

**Ascham Homes Board Meeting**

**PUBLIC**

**Minutes of meeting held at  
Board Room, Willow House, 869 Forest Road, Walthamstow E17 4UH  
Monday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2010**

<b>Board Members:</b>		
Mohammed Asif	MA	
Mark Boisson	MB	
Midge Broadley	MB	
Barry Coppock	BC	
Cleamore Henry	CH	Did not attend
Mohamed Jiva	MJ	
Paul Lowenberg	PL	
Annie Niner	AN	
Paul Olford	PO	
Liz Ormston	LO	
Alan Siggers	AS	
Eric Sizer	ES	Apologies
Ron Tamcken	RT	Did not attend
Kellie Tasarkan	KT	Apologies
Michael Todd	MT	Did not attend
Wendy Wilson	WW	
Peter Woollcott	PW	
<b>Staff</b>		
Terry Borkett, Interim Head of Finance	TB	
Martin Esom, Interim Chief Executive	ME	
Chris Furlong, Client Relationship Manager	CF	
Sonya Jackson, Head of Legal Services and Company Secretary	SJ	
John Lowe, Head of Policy & Development	JL	
Julian Mitchell, Director of Property & Investment	JM	
Mary Nuako, Director of Resources & Legal	MN	
Janet Wilson - Director of Operations	JW	
Maxine England [Minutes]	ME	
<b>Others</b>		
Councillor Marie Pye, Shareholder	MP	
Patrick Mulrenan, Audit Commission	PM	

		<b>Action</b>
<b>1.</b>	<p><b>Welcome, Introduction, Apologies for Absence</b></p> <p>As above.</p> <p>Chair apologised for the delay in receipt of the papers. This was due to the intensity of work on the Budget Report.</p>	
<b>2.</b>	<p><b>Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>None.</p>	
<b>3.</b>	<p><b>Public Interest Questions</b></p> <p>None.</p>	
<b>4.</b>	<p><b>Minutes and Matters Arising</b></p>	
<b>4.1</b>	<p><b>Board – 7<sup>th</sup> December 2009</b></p> <p><u>Matters Arising:</u></p> <p>Page 5, Risk Management Strategy [Asbestos], Item 10 – Executive confirmed that all contractors have access to the asbestos database and this is monitored by the company.</p> <p>Page 6, Risk Management Strategy – Chair of Audit Committee advised that a report was not presented at the last Committee meeting but that a report would be presented to the next meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> March.</p> <p>Page 6, item 13, Resident Engagement Strategy – Executive said that the Strategic Partnering Board will lead on this and also advised that the March Contract Panel agenda will include discussions regarding the Strategy.</p> <p>Page 6, Diversity Strategy – Head of Policy &amp; Development commented that he has not yet managed to update the Strategy with the comments made by the Board at their last meeting but will be doing so in the next day or so. <b>Action.</b></p>	<b>John Lowe</b>
<b>5.</b>	<p><b>Recruitment of Chief Executive</b></p> <p>The report set out the progress of the recruitment of the new Chief Executive and the forthcoming strategy being used to conclude the process.</p> <p><b>Discussion:</b></p> <p>Chief Executive advised that Veredus had been recruited to lead on the</p>	

