

PERFORMANCE & REGULATORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held on **5 FEBRUARY 2008** at Hounds Gate from 5.00pm to 8.20pm

Attendance

Committee Members

Tim Bell (arrived at 5.30pm)
Peter Linford
Janet Storar (Chair)

Also In Attendance

Neil Barks	- Project Manager
Julie Crook	- Director of Finance
Steve Everson	- Interim Director of Finance
Janet Glass	- Head of Business Improvement & Development
Mark Lawson	- Rents Manager (left 6.05pm)
Janet Locker	- Governance Team Leader
Tom Moloney	- Project Manager (left 6.05pm)
Amanda Schofield	- Director of Strategy & Partnerships

07/17 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS FROM THE CHAIR & ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair opened the meeting, which had been delayed pending the arrival of Tim Bell. It was agreed that item 5 would be deferred to the next meeting. Julie Crook and Tom Moloney were welcomed.

07/18 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Ade Aderogba, Paul Rowe and Malcolm Wood.

07/19 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS BY BOARD MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

No declarations were made.

07/20 MINUTES OF THE PERFORMANCE & REGULATORY COMMITTEE HELD ON 27 FEBRUARY 2007

The Minutes were agreed and adopted as a true and accurate record of the Meeting subject to the inclusion of Peter Linford on the attendance record.

07/21 RENT PERFORMANCE

The Rents Manager presented a report which detailed the rent collection performance to December 2007 progress against targets, trend analysis and how performance would be improved.

The Committee was informed that performance had fallen well below target during the first nine months of 2007/08 which had resulted in a shortfall of around One million pounds (£1m). Steps had been taken to address the disappointing performance and a specialist rents team had been created which consisted of three area teams and one central team. Close monitoring of individuals and the team would be undertaken.

The plans to improve performance included a full review of policy and procedures and the creation of arrears manual, which were out to employee for consultation and would be referred to the Tenants Rent Panel meeting at the end of February 2008. In addition three Financial Inclusion Officers had been secured to assist new and existing tenants with benefit applications and advise on bank accounts, loans, savings, insurance and general budgeting.

Peter Linford touched on that a large proportion of the employees were agency staff; the Director of Strategy & Partnerships confirmed that the matter would be resolved following the implementation of the restructure.

Tom Moloney circulated two supplementary reports and advised that they would be helpful to the Committee when considering future reports.

The Committee noted the report and endorsed the proposals to improve performance.

07/22 QUARTLEY FINANCIAL REPORT

The Interim Director of Finance (IDF) presented the third quarter report and a summary of the financial statement to December 2007. An amended Appendix C was circulated.

The Committee was informed that there was significant pressure on the repairs and maintenance budget. Action had been taken and savings across the Company had been identified to offset any overspend.

It was reported that the additional costs associated with the restructure would be supported by NCC.

The SLA negotiation with NCC had been delayed, the result of which would be less than Two hundred and fifty thousand pounds (£250k) being saved in financial year 2007/08.

Other minor overspends in Housing Operations were reported.

The IDF outlined some of the risks to income and expenditure. He highlighted that the Development Bids may not all be funded as not all of the bids submitted had been approved by NCC due to the overall budget position of the HRA. Discussions with NCC were ongoing.

The IDF took the Committee through the Capital Programme summary and that there was a significant shortage of resources. The Company has been asked to cut back and as a result the forecast outturn for the year is One million two hundred thousand pounds (£1.2m) less than the original plan.

It reported that there was little revenue expenditure slippage in to 2008, although the job evaluation scheme had been deferred to financial year 2008/09, this had been a Company decision. Tim Bell queried the detail behind the decision to defer and whether it should have been made by

the Board. He further queried whether there were any costs attached in relation to back dating. It was agreed that a detailed report be prepared and submitted to the next meeting of the HR Committee.

The Committee noted the report.

07/23 SLA REVIEW PROGRESS UPDATE

The IDF introduced the quarterly update report and advised that since the report had been circulated intensive discussions had been held with NCC about how to achieve savings from future budgets.

The Committee was informed that the Company had withdrawn from a number of SLAs. The Committee requested that at the next meeting and for the future, details of the rationale for giving notice of termination should be provided.

