

WIGAN AND LEIGH HOUSING COMPANY LIMITED

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

AT WALH HEADQUARTERS

TUESDAY 15th AUGUST 2006

Present:

Members:

Tom Frost (Chair), Pat Cummins, Don Battersby, Marjorie Marsden, Chris Ready, Jean Garlick, Sue Loudon, John Roe, Geoff Roberts, Deborah Lee (part), Mick Baines (part), and Fred Walker (part).

In Attendance:

Ashley Crumbley (Chief Executive), Tony Gerrard (Deputy Chief Executive), Mike Grimes (Area Director) and Edward Flanagan (Board Services and Finance Officer).

Observers

Sheila Darbey and Sandra Latchford

823. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

No apologies for absence were received.

The Chair welcomed new WALH Board Member Jean Garlick to her first meeting.

824. MINUTES:

The minutes of the Board meeting held on 4th July 2006 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

Matters Arising

Finance Committee Meeting (minute 806 refers) The Chair of the Finance Committee advised that the proposed meeting of the Finance Committee had been cancelled due to the absence of a Finance Officer.

Day to Day Repairs Budget Revenue Out-turn 2005/06 (minute 806 refers) The Chief Executive advised that due to capacity issues in the Audit section of Wigan Council the report on the Day to Day Repairs Budget Out-turn was not yet ready. Members requested a report from an external source and commented that the issues had been unresolved for too long. The Chief Executive undertook to ask the Auditors for the report as soon as possible and to bring a report to the Finance Committee.

At this point Deborah Lee joined the meeting.

825. URGENT BUSINESS:

No urgent business was presented to the Board.

At this point Mick Baines joined the meeting.

826. AGENDA ORDER:

Members agreed to move press and public excluded items to the end of the agenda.

827. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC:

Members agreed to exclude the press and public from the items referred to in minutes 832 to 834 as they contained personnel, financial or commercially sensitive information.

ITEMS FOR DECISION:

Open Items

828. COMPANY'S VISION 2006-2016:

The Chief Executive presented a report (circulated) informing the Board of the results of the consultation on the draft vision and to propose that the Board now formally adopts the vision.

At this point Fred Walker joined the meeting.

A discussion followed on various aspects of the vision and on proposals for measuring its success.

Members discussed the various suggested amendments and agreed to include a suggestion by FOTARA 'People feel safe in their own homes and in their estates'. Members also concluded that the word 'estates' should be replaced with 'neighbourhoods' and reference be made to Police Community Support Officers.

It was suggested that Board Members are written to asking for expressions of interest in becoming Board Member champions for each goal.

Votes For: 12

Against 0

Abstentions: 0

It was **AGREED** (a) That the Company's vision as written below for 2006 – 2016 be formally adopted.

(b) To write to Board Members seeking expressions of interest to champion each of the vision's goals.

(c) That the programme for developing the goals be accepted.

WIGAN AND LEIGH HOMES VISION 2006 – 2016

“Better Homes, Brighter Futures”

<u>What we want to achieve</u>		<u>How we will deliver</u>
Goal 1:	<p>Better housing services</p> <p>Targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 90% customer satisfaction. <p>Top performing housing services (Comprehensive Performance Assessment housing score of 3 or 4).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By providing quality customer care, access to services and personal choice. • By delivering quality value for money services.
Goal 2:	<p>Decent homes</p> <p>Targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 95% of Council homes decent by 2010. • Maintain decency standards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By having realistic stock investment programmes. • By providing a quality responsive repair programme.
Goal 3:	<p>Better neighbourhoods</p> <p>Targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing the gap between our estates and the Borough average for crime and anti-social behaviour, street cleanliness index and deprivation. • People feel safe in their own homes and in their neighbourhoods. • Improving image of neighbourhoods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By championing a new approach to Neighbourhood Renewal and stronger communities with greater community participation. • By working with the Community Safety Partnership (including Police Community Support Officers) and others on reducing crime and disorder and improving the street scene.
Goal 4:	<p>Access to affordable homes</p> <p>Targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to 100 additional affordable homes a year • Maximising the use of existing stock to meet housing need. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By working in partnership with Wigan Council in the provision of additional affordable homes for rent and sale focussing on those who cannot afford market prices.
Goal 5:	<p>Housing services for vulnerable people</p> <p>Targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure homelessness Best Value Performance Indicators are at middle or top national thresholds. • Targets for vulnerable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By providing a comprehensive housing advice service to prevent homelessness, support those most vulnerable and try and ensure prompt access to appropriate accommodation. • By fundamentally reviewing supported and sheltered housing

	people to be developed.	services. To ensure housing services are accessible to the most vulnerable.
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829. CONTRACT WITH WIGAN COUNCIL:

The Deputy Chief Executive presented a report (circulated) seeking approval to accept a new agreement with Wigan Council to continue to manage the Council's housing stock, homelessness service and certain ancillary services. The contract being for a period of five years (April 2007 to April 2012) with a review after three years. The Council Cabinet member present commented that the Council's Cabinet are happy with the new vision for the company and the approach being taken since the appointment of the new Chief Executive.

