

2010 ROTHERHAM LTD

MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 29 NOVEMBER 2006 AT 2 PM IN THE BOARDROOM, EASTWOOD

- Board of Directors:** Clive Hartley (Chair)
Anita Heaton (Vice Chair)
Cllr Jane Austen (Director)
Dr Giles Bloomer (Director)
Mrs Liz Booth (Director)
Mr Gaetano Demartino (Director)
Cllr Barry Dodson (Director)
Cllr Neil License (Director)
Cllr Reg Littleboy (Director)
Mr Keith Stringer (Director)
Mr Harry Tooley (Director)
- In Attendance:** Mrs Teresa Butler (Director of Business Development)
Mr Paul Webb (Director of Neighbourhoods)
Mr Mark Whittle (Director of Investment)
Mr Dave Roddis (RMBC) – for Mrs M Musgrave
Ms Julie Barnes (Minutes)
Miss Dawn Benfold (Notes)
- By invitation:** Mrs Victoria Penman (potential new Board member)
Mr Stephen Hopwood (Consultant) – Item B11/6/4/2
Ms Anne Cocking (Assistant Director) – Item B11/6/2
Mr Gary Ironmonger (Assistant Director) – Item B11/6/3
Mr Richard Walker (Assistant Director) – Item B11/6/6

Minute No.

B/11/6/1 **Governance**

B11/6/1/1 **Apologies for Absence**

- Mr Almas Abbasi
- Cllr Glyn Robinson
- Mrs Michelle Musgrave (Mr D Roddis in attendance)
- Mrs Isobel Riley (CEO)

Mr Hartley advised the Board that they had interviewed a potential new Board member for the independent sector immediately prior to the meeting. Mr Hartley confirmed that it was the recommendation of the sub committee that Victoria Penman be appointed to the Board. Mr Hartley confirmed that Ms Penman had a number of skills to bring to the Board. Mr Hartley advised that the decision would be required to be ratified at the AGM.

Miss Heaton asked for information regarding Mrs Penman's background. Cllr Austen advised the meeting that Mrs Penman had a law degree, had worked at Sheffield University on a graduate training programme and at Wakefield Council linked to choice based lettings. The Board was advised that Mrs Penman would receive an in-depth induction at which point she would make her final decision regarding whether to join the Board.

ACTION
T Butler

Mr Hartley sought the Board's approval to appoint Mrs Penman and asked whether they were in agreement that Ms Penman join today's meeting.

AGREED: Mrs Penman be invited to join the Board of 2010 Rotherham Limited

Mrs Penman then joined the meeting.

B11/6/1/2 Minutes of Previous Meeting 25 October 2006

The Minutes of the Board meeting were signed and agreed as a true and accurate record and were duly signed by the Chairman.

B11/6/1/3 Matters Arising

Staff Roadshows

Mrs Butler advised the meeting that Keith, Gae, Liz and Harry had attended the recent staff roadshows. Mrs Butler confirmed that this had been very well received and thanked the members for their time.

Accommodation Strategy

Mrs Butler suggested to the Board that it may be possible to consider a visit to the Bramley site on 18 December prior to the planned board development event. Members present agreed.

B11/6/1/4 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest

B11/6/1/5 Chairman's Report – Verbal

Mr Hartley advised the meeting that he and Mrs Riley had met the scrutiny panel. Mr Hartley said that he felt that the meeting had been constructive (full and frank) about the first year of the ALMO and the future. It had been agreed with the scrutiny panel that we be allowed to have sight of the report so as to deal with any issues which 2010 may have regarding its content.

Mr Hartley also stated that he and Mrs Riley had met with Tom Cray and Sue Ellis following the meeting at DCLG in Leeds (attended by Mrs Riley, Mr Cray, Mark Whittle and Mark Johnson) with regard to the possibility of

extending the Decent Homes programme beyond 2010. In reality, whatever the view of this ALMO and others, the ultimate decision would be that of the Government.

It was agreed that no further meaningful decisions regarding funding could be taken until the Government's position was clearer.

