

FREEBRIDGE BOARD MINUTES AND ASSOCIATED REPORTS

9 JULY 2012

FREEBRIDGE COMMUNITY HOUSING BOARD

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Board held on
Monday 9 July 2012 at 6.55pm in the
Conference Room, Juniper House,
Austin Street, King's Lynn**

PRESENT:

Ray Johnson (Chairman)
Lesley Bambridge
Matthew Brown
Sylvia Calver
John Fox
Irene Gammon
Bill Guyan
Michael Jervis
Paul Leader
Ian Pinches
Colin Sampson

IN ATTENDANCE:

Tony Hall - Chief Executive
Sean Kent - Deputy Chief Executive
Colin Davison - Assistant Director of
Property Services
(minute numbers 100/12 - 107/12)
Angus MacQueen - Company Secretary

OBSERVER:

Barbara McLellan - Homes and Communities Agency

NOTE: The meeting was preceded by a presentation on “Leading Health Safety at Work” given by Mike Grammer of West Norfolk Safety, Freebridge’s Health and Safety consultant.

100/12 APOLOGIES AND WELCOME

An apology for absence was received from Steve Clark.

The Chairman welcomed Barbara McLellan of the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), who was observing the meeting as part of the regulatory assessment process.

101/12 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 May 2012 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

102/12 MATTERS ARISING

(a) Confidential

(b) Confidential

103/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Tony Hall declared an interest in the item at minute number 116/12 – Chief Executive's Appraisal. The Board was content that he should remain in the room during the item.

104/12 CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

The Chairman gave an update on his activities as Chairman since the last meeting.

As well as his regular weekly meetings with the Chief Executive, the Chairman said that he had attended the following:

- a meeting of the Chief Executive's Appraisal Panel;
- a planning meeting for this year's sheltered scheme gardening competition; and
- a meeting of local housing association Chairmen hosted by Saffron Housing Trust.

With regard to the meeting of local housing association Chairmen, the Chairman stated that some very interesting and useful discussions had been held. One subject that had been raised was the issue of paperless Board meetings. The associations that had trialled this had reported on mixed results to date.

The Chairman advised that he would shortly be undertaking the following activities:

- taking part in the judging and attending the awards ceremony for the sheltered housing gardening competition; and
- attending an e² meeting at Braintree.

The Board noted the update.

105/12 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S UPDATE

(a) Confidential

(b) Confidential

(c) Providence Street

The Chief Executive reported that he was continuing to explore opportunities to keep open the Providence Street community centre, which the County Council was looking to close. The centre was in a key strategic location for Freebridge, ideally situated to aid the integration of Hillington Square with the rest of the local area. It was also an important facility for the town, there being around 25 user groups. He had met with representatives of Norfolk Property Services and Adult Social Services, and was now arranging for the Chair of the User Groups Committee to meet with himself and County Council officials. He was investigating the possibility of Freebridge entering into a leasing arrangement with a view to purchase at a later date. He would present a report to the Board if and when there were any firm proposals.

(d) Hillington Square

The Chief Executive said that the Hillington Square project had gained planning permission on 2 July 2012. He had attended and spoken at the Development Control Board (DCB) meeting at which the application had been considered, as had Freebridge board member Lesley Bambridge, in her capacity as ward councillor for the area. Some DCB members had expressed concerns about car parking provision, but there had been no issues around the design. Most members of the DCB, including its Chairman, had been very supportive of the project.

The Board thanked Lesley Bambridge for speaking on behalf of the project at the DCB meeting.

(e) Development at 2 Chapel Lane, King's Lynn

The Chief Executive stated that the development project to convert the barn at 2 Chapel Lane, King's Lynn into a resource centre was now underway. The expected completion date was October/November 2012.

(f) Employee Conference

The Chief Executive said that the annual Employee Conference would be held on 10 July 2012. The Conference would focus on the Freebridge values. An exciting programme had been arranged, with a number of external speakers, including a "Human Library" and a Mary Gobar trainer.