	<p>recruitment. The meeting was referred to the suggested timetable.</p> <p>Board queried the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Whether the Governance &amp; Remuneration Committee would be the responsible body throughout the recruitment process.  Executive confirmed this.</li> <li>2. Would the successful candidate have Performance Related Pay included in the salary package?  Executive advised that Veredus have carried out a recent benchmarking exercise and confirmed the suggested package as their recommended approach. However it was agreed that the issue of PRP would be put on the agenda of the Governance &amp; Remuneration Committee so that the panel can explore this further.</li> <li>3. Whether Veredus were fully able to satisfy the diversity implications criteria.  Executive advised that the recruitment panel had asked specific questions and Veredus proved to be the strongest in the area. Also they were the only company working towards the kite mark of Investors in Diversity as accredited by the National Centre for Diversity.</li> <li>4. Whether the company were satisfied with the final costings from Veredus?  Executive advised that the original figure had been renegotiated to a lower one. Further, a deal had been struck whereby if Veredus did not successfully recruit a candidate, they would look to recruit another candidate with no cost to the company.</li> </ol> <p><b>Decision:</b></p> <p>Board agreed the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The final terms of the salary package to be agreed by the next Governance &amp; Remuneration Committee; <b>Action.</b></li> <li>ii. The recruitment process, key stages, dates and project plan set out in the report;</li> <li>iii. Governance &amp; Remuneration Committee to act as the recruitment panel for the appointment;</li> <li>iv. Involvement of the following stakeholder groups in the</li> </ol>	<p><b>Gov &amp; Rem Committee</b></p>
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	<p>recruitment process – the Board, the Area Contact Panel Chairs and the Council to take the following form:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Board informal dinner and discussion with short-listed candidates;</li> <li>b. Area Chairs meeting with each of short-listed candidate;</li> <li>c. Council representative invited to act as an observer through all stages of the recruitment process.</li> </ol>	
<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b>Business Plan and Delivery Plan</b></p> <p>The purpose of the report to was to seek Board's views on and approval to the draft Business Plan 2010/13 and the Delivery Plan 2010/11.</p> <p><b>Discussion:</b></p> <p>Chair pointed out that a new set out Appendices were presented as there were errors in the original ones.</p> <p>Over the next 3 months, the company will extensively consult with the Contract Panels. Board were asked to give thought on suggestions as to how to engage tenants.</p> <p>Comments were made on the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Illegal letting and anti-fraud initiative – Executive said that there has been high profile activity. Council has received additional funding and the Ascham Homes is working in partnership with the Council. It was also suggested that when home visits are made these could include updating tenant profiles and discussing any further help the company could provide.</li> <li>2. Anti Social Behaviour – This is very difficult to tackle as it takes a long time to get matters to Court. Several complaints have been received and Board queried what the company is doing about this. Executive said that the company works in partnership with other organisations.</li> <li>3. Is it realistic to say that there will be stock condition survey? Executive advised that it is achievable and the company will be engaging consultancy support. Funding will be secured and the company is confident that it will be complete by the end of 2010.</li> <li>4. Competency based assessment and staff recognition. Executive advised that the company does operate an appraisal system. Job descriptions and person specifications are competency based. A competency based system will used in relation to the restructure. Ongoing training will support the development of the</li> </ol>	

	<p>appraisal system.</p> <p>Interim Chief Executive reported his feedback from a meeting he held with one of the caretakers who indicated that one of his proudest workings moments was being awarded employee of the month. With this in mind, Executive has recognised that the greatest way of rewarding staff is through recognition. Executive are to give thought on further suggestions to reward and motivate staff and include these in the final version of the Business Plan.</p> <p>5. Consultation Process – Prior to presenting the final version of the Plan there will be a range of stakeholder discussions, including with staff, tenants and leaseholders.</p> <p>6. Board indicated that the delivery plan and service plans should be clearly linked to the business plan priorities.</p> <p>7. Charitable status – Preliminary checks will be undertaken to assess whether this is likely to be appropriate before any significant resources would be incurred.</p> <p><b>Decision:</b></p> <p>Board agreed to the following:</p> <p>1. Instruct the Interim Chief Executive to prepare a final Business Plan that incorporates resident and stakeholder input, includes SMART objectives and integrates with a Medium Term Financial Strategy for the May Board meeting; <b>Action.</b></p> <p>2. Approve the draft Plan with the comments noted above as the basis for resident and stakeholder engagement;</p> <p>3. Approve the proposal to review and update the Plans on a quarterly basis. <b>Action.</b></p>	<p>CE</p> <p>CE</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p><b>Progress on Improvement Plan</b></p> <p>The report updated Board on the progress with the Refocus Programme formerly known as the Corporate Improvement Plan.</p> <p><b>Discussion:</b></p> <p>Board asked that a reference be inserted in the Plan in terms of training managers to carry out well conducted appraisals. Interim Chief Executive said that a survey has been sought from a cross section of staff and from that he will to identify what actions need to be taken, with the end result being a standard benchmark achievement for managers.</p> <p>Board referred to Appendix 1, second page “Providing a secure and</p>	