B11/6/1/6 Chief Executive's Report – Verbal

Mrs Riley was unable to attend the meeting.

B11/6/1/7 Minutes of Sub Committees

B11/6/1/7/1 Asset Management

No issues to highlight. The asbestos incident would be covered under Health & Safety (Item B11/6/4/4).

B11/6/1/7/2 Community Development & Partnership

Cllr Austen brought the Board's attention to the bullet points for the Board at the end of the minutes which highlighted the key issues from the meeting.

B11/6/1/7/3 Performance

Cllr Dodson referred to the issues at Rother Valley South but stated he felt progress was being made. Cllr Dodson also highlighted that whilst Board members were welcome to visit Neighbourhood offices, they should remember that they were not managers of the business and should not become involved in day to day issues.

Cllr Austen said that she was concerned at the effect staff changes could have on performance.

B11/6/1/7/4 Resources

Dr Bloomer had nothing to highlight as everything was in the minutes. Action items were clear and progress reports would be given to the meeting next week.

B11/6/1/8 Delegation of Authority to Committees

Mrs Butler presented a paper regarding the clarification of delegation of authority by the Board to committees, within the provisions of clause 22 of the Articles of Association. She explained that having clear written delegation would strengthen the governance of the company.

Cllr Dodson advised that Glynn Robinson had expressed that a start time of 4pm for the committee meetings was no longer convenient. Mrs Butler

ACTION
T Butler

stated that this would be considered and perhaps it would be more appropriate for Mr Robinson to be assigned to the audit committee which only meets quarterly. Mrs Butler confirmed that Mrs Penman would be asked to join an appropriate committee.

Mr Hartley questioned whether it was necessary to have at least one Board member from each sector on committees.

Dr. Bloomer suggested that the Board accept the proposal with the inclusion of the word “*ideally*” in relation to sectors of the Board.

Miss Heaton expressed concern that the delegations would give carte-blanch to the committees, leaving no business for the Board to discuss. It was explained that the Board could set parameters on the level of authority delegated to committees, the most obvious one being financial limits.

Dr Bloomer suggested the terms of reference could be more descriptive and Cllr License added they should be reviewed at least annually and any proposed changes agreed by the Board.

AGREED:

1. that in future, Sub-committees be called Committees
2. the authority of the Board is delegated to each of them for distinct aspects of the business of 2010 Rotherham Ltd as follows:-

Resources Committee – financial management of the company; contracts; staffing and human resource development;

Asset Management Committee – strategic implementation of the Decent Homes Programme and other asset management;

Performance Committee – examine performance at a strategic level across the company against key performance indicators, the Excellence Plan, the Delivery Plan and any other external and internal targets and action plans;

Community and Partnership Development Committee – community development and involvement; effective partnership working with other service providers in the statutory, voluntary, community and business sectors;

Audit Committee – approval of the Statement of Internal Control and the Annual Financial Statements; investigation of any activity of the company; consideration of effectiveness of risk management strategy; receive and consider internal and external audit reports and agree annual internal audit plan

1. **standing membership of each Committee be ideally up to four members of the Board ideally with at least one from each sector of the Board (tenants/leaseholder, independents and Councillors); and the appropriate executive director or CEO**
 2. **the quorum be two Board members (ideally from different sectors of the Board) and the executive director or CEO**
 3. **the chair for each Committee be appointed by the Board at its AGM or as required**
 4. **meetings be held at least four times per year for the Audit Committee and six times per year for each of the others**
 5. **membership of the Audit Committee is confirmed and an additional Board member is nominated, ideally from the tenant/leaseholder sector, to sit on that Committee**
- ACTION**
Committee Secretaries
6. **The terms of reference for each committee be reviewed and agreed by the Board at least annually.**

B11/6/1/9

Proposed Changes to Memorandum of Association

Mrs Butler advised that this was a technical requirement to change the present Memorandum of Association as it currently restricts our ability to work outside the immediate Rotherham area or on properties other than those owned by the council (which could also preclude Barbot Hall from potentially expanding their customer base). 2010 Rotherham had been approached by registered landlords to provide property management services and under the current M&A we would be unable to take on this additional work.

