

FREEBRIDGE BOARD MINUTES AND ASSOCIATED REPORTS

5 DECEMBER 2011

FREEBRIDGE COMMUNITY HOUSING BOARD

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Board held on
Monday 5 December 2011 at 6.30pm in the
Conference Room, Juniper House,
Austin Street, King's Lynn**

PRESENT:

Lesley Bambridge
Matthew Brown
Sylvia Calver
Steve Clark
Irene Gammon
Bill Guyan
Michael Jervis
Ray Johnson
Paul Leader
Ian Pinches
Colin Sampson

IN ATTENDANCE:

Tony Hall - Chief Executive
Sean Kent - Executive Director (Resources)
Michelle Playford - Assistant Director of
Communications and Customer
Engagement (minute numbers
184/11 - 190/11)
Angus MacQueen - Company Secretary

OBSERVER:

Barbara McLellan - Tenant Services Authority

184/11 WELCOME AND THANKS

The Chairman welcomed Barbara McLellan of the Tenant Services Authority, who was observing the meeting as part of a routine regulatory visit.

Bill Guyan thanked the Board for its messages of support during his recent period of illness.

185/11 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2011 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

186/11 MATTERS ARISING

(a) Quality Social Housing, Real Estate Investment Trust (Minute Number 169/11(c))

Confidential item

(b) Amendment to the Localism Bill – Rural Exceptions Sites and the Preserved Right To Buy (Minute Number 169/11(d))

A member asked for an update on the proposed amendment to the Localism Bill regarding a contradiction in legislation in relation to rural exceptions sites and the Preserved Right To Buy. The Chief Executive had recently briefed Lord Best on this issue, as it had originally been raised by Freebridge before being pursued by the National Housing Federation (NHF). The Chief Executive responded that the Localism Bill had now been enacted but the amendment had not been incorporated. However, the issue would continue to be pursued through the NHF's rural interest group, and he would keep the Board informed of any further developments. The Board congratulated the Chief Executive and the Legal Services Manager on the work they had done on this, which had significantly increased Freebridge's profile with housing policy makers.

(c) Tenant Empowerment Service Review (Minute Number 170/11)

In answer to a question, the Assistant Director of Communications and Customer Engagement advised that there was no progress as yet on the consideration of using a town centre shop unit to enhance customer engagement activities.

187/11 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 196/11 – Hillington Square Update. The Board was content that they should remain in the room during the item, but they did not vote.

188/11 CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

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

As well as weekly meetings with the Chief Executive, the Chairman had attended the following:

- 31 October, Board appraisals
- 4 and 5 November, Board away weekend
- 14 November, Board appraisals
- 14 November, Resources and Risk Committee
- 21 November, Board Member Recruitment Panel

- 28 November, Chief Executive's Appraisal Panel.

The Chairman additionally reported that he had visited Hillington Square on the evening of a significant power failure (7 November), so that he could ensure personally that all affected residents were as comfortable as possible and to thank the Freebridge staff who were present out of office hours at short notice.

The Chairman also advised of the following events that he would be attending:

- 12 December, official opening of Fairstead development
- 14 December, Board Member Recruitment Panel
- 19 December, evening dinner with Chairs and Chief Executives of e²
- 20 January, Event to mark the end of the Tenants of West Norfolk group in its current form
- 24 January, NHF planning conference in London
- 26 January, e² Chairs meeting hosted by Saffron Housing Trust.

189/11 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S UPDATE

- **Historical Film**

The Chief Executive reported that he had taken part in a film about the history of King's Lynn during the 1960s. He had appeared in the film to talk about Hillington Square and Fairstead. The film had just had its premier at the town's cinema and was about to go on general sale. Involvement in the film had been a good opportunity to raise Freebridge's profile locally.

190/11 CHARITABLE SUPPORT POLICY (click here to go to report)

The Assistant Director of Communications and Customer Engagement presented a report which proposed a new Charitable Support Policy.

The Assistant Director of Communications and Customer Engagement advised that a member had put forward an amendment to section 5.11, "Exceptions", of the draft Policy, as follows (additional words shown in bold):

"We will not provide charitable support to organisations and projects which **the Management Team considers** are political or religious in nature. We will not provide charitable support to organisations and projects which **the Management Team considers** are **potentially divisive and/or non-inclusive or otherwise inappropriate.**"

This amendment would provide some leeway in determining whether charitable organisations were appropriate, and would leave open the possibility of an appeal to the Board.

In answer to questions, officers made the following points:

- Freebridge worked with schools at North Lynn and Hillington Square, and officers would look for further opportunities to work with schools to the benefit of Freebridge's tenants.
- All nominated charities that met the stipulated criteria would be put forward to a vote among employees and customers to determine which three would be chosen as Freebridge's annual corporate charities.

RESOLVED: That the Charitable Support Policy be approved as attached, subject to the amendment set out above.

191/11 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT POLICY REVIEW (click here to go to report)

The Executive Director (Resources) presented a report which reviewed the Performance Management Policy and which advised of actions undertaken under the 2009-11 action plan.

RESOLVED: That the Performance Management Policy be approved, as presented.

192/11 UNDER-OCCUPATION POLICY (click here to go to report)

The Executive Director (Resources) presented a report which proposed a new Under-Occupation Policy.

The Executive Director (Resources) highlighted that data suggested that over 1,000 Freebridge properties were currently under-occupied; a more precise figure would be available following the update to the "Getting To Know You" survey, to be completed early in 2012. He also stressed that it was not, at present, intended to actively incentivise tenants to downsize, but merely to provide advice and assistance; this should not be too onerous on Freebridge staff. He asked the Board to approve use of £15,000 from the contingency budget to fund an assistance pilot for the remainder of the financial year.

A member stated that the Policy appeared to be encouraging households in which children each had their own room to downsize so that children shared a room, and questioned whether this was appropriate. The Chief Executive responded that the desire to address housing need would always have to be balanced with the needs and wishes of individual tenants.

Whilst acknowledging that this Policy was separate from the mutual exchange scheme, members highlighted that there were occasions when mutual exchange could help address housing need. It was suggested that, in such circumstances of mutual exchange, the charges that the tenants had to pay, for instance for safety checks, should be waived or refunded by Freebridge. The Chief Executive undertook to check the current situation and to let the Board know whether this would be possible. A member stressed the need to ensure that any money paid to tenants did not affect their benefits.

A member suggested that the Under-Occupation Policy could be promoted through an article in the "Streets Ahead" newsletter.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Under-Occupation Policy be approved, as presented.
- 2) That £15,000 be used from the contingency budget to fund the assistance pilot for the remainder of the financial year.

193/11 AMENDMENTS TO DECANT AND COMPENSATION POLICIES (click here to go to report)

The Executive Director (Resources) presented a report which put forward amendments to the Decant Policy, to take into account the large-scale decants that would be required as part of the Hillington Square project, and a consequential amendment to the Compensation Policy. The report also included a decant procedure note, for the Board's information; this would be made available to tenants in Plain English.

In answer to a question, the Executive Director (Resources) said that there was no evidence to suggest that the ability to claim for special expenses, such as loss of earnings and travel costs, had been or would be abused.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the amendments to the Decant Policy be approved, as presented, and that the decant procedure be noted.
- 2) That the consequential amendment to the Compensation Policy be approved, as set out in the report.

194/11 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS (click here to go to report)

The Board received a report regarding recommendations from recent committee meetings.

The Board noted that the recommendation from the Resources and Risk Committee meeting held on 14 November 2011 had been deferred, for the reason explained in the report.

The Board considered the recommendation of the Operations Committee meeting held on 2 November 2011, and

RESOLVED: That the following amendments to paragraph 4.2 of the Home Ownership Through Right To Buy/Right To Acquire Policy be approved (additional words shown as bold):

"Properties in designated rural areas contain a covenant, which restricts the subsequent disposal of the property without the

consent of Freebridge; which consent must be given if the purchaser has lived or worked in the district of King's Lynn and West Norfolk **or the County of Norfolk (depending on the wording of the covenant)** for the last 3 years. Freebridge Community Housing, in its role as the provider of local affordable housing supports the principle of this restrictive covenant which enables local homes to be available for local people. **Freebridge will not release the covenant or give consent to a disposal of any property which contains the covenant to anyone who does not meet the criteria of having lived or worked in the district of King's Lynn and West Norfolk or the County of Norfolk (depending on the wording of the covenant) for the last 3 years."**

195/11 **BUSINESS PLANNING PROCESS 2012/13 (click here to go to report)**

The Chief Executive presented a report which proposed the business planning process for 2012/13.

In answer to a question, the Chief Executive said that he would let board members know as soon as possible the date of the board/stakeholder business planning day, scheduled for early in 2012.