	<p>sustainable financial future – staffing – Review and re-launch a staff appraisal system linked to service improvement plans and performance”. It had been given a priority 3 and Board felt it should be higher. EMT to review. <b>Action.</b></p> <p><b>Decision:</b></p> <p>Board agreed the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Note the progress made with delivering the actions; and</li> <li>2. Delegate responsibility for monitoring and scrutiny of the implementation of the Refocus Programme to Governance &amp; Remuneration Committee with a report to the Board in 6 months reviewing overall progress.</li> </ol>	<p><b>EMT</b></p>
<p><b>8.</b></p>	<p><b>Repairs Policy</b></p> <p>Board were presented with the Repairs Policy and Void Management Policy.</p> <p><b>Discussion:</b></p> <p>Board commented on the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Repairs done right first time – This is a key objective; it was felt that policy did not tackle the issue. Executive advised that at the next Board meeting, the Procurement Strategy for response maintenance and voids will be presented. This item will be included. <b>Action.</b></li> <li>2. Repair timescales and defining work to be done as response repair and that which will be done through a programme. Again this is not addressed in the policy, and needs to be included in the Procurement Strategy. <b>Action</b></li> <li>3. Board and resident scrutiny to be revised to make clear that Performance and Development Committee will review a range of repairs performance results quarterly and these will also be presented to Area contract panels. The Board will review key strategic outcome through the balanced scorecard.</li> <li>2. Complaints – First sentence to be redrafted to make clear that it is not a complaint that triggers a landlord’s repairing obligations.</li> <li>3. Laminate flooring – Board asked whether leaseholders will be refrained against laying laminate flooring. Head of Legal Services said this has been a contentious issue for a number of years. The tenancy terms have been changed particularly in terms of flats. It is not just the case of noise but also contractor</li> </ol>	<p><b>Dir of Property</b></p> <p><b>Dir of Property</b></p> <p><b>John Lowe</b></p> <p><b>CE</b></p> <p><b>John Lowe</b></p>

	<p>accessing under floor areas. Company is in a difficult position in terms of leaseholders and is consulting with the Council to sponsor an amendment to their standard leases. Shareholder confirmed advice would be sort to amend the agreements and agreed that the tenant and leaseholder agreements should be synched. Head of Legal Services to progress this on behalf of the company.</p> <p>4. Section 10 – tenants’ maintenance duties and responsibilities should be amended to include fences.</p> <p>5. Tenant rechargeable repairs – Board asked what flexibility is available for vulnerable tenants. Director of Property advised that that there is suitable flexibility built into the procedure.</p> <p>6. Tracking of repairs – Director of Property indicated that there would be IT work undertaken to enable batched / programmed repairs to be tracked in future.</p> <p>7. Value For Money – Board asked whether good value for money is evidenced in recharging repairs. Director of Property &amp; Investment said that within the current agreement, a suitable pricing mechanism is being adopted.</p> <p>8. Board asked whether this policy has been costed and been built into the 2010/11 budget. Executive indicated that the policy is deliverable within the budget.</p> <p><b>Decision:</b></p> <p>Board agreed to the following:</p> <p>1. The comments of the Board to be integrated into the policy; and</p> <p>2. That the Interim Chief Executive present to the Board as part of the Asset Management Procurement Strategy, specific service timescales and standards (including delivering first time on time completions) to be introduced with the new response maintenance and voids contract, and the timescales and standards that are to be delivered by M&amp;E service providers on the new gas and electrical contracts.</p>	<p><b>Head of Legal services</b></p> <p><b>John Lowe</b></p> <p><b>Dir of Property &amp; Investment</b></p> <p><b>Dir of Property &amp; Investment</b></p> <p><b>Dir of Property &amp; Investment/ Dir of Resources &amp; Legal</b></p> <p><b>John Lowe</b></p> <p><b>CE</b></p>
<p><b>9.</b></p>	<p><b>Customer Care Strategy</b></p> <p>Board were presented with the revised Customer Care Strategy.</p> <p><b>Discussion:</b></p> <p>Comments were made on the following:</p>	



	<p><b>Decision:</b></p> <p>Board noted the report.</p>	
11.	<p><b>Board Work Plan</b></p> <p>Board were provided with an up-to-date work programme up to November 2010, showing the reports and strategies to be considered.</p> <p><b>Discussion and Decision:</b></p> <p>Executive noted the reports set out in the Appendix and agreed that the following items would be included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Options appraisal on future arrangements for the management and investment in the Council housing stock – 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2011; and</li> <li>2. Asbestos Management Strategy – To be presented to Performance &amp; Development Committee unless executive considered that it should be considered by the Board.</li> </ol>	
13.	<p><b>Committee Minutes</b></p> <p>13.1 <b>Performance &amp; Development – 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2009</b></p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>13.2 <b>Resources – 15<sup>th</sup> December 2009</b></p> <p>Noted.</p>	
<p><b>Move to Exempt Business</b></p> <p>A Member proposed the move to Exempt Business and to exclude the public.</p>		

**Paul Lowenberg - Chair of the Board**

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_

**Dated** \_\_\_\_\_