Mrs Butler said that if agreement was reached with the Board then this would be referred to RMBC for approval as the sole Member of the Company.

Miss Heaton raised concerns regarding the timing of this proposal given the discussion surrounding the quality of work being delivered. Dr Bloomer felt that in the interest of developing the business the proposal should be approved so as to be in place to ensure that as capacity allowed, or in the event that the Decent Homes programme was stretched, 2010 would be able to take on work for private companies or private individuals.

AGREED: The Memorandum of Association be amended as proposed with the addition of private companies and individuals i.e. as shown below.

The proposed revisions be recommended to the Member of the Company to make a special resolution to change the Memorandum of

Association.

Any potential work falling within the revised powers to be agreed by the relevant committee or Board.

Changes to Memorandum of Association

- **Amend Clause 3 to read: “The objects of the Organisation shall be in the area of England to:”**
- **Insert additional sub-clauses under Clause 3, Objects to read:**
 - (11) provide, manage, maintain, improve, demolish or convert the housing stock owned or managed by Councils, Registered Social Landlords or private landlords from time to time together with any other amenities or facilities for the benefit of residents of such housing stock either exclusively or together with persons who are not residents of such housing stock;**
 - (12) provide amenities and services of any description for residents of housing stock owned or managed by Councils, Registered Social Landlords or private landlords from time to time either exclusively or together with persons who are not residents of such housing stock;**
 - (13) provide advice and assistance to all tenants, leaseholders, and licensees, of Councils, Registered Social Landlords or private landlords and applicants for housing advice in respect of social housing;**
 - (14) carry out any activity which contributes to the regeneration or development in areas of England (within the meaning of Section 126 of the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996) including but not limited to:-**
 - (15) securing that land and buildings are brought into effective use;**
 - (16) contributing to or encouraging economic development;**
 - (17) creating an attractive and safe environment;**
 - (18) preventing crime or reducing the fear of crime;**
 - (19) providing or improving housing or social and recreational facilities for the purpose of encouraging people to live or work in the said area or for the purpose of benefiting people who live there;**
 - (20) providing employment for local people;**

- (21) providing or improving training, educational facilities or health services for local people;**
 - (22) assisting local people to make use of opportunities for education, training or employment;**
 - (23) meeting the special needs of local people which arise because of disability or because of their sex or the racial group to which they belong.**
 - (24) provide, construct, improve or manage housing to be kept available for letting or hostels;**
 - (25) provide, manage, maintain or improve accommodation required from time to time for the benefit of persons who require temporary accommodation;**
 - (26) provide building, repairs, maintenance and management services of any description for Councils, Registered Social Landlords, private landlords, other organisations and private individuals;**
 - (27) assess applicants for housing assistance;**
 - (28) assess applications by residents of housing stock owned or managed by Councils or Registered Social Landlords to exercise the right to buy under Part V of the Housing Act 1985;**
 - (29) enabling or assisting any residents of the housing stock owned or managed by either Councils or Registered Social Landlords or the Organisation to acquire, or to acquire and enter into occupation of, houses.**
- Amend Clause 5 (2) to read: “contract with the Council Member or other Councils, Registered Social Landlords, private landlords, other organisations and private individuals situated in England in furtherance of its objects;”**

B11/6/1/10 Board Agenda Forward Plan

Mrs Butler tabled a draft forward agenda plan and explained that this was being proposed as a process to forward plan issues relating to the board, council, committee business and to try to ensure the board managed its business in a timely manner where deadlines etc. applied and to spread the agenda load.

Miss Heaton suggested agenda should include some scheduled board member only discussion time.

ACTION

AGREED:

Board Members

Board members should contribute regularly to agenda planning to ensure key issues are brought before them in a timely fashion.

Committee Secretaries

Board members agreed the forward planning process and adopted it for committee agenda in addition to the Board agenda.

B11/6/2

Performance Management

B11/6/2/1

Excellence Plan Part 1

Anne Cocking joined the meeting to present the current position regarding the Audit Commission's key recommendations.

