

# **FREEBRIDGE BOARD MINUTES AND ASSOCIATED REPORTS**

28 MAY 2012

## **FREEBRIDGE COMMUNITY HOUSING BOARD**

### **Minutes of a Meeting of the Board held on Monday 28 May 2012 at 6.30pm in the Conference Room, Juniper House, Austin Street, King's Lynn**

#### **PRESENT:**

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

#### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

Tony Hall	-	Chief Executive
Sean Kent	-	Executive Director (Resources)
Michelle Playford	-	Assistant Director of Communications and Engagement (minute numbers 70/12 - 78/12)
Malcolm Fry	-	Assistant Director of Finance (minute numbers 70/12 - 86/12)
Angus MacQueen	-	Company Secretary

#### **70/12      APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Steve Clark and Michael Jervis.

#### **71/12      MINUTES**

##### **(a)      Board**

The minutes of the Board meeting held on 16 April 2012 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

##### **(b)      Operations Committee**

The minutes of the final meeting of the Operations Committee, held on 2 November 2011, were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Board Chairman.

### **(c) Resources and Risk Committee**

The minutes of the final meeting of the Resources and Risk Committee, held on 20 February 2012, were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Board Chairman.

#### **72/12            MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

#### **73/12            DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Irene Gammon, as a resident of Hillington Square, and Lesley Bambridge, as the ward councillor for Hillington Square, declared interests in the item at minute number 80/12 – Hillington Square Update. The Board was content that they should remain in the room during the item, but they did not vote.

Lesley Bambridge declared an interest in the item at minute number 81/12 – Development at 2 Chapel Lane, King's Lynn – as the ward councillor for the area. The Board was content that she should remain in the room during the item, but she did not vote.

Tony Hall and Sean Kent declared interests in the item at minute number 88/12 – Senior Management Structure. The Board was content that they should remain in the room during the item.

John Fox declared an interest in the item at minute number 91/12 – Mystery Shopping Payments – as he was closely connected to a person potentially in receipt of the payments. He withdrew from the room for the duration of the item.

Tony Hall declared an interest in the item at minute number 93/12 – Chief Executive's Appraisal. The Board was content that he should remain in the room during the item.

#### **74/12            CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE**

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

The Chairman advised that he had received Freebridge's Annual Viability Assessment 2012 from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). The Assessment had been accompanied by a very complimentary letter, which expressed thanks for assistance to Freebridge officers, in particular the Finance Manager. A copy of the letter and the report would be made available to board members electronically; hard copies would be provided on request.

The Chief Executive highlighted that, despite the addition of the Hillington Square project, Freebridge's assessment had remained the same as last

year. This indicated that the HCA was content with the way that the project was being managed.

The Board noted the update.

## **75/12            CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S UPDATE**

### **(a)     Regulatory Visit**

The Chief Executive reported that Freebridge had received a regulatory visit from the HCA earlier that day. This was part of an annual process and would lead to a regulatory judgement. Three members of the HCA team had attended, and a range of subjects had been covered, including risk management, performance management and governance. The HCA team had been provided with a large pack of supporting information, and had been very complimentary about the preparations that Freebridge had made for the visit. Key messages arising from the visit were:

- The HCA was grateful for the cooperation it received from Freebridge, which made its work easier.
- The HCA would be looking for more visible leadership from boards and the executives.
- The HCA had been keen to find out about how Freebridge was responding to the Government's welfare reform agenda.
- There would be stronger links between viability and governance in the way in which housing associations were judged.

The regulatory judgement was awaited.

### **(b)     Plaxtole House, King's Lynn**

The Chief Executive advised that he had made contact with the Principal of the College of West Anglia after it had emerged that the College was looking to close Plaxtole House for financial reasons. Plaxtole House provided weekday accommodation and education to around 24 young people with learning and physical disabilities. In view of the importance of this work, the Chief Executive was exploring whether there was any way that Freebridge could help to keep it open; the College had agreed to allow Freebridge one month to develop a proposal. Consultation with Plaxtole House staff would commence shortly, at which point Freebridge would be named as a potential partner. This being the case, a press release would be prepared explaining Freebridge's intentions.

Whilst supporting the principle of assisting the College to keep Plaxtole House open, board members urged caution should Freebridge's involvement progress.

**(c) Confidential item**

**(d) Confidential item**

**(e) Mayor's Design in the Environment Awards**

The Chief Executive said that two Freebridge development schemes, Ferndale and Lady Jane Grey Road, had been shortlisted for the Mayor's Design in the Environment Awards 2012. The Lady Jane Grey Road scheme had won the small residential development category.

**(f) Tenant Awards**

The Chief Executive stated that a great deal of positive feedback had been received regarding the Freebridge Tenant Awards event held on 27 April 2012, and good publicity had been achieved. Comments had been made that the event was upbeat and that the involvement of children and young people had been very pleasing. There had also been some feedback that the event had moved away from a tenant focus, and this had been noted.

**(g) Business Plan**

The Chief Executive tabled the "glossy" version of the 2012-2013 Freebridge Business Plan. These would be distributed to key stakeholders.

**76/12      COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT POLICY (click here to go to report)**

The Executive Director (Resources) presented a report which introduced a Community Development Policy.

The Executive Director (Resources) highlighted that the Policy sought to target limited resources at the areas where they would have the greatest impact or there was the greatest need. He pointed out that the Policy referred (at section 6) to monitoring by the Operations Committee and the Board; the reference to the Operations Committee would need to be removed as this had now been disbanded.

In answer to questions, the Executive Director (Resources) made the following points:

- The work to help troubled families in North Lynn (referred to in section 5 of the Policy) would involve a multi-agency approach.
- The development and support of local leaders, referred to in the action plan, would involve a range of community leaders and organisations. They had not been specifically identified as yet.

- The visits to 500 homes through “Out and About”, referred to in the action plan, would be integrated with the forthcoming tenant roadshows this year.

**RESOLVED:** That the Community Development Policy be approved as presented, subject to the removal of the reference to the Operations Committee in section 6 of the Policy.

**77/12      REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS POLICY (click here to go to report)**

The Assistant Director of Communications and Engagement presented a report which reviewed the Complaints Policy.

The Assistant Director of Communications and Engagement highlighted that it was now proposed to capture comments and compliments as well as complaints. Indeed, Freebridge received more comments and compliments than complaints.

The Assistant Director of Communications and Engagement also pointed out that it was intended that the Tenant Panel would become involved with the complaints process in early 2013, and so the Policy would need to be reviewed again at that point.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the revised Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy be approved, as presented.
- 2) That an early revision of the Policy, in March 2013, be approved.

**78/12      REVIEW OF HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY (click here to go to report)**

The Assistant Director of Communications and Engagement presented a report which reviewed the Human Resources Policy (renamed as the Human Resources Management Policy). She highlighted the four guiding themes contained within the Policy, of Recruit-Develop-Retain-Reward.

The Board thanked the Assistant Director of Communications and Engagement for an excellent report.

**RESOLVED:** That the Human Resources Management Policy be approved, as presented.

**79/12      AUDIT COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION (click here to go to report)**

The Board received a report setting out the recommendation of the Audit Committee meeting held on 30 April 2012.

**RESOLVED:** That the Whistleblowing Policy be approved, as presented to the Audit Committee, subject to the inclusion of Internal Audit as an alternative point of contact for someone wishing to report a concern under the Policy.

**80/12            HILLINGTON SQUARE UPDATE**

Confidential item

**81/12            DEVELOPMENT AT 2 CHAPEL LANE, KING'S LYNN – RESOURCE CENTRE** (report not available – confidential)

The Executive Director (Resources) presented a report which provided an update on the progress towards achieving a new Resource Centre through the conversion of The Barn at 2 Chapel Lane, King's Lynn, and which sought approval, following the market test, for Property Services to undertake this project.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the result of the market test be acknowledged.
- 2) That the submitted cost from Property Services be approved, enabling them to undertake the project.

**82/12            NEGOTIATED TENDER FOR REPLACEMENT HEATING FOR BUDGET YEAR 2012/13** (report not available – confidential)

The Executive Director (Resources) presented a report which sought permission to enter into a one-year negotiated contract with Gaswise for the replacement of 537 heating systems without the need to tender, in accordance with Financial Regulation 7.

The Board welcomed the value for money that had been achieved through the negotiated contract, and was additionally pleased that Freebridge had been able to provide the business to a local firm.

**RESOLVED:** That a one-year fixed contract with Gaswise for the replacement of 537 heating systems be approved as described in the report.

**83/12            OPERATIONS PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW** (report not available – confidential)

The Chief Executive presented the quarterly Operations Performance Overview report.

Whilst the Board found the report useful and interesting, it was suggested that it may be too operational for discussion at a Board meeting; the strategic element was provided by the Business Plan outturn reports. The following suggestions were made for future presentation of the report:

- make it available to board members in electronic version only;

- retain the “Development” and “Performance Exceptions” sections of the report on the agenda, but make the rest available in electronic version only;
- place the report at the end of the agenda in the “For Information” section; or
- use the report as a basis for discussion at informal meetings.

It was agreed to retain the report on the agenda for the next quarter, and then to consider the most appropriate way forward at that point.

The Board was pleased to note the number of compliments that had been received, and in particular that two of them were from other agencies rather than customers.

#### **84/12            FINANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES QUARTERLY MANAGEMENT REPORTS (report not available – confidential)**

The Assistant Director of Finance presented a report which provided financial information for the year ended 31 March 2012, together with Human Resources key performance indicator information.