RESOLUTIONS:

The Committee:

- 1. Noted recommendation 2.1 of the report; and**
- 2. Agreed to note the remainder of the report, subject to a statement of progress being provided in a future report to the Committee.**

07/24 COMPANY PERFORMANCE REPORT 1 APRIL 2007 TO 31 DECEMBER 2007 (QUARTER THREE 2007-2008)

The Head of Performance & Best Value (HPBV) presented a third quarter period report which measured the Company's performance against national Best Value and local primary indicators and the planned activity contained within the Foundation Plan.

The Committee was informed that there had been a significant amount of activity in the first nine months of the financial year and the Foundation Plan had achieved clear focus for the Company on the issues that matter. It was reported that employees now understand the priorities for the organisation.

The HPBV reminded the Committee that telephone monitoring within the whole organisation had not been possible for some time, he advised that he had now received a quote to take the Company away from the NTL service. A report would be prepared for the next meeting of the Committee.

Access & Customer Care

The Committee was informed that the timescale to respond to Elected Members and Board Members correspondence had been reduced to five working days creating a two tier system. It was reported that following the change performance had improved. The timescales for other correspondence and complaints remains at ten working days, however, from 1 April 2008; the two tier system would be removed.

It was reported that with the success of the 3C's policy and procedure there had been a six hundred per cent (600%) increase in the number of complaints received.

It was noted that the increase in complaints from three hundred and twenty four to eighteen hundred had been mainly due to previous under reporting/recording.

It was important to note that the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) and Housing Quality Network (mock inspection) had deemed the procedure as Best Practice. The Company and the LGO have maintained a good relationship and the LGO annual report that would be issued shortly would hopefully reflect this.

The HPBV stated that the Company was concerned about the low number of complaints that had progressed beyond the first stage of the procedure, and that quality assurance work would be undertaken to analyse.

It was agreed that a clearer explanation would be reported in future.

Vacant Property Management

The HPBV advised that despite some good success the Company would be concentrating on making further improvements. The successes included:

- Seven hundred thousand pounds (£700k) extra income had been generated;
- Reduction in average costs;
- Average void time reduced to thirty-three point five (33.5) days.

Repairs

It was noted that repairs performance had shown a decline, however performance had now stabilised.

Estate Management

By December 2007, the Tenants Services Inspection Team had rated seventeen estates as 2 star standard. The exercise had positive outturns in that the Company was able to better engage with NCC departments and highlighted the areas within the city where the caretaking service was non-existent.

Attendance Management

The HPBV informed the Committee that level of employee attendance was still a serious area of concern with the proportion of absence due to long term sickness. The Committee was informed that a meeting was scheduled and a medium term plan would be produced.

The Committee noted the report.

07/25 REGISTER OF DISPENSATIONS

The Director of Finance presented a report which advised the Committee of the dispensations to Financial Regulations agreed since the last meeting.

The Committee noted the report and register of dispensations.

07/26 BUDGET 2008/09

The IDF presented a report which outlined the revisions since the draft budget considered at the last meeting. He confirmed that the Management fee for 2008/09 was in fact

Thirty-three million and ninety-nine thousand seven hundred and twenty pounds (£33,099,720) and not as stated in paragraph 5.6 of the report.

It was reported that savings would be achieved by tightening the salary budget, which required managing a vacancy level of three per cent (3%). A further one hundred thousand pounds (£100k) would be achieved by delaying the introduction of the enhanced caretaking service until August 2008. The delegated repairs budget was also being reduced by 3% to reflect required efficiency savings.

Tim Bell was concerned about the impact the three per cent (3%) vacancy level would have on front line services. The IDF informed the Committee that the Company had a heavy reliance on agency staff and the costs had been significant, often twenty to thirty percent (20-30%) more; by eliminating the costs the saving would be generated.

The Committee were of the opinion that they should recommend the Board to approve the 2008/09 Budget.

RESOLUTION:

The Committee agreed to recommend the Board to approve the 2008/09 Budget.

07/27 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair informed the Committee that Neil Barks, the Head of Performance & Best Value had attended his last meeting and wished to thank him on behalf of the Committee for all of his hard work. The Committee wished him well in his future ventures.

The HPBV thanked the Committee for their support.

The Meeting ended at 7.15pm

SIGNED **DATED**