

**Minutes of the Aire Valley Homes
Board Meeting
26th November 2008 at 6pm - at Navigation House**

Board Members Present

Brenda Barlow (BB)
Roy Birch (RB),
Mary Clark (MC)
Cllr Geoff Driver (GD)
Cllr Peter Gruen (Chair) (PG)
Andrew Feldhaus (AF)
Christina Fielden (CF) (part)
Richard Whitaker (RW)
Cllr Robert Finnigan (RF)

Apologies

Cllr Stewart Golton (SG)
Phil Davies (PD)

AVHL Officers present

Richard Corbishley (RC)
Simon Costigan (SC)
Vicki Jagger (minutes) (VJ)
Merran McRae (MMc) (part)
Gail Webb (GW)
Neil Diamond (ND) (part)

Action

197.0 Apologies for Absence/Quorum

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Stewart Golton and Phil Davies. The meeting was quorate.

198.0 Declaration of Interest

Members were asked to declare any interests at this point. None were declared.

199.0 Chief Executive leaving AVHL

On behalf of the Board PG took the opportunity to thank Merran McRae for her leadership, commitment and dedication to both Leeds South East homes and Aire Valley Homes Leeds since she took up the post at the inception of the ALMOs.

200.0 Election of Chairs

Nominations for Chairs of the Board and Sub Committees had been received as follows:

- Board Chair – Peter Gruen
- Board Vice Chair – Tina Fielden
- Chair of Resources Performance and Risk Sub Committee – Andrew Feldhaus (MC had stepped down as Chair)
- Chair of Customer Services Sub Committee – Brenda Barlow.

MC was thanked for her contribution as Chair of the RPRSC for the last

year.

These nominations were not contested and were moved by Roy Birch and seconded by Geoff Driver.

201.0 PFI updates - Beeston Hill and Holbeck and the Round 6 bid

201.1 BHH update

Neil Diamond attended for this item. MMc outlined the main updates in the report following the report to the September Board. The bidders have now been reduced from 4 to 3, when the bidders are reduced to 2 AVHL will be more involved in the process. ND reported that they are ahead of schedule in the rehousing programme. This is good news but needs to be carefully monitored so the properties are not stood empty for a long period of time.

GW is negotiating the financial issues regarding the PFI and working up some more detailed financial information.

AVHL is currently reviewing the effects of the reduction in the capital budget and will come back to Board when there is further information.

201.2 Round 6 bid

MMc also updated the Board on the Sheltered PFI bid. She explained that the Board would not be involved in the decision making for this bid as the bid involves new build. The Board were assured however, that the bidders were open to AVHL managing the properties in the PFI. The Expression of Interest would be submitted in February 09. The Board were concerned about the number of 1 bedroom properties included in the bid and thought that wherever possible 2 bed properties should be provided.

The Board noted the content of the update report and asked that Paul Langford be invited to the January Board meeting to answer questions from the Board on the Sheltered PFI.

VJ

The Board noted the report and welcomed further progress reports as both PFI processes progress.

GW

202.0 Minutes of meeting – 24th September 2008

202.1 Accuracy

With the amendment to the spelling of the name of Cllr Robert Finnigan, the minutes were agreed as a correct record.

202.2 Matters arising

182.0 Inspection

At this point, MMc reported back from a meeting she had attended with the other ALMO CEOs and Neil Evans. A report has been drafted for

Executive Board to look at the future options for the ALMOs which basically sets out 3 options, a) to take the ALMOs back in house b) to undertake another set of mergers or c) stock transfer or a combination of any of these. The Board needs to be aware of other options that ALMOs have considered. A working group will be set up to lead this process.

Board Members agreed that they wanted to be fully involved in this process and that they wanted to have sight of the Terms of Reference for this new group. The Board thought that an invitation to Paul Langford to attend the next Board meeting to answer questions on this may be useful.

185.0 Decency

This is covered elsewhere on the agenda.

187.0 Sheltered Tender

MMc reported that Cllr Carter had frozen the tender timetable in order to take political soundings and has now been referred to Executive Board. MMc to let the Board have a copy of the new timetable when it is available.

SC

192.0 Internal Audit review

GW has a meeting on Monday with ENE, Internal Audit and Connaught to come up with a commercial solution .