The Assistant Director of Finance highlighted the following points:

- Expenditure for the year had been achieved within the revised budget.
- The figure for rent lost through empty properties had been better than that forecast, which was a considerable achievement in light of the fact that there had been 134 more empty properties than in the previous year.
- The significant underspend on improvements had been the result of slowness in the early part of the year and the reduction of elements that had been required to be replaced.
- There had been a significant improvement on sickness absence levels when compared to the previous year.

In answer to questions, officers acknowledged that staff turnover was on the high side. This had partly been the result of the sheltered housing restructure. There also appeared to have been a number of people who had not stayed with Freebridge for very long, either because they were using Freebridge as a stop-gap or because they had not proved to be right for the job. Work was being undertaken to refine recruitment practices. Very few of those who had left were people who could not be replaced by Freebridge; efforts would be made to retain an employee who had indicated an intention to leave if this was in the interests of the business. Staff satisfaction was very high, standing at 96% in the last survey. Employees benefited from a certain amount of flexibility and were generally happy to show flexibility when required for the benefit of Freebridge.

The Board noted the report.

**85/12      TREASURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE** (report not available – confidential)

The Assistant Director of Finance presented a report which provided an update on treasury activity for the period January to March 2012.

The Assistant Director of Finance advised that he had recently attended a treasury seminar given by the Royal Bank of Scotland, Freebridge's funders. The key message had been that the funders were continuing to lose money on loans in the housing sector and were looking for opportunities to restructure or re-price finance deals. It was, therefore, imperative that the funders were kept informed of key issues and that their deadlines were met. With this in mind, the report requested delegated authority for treasury management decisions; this would also enable the best rates to be obtained within the short period that they were often available.

The Board noted the report and

**RESOLVED:** That authority be delegated to the Executive Director (Resources) (or, in his/her absence, to the Assistant Director of Finance) to take decisions in relation to treasury management that are in accordance with the Association's approved Treasury Management Policy Statement and Practices, subject to consultation with the Association's treasury management advisers and the Lead Member for Resources (or, if he/she is unavailable, with the Board Chairman) and subject to any such decisions being reported to the Board for information.

**86/12      RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE** (report not available – confidential)

The Assistant Director of Finance presented a report which provided an update on Freebridge's Corporate Risk Map and detailed risk management activity during the period January to March 2012.

The Assistant Director of Finance said that work was ongoing to simplify Freebridge's process for measuring risks.

In answer to a question, the Executive Director (Resources) stated that he believed that risks around tenant mobility were sufficiently covered by the Aids and Adaptations Policy.

The Board noted the report.

**87/12      2011/12 BUSINESS PLAN OUTTURN REPORT (click here to go to report)**

The Chief Executive presented a report which set out the 2011/12 Business Plan outturn.

The Chief Executive said that the outturn overall was very pleasing. The only area of disappointment was tenant satisfaction, although it had been difficult to make an exact comparison with last year's figures as the questions had been slightly different. The dissatisfaction appeared to be mainly among sheltered housing tenants, and probably reflected the rent increases, service charge increases and restructuring of the sheltered housing service that they had experienced. It was pleasing to note that, within the overall figure, satisfaction among general needs tenants had actually increased.

The Board welcomed the outturn as a generally very positive set of results.

The Chief Executive said that the HCA had been very impressed with the way that the Board was kept informed of progress against the Business Plan.

**RESOLVED:** That the 2011/12 Business Plan Outturn Report be approved.

## **88/12            SENIOR MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE**

Confidential item

## **89/12            STATISTICAL DATA RETURN (SDR) 2012 (click here to go to report)**

The Executive Director (Resources) presented a report which sought authorisation for the submission of Freebridge's SDR 2012 to the HCA.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the submission of Freebridge's SDR 2012 be authorised.
- 2) That the Chief Executive be authorised to sign the document on Freebridge's behalf.

## **90/12            BOARD MEMBER RECRUITMENT (click here to go to report)**

The Company Secretary presented a report which provided an update on this year's Board recruitment process and sought the appointment of a Recruitment Panel for the selection of board members.

The Company Secretary advised that one of the candidates for tenant board membership was married to a member of the Freebridge Tenant Panel. The Board was of the view that this should not preclude the candidate from standing for board membership, as the Freebridge approach was that the Board and the Panel should work cooperatively together, rather than in a confrontational way. Any specific conflicts of interest that arose could be managed according to the usual procedures.

The Company Secretary read out the names of the applicants for Board membership. Board members were asked not to put themselves forward for membership of the Recruitment Panel if they knew any of the applicants to the

extent that they would feel uncomfortable with being part of the recruitment process.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That a Recruitment Panel be established to pursue the 2012 recruitment of independent and tenant board members and to report back with recommendations to the Board meeting on 6 August 2012.
- 2) That the Panel consist of four members, namely: Matthew Brown, John Fox, Paul Leader and Ian Pinches.
- 3) That the quorum for the Panel be three members.

**91/12            MYSTERY SHOPPING PAYMENTS**

Confidential item

**92/12            APPOINTMENT OF SHAREHOLDERS** (report not available – confidential)

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

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

**93/12            CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S APPRAISAL**

The Board noted that the outcome of the Chief Executive's annual appraisal held on 1 May 2012 had been previously issued to all board members. Matthew Brown, Chairman of the Chief Executive's Appraisal Panel, summarised the procedure that had been followed in conducting the appraisal, which had been in line with that used for all staff.

Matthew Brown advised that the Panel would be meeting again in June to set the Chief Executive's objectives for 2012/13.

**94/12            URGENT ACTION TAKEN – PROPOSED PURCHASE OF 15 ST STEVEN'S CRESCENT, TEN MILE BANK** (report not available – confidential)

The Board noted a request for urgent action that had been approved, for the purchase at auction of 15 St Steven's Crescent, Ten Mile Bank.

The Chairman advised that subsequently the purchase had not taken place, as another bidder had made a higher offer at the auction than Freebridge's limit.

**95/12            URGENT ACTION TAKEN – PROVISION OF A TENANCY TO AN EXISTING EMPLOYEE** (report not available – confidential)

The Board noted a request for urgent action that had been approved, to provide a tenancy to an existing employee.

**96/12            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.

**97/12            COMMITTEE MINUTES**

Confidential item

**98/12            ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

**99/12            NEXT MEETING**

The Board noted that its next meeting was scheduled for Monday 9 July 2012 at 6.30pm.

**The meeting closed at 8.30pm.**

**CHAIRMAN**

## Freebridge Community Housing

## Report to the Board

<b>Author</b>	Robert Clarke	<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>Low</b>
				√	
<b>Consultation</b>	Management Team				

**Meeting Date:** 28<sup>th</sup> May 2012

**Report Title:** Community Development Policy

**Purpose:** To seek approval for this new Community Development Policy.

**Policy/Strategy Implications:** This is a new policy and will have an impact on a number of other policies when they come up for review. Some of the main ones are specifically identified within the report.

**Finance and VFM Implications:** Within existing budgets

**Customer Care/Equality and Diversity Implications:** This policy is anticipated to have a favourable impact on all customers by enabling them to take advantage of new opportunities and have a greater input into decisions that affect them. This policy has been subjected to all Equality and Diversity impact assessments, proposed activities will be subject to this process.

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

- 2.1 Failure in customer satisfaction – Critical impact, low likelihood
- 2.3 Lack of demand for properties – Critical impact, very low likelihood
- 7.1 Failure in tenant communication – Critical impact, significant likelihood

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

- (i) Approves the Community Development Policy set out at Appendix 1 to this report.

## **Introduction**

Freebridge Community Housing always seeks to be a positive influence for the communities in which it operates. Our aim is to be an excellent landlord and deliver on our commitment to develop homes and create opportunities for people within West Norfolk, therefore helping to strengthen our communities.

The driving force behind the strategy is to help create an environment within our communities where individuals and families want to live and stay. Our Community Development work is designed to underpin this by covering a wide range of activities and themes.

The strategy will build upon existing community development achievements that have taken, and are taking place in partnership with the Purfleet Trust, Discovery Centre, The Probation Service and the Norfolk Credit Union to name a few. Whilst we will always seek new and

positive partnerships, the strategy will also look into how Freebridge Community Housing can influence community development where no partnerships are available.

Key to this, and any sustainable policy, will be working with children and young adults. We want to increase opportunities for the next generation and make people feel that they have a genuine influence and interest in decisions that affect the places in which they live.

Another important part of the strategy will be to tackle the problem of digital exclusion and the problems that can bring. Freebridge Community Housing has already begun work on this by participating in the "Give an Hour" and "Silver Surfer" campaigns in 2011. This strategy will aim build on that work. Freebridge recognise that some communities are partly or wholly online.

Our ultimate aim is create links between our community development work and our housing services so that we deliver tangible results to both residents and the wider community.

As Freebridge Community Housing has limited resources to devote to the strategy we will concentrate our activities on those areas where they will have the greatest impact or those that have the greatest need.

Our achievements to date are the reason why we wish to create a policy around Community Development as we have demonstrated successes already as detailed below:

In 2011 we:

- Created the Hillington Square Charter in response to residents' concerns with the area's reputation, anti-social behaviour, litter and dog foul. We have adopted a multi-agency approach and hope to continue this charter into 2012.
- Developed our service standards as part of regulatory requirement which are tailored to tenants. This is designed to improve customer satisfaction and quality of life.
- Created work placements through future job funding. One of our partners, the Discovery Centre, requested our help for challenging youths to give them opportunities and demonstrate an alternative lifestyle to that of benefit dependency. The young people helped are now adding to their community.
- Built a new play area in North Lynn with our contractor partners. This has provided a space away from the street for children to play in and has helped reduce the level of vandalism and general anti-social behaviour in the neighbourhood.
- Helped initiate the Norfolk County Council Swap Shop in South Lynn as part of our membership of the South Lynn Neighbourhood Partnership. This has led to more engagement between neighbours giving them another environment in which to meet.