The Chairman thanked all board members for their participation in the recent Board appraisal process. Initial feedback from Campbell Tickell was very positive; a full report would be made to the next Board meeting.

RESOLVED: That the business planning process for 2012/13 be approved as set out in the report.

196/11 **HILLINGTON SQUARE UPDATE** (report not available – confidential)

The Chief Executive presented a report which provided an update on the progress to date of the Hillington Square project and on the discussions with the Borough Council regarding the VAT sharing agreement.

The Chief Executive advised that the proposed amendment to the VAT sharing agreement had passed through the Borough Council's scrutiny process. A final decision would be made at the full Council meeting on 26 January 2012, at which he would be giving a presentation about the Hillington Square project. Should the Council agree to the amendment to the agreement, as seemed likely, it could potentially generate £3.7 million and significantly reduce the need for any sales. The Executive was very grateful to the Council for its cooperation in this matter to date, which was a testament to the good working relationship that had been developed with the Council. A recent article in the Lynn News had been unfortunate, as it had given the impression that the Council was not going to approve the amendment; however, the article had not affected Freebridge's relationship with the Council.

The Chief Executive explained that, as previously communicated to board members, the next Board meeting had been deferred by a week, and would now be held on 30 January 2012. This would enable the outcome of the Council meeting on 26 January to be taken into account. The planning application would be submitted after the meeting on 30 January.

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

- Freebridge would continue to take legal advice as and when the amendment to the VAT sharing agreement was taken forward.
- A decision would need to be made relating to the 58 properties on Hillington Square which did not currently meet the Decent Homes Standard, having regard to the Tenant Services Authority deadline of June 2012 for all Freebridge properties to achieve the Standard and to the phasing of the Hillington Square project.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the progress that has been made on the project be noted.
- 2) That authority be delegated to the Chief Executive and the Executive Director (Resources) to continue negotiations with the Council regarding the amendment of the VAT sharing agreement.
- 3) That officers be authorised to commence the Pre-Qualifying Questionnaire stage only of the OJEU procurement process.
- 4) That a report be presented to the Board at its meeting on 30 January 2012, setting out:
 - the outcome of the negotiations with the Council;
 - the revised design and associated costs; and
 - a detailed implementation plan, including phasing.

197/11 [BUSINESS PLAN 2011/12 – SECOND QUARTER UPDATE](#) (click here to go to report)

The Chief Executive presented a report which set out the second quarter update to the 2011/12 Business Plan. It was noted that the progress of the Business Plan had been considered in detail at the Board's recent away day.

The Chief Executive stressed that, despite the changes in senior management, the Executive believed that the full Business Plan was deliverable. Work was being undertaken with the Assistant Directors to develop their skills, and a report would be made to the Board at a future meeting with proposals for the senior management structure. Members commented on the enthusiasm that was currently evident among the staff,

and on the success at taking the Business Plan forward despite fewer senior managers in post.

It was pointed out that over 90% of Freebridge properties now met the Decent Homes Standard, as compared to 24% at transfer five and a half years ago. The improvements in sickness absence levels were also highlighted.

The Board noted the report.

198/11 **QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE MONITORING** (report not available – confidential)

The Executive Director (Resources) presented a report which provided quarterly performance information for the period to 30 September 2011.

It was noted that, as with progress against the Business Plan, performance had been considered in detail at the Board's recent away weekend.

In answer to a question, the Executive Director (Resources) undertook to let the Board know the costs incurred by Freebridge through failing to keep appointments. He was confident that this was not a significant figure.

The Board noted the high level of performance across the organisation and asked that its thanks be passed on to all staff involved.

The Board noted the report.

199/11 **APPOINTMENT OF SHAREHOLDERS** (report not available – confidential)

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

RESOLVED: That the application for tenant shareholding described in the report be approved.

200/11 **AFFORDABLE RENTS AND FIXED TERM TENANCIES UPDATE**

Confidential item

201/11 **WORK UPDATE** (report not available – confidential)

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

- Action Sheet
- Future Work Programme of the Board.

In answer to a question, the Chief Executive advised that negotiations with the Almshouses Association regarding the transfer of the Clenchwarton

almshouses from a local trust to Freebridge had now been concluded successfully. Final approval from the Charity Commission was now awaited. He hoped that the transfer would be completed by the end of March 2012.

The Board noted the update.

202/11 **COMMITTEE MINUTES** (Committee minutes not available – confidential)

Paul Leader, Chairman of the Audit Committee, presented the minutes of the Committee's meeting held on 31 October 2011. He confirmed that, as he had requested at the meeting (minute number A70/11refers), the Executive Director (Resources) had provided him with information on the recording of jobs.

Steve Clark, Chairman of the Operations Committee, presented the minutes of the Committee's meeting held on 2 November 2011. He highlighted the extremely good performance on gas servicing, whereby, with the exception of one property that was subject to a Notice to Quit, 100% of occupied Freebridge properties had a current gas servicing certificate.

Michael Jervis, Vice-Chairman of the Resources and Risk Committee, presented the minutes of the Committee's meeting held on 14 November 2011. He highlighted that the Committee had had a very interesting briefing on the current state of the markets from Philip Porter of BWNL, Freebridge's treasury management advisers. He also congratulated the Executive Director (Resources) and the Assistant Director of Finance on the very good rates of interest that they had obtained for two forward rate agreements.

203/11 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

(a) Saffron Housing Trust Event

Lesley Bambridge reported that she had recently attended an information event run by Saffron Housing Trust. The standard of the speakers had been mixed, but overall the event had been worthwhile and interesting.

(b) West Norfolk Carers

Lesley Bambridge advised that she had recently become a Trustee of West Norfolk Carers. She believed that there could be some opportunities for joint working between this organisation and Freebridge, and would contact the Chief Executive to pursue this.

(c) “Do Something Different” Training

The Executive Director (Resources) said that he and some other staff, as well as a member of the Tenant Panel, had attended a training programme entitled “Do Something Different”. This had encouraged new ways of thinking, and those who had attended had found it very useful. It was planned to make the programme available to more staff and through the Tenant Academy.

204/11 NEXT MEETING

The Board noted that its next meeting was scheduled for Monday 30 January 2012 at 6.30pm, having been deferred by one week (see minute number 196/11 above).

The meeting closed at 8.15pm.

CHAIRMAN

Freebridge Community Housing

Report to the Board

Author	Michelle Playford	Report Type		Impact		
Related Work Ref.		For Decision	√	High	Medium	Low
		For Information			√	
Consultation	Management Team, Board, Customers, Employees					

Meeting Date: 5th December 2011

Report Title: Charitable Support Policy and Strategy

Purpose: To present the draft Charitable Support Policy and Strategy (attached at Appendix 1).
Policy/Strategy Implications: - The Charitable Support Policy and Strategy is a new policy and strategy. It fits with the organisation's Business Plan objectives and the Vision and Values.
Finance and VFM Implications: - The policy and strategy aim to target funding and clarify the remit of Freebridge's financial support for charitable causes, maximising the resources available.
Customer Care/Equality and Diversity Implications: - Customers will be engaged in the selection of charitable causes. Charitable support will not be provided to organisations and projects which are divisive and non-inclusive.
Risk Assessment (cross-reference with FCH Risk Map): - 3.1 Missed opportunities – Marginal Impact, Very 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 - Marginal Impact, Significant Likelihood 8.10 Deterioration in staff morale - Marginal Impact, Significant Likelihood 12.0 Failure to address Equality and Diversity issues effectively – Marginal Impact, Significant Likelihood
Recommendations: It is recommended that the Board: (i) Approves the Charitable Support Policy and Strategy, as attached.

Development

1.1 The Charitable Support Policy and Strategy has been produced to formalise Freebridge's corporate approach to supporting charities.

1.2 It aims to simplify and focus our approach to selecting and supporting charitable causes, ensuring a fit with our vision and values.

1.3 The policy and strategy aim to empower employees in taking the lead in selecting and supporting charitable causes through targeted activities. This follows on from feedback from employees about the range of charitable organisations Freebridge supports.

1.4 Empowerment and engagement are crucial to the success of the strategy, with opportunities for involvement for both employees and customers.

1.5 Measurement and evaluation are also incorporated into the approach and charitable support will be monitored and evaluated to ensure it has a demonstrable impact.

1.6 Activities resulting from the Charitable Support Policy and Strategy will complement existing community and partnership work.

Strategic elements

2.1 The strategy incorporates a number of appropriate elements to ensure that the policy is effectively implemented:

- Mutually beneficial, supportive, strategic partnerships – such as the partnership with the Kings Lynn Arts Centre Trust;
- The Freebridge Community Foundation – through which funding is made available to local community causes;
- Annual corporate charities – up to three charities, nominated and selected by employees and customers, which employees are empowered to support through a range of activities;
- Individual activities within the community – enabling employees to work with other charitable organisations as part of their professional and personal development.