At this point MMc reported some of AVHL's specific achievements

- The Sheltered Service has now gained an A rating for Complaints
- AVHL submission for Level 4 of the Equality Standard was successful
- AVHL achieved second place at the 'Making a Difference Awards for Yorkshire and Humber in the category of 'Best Community Initiative'.

203.0 Inspection Plan

MMc has compiled an action plan for AVHL which set out the timescales for implementation of the 7 recommendations from the recent inspection report.

There are some underlying structural actions that need to be taken before the recommendations can be addressed with confidence. These are subject to a separate report to Board on this agenda. MMc also highlighted three further main themes to the Action Plan:

- the emphasis on developing the AVHL culture to a tighter focus on Performance,
- the need for a governance review to review the relationship with LCC, and to review with LCC the future investments plans for council housing in Leeds and;
- the need to further embed customer involvement and ensure that customers understand the business well enough to engage in cost-benefit debates.

MMc explained that some of the recommendations would benefit from awaiting the outcome of the other 2 ALMO Inspections to be able to drive these forward with the Council collectively.

204.0 Confidential Items

In accordance with the Board's Access to Information rules it was agreed that Members of the public be excluded from the discussion of the following items 205 to 206, in view of the confidential nature of the business to be considered.

206.3 Tina Fielden left the meeting at this point

207.0 Business Plan/Capital Report

RC presented a report to update the Board on the current Capital programme situation. The Board noted that there are insufficient resources to meet anticipated need due to a shortfall of £17million on our Decency programme and a recent loss of £3.2million as a result of LCC not transferring anticipated resources from the general capital fund. RC explained that the recommendations of the report are to:

- Transfer £2million from the Environmental works to cover the Middleton properties
- Transfer all of the remaining £3.2million environmental budget to capital or a mix of this budget and area panel budget.
- Minimise work such as roofing replacement and planned maintenance in tenanted properties.

MMc explained that there is also £5.8million that Strategic Landlord have in reserves that the ALMOs are able to bid into to cover their shortfalls.

The Board agreed in principle to use the Environmental budget to fund the shortfall but will await the outcome of the Business Plan before they make the decision.

MMc left the meeting at this point.

208.0 Public Relations contract

GW explained that we have been using a public relations company called Acceleris since March 2008 and since this time have enjoyed a steady stream of positive press releases. This contract has now come to an end and is being extended on a monthly basis. Given the productivity, market position and knowledge of Acceleris the report seeks the Boards permission to opt out of a formal tender process and negotiate directly with Acceleris to provide our PR service for a further 12 months.

The Board agreed to the recommendations under its delegated powers to:

Opt out of an open tendering process, allowing AVH to negotiate

GW

the services of Acceleris for a further one year period.

That a future presentation on media work and discussion to help them understand the forward activity plan be arranged.

Management Accounts – period 7

GW reported that AVHL has an overspend of £391k against budget at the end of period 7, primarily due to an overspend on repairs. The current year end forecast is an overspend of £384k. GW confirmed that tight controls continue to be enforced on our repairs contractors.

The Board approved the management accounts to period 7.

209.0 KPIs – period 7

GW explained that a slight downturn in arrears performance has been noted which would be explained by the current financial climate and that SMT are preparing a report for the next Board meeting on the effects of the credit crunch for AVHL. SMT have also met with Strategic Landlord to go through targets and any issues regarding the credit crunch.

Board Members approved the KPI report to period 7.

210.0 Diversity Targets and Monitoring

GW reported that following a report to Board presented in July on targets for monitoring ethnicity this report sets out the targets for monitoring the other diversity strands. The approach has been to concentrate on the three key service areas of

- Income Management
- Allocations/lettings
- Repairs

There are 13 recommendations which have been compiled from the data collected which will be analysed and actioned. Any outstanding data will be presented to the next Customer Services Sub Committee in February.

211.0 Minutes of Customer Services Sub Committee 28th October and Resources, Performance and Risk Sub Committee of 21st October.

These were noted for information.

212.0 Minutes of Area Panels

The minutes of the meeting of Inner South Area Panel of 18th September 08, Outer South Area Panel of 11th September 08, and Outer South East Area Panel of 19th September 08 were noted for information.

213.0 Any Other Business

There being no other business the meeting closed.

214.0 Date of next meeting

Tuesday 3rd February 2009 at 5.00pm at Navigation House.