In 2010 we:

- Created the Terrington St Clement charter in response to the level of anti-social behaviour in the area. As with Hillington Square we have adopted a multi-agency approach.
- Started the Monk's Close Community Project following issues flagged up by residents following walkabouts, which include lack of transport adding to community isolation and

lack activities. Since then extra transport links have been arranged and a youth club formed. The community is more engaged with each other with tangible results.

- As previously mentioned we started multi-agency walkabouts to help engage with residents and deal with minor issues on the spot and take reports of larger issues face to face.
- Introduced Community Pride Impact Days to help key partners deliver services and raise their profile.
- Introduced a multi-agency project in North Lynn to tackle the problem of truancy in this community. Since identifying key partners and working closely the truancy rate has fallen and the community has benefited with less children playing on the estate.
- Took part in the Work Placement Scheme with the Purfleet Trust. This resulted in a job offer through the interview process and the wider community benefits from this individual's work.
- Helped to introduce the "Kickz" Community Football initiative which provides activities for young people and reduces anti-social behaviour and vandalism.
- Partnered with Community Payback to complete works in Downham Market, the wider community benefited from a cleaner environment.

And in 2009

We took part in the Prince's Trust initiative to landscape a community house which was handed over to a South Lynn youth club. This has since provided positive activities for young people



Policy – Community Development Policy			
Last Reviewed	May 2012	Next Review	May 2014
Responsible Officer	Assistant Director - Housing		

## 1. Policy

Freebridge Community Housing recognises that the communities that house our properties have a large impact on the enjoyment and quality of life of its residents so it is important that we maximise tenant satisfaction by supporting communities that aspire to improve their environment and fulfil their potential.

## 2. Definitions

Freebridge Community Housing defines a Community as:

“A group of people brought together, by geographical links, lifestyle or other interest”

Freebridge Community Housing defines Community Development as:

“The process whereby people form a community around a particular place or subject and work together to bring about change in their collective interest”.

## 3. Objectives

Through our action plan we will promote and encourage Community Development by:

- Helping tenants make positive changes to their communities and their own lives.
- Helping communities to foster cohesion
- Creating partnerships with local agencies that complement our policy
- Helping tenants and communities acquire new skills and knowledge
- Working with tenants and partners to improve the environment in which they live.
- Creating a sustainable culture within our organisation and communities.

#### 4. **Responsibilities**

The Board has a corporate responsibility for ensuring that Community Development is addressed in an appropriate manner and that this policy and strategy is consistent with all aspects of the Association's work. The Executive Team have responsibility for developing the organisational culture and structures in which this policy can operate effectively and for ensuring it is implemented. Managers are individually and corporately responsible for ensuring that Community Development is managed in accordance with this policy and that this strategy is implemented in their particular areas of responsibility.

#### 5. **Strategy**

Our strategy is to work with partners and agencies to undertake Community Development that underpins current projects and initiatives in the 3 year business plan.

Furthermore we recognise that we cannot help every community and therefore we must identify the communities that we feel our involvement can have the greatest impact. We will look at how willing and able communities are and whether our intervention will yield long term results.

We will achieve this by concentrating on particular activities and communities:

##### Activities

- Employment and new opportunities

We will provide information and where appropriate assistance to our tenants to access employment and take advantage of new opportunities such as the "Jog on Project" run by the Purfleet Trust in which we are involved.

- Strengthening communities

We will provide support, and where cost effective, resources to help new communities grow and work together.

- Supporting the next generation – children and young adults

We will look for ways to support young people to access the opportunities and services they need to develop.

- Partnership working

We will work with other organisations to provide cost effective and other cohesive approaches to issues. We will continue to play an active role within the West Norfolk Partnership supporting initiatives such as health, education, employment and cohesion. Our other current partners include the Purfleet Trust, Discovery Centre, The Probation Service, the Norfolk Credit Union and the Arts Centre.

- Training and/or information

We will also, when appropriate, provide or host training initiatives such as the Life Skills Programme our Welfare team are starting to roll out to tenants. We will provide information to our tenants on training opportunities we believe fit our vision.

- Capacity Building

We will continuously strive to increase the overall skills base in our communities by, where possible, helping individual tenants and community groups to strengthen theirs.

- Accessibility

Freebridge Community Housing recognises the importance of Digital Inclusion and Financial Inclusion to Community Development and will support initiatives to improve these. Freebridge Community Housing also recognises that for rural communities travel costs can be a barrier and will therefore seek to provide local services and development opportunities where possible.

- Improving the environment

Freebridge Community Housing will seek to undertake environmental works where these are cost effective and necessary.

### Communities

The main communities we are undertaking significant community development work with include:

- Hillington Square

A complex of 320 flats and/or maisonettes close to King's Lynn town centre which is undergoing a £22m redevelopment in partnership with Wayne Hemmingsway Design. This estate has in the past few years seen a rise in anti-social behaviour and estate management issues in terms of fly tipping and dog fouling.

- Monk's Close

An estate near to the village of Bircham Newton occupying the site of a former R.A.F housing facility. This area in recent times has experienced anti-social behaviour and some residents have experienced isolation due to the location and lack of public transport.

- Terrington St Clement

A village 5 miles east of King's Lynn of which our tenant's homes form a large section of the community. In recent times the village has seen a rise in anti-social behaviour and estate management issues in terms fly tipping and dog fouling.

- North Lynn

North Lynn is a deprived area of King's Lynn; we are working with partners to create more opportunities for residents of the area. At present we are working with St. Edmunds Community Foundation School to tackle truancy and to help troubled families and with the Discovery Centre helping to positive activities for young people not in education, employment or training.

## **6. Monitoring**

We will monitor performance across the areas covered by this policy and report it to the Board and Operations Committee as part of our on-going 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 Board.

## 7. Consultation

In developing this strategy Freebridge aims to consult effectively with stakeholders. We will continually seek opportunities to consult with such groups and individuals at a strategic and operational level. In delivering this strategy we will seek opportunities to work with our partners to ensure a joined up and integrated approach.

## 8. Equality and Diversity

The 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.

## 9. Community Development Action Plan

Area	Action	When	Responsibility
Employment and New Opportunities	Continue Jog-On project in partnership with Purfleet Trust and Job Centre Plus	Ongoing	RC
	Develop Waterside workshop to sustain and expand Jog-On project	Sept 2012	RC/CD
	Research viability of an urban farm project	Mar 2013	RC
	Research and evaluate government initiatives to tackle unemployment	Ongoing	RC/MB
Strengthening Communities	Support and promote digital inclusion	Ongoing	RC/DC
	Research areas for new community charters	Dec 2012	RC
	Organise 3 Civic Pride Days	Mar 2013	RC
	Support new tenants integration into communities e.g., ex-offenders and migrant workers	Ongoing	RC
Supporting the next Generation	Research and evaluate further training opportunities	July 2012	RC
	Provide work placements	Dec 2012	RC
	Support and promote Respect Agenda with local schools	Ongoing	RC
	Support local agencies in tackling truancy	Ongoing	RC
Partnership Working	Continue to explore new opportunities with our current partners – seeking out funding streams where possible.	Ongoing	RC
Training and Information	Develop tenant and catering academy	June 2012	RC

	Continue ESOL classes	Ongoing	AH
	Offer Do Something Different for tenants	Dec 2012	MP/SB
	Use digital inclusion to assist tenants switch utility companies	Ongoing	RC/DC
	Welfare reform champions in each team	Dec 2012	JY
	Sponsor the "Around the World in 80 Dishes" event	Jan 2013	RC/MP
Capacity Building	Develop and support local leaders	March 2013	RC/SB
	Identify local connections to continue successful programmes	Ongoing	MP/RC
	Clarify and effectively communicate the scope of Freebridge's involvement in projects	Ongoing	MT
Accessibility	Provide tailored training to individuals within communities.	July 2012	CD/RC
	Provide access to our premises for local projects	July 2012	RC
	Visit 500 homes through "Out and About"	Ongoing	SB
Improving the environment	Introduce controlled parking areas for tenants	Ongoing	RC
	Commence Hillington Square regeneration	Dec 2012	TH
	Implement new Asset Management Strategy	April 2013	CD
Hillington Square	Identify areas that would benefit from a children's play area	Dec 2012	RC/CD
	Monitor and review the Hillington Square Charter	Ongoing	AMT
	Build partnership with local church	Ongoing	JF
Monk's Close	Develop improved community centre	Dec 2012	RC
	Develop a community centre	Ongoing	MM
	Identify local leaders to run the youth club	Ongoing	MM
Terrington St. Clement	Organise Civic Pride day	April 2012	MM
	Monitor and review the local area charter	Ongoing	SM
	Involve non Freebridge residents in local charter	Ongoing	SM
	Assess what and when our exit strategy will be	March 2012	SM
North Lynn	Continue building Discovery Centre partnership	Ongoing	RC
	Develop programme to assist troubled families	Aug 2012	SB

## ITEM 8

## 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>For Information</b>			√
<b>Consultation</b>	Management Team, Tenant Panel				

**Meeting Date:** 28<sup>th</sup> May 2012

**Report Title:** Review of Complaints Policy

<b>Purpose:</b> To present the updated Complaints Policy, and rename it the Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy
<b>Policy/Strategy Implications:</b> The proposed revisions have implications for the Complaints Policy and links to the Communications Strategy as there will be changes made to how we communicate outcomes from complaints.
<b>Finance and VFM Implications:</b> The changes to the policy will allow outcomes from complaints, comments and compliments to feed into continuous improvement. This will have VFM implications as improvements can bring efficiencies as well as increasing customer satisfaction.
<b>Customer Care/Equality and Diversity Implications:</b> The focus of the policy is increasing customer satisfaction and allowing us to respond and make improvements when customers are dissatisfied with the service they have received. The policy is inclusive, allowing all tenants to make complaints, comments and compliments. We also monitor equality and diversity in complaints.
<b>Risk Assessment (cross-reference with Freebridge Risk Map):</b> 1.3 Significant Events lead to adverse publicity – Critical Impact, Low Likelihood 2.1 Failure in customer satisfaction - Critical Impact, Low 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 12.0 Failure to address Equality and Diversity issues effectively – Marginal Impact, Significant Likelihood
<b>Recommendations:</b> It is recommended that the Board: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Approves the revised Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy, as presented.</li> <li>(ii) Approves an early revision of the Policy, in March 2013.</li> </ul>

## Background

1.1 The Complaints Policy has been revised following a Tenant Panel review of complaints, a customer engagement review conducted by Price Waterhouse Cooper and an internal review of our complaints process.