Miss Cocking reminded the meeting of the status of each recommendation agreed by the Board on 25 October. No further changes to the traffic light status were proposed at present.

Dr Bloomer said he noted that on Page 17, recommendation 5, that the completion date was December and asked if this was on target. He was advised the action would be completed by December.

Dr Bloomer also referred to page 15, Rb4 which showed status as complete; he asked if that was the case. Mrs Butler explained the basic recommendation of the Audit Commission was to develop "smart" service standards for each SLA which had been completed in the summer (ref July Board). Mr Roddis questioned whether they had been agreed with RMBC staff; Mrs Butler understood that was the case wherever possible but would discuss that issue separately with Mr Roddis.

Cllr Austen requested more information on SLAs and the review process.

Miss Heaton asked if it would be possible to have some form of visual Gantt chart which would more easily identify the items which were on and those which were off target. Cllr Dodson added that, whilst he could understand the wish to advise the Board of what was going right, what was of greater concern was what was not going right.

Miss Cocking advised the Board she was exploring software options that would show incremental progress.

Mr Roddis referred to page 9 – R3a and stated that, whilst a survey of tenants had been done, to date there was no available analysis. (The Equalities and Diversity Strategy action plan agreed by the Board on 25 October shows analyses will be presented to the December Board.)

ACTION

AGREED:

The report was received and comments noted.

A Cocking Some method be introduced to indicate incremental progress towards achievement.

T Butler Further information on SLAs and the review be presented to the Board

Miss Cocking left the meeting.

B11/6/3 *Financial Resource Management*

B11/6/3/1 **Finance Report & Management Accounts to 31 October 2006**

Mr Gary Ironmonger joined the meeting to present his paper.

Mr Ironmonger advised the board that we were entering an important budget setting period which was crucial. He referred to the forthcoming Base Budget Review (BBR) panel meeting with the Council.

Mr Ironmonger referred to the desire to achieve better financial separation between RMBC and 2010 and that he was currently working with the council's financial manager. The lack of clear financial separation made it very difficult to establish the true financial position of the company. He made reference to the need for 2010 to have its own bank account but the difficulty was one of 2010 having no working capital upon which to start and the fact that many of the transactions occurred between RMBC and 2010.

Mr Ironmonger referred to the discussions surrounding the finance SLA; he advised that since the year end date was 31 March 2007, the sensible target date for agreeing a new SLA should be 1 July 2007. Mr Ironmonger also stated that it would be difficult to identify what services would need to be continued under the SLA without knowing what budget would be available for the finance team.

Dr Bloomer expressed disappointment at some of what had been said. He stated that until 2010 had its own bank account and working capital funding, there would be no separation between 2010/Council but acknowledged that Mr Ironmonger had only been in post a short time.

Dr Bloomer also queried why the November Board was being presented with accounts to the end of September not October. Mr Ironmonger said that these would be presented to the Resources Committee next week as the Resources Committee is responsible for examining financial information in detail and to report to the Board. It was felt that really, the Resources Committee should have been last week with the accounts being presented to the Board this week and the timing of the Resources Committee will be changed to ensure more current information is presented to the Board.

ACTION
Committee
secretary

**G
Ironmonger**

Reference was made to the uncovering of the £400,000 at Barbot Hall and Mr Ironmonger was asked to investigate and advise the Board of the circumstances.

Cllr License said that he felt there needed to be a time line for events, regular reconciliations (perhaps weekly), and look into the possibility of a 0% loan from RMBC and draw up a list of the obstacles standing in the way of 2010 having financial independence.

Miss Heaton asked a question relating to the Business Development Fund and asked if 2010 had control. It was reported that bids still have to go to Neighbourhoods for approval. Miss Heaton asked Mr Roddis why that was the case. Mr Roddis said that the principle had been that there was a pot of money available for innovations relating to 3* and beyond and that bid proposals had to be processed through Neighbourhoods.

It was proposed that the Resources committee have the authority to approve business development fund activities.

ACTION

AGREED:

The content of the report be noted.

Com. Sec.

The timing of Resource committee meetings be changed.

