

# FREEBRIDGE BOARD MINUTES AND ASSOCIATED REPORTS

23 MAY 2011

## **FREEBRIDGE COMMUNITY HOUSING BOARD**

### **Minutes of a Meeting of the Board held on Monday 23 May 2011 at 6.30pm in the Conference Room, Juniper House, Austin Street, King's Lynn**

#### **PRESENT:**

Ray Johnson (Chairman)  
Lesley Bambridge  
Matthew Brown  
Sylvia Calver  
Nigel Donohue  
Irene Gammon  
Bill Guyan  
Paul Leader  
Ian Pinches  
Colin Sampson

#### **ALSO PRESENT:**

Steve Clark (observer)

#### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

Tony Hall	-	Chief Executive
Sean Kent	-	Executive Director (Resources)
Abigail Ellis	-	Executive Director (Operations)
Michelle Playford	-	Assistant Director of Communications and Customer Engagement (minute numbers 79/11 - 85/11)
Angus MacQueen	-	Company Secretary

#### **79/11      WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

The Chairman welcomed Steve Clark, who had been appointed as an independent board member with effect from 20 September 2011, but would be attending Board meetings in the meantime as an observer.

The Chairman congratulated Lesley Bambridge and Colin Sampson on their re-election to the Borough Council. He further congratulated Colin Sampson on his appointment as Borough Mayor for the forthcoming year.

Apologies for absence were received from Geoffrey Hipperson and Michael Jervis.

#### **80/11      MINUTES**

The minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 11 April 2011 and of the special meeting held on 26 April 2011 were confirmed as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

## **81/11            MATTERS ARISING**

### **•     Review of The Size of The Board (Minute Number 55/11(a))**

In answer to a question, the Chief Executive confirmed that the consultation on the proposal to reduce the size of the Board to 12 members had been sent to the Council. Indications were that the Council officers understood the rationale for the proposal. It was expected that the proposal would shortly be considered formally by councillors.

## **82/11            DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

On behalf of all staff present, the Chief Executive declared an interest in the item at minute number 88/11 – Resources and Risk Committee Recommendations (Part 1) – in relation to the proposed changes to the Sickness Absence Policy. The Board was content that staff should remain in the room during the item.

Ian Pinches declared an interest in the item at minute number 94/11 – Appointment of Shareholders – as he was one of the applicants for shareholding. The Board was content that he should remain in the room during the item, but he did not vote.

Tony Hall, Sean Kent and Abigail Ellis declared interests in the item at minute number 99/11 – Resources and Risk Committee Recommendations (Part 2) – in relation to the recommendations on executive remuneration. They withdrew from the room during consideration of this item.

Lesley Bambridge asked it to be noted that she was about to sign up as a Supporter of the King's Lynn Arts Centre, but it was not considered that this should result in a formal declaration of interest.

## **83/11            CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE**

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

As well as weekly meetings with the Chief Executive and Board/committee meetings, the Chairman had attended the following:

- A meeting of the Hillington Square Project Group with the newly appointed architects, on 13 April 2011.
- A meeting with the Chief Executive and Chairman of Orwell Housing Association, on 4 May 2011.
- The opening of a new workshop at the Camphill Communities establishment at Thornage. It had been clear at the event that Camphill Communities were very pleased at Freebridge's involvement with their facility.

- The official launch of the allotments at Charles Dewar Close, Great Massingham, on 21 May 2011. This had been a very successful event, which had received good coverage in the local media.

The Chairman also reported that, in line with the Board's decision at its last ordinary meeting (minute number 65/11 refers), the Executive Director (Resources) had been developing a Service Level Agreement with the King's Lynn Arts Centre Trust. The Executive Director (Resources) had done an excellent job on this, and there was real potential for benefits for Freebridge and its tenants, for instance through exhibitions and small scale events. Monitoring reports would be presented to the Resources and Risk Committee.

The Chairman also advised that he would be attending his second meeting of the National Housing Federation's Planning Sub-Committee, on 15 June 2011.

## **84/11            CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S UPDATE**

### **(a)    Remuneration Strategy**

The Chief Executive said that discussions with the trade unions were currently being held regarding the proposed new remuneration strategy.

### **(b)    Energy Efficiency Grants**

The Chief Executive stated that discussions were being held with regard to accessing grants from companies for energy efficiency works, particularly in areas of deprivation. It may be that the nature of the bid would allow for non-Freebridge properties to benefit from the scheme and help meet the targets.

### **(c)    Management Group Away Day**

The Chief Executive reported that Management Group (which included all of the managers in the organisation) had had an away day, to consider the new Business Plan and how it would translate into operational plans. The event had been very successful, and the business had continued to run smoothly on that day despite the absence of all managers.

### **(d)    Tenant Board Member Recruitment**

The Chief Executive advised that he and the Company Secretary were meeting with individuals who had been identified by Freebridge staff as potential tenant board members. This followed the recruitment process earlier this year, which had failed to yield any new tenant board members. Once some applications had been received, it was intended to reconvene the recruitment panel. The Board endorsed this approach.

### **(e)    Meetings with KLFM**

The Chief Executive said that UKRD, the group which owned the local radio station KLFM, had been number one in The Times' top 100 employers this

year. Senior level meetings were being held with KLFM in order to gain some suggestions on good practice; there might also be areas where Freebridge could help them.

**(f) Harpley Court Sheltered Scheme**

The Chief Executive explained that some significant expenditure was required at the Harpley Court sheltered scheme. In view of the difficulty in letting some of the properties on the scheme, an options appraisal for its future would be presented to the Board on 25 July 2011. It was intended to seek the views of the tenants in advance of presenting the options to the Board; the Board endorsed this approach.

**(g) Interim Assistant Director of Assets**

The Executive Director (Operations) reported that Peter Nourse had been appointed as the Interim Assistant Director of Assets, for a period of up to six months.

**85/11 CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT POLICY (click here to go to report)**

The Assistant Director of Communications and Customer Engagement presented a report which set out the proposed Customer Engagement Policy for consultation with tenants. It was intended that, once finalised, the Policy would replace the Tenant Involvement Policy and Tenant Empowerment Strategy.

The Assistant Director of Communications and Customer Engagement advised that a tenant focus group would be held in June to consider the Policy and to review the Tenant Compact.

A member suggested that the final bullet point under “Policy Objectives”, “Comply with our regulatory and legal equality responsibilities as a minimum”, did not indicate a customer service approach.

A member pointed out that the definition of “customer” should include representatives, which would incorporate people such as ward councillors and translators.

**RESOLVED:** That the draft Customer Engagement Policy be approved for tenant consultation as presented, subject to the following two amendments:

- **Section 2, Definitions:** Include representatives within the definition of “customer”.
- **Section 3, Policy Objectives:** Replace the final bullet point with the words, “Exceed our regulatory and legal equality responsibilities”.

**86/11**            **REVIEW OF EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY (click here to go to report)**

The Executive Director (Resources) presented a report which reviewed the Equality and Diversity Policy.

The Board congratulated the Executive Director (Resources) on an excellent document.

**RESOLVED:** That the revised Equality and Diversity Policy be approved, as presented.

**87/11**            **REVIEW OF WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY**

The Company Secretary explained that the Whistleblowing Policy had been reviewed a year ago, so that it incorporated external people, such as customers and consultants. At the time, the Policy had been given a one-year review date, but officers were of the view that a review was not yet required. The Employee Handbook, which included the Whistleblowing Policy, was scheduled for review in February 2012, and it seemed sensible to defer the review of the Policy to dovetail with this. Furthermore, although the responsibility for the Policy currently sat with the Assistant Director of Housing, it was suggested that this should sit centrally, with the Company Secretary, who could ensure that it covered all relevant parties. The Board endorsed this approach.

**88/11**            **RESOURCES AND RISK COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS (Part 1) (click here to go to report)**

Matthew Brown, Vice-Chairman of the Resources and Risk Committee, gave a brief description of the main items considered by the Committee's meeting on 18 May 2011, and presented the Committee's recommendation on changes to the Sickness Absence Policy.

**RESOLVED:** That the changes to the Sickness Absence Policy be approved as presented to the Resources and Risk Committee, for inclusion in the Employee Handbook.

[The Committee's recommendations in relation to Executive remuneration were considered later in the meeting (see minute number 99/11 below).]

**89/11**            **REGULATORY AND STATISTICAL RETURN (RSR) 2011 (click here to go to report)**

The Chief Executive presented a report which sought authorisation for the submission of Freebridge's RSR 2011 to the Tenant Services Authority (TSA).

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the submission of Freebridge's RSR 2011 be authorised.

- 2) That the Chief Executive be authorised to sign the document on Freebridge's behalf.

**90/11            NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

Confidential item

**91/11            QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE MONITORING (click here to go to report)**

The Executive Director (Resources) presented a report which provided quarterly performance information for the period to 31 March 2011.

The Board was of the view that properties that were being kept empty for possible redevelopment should not be classified as voids. Officers confirmed that these properties would not be reported within voids but recorded alongside them, although this approach would first need to be agreed with the auditors.

The Board was delighted with the performance figures, and noted the significant improvement that they represented over the five years of Freebridge's existence. The Chairman asked that the Board's thanks be passed on to all staff involved.

The Board noted the report.

*[Colin Sampson withdrew from the meeting at this point.]*

**92/11            BUSINESS PLAN 2010/11 – OUTTURN REPORT (click here to go to report)**

The Chief Executive presented a report which set out the outturn to the 2010/11 Business Plan.

The Chief Executive highlighted that there were very few items that had not achieved completion by the end of 2010/11. Those that were in this category related to Asset Management and the Sheltered Housing service review. With regard to the former, the Interim Assistant Director of Assets would be considering these and applying new target dates. The latter had been affected by uncertainty around Supporting People funding, and a report on this would be made to the next Board meeting.

**RESOLVED:** That the 2010/11 Business Plan outturn report be approved.

**93/11            CO-OPTION ONTO THE AUDIT COMMITTEE (click here to go to report)**

The Company Secretary presented a report which sought agreement to a co-option onto Freebridge's Audit Committee.

**RESOLVED:** That Karen Sly be co-opted onto Freebridge's Audit Committee, along the lines set out in the report.

**94/11**            **APPOINTMENT OF SHAREHOLDERS** (report not available – confidential)

The Company Secretary presented a report which requested the Board to consider applications for shareholding. He explained that, since the agenda had been issued, one further application for tenant shareholding had been made. He tabled the list of applications which had been updated to include this.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the three applications for tenant shareholding contained in the tabled list be approved.
- 2) That Ian Pinches be appointed as an independent shareholder.

**95/11**            **VIABILITY REPORT** (report not available – confidential)

The Executive Director (Resources) presented a report which introduced Freebridge's Viability Report recently received from the TSA.

The Executive Director (Resources) referred to the negative article that had appeared in Inside Housing following the publication of the TSA's regulatory judgement on Freebridge. He advised that, at a recent conference, a representative of the TSA had expressed disappointment that Inside Housing was misinterpreting its regulatory language and creating negative news stories, and that the TSA had contacted Inside Housing about this.