Consultation

3.1 The Charitable Support Policy and Strategy has been the subject of consultation with the Employee Panel and the Tenant Panel.

Objective 2 – Customer Focused



Policy – Charitable Support			
Last Reviewed	December 2011	Next Review	December 2013
Responsible Officer	Assistant Director of Communications & Engagement		

1. Policy statement

Freebridge Community Housing is committed to providing charitable support for organisations and projects whose activity supports or complements our vision and/or values.

2. Definitions

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

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

3. Policy objectives

Freebridge Community Housing will aim to:

- Develop mutually beneficial and supportive strategic partnerships with charitable organisations whose vision and values mirror our own.
- Provide grant funding through the Freebridge Community Foundation, ensuring all applications are assessed through a fair, robust process.
- Engage our employees and customers in identifying appropriate organisations and projects which can be supported as corporate charities.
- Maximise and target the funding and resources we have available for charitable support through a clear strategy and predetermined criteria.
- Monitor and review our charitable support to ensure it continues to be appropriate and targeted and that it has a demonstrable impact.
- Ensure that our charitable support complements our existing community and partnership activities.

4. Responsibilities

Board and management:

The Board has a corporate responsibility for ensuring that charitable support is appropriately delivered at a strategic level through the Business Plan. The Executive will identify strategic opportunities for providing charitable support and will develop these accordingly. The Management Team will direct and deliver charitable support within the framework of this strategy. The Management Team will be responsible for embedding the approach to charitable support, and the guiding principles, within the culture of the organisation.

Employees, contractors and suppliers:

Employees will play a key role in the delivery of the charitable support strategy through identifying appropriate charities to support, and practical means by which to deliver this support. Employees, contractors and suppliers will also play an operational role in providing charitable support for organisations and projects who have been adopted as corporate causes.

Customers:

Customers will help to identify appropriate charities for Freebridge to support. There will also be opportunities for customers to get involved and contribute to activities designed to raise funds and raise the profile of charitable causes adopted by Freebridge. Customers will also have the opportunity to make applications for funding through Freebridge's community foundation.

5. Strategy

5.1 **Corporate culture**

We will promote our commitment to providing charitable support and underline the joined-up, corporate approach. We will ensure that this support is delivered in a targeted, appropriate manner.

5.2 **Corporate standards**

Freebridge will ensure that every member of staff understands our approach to providing charitable support through the publication of this policy and strategy. Managers will ensure that employees understand the framework in which charitable support is delivered.

5.3 **Governance**

The charitable support policy will need to be approved by the Board before being adopted as the corporate approach. The Board will receive an annual report on Freebridge's charitable support activities.

5.3 **Mutually beneficial, supportive, strategic partnerships**

Freebridge will enter into mutually beneficial, supportive strategic partnerships with organisations whose vision and values mirror our own. These partnerships will be developed only when there is a strategic fit and where resources and capacity allow such support to be provided. Such partnerships

will be developed in a targeted manner and on an ad hoc basis when there are clear, meaningful benefits for both parties.

5.4 The Freebridge Community Foundation

Freebridge will provide a formal structure for organisations and groups operating within our communities to access funding through the Freebridge Community Foundation. The aim of the fund is to support community and voluntary activity that addresses the needs of communities within West Norfolk. The fund will be administered independently and employees and customers will play a role in the selection process. There will be a set amount of funding distributed annually, and applicants will have to meet clear criteria.

5.5 Annual corporate charities

Freebridge employees and customers will have the opportunity to identify and select up to three charities which will be adopted as corporate strategies for the period of one year. Both employees and customers will be able to nominate charities for shortlisting which will be assessed against the following criteria: two of the three charities must be making a positive difference within West Norfolk and the vision and/or values of the organisations must complement our own. The process will be democratic with the shortlisted charities opened up for voting amongst employees and customers. Employees and customers will be empowered to take the lead in providing practical support for these charities through identifying activities and events which will enable fund and profile raising.

National charitable campaigns will be considered on their individual merit and interest from employees.

5.6 Sponsorship

Freebridge does not operate a corporate sponsorship fund. We would direct all requests for funding through our Freebridge Community Foundation, or if the activities have a wider impact in improving the local community, we would consider these within our community development budget. We will not provide corporate sponsorship for individuals – either employees or customers. Employees can promote their personal sponsored activities on an individual basis.

5.7 Individual activities within the community

Freebridge employees will have the opportunity to work with other charitable organisations as part of their own professional development. Consideration must be given to ensure the chosen organisations' vision and/or values complement our own, and that the organisations do not meet any of the exception outlined at point 5.11.

5.8 Community Development budget

The budget allocated for community development will be directed at activity which brings a benefit to local communities. The budget will not be used to provide strategic charitable support.

5.9 Promotion and communication

Freebridge activities delivered to provide charitable support will be promoted internally and externally through communication channels such as Streets Ahead, the intranet and media releases.

5.10 Measurement and evaluation

We will evaluate our charitable support through gathering feedback from strategic charitable partners and recipients of funding. We will evaluate the impact we have made by identifying where our support – both financial and in terms of resources – has been invested. We will provide feedback to employees and customers of what support has been given and how that has been used.

5.11 Exceptions

We will not provide charitable support to organisations and projects which are political or religious in nature. We will not provide charitable support to organisations and projects which are divisive and non-inclusive.

6. Monitoring

We will monitor the charitable support we are providing, the impact of this support and any associated publicity, and report this to the Board on an annual basis. We will also provide an annual update to employees and customers.

7. Review

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

8. Risk Management

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

9. Equality and Diversity

This policy and strategy has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment. All requests for charitable support will be assessed against equality and diversity criteria.

Charitable Support Strategy 11-13 Action Plan

Area	Actions	Responsibility (Deadline)
Corporate Culture and Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share the Policy with the Board for feedback and approval Publish the Policy and Strategy and brief Management Group 	AD C & E, December 2011 AD C & E, January 2012
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an annual evaluation report of charitable support to the Board 	AD C & E, January 2013
Mutually beneficial, supportive, strategic partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide ongoing support to Thornage Hall, the Purfleet Trust and the Discovery Centre Provide strategic support to the Arts Centre Trust when it is formally established Identify and develop opportunities for employee and customer engagement 	MT, ongoing MT, ED (R) lead, autumn 2011 AD C & E, autumn 2011
The Freebridge Community Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote applications for funding Assess applications and allocate funding Promote grants with a reception for recipients 	AD C & E, April 2012 Panel of employees and customers, C & E lead, summer 2012 C & E, summer 2012
Annual corporate charities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite employees and customers to nominate corporate charities Shortlist and organise voting on choices for employees and customers Empower employees and customers to identify and deliver practical opportunities to support the corporate charities. Develop a programme of activity. 	C & E, December 2011 C & E, January 2012 C & E lead, February 2012 and ongoing
Sponsorship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote, as appropriate, individual, sponsored activities for charity 	C & E, ongoing
Individual activities within the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate to Management Group the remit of individual activities within the community, in line with this policy and strategy 	AD C & E, January 2012
Community Development Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support targeted activities within our communities which deliver community development. 	AD HM, ongoing
Promotion and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote activities which provide charitable support through a range of communication channels 	C & E, ongoing
Measurement and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an annual evaluation report of charitable support to the Board Provide feedback to employees and customers on the nature and impact of corporate charitable activities 	AD C & E, January 2013 AD C & E, January 2013
Exceptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that the exceptions to charitable support are adhered to 	MT, ongoing

Key ED(R) = Executive Director (Resources); AD C & E = Assistant Director of Communications & Customer Engagement; C & E = Communications & Engagement Team; AD HM = Assistant Director Housing; MT = Management Team.

Freebridge Community Housing

Report to the Board

Author	Sean Kent Executive Director (Resources)	Report Type	Impact		
Related Work Ref.	For Decision	√	High	Medium	Low
	For Information		√		
Consultation	Chief Executive, Management Team				

Meeting Date: 5 December 2011

Report Title: Performance Management Policy, Strategy and Action Plan Review

Purpose: To review the Performance Management Policy and Strategy and present the revised Action Plan.
Policy/Strategy Implications: This report introduces a revised Performance Management Action Plan.
Financial and VFM Implications: There are no immediate financial implications as a result of this report.
Customer Care/Equality and Diversity Implications: No implications
Risk Assessment (cross-reference with Freebridge Risk Map): 8.4 Failure to implement correct prioritisation Impact-Critical – Likelihood-High 8.8 Change management Impact-Critical – Likelihood-High
Recommendations: It is recommended that the Board: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Note the report and approve the revised Performance Management Policy, Strategy and Action Plan (as attached at Appendix 1).

