

## NEWARK AND SHERWOOD HOMES

Minutes of the Meeting of **THE BOARD OF NEWARK AND SHERWOOD HOMES** held on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2005 at 5.00pm in the Lady Chapel, Kelham Hall.

**Present:** Miss M Butler (Chairman)  
Councillor Mrs G Dawn (Vice-Chairman)

Mr R Ainger  
Councillor Mrs N A Armstrong  
Mrs K Chaffe  
Mr S Medhurst  
Mr G Parkinson  
Mr R Rontree  
Mrs P Taylor

### **Officers in**

**Attendance:** Mrs R Rance (Chief Executive)  
Mr A Treweek (Technical Director)  
Mr F McElhinney (Housing Director)  
Mrs S Whitling (Finance & Corporate Services Director)  
Mrs M Proud (Head of Human Resources)  
Mrs S Y Parker (Housing Service Development Manager)

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming Suzanne Whitling as Finance & Corporate Services Director.

### 25. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs P Fletcher and Mrs G Hughes.

### 26. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2005**

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2005 be accepted as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 27. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT ITEMS**

#### Letter of thanks

The Chairman read out a letter from the late John Baker's wife thanking the Board of Directors and senior staff for all their kind wishes at this distressing time. Mrs Baker also said that a total of £1,400 was collected as donations at the Church service alone. The letter from Ella Baker was available for the Board to read.

Appointment of Tenant Director of the Board

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) Mrs Irene Brown, nominated by the Newark and Sherwood District Federation of Tenants & Residents Associations, be appointed as Tenant Board Member.

28. **MINUTES FROM SUB-COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

Nil as all Sub-Committees have been dissolved.

29. **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION**

The Board considered an in-depth report prepared by Mrs Martinette Proud (Head of Human Resources), which was handed out to all Directors of the Board. She was complimented on the presentation of the Freedom of Information (FoI) training.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the action to implement, and the process to respond to, the Freedom of Information Act be noted
- (b) that the Finance & Probity Committee has delegated authority to monitor compliance with the Act.

30. **JOB EVALUATION**

The Board considered the report and clarification was given on two points:

- 4.1 Greater London Provincial Job Evaluation Scheme:- The Head of Human Resources advised that this scheme was chosen by the Council as it was considered to be the best fit for the Council staff
- 7.1 The Protection of Employees Salaries:- The scheme is protective for all individuals where the grading is lower than current levels. The salary is not frozen, and increases and increments accrue. However, after three years there is a downward adjustment to the new level, which could be of a significant value

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the approach to the introduction of the Greater London Job Evaluation Scheme be noted
- (b) the full implications of the scheme be reviewed at the next Human Resources Committee.

31. **STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK**

The Board considered the report and the Housing Director highlighted the Risk Management Policy.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the progress in delivery of the Strategic Framework is noted.

32. **BEST VALUE SELF-ASSESSMENT**

The Board considered the self-assessment submission and action plan.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the self-assessment and action plan be approved for submission

33. **IMPROVEMENT PLANNING PROCESS**

Measures are put in place to move forward.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the principles to guide the Improvement Planning Process be adopted
- (b) the Service & Performance Committee be given delegated authority to develop and implement the Improvement Planning Process, its outputs and outcomes.

34. **PERFORMANCE**

The Housing Service Development Manager explained to the Directors of the Board the key tasks and how important it is to keep up a high standard of performance. Directors of the Board were advised on the Company's general service performance. The data within the report was discussed by the Technical Director and the Housing Service Development Manager, with the Directors of the Board.

The base date for schedules depends on the cycles of the Committee Meetings. Board papers are issued 10 days in advance of the meeting and need preparation in advance. There will always be a lag in the data and some statistics are updated quarterly or annually. The Company's performance was presented and no adverse comments were noted. The Company supported top quartile objectives.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) performance against PI, Benchmarking data and the Work Plan, be noted.

35. **INVESTMENT PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE**

The Technical Director explained to the Directors of the Board that the figures are for December. Less work will be done in 2004-5 and there will be a catch-up in 2005-6.

The Company is having difficulty in recruiting Quantity Surveying staff. This was an issue when the business was transferred.

Targeted spend will not be achieved this year, however, half will have been spent by the end of the financial year.

The Audit Commission look at our ability to spend, but the underspend is not damaging. Good joint procurement processes are in place that will mitigate any concerns over the under spent funds.

The Technical Director explained that we are geared up to spend the money and most would be spent by June 2005. Two contractors were available to provide additional resources to deliver the work.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the investment programme is noted.

36. **DIRECTORS OF THE BOARD-EXPENSES RE-IMBURSEMENT SCHEME**

The Chief Executive explained the report saying the Board has set the targets. The Council practices are based on 2001 Rates and guidance has been issued to all Directors of the Board. It was also explained that where Council Board Members attend meetings representing the Council they should not claim expenses from Newark and Sherwood Homes, but if they are required to attend on behalf of Newark and Sherwood Homes they claim through the Newark and Sherwood Homes' scheme.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the Expenses Re-Imbursement Scheme be approved.
- (b) the Expenses Re-Imbursement Scheme is reviewed annually.

37. **WORK SCHEDULING SOFTWARE**

The Technical Director explained to the Board how the new software would work. This equipment manages staff time and provides a better quality service to tenants. It maintains on-line records of what jobs have/are been/being completed, making the service more effectively managed. It also facilitates booking of appointments for repairs and using the internet for booking repairs. It was considered that performance could not be improved any more without this technology.

A query was raised regarding how the staff reacted about using the new system and was told the response was good.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) a single tender in accordance with paragraph 7.3.4 of Newark and Sherwood Homes' Code of Procedures with respect to Contracts, be accepted from Aeron for the provision of work scheduling software.

38. **JOINT PROCUREMENT PANEL**

A verbal update was given to the Board by the Technical Director. Following the tender evaluation process two contractors have withdrawn, leaving four for the final selection.

These are Bramall, Bullock, Connaught and Lovells. Interviews are taking place week commencing 7<sup>th</sup> March 2005 when the final two will be selected. Thanks were given to the Board for their time commitment to the selection process. Three of the four contractors were noted to regard tenant liaison as a high profile and important role. Also issues of ethnicity and disability were recognised, as was willingness to recruit staff locally where possible.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) this written report and verbal updates be noted.

39. **HOUSING INVESTMENT IN THE REGIONS**

Newark and Sherwood Homes are largely in agreement with the proposals brought forward in the paper. It was considered to be potentially favourable to Newark and Sherwood Homes.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) to note the contents of the response.

40. **FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE**

The Finance & Corporate Services Director explained to the Board how the finance reports are prepared. Invoices are posted to the accounts in arrears as they are approved. Salaries are recorded monthly.

Some large variances are noticeable but this will right itself by the end of the financial year, when there will be adjustments for goods and services received but not paid for. Queries relating to financial performance were answered by the Finance & Corporate Services Director.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the Board note the contents of this report.

The meeting closed at 6.40p.m.

Chairman