The Board noted the report.

**96/11**            **URGENT ACTION TAKEN – EMPLOYMENT OF CLOSE RELATIVES OF EXISTING EMPLOYEES** (report not available – confidential)

The Board noted a request for urgent action that had been approved, to employ two close relatives of existing employees.

In response to a point raised by a member, the Chief Executive said that he would ask the Assistant Director of Communications and Customer Engagement to explore opportunities for positive publicity in relation to students who had undertaken work experience with Freebridge and had ultimately secured employment partly as a result of this.

**97/11**            **WORK UPDATE** (report not available – confidential)

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

- Action Sheet
- Future Work Programme of the Board.

The Board noted the update.

**98/11**            **COMMITTEE MINUTES** (committee minutes not available – confidential)

Paul Leader, Chairman of the Audit Committee, presented the minutes of the Committee's meeting held on 4 April 2011.

Nigel Donohue, Chairman of the Operations Committee, presented the minutes of the Committee's meeting held on 4 May 2011.

**99/11**            **RESOURCES AND RISK COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS (Part 2)** (report not available – confidential)

The Board Chairman tabled and presented the recommendations of the Resources and Risk Committee meeting held on 18 May 2011 relating to Executive remuneration.

[The full text of this minute can be found in the confidential appendix to these minutes, made available to Board members only.]

**100/11**           **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

**101/11**           **NEXT MEETING**

The Board noted that its next meeting was scheduled for Monday 25 July 2011 at 6.30pm.

**The meeting closed at 8.20pm.**

**CHAIRMAN**

## Freebridge Community Housing

## Report to the Board

<b>Author</b>	Michelle Playford	<b>Report Type</b>		<b>Impact</b>		
<b>Related Work Ref.</b>		<b>For Decision</b>	√	<b>High</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Low</b>
		<b>For Information</b>			√	
<b>Consultation</b>	Management Team, Customers					

**Meeting Date:** 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2011

**Report Title:** Freebridge Customer Engagement Policy & Strategy

**Purpose:** To present the new Customer Engagement Policy & Strategy 2011-2013 (attached at Appendix 1) which sets out Freebridge's strategic approach to customer engagement.

**Policy/Strategy Implications:** The Customer Engagement Policy & Strategy 2011-2013 replaces the Tenant Involvement Policy and Tenant Empowerment Strategy. It complements the Communications Policy and the Communications & Customer Engagement Strategic Activity Plan 2010-2012.

**Finance and VFM Implications:** The Customer Engagement Policy and Strategy has been developed as part of the Tenant Empowerment Service Review. Through this process, reviews are being conducted across activities such as the Tenant Academy, strategic customer engagement opportunities such as the Tenant Event and Tenant Awards, and activities which deliver equality and diversity. The review is being used to market test and measure effectiveness of the activities to make savings and ensure ongoing Value for Money.

**Customer Care/Equality and Diversity Implications:** Customer care is central to the policy and the policy statement makes reference to Freebridge's consumerist approach. The policy has also been the subject of an Equality Impact Assessment, and the strategy outlines the accessible and diverse opportunities which will be delivered.

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

- 1.3 Significant Events lead to adverse publicity – Critical Impact, Low Likelihood
- 1.7 Failure in relationship with TOWN – Critical Impact, Significant Likelihood
- 7.1 Failure in tenant communication – Critical Impact, Significant Likelihood
- 7.3 Inappropriate organisational image – Marginal Impact, Significant Likelihood
- 7.4 Failure to achieve tenant empowerment – Critical Impact, Low Likelihood
- 7.7 Failure to deliver transfer promises – Catastrophic Impact, Low Likelihood
- 12.0 Failure to address Equality and Diversity issues effectively – Marginal Impact, Significant Likelihood

**Recommendations:** It is recommended that the Board:

- (i) Approves the draft Customer Engagement Policy & Strategy 2011-2013 for tenant consultation to be carried out.

## **Development**

1.1 The Customer Engagement Policy and Strategy replaces the Tenant Involvement Policy and the Tenant Empowerment Strategy which were produced in 2005 and reviewed in 2008.

1.2 The new Policy and Strategy has been produced at this time as part of the ongoing Tenant Empowerment Service Review which aims to ensure engagement is delivered effectively and appropriately.

1.3 The new Policy and Strategy also reflects the change in team structure and focus from Tenant Empowerment to Communications & Customer Engagement.

1.4 The Customer Engagement Policy and Strategy reflects Freebridge's consumerist approach with puts customer needs at the heart of the organisation. This approach is delivered practically through the use of the Ask, Listen, Act, Learn principles.

1.5 Once feedback has been gathered from the Board, the Policy and Strategy will be the subject of tenant consultation.

1.6 Following tenant consultation, the Policy and Strategy will be translated into a workable activity plan which incorporates the findings of the Tenant Empowerment service review.

1.7 The Policy and Strategy will be communicated to customers, staff and partners in an accessible format.

**Objective TBC**

<b>Policy TBC</b>			
<b>Last Reviewed</b>	<b>May 2011</b>	<b>Next Review</b>	<b>May 2013</b>
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Assistant Director of Communications &amp; Customer Engagement</b>		

## 1. Policy statement

Freebridge Community Housing is committed to putting the customer at the heart of our activities through actively encouraging and facilitating meaningful opportunities for engagement which have a genuine impact on, and link to, our services.

Freebridge will actively seek to encourage participation from all sections of the communities in which we operate through the delivery of a varied, dynamic customer engagement programme which meets the diverse needs of our customers.

Freebridge will maintain open, accessible and honest channels of engagement and communication with our customers, ensuring that 360° feedback is sought and given.

Freebridge will adopt a consumerist, can-do, proactive approach to engaging tenants.

## 2. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, 'customer' refers to:

- Existing and potential tenants,
- Leaseholders
- Shared owners of a Freebridge property.

## 3. Policy objectives

Freebridge Community Housing will aim to:

- Meet the needs of our customers, by ensuring we are easy to do business with, to increase satisfaction;
- Deliver appropriate, well-planned and timely opportunities and structures for customer engagement across the business so that our customers can have an input on services which impact upon them;
- Respond to customer feedback through adapting the services we provide, and communicating to our customers when, where and why we have made relevant changes;
- Provide a variety of accessible opportunities for involvement which meet the diverse needs of our customers;
- Be dynamic and creative, through continuously improving and innovating the opportunities for engagement to ensure high levels of participation and interest from our customers;
- Deliver all customer engagement activity with a listening approach, recognising the meaningful impact that customers have on the continuous development and improvement of our business;
- Recognise that we all have a role in keeping our customers engaged, and behave accordingly;
- Comply with our regulatory and legal equality responsibilities as a minimum.

## 4. Responsibilities

### **Board and management:**

The Board has a corporate responsibility for ensuring that Customer Engagement is promoted and that this policy and strategy underpins all aspects of the Association's work. The Board has a responsibility to ensure that customer engagement is delivered effectively at board-level through ensuring a level of tenant board membership. The Executive Team has responsibility for developing the organisational culture which embeds customer engagement within the fabric of Freebridge. Managers are individually and corporately responsible for ensuring that the policy and strategy is implemented in their particular areas of responsibility.

### **Staff, contractors and suppliers:**

All staff, regardless of job title or remit, should have an understanding that customer engagement is of crucial importance to the continuous development and improvement of the business. Through use of the Ask, Listen, Act, Learn approach, staff, contractors and suppliers will obtain feedback which can be used to make meaningful developments and improvements to our services.

### **Customers:**

Freebridge expects that all customers treat our workers with respect and courtesy and recognise that we will not always be able to adapt our services based on all of their comments.

## 5. Strategy

### **5.1 Corporate culture**

Freebridge is putting the customer at the heart of the organisation through the development of an organisational 'customer care' culture. Alongside this, we will promote the importance of customer engagement through this policy and through providing, and promoting, opportunities for engagement across the business.

### **5.2 Corporate standards**

Freebridge will ensure that every member of staff understands what principles must guide customer engagement through customer engagement standards. The delivery of these principles will be supported practically by the development of a toolkit which will allow staff across the organisation to deliver effective, appropriate, financially-viable and inclusive opportunities for engagement. In addition, the Local Offer to our customers will be promoted and delivery against the standards outlined in the Offer will be managed by the Tenant Panel.

### **5.3 Governance**

Freebridge will embed customer engagement into the Governance of the organisation through ensuring tenant representation on the board. Customer engagement will further be built into Freebridge's governance arrangements with the establishment of the Tenant Panel, whose programme of work will feed into the Board. Actions and recommendations from the Tenant Panel will be taken forward formally into the organisation to translate into improvements and adaptations.

### **5.3 Formal groups and structures**

Freebridge will provide appropriate support and advice to formal customer groups, attending meetings and events as resources allow.

### **5.4 Accessible and diverse opportunities**

Freebridge will meet the diverse needs of our customers through offering a range of inclusive, accessible engagement opportunities. Opportunities will include, but are not exclusive to, focus groups, meetings, events, engagement through our customer magazine *Streets Ahead*, the Tenant Academy, the Tenant Awards and other activities which will allow us to reach our customers. We will ensure that our engagement is accessible and recognises differing customer needs through communication which is clear and easy to understand and activities which are inclusive.

### **5.5 Dynamic, creative and innovative engagement**

Freebridge will seek to maximise customer participation and innovation through delivering a dynamic programme of customer engagement with a creative approach which allows us to look for new and innovative ways of engaging customers. We will continuously improve our opportunities for engagement and, where appropriate, we will bring in new ways of working to complement tried and tested methods.

## **5.6 Training and capacity building**

We will provide appropriate training and capacity-building to our customers to allow them to access our opportunities for engagement. We will provide training and ongoing support for members of our Tenant Panel to allow them to fulfil their membership effectively. We will, where appropriate, also offer training to develop customers' skills to support them in accessing services.

## **5.7 Technology**

We are currently using technology effectively to engage customers through our use, and ongoing development of, social media. We will continue to develop our use of technology, and we will, where possible, aim to be early adopters of new technological advancements so that we can offer our customers further opportunities to engage with us through technology in the way which they prefer.

## **5.7 Surveys**

Freebridge carries out regular surveys, such as the STATUS survey, which provides an insight into our customers and their needs. We will continue to deliver timely and appropriate surveys so that we can maintain our knowledge of our customers and deliver appropriate engagement opportunities to them.

## **5.8 Feedback**

We will seek to ensure we provide feedback to our customers following their involvement in engagement opportunities. We will provide this feedback through a variety of methods, used as appropriate, such as through our social media channels, through our customer magazine *Streets Ahead*, or through targeted letters to customers. We will also provide feedback to our customers on how we are performing through the annual tenant report.

## **5.9 Consultants and contractors**

We will ensure that consultants and contractors who are working on behalf of us understand the importance of engaging customers and that where appropriate, they offer opportunities for involvement in activities they are carrying out for Freebridge. We will provide support and guidance to consultants and contractors on what we expect from them in terms of customer engagement, and we will offer practical advice on how this should be delivered.