Introduction

This report reviews the Performance Management Policy & Strategy, advises on actions which have been carried out and presents a revised action plan for 2011-13. The core of the strategy is our commitment to provide services and benefits that are accessible to all tenants and staff. There are no major changes to the policy or strategy – previous themes have been developed further following our achievements since the last update.

Performance management will continue to be a priority for Freebridge and the link between performance and cost will need to be clearly understood in the light of the Government's focus on us 'making the best of what we've got', 'providing something for something' and continued cost reduction.

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

Performance Management Strategy 09-11 Action Plan

Area	Actions
Business Planning Cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate Inspection Action Plan • Roll out targets to Operational plans
Service Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalise development of Service Standards • Communicate Service Standards • Set up necessary monitoring systems, including mystery shopping • Roll out targets to Operational plans
Operational Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Operational Plan format • Produce Operational Plans
Service Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and revise Service Review Methodology • Training for managers and staff • Training for involved tenants and stakeholders • Update Service Review Programme
Human Resources Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reward and Remuneration Strategy including replacement Performance Related Pay System • Training on managing poor performance • Annual Training Plans developed
Monitoring & Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly Performance reports placed on web site • Monthly performance report detailed included in Freebridge Bulletin to Staff • Improving performance information for tenants • Reporting against Service Standards • Achieving higher level of press coverage for good performance
Information Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and rationalise targets to ensure consistency • Naming of IT system to increase ownership • Relaunch IT system
Improvement Focus Groups/ Tenant Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate Housemark “develop and monitor” methodology • Determine remit and programme for focus groups • Recruit focus groups • Train focus groups • Facilitate focus group meetings • Review focus group operation
Risk Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve integration of risk and performance reporting • Improve risk evaluation in business planning process • Develop risk action plans for top ten risks • Integrate risk action plans into Operational plans • Evaluation of Risk element of Performance IT system
Benchmarking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Housemark LSVT Report analysed and reported • Evaluation other benchmarking groups used • Improve communication of benchmarking information

Future developments in Performance Management Strategy and Action Plan

The executive recognise the importance of the organisation’s culture and remain committed to the use of coaching approaches to continue to develop and improve performance. The strategy reflects this.



Policy XX Performance Management Policy, Strategy and Action Plan

Last Reviewed	December 2011	Next Review	December 2013
Responsible Officer	Executive Director (Resources)		

1. Policy

Freebridge Community Housing believes that effective performance management will enable us to:

- know what we are aiming for and how we plan to achieve this;
- know our progress in meeting these plans;
- detect and remedy problems that might prevent us from meeting our plans

2. Principles

We will take an integrated approach to performance management and make clear links between the Performance Management and:

- Corporate Priorities and Strategies as set out in the Business Plan
- Organisational Risk
- Value for Money
- Service objectives, operational/action plans and targets
- Team and Individual performance ('Golden Thread')
- HR and Communications strategies

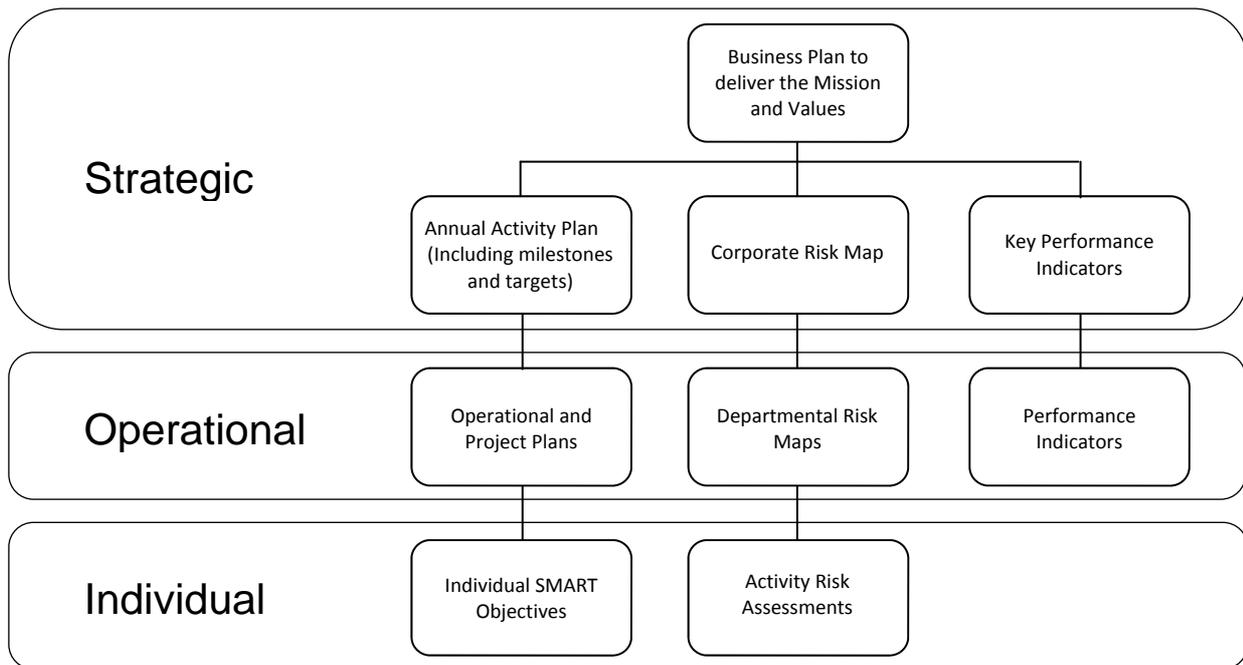
The following five principles will guide us in delivering continuous improvement

- Outcomes driven – focussing on what our customers experience
- Evidence based – using information that is complete, accurate, timely and relevant
- Transparent – being objective and readily accessible to users and customers
- Focussed – prioritising in line with risks to avoid monitoring for its own sake.
- Accountable – accepting own our role in managing and improving performance

To ensure a holistic and efficient approach performance management should consider the requirements and aspirations of the Board, management, regulators and customers.

Our Performance Management Framework (set out below) will focus on the achievement of both operational and strategic objectives and integrate these with risks at all levels.

Performance Management Framework



3. Objectives

Freebridge Community Housing's Performance Management Strategy will support it to achieve the following objectives:

- Deliver agreed outcomes from business and operational plans
- Deliver our commitments to customers
- Deliver performance improvements to customers
- Deliver Value for Money
- Comply with regulatory and legal requirements as a minimum

4. Responsibilities

A summary of roles and responsibilities is shown below:

Board & Executive	Managers	Staff and Customers
<p>Board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide clear vision and priorities in our Business Plan • Approve objectives and targets in Business Plan • Approve budgets • Challenge services <p>Executive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver Business Plan priorities • Challenge underperformance • Ensure value for money is delivered <p>Operations Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutinise areas of underperformance <p>Resources & Risk Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenge targets and value for money 	<p>Management Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take operational responsibility for delivering the priorities • Review performance • Agree actions to address underperformance • Reward achievement • Monitor delivery of Performance Management Strategy <p>Team Managers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly review performance • Challenge and sign off performance data • Identify opportunities for improvement • Take responsibility for underperformance • Ensure performance is given a high priority 	<p>All staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have an understanding of how what they do contributes to overall priorities and outcomes • Have an awareness of team and stakeholder objectives • Deliver on personal targets and help to implement action plans for improvement <p>Tenants Panel, TOWN & other customers groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively contribute towards performance by suggesting ideas for improvement and sharing good practice

5. Strategy

Key components of our strategy are:

- **The Business Planning Process**

The Business Plan is central to our strategic planning process. The Plan sets out our strategic and key operational objectives over a set period. It should clearly set out the milestones for these for each year ahead and enable responsibility for these to be assigned to individuals. The Business Plan should integrate with our long term financial plan to direct our allocation of resources in annual budgets. The budget process provides an annual forum to question the need for the continuing level of resources and set relevant performance targets.

- **Service standards**

The Association should ensure that it has clearly set out standards, including Local Standards where appropriate, for each aspect of its service delivery and that these have been agreed with customers. Monitoring should ensure that these standards are delivered consistently to all recipients, and may include the use of 'Mystery Shopping'.

- **Operational Plans**

These will be prepared for each service area and will detail plans to achieve relevant objectives, outcomes, targets. They will also include any specific monitoring arrangements to ensure that these achievements can be clearly tracked and evaluated. They enable management to formulate more detailed plans for the implementation of Business Plan objectives and allocate these responsibilities.

- **Service Reviews**

To ensure that we deliver continuous improvement in our activities and to address national standards as published within the Audit Commission's Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOEs) Freebridge will undertake Service Reviews. Each service area will be assessed against the three generic KLOEs. It is important that customers and other stakeholders are involved in these reviews and that the process is open and transparent. The outputs of these will be fed into the relevant Operational Plans.

