



**PEAKS & PLAINS**  
Housing Trust

**Minutes of the Trust's Board Meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2017, The Boardroom,  
Ropewalks, Macclesfield**

<b><u>Present</u></b>	John Hudson	JH	Chairman
	Alison Light	AL	Board Member
	Gordon Richardson	GR	Board Member
	Matthew Cunningham	MC	Board Member
	Paul Findlow	PF	Board member
	Kate Lindley	KL	Board Member
	Tom Agar	TA	Board Member
	Simon Leighton	SL	Board Member
	Sam Knuckey	SK	Board Member
	Tim Pinder	TP	Chief Executive
	Greg van Enk-Bones	GvEB	Director of Homes & Resources
	Jamie Hutchinson	JaH	Director of Customers
	Margaret Goddard	MG	Assistant Director of Homes (presentation only)
	Nigel Bennett	NB	Head of Development (presentation only)
	John Cooke	JC	Pozzoni (presentation only)
	Eleanor McCallum	EM	Pozzoni (presentation only)
	Nikki Pearson	NP	Governance Officer
	Pauline Gosling	PG	Business Support Administrator

**Presentation on Georgian Mill by Pozzoni**

Board members received a presentation on the facades of Georgian Mill by the Architects Pozzoni

Following the presentation Board agreed that the scheme must stand out from the norm so they will take the 2/3 weeks available during planning application process to look at the proposals in more detail.

Board also agreed that there is a need to speak out strongly on what the Trust wants, even if that means taking on the planners.

**Apologies for Absence and introduction of new Board Members**

There were no apologies for absence

JH welcomed Simon and Sam to their first formal Board meeting and thanked everyone for allowing their induction programme to get underway. Both Simon and Sam had attended the NHF Conference for 1 day each.

### **Chief Executive Current Issues update**

TP briefed Board on current issues from a National, Local and Trust perspective:

#### **Nationally:**

- HCA are now charging fees to regulate the sector, for us that means £12k for first 6 months (to end of financial year). In return the fees will change the relationship with a more qualitative approach from them.
- Government's intention to regulate the power of Local Authorities in HA boards, currently in secondary legislation to remove LA voting rights, the timetable suggests this may be April next year.
- At the NHF conference last week it was expected that the Secretary of State would make an announcement on the rent formula post 2020, however this was not the case.
- Major theme from the Conference was the commitment to growth and how housing associations will be involved.
- Following Grenfell the Government is seeking views from tenants around the country on how assured they feel. Two of our Challenge Group members will be attending.

#### **Locally:**

- 'There's no place like Macclesfield' – we have been invited to join a project board along with major local employers. The Trust is seen as key partner and will be very actively engaged.
- TP made contact with Esther McVey when she was elected to talk about the Trust's role in her constituency. A meeting is arranged in 2 weeks' time which will build on the good relationship we have with David Rutley.
- Following the call for an independent review of build regulations and fire safety the key for the Trust will be its leaseholder relationship.
- The Trust has been invited to join the Places Board to help shape industry and infrastructure of Cheshire East.

#### **Trust:**

- Meeting to take place shortly with a contractor the Trust has worked with before regarding offsite accommodation.
- The new office has been very well accepted as thought with staff feeling at home within half an hour of arriving on the first day. The spaces are working really well

and with no cupboards there is very little paper in the office, agile working is also working really well.

- The Staff Conference took place recently with two aims:
  - Rolling out the values and getting staff buy in and understanding which will be fed into board away day in November.
  - Gaining staff views on where they want to take the Trust in the next 5 years which will also be fed into the away day.
- Discussions were also held on expanding the geography of where we operate and wellbeing services.
- Discussions took place on our future spatial strategy between some board members to help Exec frame discussions for the whole Board at the Away-Day.

JH stated that the NHF conference was very good, but Grenfell Fire rightly cast a shadow over the conference. Government had focussed on longer term policy (Green Paper) but conference was emphasising the need to do things more urgently.

JH also endorsed the good feeling on coming into the new office on the first day and also signing off on the lease for some of the space we have given up.