1.2 The reviews captured some common recommendations:

- Informal complaints / comments need to be captured;

- Complaints need to be monitored to identify lessons learned as part of continuous improvement;
- The complaints leaflet needs to be consistent and updated in line with the policy.

1.3 In addition, the Tenant Panel review highlighted a recommendation for a tenant-led stage within the complaints process.

1.4 The internal review made a key recommendation that the complaints process be extended to incorporate comments and compliments as well so that it offers more positive opportunities for capturing feedback.

1.5 The revised Policy is attached at Appendix 1.

### **Key revisions**

2.1 A key change to the complaints policy is that it now enables the capture of informal comments and compliments as well. This will enable us to recognise excellent service and to record informal feedback.

2.2 Formal procedures have been introduced for the monitoring of complaints, comments and compliments which can feed into the continuous improvement of services.

2.3 There is consistency in the timescales allowed within the complaints process.

2.4 The complaints leaflet will be revised when the complaints policy is finalised.

2.5 Articles on complaints, comments and compliments will be included in Streets Ahead.

### **Proposed Tenant Panel Involvement**

3.1 From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013, tenants will be able to request that their complaints be considered by a 'designated person' once they complete the internal procedure of their landlord. Such a person can be an MP, a local Councillor, or a recognised Tenant Panel.

3.2 Ahead of this change, the Tenant Panel expressed a desire to take on a proactive role within the complaints procedure.

3.3 Following their review of the complaints process, the Tenant Panel stated that they would like to be introduced at stage two to carry out their own review once the Executive and Assistant Directors have carried out their review. This would see the existing stages one and two combined.

3.4 The Tenant Panel would need complaints training and to establish their own procedures before this change is introduced. They are proposing that the new Tenant Panel-led stage is introduced from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013. This would allow the Panel sufficient time to prepare for the change.

3.5 The new complaints procedure proposed from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 would consist of the following stages:

Stage 1 – Executive and Assistant Director investigation and response

Stage 2 – Tenant Panel investigation and response

Stage 3 – Complaints panel of board members investigation and response

Democratic filter – this would be an MP or councillor. The Tenant Panel would not be able to act as a democratic filter as they already have a role at stage 2.

3.6 As these changes are proposed for next year, it is recommended that the next review of the complaints policy takes place in early 2013 and is brought to the Board for consideration.

## Objective 1 – Increasing Satisfaction



Policy 1a – Complaints, Comments and Compliments			
Last Reviewed	May 12	Next Review	March 13
Responsible Officer	Assistant Director Communications & Engagement		

## 1. Policy

Freebridge Community Housing is committed to increasing satisfaction through delivering an excellent service.

We recognise that there may be times when we don't get things right and when this happens, we will apologise and rectify the problem promptly, efficiently and sensitively.

We will identify potential improvements through the complaints process, and through collecting and monitoring customer comments.

We welcome compliments as these allow us to identify best practice across Freebridge, and recognise individuals who are delivering exemplary customer service.

We value complaints, comments and compliments as they enable us to learn, improve, and deliver services which increase customer satisfaction.

## 2. Definitions

### Complaint

A complaint is:

**“When the customer is unhappy about the service they have received from us”.**

We treat the following as complaints:

- When we haven't met our Service Standards
- When we haven't done something we should do, legally and contractually
- When the customer is unhappy with a decision or action (if this decision or action is outside of an agreed policy to provide a service)
- When the customer is unhappy with the attitudes and behaviours of our employees or contractors.

We do not treat the following as complaints:

- Complaints about anti-social behaviour or nuisance by Freebridge tenants. Such complaints will be handled by a separate anti-social behaviour policy and

procedure. However, if the complaint is about the way in which the nuisance has been handled then this will be covered by our policy.

- Initial requests for a service or information, for example initial reporting of a repair. However when we fail to meet our service standards this will be covered by our policy.
- Complaints where legal action is already taking place or a decision has been made by the court
- Complaints about our decision to end a starter tenancy; refusal to offer a tenancy after an applicant has been referred or nominated to us; refusal of a mutual exchange – these would be dealt with under our appeals policy. However if the complaint is about the way in which the process has been handled then this will be covered by this policy

### **Comment**

A comment can be made when an individual wants to provide feedback about any aspect of our service but does not wish to make a formal complaint. A comment can also include a suggestion for service improvements.

### **Compliment**

A compliment is formal recognition of the service which has been received from a Freebridge employee or employees.

### **3. Our commitment:**

We will:

- Try to resolve issues before they become formal complaints.
- Ensure that there are no adverse effects to the customer as a result of making a complaint or comment and reassure the individual of this.
- Consider compensation as appropriate in line with our compensation policy.
- Monitor complaints, comments and compliments through quarterly trend reports, identifying any areas for improvement.
- Provide feedback to customers on complaints, comments and compliments received, and appropriate actions, through Streets Ahead.
- Ensure all Freebridge employees understand the importance of complaints, comments and compliments for increasing satisfaction and continuous improvement, and are aware of their role in capturing, collating and responding to these.

### **4. Who can make a complaint?**

This policy applies to complaints about any aspect of Freebridge's services and can be made by:

- Any Freebridge tenant or advocate on their behalf.
- Freebridge applicants (who have been referred to us via a local authority or another agency, or who have bid for one of our properties via Home Choice, Choice Based Lettings scheme ).
- Neighbours or members of the public.

Complaints can be made in any way and we strongly recommend that anyone who has a complaint contacts us at the earliest opportunity. This will help us to investigate the complaint fully and ensure a quick response.

Comments and compliments can be made by anyone who has access to our services.

Complaints, comments and compliments can be made in the following ways:

- in person
- in writing
- via e-mail
- website
- by telephone
- one of our offices.

## 5. Our Complaint Process

In the majority of cases, the complaint will be dealt with immediately. Where possible, complaints should be resolved by the end of the following working day. (These are logged onto internal systems and used to help improve our service).

**Stage 1** Any complaint that is not resolved by the end of the following working day will be referred to the relevant Assistant Director.

- Within 3 working days – the complainant will receive a letter and leaflet from the Complaints Officer.
- Within 10 working days – the complainant will receive a response from the Assistant Director.

There will be occasions when the investigation may take longer; we will ensure that the complainant is kept fully informed on a regular basis, even when we have no specific progress to report.

**Stage 2** If, after Stage 1 the complainant remains unhappy, they can contact a member of the Executive team as named in our letter .

**Stage 3** In the unlikely event that the complainant remains unhappy, they will be offered the opportunity to have the issue considered by a complaints panel (made up of Board members, of which at least one will be a tenant.) The complainant will be notified of their response within 10 working days of the meeting.

The complaints panel will receive papers, detailing the circumstances of the complaint. This will include any comments from the complainant who will be given the opportunity to attend and put the complaint directly to the Panel, with a friend or advisor .

In exceptional circumstances, a member of the Executive may be able to forward a complaint from Stage 1 to Stage 3.

### **The Independent Housing Ombudsman**

If, after following the stages of our Complaints procedure and after the decision from our Complaints Panel, the complainant remains unhappy, they have the right to refer their complaint to the Independent Housing Ombudsman. We will also provide further information or assist complainants in contacting the Independent Housing Ombudsman Scheme.

The address for the Housing Ombudsman is:

The Independent Housing Ombudsman Scheme, Norman House, 105-109 Strand, LONDON WC2R 0AA

Telephone: (020) 7836 3630  
Minicom: (020) 7240 6776  
Lo-call: 0845 7125 973  
Email: [ombudsman@ihos.org.uk](mailto:ombudsman@ihos.org.uk)  
Website: [www.ihos.org.uk](http://www.ihos.org.uk)

### **6. Monitoring and feedback**

Complaints, comments and compliments will be monitored on a quarterly basis by the Management Team. The Management Team will identify any actions, including improvements.

The Board and the Tenant Panel will also receive a quarterly complaints, comments and compliments report, with the latter using the report to help inform their work programme.

As well as monitoring the type of complaint and the stage at which it was resolved, we will monitor the following information about the tenant or applicant making the complaint:

- Gender
- Ethnic origin
- Age
- Disability
- Religion
- Sexual orientation.

We will provide feedback to customers on complaints, comments and compliments received, and appropriate actions, through Streets Ahead.