- **Human Resources Management**

As the Association delivers its performance via its staff then it is vital that our Human Resources systems support the management of performance. In particular there should be systems to ensure the regular and structured review of individual objectives. Clear processes to recognise and reward good performance and to remedy poor performance. Training and development should be clearly aligned to the organisation's objectives and focussed on building capacity to ensure the strategic vision can be delivered. The culture of the organisation should support the achievement of objectives and continuous improvement in all areas. Performance management will be developed as a key competence of managers and, structured development will be undertaken specifically to improve understanding of the performance framework and in particular managers' role within this. The improved integration of performance management into our reward and development strategies are crucial to success.

- **Monitoring and Communication**

The Association must ensure that it has clear, consistent, and timely monitoring information to those who are responsible for the delivery of the relevant aspects of performance. Key aspects of performance should be routinely monitored against the business plan, service standards regulatory and legal requirements and this should be communicated to the Board, management, customers and interested stakeholders. Monitoring should regularly be cross referenced with the various diversity strands to ensure a consistent and fair service delivery is being achieved.

- **Information Management**

It is important that information about performance indicators and objectives is accessible and communicated with consistency and integrity to enable current and trend information to be readily interpreted and used effectively. The development of a performance management recording system, possibly based on 'BRIDGE' proprietary software that we currently use, may provide this. Internal audit reviews and external validation of regulatory Performance indicators will assist the Association in ensuring this is achieved.

- Customer Focus Groups**
 The use of focus groups, including customers, staff, Board members and other stakeholders, will enable the Association to regularly or periodically review performance with objectivity from a variety of perspectives. These groups should be able to provide an effective and constructive challenge to identify means of improving current performance. Such groups may be used periodically for Service Reviews or regularly to focus on particular areas.
- Tenant Panel**
 The Tenant Panel will provide an independent view of our performance, identifying areas for review and opportunities for improvement.
- Risk management**
 The integration of risk management processes with the setting and monitoring of performance should assist the Association in prioritising areas of performance improvement.
- Benchmarking**
 Through benchmarking with other local and stock transfer housing associations via Housemark, we will be able to identify and prioritise activities with scope to improve quality and efficiency. Benchmarking clubs can also provide us with details of best practice to assist improvement initiatives.
- Service Assurance Statement (SAS)**
 Our internal auditors, PwC will work in partnership with us to review and challenge management's self-assessment of the effectiveness of their controls. This is a recent innovation that is starting to be applied by some organisations in the public and commercial sector where internal control has reached reasonable maturity and the ability to share knowledge and perspectives is seen as particularly valuable.

6. Monitoring Organisational Performance

Cycle	Performance Activity or Report	Reported to
Monthly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly Performance Indicators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management Team (MT), managers and staff.
Quarterly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly Performance indicators Review of progress against Business Plan Objectives Review of progress against Service Plan Objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MT, Board managers and staff MT, Board MT and managers
Annual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Performance Report Regulatory & Statistical Return Regulatory Code compliance Annual Update of Business Plan Individual Operational Plans Housemark Benchmarking Report Review of Chief Executive's Objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MT, Managers staff Board and customers Tenant Services Authority (TSA) Board, MT, all staff, customers MT, managers MT, Board, Resources Committee Board Panel
Periodic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service Reviews Internal Audits KPI Validation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders Audit Committee Regulator

Additionally responsible managers will be receiving and acting upon performance information for their area of operations at a frequency matched to the activity. This could be monthly, weekly or even daily.

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. Performance Management Strategy 11-13 Action Plan

Area	Actions	Responsibility (Deadline)
Business Planning Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate Strategy Action Plans Annual Update (See separate plan) Develop Mystery Shopping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ED(R) – Mar 2012 CE – Annually ADHM – Mar 2012
Service Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Service Standards Develop and review Local Standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ADHM - Mar 2012 ADHM - Mar 2012
Operational Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up quarterly monitoring systems Update Operational Plans Roll out targets to teams and individuals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CE – Dec 2011 CE - Annually CE - Annually
Service Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate Service Reviews Integrate Service Review outcomes into Operational plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All – ongoing CE – ongoing
Human Resources Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised performance Appraisal System Revised Reward Strategy Organisation Development plan to develop Performance Culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ED(R) – April 2012 ED(R) – April 2012 CE – June 2012
Monitoring & Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of reports directly from IT Systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ED(R) – April 2013
Information Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of Performance IT system Increasing awareness and usage of IT system PI Validation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ED(R) – April 2012 ED(R) – April 2013 ED(R) – TBA
Customer Focus Groups & Tenant Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine remit and programme for focus groups Determine remit and programme for tenant panel Recruit tenant panel Train tenant panel Facilitate tenant panel Review tenant panel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ED(R) – Completed ED(R) – Completed ED(R) – Completed ED(R) – In progress ED(R) – In progress ED(R) – April 2013
Risk Management (Including Service Assurance Statement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve integration of risk and performance reporting Improve risk evaluation in business planning process Develop risk action plans for top ten risks Integrate risk action plans into Operational plans Quarterly Updates of Service Assurance Statements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ED(R) – Dec 2012 CE – Mar 2012 CE – June 2012 CE – Mar 2012 ED(R) – Sept 2011
Benchmarking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation other benchmarking groups used Annual Action plan to target savings Develop understanding of links between costs and quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ED(R) – April 2012 ED(R) – Annually All ongoing

Key

CE – Chief Executive; ED(R) – Executive Director (Resources); ADHM – Assistant Director of Housing Management

Freebridge Community Housing

Report to the Board

Author	Sean Kent	Report Type		Impact		
Related Work Ref.		For Decision	√	High	Medium	Low
		For Information			√	
Consultation	Management Team					

Meeting Date: 5 December 2011

Report Title: Under-Occupation Policy, Strategy and Action Plan

Purpose: To seek approval of the Under-Occupation Policy, Strategy and Action Plan.

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: A budget of £15,000 is requested from the contingency budget to fund the assistance pilot for the remainder of this financial year.

Customer Care/Equality and Diversity Implications: This policy is anticipated to have a favourable impact on elderly customers by enabling them to move to smaller properties if they wish to. It may have wider implications for disabled tenants when it is integrated into our Aids and Adaptations Policy in due course.

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

Risk 1.5 – Government Housing Policy Change – Marginal Impact, Significant Likelihood
 Risk 2.2 – Housing Benefit Changes – Critical Impact, Low Likelihood
 Risk 2.3 – Lack of Demand for Properties – Critical Impact, Very Low Likelihood
 Risk 2.7 – Operational Failures – Critical Impact, Significant Likelihood
 Risk 12.0 – Failure to address equality and diversity issues effectively – Marginal Impact, Significant Likelihood

Recommendations: It is recommended that the Board:

- (i) Approves the Under-Occupation Policy, Strategy and Action Plan set out at Appendix 1 to this report.

Introduction

A recent report from the National Housing Federation concluded that "The East of England is a popular place to live, with a population which is ageing faster than the national average. In over half of the region, at least a fifth of social rented homes are under-occupied by at least two bedrooms, with potentially 27,000 social homes under occupied across the region as a whole.

At the same time over 147,000 households are registered on the waiting list for accommodation.”

The report also stated that "as we move into a period of fiscal restraint with less funding available for new housebuilding, there is a challenge to social landlords and strategic partners to make best use of the homes available."

Our own research which has been carried out on the limited data that we currently hold about households has suggested that we may have well over 1,000 households that are currently under-occupied.

The government has also publicised the fact that there will be changes to Housing Benefit in the near future that will restrict housing benefit for those that are under-occupying their properties. We believe that benefit will be restricted by £11 for under-occupation by one bedroom and £20 for under occupation by two bedrooms. With the average deduction anticipated to be £14. This may have a significant impact on many of our tenants as in addition to having to heat a larger property than is needed they may also find that their rental cost is no longer being fully met by housing benefit.

This, together with a desire to make better use of our housing stock and offer increased options to tenants who wish to downsize has prompted us to produce the attached policy.

At this stage we are not actively incentivising tenants to downsize to smaller properties but making them aware of the options they already have to do so and offering practical and financial assistance where this is needed. This will enable us to work with our tenants to ascertain the real issues preventing them from moving to more appropriate properties and fine tune this policy should we decide that we need to offer a more incentive-based approach in the future.



Policy XX Under-occupation Policy, Strategy and Action Plan

Last Reviewed	November 2011	Next Review	November 2013
Responsible Officer	Executive Director (Resources)		

1. Policy

Freebridge Community Housing aims to make the most effective use of its housing stock and maximise tenant satisfaction by supporting tenants who are currently under-occupying and wish to downsize from larger homes.