Votes For: 12
Against 0
Abstentions: 0

It was **AGREED** To enter into a new agreement with Wigan Council to continue to manage the Council's housing stock, homelessness service and certain ancillary services for the period April 2007 to April 2012 with a review after three years.

830. MINUTES:

- (a) **Minutes – Human Resources Committee 4th April 2006**
 These were endorsed and there were no matters arising.
- (b) **Minutes – Human Resources Committee 5th July 2006**
 These were endorsed and there were no matters arising.
- (c) **Minutes – Wigan Homes Board 11th July 2006**
 These were endorsed.

Matters Arising

Independent Board Member Selection Process 2006 (Minute 711 refers)
 Board Members were informed that this year's AGM would be held on 19th December 2006.

- (d) **Minutes – Leigh Homes Board 19th July 2006**
 These were endorsed and there were no matters arising.

831. PROGRESS ON HOUSING INSPECTORATE RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Deputy Chief Executive presented a report (circulated) to inform Members of progress that has been made on implementing the recommendations from the housing inspection in 2005. Board Members commented on the usefulness of the document and queried why a couple of recommendations had been marked as completed when they felt this was not the case.

The Chief Executive advised that the Director of Strategy, Policy and Projects would be working on value for money for the next two years and that he wants new robust processes to prove value for money. Members were also reminded of the three critical areas of responsive repairs, rent arrears and voids, for which groups had been set up to look at and would report back to the Board on these matters.

It was **AGREED** To note the contents of the report.

At this point Sheila Darbey and Sandra Latchford left the meeting.

ITEMS FOR DECISION:
Press and Public Excluded

832. JOINT SERVICE CENTRE – MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING:

The Area Director presented a report (circulated) to seek approval for the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between Wigan and Leigh Housing and Wigan Council to demonstrate the organisation's commitment to the Joint Service Centre project when the outline business case is submitted in September 2006.

Following a discussion on the proposals, the Area Director reminded Members that the proposal is to provide a central hub for access to a range of services. The Chief Executive added that the proposals would benefit WALH's customers and would be a big step forward for the Council.

Votes For: 12
Against 0
Abstentions: 0

It was **AGREED** That the Board authorise the Chief Executive to sign the Memorandum of Understanding between Wigan and Leigh Housing and Wigan Council.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:
Press and Public Excluded Items

833. PROGRAMMED WORKS PROGRESS:

The Chief Executive presented a report (circulated) updating the Board with the progress on the 2006/07 programmes.

In reply to questions raised, the Chief Executive advised that kitchens not replaced when the rest were done in their area are being replaced when the property becomes vacant. Proposals on how to work through the remaining kitchen 'mop ups' would be taken to the Stock Investment Committee.

It was **AGREED** to note the report.

ITEMS FOR DECISION:
Press and Public Excluded Items

834. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BRIEFING AND QUESTION TIME:

The Chief Executive presented a report (circulated) briefing the Board on issues affecting the Company.

Members expressed concern at proposals to regrade some employees even though this may not be contained within budget and asked why this would not be covered by savings from the reduction in Area Housing Offices. Members requested a report clearly setting out what has been spent and what has been saved with the Service Excellence Review. The Chief Executive advised that due to the lack of an accurate base budget to start from it was not possible to accurately state how much savings have been made. He further advised that work is underway to try to work out what the budgets are for this year and when this is complete, hopefully by October, a clear picture of the Company's financial position should be established. The Chief Executive said regular financial reports will be circulated to the Finance Committee together with action for addressing any variances or issues.

Votes For: 12

Against 0

Abstentions: 0

It was **AGREED** (a) That the Board confirm the following appointments

Deputy Chief Executive	Tony Gerrard
Director of Strategy, Policy and Projects	Elspeth Brighton
Director of Housing Management	Mike Grimes
Director of Housing Needs	Janice Barton

(b) To convene a panel consisting of Pat Cummins, Marjorie Marsden, Tom Frost and Mick Baines for the recruitment and selection to the vacant post of Director of Stock Investment and Repairs.

(c) To accept the decision to regrade the Area Housing Managers and Deputy Area Housing Managers even though this may not be contained within budget.

(d) To agree that the Chief Executive may use his delegated authority to issue a redundancy notice to the Director of Corporate Services.

835. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 6.00pm on Tuesday, 26th September 2006 at WALH HQ, Westwood Park Drive, Wigan.

John Roe informed Members that he was resigning from the Board for personal reasons. He thanked fellow Board Members and Officers for their friendship and support. Board Members thanked John for his invaluable contribution. The Chief Executive also thanked John for his support and stated that under John's chairmanship the Borough had seen the biggest improvement in Council housing stock.

CHAIR