## ITEM 9

## 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, Employees					

**Meeting Date:** 28<sup>th</sup> May 2012

**Report Title:** Review of Human Resources Policy

<b>Purpose:</b> To present the updated Human Resources Policy, renamed as the Human Resources Management Policy.
<b>Policy/Strategy Implications:</b> The proposed revisions have implications for the HR Policy and the Communications Policy which outlines how internal communications are delivered.
<b>Finance and VFM Implications:</b> The changes to the policy will allow Freebridge to make improvements which will result in efficiencies through enabling and supporting managers to manage their employees effectively. We will seek to bring further savings in effective recruitment and selection; through internal development of employees; through retaining employees and reducing turnover, and through tracking and monitoring reward.
<b>Customer Care/Equality and Diversity Implications:</b> There is a clear link between employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction and through providing good quality HR management, our employees will be enabled to deliver their roles effectively and efficiently. We monitor Equality and Diversity across HR practices, and we are committed to being an inclusive employer.
<b>Risk Assessment (cross-reference with Freebridge Risk Map):</b> 2.1 Failure in customer satisfaction - Critical Impact, Low Likelihood 7.2 Failure in establishing organisational culture – Critical Impact, Significant Likelihood 7.3 Inappropriate organisational image – Marginal Impact, Significant Likelihood 7.5 Failure in internal communication – Critical Impact, Significant Likelihood 8.1 Lack of staff, resources or skills – Critical Impact, Significant Likelihood 8.2 Conflict with unions - Critical Impact, Significant Likelihood 8.4 Failure to implement correct prioritisation - Critical Impact, High Likelihood 8.5 Loss of key staff - Critical Impact, Significant Likelihood 8.8 Change management - Critical Impact, High Likelihood 8.10 Deterioration in staff morale - Critical Impact, Significant Likelihood 10.4 Failure to revise T & Cs - Critical Impact, Significant Likelihood 10.8 Lack of skilled tradesmen - Critical Impact, Significant Likelihood 12.0 Failure to address Equality and Diversity issues effectively – Marginal Impact, Significant Likelihood
<b>Recommendations:</b> It is recommended that the Board:  (i) Approves the revised Human Resources Management Policy.

## **Background**

1.1 The HR Management Policy has been revised following a review of existing HR operations, an analysis of business needs and an analysis of external factors.

1.2 The review was carried out internally and incorporated consultation and discussion with managers and employees.

1.3 The review identified the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) for HR Management in Freebridge.

1.4 Based on the findings of this SWOT analysis, the HR Management Policy was revised.

1.5 The revised Policy is attached at Appendix 1.

## **Key revisions**

2.1 A key element of the new HR Management Policy is greater alignment with the business plan themes and values.

2.2 Coaching is also incorporated as a principle in the revised Policy. This underlines the central role of coaching within Freebridge's culture.

2.3 This relationship between the strategy, business plan, themes and coaching will enable the development of an appropriate operational culture.

2.4 The revised Policy focuses on enabling and supporting managers to manage their teams through appropriate and targeted HR management processes and procedures.

## **Strategy**

3.1 There are four guiding themes of our HR Management Strategy (contained within the Policy document):

Recruit – Develop – Retain – Reward.

These provide the framework for our HR Management Strategy.

3.2 Within this framework, there are key activities and improvements which are outlined in the strategy and action plan.

3.3 In addition to the activities already outlined, we will take an approach of continuous improvement to HR Management, seeking to improve best practice. We will be able to identify areas for improvement through continued monitoring of HR Management practice.

## **Action Plan**

4.1 The Board's attention is drawn to the fact that the review of the Employee Handbook is scheduled in the action plan to take place by 28/02/2013. The review of the Handbook is currently listed in the Board's work programme to be reported to the Board in July 2012, but in view of other priorities, it is felt appropriate to defer the review until the start of 2013.

## **Monitoring and review**

5.1 We will provide reports to the Board on specific HR Management projects, as appropriate.

5.2 We will also monitor and report on performance to the Board.



Policy – Human Resources Management			
Last Reviewed	May 2012	Next Review	May 2014
Responsible Officer	Assistant Director of Communications & Engagement		

## 1. Policy Statement

Freebridge Community Housing aims to recruit, develop, retain and reward a highly-satisfied, solution-focused, skilled and diverse workforce which delivers our vision and values.

## 2. Objectives

Our policy will enable us to deliver the following objectives:

- Freebridge employees, through ongoing capacity building and development, will be empowered and skilled to deliver their role with a solution-focused attitude.
- Freebridge employees will demonstrate high levels of satisfaction within a culture of continuous improvement, and will be supported to maintain their wellbeing;
- Freebridge will be an employer of choice for new and existing employees enabling the organisation to recruit and retain the best candidates. Managers will understand their role in developing those within their teams and will be empowered to do so.

## 3. Principles

We will achieve our objectives by following our HR management principles:

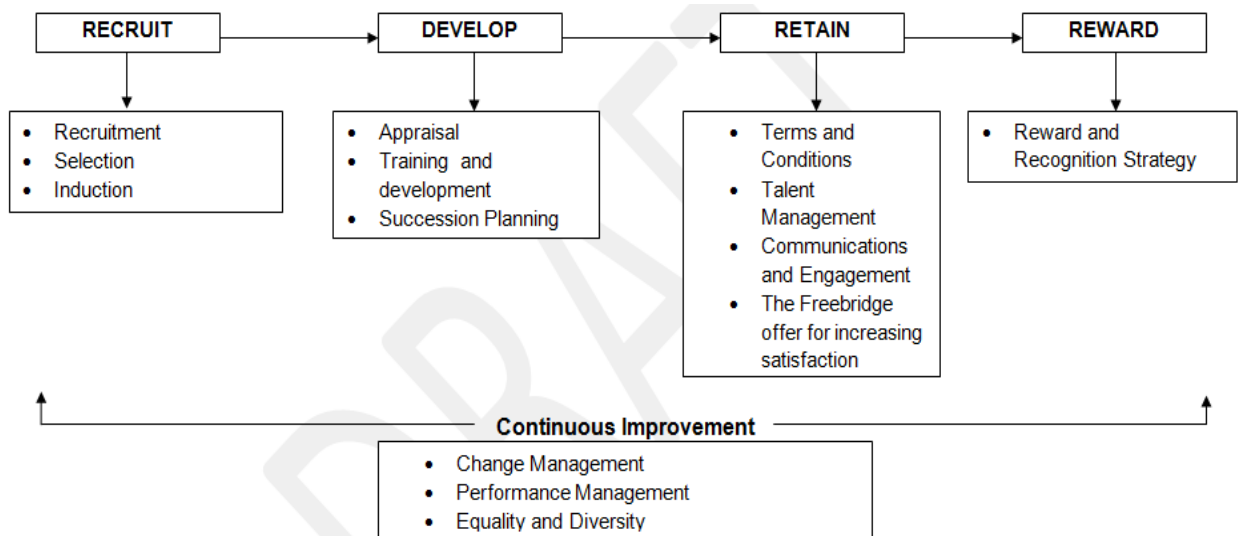
- All HR Management practices should be aligned to the Business Plan themes of Increasing Satisfaction, Increasing Capacity and Community Focussed;
- The values should be intrinsically linked to every HR Management practice;
- Coaching will be used as a key part of the organisational culture;
- The HR Team will take a positive, proactive approach, preparing for external and internal change and developing and updating HR Management practices accordingly;
- Managers will be given expert advice and support from the HR Team and there will be a clear distinction between the role of managers and the HR team;
- Accessible guidance and information will be provided by the HR Team;
- The HR Team is committed to continuous improvement and will monitor, review and develop practices on an ongoing basis.

#### 4. Responsibilities

The Board has a corporate responsibility for ensuring that the HR policy is addressed in an appropriate manner and that this policy and strategy is consistent with all aspects of the Association's work. The Executive Team have responsibility for developing the organisational culture and structures in which this policy can operate effectively and for ensuring it is implemented. Managers are individually and corporately responsible for ensuring that policy is managed and delivered to staff and all staff have responsibility for delivering the organisation's vision and values.

#### 5. Strategy

We have mapped our HR Management practices below



This is the framework of our strategy.

##### a) Recruit:

- Empowering managers to be creative with vacant roles and not automatically replace 'like with like';
- Recognising that some roles are difficult to recruit and developing a different approach to these areas;
- Developing organisation wide consistency with all recruitment coordinated by the HR team;
- Developing a bank of Freebridge temporary staff instead of using recruitment agencies;
- Learn from departing employees to identify reasons and areas of improvements;
- Research alternative methods of selection;
- Review the staff handbook and induction pack

##### b) Develop:

- Seek to simplify the new appraisal plan;
- Develop a strategic training plan;
- Empower managers to seek alternative methods of capacity building rather than just training alone;

- Identify methods to attract talented people to the organisation for future development;
- Ensure that skilled employees are retained and recognised succession ready employees.

**c) Retain:**

- Review terms and conditions as appropriate;
- Use the employee satisfaction survey and other methods of feedback to continuously improve talent management;
- Empower employees to communicate between teams and with management more openly;
- Support all employees to deliver the Mary Guber method and develop and promote this as the Freebridge way of working;
- Continuously monitor employee satisfaction with their experience of working for Freebridge.

**d) Reward:**

- Develop a revised remuneration strategy and consult with employees in the development of the strategy;
- Simplify and target the range of benefits on offer to employees;
- Formalise the recognition strategy.

**e) Continuous Improvement**

- Constantly seek to improve best practice;
- Keep Equality and Diversity matters under constant monitoring;
- Keep under review our range of accessible communications;
- HR to be represented in the Equality and Diversity working group;
- HR to review training around Equality and Diversity.

**f) Culture**

- Develop Freebridge's culture based on the clear direction set by the organisation's leadership.
- Freebridge's employees will deliver our vision, values and business plan through a culture of feedback and feeling engaged with;
- Promote and implement an action plan which will protect, support, maintain and improve employee wellbeing

**6. Monitoring**

We will monitor performance across the areas covered by this policy and report it to the Board as part of our on-going 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 around key activities to the Board..