## **6. Monitoring**

We will monitor performance across the areas covered by this policy and report it to the Board and Tenant Panel as part of our ongoing performance monitoring. In addition we will have an action plan and accompanying outputs that will be monitored and reviewed by the Management Team and progress reported to the Tenant Panel and Board. The new Corporate Bond targets will ensure that customer views are taken into account.

## **7. Review**

This policy will be subject to ongoing review in the light of experience, changes in legislation and Association policy and meeting the needs of our customers.

## **8. Risk Management**

The risks associated with a failure to promote Customer Engagement and the activities set out in this strategy will be identified and included within the Association's Risk Map. The Risks will be managed in accordance with the Association's Risk Management Strategy.

## **9. Equality and Diversity**

This policy and strategy has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment. All activities proposed in the action plan will be subject to Equality Impact Assessments prior to their introduction.

## Customer Engagement Strategy 11-13 Action Plan

Area	Actions	Responsibility (Deadline)
Corporate Culture and Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop Freebridge Customer Engagement standards and toolkit</li> <li>• Promote the new policy, standards and toolkit via briefings for MT and service area teams</li> <li>• Promote the Local Offer to tenants</li> <li>• Oversee the effective delivery of the standards in the Local Offer through the Tenant Panel</li> </ul>	<p>AD CCE, June 2011</p> <p>CCE, June 2011</p> <p>AD H, AD CCE, April 2011</p> <p>Tenant Panel, June 2011 onwards</p>
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing recruitment of tenant board members</li> <li>• Ongoing recruitment of Tenant Panel members</li> <li>• Appointment of facilitator for the Tenant Panel</li> <li>• Recruitment and training for new Tenant Panel members</li> <li>• First meeting of Tenant Panel</li> <li>• Ongoing support of Tenant Panel</li> </ul>	<p>CS, ongoing</p> <p>CCE, ongoing</p> <p>ED(R), AD CCE, TOWN, April 2011</p> <p>Facilitator, CCE, April – May 2011</p> <p>May 2011</p> <p>CCE, ongoing</p>
Formal groups and structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of TOWN aims and objectives</li> <li>• Review of Sheltered United aims and objectives</li> <li>• Ongoing support of TOWN and Sheltered United</li> </ul>	<p>AD CCE, TOWN, May 2011</p> <p>AD CCE, Sheltered United, May 2011</p> <p>CCE, ongoing</p>
Accessible and diverse opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service review of existing opportunities for engagement</li> <li>• Development of new customer engagement opportunities plan to include the following reviewed methods for engagement:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Strategic engagement events (e.g. Tenant AGM)</li> <li>○ Streets Ahead</li> <li>○ Tenant Panel</li> <li>○ Tenant Awards</li> <li>○ Tenant Academy</li> <li>○ Social media</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Scoping of equality and diversity of opportunities in existing structure</li> <li>• Recommendations of developments and improvements to ensure ongoing equality and diversity in engagement</li> <li>• Scoping of youth opportunities for engagement</li> <li>• Recommendations of developments and improvements to opportunities for youth</li> </ul>	<p>ED(R), CCE, Comms Group, Jan – July 2011</p> <p>AD CCE, July 2011</p> <p>BAM, E &amp; D Group, April 2011</p> <p>BAM</p> <p>BAM, May 2011</p> <p>BAM, June 2011</p>

	engagement	
Dynamic, creative and innovative opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing research into new and creative opportunities for engagement and communication through media monitoring and attendance at conferences</li> <li>• Opportunities and ideas generation at quarterly meetings</li> </ul>	<p>CCE, ongoing</p> <p>CCE, quarterly</p>
Training and capacity building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and update the programme of training through the Tenant Academy</li> <li>• Look for shared opportunities for training with partners</li> <li>• Offer training and capacity building to the Tenant Panel</li> <li>• Appropriate and outcome-led training and capacity building for the CCE team</li> </ul>	<p>AD CCE, CCEO, April 2011</p> <p>AD CCE, CCEO, April 2011</p> <p>April – May 2011</p> <p>CCE, October 2011 and October 2012</p>
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and redesign of the website</li> <li>• Ongoing development of the Facebook and Twitter pages</li> </ul>	<p>CCE, ICT, April – July 2011</p> <p>CCEO, BAM, ongoing</p>
Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• STATUS Survey to be completed</li> <li>• Ongoing watch on satisfaction surveys post STATUS</li> </ul>	<p>BAM March – April 2011</p> <p>BAM ongoing</p>
Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish principles for providing feedback in the Freebridge Customer Engagement standards and toolkit</li> <li>• Provide feedback opportunities whenever communicating or engaging</li> <li>• Annual tenant award</li> </ul>	<p>AD CCE, June 2011</p> <p>CCE, ongoing</p> <p>BAM, September 2011</p>
Consultants and contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide support to consultants and contractors through promotion of the Freebridge Customer Engagement standards and toolkit</li> </ul>	<p>AD CCE, July 2011</p>
Promotion of this strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Customer Engagement, Policy Strategy and Plan will be shared with customers through an accessible document made available through the website, Streets Ahead and in leaflet format</li> </ul>	<p>CCE, July 2011</p>

Key ED(R) = Executive Director (Resources); AD CCE = Assistant Director of Communications & Customer Engagement; CCE = Communications & Customer Engagement Team; CCEO = Communications & Customer Engagement Officer; BAM= Business Assurance Manager; AD H = Assistant Director Housing; CS = Company Secretary; E & D Group = Equality & Diversity Group; ICT = ICT Team.

## Freebridge Community Housing

## Report to the Board

<b>Author</b>	Sean Kent Executive Director (Resources)	<b>Report Type</b>	<b>Impact</b>		
<b>Related Work Ref.</b>		<b>For Decision</b>	√	<b>High</b>	<b>Medium</b>
		<b>For Information</b>		√	
<b>Consultation</b>	Executive Team				

**Meeting Date:** 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2011

**Report Title:** Equality & Diversity Policy, Strategy and Action Plan

<b>Purpose:</b> To review the Equality & Diversity Policy and Strategy and present the revised Action Plan.
<b>Policy/Strategy Implications:</b> As set out in this report.
<b>Finance and VFM Implications:</b> There are no immediate financial implications as a result of this report.
<b>Customer Care / Equality and Diversity Implications:</b> As set out in this report.
<b>Risk Assessment (cross-reference with FCH Risk Map):</b> 12.0 Failure to address E&D issues effectively Impact-Marginal - Likelihood-Significant
<b>Recommendations:</b> It is recommended that the Board: (i) To note the report and to approve the revised Equality & Diversity Policy, Strategy and Action Plan

### Induction

This report reviews the Equality & Diversity Policy & Strategy, advises on actions which have been carried out and presents a revised action plan for 2011-13. The core of the strategy is our commitment to provide services and benefits that are accessible to all tenants and staff.

The new Equality & Diversity Policy, Strategy and Action Plan is set out in Appendix 1.

### Achievements to date

Since the last update of the policy the Equality & Diversity legislation has introduced the concepts of protected characteristics. These replace and expand the previous diversity strands, with the addition of Pregnancy and Maternity. The Policy and Strategy has been updated to reflect this change. Other minor changes have brought it in line with the corporate policy format and current aspirations.

The revised action plan incorporates and expands the actions that the Board approved following feedback from Stonewall and seeks to apply these to all protected characteristics.

The specific achievements that have been completed from the previous action plan are set out below.

## Equality & Diversity 2009-11 Action Plan

Area	Actions
Corporate Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide regular briefings on E&amp;D issues</li> <li>• Promote E&amp;D policy and activities</li> </ul>
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review E&amp;D responsibilities in Board code of conduct</li> <li>• All Board reports to highlight E&amp;D implications</li> <li>• Carry out Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) on constitutional structure</li> <li>• Set targets to increase Board diversity</li> <li>• Board Training</li> </ul>
Employment & Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include E&amp;D materials and training in induction program</li> <li>• Corporate E&amp;D training made compulsory</li> <li>• Maintain and monitor staff profiling data</li> <li>• Obtain feedback from staff on the effectiveness of harassment and discrimination policies and procedures</li> </ul>
Communication & Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All new policies subject to EIA</li> <li>• Review customer Satisfaction monitoring methods to ensure ease of access for under-represented groups</li> <li>• Develop and produce regular E&amp;D monitoring reports</li> <li>• Collect information about tenants' communication preferences</li> <li>• Promote the variety of communication and access options</li> <li>• Following Access Audits on all offices and make necessary improvements</li> <li>• Complete Access Audits on all sheltered schemes and communal areas and make necessary improvements</li> <li>• Investigate feasibility of mobile equipment for homes visits</li> </ul>
Housing Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out Equality Impact Assessment Program</li> <li>• Implement actions from EIA Assessments</li> <li>• Promote the use of INTRAN and other resources</li> <li>• Finalise Tenant Profiling exercise</li> <li>• Use Communication preference</li> </ul>
Tackling Harassment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sign up to the Norfolk Multi Agency Protocol for Reporting Hate crime</li> <li>• Review and Update Racial Harassment policy to include other hate incidents</li> <li>• Monitor harassment incidents</li> <li>• Obtain feedback on harassment incidents from minority tenants</li> </ul>
Tenant Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain and monitor involved tenant profiling data</li> <li>• Obtain feedback on involvement process from minority applicants</li> </ul>

### Future developments in Equality & Diversity

It is envisaged over the next 12 months that Freebridge will continue to embed the equality and diversity approach into day to day operations, procedures and communications and will use the annual calendar to promote awareness of equality and diversity issues on an ongoing basis.



Equality and Diversity Policy			
Last Reviewed	April 2011	Next Review	April 2013
Responsible Officer	Executive Director (Resources)		

## 1. Policy statement

Freebridge Community Housing is committed to eliminating discrimination and achieving diversity in all our activities. We recognise that people are different and aim to ensure that we treat each individual with dignity and respect.

We are committed to developing an organisational culture which values people from all sections of the community. This will involve creating an environment that capitalises on everything that makes people unique and gives everyone a fair and equal chance to be successful.

The Association recognises that some kinds of difference, discrimination or disadvantage are shared and experienced by particular groups. For example on the grounds of gender, gender reassignment, ethnic origin, race, nationality, disability, sexual orientation, religious or political beliefs, age, marital or family status, rural location, caring responsibilities or ex-offenders.

## 2. Definitions

**Discrimination.** It is unlawful to discriminate against a person, directly or indirectly on the grounds of ~~their gender, marital status, disability, race, colour, nationality, religion or belief or sexual orientation.~~ protected characteristic.

**Protect Characteristics.** Where we had previously referred to "strands" or "equality strands" in respect of different groups, the Equality Act - introduced in October 2010 - made a number of changes. Equality is now defined in terms of people's "protected characteristics".

