

## MINUTES: SHADOW BOARD, STOCK TRANSFER PROJECT

### Item

### Action To Be Taken By

Present: Shadow Board Members: Louise Barnden, Peter Ebsworth (Chair), Ken Foster, Zilpah Leahy, Linda Macbeth, Sue McDonald, Eddie Rennie, Elaine Pellow, Jack Thompson, Nigel Warn, Christine Watts

Staff/Advisors : Belinda Pascoe, Georgina Savill,  
Colin Walker

#### 1 **Welcome and Introductions, new Board members**

PE welcomed Sue McDonald to her first meeting as a formally designated PCC representative.

PE welcomed the four new Independent Board Members, Louise Barnden, Zilpah Leahy, Linda Macbeth and Jack Thompson.

PE displayed a picture of Smeaton's Tower and Plymouth Sound which had been presented to the association by Bob Furzeland. PE expressed the Board's gratitude for this donation and a thank you letter would be sent.

AC

2 **Apologies:** Andy Fox, Robert Beiley, Andrew Cobb, Gary Seabourne

#### 3 **Minutes of Meeting 26 February 2008**

Agreed

#### 4 **Matters Arising from Meeting 26 February 2008**

#### **Item 10, Asset Principles (Report 006)**

A set of principles was being developed to guide the decision/discussion on land transfers. The intention was that parcels of land surrounded by social housing and within housing estates would transfer to Plymouth Community Homes, unless there were special circumstances.

There were no plans to develop the large gardens attached to some PCC properties.

In the case of amenity spaces that did transfer, the Board would not approve their development against residents' wishes.

#### **Item 11, Attendance Requests at Future Meetings (Report 011)**

The trade unions had not been approached in the meantime regarding their request for observer status. The unions had been

concentrating on job evaluation matters recently. BP would be meeting with the unions again on 14 April 2008.

## 5 Stock Transfer Proposal Update and DWA – DVD Video Diary

GS reported:

- the Shadow Board was now at full strength,
- creation of the corporate identity was almost complete,
- most policies have been subject to tenant consultation, they would now be taken to the Interested Tenants Network and should be brought back to the Shadow Board in two to three months,
- the DWA event on 15 March had been very successful,
- the development of the Business Plan was now at a crucial stage. The updated Stock Condition Survey figures had been received. The Gap Funding, which would ensure the viability of the Business Plan and the overhanging debt position (£85 million before redemption premium) would be discussed at the meeting with Communities and Local Government on 4 April 2008,
- the intention was to bring the Business Plan and the Offer Document to the Shadow Board for approval at the start of June,
- the ‘credit crunch’ had not so far led to a rise in interest rates, although it did appear that transfer proposals were now attracting a smaller number of potential funders,
- the first draft of the Offer Document would be given to the Editorial Panel on 31 March 2008.

The Shadow Board viewed the Plymouth Voices DVD produced by DWA. During the interviews tenants expressed the wish for kitchen and bathroom improvements, more secure front doors and windows, better services for disabled tenants including access improvements and adaptations, the appointment of a disabilities officer, better children’s play parks, crime prevention measures and a desire to be informed and consulted.

## 6 Board Member Induction (Report 012)

The report described an outline induction programme.

The induction would also include details of current service performance, the Call Centre, details of the existing tenancy involvement structures, the assumptions of the Business Plan and the Choice Based Lettings system.

The induction training would be scheduled to coincide with the availability of the majority of members.

BP

The Governance Training Programme provided by City College would

begin on 31 March 2008.

The Shadow Board resolved: **to approve the Induction Programme (Report 012) subject to the inclusion of the additions noted above.**

## **7 Communications Group Work Programme (Report 013)**

The complex nature of the stock transfer proposal would require a carefully planned communications strategy, providing information in a variety of formats, leading up to and including the provision of the formal consultation, or Offer Document, to all tenants.

Previous transfers had demonstrated the effectiveness of a twin track communications strategy based on demonstration properties and door knocking.

Seven demonstration homes had been identified across the city. These properties would provide examples of PCH Decent Homes Standard.

In addition, a mobile unit would be available which could visit areas without a demonstration home.

The door knocking would begin during the summer months. Face to face contact had been shown elsewhere to be the most effective means of communicating the stock transfer message and a very good way of engaging with hard to reach groups.

The door knocking programme would be risk assessed and those involved would receive the appropriate training and support.

The results of an IPB survey of 500 respondents during August/September 2007 indicated an encouraging level of awareness of stock transfer issues.

The Shadow Board resolved: **to note the contents of Report 013, Communications Work Programme.**

## **8 Draft Constitution of Plymouth Community Homes (Report 014)**

At its meeting on 26 February 2008, the Shadow Board resolved that: Plymouth Community Homes should be registered as an Industrial and Provident Society and should seek charitable status. As a result of this resolution, rules for the organisation had been drafted, based on the model rules produced by the National Housing Federation, but with certain alterations in order to facilitate the desire in Plymouth to have a higher than usual proportion of tenant representation at membership level.

The rules as drafted did not refer to community development, although this was the case in some other associations. BP proposed to investigate this subject (including a discussion with STAG) and report back to the Board.

BP

Tenant Board members would automatically become members of the association and although this would not apply to tenants as a whole, they could apply for membership at any time. Membership would confer the ability to vote at the Annual General Meeting.

The membership status of a tenant who was also a Councillor would be clarified.

GS

The preparation of a layman's guide/plain English version would be considered.

GS

The Shadow Board resolved that: **the rules would be discussed in detail before the Shadow Board meeting on 22 April 2008. The other papers for the meeting would be kept to a minimum to allow sufficient time for the Board to consider and discuss the issues prior to 'sign off' in the meeting proper.**

(The discussion would provide an opportunity to discuss issues such as balanced representation across the city.)

#### **9 Attendance Requests at Future Meetings (Report 014)**

This report was deferred from 26 February 2008 to allow the full Shadow Board the opportunity to consider this subject.

The intention was to develop a general policy on attendance.

Sue McDonald and Nigel Warn declared an interest as trade unionists.

The Shadow Board resolved that: **its meetings would remain closed until the completion of the Board Induction Programme, but this decision would be reviewed in June 2008, the trade unions would be invited to a meet the Board members session and the possibility of a board member(s) attending the union briefings would be discussed with the trade union representatives.**

BP

#### **10 Any Other Business**

Future meetings would begin at 5.00pm, rather than 6.00pm.

The possibility of a fact finding visit to Wakefield had been raised with the association in Wakefield. It was anticipated that Wakefield would respond to the approach with some dates in May when they could accommodate a visit.

Stock Transfer Steering Committee would be made a standing agenda item.

### 13 **Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday 22 April 2008, 5.00pm, **(please note earlier start time)**  
Conference Room, HQ Building, Union Street