2. Definitions

“The TSA defines under-occupation as: ‘Households who are under-occupiers are two or more bedrooms above the Bedroom Standard, e.g., a household living in a three-bedroom property who would only require one bedroom if assessed against the Bedroom Standard.’ However, this research considered both those under-occupying with just one spare bedroom and those who had more than one spare bedroom. It is unofficially recognised that many people use their spare room for health reasons, for a carer or because adult children often move in and out of their parental home depending upon their circumstances.”

The bulk of our housing stock is two and three bedroom properties and as few people will want or be able to downsize by two bedrooms, particularly in rural areas, it is suggested that Freebridge defines under-occupation as “where a tenant is occupying a property with one or more bedrooms above their statutory requirement”.

3. Objectives

Freebridge Community Housing’s Under-occupation Strategy will support it to achieve the following objectives:

- Maximise the usage of its housing stock to meet housing need
- Maximise the satisfaction of tenants
- Reduce financial exclusion, especially fuel poverty
- Make best use of Freebridge resources i.e. Aids & Adaptations, Gardening Service

- Encourage greater mobility within the social rented sector
- Assist tenants avoid benefit deductions for under-occupation

4. **Responsibilities**

The Board has a corporate responsibility for ensuring that under-occupation 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 under-occupation is managed in accordance with this policy and that this strategy is implemented in their particular areas of responsibility.

5. **Strategy**

Key components of our strategy are:

Communication

We will ensure that all tenants are aware of the options that they have to move to a smaller property by way of mutual exchange or the Choice Based Lettings scheme that the Council operates. We will also undertake targeted communications for those groups of tenants that we believe are most likely to be under-occupying and may have specific support needs to move to a smaller property. We will ensure that advice is clear and positive.

Working with other stakeholders

We will endeavour to work in an integrated manner with the Council and other Registered Providers to facilitate and promote opportunities for tenants to move to smaller properties through existing means. We will participate in and promote appropriate home-swapping schemes.

Take an integrated approach

We will ensure that under-occupation is an integral part of our other policies and that where we have discretions we use these in a responsible way to reduce under-occupation. We will ensure that all relevant staff are aware of our approach to under-occupation and that resources are available to us to help to reduce this. In particular we will integrate our approach to under-occupation within our aids and adaptations process. This may involve encouraging tenants who need aids or adaptations to move to a more appropriate property if they are currently under-occupying and retaining adapted properties for tenants who can make the best use of them. We will also make use of our available discretions to prevent under-occupancy on tenancy succession where possible. We will integrate housing needs specific to under-occupation into Freebridge's future development plans.

Provide targeted assistance and support

We will offer targeted assistance and practical support to tenants wishing to move to smaller accommodation. We will establish an under-occupation assistance scheme as set out in the following paragraphs and regularly review its operation and effectiveness to ensure that resources are used in the most appropriate way.

6. Under-Occupation Assistance Scheme

Eligibility for assistance and support

Tenants requesting to downsize will be considered providing:

- They hold an assured tenancy of their current home.
- They have had a clear rent account for at least three months and when an offer of a smaller home is made
- They have kept to the terms of the their tenancy agreement
- The tenant has not incurred any other debts to Freebridge including, court costs, rechargeable repairs, for example
- The downsize will not result in the household becoming overcrowded.

In exceptional circumstances tenants who owe Freebridge money either through rent arrears or rechargeable repairs, will be allowed to downsize with their cash assistance offsetting any current or former debt. Tenants will only be eligible for the Assistance to Move payment if they are under occupying their home by at least one bedroom, and this does not breach the Bedrooms Standard. Residents will be offered a new property that is adequate for their housing need. The table below illustrates the minimum property size Freebridge will offer different household types:

Household	Number of bedrooms
1 person household	1 bed home
2 person household (couple only)	1 bed home
3 person household (couple and one child)	2 bed home
3 persons household (lone parent and two children of same sex)	2 bed home
4 person household (couple and two children of same sex)	2 bed home
4 person household (lone parent and three children)	3 bed home
5 person household (couple and three children)	3 bed home

Assistance to Move Payments

Freebridge will help its tenants who are under occupying their home to move to a smaller property by offering a range of assistance, including: a cash payment; a part cash payment and practical assistance; and practical assistance only.

Cash Payments	Assistance (general)	Assistance (discretionary)
£1,500 per bedroom up to the maximum of £6,000 per tenant	Removals (including packing and unpacking for older or vulnerable tenants) Clearance of gardens Clearance of loft/shed Hire of skip/recycling of unwanted household items Disconnection and reconnection (telephones, computers, cookers, washing machines, etc) Redirection of mail for the first six months Removal and reconnection of TV aerials where appropriate Removal, alteration and refitting/fixing of soft furnishings including flooring, curtains, blinds and curtain rails) Removal/Refitting or replacement of personal support aids Replacement flooring and curtains in the new home Redecoration of new property	Removal and refitting of alarms and added security Replacement of cookers, where the fuel supply is different in the new home from the old home

Assistance will be to the value of the total eligible cash payment. All applicants will be informed in writing that they have the right to appeal against any decision taken by Freebridge in relation to the Assistance to Move Policy and its implementation. An appeal must be made within 21 days of the decision.

7. 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 ongoing performance monitoring. In addition we will have an action plan and accompanying outputs that will be monitored and reviewed by the Management Team and progress reported to the Board.

8. 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.

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. Under-occupation Strategy 11-13 Action Plan

Area	Actions	Responsibility (Deadline)
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend the 'Getting to Know You' survey to include details of family members to enable us to identify potential under-occupation • Develop, produce and promote a general advice leaflet about the options open to all tenants to move to a smaller property. • Develop and use targeted communications about under-occupation options and assistance available to groups identified with specific needs or extreme levels of under-occupation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AD(HM) (Dec 2011) • AD(HM) (Jan 2012) • AD(CE) (Mar 2012)
Working with other Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular liaison with and support for Council initiatives with regard to under-occupation • Participate in and support the under-occupation activities of other Registered Providers of social housing in West Norfolk • Participate in and promote appropriate Home-Swapping schemes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AD(HM) (Ongoing) • AD(HM) (Ongoing) • AD(HM) (Ongoing)
Take an integrated approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update Aids and Adaptations policy and procedures to reflect this policy • Review and update succession policy to reflect this policy • Ensure that under-occupation is considered for all relevant future policy reviews • Staff training in our approach to under-occupation • Ensure that housing needs in relation to under-occupation are taken into account in future development plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ED(R) (Mar 2012) • ED(R) (Jun 2012) • CE (Ongoing) • ED(R) (Jan 2012) • CE (Ongoing)
Provide targeted assistance and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot the scheme as set out in this policy • Review its operation and effectiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AD(HM) (Jan 2012) • AD(HM) (Apr 2012)

Key CE – Chief Executive; ED(R) – Executive Director (Resources); AD(HM) Assistant Director of Housing Management; AD(CE) Assistant Director of Communications & Engagement

Freebridge Community Housing

Report to the Board

Author	Lisa French/Jackie Beckett	Report Type		Impact		
Related Work Ref.		For Decision	√	High	Medium	Low
		For Information			√	
Consultation	Chief Executive, Executive Director (Resources), Assistant Director (Housing), Project Manager (Hillington Square)					

Meeting Date: 5th December 2011

Report Title: Amendments to Decant and Compensation Policies

Purpose:

To amend the Decant Policy and to make a consequential amendment to the Compensation Policy.

Policy/Strategy Implications:

These are amendments to existing policies.

Finance and VFM Implications:

None directly arising from this report.

Financial impact on the level of compensation paid to residents being decanted.

Customer Care/Equality and Diversity Implications:

Having a policy in place ensures a consistent approach, which has a positive impact on customer care.

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

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

Risk 1.3: Significant events lead to adverse publicity – Critical Impact, Low Likelihood

Risk 2.7: Operational failure – Critical Impact, Significant Impact

Risk 4.9: Not providing a sustainable solution to Hillington Square: Critical Impact, High Likelihood

Recommendations: It is recommended that the Board:

- (i) Approve the Decant Policy (Appendix 1) and note the Procedure (Appendix 2), as attached.
- (ii) Approve the consequential amendment to the Compensation Policy as set out in the report.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Decant policy has been reviewed due to the Hillington Square Project and the large scale decants that will be taking place. The Hillington Square project will involve a major decant process and will include permanent decants and the decanting of leaseholders.
- 1.2 There have been several amendments made, the following being the most significant changes:

Under/Over Occupation: The policy refers to our approach to under/over occupation when dealing with decants.

Permanent Decants: The existing policy covered decants made on a temporary basis. The amendments cover the circumstances where a permanent decant would be necessary.

Decanting Leaseholders: The decant policy, in its original form, only applies to tenants of Freebridge Community Housing. A section has been added to the policy to cover the approach that Freebridge will take should any leaseholders need to be decanted and the levels of compensation that they may be eligible for. A section covering the legal powers that Freebridge possess should leaseholders refuse to be decanted has also been added.