**8. Consultation**

In implementing this strategy Freebridge aims to consult effectively with employees through ongoing communication and engagement. We will continually seek opportunities

to consult with employees and the unions. In delivering this strategy we will seek opportunities to work with our employees to ensure a joined up and integrated approach.

## 9. Equality and Diversity

The 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.

## 10. HR Policy Action Plan

Area	Action	When	Responsibility
Appraisal reward and Recognition: Remuneration	Finalise forms and performance rating to share with the Union.	29/02/2012	MP
	Review existing recommendations	30/04/2012	MP
	Share forms and performance ratings with Unions and hold manager briefings..	30/04/2012	MP
	Prepare plan to develop the Remuneration Strategy	30/04/2012	MP
	Employee briefings about the past year's benefits	31/05/2012	MP
	Develop a series of 'softer' benefits – such as local discounts – which can be offered to employees as added value	30/06/2012	MP
	Formalise the approach to recognition	30/06/2012	MP
	Promotion of extension of EAP scheme for employees	31/01/2012	MP
Terms and Conditions	Develop a long-term plan for Union engagement.	30/04/2012	MP
	Identify employee priorities and incorporate into future reviews of terms and conditions where review is possible.	Ongoing	MP
	Propose and implement a new employee panel for MT consideration	31/05/2012	MP
Training and Development: Management Development Workshops	Deliver and develop a programme of Management Development Workshops	Ongoing	MP/SK
	Develop a mediation policy and training opportunities	29/02/2012	MP
		29/02/2012	MP
	Development of a programme for apprenticeships, work experience, internship and management trainee.	31/08/2012	MP

	Review of planning process / programme for 2012-13 for a strategic fit with key business plan objectives.	31/08/2012	MP
	Review and revision of the training request form, the training evaluation form and revision of the development and training contract.	31/08/2012	MP
	Develop and issue a manager's toolkit.	31/01/2013	MP
Induction	Redesigned employee handbook made available	29/02/2012	MP
	Review of the Induction Pack improvement opportunities.	30/06/2012	MP
		31/01/2013	MP
	Revise the employee handbook based on reviews carried out as part of the HR strategy.	28/02/2013	MP
Equality and Diversity	HR to take part in the accessible communications project.	12/03/2012	MP
Communications and Engagement	Review and update the communications and engagement plan.	31/03/2012	MP
	Develop and support the employee social club separately from the employee panel	31/05/2012	MP
	Employee Conference to be held.	31/07/2012	MP
	Employee satisfaction survey to be completed.	30/09/2012	MP
Difficult to recruit jobs:	Analysis of difficult to recruit roles and associated recommendations.	31/03/2012	MP
Selection	Review the selection process including:	31/05/2012	MP
Talent management	Incorporate into timetable future reviews of policies and procedures on a rolling programme.	Ongoing	MP
The Freebridge Offer for increasing Satisfaction	Develop a Wellbeing strategy.	30/04/2012	MP
	Following on from the survey, a review of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How the values are being embedded</li> <li>Review of the competencies Review of the Mary Guber method</li> </ul>	30/09/2012	MP
	Assess how we are meeting the criteria in the 'People and the Bottom Line'.	31/12/2012	MP
Continuous Improvement: Monitor, review	Updates on changes in employment legislation.	30/04/2012	MP
	Formalise mechanisms for	30/04/2012	MP

and prepare for changes	continuous improvement		
	Updates on changes in approaches to HR management.	31/10/2012	MP
Appraisal	Review of appraisal scheme	31/07/2012	MP
Recruitment	Review of the recruitment process, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Request to recruit form</li> <li>• Advertising;</li> <li>• Job descriptions;</li> <li>• Use of recruitment agencies;</li> <li>• develop a Freebridge bank of employees;</li> <li>• Associated recommendations and actions.</li> </ul>	31/10/2012	MP
Succession Planning	Review of succession and development opportunities to prepare employees for succession:	30/11/2012	MP
Change Management	Review how we have managed change to date and identify opportunities for improvement.	28/02/2013	MP

## 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:** 28 May 2012

**Report Title:** Audit Committee Recommendation

<p><b>Purpose:</b> To present the recommendation from the following committee meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Audit Committee – 30 April 2012</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 Freebridge 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> <p>(i) Consider the recommendation set out in the body of the report.</p>

# 1. Audit Committee – 30 April 2012

Presentation of recommendation by: Paul Leader (Chairman of the Audit Committee)

## Recommendations –

- That the Board approve the Whistleblowing Policy, as presented to the Audit Committee, subject to the inclusion of Internal Audit as an alternative point of contact for someone wishing to report a concern under the Policy.

The draft Whistleblowing Policy can be seen on the board members' website, with the agenda for the Audit Committee meeting held on 30 April 2012. If you would like a hard copy, please contact Angus MacQueen (tel: 01553 667754).

## Freebridge Community Housing

## Report to the Board

<b>Author</b>	Tony Hall	<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:** 28<sup>th</sup> May 2012

**Report Title:** 2011/12 Business Plan Outturn Report

**Purpose:**

To approve the 2011/12 Business Plan outturn report

**Policy/Strategy Implications:**

None as a result of recommendations in this report

**Finance and VFM Implications:**

None as a result of recommendations in this report

**Customer Care/Equality and Diversity Implications:**

None as a result of recommendations in this report

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

The risk map was used as one of the reference points for the development of the original plan.

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

- (i) Approve the 2011/12 Business Plan Outturn report

## 1 **Background**

- 1.1 This report documents the outturn of the 2011/12 Business Plan. The plan sets out the activities undertaken during the first year of the new three year plan developed in conjunction with the Board and key stakeholders.
- 1.2 The Plan was formed around four corporate objectives each of which has two corporate bond targets:
  - Increasing Satisfaction
  - Community Focussed
  - Appreciating Assets
  - Increasing Capacity
- 1.3 Six of the eight corporate bond targets were achieved in full or exceeded; two targets relating to tenant satisfaction were not achieved. Further details of the performance against these targets are set out later in this report.

- 1.4 Overall only six of the forty five business plan actions were not achieved. These have either been carried forward into the current plan, or amended as a result of a change in circumstances.
- 1.5 A full outturn report is attached at Appendix 1

## **2 Outturn**

### **2.1 Increasing Satisfaction**

#### **Target 90% customer satisfaction - Actual 87%**

The original STATUS survey is no longer being operated by the National Housing Federation and has been replaced by the STAR survey. We are pleased that the general needs satisfaction levels have increased by 2% to 88%; however, overall satisfaction has reduced by 1% to 87%. This is as a result of a decrease in sheltered housing satisfaction from 94% to 85%.

Sheltered Housing tenants have been through a difficult period with both rent and service charges increased and changes brought about by a reduction in Supporting People funding. It is proposed to undertake a number of focus group meetings with sheltered tenants to establish how we can improve satisfaction.

#### **Target 10.7 average days lost to sickness - Actual 6.24 days**

This target was set as an indirect indicator of staff satisfaction. Some of the change has clearly been achieved by a change in our sickness policy; however, we have also introduced a number of initiatives to improve employee motivation. The staff survey returned a figure of 96% of staff being proud to work for Freebridge.

### **2.2 Community Focussed**

#### **Target Concluding tenancy visit pilots 500 - Actual 778**

The visits were carried out by a range of employees that focussed on specific geographic areas as part of the 'Out and About' initiative, but we also visited tenants that had not had contact with Freebridge for over twelve months.

Freebridge benefitted from a number of operation issues in addition to supporting tenant satisfaction and the 'Out and About' initiative will become a central part of this year's summer road-show campaign.

#### **Target 85% satisfaction with views taken into account - Actual 69%**

This figure is collected through the STAR survey and follows a similar pattern to the overall satisfaction figure. It should be noted that this specific question is no longer asked in the survey. The closest question is 'Views taken into account and acted upon', which is a different perspective. Again we will be following up these results through tenant focus groups.

## 2.3 Appreciating Assets

### **Target Decent Homes 95% - Actual 95.2%**

It is pleasing to note that the Decent Homes target of 95% has been achieved. This includes first time refusals of work which are now re-entering the programme. The remaining properties are generally Hillington Square and our non-traditional properties.

### **Target new homes 18 - Actual 22**

This figure includes fifteen new build properties and seven existing properties that were acquired. It is pleasing to note that two schemes, Ferndale and Lady Jane Grey Road were shortlisted for the Mayor's Design in the Environment Award. Lady Jane Grey Road won the small residential development category.

## 2.4 Increasing Capacity

### **Target 200 new skills in the business - Actual 212**

The objective was, and remains, to build capacity within the organisation through targeted learning and development. 212 skills have been logged by employees as a result of both internal and external training opportunities.

### **Target £333,000 cost reduction - Actual £333,000**

The Board are aware that each year we build into the Business Plan a target to reduce costs by £333,000. This has been achieved without cutting services to tenants.

## 3 Summary

- 3.1 This has been a challenging year as a result of internal changes and responding to the external environment. The Board are invited to reflect on last year's Business Plan objectives.
- 3.2 From an Executive perspective Freebridge is a stronger organisation than at the same time last year. Employees tell us that they are more motivated and engaged with the organisation and we are receiving positive feedback from our stakeholders.

The Board agenda also includes an overview of the business operations. It is pleasing to note the operational performance trends with twelve indicators showing a positive trend with only one negative. In addition eleven of the thirteen indicators are within the top quartile when benchmarked against comparable Registered Providers.