**G
Ironmonger**

Obstacles preventing 2010 managing its financial transactions through its own bank account be identified and an action plan to overcome them drawn up.

T Butler

Authority be sought from RMBC for the Resources committee to approve proposals for the business development fund

Gary Ironmonger left the meeting; Keith Stringer and Gaetano Demartino also left the meeting (4.10pm).

B11/6/4

Investment

B11/6/4/1

Decent Homes Phase 2

Mr Whittle highlighted that expenditure was £5m down on that projection. He assured the meeting that things were being managed in relation to contractors, e.g. Connaught was not being paid any money for December as they have not delivered to the standard required and they would not be given any more work until things improved.

Mr Whittle advised the meeting that the decent homes team was in the process of revising expenditure profiles to the end of march when new forward programmes would be established.

Reference was made to issues relating to the Decent Homes programme.

Examples were given of contractors not taking into account tenants' wishes and needs e.g. walk -in shower for a disabled tenant requires an Occupational Therapist to establish exactly what adaptations are required; leaving window areas only partially tiled.

Board members were concerned by the attitude of some contractors who appear to be telling tenants what they are getting rather than giving them any choice. In addition, the attitude of some contractors seems to be that 'it's only a council house' – not the attitude 2010 Rotherham wanted. Other specific examples were given.

Cllr License stated that it was important that specifications and standards were agreed and that contractors were adhering to those standards.

Board members discussed their desire to achieve a 'Rotherham standard' which they wanted to be Decent Homes plus - it was the view that, at present, we were not even meeting the Decent Homes standard.

The meeting asked who was responsible for quality checking. Mr Whittle advised there was a handover certificate. Cllr License said that the handover process appeared to be complex; he had received verbal reports where contractors had left tenants who had new central heating systems without any direction on how it worked and no instruction book. Cllr Dodson said that we should bear in mind that many of our tenants are vulnerable people (elderly, disadvantaged etc). Reference was made to a petition from Brinsworth tenants who wanted showers and not baths. Mr Whittle stated that we had to take into account the setting of a precedent but that the needs of those tenants would of course be considered.

Cllr License was concerned that the negative publicity would increase the refusal rate.

Cllr Littleboy said that decent homes should be a good news story; clearly there are some problems, but there should be some satisfied customers. Mr Dodson said that he had to say that he had to say that 2010 staff had always responded quickly when complaints had been communicated. Cllr Littleboy said that he would like to be kept informed of news (good or bad) rather than hear it from Decent Homes Champions or tenants.

Mr Roddis stated that the Council had received a number of complaints directly from unhappy customers. These generally focussed upon choice/lack of care and support. Mr Roddis confirmed that 2010 would shortly be receiving their report.

Mr Whittle expressed serious concern that RMBC staff were seeking out complaints whilst surveying for adaptations. Mr Whittle said it would have been more helpful to have informed 2010 about the complaints immediately

rather than writing a report. Mr Webb also expressed serious disappointment that RMBC had waited until the Board meeting to communicate such comments.

Miss Heaton referred to the Savill's report which had given a tight timescale (16 days) and asked how far we were off the target. Mr Whittle stated we were not off the target and that the issues we were facing were common to the early days of any Decent Homes programme.

Cllr License stated that he believed a customer satisfaction survey would highlight where we were delivering, what the issues were and what we were doing wrong. He stressed the importance of finding out why people were dissatisfied, to learn from them.

Mr Whittle advised the meeting that there would be an article in the newspapers regarding Connaught as he had been asked for a comment by RMBC's media-relations officer.

ACTION

AGREED:

The Decent Homes project progress report to November 2006 was received and noted.

M Whittle Action to address the issues raised to be reported to the Asset Management committee

M Whittle Speedier communication channels to be established with RMBC to ensure any feedback is obtained promptly by 2010 Limited

B11/6/4/2 Barbot Hall Option

Mr Hartley proposed a change to the order of the agenda to allow a presentation to the Board on Barbot Hall Options. The meeting agreed to take the presentation as the first business item.

