



The Gateshead Housing Company

Working with Gateshead Council

RESOURCES COMMITTEE

5 May 2015

PRESENT:

Directors

John Hamilton (Chair)
Sheila Bouitieh
Elizabeth Bird
George Clark
Mick Davison
Tracy Harrison

Advisers

Jon Mallen-Beadle	Managing Director
Neil Bouch	Director of Customers and Communities
Natalie Hewitt	Head of Corporate Services
Jennifer Aston	Support Services Manager
Louise Taylor	Involvement and Diversity Manager
Stuart Gibson	Governance and Risk Officer

Apologies

Robert Buckley
Kathryn Ferdinand
Joachim Moussouanda Mouanda

1 ROBERT BUCKLEY

The committee placed on record its best wishes to Robert Buckley for a full and speedy recovery following his recent stroke.

2 MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting of the committee held on 24 February 2015 were approved as a correct record.

3 MATTERS ARISING – SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

The Social Media Policy has been rolled out to all TGHC employees who have a mandatory requirement to read and sign up to the Policy.

4 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15

A draft Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2014/15 was submitted.

The report covers the key areas of how the Company is ensuring it works to embrace equality and work in accordance with the legislation and regulation.

It highlights some of the activities the Company has been involved in, including where it has worked with partner organisations to deliver on its objectives.

In this annual report and previous reports to this committee, the Company's approach to LGBT equality and in particular its entry to the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index has been highlighted.

The framework for the index was revised this year which has seen the Company fall in the index, scoring 79 out of 200 this year, compared to 128 out of 200 last year. Whilst this may seem like a significant drop, this has been discussed with the Stonewall Workplace contact who has confirmed that following the update of the framework this has happened across the majority of organisations submitting information.

As entry to the index opens every September, this provides limited time from the date of the feedback meeting with Stonewall to implement any actions. It is therefore proposed that entry into the index is postponed until 2016 to allow the Company to spend the next 18 months implementing the recommendations.

The committee asked if other organisations were also delaying their entry and if the delay could damage the Company's reputation. It was noted that some organisations only entered every two years and it wouldn't damage the Company's reputation because it wasn't currently in the top 100. Postponing its entry and implementing the recommendations would provide the Company with a better chance of getting into the top 100 in 2016.

The committee asked what the benefits were of entering Stonewall compared to the resources it put into it. It was noted that there was no cost but it was intensive gathering the information. The Company did use the information however to check against other equality strands but for a real benefit it needed to be in the top 100. The committee suggested reviewing this also to ascertain whether it needed to enter it in a two-year cycle in future.

The committee asked if the increase in the number reporting mental health would have a knock on effect on services like gas servicing. It was noted that the Company used this information to help shape services in all areas. It also helped with bids for external funding in areas like supporting mental health.

- RESOLVED –
- (i) That the draft Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2014/15 be approved.
 - (ii) That the report be designed and made available on the TGHC website and issued on request.
 - (iii) That the proposal to defer entry into the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index to 2016 be approved, subject to reviewing whether it needed to go to a two-year cycle in the future.

5 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS – FOURTH QUARTER 2014/15

The committee received an update on the management accounts for the fourth quarter of the financial year 2014/15.

The Management Accounts Revenue shows a surplus for the fourth quarter of £224,000. This is due to an increase in income from properties owned by TGHC, slippage on vacant posts, one off credits for communal gas supplies and a credit from a reduction in the insurance provision held on the company's balance sheet of £150,000.

The £505,000 under spend on employee costs is mainly due to slippage on vacant posts.

The overhead costs are over budget by £252,000 to the fourth quarter. This was mainly due to increased costs being incurred at Keelman House, prior to it being handed back to the landlord, and a full year charge being made for the Civic Centre (when budgets were based on 8 months).

The overall position in relation to the Repairs Fee at the end of the fourth quarter is an under spend of £189,000. This is mainly due to demand in relation to boilers and winter maintenance being lower than forecast.

RESOLVED – That the update on the management accounts for the fourth quarter of the financial year 2014/15 be noted.

6 SICKNESS ABSENCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE

The committee received an update on general human resources initiatives and developments from April 2014 to March 2015, including sickness absence and learning and development activity.

The total sickness absence for the period equates to 8.90 days per person, compared to 8.58 days for the same period last year, which is an increase of 3.60%.

Short term absence is defined as a period of less than 15 working days in duration and long term absence is greater than 15 days in duration. Short term absence for the period was 3.91 days per person and long term absence was 5.00 days. This compares with 3.10 days short term absence and 5.48 days long term absence for the same period last year. This represents an increase of 20.72% in short term absence and a decrease of 8.76% in long term absence.

The biggest cause of absence for the period was stress related with 686 days lost compared to 630 days lost last year, an increase of 8.16%.

347 days of stress related absence was reported as non-work related stress. This equates to 49.45% as non-work related absence and 50.55% work related absence.

Of the 686 days lost to stress related absence, 22 employees reported non-work related stress and 10 employees reported work related stress.

In March 2015, the Board approved the appointment of Gateshead Council to deliver an Occupational Health Service via a Service Level Agreement (SLA). The SLA commenced on 1 March 2015 and quarterly meetings have been established to monitor the contract. The committee asked if the Council did anything different that it could learn in terms of managing stress. It was noted that it didn't do anything different but the Company was trying to get best out of situations to manage stress.

The committee was informed that research carried out by the Northern Housing Consortium had shown that increased sickness absence through stress is a trend throughout the sector and tended to relate to contact staff and linked to Welfare Reform.

The committee also received details of the work that the company had been doing during the period to manage sickness absence, health and wellbeing, other human resources initiatives and developments and learning and development activity.

RESOLVED – That the update on sickness and human resources initiatives be noted.

7 HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE

The committee received an update on the following health and safety activities for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015: -

- Partners Activity
- Accident Reporting
- Asbestos Management
- Fire Safety Management
- Legionella Control
- Fire alarm systems and sprinkler system
- Out of Hours
- Emergency lighting
- Non domestic gas boilers
- Bin Chute Fire Shut Off Tests and Inspections
- Cyclical Repair and Maintenance
- Lift Maintenance
- Company Construction Related Activity
- Health and Safety Legislation Changes

A breakdown of the accidents/incidents near misses and the violent incidents and warning alerts would be posted on the TGHC Website.

RESOLVED – That the update on health and safety activities be noted.

8 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the committee would be held on Tuesday, 8 September 2015 at 2pm at Gateshead Civic Centre.

9 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED – That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the remaining business in accordance with Category 1 of the Company's Access to Information Rules.

10 MINUTES (Category 1)

The minutes of the last meeting of the committee held on 24 February 2015 were approved as a correct record.

11 MATTERS ARISING – WREKENTON HUB (Category 1)

The committee was informed that the teams were now working together in preparation for the library element of the HUB opening in June.