- Age. Where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 year olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18 - 30 year olds).
- Gender reassignment. The process of transitioning from one gender to another.
- Marriage and civil partnership. Marriage is defined as a 'union between a man and a woman'. Same-sex couples can have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must be treated the same as married couples on a wide range of legal matters.
- Pregnancy and maternity. Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.
- Race. Refers to the protected characteristic of Race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.
- Religion and belief. Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.
- Sex. A man or a woman.
- Sexual orientation. Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes

**Direct discrimination** consists of treating a person less favourably than others are or would be treated in the same or similar circumstances according to the above categories.

**Indirect discrimination** consists of applying a requirement or condition which, although has been applied to all, has the effect of disadvantaging people (according to the above categories) unless the practice can be justified.

**Victimisation** is when an individual is treated detrimentally because they have made a complaint or intend to make a complaint about discrimination or harassment or have given evidence or intend to give evidence relating to a complaint about discrimination or harassment.

**Harassment** is unwanted conduct that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment having regard to all the circumstances and the perceptions of the victim.

A **racist incident** is defined as “**any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person**” (Stephen Lawrence Inquiry 1999).

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**Disability.** A disabled person is defined as “someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse affect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”. Long term means that the effect of the impairment has lasted or is likely to last for at least 12 months.

**Community cohesion.** A cohesive community is one where, there is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities; the diversity of people’s different backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and positively valued ; those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities; strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds and circumstances in the workplaces, in schools and within neighbourhoods.

### 3. Policy objectives

Freebridge Community Housing will aim to:

- Encourage a corporate culture where equality and diversity is treated as a core value.
- Be aware of all forms of discrimination in its operations, activities and dealings with communities and strive to eliminate them.
- ~~Have a governance structure that reflects the population it serves.~~
- ~~Have a workforce that reflects the population it serves.~~
- Provide information which is non-discriminatory in content, accessible to all and actively promotes equality.
- Provide choice, access and quality of services that meet the diverse needs of all communities in which we work.
- Take prompt responsive action in all cases of harassment and conflict.
- ~~Actively consult tenants and other stakeholders to ensure that their views form an integral part of the decision making process.~~
- Work towards promoting better understanding and integration in our communities.
- ~~Provide good quality housing of the type and design that people want in their preferred locations.~~
- Work with or employ organisations who reflect the communities we work in and who are able to demonstrate their commitment to equality and diversity.
- Comply with our regulatory and legal equality responsibilities as a minimum.

### 4. Responsibilities

#### **Board and management:**

The Board has a corporate responsibility for ensuring that equality & diversity is promoted and that this policy and strategy underpins all aspects of the Association’s work. The Executive Team have responsibility for developing the organisational culture in which this policy can operate effectively and for ensuring it is implemented. Managers are individually and corporately responsible for ensuring that equality and diversity are promoted and that the policy and strategy is implemented in their particular areas of responsibility.

#### **Staff, contractors and suppliers:**

All staff have a responsibility to ensure that the policy is incorporated into their work related activities. All employees, contractors, board and committee members are expected to abide by this policy. Freebridge operates a zero tolerance approach towards discrimination. Any breach will be taken very seriously and could result in disciplinary action or contracts being removed.

## **Tenants**

Freebridge Community Housing expects that all tenants treat our workers with respect and courtesy. It is not acceptable for our workers to be subjected to harassment, bullying or discrimination, including verbal or physical abuse. Such incidents will be investigated and, if proved we will take suitable action upon the perpetrator, which could result in the withdrawal of services and possibly legal action.

## **5. Strategy**

### **5.1 Corporate culture**

Freebridge Community Housing will ensure that staff, tenants and stakeholders are made aware that equality and diversity is one of its core values. We will adopt a zero tolerance policy towards discrimination. We aim to develop a culture where equality and diversity issues are discussed openly on the basis of facts not assumptions. We are committed to ensuring that all staff, tenants and stakeholders believe the organisation takes decisions in a fair and open manner.

### **5.2 Governance**

Freebridge Community Housing will include equality and diversity issues into its governance and planning mechanisms so that the decisions we make are more relevant to the needs and circumstances of the people we serve. It is essential that the Association's Board are representative of the communities they serve so that they are able to understand the issues faced by those they seek to provide housing and services for. [We will aim to increase the numbers of applicants from all diverse groups.](#) However we will balance this with the need for experience and relevant skills and where necessary, we will actively seek alternative methods of gaining the views of diverse groups. We will provide training on equality and diversity to board members so that they are comfortable discussing the issues and are able to demonstrate their personal commitment to it.

### **5.3 Employment and training**

Freebridge Community Housing wants a diverse workforce which has the skills and understanding to achieve the organisation's goals. We therefore aim to increase the numbers of applicants from all diverse groups as well as increasing the number of diverse people employed in more senior positions. Freebridge is committed to recruiting staff who meet the required competency profile for the job they have applied for, irrespective of their background. Through a thorough and rigorous process, we ensure that we only measure skills and/or attributes which are clearly relevant to the job. Applicants with a disability, who meet the minimum person specification requirements for the job, will automatically be shortlisted. We will

consider our methods and locations for advertising vacancies to ensure they reach an appropriate target audience.

We are committed to ensuring that staff have an equal opportunity to develop their potential; progress within the organisation and are treated fairly and without unlawful discrimination. We aim to develop a working environment where harassment is unacceptable and where individuals are able to bring complaints without fearing prejudice.

Freebridge will endeavour to provide training and development programmes and events that meet the needs of individuals. We will include specific equality and diversity training that raises awareness and ensure that equality and diversity issues are included in other relevant training.

We will monitor the staff profile, satisfaction, recruitment, promotion, training, study opportunities, complaints, grievances and reasons for leaving to ensure there is no significant difference between groups.

#### **5.4 Communication and access to information and services**

Freebridge Community Housing believes that effective two way communication between its tenants, staff and stakeholders is key to delivering services that meet the needs of individuals.

We will ensure that the information provided is in an appropriate format, non-discriminatory in content and actively promotes equality and diversity where possible. Information will be provided in alternative languages and formats and interpreters made available on request. We will also promote English language classes to newcomer communities whose first language is not English in order to help integration and foster better community relationships.

We will ensure that our offices open to the public are accessible under the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

#### **5.5 Housing management**

Freebridge Community Housing aims to provide services that meet the diverse needs of our tenants across all types of provision. We believe that tenants should be able to access housing and support services with ease and that the quality of our service is the same for all residents. We also aim to ensure that our residents receive the right level of advice, support and benefits to meet their needs.

We will work with local authority partners to ensure we meet housing needs in our area of operation. We will monitor nominations to ensure they are representative of housing need. Where nominations are not in line with housing need we will raise our concerns with local authority partners.

We will monitor [perceptions of property quality at letting, reasons for refusing an offer, repairs reporting, rent collection, cases of Anti-social Behaviour](#) and tenant satisfaction across the range of our services to [ensure there is no identify, investigate and attempt to eradicate any](#) -significant difference between groups.

## **5.6 Tackling harassment and conflict**

Freebridge Community Housing recognises that conflict does arise between individuals and groups because of their minority status. We believe that all forms of harassment (including racial harassment) should be tackled promptly using a victim centred approach. We will send out a clear message that all forms of harassment will not be tolerated. Freebridge will monitor cases, actions taken and outcomes. We will seek feedback from tenants who have reported harassment to us on how satisfied they were with the service and outcome.

## **5.7 Tenant empowerment**

Freebridge Community Housing aims to better understand the diverse needs of its tenants. We will increase opportunities for the involvement and development of tenants and communities, ensuring that their views form an integral part of our decision making processes.

We will take into account the individual circumstances of tenants attending meetings, ensuring the location is convenient and accessible and that it is held on a day and time that encourages participation by diverse groups. We will work together with residents groups to ensure that they are representative of the communities they serve.

## **5.8 Community cohesion**

Freebridge will work in partnership with people, groups, communities and other agencies to ensure that all groups can live together better and prosper. Factors such as ethnicity, nationality, age and class differences can spark conflicts that impact on the cohesiveness of a community. We will work towards understanding the different dynamics that shape the people in our communities and develop consensual strategies or common grounds on which they can work together. We will seek to work in partnership with minority-led organisations to improve the services we provide to minority groups.

## **5.9 Consultants and contractors**

We will ensure that consultants and contractors are aware of the importance of equality and diversity to us. We will help them to understand the diverse needs of our tenants in order that they are better equipped to provide an efficient service to all sections of the community. Freebridge will where possible ensure that it employs consultants and contractors who reflect the community we serve.

### Equality & Diversity (E&D) Action Plan 2011-13

<u>Strategy Theme</u>	<u>Actions</u>	<u>Who</u>	<u>When</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Corporate Culture</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Develop publicity material to promote E&amp;D activities</u></li> <li><u>Develop an E&amp;D calendar of events and issues to aid communication</u></li> </ul>	<u>CE</u>	<u>To do</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Governance</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>All Board reports to highlight E&amp;D implications</u></li> <li><u>E&amp;D Reports</u></li> <li><u>Develop mechanisms for under-represented groups to inform the Board on key decisions</u></li> <li><u>Identify a range of equality issues the Board can support</u></li> <li><u>Provide specific guidance on what constitutes anti-gay bullying and harassment based on statutory examples of "outing" and perceived orientation</u></li> <li><u>Communicate findings from monitoring exercise to Board and staff including any relevant variation by any diversity strand</u></li> </ul>	<u>ED(R)</u> <u>CE</u> <u>CE</u>  <u>CE</u> <u>ADR</u>  <u>CE</u>	<u>Ongoing</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Employment &amp; training</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Obtain feedback on recruitment process from minority applicants</u></li> <li><u>Develop actions to address areas of staff under-representation</u></li> <li><u>Undertake an analysis of grievances to identify trends and common issues</u></li> <li><u>Undertake LGB education with staff</u></li> <li><u>Ensure diversity training and updates specifically includes LGB issues</u></li> <li><u>Include specific diversity awareness in Managers competency framework</u></li> <li><u>Ensure that diversity specific questions are included in management recruitment and appraisal processes</u></li> <li><u>Ensure Employee Assistance facilities are accessible to staff with protected characteristics.</u></li> <li><u>Monitor promotion by diversity strands</u></li> <li><u>Analyse exit interview themes by diversity strands</u></li> <li><u>Monitor training take up by diversity strands</u></li> </ul>	<u>ADHR</u>  <u>ADHR</u>  <u>ADHR</u>  <u>ADHR</u> <u>ADHR</u>  <u>ADHR</u>  <u>ADHR</u>  <u>ADHR</u>  <u>ADHR</u> <u>ADHR</u>  <u>ADHR</u>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Communication &amp; Customer Engagement</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">EIA delivered</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Ensure Communications strategy includes guidance on E&amp;D issues</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Collect information about tenants' communication preferences</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Develop Diversity section of intranet to include more specific resources.</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Regular communication to promote inclusive nature of staff benefits</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Promote relevant Diversity issues in FCH Bulletin</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Include Stonewall logo on website (consider recruitment area)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Include more detailed questions around (eg. homophobic and racist) bullying in staff survey</a></li> </ul>	<a href="#">ED(R)</a> <a href="#">CE</a>  <a href="#">ED(R)/</a> <a href="#">ED(O)</a> <a href="#">ADICT</a>  <a href="#">ADCCE</a>  <a href="#">ADHR</a>  <a href="#">ADHR</a>  <a href="#">ED(R)</a>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Housing Management</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Carry out Equality Impact Assessment Program</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Implement actions from EIA Assessments</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Maintain and monitor tenant profiling data</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Develop actions to address areas of tenant under-representation</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Use tenant profiling information to develop actions to improve customer service</a></li> </ul>	<a href="#">ED(R)</a>  <a href="#">ALL</a>  <a href="#">ADHM</a>  <a href="#">ADHM</a>  <a href="#">ADHM</a>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Tackling Harassment</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Monitor ASB &amp; harassment incidents</a></li> </ul>	<a href="#">ADHM</a>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Tenant Empowerment</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Develop actions to address areas of tenant under-representation</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Include tenants with protect characteristics in service reviews</a></li> </ul>	<a href="#">ADCCE</a>  <a href="#">Relevant</a> <a href="#">Manager</a>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Community Cohesion</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Participate in and support local partnership forums and minority led groups</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Contribute to initiatives that support community cohesion</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Develop virtual Employee Network Groups in connection with other organisations</a></li> </ul>	<a href="#">CE</a>  <a href="#">CE</a>  <a href="#">ED(R)</a>	<a href="#">Ongoing</a>  <a href="#">Ad Hoc</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Contractors &amp; Consultants</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Monitor to ensure compliance with FCH policy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Involve in E&amp;D training initiatives</a></li> </ul>	<a href="#">ADF</a>  <a href="#">ADHR/</a> <a href="#">ADAM/</a> <a href="#">ADPS</a>	<a href="#">Ongoing</a>  <a href="#">Ongoing</a>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Provide updates and materials to support E&amp;D policy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Include specific clauses in future contracts to enable terminations for breach of E&amp;D policies</a></li> </ul>	<a href="#">ED(R)</a>  <a href="#">ADF</a>	<a href="#">Ongoing</a>
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**Key**