VISION	2011 - 2012	STATUS	RESPONSIBILITY AND TIMESCALE	PROGRESS
<b>1. INCREASING SATISFACTION</b>				
<b>1.1 Increasing employee satisfaction in order to develop a corporate culture that supports Customer Excellence</b>	1.1.1 Implement the Remuneration Strategy.	G	Sean Kent Mar 12	Union agreement was obtained to implement the move to an annual performance related pay award which is being trialled during the first quarter 2012/13 in line with the recently approved Board report. <b>[Status change - Red to Green]</b>
	1.1.2 Embed the Mary Gobar training/coaching. Commence in-house induction.	G	Tony Hall/Sean Kent Mar 12	Coaches trained and being developed. 20 people have attended in house induction sessions during the year including three Board members and 5 Tenant Panel Members.
	1.1.3 Identify External Validation scheme and self assessment.		Sean Kent Mar 12	No longer being actively pursued, as not thought relevant now. Board agreement requested to remove from plan.
<b>1.2 Embed customer engagement in continuous improvement</b>	1.2.1 Establish Tenant Panel.	G	Michelle Playford June 11	A new member has been appointed to the Panel, bringing membership up to 11 with only 1 further vacancy. The Panel has completed its first service reviews and has made a series of recommendations around the Local Offer and Complaints.
	1.2.2 Develop Local Offer to include customer satisfaction and improving repairs and maintenance.		Robert Clarke Mar 12	Tenant Panel are now involved in monitoring the Local Offer to ensure

## Business Plan 2011/12 - Final Outturn March 2012

VISION	2011 - 2012	STATUS	RESPONSIBILITY AND TIMESCALE	PROGRESS
		G		standards are being met. Local Offer highlights the focus on customer satisfaction and repairs and maintenance. Work will continue with the Panel.
	1.2.3 Asset Management Service Review.	R	Colin Davison <del>Nov 11</del> Mar 12 Revised date Jan 13	The decision has been made to combine Assets with Property Services under the overall management of the AD of Property Services. It is planned to have a new structure in place by July 2012 and a service review will follow 6 months after the introduction of the new structure in January 2013. <b>[Status change Amber to Red]</b>
	1.2.4 Tenant Engagement Service Review.	G	Michelle Playford July 11	This has been completed and been presented to the Board and approved. Recommendations from the review are being implemented
1.3 Increase feedback in order to demonstrate learning (Ask, Listen, Act, Learn)	1.3.1 Improve Complaints Process establish clear procedures to improve response times.	G	Sean Kent March 12	Regular monitoring and feedback have improved response times in the short term. Further improvements and suggestions from the Tenant Panel will be integrated into a revised policy and procedures to be presented to the Board during early 2012/13.  <b>[Status change - Amber to Green]</b>
	1.3.2 Feedback mechanisms - re-launch Mystery Shopping. Focus Groups.		Sean Kent /Robert Clarke	First Mystery Shopping exercise now completed and results being evaluated.

## Business Plan 2011/12 - Final Outturn March 2012

VISION	2011 - 2012	STATUS	RESPONSIBILITY AND TIMESCALE	PROGRESS
		G	March 12	Additionally joint working with e <sup>2</sup> partners has commenced to look at cross shopping in the future.
	1.3.3 Annual Satisfaction Surveys.	G	Michelle Playford	STATUS survey completed in April and showed overall improvement in satisfaction. The Star Survey is currently underway with the results due mid-April 2012.
<b>1.4 Improve communication and access to services, ensuring that FCH is 'Easy to do business with' whilst providing VfM</b>	1.4.1 Customer Contact Centre - develop strategic plan and implement the first phase.	G	Robert Clarke <del>Dec 11</del> March 12	FCC now being aligned to wider housing management functions as part of the housing management restructure which commenced in March 2012. <b>[Status change - Amber to Green]</b>
	1.4.2 Behavioural Influencers - assess opportunities and establish pilots.	G	Sean Kent	Despite no response from Cabinet Office approaches being developed and used in conjunction with Mary Guber coaching. 'Do Something Different' training completed and program being established.
<b>1.5 Improve choice in order that individual needs are met</b>	1.5.1 Revise Customer Profiling survey and collect additional data.	G	Robert Clarke July 11	Customer Profiling Survey revised and sent out to all tenants. As at end of March we have had a 50% return. Action Plan in place to continue to collect data in first quarter of 12/13. <b>[Status change - Amber to Green]</b>
	1.5.2 Diversity Impact Assessments - continue rolling review and integrate into service reviews.	G	Sean Kent	Ongoing

VISION	2011 - 2012	STATUS	RESPONSIBILITY AND TIMESCALE	PROGRESS
<b>2. COMMUNITY FOCUSED</b>				
<b>2.1 Support our communities through working with people in ways which will help them to have a greater influence over decisions which affect their lives</b>	2.1.1 Complete Community Development Strategy to include employment, training and capacity building opportunities and commence implementation.	G	Robert Clarke Dec-11 Mar 2012	Completed March 2012.
	2.1.2 Tenancy Visits - agree and implement programme of pilots.	G	Robert Clarke	Visits taken place target of 500 visits was exceeded.  <b>[Status change - Amber to Green]</b>
<b>2.2 Working in partnership to improve our residents economic and social well being</b>	2.2.1 Local Partnerships - Influencing partnerships' objectives to meet tenants' needs.	G	Tony Hall	Range of local partnerships in place, strong working relationship with the Borough Council, Arts Centre and Thornage Hall.  <b>[Status change - Amber to Green]</b>
	2.2.2 Local Procurement - establish baseline data and set target for future activity.	R	Malcolm Fry Aug-11 Mar/Apr 12	Targets to be set. Will be part of review of the procurement function and resourcing. <b>[Status change - Amber to Red]</b>
	2.2.3 Revise Financial Inclusion Strategy and Develop Digital Inclusion Strategy.	G	Malcolm Fry / Dave Clements March 12	Digital Inclusion: Policy, Strategy & Action Plan approved by Board February 2012.  <b>[Status change - Amber to Green]</b>

## Business Plan 2011/12 - Final Outturn March 2012

VISION	2011 - 2012	STATUS	RESPONSIBILITY AND TIMESCALE	PROGRESS
<b>2.3 Demonstrate a commitment to improving neighbourhoods</b>	2.3.1 Hillington Square - Consult and complete design pilot - start on site.	R	Tony Hall Mar 12 Sept 12	Consultation finalised and planning application has been submitted. Invitation to Tender for contractor in progress, start on site revised Sprint 2013
	2.3.2 Local Charters - Grow Neighbourhood Charters as appropriate.	G	Robert Clarke April 11	Action plan in place to commence new approach on Hillington Square w/c 9 <sup>th</sup> Jan 12. Terrington Charter working well. No new Charters identified to date.
	2.3.3 Estate Walkabouts - Agree approach and set targets. Publish programme for residents.	G	Robert Clarke	Programme published.
<b>2.4 Influence local and national policy makers to help meet the needs of our communities</b>	2.4.1 Media & Stakeholder Influencing - complete Influencer audit and deliver action plan.	G	Michelle Playford Ongoing	Influencer and partner perception surveys completed and findings analysed. Delivery of targeted engagement activity underway. The 2 <sup>nd</sup> edition of the Freebridge View is being produced.  Media engagement is ongoing with proactive and reactive media relations.
	2.4.2 Providing Support for Smaller Charities - Agree extent and approach. Agree scope with Purfleet Trust, Arts Centre & Thornage.	G	Tony Hall/Sean Kent	Charitable Support Policy agreed. Art Centre SLA concluded April 2012.  <b>[Status change - Amber to Green]</b>

VISION	2011 - 2012	STATUS	RESPONSIBILITY AND TIMESCALE	PROGRESS
<b>3. APPRECIATING ASSETS</b>				
<b>3.1 Develop an effective Asset Management Strategy that delivers a range of approaches, products and priorities reflecting our assessment of local markets</b>	3.1.1 Revise Asset Management Strategy and agree corporate objectives.	R	Tony Hall March 12	Further to the decision to transfer the management of the Assets function to the AD of Property Services, it has been agreed that he will prepare a revised Asset Management Strategy in conjunction with the Executive Director (Resources). <b>[Status change - Amber to Red]</b>
<b>3.2 Improve effective Asset Management in order to understand the long term performance of our asset portfolio and the investment performance of each individual property [Making best use of what we have got]</b>	3.2.1 Asset Management Database - analysis of requirements for stock condition information. Validate and collect information.	G	Peter Nourse <del>Nov 11</del> Jan 12	Surveys have been carried out to identify elements which appear on Open Housing as No Data. Survey data has been used to update Open Housing and re-align project work. <b>[Status change – Amber to Green]</b>
	3.2.2 Devise Under Occupation Strategy and action plan. Implement pilots.	G	Sean Kent	Policy and Strategy agreed. Action Plan in progress. <b>[Status change - Amber to Green]</b>
<b>3.3 Improve analysis of our asset portfolio to maximise new affordable housing in order to meet local need</b>	3.3.1 Stock Rationalisation Plan.	G	Peter Nourse <del>Oct 11</del> June 2012	Plan ongoing, completed review of hard to let sheltered housing schemes and bedsit accommodation. Decommissioning programme progressing, Harpley Court closed, Willow Lodge decants started. Bedsit conversion where possible ongoing, will complete 2012/13, bedsit units remain under review and are being re-assed at void turnaround on a scheme by scheme basis. 21 non-traditional housing sites assessed, repair/re-development options complete, programme of repairs

