



**PEAKS & PLAINS**  
Housing Trust

**Minutes of the Trust's Board Meeting held on 21 March 2017, 6.00pm at Ropewalks, Macclesfield**

<b>Present</b>	John Hudson	JH	Chairman
	Tom Agar	TA	Board Member
	Alison Light	AL	Board Member (from Item 3)
	Kate Lindley	KL	Board Member
	Gordon Richardson	GR	Board Member
	Matthew Cunningham	MC	Board Member
	Paul Findlow	PF	Board member
	Tim Pinder	TP	Chief Executive
	Greg van Enk-Bones	GvEB	Director of Resources
	Gill MacDonald	GM	Executive PA
	Jenny St Leger	JSL	Chair – Challenge Group (for Item 2 only)
	Anne Preece	AP	Challenge Group (for Item 2 only)
	Madeleine Bartlett	MB	Customer Engagement Officer (for Item 2 only)

**Apologies for Absence**

Pauline Gosling – Governance Officer

**Declarations Of Interest**

GR declared that his partner works for the Trust and is mentioned several times in the Challenge Group report

Prior to the meeting commencing JH explained that AL would be attending the meeting but arriving late and until she did, the meeting would not be quorate. Therefore it was proposed that the meeting would continue as usual until AL arrived and then any key decisions reached would be reviewed with AL for formal approval. This was agreed by the meeting.

**1. Minutes of the Meeting Held 17<sup>th</sup> January 2017**

The minutes of the meeting held 17<sup>th</sup> January 2017 were reviewed.

**The Board Decided:**

**600)** That the minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2017 be agreed as a true and accurate record and be signed off by the Chairman.

JH stated that he found the development session with Frank Jordan very interesting and informative resulting in good debate and thanked Frank for attending

PF said that Frank had commented that he enjoyed the session very much and thought it had been challenging but very cooperative

## 2. Challenge Group Inspection Report on Digital Services

JH welcomed JSL and AP to the meeting. He thought it very timely given the next Board discussion session on the balance of our approach on the delivery of services and how digitalisation feeds into this.

JSL felt that every aspect had been covered by Challenge Group that could be covered and suggested that the iTea and chat sessions could be run a bit longer as, with the launch of online repairs, the support provided in these sessions would be very beneficial to tenants who needed more time to adjust to using the new system.

JH considered the report very thorough and thought provoking piece of work doing exactly what was expected of Challenge Group.

TP stated that he was appreciative of the open minded approach of the report as the digitalisation programme does represent a very significant way that we deliver services and it would be very easy to be fearful of those changes. The messages given are that the Trust is encouraged to continue with the digitalisation plans making sure that it is as easy, straight forward and as convenient it can be.

JH welcomed the balance of the report and the feedback which shows an overwhelming positive customer experience coming across. But it is of course important that some of our customers don't get left behind in the process which appears to have been highlighted very well.

TP agreed and said that he fully endorsed the recommendations made in the report and they felt that they would improve the offer that we can make to customers.

The Board discussed the report and made suggestions for promoting the online services.

GR asked if there was a timescale for the implementation of the recommendations. TP said that some of the recommendations were based around the programme that will go live in two weeks time and the others were in support of the development for the future of the system.

JSL suggested that Challenge Group revisit the recommendations in 3-4 months once the system was up and running.

### **The Board Decided:**

**601)** To approve the 10 recommendations made by Challenge Group in their report

JSL, AP and MB left the meeting

## **Chief Executive's briefing (verbal)**

TP gave a verbal update to the Board on key issues within the Sector and Trust including the Housing White paper and its focus on increasing supply by improving planning, building faster, diversifying the market and an extension of help to buy initiative.

TP had attended a roundtable conversation with the HCA on their current thinking and their proposals around the reduction of the consents regime (eg for the disposal of land, making a rule change, conversation to a CBS etc).

The power of Local Authorities in housing associations was also discussed at the event. TP outlined the HCA's ideas to pass secondary legislation later in the year to cap local authority voting rights at 24% (current 33.3% for the Trust) removing the effective Veto a local authority may have on special resolutions. There was no desire to remove local authority Board members.

TP also outlined the HCA's consultation on changing the Tenant involvement and empowerment standard and their suggestion is that for tenanted stock there should be a meaningful consultation with tenants – to protect against tenanted social housing being transferred to the market sector via subsidiaries or other landlords.

HCA also shared that they thought that, in the Autumn Budget, it was likely that there would be an announcement from the Chancellor around rent post 2020, HCA has told government that the whole sector required certainty.

[AL arrived to meeting at 6.42pm]

Meanwhile the NHF have been mounting a campaign and dialogue with government around rent flexibilities, partly on the back of the ONS reclassification.

### **Peaks & Plains**

TP updated the Board that our application to convert to a Community Benefit Society had now been lodged with the FCA.

Tenders have now gone out to 6 potential contractors for the office refurbishment.

Recruitment is currently underway for a new Director of Customers, looking for someone with more commercial experience rather than sector – interviews set for beginning of April.