(g) Behavioural Influencing

The Deputy Chief Executive reminded board members that they had considered behavioural influencing at their away weekend in November 2011. The Government was promoting this as a cost effective way of addressing issues, particularly in the health sector. Freebridge had been investigating its use in housing, and most specifically as part of the Hillington Square project. After seeking advice from the Cabinet Office, Freebridge had been invited to attend a brainstorming session with the Cabinet Office's behavioural

influencing support team, focusing on the Hillington Square project. Four Freebridge representatives would be attending. The Deputy Chief Executive would report back to the Board on the session and would ensure that its outcomes were integrated into the Hillington Square project.

(h) Employment Tribunal

The Deputy Chief Executive reminded board members that they had received an email in the previous week advising them of the successful outcome of a dismissal case, involving two employees who had sought to take the matter to an Employment Tribunal. Preparation for the Tribunal had been extremely time-consuming, and four Freebridge officers had travelled to Norwich on 4 July 2012 expecting to attend a three-day case. However, just before the case was due to start being heard, the former employees had undertaken to withdraw their case. The Chief Executive commented that the result of the case showed that the decision to dismiss had been correct. The Board thanked the Deputy Chief Executive and the other employees involved for their hard work in achieving this excellent result.

There followed further confidential discussion with regard to the details of this case.

(i) Board Appraisal and Review

The Company Secretary reported that Debby Ounsted of Campbell Tickell had been engaged to support this year's Board appraisal and review process. She had already observed the Audit Committee meeting held on 2 July and would be observing the Board meeting on 5 November. Board members would be contacted shortly to arrange appointments for individual appraisals, which had been provisionally scheduled for the week commencing 5 November.

106/12 REVIEW OF HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY (click here to go to report)

The Assistant Director of Property Services presented a report which reviewed the Health and Safety Policy.

RESOLVED: That the Health and Safety Policy be approved, as presented.

107/12 ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE (report not available – confidential)

The Assistant Director of Property Services presented a report which provided an update on health and safety activity over the year and on progress towards reducing the overall risks associated with Freebridge's activities.

The Assistant Director of Property Services highlighted the significant achievement of a Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents Gold Award for the second year running. The Board recorded its thanks and congratulations to all staff involved in the achievement of the Award, which

was particularly impressive as Freebridge was the only housing association with its own Direct Labour Organisation to have won the Award.

The Assistant Director of Property Services also highlighted that there were no longer any critical items on the health and safety action plan. Four or five areas had been targeted for improvement and would be monitored by the Health and Safety Committee.

The Assistant Director of Property Services acknowledged that a few words in relation to dealing with sharps had been omitted from action plan; he would ensure that this was addressed.

In answer to questions, officers made the following points:

- The employee assistance telephone helpline was not heavily used. It had not revealed any consistent themes of concern among employees.
- Schools undertook individual risk assessments before children were placed with Freebridge for work experience. The Assistant Director of Property Services would record this in the action plan.
- The Freebridge Week of Wellbeing had taken place during June 2012. It had included opportunities for employees to receive health checks, coaching, massage, advice on stress management, advice on gym membership, and financial advice, as well as the provision of free fruit and a dress down day/healthy cake stall to raise money for Freebridge's chosen charities. It had been well-received by employees and it was planned to hold it again.

The Chief Executive placed on record his thanks to the Assistant Director of Property Services for the significant improvements that Freebridge had made in respect of health and safety since he had taken on responsibility for this area.

The Board noted the report.

108/12 [REVIEW OF DATA PROTECTION POLICY \(click here to go to report\)](#)

The Deputy Chief Executive presented a report which reviewed the Data Protection Policy. He said that Internal Audit reviews had shown that data protection awareness had increased significantly among Freebridge employees.