#### **Declarations of Interest**

All Board members declared an interest in item 3, the approval of the new Board Remuneration Policy.

#### **Chair Executive Action**

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

#### **The Board Decided:**

- 630)** To endorse the executive actions taken by the Chair in relation to:
1. The membership of the Sub Committees
  2. To defer the review of the Customer Experience Policy until June 2018

**1. Minutes of the Meeting Held 18<sup>th</sup> July and matters arising**

The minutes of the meeting held 18<sup>th</sup> July 2017 were reviewed.

#### **The Board Decided:**

- 631)** That the minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2017 be agreed as a true and accurate record and be signed off by the Chairman.

There were no matters arising

**2. Value for Money Statement**

Board received the draft VFM statement which is increasingly seen as proxy by regulator on how viable housing associations are.

TP asked Board members if they felt the statement conveys a sense of transparency, reminding them that they need to feel it's sufficient before it is signed off.

TP confirmed that where benchmark figures are included the same benchmark group has been used as in previous assessments.

Whilst last year the HCA said the VFM statement was ok they also said it could contain more forward forecasts.

TP informed that the statement which needs to be published by 30th September includes some broader data to try and prove productivity, he asked if Board felt it is a fair reflection and reasonable to meet requirements of HCA.

SL commented that from the perspective of a new member looking at it that it reads quite well but felt that future head office costs and development costs could both be positive messages.

TP explained that the statement refers to the financial year 16/17 and that current benchmarking data is not readily available but did agree the point that development could be a positive story.

AL suggested that the use of existing garage sites for development would be good example of vfm.

KL thought the document was really thorough but from customer point of view some of language may not be easily understandable.

TP explained the differences with benchmarking – the Trust may have higher repair costs but we do less repairs than others. He also said a piece of work is being undertaken to show how well we are doing well against others.

MC thought the statement was a great summary for HCA and for the Board but asked if there was a way to share it with tenants as it is one of a very few documents that doesn't include tenants views or comments.

TP explained that it was planned to share the Annual Review at the Annual Residents Meeting.

**The Board Decided:**

**632.i)** That the Draft VFM statement meets the HCA's criteria.

**632.ii)** That the suggested additions and amendments to the Self assessment be delegated to the Chief Executive

**3. Governance Verbal Update**

AL gave Feedback from Governance Committee meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> September, the minutes are available via the portal. Committee considered the following:

- Agreed the AGM ordinary resolutions including Board member appointments and special resolutions:
  - Resident and independent shareholding to have parity
  - A Board Quorum to require any three Board Members (regardless of type)
- Agreed the Terms of Reference and the effectiveness of the committee
- Reviewed the Board member Remuneration Policy and recommended to Board for approval
- Agreed remuneration will be reviewed externally every 3 years
- Discussed Board quorum going forward to any three as currently a tenant has must always be present
- Reviewed terms of ref and committee effective
- JaH gave an update on the tenant empowerment standards
- Received a report on productivity
- Received HR updates including legal update

AL commented that committee were concerned about the level of sickness, JaH explained the work that is in progress to improve the level of absence.

JH thanked AL for her involvement in the Board member recruitment process.

PH asked for clarification on 1.7 of the Terms of reference. It was explained that 1.7 now allows for committee to act as a review panel for aspects involving the Chief Executive, Executives, Board members, the Board Chair and members of Challenge Group, with Board as decision maker.

**The Board Decided:**

- 633.i)** To note the feedback from Governance Committee
- 633.ii)** To approve the Board Remuneration policy
- 633.iii)** To approve the Governance Committee Terms of Reference
- 633.iv)** To approve the AGM ordinary resolutions including Board member appointments and special resolutions

**4. Away Day Proposals**

TP suggested that the Away Day (9/10<sup>th</sup> November) be extended to include an overnight stay this year as there are new Board members and the content will be quite intense. He also suggested that the evening could be used to invite someone along to talk about the bigger picture and future trends, not specifically housing but more demographic.

TP outlined some of the items to be covered at the Away Day:

- The next 5 year plan
- What are the outcomes we are looking to deliver
- Tracking back then to decide how we will deliver them

He confirmed that feedback from staff and customers will be included but that it is the job of the Board to decide on the Trust's future objectives.

