



SIX TOWN HOUSING BOARD MEETING

22 JANUARY 2009

5.00 PM GLOBAL BUILDING

IN ATTENDANCE:

Board Members:

John Smith (Chair)
Andy McGiffin (Vice-Chair)
John Anderson
Denise Bigg
Ivy Bolton
Roger Brown – to Item 8
Wilf Davison
Peter Dawson
Brenda Headley
C Pathinige
Larry Patrick
Sharif Salim

Officers:

Susan Jordan (Chief Executive)
John Merrick (Director of Neighbourhood Services)
John Bowker (Director of Technical Services)
Julia Shepherd (Board Support Officer/Minutes)
Julie Heywood (Customer Contact Manager)
Jacqui Rutter (HR Officer) – to Item 7

APOLOGIES:

John Ball
Janette Taylor
Michelle Wiseman
Vicki Haslam (Head of Performance & Governance)
Lindsey Dobson-Scott (Head of HR & Organisational Development)

GUESTS:

Alex Van Vliet - Stonewall

		ACTION
	The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed Alex Van Vliet from	

	Stonewall. Board had made a request that further information on Stonewall be brought to a future meeting before making a decision on the proposal for Six Town Housing to join Stonewall's Diversity Champion programme which gives support to lesbian, gay and bisexual employees in the workplace. Alex presented Board with an overview of the work of Stonewall, which celebrates its 20 th anniversary in 2009 and answered questions.					
1.0	APOLOGIES					
1.1	As detailed on page 1.					
2.0	MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING: 22 October 2008					
2.1	The minutes were agreed as a correct record.					
	8.2 - WD requested the minutes read to reflect that he declared an interest "as Chair of Governors of St John with St Mark's Primary School Prestwich".					
3.0	MATTERS ARISING					
3.1	Page 6 – 10.1.2: It was queried if a letter had been sent to Anne Laraine Noble who withdrew her application to join the Board. A letter hasn't been sent but the Board Support Officer will pick this up.	JS Comp 30.01.09				
3.2	Page 3 – 5.3: The Board were advised that a review of the service provided by Rossendales was undertaken as part of a whole Former Tenants Arrears review; FTA's is an area of work which is built into the Service Improvement Plan. This will come under the Neighbourhood Services Committee Work Plan.					
3.3	Page 5 – 8.2: The Board were advised that there had been an error in the way the figures had been reported relating to SAP ratings on detached properties. This has been corrected in the Asset Management Strategy.					
4.0	DECLARATION OF INTEREST					
4.1	None declared.					
5.0	PERFORMANCE UPDATE (QUARTER 3)					
5.1	The performance information for Quarter 3 was presented to Board by the Directors of Technical Services and Neighbourhood Services.					
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Indicator Description</th> <th>Comment</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Proportion of Rent Collected</td> <td>Cumulative = 97.78% 104.26% collection in December 08. Acknowledged this is the first time above target since April 08. Initiatives were carried out in December by staff which have had an impact on rent collection.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Indicator Description	Comment	Proportion of Rent Collected	Cumulative = 97.78% 104.26% collection in December 08. Acknowledged this is the first time above target since April 08. Initiatives were carried out in December by staff which have had an impact on rent collection.	
Indicator Description	Comment					
Proportion of Rent Collected	Cumulative = 97.78% 104.26% collection in December 08. Acknowledged this is the first time above target since April 08. Initiatives were carried out in December by staff which have had an impact on rent collection.					

		Former trends indicate the toughest period for rent collection is from January through to April. Radio media and mailing campaigns to be carried out in efforts to maximise impact.	
	Amount of Rent Arrears of Current Tenants	2.92% Identified as the lowest since STH was established. Rent arrears at December 08 amounted to £717.521	
	FTA's	£682.481 Acknowledged as below target. There were a large amount of write-offs in December in line with Bury Council's policy framework.	
	% of FTA's collected	7.43% Noted an improvement in December. Target of 13% is in place however feel that 10% would be more accurate and realistically achievable. This has been proposed to Bury Council who has accepted this figure as a new target for next year.	
	Average Relet Time	48 days at the end of December. Board advised that sheltered housing and Aids & Adaptations impact on this performance. Director of Neighbourhood Services to investigate if STH pay the Council Tax if sheltered housing property is empty over 6 month period. The review of Sheltered Housing/Stock Options has been placed on hold while Bury Council develops a Housing Needs Strategy.	JM agenda 25 March 2009
	Rent Loss on vacant dwellings	Cumulative = 2.99% (as at December). In monetary terms this equates to £543.488 void rent loss.	