Mr Stephen Hopwood (Niksten Consulting Limited) joined the meeting to give his presentation on the possible options relating to Barbot Hall (BH).

Mr Hopwood advised the meeting that his presentation had been pitched at a high level and the full report was some 31 pages long. Mr Hopwood said that in particular the report goes into risk in a lot more detail and gives an indication of key findings which can then be discussed.

Mr Hopwood advised the meeting that BH was a difficult topic but that matters would only get worse if no action was taken. The ramifications of taking no action could be reputational and financial for both the Council and 2010 and impact on the future of the staff and their jobs.

Mr Hopwood said that the situation was an unusual one and, having done

some research on ALMOs, 2010 Rotherham was the only ALMO to own a window factory.

Mr Hopwood said that during the course of his investigation he had gained a sense of a moderate and reflective approach, a desire to do the right thing whilst realising the difficulties involved. He described the business as split into 4: (glass units, window frame fabrications, installations, repairs) but it was difficult to establish which areas, if any, were viable. Mr Hopwood referred to the internal audit report in 2005 which highlighted failures in financial controls and drifting of management before transfer to the ALMO.

Mr Hopwood referred to the low productivity of the unit, the major administration overhead (ratio of 4:1), the high cost of charge hands and the procurement of materials which were all impacting adversely on the productivity and viability of the operation which would not easily be turned round.

Mr Hopwood stated that, in reality, Barbot Hall was a “one trick pony” which had been a ‘soft supplier’ to a ‘soft customer’ and needed to consider how it will replace £3m turnover on completion of the Decent Homes programme. Mr Hopwood referred to the rumours about the Decent Homes programme being extended by the Government which could reduce that turnover to £2.5m.

Mr Hopwood said that he had identified 6 possible options:-

- Status Quo
- In-House Recovery
- Dissolution
- Establish Barbot Hall as a Social Enterprise
- Establish a Joint Venture with a private company
- Transfer Barbot Hall to an existing Social Enterprise or other Partner

Mr Hopwood advised that any potential partner would of course be subject to due diligence and none of the options would be without risk, although the risk analysis had been aligned to correlate with the Council’s risk management strategy. Mr Hopwood stated that he felt it essential that RMBC extend the contract beyond that currently in place.

Mr Hopwood said that things to consider were to try to minimise risk for shareholders (in this case the Council as sole member of the company) consider transfer in total to a Social Enterprise or other partner. Mr Hopwood stressed the need to safeguard the Decent Homes programme.

Mr Hartley invited comments and questions.

Cllr License said that perhaps BH would be returned to the control of RMBC in 2010. He felt that it was unlikely that RMBC would extend the contract. Cllr License also expressed concerns regarding safeguarding jobs at BH

and the fact that a private company may come in and close the operation down for not a lot of money (which would impact on Decent Homes programme).

Dr Bloomer stated that the board had a responsibility to do the best it could; but doing nothing could not be an option and to hand it back to the Council in four years time would be a failure of duty. Mr Bloomer said that he considered only 2 of the options were viable: a private or social enterprise joint venture partner or outright transfer.

Cllr License said that there would be a need to make the business fit for disposal which would involve some internal recovery work and changes to the management structure to make the business appear more credible (although any proposal would be subject to a due diligence exercise).

Mr Whittle confirmed that some work was already underway through the appointment of the McMorrow brothers. The situation was due to be reviewed in December.

Mr Hartley suggested to the Board that no decisions could be taken and progress could not be made until the views of RMBC were known.

Cllr Littleboy suggested that the search for potential partners should begin immediately.

ACTION

M Whittle

AGREED: Mr Hopwood should make his Presentation to the Council as soon as possible, with the Presentation being amended to reflect the Board's preference for transfer to an existing social enterprise or, if that proved impossible, to some other organisation.

M Whittle

A copy of the full report be provided to all Board members as soon as possible.

B/11/6/4/3

Report of the Director of Investment

The report was received and noted.

B11/6/4/4

Health & Safety Update

Mr Whittle reported to the Board on the meeting which took place with the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) on 16 October. This related to an incident where an agency worker had removed a bath panel which contained asbestos. Mr Whittle stated that the meeting had been amicable and he had reported to the HSE the revised procedures which had been put in place.