In answer to a question, the Deputy Chief Executive stated that the likely extension of Freedom of Information Act requirements to housing associations presented a risk to Freebridge in terms of the time required to deal with information requests and the need to follow the procedures correctly. Freebridge was attempting to pre-empt this as far as possible by increasing

the amount of information published on its website, particularly in relation to purchasing and contracts.

RESOLVED: That the Data Protection Policy be approved, as presented.

109/12 **PROPOSED LEASE/PURCHASE OF PLAXTOLE HOUSE**
(report not available – confidential)

The Chief Executive presented a report which set out proposals that sought to secure the future of Plaxtole House, King's Lynn, a learning facility and supported accommodation for young people currently owned by the College of West Anglia.

The Chief Executive said that, although the report requested delegated authority to enter into the necessary agreements, he would refer these to the Board for final approval if the timescales allowed.

The Chief Executive stated that the project was a good example of partnership working, and was gaining a real momentum. As well as Freebridge, the College and the Borough Council were already involved, and a specialist housing provider would also need to become a partner. The risks of the project were being spread across the partners.

The Chief Executive said that he and Kassie Melnyk (the consultant engaged to assist with the project) had met with the staff team and parents of the users of Plaxtole House. It was clear that this was a much needed and highly valued facility, and that its closure would have a significant impact on the quality of life of its users. Although there were currently 24 users, accommodation could realistically be provided for around 30, with a maximum provision for 50. Going forward, it might be possible to work with other partners to establish supported housing for users to move into once they had finished at Plaxtole House, or to arrange for them to spend some time at the supported complex at Thornage. The intention was for the facility to be ready by September 2012; urgent works to satisfy fire safety requirements would be undertaken by then, with further maintenance and improvement works to follow.

In answer to questions, officers made the following points:

- The Government was currently considering the withdrawal of Housing Benefit for people aged under 25. Should this occur, it was hoped that a special exception would be made for people with particular needs, such as those who used Plaxtole House. In the worst case scenario, where a special exception was not made, the facility would most probably have to close and the exit strategy instigated. Tenancies would be on a six-month licence, in order to limit Freebridge's exposure to such an eventuality.
- A flood risk assessment would be carried out and would reveal whether there were any concerns over drainage.

- Discussions had taken place with the Borough Council regarding Housing Benefit provision. Advice on Housing Benefit was being made available to the users of Plaxtole House. It was intended to establish the income stream from Housing Benefit quickly.
- Discussions were ongoing with the College in terms of what activities it would run at Plaxtole House. The need to be sensitive to the existing users would be taken into account. The insurance situation in relation to these activities also needed to be resolved.
- Users came to Plaxtole House through a variety of means. Some were as a result of a course application to the College, some were referred by Norfolk County Council, and some came through a specific application from parents. This was set to continue, although Freebridge would work with the College to increase the marketing of the facility.
- At present, no TUPE transfer of staff was intended. The facility would change its emphasis to one of primarily residential use, and as such it was unlikely that the staff's roles would be similar enough to merit TUPE. Opportunities for ongoing employment at Plaxtole House were being discussed with the current staff.
- It was hoped to make available the Plaxtole House project as a case study for partnership working.

The Board welcomed the project, which was in line with Freebridge's values and aimed to keep open an important facility for the area. The Board was reassured that there was a clear exit strategy in place should this be required. The Board also noted that this project was a good example of using an external consultant to provide specific expertise, which was a necessary element of operating with an Executive Team of two. The Board thanked the Chief Executive, the Deputy Chief Executive and the Assistant Director of Property Services for their hard work on the project to date.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That Freebridge's involvement in the Plaxtole House project be approved in principle.
- 2) That authority be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Board Chairman and Lead Member for Resources to enter into a lease agreement with the Borough Council.
- 3) That authority be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Board Chairman and the Lead Member for Resources to agree any transitional arrangements, including a management agreement with a specialist housing provider and hire agreement with the College of West Anglia.