## Business Plan 2011/12 - Final Outturn March 2012

VISION	2011 - 2012	STATUS	RESPONSIBILITY AND TIMESCALE	PROGRESS
				progressing on 15 sites, 4 identified for potential re-development, 1 for disposal. Expression of interest submitted for 160 properties in West Norfolk. <b>[Status change - Amber to Green]</b>
	3.3.2 New Affordable Homes - deliver 18 new homes.	G	Peter Nourse Mar 12	New homes total, which includes build, buybacks and purchases for year end was 21 units.
3.4 Improve overall satisfaction in the quality of tenant homes including optimising energy efficiency measures	3.4.1 Decent Homes and Development of Investment Plan - program Stock Condition Survey work plan. Procurement of partners.	G	Peter Nourse/Colin Davison Nov 11	Decency level as of end of March 2012 is 95.2%,. Programme has been identified to achieve 100% Decency by end of June 2012. Investment plan has been identified. Procurement of partners to utilise existing partnering agreements, Eastern Procurement Consortium and new tenders. As part of the restructure focus will be given to the production of a plan to carry out 20% Stock Condition Survey. Revised date Sept 2012. <b>[Status change - Amber to Green]</b>
	3.4.2 EEDA Bid for retrofitting pilot successful. Prepare and commence.		Tony Hall Dec 11	Board agreement requested to remove from plan.
	3.4.3 Complete approach analysis to wider energy efficiency measures - identify funding including "Green Deal". Consider pilots.	G	Sean Kent <del>Aug 11</del> Mar 12	Research into Green Deal and other funding is ongoing. Several small scale pilots have been identified to inform the development of the sustainability section of the Asset Management Strategy in due course.  <b>[Status change - Amber to Green]</b>

VISION	2011 - 2012	STATUS	RESPONSIBILITY AND TIMESCALE	PROGRESS
<b>4. INCREASING CAPACITY</b>				
<b>4.1 Clear understanding of our operating costs in order to achieve cost reductions</b>	4.1.1 Benchmarking and Reducing costs - target reductions from agreed areas.	G	Malcolm Fry Nov 11	Reduction targets will be calculated May 2012. 2011/12 Benchmarking to commence May 12. <b>[Status change - Amber to Green]</b>
	4.1.2 Revised Procurement Strategy produced	R	Malcolm Fry <del>Dec 11</del> Mar 12 Sept 12	Research ongoing. Links with new VFM standard. To go to Board Sept 2012 <b>[Status change - Amber to Red]</b>
<b>4.2 Improve internal capacity</b>	4.2.1 Developing Skills - Review training approaches Improve identification of outcomes.	G	Sean Kent July 12	New PDP introduced as part of new appraisals. Revised training request form completed. Guidance notes for managers on training evaluation completed. Definition of 200 skills and skills 'log' completed.
	4.2.2 ICT Strategy - map and review existing information storage, improve access to reporting tools, improve usage of existing systems.	R	Dave Clements Information Storage: Target <del>Dec 11</del> Mar 12	Database map to be established by end of June 2012 <b>[Status change - Amber to Red]</b>
		G	Reporting Tools: Target <del>Sep 11</del> Mar 12	Reporting tools being developed as part of performance monitoring review – SharePoint Enterprise being implementation commenced April 2012 <b>[Status change - Amber to Green]</b>
		G	Improved Usage of Existing Systems: Target Jan 12	ASB requirements specification drawn up and demos received from REACT & Gentoo – Capita's module to be assessed once released. Asset Management Systems action plan agreed by Management Team. HR system to be migrated to a self-service portal. <b>[Status change - Amber to Green]</b>

## Business Plan 2011/12 - Final Outturn March 2012

VISION	2011 - 2012	STATUS	RESPONSIBILITY AND TIMESCALE	PROGRESS
	4.2.3 Agree and implement Succession Planning approach.	R	Sean Kent Sept 11 - Mar 12	Deferred pending review of HR Strategy. <b>[Status change - Amber to Red]</b>
4.3 Income maximisation and impact on affordability	4.3.1 Fairer Futures Investment Plan - identify funding options.	G	Sean Kent March 12	Funding in place for current program. Investigation of new opportunities ongoing. <b>[Status change - Amber to Green]</b>
	4.3.2 Service Charging - implement phase 2 of sheltered and identify general needs charges.	G	Robert Clarke April 12	Agreed that general needs service charging was to be held for review until 12/13 due to higher rent increases this year. Phase 2 of sheltered service charges have been implemented <b>[Status change - Amber to Green]</b>
	4.3.3 Supporting People Strategy - restructure sheltered services.	G	Robert Clarke Dec 11	Restructure now complete with reduced staffing to minimise risk around the uncertainty of SP funding. Next review in September 2012. Additionally this service area is being aligned with FCC as part of wider HM restructure. <b>Status change - Amber to Green]</b>
4.4 Selling services	4.4.1 Stock management opportunities - agree approach and develop draft systems and procedures. Review current opportunities.	G	Tony Hall March 12	In discussion with developers regarding lease arrangements. <b>[Status change - Amber to Green]</b>
	4.4.2 Agree and implement PSD Business Plan.	G	Colin Davison Mar 12	Business plan completed and implementation commenced in line with agreed action plan. <b>[Status change - Amber to Green]</b>
4.5 Improving governance	4.5.1 Revise Board Development Plan.	G	Tony Hall March 12	Action Plan from Board Appraisals and proposals regarding new Board /Committee structure. <b>[Status change - Amber to Green]</b>

NB: Where there has been a change of status this is indicated in the Notes

## 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:** 28<sup>th</sup> May 2012

**Report Title:** Statistical Data Return (SDR) 2012

**Purpose:** To provide information regarding the submission of Freebridge's Statistical Data Return (SDR) (a copy of which can be found on the Board Members' website next to the agenda for this meeting) to the Homes & Communities Agency (HCA).

**Policy/Strategy Implications:** Freebridge is required to submit an SDR 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 SDR 2012 .
- (ii) Authorise the Chief Executive to sign the document on Freebridge's behalf.

**Note :** The SDR replaces the Regulatory Statistical Return (RSR) which we have completed in previous years.

## Freebridge Community Housing

## Report to the Board

Author	Angus MacQueen	Report Type		Impact		
Related Work Ref.		For Decision	√	High	Medium	Low
		For Information		√		
Consultation	Chief Executive					

**Meeting Date:** 28 May 2012

**Report Title:** Board Member Recruitment

**Purpose:** To provide an update on this year's Board recruitment process and to seek the appointment of a Recruitment Panel for the selection of board members.

**Policy/Strategy Implications:** The process set out in this report is in line with the Board Membership, Recruitment and Succession Policy.

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

**Customer Care/Equality and Diversity Implications:** Equality and diversity requirements are taken into account as part of the Board recruitment process.

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

Risk 1.1 – Failure to comply with Regulatory and Legislation requirements – Critical Impact, High Likelihood. Freebridge has a regulatory requirement to achieve good governance, and Board recruitment is an important aspect of this.

1.4 – Skill Deficiency in Board or Management Team – Critical Impact, High Likelihood. It is intended that the Board recruitment process will maximise the skills on the Board.

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

- (i) Establish a Recruitment Panel to pursue the 2012 recruitment of independent and tenant board members and report back with its recommendations to the Board meeting on 6 August 2012.
- (ii) Agree that the Panel comprise four board members, including at least two tenant board members.
- (iii) Agree that the quorum for the Panel be three members.

## 1.0 Background

- 1.1 In accordance with the cycle set out in the Rules, Sylvia Calver and Irene Gammon will be required to step down as tenant board members at this year's AGM, whilst Ray Johnson will be required to step down as an independent board member. Additionally, Michael Jervis has indicated a desire to leave the Board at this year's AGM, a year before the end of his term of office. A recruitment exercise is, therefore, underway to fill four vacancies, two for tenant Board members and two for independent board members.

## **2.0 Recruitment Process To Date**

2.1 The vacancies have been advertised in the following ways:

- an article in the December 2011 issue of Streets Ahead;
- a feature on Paul Leader in the March 2012 issue of Streets Ahead;
- a newspaper advertisement published twice in the Lynn News, in March/April 2012;
- an advertisement on the Jobs Today website;
- an advertisement on the Freebridge website, with links to this published on Twitter and Facebook;
- a targeted letter to Freebridge shareholders; and
- word of mouth.

2.2 The decision was taken to send a targeted letter to Freebridge shareholders as this is a group of tenants who are already engaged with Freebridge, and it was hoped that this letter might encourage applications. Furthermore, as a significant proportion of Freebridge shareholders are from an ethnic minority background, this was believed to be the best opportunity to increase the diversity of applications.

2.3 An open evening for anyone interested in applying was held on Monday 30 April, and attended by 11 people (three independents and eight tenants). The number of tenants that attended was a clear improvement on last year (when the total was three) and this was largely the result of the shareholder letter; two of the tenant attendees were shareholders from ethnic minority backgrounds. Five other people (three independents and two tenants) were unable to attend the open evening but have expressed an interest in applying.

2.4 The closing date for applications was set as Friday 25 May, and the Board will be informed orally at the meeting of the applications received.

## **3.0 Recruitment Panel**

3.1 The Board is asked to establish a Recruitment Panel of four members (with a quorum of three), to pursue this year's recruitment of tenant and independent board members. It is suggested that the Panel be required to report back to the Board's meeting on 6 August 2012 as to its recommendations.

3.2 As the recruitment of tenant board members will be part of the Panel's remit, the Panel must include at least one tenant board member, in line with our Policy, and it is suggested that two of the four are tenant board members.

3.3 Under the Rules as currently written, the Panel should aim to identify more suitable tenants than there are tenant board member vacancies, in order to initiate a ballot in which all Freebridge tenants would have the opportunity to vote.

3.4 The Panel will need to take into account that the Board appraisal and review process held at the end of 2011 identified that the Board would benefit in particular from human resources/organisational development experience and substantial corporate experience. The Panel will also need to take into account a further recommendation arising from that process, relating to diversity of representation on the Board, regarding age, gender and ethnicity.