Cllr License stated that it was necessary to identify who was accountable. Mr Whittle stated it was not clear who had direct accountability but he felt this should be with 2010. Mr Whittle advised the Board the intention was

that information would be directly available through operatives PDA's, but in the short term extra codes would be put on job cards AS (asbestos) where we know there is asbestos and PA (potential asbestos). Mr Whittle confirmed that steps would be taken to tighten up the survey process and we had offered the HSE the opportunity to come along in January and do an audit (Mr Whittle felt that this would happen) but he felt that he had made a good contact within the HSE.

A discussion took place surrounding the number of HSE reported incidents. Mr Whittle confirmed that there had been 3 (asbestos incident, tower scaffolding, and fall from roof).

Cllr Austen highlighted the need to establish a protocol in these situations. Cllr License asked whether any members of the board had received any media training and, if not, some members, including the chairman should attend.

Mr Hartley stated that since 2010 Rotherham had an SLA Agreement for media services and suggested that in such eventualities, members utilise the services provided under that SLA.

Miss Heaton asked about the advert which had recently been placed for a Communications & Marketing Manager. Mr Whittle confirmed the advert but this was for Decent Homes (as were the other 3 advertised vacancies).

Mr Hartley stated that H&S matters were covered within the Asset Management /Resources Minutes. If the Board requires something different, then it should ask.

Cllr License stated that he felt we needed a clear protocol that members of the board are advised of any matters which involve the HSE.

ACTION

AGREED:

M Whittle

A clear protocol be established to inform the Board and RMBC of any significant H&S incidents

Board Members

Any media enquiries received by Board members should be referred to the press office - RMBC

B11/6/5

Business Development

B11/6/5/1

Report of the Director of Business Development

The report was received and noted.

B11/6/6

Neighbourhood Management

B11/6/6/1

Neighbourhood Offices Opening Hours

Mr Richard Walker joined the meeting to present his paper.

Mr Walker explained that a decision had been taken to pilot Saturday morning opening but after a prolonged pilot, the conclusion was that this was simply not cost effective.

Mr Walker stated that the intention was to cease Saturday opening with a positive publicity campaign and introduce other services to tenants and residents in conjunction with Rother Fed and including walkabouts and property viewings, which could ultimately lead to improved customer service.

Cllr License agreed that the current position did not represent value for money and that there were other agencies which could be utilised for rent collection.

Mr Walker also raised an issue about the possibility that RMBC would be closing Wath Town Hall where one of the 2010 teams is based. Various possibilities were discussed (former library at Herringthorpe was suggested and it was suggested that perhaps the Youth Service was seeking a partner for the property). Mr Walker advised that they had requested EDS try to find alternative accommodation.

Cllr Austen advised caution regarding recommendation (3) as parliamentary constituencies are too large, lack a natural centre and often cross local authority boundaries.

Mr Webb said that historically staff had been given time in lieu of Saturday morning working but it was felt that removal of this service would give front line staff the opportunity to deliver core business and provide an opportunity for better management of resources. He felt this should be reflected in the management fee.

Mr Roddis said that he understood the need for the Board to make a decision but wished to give them 'food for thought' by referring to the recommendation made by Charter Mark about customers having an opportunity for face to face contact with 2010 staff within office opening times and this was seen as positive practice for 2010. Mr Roddis also referred to Audit Commission recommendations in 2004 on the implementation of the ALMO and that this was part of the management fee at that time.

Mr Hartley said that that discussion had to take place but that the original management fee had been reduced; 2010 had to look at affordability.

Mr Walker said that, on the management fee issue, we were actually delivering more services than were recommended in the original report to Cabinet and the Board and were in fact doing more than was required, and

whilst it may be that the offices would not be open on Saturday mornings, the intention was to take more services to the tenants by way of surgeries on the estates, walkabouts etc.