110/12 **NEW FUNDING CONDITIONS (click here to go to report)**

The Chief Executive presented a report which sought approval for the 2012/13 Funding Conditions issued by the HCA.

RESOLVED: That the new 2012/13 Funding Conditions be approved, as presented, for any development under the Framework Delivery Agreement, including conversion to Affordable Rent.

111/12 **MORTGAGE RESCUE SCHEME** (report not available – confidential)

The Chief Executive presented a report which sought approval for the purchase of three properties under the Mortgage Rescue Scheme.

The Chief Executive explained that purchases under the Mortgage Rescue Scheme often required some urgency and would only be pursued if they were viable. He, therefore, asked if the Board would consider that such purchases could be made under delegated authority in future, provided that certain parameters were met.

It was suggested that any future reports to the Board on mortgage rescues need not include full address details, so as to maximise individuals' privacy.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the purchase of the three properties listed in the report as being offered to Freebridge under the Mortgage Rescue Scheme be approved.
- 2) That the Chief Executive present to the next meeting proposals in relation to the establishment of delegated authority for purchases to be made under the Mortgage Rescue Scheme.

112/12 **REQUEST TO WRITE OFF DEBTS OVER £2,000** (report not available – confidential)

The Deputy Chief Executive presented a report which sought approval to write off a number of debts that were worth over £2,000.

The Board acknowledged that the total value of the write-offs requested and of those made during 2011/12 was a very small proportion of Freebridge's annual income. It was also noted that Freebridge was in the upper quartile for rent collection when benchmarked against other housing associations.

The Board requested that benchmarking take place to establish the level of write-off that required Board approval in other housing associations. If appropriate, a higher figure could then be recommended in the forthcoming review of Freebridge's Financial Regulations.

It was noted that the level of bad debt was likely to increase when the new welfare reforms were introduced.

RESOLVED: That the write-off of the debts listed in the report be approved.

113/12 **APPOINTMENT OF SHAREHOLDER** (report not available – confidential)

The Company Secretary presented a report which requested the Board to consider an application for tenant shareholding.

RESOLVED: That the application for tenant shareholding set out in Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

114/12 **TENANT SATISFACTION SURVEY (click here to go to report)**

The Deputy Chief Executive presented a report which set out the headline results of the recent tenant satisfaction survey.

The Deputy Chief Executive highlighted that there had been an increase in satisfaction among general needs tenants, but a significant decrease within sheltered housing. In depth research into the reasons for this decrease had been commissioned and would be reported back to the Board in autumn 2012; it would then be fed into the business planning process.

The Board acknowledged that there had been a number of changes to the sheltered housing service during 2011/12. These had been the result of a cut to the Supporting People funding, which had been outside of Freebridge's control, and Freebridge had done well to maintain the service to the level that had been achieved.

The Board noted the report.

115/12 **ANNUAL EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IN RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING UPDATES** (report not available – confidential)

The Deputy Chief Executive presented a report which:

- provided an update on equality and diversity in recruitment and on actions undertaken to promote this; and
- gave an overview of training and development during 2011/12.

The Deputy Chief Executive said that applicants to roles within Freebridge had not been as diverse as would have been ideal, but that no barriers to making applications had been identified.

The Board noted the report.

116/12 **CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S APPRAISAL**

Matthew Brown, Chairman of the Chief Executive's Appraisal Panel, said that the Panel had met recently to set the Chief Executive's performance

objectives for 2012/13. The outcome of the meeting had previously been circulated to all board members.

117/12 WORK UPDATE

The Company Secretary presented the work update, which included the following:

- Action Sheet
- Future Work Programme of the Board.

In answer to questions, the Chief Executive made the following points:

- Confidential
- Although there were currently no opportunities for new affordable housing arising from the recently introduced Military Covenant, officers would continue to monitor the situation in conjunction with the Borough Council and RAF Marham.

