

# **ST LEGER HOMES OF DONCASTER LTD**

Company limited by guarantee registered in England  
Company Number 05564649

## **Joint Area Board Meeting**

**Date** : 14 January 2008

**Item** : 9

**Subject** : **Approved Minutes from Board Meeting 01-08-07**

**Recommendation :**

**For Information Purposes Only.**

Company Number 05564649  
A Company Limited by Guarantee  
Registered in England

**St. Leger Homes of Doncaster Limited**

**BOARD MEETING**

**1 August 2007**

**Present**

Sidney Hall, Lyn Ralph (Vice Chair), Rodger Haldenby (co-optee), Betty Clayton (co-optee), Cllr George Beck, Cllr Stuart Exelby, Cllr Paul Coddington, Cllr Pat Haith, Peter Chapman (Chair), Kate Radovanovic, Gill Taylor, John Young.

**In attendance**

Martin Musgrave (Chief Executive), Judith Jones (Director of Customer Services), Paul Hopkinson (Director of Property Services), Trevor Lincoln (Director of Business Planning), Linda Milan (Company Secretary), Maxine Newton (Board Support Officer).

**Also in Attendance**

Maureen Harkin (DMBC)

**Members of the Public**

Mr David Farrell, Mr Turner

**1. Apologies and Quorum**

1.1 Apologies were received from James Parkin, Cllr Bill Mordue and Mike Hardy.

1.2 It was noted that a quorum was present. Peter Chapman chaired the meeting.

**2. Declarations of Interest by the Board**

2.1 Lyn Ralph declared an interest in items 9 & 10.

**3. Minutes of meeting held on 6 June 2007 and Matters Arising**

3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2007 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

**3.2 Matters Arising**

3.2.1 The Chair welcomed Kate Radovanovic back to the meeting after some time spent away on maternity leave.

3.2.2 **Minute 4.3** – The Chief Executive advised that Councillor Paul Coddington had volunteered to take up the position of Vice Chair

**ACTION**

subject to Board approval.

**The Board approved the appointment of Paul Coddington to the vacancy of Vice - Chair.**

3.2.3 **Minute 4.5** – One member enquired whether any arrangements had been made for Yvette Cooper to pay Doncaster and SLHD a visit following achievement of 2 stars. He was informed that whilst this was a good idea no arrangements had been made.

#### **4. Chief Executive's Report**

4.1 **Staff Conference** – the Chief Executive advised that due to the adverse weather conditions leading to some of our customers suffering sever flooding the staff conference had been postponed and was now to take place during the first week in October.

4.2 **2 Star Celebrations** – for the same reasons the Staff party will now also take place later in the year.

4.3 Gillian Taylor joined the meeting.

4.4 **Apprentices** – 10 new apprentices joined the company on Monday 30 July, 6 of which were male and 4 of which were female. SLHD now had over 50 craft and modern apprentices.

They were presented with toolboxes at a small ceremony held to present awards to the most promising 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year apprentices and also the Apprentice of the Year award and welcome the new recruits to the company. Trophies were presented to Andy Wilson as the most promising 1<sup>st</sup> year apprentice and Mark Norris as the most promising 2<sup>nd</sup> year apprentice. The Apprentice of the year award was presented to Katie Plummer.

4.5 **Flood News** – the Chief Executive pointed out that allocations of properties had returned to normal in most areas but it was agreed that a few more properties may be required to assist those made homeless.

SLHD was working closely with DMBC on the flood restoration. He advised that SLHD staff had worked approximately 7,500 hours on flood related activities with costs in excess of £130,000. This has had a major affect on the company's budgets and impacted on service delivery.

4.6 **Housing Green Paper – Homes for the future: more affordable, more sustainable** – referring to the consolidated brief that was available for members to collect after the meeting the Chief Executive highlighted that the paper indicated that consideration is being given to allowing 2 star ALMO's to be

involved in the building of new homes and this may allow SLHD to contribute to the building of new homes sooner than we had previously envisaged.

- 4.7 **Choice Based Lettings (CBL)** – The Director of Customer Services updated the Board advising that SLHD was in discussions with DMBC to agree a revised implementation date because of the impact of the floods and the need to divert staff to emergency work. Although this was still being considered it was suggested that December 2007 would allow sufficient time to introduce the required systems.
- 4.8 A member enquired about the progression made with the development of the property shop. They were informed that this would be part of Phase II of the CBL project.

