



**CHESHIRE**  
PEAKS & PLAINS  
HOUSING TRUST

**Minutes of the meeting of the Trust's Board held on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2008 at 6.00 pm at Ropewalks, Macclesfield.**

**Present**

David Gooda	Chairman
Louise Booth	Board Member
Sheila Coulson	Board Member
Jim Crockatt	Board Member
Kevin Richardson	Board Member
Margaret Pickup	Board Member
Don Ellis	Board Member
Jan Hennessey	Board Member
Shirley Sockett	Board Member
Roger West	Board Member
Tim Pinder	Chief Executive
Greg Bones	Director of Resources
Emma Marsh	Head of Housing
Pauline Gosling	Executive Support
Liz Holmes	Head of Finance
Oriel Gordon	Head of Performance & Quality

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from David Robinson, Carolyn Andrew, David Kent, Jacqui Sinnott-Lacey, Tony Ranfield.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest

3. **Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising**

**3.1 Minutes**

Board reviewed the minutes of the previous meeting.

**The Board Decided:**

- 0.96)** That the minutes of the meeting held 18<sup>th</sup> November 2008 reflected a true and accurate record and should be signed as such by the Chairman

### 3.2 Matters Arising

#### Floating Support Policy

As agreed at the last meeting the policy was referred to the Tenant Panel who agreed the content therefore the policy is adopted.

#### Review of Resident Involvement

The first meeting with a small group of the Tenant Panel was held last week. The meeting looked at and agreed the structure. The group will now look at a name for the monitoring group.

The members of the Tenant Panel who attended the meeting asked that it be fed back to Board that the meeting was very positive.

It was stated that Tony Ranfield is no longer a Board Member of Manchester Methodist Housing Association.

## 5.0

### **Rent Setting and Service Charges Setting 2009/10**

The report informed Board of the regulatory guidance with regard to rent restructuring, the method the Trust has adopted to determine target rents and the timescale required for the 2009/10 increase.

The Rent Restructuring Framework published in October 2001 sets out the Government objective to bring rent setting in the social housing sector onto a common system. The Head of finance reminded the Board that 4.4% + £2.17 was applied to rents for the 2008/09 financial year.

Board was informed that rent restructuring had been subject to an internal audit by Beever & Struthers in December 2007 who advised that the Trust had received full assurance.

Government guidance – The September 2008 RPI of 5% has been used in calculating the increases for 2009/10, plus 0.5% + £2.17 per week to achieve rent convergence.

The Head of Finance advised that target rents are calculated using a specific formula which incorporates relative property values, relative local earnings and a bedroom weighting factor.

Rent Plan – In applying the maximum rent increase for 2009/10 a further 707 properties would reach target rent in 2009/10. This means a total of 1,183 will have reached target rent. By 2011/12, 3,640 properties would be at target rent and if the 5% tolerance is applied this figure will increase to 4,482 properties.

The Head of Finance advised that the rent increases would be applied with effect from 6<sup>th</sup> April 2009. Service charges for tenants and leaseholders are currently being reviewed and will be brought to a future Board meeting.

The Head of Finance advised the Board that the change in the VAT rate from 17.5% to 15% had been applied to garage rents where required & that the 2009/10 increase proposed was RPI (5%) + 0.5%. Lifeline charges – the 2009/10 increase proposed was RPI (5%) + 0.5%

The Head of Finance referred to the impact of the increases on the Business Plan. The budget process for 2009/10 would reflect the VAT changes.

### **The Board Decided:**

**0.98)** To approve the rent increases for financial year 2009/10 as follows:

- Rents to increase by RPI + 0.5% + £2.17 per week
- Garage rents to increase by RPI + 0.5% per week **amended as per**
- Lifeline charges to increase by RPI + 0.5% per week **February 09**  
**Minutes**

A Board member commented that we should be sensitive in our correspondence when writing to customers.

6.0

### **Estate Management, Tenancy Management, Garages and Parking Policies**

The Head of Housing presented the policies, 2 of which were new and 1 revision, a follow on from the HQN mock inspection who's view was that the policies needed to be split out.

The policies had previously been presented to the Tenant Panel where minor amendments had been made and included as tracked changes.