The Board noted the update.

118/12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

119/12 NEXT MEETING

The Board noted that its next meeting was scheduled for Monday 6 August 2012 at 6.30pm.

The meeting closed at 8.40pm.

CHAIRMAN

Freebridge Community Housing

Report to the Board

Author	Colin Davison	Report Type		Impact		
Related Work Ref.		For Decision	√	High	Medium	Low
		For Information		√		
Consultation	Health and Safety Committee, Mike Grammar – Health & Safety consultant					

Meeting Date: 9th July 2011

Report Title: Review of Health & Safety Policy

Purpose: To present the Health & Safety Policy – available to view on the Board Members' Website, alongside the agenda for this meeting.

Policy/Strategy Implications:

It fits with the organisation's Business Plan objectives, Vision and Values and Risk Management Strategy.

Finance and VFM Implications:

The policy aims to reduce the cost involved with dealing with the effects of a breach of Health & Safety within Freebridge associated with Tenants, staff & contractors.

Customer Care/Equality and Diversity Implications:

Equality Impact Assessment completed on revised policy and procedures. Improving health and safety practices will improve the working environment for staff and customers alike.

Risk Assessment (cross-reference with Freebridge Risk Map):

Risk 11.0 Health and Safety, Legislation not complied with – Impact Critical, likelihood Significant.

Risk 11.1 Fire Safety, Impact catastrophic, Likelihood significant.

Recommendations: It is recommended that the Board:

- (i) Approves the Health & Safety Policy.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Health & Safety Policy has been updated to recognise Freebridge's corporate approach to Health & Safety.
- 1.2 It aims to focus our approach to Health & Safety, ensuring a fit with our vision and values.

2.0 Strategic elements

- 2.1 The Policy incorporates a number of appropriate actions to ensure that the policy is effectively implemented:
 - Regular updates through team meetings
 - Inspection of premises and accurate recording of actions
 - Staff training and refresher training
 - Regular testing of systems and maintenance checks

3.0 Key changes to previous policy

3.1 The revised policy has updated a number of key changes to ensure the policy is fit for purpose and meets the requirements of the business. These are;

- Introduction of an overriding policy statement that encompasses the previous board concerns around tenant safety
- Previously there were procedures linked to the policy that did not exist – these are now all in place.
- Removed the anomaly where the policy stated a two year review but the body of the document stated a one year review. It will now be reviewed every two years.
- One of the main changes has been the Asbestos Management Plan, this is mainly because of a change in legislation for 2012 and the lack of accurate information supplied in the transfer, which has only been identified following recent surveys.
- The benefit of the changes are that when something is found not to be working it can be easily and quickly rectified to prevent re-occurrence of a problem.
- Updates can now be circulated on the corporate intranet and viewing can be measured
- Procedures have been amalgamated to reduce and simplify the arrangements for ease of use by staff.
- The main benefit of a robust health and safety policy and arrangements is that new people coming into the company can identify the procedures to follow, which in turn enables them to get a clear understanding of their responsibilities.

4.0 Availability of Updated Policy

4.1 The updated Policy can be viewed on the Board Members' Website, alongside the agenda for this meeting. The Freebridge Health and Safety Policy Statement, signed by the Chief Executive, can also be viewed on the Board Members' Website, alongside the agenda for this meeting. Hard copies of both documents are available on request.

Freebridge Community Housing

Report to the Board

Author	Dave Clements	Report Type		Impact		
Related Work Ref.		For Decision	√	High	Medium	Low
ICT Policy, Strategy & Action Plan – February 2011 Data Protection Policy – February 2010		For Information		√		
Consultation	Deputy Chief Executive Management Team					

Meeting Date: 9th July 2012

Report Title: Review of Data Protection Policy

Purpose: To present a review of the Data Protection Policy and seek approval to the policy update.

Policy/Strategy Implications: There are no significant changes in policy arising from this report.