- [CE](#) Chief Executive
- [ED\(R\)](#) Executive Director (Resources)
- [ED \(O\)](#) Executive Director (Operations)
- [ADHM](#) Assistant Director of Housing Management
- [ADAM](#) Assistant Director of Asset Management
- [ADPS](#) Assistant Director of Property Services
- [ADHR](#) Assistant Director of Human Resources
- [ADICT](#) Assistant Director of ICT
- [ADF](#) Assistant Director of Finance
- [ADCCE](#) Assistant Director of Communications & Customer Engagement

**6. Monitoring**

We will monitor performance across the areas covered by this policy and report it to the relevant Board or Committee as part of our ongoing performance monitoring.

In addition we will have an action plan and accompanying outputs that will be monitored and reviewed by the Management Team and progress reported to the Equality and Diversity Working Group.

**7. Review**

This policy will be subject to ongoing review in the light of experience, changes in legislation and Association policy and meeting the needs of our stakeholders.

It is essential that all Association policies and practices are reviewed and amended to ensure that the objectives of the Equality and Diversity Policy and Strategy and resulting action plan are embedded in everything we do.

## Freebridge Community Housing

## Report to the Board

Author	Angus MacQueen	Report Type		Impact		
Related Work Ref.		For Decision	√	High	Medium	Low
Minutes of the meeting listed in the report		For Information			√	
Consultation						

**Meeting Date: 23 May 2011**

**Report Title: Resources and Risk Committee Recommendations**

<p><b>Purpose:</b> To present the recommendations from the following committee meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resources and Risk Committee – 23 May 2011</li> </ul>
<p><b>Policy/Strategy Implications:</b> None directly arising from this report.</p>
<p><b>Finance and VFM Implications:</b> None directly arising from this report.</p>
<p><b>Customer Care/Equality and Diversity Implications:</b> None directly arising from this report.</p>
<p><b>Risk Assessment (cross-reference with FCH Risk Map):</b> Risk assessment will have been considered at the committee stage for each recommendation.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b> It is recommended that the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Consider the recommendations set out in the body of the report.</li> </ul>

### 1. Resources and Risk Committee – 23 May 2011

Presentation of recommendations by: Matthew Brown (Vice-Chairman of the Resources and Risk Committee)

#### Recommendations –

- That the changes to the Sickness Absence Policy be approved as presented to the Resources and Risk Committee, for inclusion in the Employee Handbook.

**The draft Sickness Absence Policy can be seen on the Board member area of FCH's website, within the agenda for the Resources and Risk Committee meeting held on 19 May 2011. If you would like a hard copy, please contact Angus MacQueen (tel: 01553 667754).**

Further recommendations, relating to Executive remuneration, will follow, subject to agreeing the final wording with the Chairman.

## Freebridge Community Housing

## Report to the Board

<b>Author</b>	Simon J Swanson	<b>Report Type</b>		<b>Impact</b>		
<b>Related Work Ref.</b>		<b>For Decision</b>	√	<b>High</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Low</b>
		<b>For Information</b>				√
<b>Consultation</b>	Chief Executive					

**Meeting Date: 23 May 2011**

**Report Title: Regulatory and Statistical Return (RSR) 2011**

**Purpose:** To seek authorisation for the submission of Freebridge's Regulatory and Statistical Return (RSR) to the Tenant Services Authority (TSA).

**Policy/Strategy Implications:** Freebridge is required to submit an RSR annually.

**Finance and VFM Implications:** None.

**Customer Care/Equality and Diversity Implications:** None.

**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) Authorise the submission of Freebridge's RSR 2011 (see note below)
- (ii) Authorise the Chief Executive to sign the document on Freebridge's behalf.

**Note :** Completion of the RSR is still ongoing at the time of issuing this agenda; however, it will be completed in the very near future. When the RSR has been completed, it will be published on the board member area of Freebridge's website. Board members will be informed as soon as it is published, so that they can view the document before the meeting on 23 May 2011.

## Freebridge Community Housing

## Report to the Board

<b>Author</b>	Darren Hudson – Accountant & Performance Accountant	<b>Report Type</b>	<b>Impact</b>		
<b>Related Work Ref.</b>		<b>For Decision</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Low</b>
		<b>For Information</b>		√	
<b>Consultation</b>	Executive Director (Resources), Assistant Director of Finance.				

**Meeting Date:** 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2011

**Report Title:** Quarterly Performance Monitoring Report

<b>Purpose:</b>
To provide the Board with performance information to 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2011.
<b>Policy/Strategy Implications:</b>
None
<b>Finance and VFM Implications:</b>
None as a direct consequence of this report.
<b>Customer Care/Equality and Diversity Implications:</b>
Performance monitoring is essential to maximising customer care.
<b>Risk Assessment (cross-reference with Freebridge Risk Map):</b>
2.5 Poor Income or Benefit Collection: Likelihood - low; Impact - critical
4.3 Incorrect balance of responsive and planned maintenance/Increase in demand for responsive maintenance: Likelihood – significant; Impact - critical
4.7 Fuel Servicing – Gas/Oil/Solid: Likelihood – low; Impact - critical
<b>Recommendations:</b> It is recommended that the Board:
(i) Notes the report.

Attached are the Performance Reports to provide the Board with an overall strategic view of Freebridge's performance as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011.

Appendices 1 & 2 detail how performance compares with previous years and with sector benchmarks. Both reports focus on the relevant business indicators that will enable the Board to have a strategic overview of performance. The intention of the report is to enable the Board to monitor more effectively and prioritise areas of the business for improvement and by focusing on a smaller volume of information a better interpretation can be made.

#### Appendix 1 – Monthly Performance Reporting.

This report focuses on the three months to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011 of performance to highlight current trends and a year to date figure to be compared against target.

Responsive emergency repairs remain above the target figure of 98.5% with an average of 99.1% in the fourth quarter and year-to-date of 99.4%. There were 19 jobs not completed on time in the fourth quarter resulting in a reduced figure of 99.1% and an overall decrease year-to-date from 99.9% to 99.4%. Overall, 40 jobs (27 jobs relate to PSD) not completed on time throughout 2010/2011. Urgent repairs remain above the target figure of 96.5% with an average of 98.5% for fourth quarter and a year-to-date figure of 99.0%. Routine repairs remain above target of 96% with an average of 98.4% in the fourth quarter and a year-to-date figure of 98.4%.

The number of properties without gas servicing certificates was 8 in the third quarter and 8 in the fourth quarter; with 7 properties more than 8 weeks overdue. PSD has been working closely with housing officers to try and gain earlier access to the properties. PSD are looking at persistent offenders whose properties are difficult to service and the possibility of changing the time clock of the heating system. Tenants who have legal action to allow entry into the property will have their gas appliance serviced and the time clock set, so that in 11 months time the tenant must manually turn on the heating system hourly as an incentive to allow access to the property for the next gas service.

Re-let times have remained the same in the fourth quarter compared to the third quarter at 12 days and achieved the target of 12 days. Close monitoring is continuing by the First Contact Centre. This includes spot checks on all of the void work to ensure the various steps of the process are being carried out within a satisfactory time period.

A new report for Right First Time Repairs has been amended to include all contractors and will commence on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011. Previously, this report only reported Property Services Department and did not take into account any other contractor. The appointments made and kept report has been reviewed and modified so that it now reflects the HouseMark criteria, eliminating the potential for categories 1 and 2 to be missed. The attached performance report has been updated to reflect the new modified performance results.

#### Appendix 2 – Trend Report

This report focuses on the current year's performance compared to the previous year's performance and the target set for 2010/2011.

Emergency repairs done within KPI's are above target as are urgent and routine repairs. The target figures have been achieved for the financial period 2010/2011.

Non-decent homes achieved 20.20% for the financial year 2010/2011, higher than target of 15%.

The overall customer satisfaction survey has been conducted for the financial period 2010/11. This survey achieved 88.24% which was above the target figure of 83% and in top quartile.

### Appendix 3 - Complaints

In the fourth quarter from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2011 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011, a total of 23 complaints were logged. This is an increase on the previous quarters; however 21 of the 23 were solved within the time scale at stage 1 with no complaints progressing to stage 2.

Due to the data timeline, the remaining two complaints had target dates outside of the quarter, and we were awaiting feedback from the resident on one and the other was still being investigated as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011.

There has been one complaint panel meeting in the fourth quarter, held on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2011.