	Indicator Description	Comment
	Urgent Repairs completed within Government timescales	Cumulative = 96% against a target of 99% Board informed as at December this had risen to 97% reflecting an increase of 5% from November.
	Average number of days taken to complete non-urgent repairs	Cumulative = 22 days (as at December). It was noted that repairs priorities are now streamlined through the new service standards.
	Customer Satisfaction	Over six month period satisfaction has increased from 92% to 98%.
	Gas Servicing	Acknowledged a significant improvement with this performance. CP12's outstanding as at June 08 = 191. Total outstanding in November 2008 = 48 (less than 1%). Board congratulated John Bowker and his team on the efforts and commitment which has resulted in this improvement.
5.2	Board asked for their thanks to be passed on to the Rent Collection Team. The Chief Executive thanked Board for their support in using the systems approach.	
5.3	<p>Board Members asked questions relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the cost of collecting FTA's using Rossendales; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↳ advised no payment is made to Rossendales, however they receive commission on debts collected. ▪ why are decant properties kept for long spells <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↳ agreed the time decant properties are kept for is too long. This has been considered in the review of the void process. Neighbourhood Services will monitor this. ▪ the percentage of rent loss which is attributable to Bury Council; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↳ Board informed that rent loss equates to approximately £35K per week of which £20K relates to sheltered housing. Neighbourhood Services will monitor this performance. 	
6.0	HR UPDATE	
6.1	<p>Jacqui Rutter presented the HR Quarter 3 Update.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ significant changes to workforce establishment which incorporates the addition of 107 personnel from Repairs and Maintenance and 7 personnel from Anchor. 	

6.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ March 2008 showed a workforce of 131 staff, this has increased at Qtr 3 to 245 staff. We are near to completing a 100% transfer of HR data from Repairs and Maintenance to Six Town Housing's HR database. ▪ Equality & Diversity analysis: Female employees = 44.08% Male employees = 55.92% ▪ Disabled employees = 4.49% ▪ 3.67% of employees are from an ethnic background ▪ Employee religion is predominantly Christian ▪ Cumulative figure for sickness absence is 8.60 working days (an improvement on last quarter) ▪ 2 formal disciplinary cases and 3 formal grievances in Qtr 3. ▪ The HR Service are developing succession planning for future. <p>The Board congratulated Lindsey Dobson-Scott and the HR team on the improvements made to date.</p>	
7.0	EQUALITY & DIVERSITY UPDATE	
7.1	<p>John Merrick gave a verbal update to Board confirming that following the completion of the CRE (Commission for Racial Equality) Code of Conduct last year, the Equality Monitoring Toolkit has now been introduced. As an organisation we are currently not capturing who is and who isn't accessing the service, by using the toolkit we can start to do this. Managers will receive training on this in January 2009 with plans in place to implement from April 2009.</p>	
7.2	<p>Performance measures will be reported to Board from April 2009. IT systems need to be put in place to record the required data.</p>	JM
7.3	<p>JM gave an overview of the key findings by the Audit Commission on our approach to diversity Some of the highlights from the recent Audit Commission Inspection report show:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ strengths now outweigh weaknesses (previous report (July 2005) showed weaknesses outweighed strengths) ▪ a clear commitment to Equality & Diversity. ▪ The Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit ensures ownership across the organisation with mandatory training in place. ▪ A greater understanding of customers and staff ▪ Better access to service and translation ▪ The support for vulnerable groups by the work of the caretaking and HIA service ▪ A positive approach in tackling hate crime and hard to reach groups ▪ Impressed by the use of age profile data 	
7.4	<p>However there are still some things that need to be done:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff profile is not representative of the borough. ▪ STH are not monitoring access to the service ▪ The action plan is not SMART (specific, measured, achievable, 	

	realistic and time framed)	
7.5	The report also criticised the Council for not ensuring that the sheltered housing schemes were fully DDA compliant. The Audit Commission appreciate the effort that Six Town Housing has made on this. STH also need to ensure that resident and TRA's (Tenant Resident Associations) comply with diversity requirements.	
7.6	The Audit Commission report reflects that the service has been turned round from a weak 2 star service to a 2 star service with excellent prospects.	
7.7	At the August Board meeting, Board were asked to note the proposals to join Stonewall's Diversity Champion programme which aims to promote the interest of the lesbian, bi-sexual, and gay (LGB) community. The proposal was deferred, and Board asked for further information on Stonewall be brought to a future meeting. After receiving the presentation earlier this evening from Stonewall, Board supported the proposal to join Stonewall's Diversity Champion Programme.	
8.0	PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FOR BOARD	
8.1	The recording of performance management information is essential to capture the effectiveness of the organisation. A review of the performance management framework was carried out in the summer of 2008. Following the review new performance management information, and techniques for recording and using the data have been developed across the organisation. It is vital that we capture and measure outcomes generated by the Board and its members as well as from staff delivering services directly to customers.	
8.2	Board were asked to discuss the table of proposed performance measures (Appendix 1) to agree which ones they would like to start measuring following this meeting. STH will benchmark the agreed performance measures with the Great Manchester ALMO Group. RECOMMENDATIONS: The Board were asked: 4.1 To discuss the table of proposed performance measures attached at Appendix 1 and agree which ones they would like to start to measure following this meeting; 4.2 The agreed measures will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure that they are meaningful to us and that they are not exclusive to new measures being developed. After discussion Board agreed and approved the following performance measures:	