Finance and VFM Implications: None arising directly from this report.

Customer Care/Equality and Diversity Implications: This report is not anticipated to affect current Equality and Diversity activities and standards but where implications are possible an Equality Impact Assessment will be completed.

Risk Assessment (cross-reference with Freebridge Risk Map):

- 1.1 Failure to comply with Regulatory and Legislation requirements – Critical impact, High likelihood
- 1.2 Board direction not implemented – Critical impact, Very low likelihood

Recommendations: It is recommended that the Board:

- (i) Approves the updated Data Protection Policy.

We have conducted a review of the Data Protection Policy, and as legislation remains unchanged the main body of the policy does not need updating.

We have updated the Action Plan reflecting the following achievements since the policy was approved:-

- We have reviewed all forms used to capture personal data and ensure they contain a Fair Collection Statement.
- A Data Protection addendum has been added to all tenancy sign-up packs.
- We now comply with the National Housing Federation data retention guidelines.
- We have updated the 'red flag' cases on our housing management system to ensure all cases where the flag is used remains relevant.
- We have improved the way in which confidential waste is stored and disposed of.
- We have ensured that all confidential files are secured in lockable cabinets.

- We have ensured that all new third parties working with us sign a written data protection agreement.
- We have ensured that 'Subject Access' request forms are available on the intranet, our website and at reception areas.

The Policy, including the updated Action Plan, can be viewed on the Board Members' website, alongside the agenda for this Board meeting; a hard copy is available on request

The Board should be aware that we are in the process of introducing Electronic Document Management so that tenancy files, records and correspondence are held digitally rather than in paper form. The principles of Data Protection remain the same but the medium has changed reducing the risk of data being exposed to those not eligible to see information.

We also expect that at some stage in the future certain of our activities will become subject to the Freedom of Information Act. With this in mind we have already started to publish information that is typically requested via Freedom of Information requests on our website.

As legislation has not changed since the policy was agreed, it is recommend that the existing policy is extended for a further two years.

We will keep the Board updated in changes to legislation when they arrive although we do not expect the Data Protection Act to be updated before 2014.

Freebridge Community Housing

Report to the Board

Author	Jackie Beckett	Report Type		Impact		
Related Work Ref.		For Decision	√	High	Medium	Low
		For Information			√	
Consultation	Tony Hall, Jeremy Mason					

Meeting Date: 9th July 2012

Report Title: New Funding Conditions

Purpose:

To seek Board approval to the 2012/13 Funding Conditions issued by the HCA.

Policy/Strategy Implications:

None directly arising from this report

Finance and VFM Implications:

None directly arising from this report

Customer Care/Equality and Diversity Implications:

None directly arising from this report

Risk Assessment (cross-reference with Freebridge Risk Map):

Risk 1.1 – Failure to comply with Regulatory and Legislation Requirements – Critical Impact, High Likelihood

Recommendations: It is recommended that the Board:

- (i) Approve the new 2012/13 Funding Conditions, attached as Appendix A to this report for any development under the Framework Delivery Agreement including conversion to Affordable Rent.

- 1.0 The Homes and Communities Agency requires Registered Providers who are continuing to develop schemes under the Agency's National Affordable Homes Programme 2008-11 or the 2011-15 Affordable Homes Programme to formally accept the Agency's Funding Conditions that apply to that programme.
- 2.0 This requires a Board decision which must be retained on file for compliance audit purposes. The Board have approved the Funding Conditions in place at the time of previous development schemes receiving Board approval.
- 3.0 Further to the Board meeting on 5th March when the 2011/12 Funding Conditions were approved, there is now a new set of Funding Conditions for 2012/13 which will now require the approval of the Board. These Funding Conditions apply to the Framework Development Agreement for which Board approval was given on 5th September 2011 which includes proposed new developments at:

