



PEAKS & PLAINS
Housing Trust

Minutes of the Trust's Board Meeting held on 20th November 2018, 6.00pm at Ropewalks, Macclesfield

<u>Present</u>	John Hudson	JH	Chairman
	Matthew Cunningham	MC	Board Member
	Paul Findlow	PF	Board member
	Sam Knuckey	SK	Board Member
	Kate Lindley	KL	Board Member
	Simon Leighton	SL	Board Member
	Gordon Richardson	GR	Board Member
	Tom Agar	TA	Board Member
	Jamie Hutchinson	JaH	Director of Customers
	Alison Light	AL	Board Member
	Tim Pinder	TP	Chief Executive
	Beverley Swift	BS	Interim Director of Homes & Resources
	Nikki Pearson	NP	Governance Officer
	Sam Brady	SB	Director from DTP Partner (Board observing)
	Liz Holmes	LH	Assistant Director of Finance

Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence

Declarations Of Interest

PF declared interest in Item 5: Allocations Arrangements & Choice Based Lettings

The Chair introduced Sam McGrady from David Tolson Partners (DTP) to the meeting. Sam is observing the meeting as part of the Board Appraisal- a key element of good governance and important regulatory requirement. JH reminded Board members to return their appraisal questionnaire to DTP.

1. Minutes of meeting held 18th September 2018 and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting held 18th September 2018 were reviewed.

The Board decided:

695) That the minutes of the meeting held on 18th September 2018 be agreed as a true and accurate record and be signed off by the Chairman, once paragraph numbering errors have been corrected.

1a. Matters Arising

- Matters arising add to action plan. Comparative information about other associations with regards to DC Pension Schemes added to Board agenda in January.

3. Approval of Chair Executive Actions

- 3.1 Signing of Telecare Transfer Agreement with Johnnie Johnson Housing Trust
- 3.2 Appointment of Deputy Secretary
- 3.3 NP was appointed Deputy Company Secretary in the absence of GvEB. However as this is her last Board meeting, TP thanked her for her support to the Board and proposed that JaH be appointed as Secretary.

The Board decided:

696) To approve the Chair executive actions and to appoint JaH as Secretary

4. Wellbeing Cheshire East Update

- 4.1 **Trustlink:** Cheshire East Council has appointed Wellbeing Limited as their provider to deliver their alarm monitoring and response contract that we were due to exit on 30th November. To ensure a smooth and successful transfer of service for customers and staff, we have agreed to their request that we extend our involvement until the 10th December. The Board agreed to the Director of Customers' request that we do not agree to any further extensions based upon increasing challenges to staff the service and the disproportionate cost of doing so. Contingencies will be explored with a Manchester based call center back-up.
- 4.2 Board were informed that Wellbeing Ltd intend to make 10 redundancies from the 27 due to transfer. These monitoring roles are delivered from their Eastbourne HQ which proved unattractive for staff to relocate to. We cannot influence this decision nor the timing of the redundancy payments of 24th December, which poses a potential reputational issue for us to manage.

The Board decided:

697) To approve extension to the 10th December

5. Allocations Arrangements & Choice Based Lettings

- 5.1 The report sought to elicit Board support to a direction of travel for the Trust to focus its allocations on creating sustainable tenancies and communities and in developing an allocations policy that reflects that focus.
- 5.2 The Board supported the fact that as a General Needs Social Landlord we did not have the skills, experience or resources to provide the high intensity support required for an increasing proportion of applicants to have any chance of sustaining a tenancy. It was felt that granting a tenancy without support to vulnerable applicants often set them up to fail and ran the risk of unsettling neighbourhoods and communities.
- 5.3 The Board had previously been made aware of a high tenancy failure rate in the first two years of tenancy due in part to the lack of supporting information with applicants coming

through CBL and in part due to the reduction in appropriate care and support for such vulnerable tenants.

- 5.4 At present the Exec Team does not feel that the Trust is sufficiently in control of lettings due to an imbalance in our relationship with the two CBL arrangements we belong to.
- 5.5 Board discussed being restless in getting the right customer in the right home, to maximize the impact on the Place making and improving lives, including the rights of neighbours and the customers.
- 5.6 Stafford's CBL partnership arrangements were identified by the Chair as a possible exemplar of good practice. The Exec team will look at this ahead of further discussions and negotiations with our two CBL partnerships.
- 5.7 Board were keen to ensure that we consulted our partner Associations in the respective CBL schemes to provide a united front if possible.
- 5.8 Agreed that the approach would be to discuss at officer level initially before potentially discussing with the portfolio holders.