## 5. **Equality & Diversity Progress Report**

- 5.1 The Director of Customer Services presented this report that updated the Board on the progress made on the Equality & Diversity strategy.
- 5.2 Referring to the report she highlighted that the Equality & Diversity Strategy was approved by the Board on 1 February 2006. Progress was reported in the action plan which contained 33 actions, 11 (33%) have been completed, 21 (64%) are on target and 1 is outside target (action 3.9).

**Action 3.9 – Make all SLHD buildings accessible to disabled people** – she explained that this action was outside target because it was being reviewed in light of the Mayors white paper. It was part of a wider DMBC strategy review and she felt it would be totally inappropriate for SLHD to go ahead and progress in isolation.

- 5.3 **Action 1.3 - Achieve Level 4 of Equality Standard** – she pointed out that this was a good demonstration of working in partnership. Level 4 could only be achieved in conjunction with DMBC, the tight timescales involved for the target complete date were also highlighted.
- 5.4 **Action 2.1 – Analyse Customer Profile** – the Board were advised that 55% of the customer profile questionnaires were complete.
- 5.5 **Action 2.5 – Increase Confidence of Tenants that we are dealing with hate motivated crime** – Board members were informed that area offices are now Hate Crime Reporting Centres, SLHD was working closely with DMBC on this important issue.

- 5.6 **Action 3.8 – Investigate Pilot project for Sanctuary Rooms for victims of Domestic Violence** – The Audit Commission were very complimentary regarding the company's lead on the initiative for Sanctuary Rooms for victims of domestic violence, and that a lot of work had been done on the initiative.

Members enquired what constituted a sanctuary room. They were informed that it was a designated room in a property, usually on the first floor, that gave additional protection to victims of abuse. The additional protection usually includes doors opening outwards and hinges on the inside of the room, a drop ladder to give an additional means of escape and a phone to request assistance. Special locks also provided additional external protection. They were advised that such measures tailored to the individuals needs often gives people empowerment to stay in their homes. Financial costs were minimal as experience of previous schemes has been that such measures have only been required on approximately 12 occasions per year.

- 5.7 A member enquired if BME groups were involved in the Sanctuary Room pilot project as experience of BME groups involvement on similar projects had seen a significant impact on the number of cases being recorded.

**The Director of Customer Services advised she would investigate.** JJ

- 5.8 **The Board noted and approved the contents of the report.**

**6. Monitoring SLA's**

- 6.1 The Director of Business Planning presented this report that informed members of results of performance monitoring and quality checking of the Councils services delivered via Service Level Agreements.

- 6.2 Referring to the report he drew Board members attention to the key findings. He commented that solid progress had been made but there were still areas for improvement. The findings were based on feedback from SLHD staff and customers. He advised in the past the focus on reviewing SLAs had been on value for money and the company had been successful in achieving that. In future the focus would concentrate more on the quality of service.

- 6.3 He proposed that future reports brought to the Board were reported on an exception basis only.

TL/JD

**The Board agreed and noted the contents of the report.**

**7. IT Strategy & Action Plan**

7.1 The Director of Business Planning presented an update report to the Board on progress with the major actions in the IT Strategy, and provided an updated action plan for the next 18 months.

7.2 Referring to the report he gave a summary of the major projects that have been progressed and have been completed since the strategy has been approved in December 2006.

He pointed out that in respect of TASK the housekeeping work and system fixes do appear to have worked and the system has been more robust. He advised that a comprehensive report would be submitted to the Executive Management Team, and subsequently to Board, in late September to advise whether the system fully meets the needs of the business.

7.3 He went on to give a brief summary of the main planned improvements from July to December 2007. A member queried what percentage of mobile working the company carried out. They were informed that it was currently a very small percentage of the company's full range of services. In future this may be extended to the rents and repairs departments and dependent on outcomes a review would take place whether to roll it out throughout the rest of the company.

The Chief Executive added that as it offered loan worker protection. Not only does it improve business efficiencies it also improves the safety of our operatives and officers.

7.4 **The Board noted the contents of the report.**

**8. Decency Appeals Panel Update**

8.1 The Director of Business Planning provided Board members with details of the appeals procedure. He explained it had been revised following comments and observations made during the Board Conference on 6 June 2007.

8.2 He advised that the panel should consist of three Board Members, one from each stakeholder group and that meetings were to be called on an 'ad hoc' basis with a rota of representation.