Church Drove, Outwell
The Wroe, Emneth
Chiltern Crescent/Willow Road Hunstanton
Town Lane Castle Acre
Gelham Manor, Dersingham
Mill Road Watlington

- 4.0 The main differences from the previous version of the Funding Conditions are fairly minor, mostly relating to the inclusion of reference to the Greater London Authority for properties in London. The other changes are:
- Deletion of reference to modern methods of construction
 - Specific reference to the Regulatory Framework Annexe A Rent Standard Guidance (to replace a general reference to the Regulatory Framework)
 - Deletion of reference to risk and financial status in the responsibilities of the “Lead” RP
 - Deletion of reference to Affordable Rent in the section on rent
 - Different provision relating to CORE recording
- 5.0 None of the amendments has any implications for Freebridge. This has been confirmed by Orwell Housing Association.

Freebridge Community Housing

Report to the Board

Author	Simon J Swanson	Report Type	Impact		
Related Work Ref.		For Decision	High	Medium	Low
		For Information	√		
Consultation	Tenant Representatives				

Meeting Date: 9th July 2012

Report Title: Tenant Satisfaction Survey

Purpose: The purpose of this report is to advise the Board of the headline results of the recent tenant satisfaction survey.

Policy/Strategy Implications: None.

Finance and VFM Implications: None.

Customer Care/Equality and Diversity Implications:

To make Freebridge Community Housing more aware of their tenants needs and their views on Freebridge Community Housing.

Risk Assessment (cross-reference with Freebridge Risk Map):

3.1 Housing Management–Failure in customer satisfaction, critical impact – low likelihood
 8.1 Relationships–Failure in tenant communication, critical impact – significant likelihood
 8.7 Relationships–Failure to deliver transfer promises, catastrophic impact–low likelihood

Recommendations: It is recommended that the Board:

- (i) Note the report.

1.0 Introduction

As long as Freebridge has been in existence we have regularly surveyed our tenants to see how satisfied they were with the services we provide. Over the last few years we have used the STATUS survey which has allowed us to directly compare our results from previous years.

The STATUS survey is now no longer in use and has now been replaced by the STAR survey which asks largely similar questions although doesn't allow direct comparison so easily because of the change in wording of said questions.

The surveys were sent out to around 2,500 plus tenants in March of this year and responses were received back from just under a 1000 - a similar response to 2011.

2.0 Results

A summary of the three keys measures that are have been used previously as the main performance indicators are as follows :

	Combined					
	Jan-08	Jul-08	Jan-09	Mar-10	Mar-11	Mar-12
Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the services provided by housing association?	75%	77%	77%	84%	88%	87%
Generally, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way your housing association deals with repairs and maintenance?	72%	72%	74%	82%	87%	82%
How satisfied or dissatisfied are your that your views are being taken into account?	55%	56%	60%	74%	76%	see below

It is worth noting that although the overall tenant satisfaction is down by 1% the satisfaction of General Needs tenants had actually increased slightly from 86% to 88%, however the satisfaction of Sheltered Needs tenants had dropped from 94% to 85%.

Satisfaction across the survey has largely replicated this pattern other than with satisfaction with repairs which has dropped with in respect of General Needs *and* Sheltered tenants.

Lastly because of the change in questions asked of the tenants in the new STAR surveys there is no directly comparable question regarding tenants satisfaction, however there are three questions which cover similar ground namely :

- Listening to residents' views and acting upon them = 69%
- The opportunity to make your views known = 74%
- Keeping you informed about things that might affect you = 87%

3.0 Additional Comments

Given that the drop in the Sheltered Housing tenants' satisfaction has cut across most questions within the survey we have commissioned some qualitative research to be carried out to allow us a greater understanding as to why this might be. We expect the findings of this in autumn.

We are aware that these tenants have been particularly affected by a number of changes to the services they receive over the last year but this further research should allow us to more fully understand what we are doing well, what we are doing less well and what we need to do to improve their satisfaction.