Estate services was the poorest service, scoring zero stars in the mock inspection with uncertain prospects for improvement and the policy now sets out a statement on how the Trust intends to address the estates including a table of cleaning schedules and expected standards.

The Tenancy Management Policy now brings together all other tenancy related policies, another recommendation from HQN.

The garages policy was due for renewal at this time.

A Board member asked how the frequency of cleaning on the estates had been decided. The Head of Housing informed Board that the frequency depended on the size of the area and volume of communal areas. The Trust has appointed an Estates Quality Manager (EQM) to co ordinate the Trust's approach to estate improvements. The EQM also has the authority to build relationships with other agencies and to challenge, for example, County Council and Borough Council to ensure all agencies meet their requirements to improve estates.

The Chairman requested that 'general domestic storage' be included in the use of the garage, at section 8.

A Board member raised the subject of letters being sent out to owner occupiers regarding dropped kerbs. The Chief Executive stated that these would be investigated.

A Board member asked if the Trust could reinforce the fact that tenants are only allowed to carry out appropriate business, with prior permission, from their home.

**099.i)** To approve the revised Garages and parking Policy with the addition of 'general domestic storage' to the use of the garage at section 8.

**099.ii)** To approve the Estate Management Policy

**099.iii)** To approve the Tenancy Management Policy

7.0

### **Review of Equality and Diversity Action Plan**

The Head of Housing presented the update report which has seen significant progress. The E&D Sig Group has been resurrected and the Trust recently held its second diversity day which was a great success.

The lettings targets for E&D have been surpassed and all staff have received training on disability awareness, carried out by the disability information bureau

A Board member asked if the action plan could contain traffic lights and it was agreed that future updates would take the form of a one page exception report.

The Chairman asked that the action plan be amended to reflect the Board member vacancy.

#### **The Board Decided:**

**100)** To Note the Equality & Diversity Action Plan Update.

8.

### **Approval of Company Membership Applications**

The Director of Resources requested Board to approve the 21 tenant applications to become members of the Trust, subject to a further check on their relationship with contractors.

A discussion took place on the rights of company members.

#### **The Board Decided:**

**101)** To approve the 21 applications for company membership and record the members as tenant members in the register of members.

9. **Cumberland Street Development Update**

Board was informed that the report was tabled as a holding statement on the proposed development at Cumberland Street.

Following a revision of the plans the Director of Customer Services met with the Head of Planning to identify a way forward in delivering a positive scheme on site. This week the planning officers have advised that they are happy to recommend a positive implementation of the new plans. The application is due to be made to the relevant committee imminently and if approved will allow a start on site by the end of the financial year.

**The Board Decided:**

**102)** To note the Cumberland Street Development Update

10. **Peak Performance & Scrutiny Panels Update**

The purpose of the report was to update Board on progress with the Trust's service plan (Peak Performance) and the development of the Scrutiny Panels.

There are now ten scrutiny panels set up and the terms of reference for the panels was included in the report.

The Head of Performance & Quality tabled a supplement to the report showing the traffic lights per service area.

A Board member showed concern regarding the number of days over target on the amber lights for the supported housing area. An answer will be provided.

It was suggested that where Board may have concern regarding amber traffic lights that the relevant Head of Service attaches a note of the reason why.

**The Board Decided:**

**103.i)** To note the content of the peak Performance & Scrutiny Panels Update

**103.ii)** To receive an update bi-annually.

11. **Performance Reporting Framework**

Board previously approved the performance reporting framework in July 2007.

The report sets out the regulatory requirements and how the information is going to be used.

Board was informed that the Trust takes part in benchmarking exercises with several other organisations and that work is continuing to ensure we are making the best use of IBS for producing reports.

It was noted that the repairs KPI's do not currently include the % for customer satisfaction and that this will be addressed.

**The Board Decided:**

104) To approve the performance reporting framework.

12.

**Any Other Business**

A Board member asked that more notice be given for events being held at the Trust.

The Chairman passed on his best wishes to everyone for a Happy Christmas and prosperous New Year

The meeting closed at 8.00pm

Signed.....

Date.....