8.3 A member re-iterated his previous suggestion that members of the Area Boards to be considered for inclusion onto the panel.

8.4 The Chief Executive responded by suggesting that the Decency Appeals Panel was possibly not the appropriate vehicle to provide further involvement from the Area Boards. He suggested that the Terms of Reference for Area Boards should be reviewed and a

report brought back to the Board.

8.5 The Chair concluded saying that the situation should be monitored and if the Board could not meet the resource needs of the appeals process the possibilities of using the Area Boards would be considered at that time.

8.6 **The Board approved the report as submitted.**

## 9. **Repairs & Maintenance Market Testing**

9.1 The Director of Property Services presented this report that gave Board members on update on progress with the project to Market Test the Repairs and Maintenance service.

9.2 From the project plan he informed the Board that the company had seen its first set of trading accounts and the DLO is making a modest surplus.

9.3 He advised members that the stores function had transferred to SLHD. The stock take exercise took place during the first stages of the flooding emergency.

He added that the TASK & Repairs systems were more reliable and as a whole the project was on track and to plan.

9.4 The Director of Property Services gave a presentation to the Board on the Transport Review highlighting the main findings of the review and efficiency measures identified. He commented that in the first year if most of the recommendations were adopted the company could make efficiency savings of approximately £50k.

9.5 Members raised concerns that it appeared that DMBC did not know how many SLHD repair vehicles it leased.

A member suggested that the Transport post being suggested should be that of a Fleet Manager having a full range of responsibilities rather than an administrative post.

9.6 The Chief Executive added that the report had confirmed their expectations and that this should be seen as an opportunity to improve the company's efficiency by the use of "greener" more efficient vehicles and fuels.

9.7 Councillor George Beck asked permission from the Chair and left the meeting.

**10. Election & Selection of Tenant Members Progress Report**

10.1 The Company Secretary presented this report that updated members following the recruitment notice in the May edition of Houseproud.

10.2 The Board were advised that the closing date for receipt of applications for the Tenant Board Members was 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2007.

Two candidates had come forward for the North West sector and arrangements were in place to hold an election in August 2007.

10.3 No applications had been received in the North East sector, five options were given to the Board to address the way forward.

The Board agreed to option three in the report, which was to place a further advertisement in Houseproud (with the co-opted Area Board Member being asked to remain on the Board until the selection process is complete, if this is after the date of the 2007 Annual General Meeting).

LM

10.4 She went onto explain that the closing date for Tenant Area Board members was 6 July 2007. Two candidates had applied for the position, one in each of the areas however there was an additional position in each area. Members were given two options in the report to address the way forward.

The Board agreed to option one which was a further advertisement to be placed in the September edition of Houseproud with candidates being interviewed and appointed as soon as possible.

LM

10.5 The Chief Executive added that a lesson had been learnt in respect of recruitment advertising and better promotion would be used throughout the TARA's for future vacancies.

He commented that there had been a good response to the Independent Board Member and Area Board Member vacancies that were being considered next week.

**11. Any Other Business**

11.1 A member passed the contact details for the donation of a four birth caravan for the flood victims to the DMBC representative. It was confirmed that DMBC are reviewing all the options.

**12. Date of Next Board Meeting**

12.1 Wednesday 3 October 2007.

12.2 The public were asked to leave the meeting in view of the confidential nature of the business to be discussed.

**13. Urgent Action Taken by the Chief Executive**

13.1 The Chief Executive advised Board members of urgent actions taken by himself, under section 2.7.2.1 of standing orders regarding the Window Contract Evaluation Report and sought approval.

13.2 He informed members that during the floods a Finance & Performance Committee meeting was scheduled to take place. Drawing members' attention to Appendix A – Windows Evaluation Report, he advised that this report would have been considered at that meeting unfortunately the meeting was cancelled and following consultation with both the Chair of the Board and the Chair of the Finance & Performance Committee the Chief Executive used powers under section 2.7.2.1 of standing orders to approve the report.

13.3 **The Board noted the actions taken.**

**For Information Only**

***Confidential Item – Not Open to the Press or Public***

14. The Board noted and approved the following minutes:

- Minutes of the Finance & Performance Committee held on 29 March 07.

***Non Confidential Item***

15. The Board noted approved the following minutes:

- Minutes of the West Area, Joint Area & East Area Board meetings held on 16 April 07 & 14 May 07.

The meeting ended at 7.27pm.