Also recruiting for the position of Assistant Director of Homes, with interviews planned for the middle of April.

Development opportunities – we have now been awarded £100k for someone to commission someone to undertake a masterplanning exercise for the Moss estate.

We have made progress on securing the Georgian Mill, we are in talks with the landowner and developer and have run financial appraisals and we are satisfied that we can make it work subject to some testing of some of the value assumptions.

We have been looking at a number of opportunities in the town centre and trying to secure

some options and legal interest in some of the sites.

Wellbeing programme – the public launch of One You Cheshire East took place in Crewe last week. This project is Public Health funded and is looking to improve people's health and reduce health inequality through outreach and offers services to stop drinking/smoking, lose weight etc. We are delivering this service with a number of partner organisations.

We have been successful in securing a contract through the CCCG called Talking Therapies together with the Big Life Group, managing mental health.

At this point, JH welcomed AL to the meeting and recapped on the Board decisions:

**600)** That the minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2017 be agreed as a true and accurate record and be signed off by the Chairman.

**601)** To approve the 10 recommendations made by Challenge Group in their report  
AL confirmed her agreement with these decisions

### **3. Chair's Executive Actions**

Board was informed of an executive action taken by the Chair between meetings. The background information was included in the Board papers.

**The Board decided:**

**602)** To endorse the approval to the rewording of the special resolution to seek conversion to community Benefit Society

### **5. Performance Report to January 2017**

Board received the performance report to January

GvEB highlighted the main points in the report:

- Rent collection – up to January 2017 is at 98.40%, which is 1% behind the target of 99.40%. Performance is in line with previous forecasts, at the highest level in the past 3 years and is expected to improve by the end of the year. As previously reported we do not expect to meet this year end target, but we have got more teams involved in collection heading for the end of the year to do as much as we can. In the new year, new structure and online methods will support an improvement in performance. It should be noted however, that this is an improvement on the previous year's performance
- Gas safety certificates – 100% for 14 months
- Empty property rent loss – very strong performance
- New homes starts and completions – currently amber but expected to reach targets by the end of the year.
- Unsold SOs – very low as one mortgage fell through. JH felt that the commentary was not giving the big picture on shared ownership. This will be revised in future.
- Responsive repairs customer satisfaction has returned to previous high levels after a dip.
- % self sufficient rent payers – just below our 95% target
- Non-social housing turnover – higher than targets about 8% against a 6% target

**The Board decided:**

**604)** To note the performance dashboard to January 2017

**6. Feedback from Audit Committee**

MC gave feedback from the committee meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2017. He thanked GR for Chairing the meeting in his absence.

Data breach investigation from ICSO now completed and no further action to be taken which was very reassuring not only from the ICSO findings but also the internal approach taken.

GR fed back on the Internal Audit reports – Asset and Performance Management audits both substantial.

Committee approved the revisions to the Scheme of Delegation and Financial Regulations.

MC noted that the HCA are much interested in seeing that stress testing is driven by the Board and not officer driven. Board members need to understand key risks to associations and how they're going to get out of that.

**The Board decided:**

**605)** To note the feedback from the Audit Committee meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2017

**7. Feedback from Governance Committee**

AL gave feedback from the committee meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2017.

Committee agreed to go to the unions with a pay review of 2.75% over 2 years. TP reported that there were three unions involved in negotiations – two had accepted and the other was out to postal vote with results due in on 23<sup>rd</sup> March.

AL reported that the Chair remuneration was approved in line with the proposed pay review.

Committee agreed to continue with the self assessments for Board appraisals to include a wider feedback group from other people within the organisations.

**The Board decided:**

**606)** To note the feedback from the Governance Committee meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2017

**8. Policy Approvals**

**The Board decided to approve the following policies:**

- 607.i)** Scheme of Delegation and Financial Regulations
- 607.ii)** Fraud & Irregularity policy
- 607.iii)** Chair Succession policy
- 607.iv)** Remuneration policy
- 607.v)** Board and Employee Expenses policies

9. **Any Other Business**

TA asked about the current structure of the Governance and Audit Committees and whether they would be reverting to being held on separate days again. JH reminded the Board that the decision had been made to hold the two meetings at the same time during the CBS conversion process to ensure timely decisions. There was still an issue of Board membership and quoracy at meetings given that AL was the only tenant Board member and it was agreed that focus needed to be given to resolving this as soon as possible

JH looked at the forward agenda for the 18<sup>th</sup> April Board discussion session when the topic would be “Defining our customer service ethos and delivery”.

Following attendance at the Board Members Conference early in the year, JH reported that there was quite a lot of focus around HAs revisiting their social mission and reflecting on that which is important with the business plan process. What are we here for as well as who are we?

JH commented that he enjoyed the last edition of PlainSpeaking and MC commented that he thought that the App was working really well

GM informed the meeting that the CIH Housing Conference would be taking place in Manchester on 27<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> June 2017 and she would be sending out information to Board members should they wish to attend.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm

Signed.....

Date.....