Proposed Performance Measure	Rec for Collection By STH	Changes to be made
How far in advance of the meeting Board Members receive board papers in working days	Yes	To change the word receives to sent.
How often does the Board meet in a year	No	No value in collecting this.
How long do Board meetings last	No	No value in collecting this.
Mix as a percentage of reports that go to Board for decision or information/discussion	No	No value in collecting this
Board member attendance as a percentage by the Board as a whole.	Yes	Board also asked for Committee attendance to be recorded. Target levels to be agreed by the Governance Working party group.
Board Member attendance by Board denomination	No	No value in collecting this
Time in working days to distribute the minutes to Board Members after a meeting	Yes	Minutes to be sent out within 10 working days
Time taken to put Board papers on the website either before or after a meeting.	Yes	Agenda and reports to go on website prior to Board meeting. Minutes of previous meeting to go on website the day after being agreed at the Board meeting.
Board diversity: gender/ethnicity/age/disability/sexuality/carer responsibility	Yes	
% of appraisals completed on an annual basis.	Yes	In line with organisational measures.
Attendance of public at Board Meetings.	Yes	Need to encourage open Board meetings and transparency of decision making. Raise awareness that public can attend open part of meetings.
Board agreed to the recommendations agreed as detailed in 4.2.		

9.0	VMS SURVEY CUSTOMER FEEDBACK	
9.1	<p>The Vision Management Systems (VMS) performance management tool was introduced last year to measure customer satisfaction levels.</p> <p>Julie Heywood presented to the Board results of satisfaction surveys using VMS in four service areas (post-lets, repairs, leaseholders and customer service). A total of 971 surveys had been sent to customers who had used the services. 171 completed questionnaires were returned giving an overall response rate of 17.61%.</p> <p>RECOMMENDATIONS: Board were asked to approve the following recommendations :</p> <p>4.1 To continue to use VMS to learn more about what our customers think of the service by listening to and learning from their feedback. This will result in implementing changes to service provision to deliver an improved service to our customers.</p> <p>4.2 To continue to evaluate performance against other organisations' results where possible and to share learning through the VMS benchmarking meetings.</p> <p>Board agreed both recommendations, and made a request for cumulative trends to be included in future reports. Board also suggested that we consider giving feedback to those customers who took part.</p>	
13.0	ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY ACTION PLAN	
13.1	<p>A request to discuss the Asset Management Action Plan was received regarding the following questions:</p> <p>Q. There are two points on the action plan due for completion by January 2009, along with actions due to be completed for February and March 2009.</p> <p>A. John Bowker confirmed that all 15 actions are on track. An updated Asset Management Action Plan was circulated.</p> <p>The Technical Services Committee will monitor the action plan.</p>	
14.0	CAPITAL PROGRAMME UPDATE	
14.1	<p>A request to discuss the report was received, and the following questions were answered on:</p> <p>Delivery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On target slightly ahead of programme • Over programmed - currently by £1.5 million. • Re-profiled spend based on progress on site – brings forecast spend in line with budget • Audit & Standards Committee – Barrie Strothers –quoted 	

	<p>differently? Info based on old profile and did not include certified works which equates to £1.5million.</p> <p>5.2 SLA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produced new SLA which fully sets out the services we require going forward • Architects offered further reduction in fees through the agreement • Currently negotiating this with them based on market testing information • Will be finalised before start of next years contracts <p>5.3 Programme Manager:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews held last week • Unsuccessful in finding suitable candidate • Currently have interim manager in place who is doing an excellent job • Have opportunity now to review the post and agree on next steps. • Post 2010 there will still be around 5million a year of spend required to maintain decency. • Post covers work outside capital programme, including some planned work, painting, M&E etc. Could be ongoing resource for technical services directorate as a whole. <p>5.4 Efficiencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The efficiencies have enabled us to do additional works • We have been able to put together more estate based improvements rather than pepper potting those properties that were failing decency. • This has enabled us to carry out work to more properties than originally intended on the decent homes programme. • We have also been able to do additional work to meet the Bury Standard, which was recognised as good practice by the Audit Commission <p>6. Next steps – Transparent process for Allocating 2009/10 programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed scoring matrix based on cost and quality for all 2008/9 contracts • Have run this through internal audit to ensure fairness • Took to Core Group on Tuesday • Should be in a position next week to determine which contractors we are moving forward with • Likely to be one main contractor for internals and one for externals 	<p>JB</p>
	<p><i>Agenda Item Numbers 11 / 12 / 15 / 16 / 17 and 18 are for information and were not discussed as no prior request was put forward to discuss by Board Members.</i></p>	

20.0	ANY OTHER BUSINESS	
20.1	<p>Recruitment & Selection training: The Board Support Officer advised Board of the above joint training which they are invited to take part in with staff. This training is on the Board Training & Development Plan, but members who are free during the day are invited to join in with the staff training if they wish. Board Members will need to complete this training if they wish to take part in recruitment and selection interviews. JS will forward the email with details of dates to Board.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 8.30pm.</p>	JS
21.0	DATE OF NEXT MEETING	
	25 March 2009 at 5.00pm at Global.	