

WIGAN AND LEIGH HOUSING COMPANY LIMITED

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

AT WALH HEADQUARTERS

TUESDAY 11th APRIL 2006

Present:

Members:

George Robinson (Chair), Pat Cummins, Marjorie Marsden, Don Battersby, Deborah Lee, Geoff Roberts, Sue Loudon and Fred Walker (part)

In Attendance:

Peter Gee (Chief Executive), Tony Gerrard (Deputy Chief Executive) and Edward Flanagan (Board Services and Finance Officer)

Observers:

Sandra Latchford and Sheila Darbey

767. APPOINTMENT OF A CHAIR:

In the absence of both Chairs, Members agreed that George Robinson should chair the meeting.

The Chair welcomed the observers to the meeting.

768. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies for absence were received from Tom Frost, John Roe, Mick Baines and Chris Ready.

769. MINUTES:

The minutes of the Board meeting held on 28th February 2006 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

Matters Arising:

Proposed Industrial Action: (minute 759 refers). The Chief Executive advised that the organisation coped well during recent strike action with 50% of non union staff working. He suggested that the organisation may not be able to cope as well during future action as many non union staff have since joined unions in support of the action. Contingency plans for the next unconfirmed strike days of 27th April and 3rd and 4th May would be formulated.

In reply to questions raised, the Chief Executive advised that pickets were outside Unity House and were at all times good natured.

770. URGENT BUSINESS:

The Chief Executive requested that supplementary papers sent to Board Members be considered with the report 'National Federation of ALMO's Update.

771. AGENDA ORDER:

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

772. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC:

Members agreed to exclude the press and public from the items referred to in minutes 781 and 782 as they contained financial or commercially sensitive information.

ITEMS FOR DECISION:

Open Items

773. NATIONAL FEDERATION OF ALMO'S UPDATE:

The Deputy Chief Executive presented a report (circulated) informing Members about recent NFA decisions and in particular to seek agreement to the proposal to increase membership fees to fund a marketing strategy. Members were advised that the marketing strategy comes at a critical time for ALMO's as the strive for decent homes is coming to an end.

Members were asked to note that WALH had submitted itself for nomination to the NFA Board. As each NFA member is entitled to vote for up to two ALMO's to fill the two vacancies, Members were asked how they would like to cast the WALH votes. A revised list of ALMO's standing in the election along with their supporting statements was circulated at the meeting.

Members discussed the merits of gaining a place on the NFA Board and if it would be in WALH's interests to vote for itself only.

Votes For: 8

Against 0

Abstentions: 0

It was **AGREED** (a) To consent to the increase in the membership fee to the NFA to £5,300 subject to it being approved at the NFA AGM.

(b) To note that Wigan and Leigh Housing has submitted itself for nomination to the NFA Board.

(c) WALH will use just one of its votes and vote for WALH.

(d) To consent to attend the launch of the parliamentary cross-party ALMO group on 28th June 2006.

774. MINUTES:

- (a) **Minutes – Human Resources Committee 21st February 2006**
These were endorsed and there were no matters arising.
- (b) **Minutes – Leigh Homes Board 8th March 2006**
These were endorsed and there were no matters arising.
- (c) **Minutes – Wigan Homes Board 15th March 2006**
These were endorsed and there were no matters arising.
- (d) **Minutes – Equality and Diversity Committee 27th March 2006**
These were endorsed.

Matters Arising

Service Planning Day (minute 150 refers). It was noted that the Equality and Diversity Committee's Service Planning Day had been postponed to 21st April 2006.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

Open Items

775. APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE:

The Chief Executive gave a verbal update advising the Board that Ashley Crumbley, the current Deputy Director - Community Protection Department, Wigan Council, had been appointed to the post of Chief Executive. The appointment date had been set for 1st June 2006.

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

776. EUROPEAN COURT CASE:

The Chief Executive presented a report (circulated) advising the Board of advice received from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) and the National Federation of ALMO's (NFA) on the implications of the Brixen case. Members were reminded that WALH's contract with the Council would have to be extended later this year; this may be an extension of the current contract or a new one.

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the implications of the Brixen case would have to be taken in to account when considering taking on new types of business.

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

At this point, Fred Walker joined the meeting.

777. TENANCY RELATIONS REPORT UP TO 31ST DECEMBER 2005:

The Chief Executive presented a report (circulated) informing Board Members of relevant information with regards to neighbourhood nuisance and neighbour complaints received across the borough between 1st April 2005 and 31st December 2005.

In reply to questions raised, the Chief Executive suggested that the disproportionately high amount of neighbour nuisance complaints recorded in some area housing offices was in part due to some offices being open full time and others open part time. The current disparities would balance out once the part-time offices had closed. Members were advised that they would be informed at the next meeting if the targets referred to in the report had been met.

Members commented on how positive they perceived the successes of the team and that perception was shared in the Council and with tenants. It was suggested that Housing Matters magazine was the appropriate place to publicise successes in tackling antisocial behaviour and neighbour nuisance.

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

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION:

Open Items

778. ESTATE INSPECTIONS:

The Chief Executive presented a report (circulated) providing Board Members with the schedule for the forthcoming year's estate inspections. Board Members were reminded that they are welcome to attend any of the estate inspections.

The Chief Executive informed Board Members that legal advice has suggested that in a period running up to an election, it would be inappropriate to invite ward Councillors to estate inspections, as is normal practice at all other times.

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

779. COMPANY CORE VALUES:

The Deputy Chief Executive presented a report (circulated) reporting to Members on Wigan and Leigh Housing's set of core values, that have been agreed following a recent consultation exercise with staff. Members were informed that these core values could now be used to underpin behaviours' and would also help in the visioning process scheduled for later in the year.

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

780. PROCUREMENT STRATEGY:

The Chief Executive presented a report (circulated) to make Members aware of the introduction of a new procurement strategy. A draft of which was appended to the report. Members were advised that comments would be gratefully received.

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

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

ITEMS FOR DECISION:

Press and Public Excluded Items

781. DISPOSAL OF FORMER GARAGE SITE AT LOGWOOD HOUSE PLACE, SCOT LANE, WORSLEY HALL:

The Chief Executive presented a report (circulated) asking the Board to endorse the recommendations of the Wigan Homes Board with regard to the disposal of land formally used as garaging and the provision of substitute parking at Logwood House Place in Worsley Hall.

In response to Board Members requests to ensure enough parking spaces are provided, the Chief Executive advised that although the provision of new parking spaces would be the maximum possible in the space available, this may still be insufficient for the amount of cars used by the residents and their visitors.

Votes For: 8

Against 0

Abstentions: 0

It was **AGREED** To endorse the recommendations of the Wigan Homes Board.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

Press and Public Excluded Items

782. PROGRAMMED WORKS PROGRESS:

The Chief Executive presented a report (circulated) providing an update on the 2005/06 programmes. Members noted that some of the programmes are almost finished and that thanks had been passed on to the partners for contributions made toward play equipment for the Homeless Persons Unit.

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

783. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 6.00pm on Tuesday, 23rd May 2006 at WALH HQ, Westwood Park Drive, Wigan.

CHAIR