The Board decided:

- 698) i)** To note the inherent current risk levels, the emerging social and CEC relationships risks and the limited level of controls in place to mitigate those risks through the partnership agreement.
- 698)ii)** To support the direction of travel outlined in the report and receive a report in due course on proposed future partnership arrangements.

6. Affordable Rent Setting & Five year fixed tenancies

- 6.1 Board agreed that the issues in this paper go to the heart of why we exists and who we are here to help.
- 6.2 A number of Board members queried the recommendation to end fixed term tenancies and whether they had a continued role. TP responded to say that, in the first wave of fixed term tenancies coming up for renewal, there were not any where we had grounds not to continue. L&Q Housing Association found the same on its London tenancies. Fixed term tenancies never became the norm and the Trust is in a minority of Associations offering them.
- 6.3 Board wanted assurance that we would continue offering 12 month probationary tenancies to address any issues facing future sustainability.
- 6.4 Board reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring that our rents should be affordable to those in low paid employment and accepted that uncapped affordable rents would not achieve this.
- 6.5 Board asked about the report reference to the impact on S.106s if affordable rents were capped. TP responded to say that lower rents would lead to lower offer prices to House builders, making it more challenging to win any competitive bids.

- 6.6 TP drew the Board's attention to the Regulatory Breach caused by levying Affordable Rents on s106 schemes outside Homes England programmes. He updated the report included in the Board pack, by confirming that following more detailed analysis, the number of homes affected is now put at 47 rather than the 52 homes mentioned in the report.
- 6.7 The Board expressed their disappointment that this should have occurred, sought reassurance that systems and controls had been introduced to prevent a repetition. They agreed that tenants should be refunded any overcharged amount, with interest and an ex gratia payment for their inconvenience.
- 6.8 TP notified the Board that the Regulator has now been informed of the breach, and that there must be a risk that it could result in a potential regulatory downgrade from G1.

The Board decided:

- 699) i)** To note the position on the regulatory breach
699) ii) To limit affordable rent levels to LHA levels
699) iii) To end the granting of five year fixed term tenancies.

9. Performance Report

- 9.1 The Board identified that Void management remains a challenge and asked for future reports to distinguish between voids we are keeping unlet in Sheltered Housing schemes, those requiring substantial investment and critically "everyday" turnaround voids. Board want to concentrate on these at the next meeting together with the negative KPIs around development starts/ completions and sales.

The Board decided:

- 702) i)** To note the performance
702) ii) To add action to plan to separate voids from planned and unplanned

10. Audit Committee Update

- 10.1 Committee Chair gave Board a brief verbal update on any matters arising not covered on this Board meeting agenda.

11. Governance Committee Update

- 11.1 Committee Chair gave Board a verbal update although much has been covered at this Board meeting. Having made recommendations on Board resolutions;

The Board decided:

- 703) i)** To reappoint John Hudson as a Board Member and Chair appoint Paul Findlow as a Board Member
703) ii) To reappoint Grant Thornton as auditors

12. Standing Orders Review:

- ST02 Essential Functions of the Board & Board reserved matters
- ST05 Terms of Reference for Governance Committee
- ST10 Framework for approving

The Board decided to approve:

- 704)** ST05 Terms of Reference for Governance Committee
ST10 Framework for approving
ST02 Essential Functions of the Board & Board reserved matters

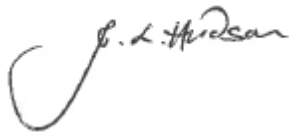
13. Policy Review:

- Rent Collection and Arrears Management Policy
- Treasury Management Policy & Practices
- Code of Conduct
- Performance Framework

The Board decided to approve the following policies:

- 705)** Rent Collection and Arrears Management Policy
Treasury Management Policy & Practices
Code of Conduct
Performance Framework

The meeting closed at 20.30



Signed..... ..

Date.....22nd January 2019.....