**FREEBRIDGE COMMUNITY HOUSING  
MONTHLY PERFORMANCE REPORTING  
AS AT 31<sup>st</sup> MARCH 2011**



Description	Target 2010/11	Monthly			Year to Date	Comments	A.Dir. Resp.
		31 <sup>st</sup> Jan 2011	28 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2011	31 <sup>st</sup> Mar 2011	Year to Date as at Mar 2011		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Rent Arrears as a % of Gross Rent:</u></li> </ul>						<p>Gross fig higher than Feb as currently approx £472k in HB due to Year End vs. £136k that was outstanding at end of Feb.</p> <p>Rents Income Excellence Network benchmarking would mean that gross performance is in the upper half of the medium quartile and the net fig is both within the upper quartile as well as the top 20%.</p> <p>Total rechargeable repair debt o/s (£59,794 invoiced April – Mar 2011). Provision is £198,000.</p>	RC
Inc HB Arrears %	<b>2.0%</b>	<b>2.3%</b>	<b>2.3%</b>	<b>3.4%</b>	<b>3.4%</b>		
Inc HB Arrears (in £'000)		<b>543</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>793</b>	<b>793</b>		
Excl HB Arrears %	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>1.7%</b>	<b>1.7%</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>1.5%</b>		
Excl HB Arrears (in £'000)		<b>405</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>358</b>		
• <u>Former Tenant Arrears %</u>	<b>0.6%</b>	<b>1.24%</b>	<b>1.29%</b>	<b>1.34%</b>	<b>1.34%</b>		
• <u>Other Arrears (in £,000)</u>	<b>60</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>231</b>		
• <u>Write Offs</u>							
FTD %	<b>0.5%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.16%</b>		
FTD (in £,000)		<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>38</b>		
• <u>% Responsive Repairs and Planned works completed on Time (includes PSD and External Contractors): (Monthly)</u>						<p>All three performance indicators have finished in the top quartile for the first time since transfer. These are now all monitored by PSD.</p>	CD
Emergency	<b>98.5%</b>	<b>99.2%</b>	<b>99.3%</b>	<b>98.8%</b>	<b>99.4%</b>		
Urgent	<b>96.5%</b>	<b>98.7%</b>	<b>98.3%</b>	<b>98.6%</b>	<b>99.0%</b>		
Routine	<b>96.0%</b>	<b>98.7%</b>	<b>98.7%</b>	<b>97.9%</b>	<b>98.4%</b>		

Description	Target 2010/11	31 <sup>st</sup> Jan 2011	28 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2011	31 <sup>st</sup> Mar 2011	Year to Date as at Mar 2011	Comments	A.Dir. Resp.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Right First Time Repairs (PSD Only)</u></li> </ul>	96%	97.11%	98.67%	97.82%	98.37%	A new report to include All Contractors will commence on 1 <sup>st</sup> Apr 2011	CD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Appointments</u> Made Kept</li> </ul>	90% 95%	62.9% 92.0%	62.3% 91.6%	62.4% 93.3%	49.6% 92.7%	Appointments Made and Kept have moved from a low starting point to the current levels. The report has been modified so that it now reflects the HouseMark criteria.	CD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Gas Servicing Certificates completed on time</u>  <u>Number of properties without certificates</u></li> </ul>	100%  0	99.72%  9	99.75%  8	99.75%  8	99.75%  8	8 properties are outstanding as at 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2011.  Please see note 1 on page 3 below for details.	CD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total Void Rental Loss – Monthly (in £'000)  Less: Decants (Monthly) Shared Ownership (Monthly) Major Repairs &amp; DHS (Monthly)</li> </ul>		21 8 0 6	24 7 0 6	25 9 1 6	243 94 2 56	98 Properties void in the month of March 2011.  30 Held for Decant – 682 average days void 24 Sheltered – 609 average days void 8 Major Repairs – 589 average days void 15 Standard – 19 average days void	RC
Adjusted Void Rental Loss (in £'000)	150	7	11	9	91	21 DHS works – 20 average days void	

Description	Target 2010/11	31 <sup>st</sup> Jan 2011	28 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2011	31 <sup>st</sup> Mar 2011	Year to Date as at Mar 2011	Comments	A.Dir. Resp.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>“Average Re- Let Times”:</u> <u>(In Days) – From CORE Report. (General Needs)</u></li> </ul> <p>CORE Stands for “Continuous Recording System” data is collected by Social Housing Sector.</p>	<b>12 Days</b>	<b>11 Days</b>	<b>14 Days</b>	<b>8 Days</b>	<b>12 Days</b>	There was strong performance in March following changes in the procedure that were highlighted as part of the ongoing monitoring process and the updating of the action plan. The Year End target has been achieved.	RC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Staff Turnover</u></li> </ul> <p>Total Voluntary</p>	<b>15%</b> <b>11%</b>	<b>1.46%</b> <b>0.97%</b>	<b>1.95%</b> <b>1.95%</b>	<b>2.54%</b> <b>1.52%</b>	<b>20.86%</b> <b>11.92%</b>	Higher than ‘target’ to end of year as a result of a higher than average number of redundancies. Voluntary turnover (resignations, early retirements etc) slightly above ‘target’ but not considered to be an issue. Of leavers there are three who we would have liked to retain but were not able to because of a) higher salary offered elsewhere and b) individuals capability exceeded the role and we had no alternative role to offer at the time.	JW
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Sickness Absence</u></li> </ul> <p>Days Time Lost Cost (in £’000)</p>	<b>9 Days</b> <b>3.6%</b> <b>238</b>	<b>1.2 Days</b> <b>5.28%</b> <b>12</b>	<b>1.02 Days</b> <b>4.65%</b> <b>8</b>	<b>0.95 Days</b> <b>4.14%</b> <b>5</b>	<b>11.51 Days</b> <b>4.2%</b> <b>116</b>	Affected by higher than average number of long-term absences 2010/11. Of remaining 5 cases at 31 <sup>st</sup> March, 2 returning imminently, one likely to be assessed as qualifying for medical retirement, two still awaiting long-term prognosis before decisions can be made. Significant cost reductions already seen due to change in policy (first 3 days unpaid for new staff since April 2009).	JW

Note 1:

#### Gas Servicing

January	1 x Tenant	-	1 Alice Fisher Crescent	- Injunction Paperwork being prepared by Legal	- English
February	3 x Tenants	-	71 Bagge Road 7 Keene Road 12 Chiltern Crescent	- Paperwork to be prepared by Legal - Court Hearing 14/04/11 - Paperwork to be prepared by Legal	- English - English - English
March	4 x Tenants	-	24 Bishops Road 3 Keene Road 2 Camfrey 29 Westfields	- Service Appointment booked for 04/05/11 - Service Appointment booked for 13/04/11 - Service Appointment booked for 14/04/11 - Service Appointment booked for 20/04/11	- English - English - English - English

## Quarterly Trend Report

Performance Indicator	Target	Previous Year	Year to Date as at Mar 2011	Improvement Trend	2008/09 House Mark Benchmark Comparisons		Actions Only	
	2010/11	2009/10	2010/11		QUARTILE			
					UPPER			
% of Non-Decent Homes	15%	28%	20.2%		2.0%			
Arrears as % of rent debit (Housing Quality Network GNPI 134) (Excl Housing Benefit Arrears)	1.5%	1.4%	1.5%		2.5%			
Former Tenant Arrears %	0.6%	1.09%	1.34%		0.73%		Action plan to be in place by end of May 2011 to address this area.	
Service Charges and Other Arrears (in £,000)	-	55	51		-		Shop arrears of £22,347 to be monitored.	
Rent Loss Voids + Bad Debts (in £,000)	292	285	129		-			
% repairs done within KPI's (Year to date)	Emergency	98.5%	99.3%	99.4%		99.3%		
	Urgent	96.5%	95.2%	99.0%		97.6%		
	Routine	96.0%	93.5%	98.4%		98.2%		
Right First Time Repairs (PSD)	96%	97.3%	98.37%		-		A new report to include All Contractors will commence on 1 <sup>st</sup> Apr 2011.	
Average time to re-let (GN excluding Major Repairs and New Lets) from Core (Days)	12	30	12		24.73			
Overall customer satisfaction (STATUS Survey)	83%	N/A	88.24%		88.24%		Survey has now been completed for the financial period 2010/11.	
Gas Servicing Certificates Completed on Time	100%	99.15%	99.75%		99.88%			
No of Properties without Certificates	0	27	8		-			



Appendix 3 – Complaints to 31/3/2011

Service Area	Received 01/1/11 to 31/3/11	Resolved at Stage 1	Resolved at Stage 2	Outstanding
<b><u>HOUSING MANAGEMENT</u></b>				
General	4	4		
Staff Attitude				
Anti-social Behaviour				
Estate Management				
FCH				
Service Standards				
Tenancy	3	3		
Poor state of property				
Unfair Treatment	1	1		
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b><u>ASSETS</u></b>				
General	3	3		
Repairs	4	4		
Staff Attitude				
Estate Management				
Decent Homes Work				
Tenancy	1	1		
FCH				
Standard of Workmanship				
Poor state of property				
Unfair Treatment				
Incomplete Repair				
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b><u>PSD/REPAIRS</u></b>				
General				
Staff Attitude				
Freebridge Community Housing				
Decent Homes Work				
Procedure Failure				
Service Standards				
Standard of Workmanship				
Poor state of property				
Tenancy	1	1		
Unfair Treatment				
Incomplete Repair	6	4		2
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>
Member of staff				
<b>HR</b>				
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>

## Freebridge Community Housing

## Report to the Board

<b>Author</b>	Tony Hall Chief Executive	<b>Report Type</b>		<b>Impact</b>		
<b>Related Work Ref.</b>		<b>For Decision</b>	√	<b>High</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Low</b>
		<b>For Information</b>			√	
<b>Consultation</b>	Management Team					

**Meeting Date:** 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2011

**Report Title:** 2010/11 Business Plan Outturn Report

<b>Purpose:</b> To approve the 2010/11 Business Plan outturn report
<b>Policy/Strategy Implications:</b> None as a result of recommendations in this report
<b>Finance and VFM Implications:</b> None as a result of recommendations in this report
<b>Customer Care/Equality and Diversity Implications:</b> None as a result of recommendations in this report
<b>Risk Assessment (cross-reference with Freebridge Risk Map):</b> The risk map was used as one of the reference points for the development of the original plan.
<b>Recommendations:</b> It is recommended that the Board  (i) Approve the 2010/11 Business Plan Outturn report

## 1 Business Plan Outturn 2010/11

- 1.1 The Board approved the 2010/11 Business Plan in February 2010 and have subsequently received quarterly updates.
- 1.2 The plan was build around the seven original corporate objectives and corporate indicators; and four key initiatives.
  - Implement the Customer Care Strategy - Ask, Listen, Act, Learn
  - Implement the Performance Management Strategy - continuous improvement
  - Options Appraisal for the introduction of a Customer Contact Centre
  - Develop an architectural vision for Hillington Square
- 1.3 A full outturn report is attached at Appendix 1.

## 2 Summary

2.1 The significant activities and outcomes have been summarised below, including the key initiatives, under the seven corporate objectives and performance against the corporate targets.

### 2.2 Growth

Target: 22 new homes

12 new homes completed, funding secured for a further 34 homes

Work has commenced on a wider range of housing options that will meet housing need without the level of HCA subsidy that was available in the past.