Levels of Compensation: The policy amendments contain details of the compensation that will be paid to those being permanently decanted. It covers the statutory Home Loss payments, the levels of compensation to be paid, and the qualifying conditions for these payments.

2.0 Consultation

These revisions are the subject of consultation with tenants so the Board will be updated should any amendments result.

3.0 Compensation Policy

The current Compensation Policy contains reference to home loss payments and disturbance payments under the heading “Decant for Major Works”. It is considered that the Decant Policy and procedure are a more appropriate place for reference to these payments and the table attached to the Compensation Policy should be amended to delete reference to these as follows:

Item	Standard/timescale	Rate (£)	Frequency
Loss of amenities			
Bedsit	Uninhabitable	£3.00	Daily
Living room	Uninhabitable	£3.00	Daily
Kitchen	Uninhabitable	£3.00	Daily
Bathroom incl WC	Uninhabitable	£2.00	Daily
Bedroom	Uninhabitable	£2.00	Daily
Dining Room	Uninhabitable	£2.00	Daily
Hall/Corridor	Uninhabitable	£1.00	Daily
Front/back garden	Uninhabitable	£1.00	Daily
Missed Appointment (without cancellation)	2 hours late	£10.00	Single payment
Dealing with a complaint	Failure to comply with prescribed timescale	£10.00	Single payment

Responding to correspondence	Failure to comply with published service standards	£10.00	Single payment
Direct debit collection	Unauthorised collection	Amount of any bank charges incurred plus £10.00	Each unauthorised collection
Failure to follow policies/procedures		£20.00	Single payment
Decorations	Making good following works by FCH	£40.00 per room or £10.00 per wall	Single payment
Loss of heating	Temporary heaters supplied by FCH	£1.50	Daily
	Dehumidifiers	£1.00	Daily
Repair not carried out properly	Prescribed standard	£20.00	Single payment
Standard of property at letting	Failure to meet published standards	£20.00	Single payment
Decant for major works			
Home loss payments → made where loss of home is permanent or other qualifying circumstances	As per statute	£1500	Single payment
Disturbance payment — to compensate for reasonable expenses occurred when we ask you to move out due to redevelopment or improvement works		Variable	
Right to Repair	As per statute	Variable	Single payment
Right to Improve	As per statute	Variable	Single payment

Objective 3 – Appreciating Assets



Policy 3c – Decant			
Last Reviewed	Oct 2010	Next Review	Oct 2012
Responsible Officer	Assistant Director of Housing		

Policy Statement

At times Freebridge Community Housing will require residents to vacate their permanent home to enable refurbishment or repair works to be carried out. Where this is the situation Freebridge Community Housing will arrange to move the resident. This will either be on a temporary or permanent basis and will be discussed with the individuals, their families or carers. When a move is necessary, financial compensation may be payable. We will work with residents to minimise disruption and ensure appropriate compensation is made.

Definitions

Decanting

A legal definition used to explain the process where residents are required to move from their homes.

Permanent Decant

When a resident is moved out of their property and there is no intention to return them to it or the resident has been moved on a temporary basis and it is agreed by all parties that the new property is more suitable for them to remain in.

Temporary Decant

When a resident is moved out of their property, to enable work to be carried out, with the intention of returning them to the property at the earliest opportunity.

Resident

When referring to resident(s) this means leaseholder(s), Freebridge tenant(s) or any other type of resident(s) unless otherwise stated.

Decant Principles

The following points should be made clear to the resident:

Temporary Decants

- the move is temporary and only lasts as long as it takes to do the work to the property
- the tenant at all times remains a tenant of their original home. This applies to Freebridge tenants only
- reasonable extra costs as a result of the decant will be covered by Freebridge Community Housing
- we will usually only make one offer of accommodation that meets the resident's needs
- the temporary home is let to the resident on a License to Occupy.
- the move does not affect any outstanding transfer request

OR

Permanent Decants

- the move is permanent owing to the need to re-develop the property or the area where the property is located

Any decant will not affect the resident's statutory rights

Our Approach

We will advise residents as early as possible of the need to move from their permanent home and discuss the options for alternative accommodation with them in person, tailoring the options to meet their needs.

Where possible we will seek suitable alternative accommodation from Freebridge stock or with other social landlords. If a tenant is over or under occupying a property, at the time of a decant, Freebridge Community Housing will consider the individual circumstances of the tenant. Assistance may be provided for registering for re-housing, into a more suitable property, through the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk's Homechoice system or a mutual exchange.

Disturbance and Home Loss Payments

Depending on whether it is a temporary or permanent decant, Freebridge Community Housing may cover the cost of the following:

- Statutory Home Loss payments, paid to permanent decants only
- Disturbance allowances
- Removals
- Disconnection and reconnection of appliances
- Removal and reinstatement of TV aerials and satellite dishes
- Disconnection and reconnection of telephone lines
- Redirection of mail
- Carpets and curtains
- Decorating allowance

- Special expenses
- Miscellaneous payments

Home Loss Payments

Home Loss payments are statutory payments made under the Land Compensation Act 1973 and The Home Loss Payments (Prescribed Amounts) England Regulations 2008. These regulations are updated regularly and will be checked before any payment is agreed. Home Loss payments will only be paid to those being permanently decanted that meet the qualifying criteria under the statutory provisions.

Claiming Home Loss Payments

A Home Loss Payment must be claimed in writing. The time limit for claiming home loss compensation is the statutory limitation of six years. A Home Loss Payment will be paid within three months of the application and provided the household has moved from the property for which the Home Loss Payment is being made.

Decanting Leaseholders

Any decanting and compensation paid to the Leaseholder will be through negotiation. Freebridge will consult Leaseholders about any major works prior to any discussion around possible decanting. Once the necessity of decant has been decided Freebridge will start consultation on the proposed decant.

Legal Powers when Decanting Leaseholders

If leaseholders are unwilling to move then Freebridge Community Housing will consider taking legal action against them. Unless we are able to reach a voluntary agreement Freebridge will pursue a Compulsory Purchase Order.

Returning Home

Freebridge will inspect a property before it is handed back to a resident to ensure it is clean and tidy and the works are completed. Freebridge will also inspect the home that has been used temporarily by the resident or to ensure it has been well kept. Any damages will be recharged or offset from any disturbance payment.

Monitoring and Reporting

The Board will consider and agree any changes to this policy.

Consultation

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

Equality and Diversity

The Policy 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.

Decant Policy – Procedure Note

Introduction

The purpose of this procedure is to explain what Freebridge Community Housing will do when it becomes necessary to re-house a resident to allow major repairs to be undertaken and these cannot reasonably be done with them in residence. This policy will also be followed in cases where a property is to be demolished or disposed of. The procedure will explain the level of compensation that will be paid to residents when they are decanted

In order to ensure the decant process is managed effectively, Freebridge Community Housing will:

- Consider options for re-housing and offer choices to residents, including ensuring similar adaptations where a resident has particular needs and their existing home has been adapted; location issues for families with children where possible.
- Consult with the affected residents.
- Support residents through the decant process.
- Pay statutory and/or discretionary home loss payments using a fair basis for assessment of the loss or costs incurred; including prompt payment.
- Consider interim payments where there is clear evidence of financial hardship caused by the decant.
- Provide regular and easy to understand information.
- Instigate legal action, where necessary, to ensure the decant process is not delayed; or if the resident refuses to move.
- Address under or over occupation issues where practical.

Our Commitment

Where it is necessary to ask a resident to vacate their home, we will work with them to manage the process and make it as simple as possible, taking into account how difficult a process it may be for them and tailoring our service to meet their needs. The following are examples of circumstances where it might be necessary to ask residents to vacate their permanent home:

- Where major structural repairs, refurbishments or improvements are required to the property, which would make it impossible for them to remain in occupation in particular regards to Health and Safety. Our Tenancy Agreement states specifically under **Section 10. Access to your Home**, ***“you must allow our employees or agents reasonable access to your home to: carry out improvements to your home”***.
- That the property has been damaged or made structurally unsound owing to a fire or flood and it is not safe for the resident to occupy until the repairs have been carried out.
- Where the property is being demolished or disposed of.

Disturbance and Home Loss Payments

All payments including those made at the discretion of Freebridge Community Housing may be offset, wholly or partly, against debts owed to us.

Disturbance Allowance

The purpose of a disturbance allowance is to ensure the resident is not financially out of pocket due to the move. Freebridge Community Housing will pay a disturbance allowance of £400.00 in recognition of the disruption caused. The £400.00 will only be paid to residents being temporarily decanted. We will also pay for the following:

Removals

Freebridge Community Housing will arrange and pay for removal expenses using our designated contractor. Vulnerable and elderly households will receive support during the moving process.