AGREED: The Recommendations in the paper were agreed, namely:

- 1. Saturday office opening ceases with a positive publicity campaign offering alternatives**
- 2. Alternative 2010 based services are explored with Rother Fed, such as weekend neighbourhood walkabouts, viewings and appointments**
- 3. Consideration be given to the possibility of opening one office per parliamentary constituency on a less frequent basis**
- 4. 2010 requests an addition to the management fee for delivering services on Saturdays**
- 5. 2010 makes a clear recommendation to Neighbourhoods that they should seriously consider commissioning RBT to undertake Saturday morning cash collection duties**
- 6. That 2010 follow the RMBC lead in relation to the Wath Neighbourhood Office, resulting in the transfer of back office services to the Swinton Office and the Customer facing services to the Swinton Customer Service Centre**
- 7. That a mobile working Neighbourhood Champion be piloted in Wath as an alternative mode of access**
- 8. That the East Herringthorpe Neighbourhood Office operates reduced opening hours with immediate effect**
- 9. That the Corporate Organisational Service Review considers access arrangements that offer Value For Money and customer choice.**

B11/6/6/2 Report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services

Mr Webb referred the Board to the paper previously circulated and talked through the principles of the decision to introduce Customer Service Assistants (CSA's) which should free up Neighbourhood Support Officers for more housing management duties and leave the Neighbourhood Champions with more time to do what they should be doing.

Regarding the RESPECT agenda, the Board agreed to accept a further report at the next meeting.

Mr Webb reported to the meeting about the formation of the service improvement group.

A discussion took place regarding the reference to staff being able to deal with 80% of enquiries. In particular Cllr License said that he did not think this was an appropriate benchmark to use and we should aim for 100%. Mr Webb said that he believed an 80% target met the acceptable standard. Cllr License said that KPIs tended to be driven by the length of call time but that this in turn reduced the overall level of quality of resolution of complaints.

Miss Heaton asked for clarification of who were the project board. Mr Webb confirmed Executive Management Team (himself, Mrs Riley, Mrs Butler, Mr Whittle) plus Gary Ironmonger, Anne Cocking and Richard Walker. Miss Heaton also asked Mr Webb if there was a Neighbourhood Management Strategy document. Mr Webb responded in the negative.

Cllr Austen stated that she felt that Neighbourhood Officers were overstretched and expressed concern at the movement of staff around the areas. Mr Webb advised that there were many reasons for movement of staff, they could be operational, or they could be at the request of individuals. The Board generally felt that they wish to be kept informed of changes as they happen. Mr Webb asked the board to clarify to what level they wish to be advised. It was confirmed that they would like to be informed down to Neighbourhood Champion level.

Mr Webb said that he took on board what had been said and reiterated that they do not move staff for the sake of moving. Mr Webb also confirmed that there may be some changes to the structure on completion of the service reviews.

Dr Bloomer asked how the 4 new posts were to be funded. Mr Webb confirmed that they would be ending agency staff contracts and this resource would then be utilised. Cllr Dodson raised the possibility of an area 'hit squad'. Mr Webb said that that would be desirable but we did not have the resource.

AGREED:

ACTION

The report was received and noted.

P Webb

Staff changes down to (and including) Neighbourhood Champions to be notified to Board members.

B11/6/6/3

Borough Environment Training Scheme

Mr Webb said that he hoped that this would be seen as a good news story. We had gained approval of £144,250 from the Business Development Fund to establish a Borough Environmental Training Scheme which aims to assist

young people who are not in education, employment or training. Mr Webb said that he hoped that this would be seen as a positive way forward. It was intended to work with a Rotherham training company, Morthyng, on this project.

Miss Heaton stated that care should be taken when selecting the partner for this project as she believed Morthyng does not have a very good reputation in the area which could preclude young people from taking part. The possibility of working with Project 400 was also discussed.

ACTION

AGREED:

**The Board endorsed the project
Every effort to be made to ensure compatibility with any existing
schemes doing familiar work, such as Project 400.**

P Webb

Date of Next Meeting

20 December 2006

**Time: 1PM Christmas Buffet
2PM Meeting**

ACTION

T. Butler

Papers to be sent on 13 December 2006