Through firm negotiations HCA funding has been received for all our pipeline schemes with only four conversions from rent to 'rent to home buy'.

Further work is required in relation to the Asset Management Review, specifically the review of assets for development potential or disposal. This will be carried forward into the new plan.

### 2.3 Empowering Tenants

Target: 75% Customer Satisfaction with views taken into account.

Last year the figure was 59.6% which was increased to 75.4%. (The April 2011 result is 79.4%)

The Tenant Empowerment Team was reorganised during the year and a new Assistant Director appointed. The Tenant Empowerment Review has been refocused. The structure of the Tenant Panel has been agreed with TOWN and an Independent Advisor has been appointed. A range of different mechanisms are being used to engage with a diverse group of tenants.

### 2.4 Financially Sound

Target: £330,000 out performance of the Business Plan

£330,000 savings were built into the Plan

In the current economic climate greater attention has been given to the details within the funding covenants. Alongside this we have been, and continue to, explore opportunities for alternative funding models.

Property Services were on course to break even; however, once late invoicing had been taken into account the PSD income and expenditure account shows a deficit of £12k.

### 2.5 Fit for Purpose

Target: Customer Contact Centre Implemented.

The Customer Contact Centre was implemented which was also a key initiative.

The Customer Contact Centre went live in December 2010 and has made a significant difference to the way both telephone calls and face to face customer enquiries are handled.

Following the communications audit and branding exercise that took place with Stakeholders we launched a new Communications Strategy and we have tightened up the use of the brand logo.

After a corporate focus on improving Health and Safety we have been able to reduce the corporate risk rating and Freebridge has been awarded the ROSPA Gold Safety Award.

The first phase of the service charge implementation plan has been completed successfully following consultation at each sheltered scheme and we will now focus on service charging in general needs properties.

The Stock Condition Survey has been updated and the information used to update the Financial Plan.

## 2.6 Investing in People

Target 75% staff satisfaction

Overall staff satisfaction increased from 65% in 2009 to 81%

Performance management training has taken place. Coaching is being developed throughout the organisation as a management style and consideration is being given to how behavioural influences can be used to encourage behaviours that support our values.

A coaching approach is being rolled out through Management Team. An assessment has been carried out against the Investors in People criteria and although we are still committed to external validation of our people management, we no longer feel that Investors in People is the right tool.

Although significant work has been done on the Revised Pay and Benefits Package, negotiations are still underway with the Unions. This target has been carried forward into the new plan.

## 2.7 Regeneration Through Partnership

Target 85% of stock decent

Estimated outturn 82%

During the year Hemingway Design were appointed as lead designer for the 're-imagining' of Hillington Square. Numerous engagement events have taken place with Stakeholders and residents. This has supported a creative approach to resident engagement including the employment of six Creative Apprentices through the King's Lynn Arts Centre. Following an extensive tender process Mae Architects have been appointed to undertake detailed design work. In addition the Borough Council made a contribution of £50k towards professional fees.

The Community Development plan needs to be completed to provide context for activities that are being carried out within the community. For example Monks Close, support for

The Discovery Centre, Purfleet Trust, Hillington Square, Thornage Hall and the Arts Centre.

## 2.8 Responsive Landlord

Target 85% overall customer satisfaction

Satisfaction at April 2011 88.4%

The Board approved the revised Customer Care Strategy. An integral part of the strategy has been to implement the Mary Gobar, Customer Excellence training. Each member of staff has completed the two day training course and new employees have received the one day Cascade Training, lead by the Executive Team, as part of the induction training. Twenty four members of the Management Group have undertaken the Mary Gobar Coaching Course and are attending routine coaching supervision sessions.

## 3 Summary

Of the fifty four activities contained within the plan thirty nine are completed, eleven are in progress and well developed; four will not be completed without further interventions.

The focus for stepped change is wider Asset Management. Currently interim arrangements are in place. Appreciating Assets became one of the four objectives for the new plan.

Business Plan 2010/11 - 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Update March 2011

VISION	2010/11	Status	Responsibility & Timescale	Progress
<b>1. Growth</b>				
<b>1.1 Developed balanced tenure portfolio in and around West Norfolk</b>	1.1.1 Alignment of development plans with sub-regional priorities/risk/submarkets	<b>G</b>	Tony Hall Ongoing	All bids approved. Continue to manage relationship with BCKLWN.  <b>[Status changed from A to G]</b>
<b>1.2 To deliver a sustainable new build programme</b>	1.2.1 Implement and review annual development plan	<b>G</b>	AD Asset Management January 2011	Successful bid to HCA for 34 homes - further Fairer Futures bid.
<b>1.3 Completed Asset Management Review - identifying all possible development sites within existing land holding and implementation plans</b>	1.3.1 Review assets for development potential or disposal and prioritise	<b>R</b>	AD Asset Management August 2010 March 2011	Review not completed - carry forward.  <b>[Status changed from A to R]</b>
<b>1.4 To establish a land bank to support development plans</b>	1.4.1 Identify sites for acquisition	<b>A</b>	AD Asset Management Ongoing	A number of sites identified with negotiations ongoing.
<b>1.5 Strategy in place for merger, acquisitions and partnerships</b>	1.5.1 Research and review successful implementation of completed mergers.	<b>G</b>	Tony Hall March 2011	Report to Board March 2011.  <b>[Status changed from A to G]</b>
<b>1.6 Increase the supply of affordable housing under new management</b>	1.6.1 Explore options to increase supply and identify most viable opportunities	<b>G</b>	Executive Ongoing	Currently investigating a range of management opportunities as well as new HCA programme.  <b>[Status changed from A to G]</b>

Business Plan 2010/11 - 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Update March 2011

VISION	2010/11	Status	Responsibility & Timescale	Progress
<b>2. EMPOWERING TENANTS</b>				
<b>2.1 Fully developed empowerment framework with meaningful opportunities for customers to be involved as individuals and representative groups at all levels</b>	2.1.1 Complete Tenant Empowerment Service Review	<b>A</b>	Michelle Playford March 2011 Revised to July 2011	The Baseline Statement has been produced and agreed by MT. The review is entering the final CONSULT and COMPETE stages before a final review is published in June. <b>[Status changed from R to A]</b>
	2.1.2 Identify options for tenant scrutiny and implement	<b>G</b>	Michelle Playford April 2011	The Tenant Panel facilitator has been appointed and the recruitment process is underway. <b>[Status changed from A to G]</b>
	2.1.3 Develop structure for opportunities for customer involvement on individual and collective basis	<b>G</b>	Executive April 2011	Tenant Panel progressing. New Customer Engagement Policy drafted. Better working with TOWN. Increased use of other media. <b>[Status changed from A to G]</b>
	2.1.4 Identify partner to assist in the delivery of Tenant Empowerment training.	<b>G</b>	Michelle Playford Ongoing	A review of the Tenant Academy has taken place. A new Tenant Academy plan will be drawn up which includes maximising opportunities with partners. <b>[Status changed from A to G]</b>
<b>2.2 A clear and transparent mechanism in place for tenant involvement to improve service delivery</b>	2.2.1 Establish a tenant panel to monitor service improvement	<b>A</b>	Executive April 2011	The Tenant Panel facilitator has been appointed and the recruitment process is underway, 30+ interested tenants identified.  TOR agreed by the Board and TOWN.

Business Plan 2010/11 - 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Update March 2011

VISION	2010/11	Status	Responsibility & Timescale	Progress
<b>3. FINANCIALLY SOUND</b>				
<b>3.1 Operating within Funding Covenants/ Requirements</b>	3.1.1 Compliance with funding covenants	<b>G</b>	Malcolm Fry March 2011	Full review of covenants - legal advice taken where required.
<b>3.2 Financially out-performed, transfer Financial Plan by £1m</b>	3.2.1 £0.33m out performance	<b>G</b>	Malcolm Fry March 2011	Achieved.
<b>3.3 Financial capacity for the future plans</b>	3.3.1 Review funding options	<b>G</b>	Sean Kent September 2010	Meetings with Funders and funding advisors. Outperformed by £3.1m, mainly because of improvement under-spends.
	3.3.2 Explore opportunities to increase financial capacity	<b>G</b>	Sean Kent September 2010	Developed into the new Business Plan. <b>[Status changed from A to G]</b>
<b>3.4 Overall core cost - basic average for LSVT's - more spent on 'front line' services, less on 'support'</b>	3.4.1 Efficiencies targeted in Service Reviews and Operational Plans	<b>A</b>	Malcolm Fry <del>June 2010</del> <del>November - December 2010</del> January 2011	Efficiency target achieved but not specifically focussed on service plan - revised Cost Reduction Strategy being developed.
<b>3.5 Property Services operating at a surplus and winning external work</b>	3.5.1 Property Services in surplus for year	<b>A</b>	Colin Davison March 2011	Small deficit for year made.
	3.5.2 Planning for winning external work - Market analysis Capacity Planning and annual plan.	<b>A</b>	Colin Davison March 2011	Areas of external work being reviewed and advice being obtained on tax implications for growth. External work for Care and Repair won in competition with external contractors to complete adaptations to properties in BCKLWN, Fenland & Breckland areas.
<b>3.6 £5.5M VAT money allocated to specific plans</b>	3.6.1 £2.0m VAT contribution	<b>A</b>	Executive March 2011	£1.4m received despite reduced DHP spend.

Business Plan 2010/11 - 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Update March 2011

VISION	2010/11	Status	Responsibility & Timescale	Progress
<b>4. FIT FOR PURPOSE</b>				
<b>4.1 Business– infrastructure fully aligned to future plans</b>	4.1.1 <i>Key initiative:</i> Investigate options for introduction of Customer Contact Centre and implement	<b>G</b>	Abigail Ellis November 2010	Implemented Dec 2010.
	4.1.2 Sheltered Housing Service Charge Review and implementation	<b>G</b>	Abigail Ellis	Implemented.
	4.1.3 Prepare for short notice inspection.	<b>G</b>	Executive Ongoing	Improved internal controls and business assurance processes put in place pending clarity of future requirements.  <b>[Status changed from A to G]</b>
<b>4.2 Upper quartile/Beacon Performance (quality/cost/ volume) across key processes</b>	4.2.1 <i>Key initiative:</i> Implement Performance Management Strategy including training	<b>G</b>	Sean Kent Ongoing	Training including Mary Gober delivered. Strategy update due early 2011/12.  <b>[Status changed from A to G]</b>
<b>4.3 Asset Management Strategy fully implemented</b>	4.3.1 Commission stock condition survey with external validation	<b>G</b>	AD Asset Management <del>January 2011</del> February 2011	Completed.
<b>4.4 ICT/Systems capacity aligned to current and future needs</b>	4.4.1 Website Phase 2b (Content Management) developed	<b>G</b>	Dave Clements August 2010	Completed.
	4.4.2 Electronic Document Management Phase 1 planned and implemented	<b>G</b>	Dave Clements September 2010	POP/PIP system piloted within the Resources Directorate from April 2011.  <b>[Status changed from A to G]</b>

