

WATMOS COMMUNITY HOMES

BOARD BRIEFING NOTE

Board Meeting Held on Wednesday 4 March 2009

1. Chair and Chief Executive Briefing Items

The Chair advised the Board that the Birchills Neighbourhood Charter project being led by Burrowes Street TMO has been shortlisted for the Homes and Communities Academy Awards 2009. The Chief Executive advised the Board that he had given evidence to the Commission for Cooperative & Mutual Housing on 27 February 2009.

2. Board Member Appointments

The Board appointed two new members:

- Barrie Ray – nominated as a Tenant Board Member by Leamore TMO
- Jon Morris – Independent Board Member

3. Schedule 1

The Board received a report about a recent breach of Schedule 1 and agreed a range of action to improve the management and control of schedule 1 in future. These included:

- Better management of employee and committee member declarations of interest.
- Using the Quality Assurance System to audit Schedule 1 compliance issues.
- Updating the committee member code of conduct to include reference to Schedule 1.
- Changing the management agreement to require all TMO to seek the approval of the Human Resources Manager before offering any new contracts of employment.
- Providing Schedule 1 refresher briefings to all employees and committee members.
- Producing workplace posters to raise awareness of Schedule 1.

4. Budget & Business Plan 1009/10

A presentation was given to members to illustrate the budget for 2009/10 and the revised business plan.

Discussions took place with regards to the need to ensure ongoing compliance with loan covenants and the changes made to the business plan to accommodate the major works for 2009-2013. Members were also encouraged to learn that TMOs would take an active role in improving thermal efficiency across their homes.

The Board approved the budget for 2009/10 and the revised business plan for 2009.

5. Amended Standing Orders & Financial Regulations

The Board agreed the following minor amendments to the WATMOS Standing Orders:

- The transfer of delegated authority from the Housing Services Director to the HR Manager for changes to payroll and personnel source documents.
- The replacement of references to the Housing Corporation with the Tenant Services Authority (as the new regulator).
- The inclusion of a statement relating to fraud detection and prevention in line with CIPFA guidelines on good practice.
- The requirement for Operations Committee to meet only twice a year rather than four.
- The requirement for Audit Committee to meet only twice a year rather than three times.

6. Publicity & Promotion Plans 2009/10

The Board agreed to plans for publicity and promotion during 2009/10. These include:

- Involvement in the work of the Commission for Cooperative & Mutual Housing.
- The Chair and Chief Executive promoting WATMOS at a national conference.
- Getting regular community news stories about the TMOs in the local press.

7. Working Smarter Not Harder Plans 2009/10

The Board agreed a plan to begin to address the 'working smarter not harder' issue across the organisations. This includes:

- Reviewing ICT capability and identifying areas of duplication (i.e. where manual and computer systems exist for the same function).
- Gathering information from Group employees about working smarter not harder during the next round of employee appraisals.
- Using the Quality Assurance System to identify ways of simplifying/ streamlining policies and procedures.
- Undertaking a review of the current system of governance meetings.

8. Compensation Policy & Procedure

The Board received the Group Compensation policy which had now been through the full consultation process. The Board approved the policy subject to ensuring that the policy made it clear that where a contractor was at fault, compensation could be settled by the TMO or WATMOS to avoid further distress to the tenant. WATMOS or the TMO would then recover the compensation from the contractor.

9. Former Tenant Arrears Write-Offs

The Board noted information about a number of debt write-offs valued below £500.

10. Performance to 31 December 2008

The board received the Group performance up to the third quarter 31 December 08.

- Rent collection is at 100.35% which is within target and upper quartile. At HB week the group are at 100.44% which is close to target and within the upper quartile. It was noted that the rent free weeks will have had a positive effect on the performance levels at the end of December.

- Rent arrears at HB week are at 2.6% with all TMOs performing well. Burrowes Street and Sandbank are showing excellent performance showing levels 50% below their set targets.
- Repairs indicators are close to or within set targets
- Some concern with appointments which is just below target and upper quartile with the majority of failures by BMS
- Good performance in repairs completed right first time (98.5%)
- Excellent performance (10.5 days) to relet properties
- Rent lost(0.71) is slightly above target but within top quartile
- 1 employee appraisal outstanding in December but is now complete
- 13 Governance appraisal outstanding
- Management indicators are showing good performance with the exception of Estate inspections and Sickness

The following actions are being undertaken to improve performance:

- The development of the HR system / sickness management
- Ongoing support is being provided to by the HR manager and Housing Services Manager to the group in managing sickness.
- There is ongoing dialogue with the current repairs contractors
- Repairs and voids procedures, policies and processes have been developed and will go live on the 1st April 09.

11. Management Accounts to 31 December 2008

The Board received and noted the management accounts to 31 December 2008.