

MINUTES: PLYMOUTH COMMUNITY HOMES SHADOW BOARD

Item

Action To Be Taken By

Present: Shadow Board Members: Peter Ebsworth (Chair), Ken Foster, Zilpah Leahy, William Lean, Sue McDonald, Elaine Pellow, Eddie Rennie, Jack Thompson (part meeting), Nigel Warn, Christine Watts

Staff/Advisors : Andrew Cobb, Nick Jackson, Belinda Pascoe, Colin Walker

Tenant Services Authority: Steve Fox

Apologies: Linda Macbeth

1 Minutes of Meeting 10 March 2009

Agreed

2 Matters Arising from 10 March 2009

Item 8: Accommodation

In accordance with Board instructions James Savage was in the process of finalizing an agreement at 12.50 per square foot (below the £13.00 per square foot cap).

All parties (PCC, PCH and the landlord) were endeavouring to expedite the formalities and it was hoped that the document would be signed on 17 April 2009.

Princess Court should not be seen as anything other than an immediate solution for the short term needs of the stock transfer team and the evolving management team.

The form of the agreement did not commit the Board to a long term future at Princess Court.

3 Committee Minutes/Recommendations

The committees had delegated authority (in accordance with Standing Orders) with regard to their respective remits. If the matter was beyond this remit they would make recommendations to the Shadow Board as a whole.

Customer Focus Committee

The Customer Focus Committee had met on 9 March 2009 to consider the following policies:

- Social Inclusion and Anti Poverty Policy
- Customer Care and Access Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Tenants' Compensation and Payments
- Relationship Breakdown Policy
- Leaseholder Management Policy

The committee recommended that the Shadow Board adopt these policies subject to the amendment below which applied to policies in general:

- they include a consistent section on equalities and a timescale for monitoring and review,

and the following amendments which were specific to the Customer Complaints and Comments Policy:

- all stage 1 complaints should be acknowledged within 2 working days (formerly 3 days),
- the aim was to provide a full response to 100% of stage 1 complaints within 10 working days (formerly 20 days),
- stage 2 complaints could be considered by senior managers as well as directors.

The Shadow Board resolved: **to approve (subject to the amendments above) the policies recommended by the Customer Focus Committee.**

In future all policies would also be seen by Trowers before they came to the Shadow Board.

HR and Staffing Committee

The HR and Staffing Committee had met on 6 April 2009. Due to the very short timescale the minutes were not as yet available and the Chair of the committee gave a verbal report of their decisions on the recruitment of the executive team.

The committee had resolved to approve the:

- job descriptions for the three posts (with the addition of regeneration to the neighbourhood role),
- person specifications for the three posts,
- process and outline timetable for recruitment,
- information pack contents,
- advertising arrangements,

- assimilation arrangements for the post of Property Services Director.

4 **Project Update:**

In addition to the written report circulated with the Board papers, BP gave a verbal update on the latest developments.

Business Plan:

- Malcolm Lindo would prepare a revised Shadow Board Business Plan consultation timetable.

Assets:

- PCC had not to date proposed any changes to the schedules.

Communications:

- branding had gone through rigorous consultation and would come to the Shadow Board in May (after previously going through Customer Focus),
- BP would liaise with Helen Ryan about the post transfer website.

Community Development:

- 40 tenants had expressed an interest in joining a Continuous Improvement Group (post meeting note, this number has increased to 56, as of 9 April 2009),
- 250-300 tenants had joined the Resident Involvement Network (RIN),
- the RIN was the successor to the interested Tenants Network (ITN),
- tenants had been sent a newsletter immediately post transfer, another at Christmas and the next issue was due in the near future.

North Prospect:

- It was hoped that Levitt Bernstein would provide initial proposals and costings by the end of April 2009,
- the North Prospect Partnership continued to be the main means of communicating with the community,
- the Housing Service had provided financial support to the partnership for two years after the end of NRF funding,
- at the onset of the detailed consultation phase there would be

- individual communication with tenants,
- PCC would still be the lead body on certain North Prospect matters after transfer.

Appendix 1 Strategic Risk Register

- the risks would be ranked in descending order,
- the register would be amended to incorporate 'traffic lighting'.

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The Shadow Board resolved :

- 1 to note the progress outlined in the report and verbal update,**
- 2 to note the contents of the project specific risk register,**
- 3 that the Shadow Board minutes should reflect the tracking/reduction in risk rating of high risk items.**

5 Section 25 Budget:

- PCC was aware that the Section 25 budget straddled two financial years,
- Some Savills costs would be included in other lines i.e. if they advised on recruitment then this would be shown against recruitment rather than Savills,
- the recruitment line was under funded and a transfer from another line would be required,
- staff secondment costs were likely to exceed initial estimates, but pre transfer salaries were anticipated to come in under budget and the two would probably cancel each other out.

6 Registration Assessment Process:

Steve Fox (Tenant Services Authority) gave a presentation on regulation and Schedule 1. Please see presentation attached.

- the TSA would nominate a regulatory officer who would agree PCH's regulatory plan,
- as a new housing association (i.e. without a track record in this role) PCH would have more frequent contact with the TSA than an existing landlord,
- the TSA would drive the monitoring process, but the Audit Commission (the TSA's inspector of choice) would perform the actual inspections,
- the more complex an organization, the longer the regulation would continue,
- Schedule 1 prohibited housing associations from granting non contractual benefits to Board members, staff and employees,
- exemptions were either the subject of General Consents (in

- common instances such as tenants as employees) or Special Determinations which required individual rulings,
- Schedule 1 would apply for five months after transfer,
 - Schedule 1 would be replaced by Section 122 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008.

The Shadow Board **thanked SF for his presentation and comments.**

7 ICT Update:

- it was proposed that PCC should continue to provide ICT support via an SLA for 18 months after transfer,
- in common with all PCH SLAs this would be the subject of a value for money review,
- an ICT review was in hand, this would lead to a position statement that would assist with the production of an ICT strategy,
- PCH would need to purchase a new financial system,
- PCC's Strategic Procurement Unit had provided assistance as the cost was likely to exceed the trigger threshold for the OJEU process,
- five companies had been invited to tender after PQQ Shortlisting,
- implementation was expected to start in July 2009; it would take three some three months to install the basic system.

The Shadow Board resolved to: **note the report**

8 PCH Board Member Training:

- BP circulated a list of proposed NHF training dates,
- Board members agreed to attend training on 27 April 2009, 26 June 2009, 24 July 2009, 22 September 2009 and 23 October 2009,
- Board members also agreed to participate in an 'away day' on 12 May 2009.

9 Any Other Business:

- the Chair expressed the Shadow Board's gratitude and respect for the contribution made by Andrew Cobb during his time as Stock Transfer Project Director,
- the Shadow Board would write to thank Louise Barnden for her service (2008-2009) as a Board member,
- a PCC proposal in response to the ministerial announcement on rents was anticipated at Full Council on 27 April 2009.

10 Date of Next Meeting

5.00pm, Tuesday 5 May 2009, Large Conference Room, HQ Building,
Union Street