areas where internal audit are only able to provide limited assurance.

The committee have agreed that they require six members to ensure a good balance of skills, MP stated that a Councillor is needed to fulfil the vacant place and invited any volunteers to nominate themselves. The Councillor Board members to check their availability to see if they can fulfil the commitment, the possibility of having a floating council member on the committee was discussed which may be an option. To be discussed further with MP.

MP reported that an internal audit plan for 2009/10 is in place which he is comfortable covers the significant risks highlighted on the risk profile, such as Business Planning and Disaster recovery. There are also some dates left as contingency in case any areas of weakness are highlighted following the inspection process.

The next audit committee meeting is taking place on 7 July 2009 where the 2008/09 annual accounts will be discussed. The duties for reviewing these have been split between the committee according to their skills, also the various elements to the financial statements/annual report have been circulated in stages to allow everybody to digest these which has been a useful method.

Another area discussed by committee was the performance of internal and external audit as both of these contracts have been in place for three years now therefore it is appropriate to review the service. GB is conducting a survey of the auditor's performance which in relation to external audit is to be concluded at the end of the year end audit process. If the committee do propose to reappoint any of the auditors this will then need to be ratified at a Board general meeting.

Also the review of the Standing Orders is currently taking place which should reflect the changes in the Board processes. Once the draft Standing Orders have been prepared they will be considered by Board. The revised Standing Orders will also be reviewed by the Challenge Group to ensure and independent review takes place.

The Board Decided

145) Members agreed the recommendations of the Audit Committee

6. Customer Feedback Report

JS explained the purpose of the quarterly customer feedback report, which is to update the Board on customer feedback and outcomes. JS said that the focus of this report is shifting from concentrating on performance towards assessing the outcomes, lessons learned and changes made which will benefit the customer.

JS informed Board that lots of surveys are currently taking place, most of which are conducted over the telephone by customer services during their down time which enables live data to be gathered on a timely basis.

JN stated that having reviewed the report he felt there are a lot of areas where the Trust's performance is not meeting customer expectations as with a satisfaction level of 90% this means one in ten people are dissatisfied. He emphasized the need to ensure continuous improvement.

JS supports this need to continually improve and agrees that there is room for improvement, however she also pointed out that when benchmarking these results against other organisations some of the results are in the top quartile.

One of the issues highlighted through customer feedback is the importance of being able to contact the correct person. MP stated that she has encountered instances when contacting the Trust by telephone when the persons name when answering the phone has been unclear. JS to monitor this through the

call recording system.

RW made the point that the satisfaction levels may be distorted as the people who do respond to surveys may not be representative of the whole customer population. Therefore although he agrees with a 90% satisfaction level there is room to improve, he didn't feel focusing on achieving 100% is a realistic objective.

7. Mutual Exchange & Assignment Policy

The Board Decided

146) The mutual exchange and assignment policy was approved. GB stated that the minor amendment to the numbering will be made.

9. Staff Survey Results

TP presented the latest staff survey results. There was a return rate of 61% and TP explained the key findings from the survey.

TP felt that some clarity is required on some of the scores to pinpoint the areas for improvement due the different ways people may have interpreted the questions. Further input from staff is required to do this. TP is working with Human Resources on this and action plan is to be produced by 31 Aug 2009 to demonstrate how the Trust intends to increase satisfaction levels.

JN stated that 61% is good return rate for a survey which people haven't been pressured in to completing. Also he noted the difficulties in writing questionnaires in order to obtain the desired information.

MP requested a list of the questions on the survey as this is something she would be interested in getting involved with.

10. Write off Policy

The write off policy has been revised to incorporate some minor changes. JN suggested that the spreadsheet report be tidied up for clarity purposes and had a query regarding the category of debts 'uneconomical to pursue.' There is no detail in the policy to explain how the judgement is made to classify a debt in to this category and although he agrees the policy in principle it is unclear how this will be implemented.

TP to ensure that the detail of the calculations to be used when deciding whether a debt is uneconomical to pursue are circulated to Board via email.

The Board Decided

147) Subject to this email the Board approved the policy.

11. AOB

DG expressed his thanks to GB for producing the Board Calendar.

The members who are Councillors requested that they receive a reminder when events such as Estate Walkabouts are taking place. TP agreed to action this.

The Board were asked if anybody would like to nominate themselves to be on the Stage 3 Complaints Panel. SC to take on this role.

GB advised that the annual National Housing Federation Conference is taking place soon and stated brochures were available to those who were interested. This information is also available electronically.

DT, JN and OH do not have door entry badges to enable them to access the building. TP to arrange for these to be available for next week.

Signed.....

Date.....