The work being done with staff on values will also be shared.

JH asked if everyone was comfortable with that proposal and Board members agreed they were.

## **6. Performance Report to July 2017**

GvEB explained the suite of KPIs for benefit of the new Board members

Board reviewed the performance dashboard to July 2017

- Gas safety remains at 100% record still going strong
- % rent lost through empty properties is getting better but has not quite met target

JaH explained that he has identified that where we get a period of 40 plus voids per month we are going to have an issue. Where this happens the work of the repairs teams will be reconfigured. We have also been speaking to contractors with a view to outsourcing work to limit impact. JaH has identified that when we have more than 40 voids in a month or two consecutive months of more than 35 we will use resources from the planned team and where appropriate outsource to contractors.

Further work is being carried out on identifying customer issues, mainly 1 and 2 bed flats, looking at whether this is an impact of bedroom tax, alongside work on managing the 3 year trend on affordability.

JaH stated that there is a noticeable relationship between short term and improvement long term voids with 1 short term void taking 40 days to complete because it was in such poor state of repair. During the next 12 months we will be looking at an early warning system to highlight potential voids.

- increase in the number of homes – all green but needs to be watched as a lot of growth is forecast for last quarter of the year
- Shared Ownership – is risk watch for Board of units remaining unsold for 6 months
- Repairs satisfaction – is performing well
- Self sufficient with rent payments – is going ok
- Repairs reporting on line has not done so well

JaH explained that the customer service team has been restructured within budget which has released staff to encourage customers to go on line. The repairs team are also

pushing to identify customers who could go online at beginning of their visit rather than the end.

JaH is talking to consultants to analyse where were working

KL – asked if alternatives are being looked at for customers who are struggling – JaH confirmed they are with the restructuring of the phone service.

- Net promoter score - services customers would recommend is doing really well beating the upper quartile for the sector
- Diversity of income streams – the target has been increased, to reflect new contracts that have been awarded since the targets were first set.

#### **The Board Decided:**

**635)** To note the performance dashboard to July 2017

### **7. Health and Safety : Board Assurance**

Board received a report including the annual RIDDOR reportable accidents. This year the report has been expanded to provide the Board with assurance that Health and Safety obligations more broadly are complied with.

Ultimately, it is Board's responsibility for ensuring that Health and Safety risks are appropriately managed and mitigated and the Trust's legal obligations complied with. The Board therefore needs to satisfy itself that it can reasonably draw the necessary assurance from the Executive team.

TP informed Board that he used to chair the Health and Safety committee to embed our obligations. Recently Compliance Groups have been set led by the relevant responsible manager owning the risk and supported by our external consultant covering the following areas:

- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM 2015)
- The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998
- The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 – Legionnaires' Disease – The control of legionella bacteria in water systems. 2013
- The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989
- The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012

Each of these groups report into the Operational Health & Safety committee which is chaired by an Assistant Director who is responsible to the SLT for its effective delivery.

AL requested that Board are made aware of RIDDOR reportable accidents when they happens rather than annually. She also asked if the Health & Safety minutes on the intranet could be made available to Board.

GR commented that currently the only KPI related to H&S is gas safety, which addresses the health of customers but there are none relating to staff. He would like to see a KPI related to staff absence.

TP explained that work is currently being undertaken with managers on identifying stress. He also informed Board that the Trust has always offered monthly wellbeing days including health MOT's.

Board requested training to help them understand exactly what their responsibilities are.

Board members were asked if they felt that Health & Safety should be reinstated into the Corporate risk map. All Board members agreed that it should.

**The Board Decided:**

**636.i)** That Health & Safety matters are being managed appropriately

**636.ii)** That training for Board members on their responsibilities be provided

**636.iii)** To note the RIDDOR reports for July 2016-July2017

The following items were made available to Board for information

**8. Annual Safeguarding Update**

No comments were received

**9. Summary of regulatory returns**

No comments were received

The meeting closed at 20.30

Signed.....

Date.....