Business Plan 2010/11 - 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Update March 2011

VISION	2010/11	Status	Responsibility & Timescale	Progress
	4.4.3 Asset Management database operational	R	Dave Clements/AD Assets October 2010	System requirements being reviewed with AD of Assets.
<b>4.5 Health &amp; Safety fully embedded, mainstreamed and promoted within the organisation</b>	4.5.1 Develop and deliver annual Health & Safety Plan	G	Jo Whaley Development – April 2010 Re-schedule August 2010	All actions identified for 2010/11 completed, except for updating of asbestos register, now picked up under corporate risk review, to be addressed by Ex. Dir. Operations. ROSPA Gold award achieved.
<b>4.6 Embedded culture to support future plans</b>	4.6.1 Develop, agree and communicate behaviours that embed the values	G	Jo Whaley April 2010 December 2010	Stage 1 completed – Values definitions written and communicated in one-page summary. Stage 2 - Staff Group and MT have further developed the 'levels' of competence to be first assessed at the Spring 2011 performance reviews.
<b>4.7 Effective Governance Structure</b>	4.7.1 Implement Governance improvement plan	G	Tony Hall December 2010	Board briefing notes are being prepared for Board members so that they are able to respond to enquiries from the public post-Board meetings.
	4.7.2 Assess compliance with TSA new regulatory framework	G	Executive	Positive regulatory judgement received March 2011. Financial Viability Return due April 2011.
<b>4.8 Effective Communicator to external Stakeholders</b>	4.8.1 Agree and implement Communications Strategy	G	Michelle Playford Ongoing	The Communications and Customer Engagement Strategic Activity Plan was agreed by the Board in 2010. Implementation on target.

Business Plan 2010/11 - 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Update March 2011

VISION	2010/11	Status	Responsibility & Timescale	Progress
<b>5. INVESTING IN PEOPLE</b>				
<b>5.1 High calibre people want to work for and stay with Freebridge</b>	5.1.1 Review flexible working arrangements including Home Working	<b>G</b>	Jo Whaley – March 2011	Formalised flexible/home-working arrangements for adverse weather conditions, containing explanation of the principles for successful home-working. Not pursued beyond this at this stage as currently no significant demand or business need for formalised home-working arrangements, informal arrangements working satisfactorily.
	5.1.2 Review Organisational Development Strategy	<b>G</b>	Sean Kent/Jo Whaley March 2011	Revised HR Strategy agreed. Future focus on appraisal training and training outcomes.
<b>5.2 Effective/visionary leadership within the organisation and wider sector</b>	5.2.1 Coaching and mentoring approach developed	<b>G</b>	Jo Whaley – March 2011	All members of MT attended or scheduled to attend ILM level 5 introductory coaching and mentoring course. Some MT members pursuing formal qualification. Management Competency developed, including coaching skills, future focus on management development, including coaching and mentoring during 2011/12. <b>[Status changed from A to G]</b>
<b>5.3 A workforce representative of the community we serve, and of an organisational culture which values diversity and offers equality of opportunity</b>	5.3.1 E&D refresher training linked to Customer care	<b>A</b>	Jo Whaley – March 2011	Some elements covered in Mary Gober training, which has been the main focus of training in 2010/11. Specific E&D refreshers scheduled for Summer 2011.

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VISION	2010/11	Status	Responsibility & Timescale	Progress
5.4 Values embedded and lived	5.4.1 Develop Staff Charter	A	Jo Whaley – <del>June 2010</del> <del>Re-schedule December 2010</del> Re schedule to March 2011	Work on values and management competency completed for inclusion in the Charter. Working now with Michelle Playford on format for Charter in new corporate style.
5.5 Principles of IIP embedded (IIP accredited)	5.5.1 Self Assessment for accreditation and action plan	G	Jo Whaley – March 2011	Self-assessment completed, majority of criteria met and a number exceeded. Agreed to review alternative, more challenging frameworks to consider alternative accreditation.  <b>[Status changed from A to G]</b>
5.6 Effective channels of communication throughout the organisation	<b>Target 75% satisfaction</b> 5.6.1 Implement internal Communication Strategy	G	Jo Whaley – Sept 2010  Split between Jo Whaley and Michelle Playford – <del>December 2010</del> Revised to March 2011	Staff satisfaction 81% 2010.  An internal communications activity plan has been produced and agreed and is being delivered.
5.7 Implemented competitive Remuneration Policy - rewarding staff according to their performance and contribution to the business	5.7.1 Revised pay and benefits package rolled out at PSD	G	Jo Whaley March 2011	Completed.
	5.7.2 New appraisals for PSD	G	Colin Davison/Jo Whaley <del>June 2010</del> <del>October 2010</del> Revised to March 2011.	Completed.  <b>[Status changed from A to G]</b>
	5.7.3 New Remuneration Strategy agreed and implementation begun	G	Jo Whaley – staged process through 2010/11 and 2011/12	Some elements implemented for new staff from April 2011. Elements currently under consultation for Collective Agreement to apply from July 2011 or after due notice period. New appraisals June 2011 – training in May.

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VISION	2010/11	Status	Responsibility & Timescale	Progress
<b>6. REGENERATING THROUGH PARTNERSHIP</b>				
<b>6.1 A key partner in community development activities to build community capacity</b>	6.1.1 Targeted networking	<b>G</b>	Executive Team Ongoing	Stakeholder/Influencer audit under way. Networks/Influencer database established.
	6.1.2 Agree and implement Community Development Plan	<b>A</b>	Robert Clarke March 2010	To be completed to provide context for activities that are being carried out within the community.
	6.1.3 Support key local initiatives	<b>G</b>	Robert Clarke Ongoing	Local initiatives will be supported on an ongoing basis through the delivery of the Community Development Plan.
<b>6.2 Delivering homes within sustainable communities and developing skills, capacity and employment opportunities through effective partnerships</b>	6.2.1 Establish project framework for the redesign of Hillington Square	<b>G</b>	Tony Hall Ongoing - Key Milestones to be established by September 2010	Project framework in place. Mae Architects appointed.
	6.2.2 Secure 8 new training places and jobs	<b>G</b>	AD Asset Management Ongoing	Completed.
<b>6.3 Completed the Decent Homes Programme and agreed 'Decent Homes Plus'</b>	6.3.1 Delivery in accordance with all targets	<b>A</b>	AD Asset Management March 2011	82% Decent Homes estimated outturn against a target of 85%.

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VISION	2010/11	Status	Responsibility & Timescale	Progress
<b>7. RESPONSIVE LANDLORD</b>				
7.1 Doing the 'Basics' very well	7.1.2 Complete Sheltered Housing Service Review	R	Jan Mitchell <del>Due for completion late 2010</del> March 2011	Supporting People funding announcement March 11.  <b>[Status changed from A to R]</b>
	7.1.2 Asset Management Review	R	AD Asset Management	AD Assets resigned March 2011 Carry forward.  <b>[Status changed from A to R]</b>
7.2 Upper quartile on 'customer satisfaction with opportunities for involvement'.	<b>Target 85% customer satisfaction</b>	G	Tony Hall/Executive	Status Survey completed early April 2011 - 88%.
7.3 Deliver personalised customer care	7.3.1 <i>Key initiative:</i> To agree and implement a customer care strategy	G	Tony Hall Mary Gober Pilot March 2010	Board approved Customer Care Strategy. Mary Gober programme fully implemented.
	7.3.2 Develop local service standards	G	Robert Clarke March 2011	Local standards were published as required by 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2011 after consultation with tenants. Further work is now taking place on how local standards will be benchmarked and in what areas we can make further improvements.
	7.3.3 Customer care and complaint handling training.	G	Tony Hall/Abigail Ellis	STATUS survey has been issued to tenants and results are coming in. Further investigations to be conducted when results are received in full. Complaints handling training in Open Housing completed in Feb 11. First 'Gober Cascade training for new starters held in March 11 as part of induction.

## Freebridge Community Housing

## Report to the Board

<b>Author</b>	Angus MacQueen	<b>Report Type</b>		<b>Impact</b>		
<b>Related Work Ref.</b>		<b>For Decision</b>	√	<b>High</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Low</b>
		<b>For Information</b>			√	
<b>Consultation</b>	Board Chairman, Audit Committee Chairman, Chief Executive, Executive Director (Resources)					

**Meeting Date:** 23 May 2011

**Report Title:** Co-option onto the Audit Committee

**Purpose:** To seek agreement to a co-option onto Freebridge's Audit Committee.

**Policy/Strategy Implications:** Under Standing Order 4, the Operations Committee and the Resources & Risk Committee have delegated authority to co-opt members, but this authority has not been extended to the Audit Committee. It is, therefore, for the Board to make the co-option. Co-opted members of the other two committees do not have voting rights nor can their presence at a meeting be included in the calculation of a quorum, and it is suggested that this co-option is made along the same lines.

**Finance and VFM Implications:** It is suggested that the co-opted member could claim expenses for attending Freebridge meetings/events, but that the loss of earnings scheme and ICT allowances scheme are not applicable in this case.

**Customer Care/Equality and Diversity Implications:** This co-option has arisen largely out of the Board's acknowledgement of the need to give opportunities to a wider section of the community.

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

Risk 1.4 – Skill deficiency in Board or Management Team – Critical Impact, High Likelihood. The recommended co-option would add to the skills on the Audit Committee.

Risk 12.0 – Failure to address equality and diversity issues effectively – Marginal Impact, Significant Likelihood.

**Recommendations:** It is recommended that the Board:

- (i) Approve the co-option of Karen Sly onto the Audit Committee, along the lines set out in this report.

## 1.0 Background

- 1.1 At its last ordinary meeting (minute number 62/11 refers), the Board noted that, although equality and diversity implications had been taken into consideration by the 2011 Independent Board Member Recruitment Panel, the overriding importance of appointing the candidates with the best skills and experience had resulted in there being no improvement in the diversity of the Board.

- 1.2 One of the candidates, Karen Sly, who had been unsuccessful following interview, had not been chosen because of her lack of experience, but would have improved the Board's diversity in terms of age and gender. The Board, therefore, asked that opportunities be explored with Karen to help her develop her experience, possibly through co-option onto a committee and/or invitations to Board training events. In this way, she would be in a stronger position should she wish to apply for board membership, either with Freebridge or with other similar organisations, in the future.
- 1.3 Karen is currently Financial Services Manager with North Norfolk District Council. In this role, she is responsible for both the Council's financial service and its internal audit service. Her career has included various accountancy and internal audit roles, and she is a qualified accountant through the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy. It is, therefore, felt that her skills would be most suited to a co-option onto Freebridge's Audit Committee. In this way, not only would Karen gain experience of operating at Board level, but Freebridge would benefit from her significant knowledge of finance and audit.
- 1.4 The possibility of a co-option onto the Audit Committee has been discussed with Karen, and she was delighted to have been asked. She has indicated that she would be pleased to accept the position should the Board wish to proceed with the co-option.