Appliances

Freebridge Community Housing will arrange for the disconnection and reconnection of gas or electric cooker and washing machine.

TV Aerial and Satellite Dishes

Freebridge Community Housing will arrange for the removal and reinstatement of any aerials or dish by our designated contractor.

Telephone and Mail

Freebridge Community Housing will arrange for the disconnection and reconnection of telephone lines.

Freebridge Community Housing will pay for the redirection of mail for the period the tenant is temporarily displaced. If the move is permanent Freebridge will pay for the redirection of mail for a period of 6 months

Carpets and Curtains

Freebridge Community Housing will arrange for a carpet fitter to refit existing carpets where possible. If floor coverings are damaged the resident may be entitled to compensation to the value of £500 on production of receipts/estimate.

Net curtains and curtains will be provided in temporary decant properties. Where the move is permanent Freebridge Community Housing arrange for existing curtains and rails to be moved. If the existing curtains are not suitable we will replace curtains up to the value of £250, upon production of receipts/estimates.

Decorating Allowance

A further allowance of £250 will be paid toward the cost of redecoration which is payable on production of receipts or alternatively decoration vouchers will be available.

Special Expenses

One adult per household may claim for loss of earnings on the removal day(s). This must be certified in writing from the employer. This is only payable if there is no other adult available on the day. If this person is self employed the loss of earnings payment will be capped at £150.00 i.e. Allowance of 1 day per move.

If any other reasonable financial costs are incurred as a result of the relocation, such as . travel costs, they will also be reimbursed, subject to the approval of the Assistant Director of Assets and the presentation of satisfactory proof of payment (i.e. receipts).

Miscellaneous

Residents who are temporarily decanted who do not need a Freebridge Community Housing Property, for example they choose to stay with family or friends, will be entitled to an allowance. The amount of allowance paid will be discussed with the individual(s) affected. We may be able to offer a choice of how the allowance is paid.

In an emergency, bed and breakfast or hotel accommodation may be used in the short term.

Home Loss Payments

Home Loss Payments will only be paid for permanent moves. Any person making a claim for a Home Loss Payment must meet the following criteria to qualify for a payment:

- They must have occupied the property as their sole or main residence for a period of one year prior to the date of displacement.
- The move must be permanent and be due to the carrying out of any improvement to the dwelling or of redevelopment on the land.

The Home Loss Payment will be paid in line with the Land Compensation Act 1973 and The Home Loss Payments (Prescribed Amounts) (England) Regulations 2008. These regulations are updated regularly and will be checked before any payment is agreed. The current amount of compensation that can be paid to tenants is £4,700. Where there is more than one person that is entitled to the Home Loss payment, for example joint tenants, they will be paid a total of £4,700 split equally between the parties.

Tenants being permanently decanted will be entitled to the Disturbance Allowance payments listed above, such as removal costs, but they will not be entitled to the £400.00 payment made to tenants being temporarily decanted.

Legal Powers when Decanting Tenants

If we are unable to come to a voluntary agreement Freebridge Community Housing will take appropriate legal action to gain possession of the properties concerned. If we need to apply for a possession order then it is the court that will decide when the tenant will need to leave the property. The Court may ask the tenant to pay our legal costs in bringing the legal action.

Decanting Leaseholders

Any decanting and compensation paid to the Leaseholder will be through negotiation. Freebridge will consult Leaseholders about any major works prior to any discussion around possible decanting. Once the necessity of decant has been decided Freebridge will start consultation on the proposed decant.

Leaseholders being permanently decanted, that meet the statutory requirements, will be entitled to claim a Home Loss Payment. The Home Loss Payment will be paid in line with the Land Compensation Act 1973 and The Home Loss Payments (Prescribed Amounts) (England) Regulations 2008. These regulations are updated regularly and will be checked before any payment is agreed. The minimum compensation amount is currently set at £4,700 and the maximum is £47,000. The amount paid will be 10% of the market value of the claimant's interest capped at £47,000. Where there is more than one person that is entitled to the Home Loss payment, they will be paid a total figure, split equally between the parties.

Leaseholders who are being decanted, either permanently or temporarily, will be paid the Disturbance Allowance payments listed above, including removal expenses and other costs incurred relating to the move as allowed under this policy. Any leaseholders being permanently decanted will not be entitled to the £400.00 compensation paid for temporary moves.

Home Loss payments will only be paid to resident leaseholders as non-resident leaseholders do not qualify for payment.

Legal Powers when Decanting Leaseholders

If leaseholders are unwilling to move then Freebridge Community Housing will consider taking legal action against them. Unless we are able to reach a voluntary agreement Freebridge will pursue a Compulsory Purchase Order.

Claiming Home Loss Payments

A Home Loss Payment must be claimed in writing. The time limit for claiming home loss compensation is the statutory limitation of six years. A Home Loss Payment will be paid within three months of the application and provided the household has moved from the property for which the Home Loss Payment is being made.

Freebridge Community Housing

Report to the Board

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

Meeting Date: 5 December 2011

Report Title: Committee Recommendations

Purpose: To present the recommendation from the Operations Committee meeting held on 2 November 2011 and to note the position regarding the recommendations from the Resources and Risk Committee meeting held on 14 November 2011.
Policy/Strategy Implications: None directly arising from this report.
Finance and VFM Implications: None directly arising from this report.
Customer Care/Equality and Diversity Implications: None directly arising from this report.
Risk Assessment (cross-reference with Freebridge Risk Map): Risk assessment will have been considered at the committee stage for each recommendation.
Recommendations: It is recommended that the Board: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Consider the recommendation set out in the body of the report.

1. Operations Committee – 2 November 2011

Presentation of recommendation by: Steve Clark (Chairman of the Operations Committee):

Recommendation –

That the Board approve the following amendments to paragraph 4.2 of the Home Ownership Through Right To Buy/Right To Acquire Policy (deletion shown as “strike-through”; additional words shown underlined):

“Properties in designated rural areas contain a covenant, which restricts the subsequent disposal of the property without the consent of Freebridge; which consent must be given if the purchaser has lived or worked in the district of King’s Lynn and West Norfolk or the County of Norfolk (depending on the wording of the covenant) for the last 3 years. Freebridge Community Housing, in its role as the provider of local

affordable housing supports the principle of this restrictive covenant which enables local homes to be available for local people. Freebridge will not release the covenant or give consent to a disposal of any property which contains the covenant to anyone who does not meet the criteria of having lived or worked in the district of King's Lynn and West Norfolk or the County of Norfolk (depending on the wording of the covenant) for the last 3 years."

2. Resources and Risk Committee – 14 November 2011

The Committee made the following recommendation:

That the Board approve the Anti-Money Laundering Policy and Procedures, as presented to the Resources and Risk Committee, subject to any comments made on the document by the Committee Chairman.

The Committee Chairman has considered the document and his comments are currently being incorporated. The final version of the document will be presented to the Board at its meeting on 23 January 2012. (Although the Committee considered the Policy and Procedures, it will be suggested to the Board that it approves only the Policy, and notes the Procedures.)

Freebridge Community Housing

Report to the Board

Author	Tony Hall	Report Type		Impact		
Related Work Ref.		For Decision	√	High	Medium	Low
		For Information		√		
Consultation	Executive Team					

Meeting Date: 5th December 2011

Report Title: Business Planning Process 2012/13

Purpose:

The report makes recommendations for the Business Planning Process 2012/13

Policy/Strategy Implications:

There are no new strategies resulting from this report

Finance and VFM Implications:

There are no financial implications as a result of this report. The Board will need to consider the revised Business Plan and Financial Plan at a later stage.

Customer Care/Equality and Diversity Implications:

There is time allocated within the timetable for tenant consultation and the plan update.

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

The risk map was used as one of the reference points for development of the original Plan. The high level risk map will be reviewed within the business planning process.

Recommendations: It is recommended that the Board:

- (i) Approve the revised business planning process

1 Background

The Board were heavily involved in developing the new Business Plan over the past twelve months. Following a strategic review with James Tickell in March 2010; a Board/Stakeholder Planning Day was held in January 2011 with key external speakers - this helped shape thinking about the content for the new Plan - this event will be repeated in January 2012.

At the March planning workshop the Board were able to vote to test priorities before the Plan was approved. In November at the Board Planning weekend the Board considered key policy changes within the operating environment, rent policy and reviewed this year's Business Plan.

This coming year the Plan will need to be updated rather than rewritten. Set out in Appendix 1 is a draft outline of a revised Business Planning cycle based on the current Board and Committee cycle. It is a more organic process to bring to the Board's attention a number of

external and internal factors. These will be assimilated into the Plan for consideration in the spring.

The Board are requested to approve the new Business Planning process.

Draft Business Planning Cycle 2011/12

Date	Board	Resources & Risk	Operations	Audit
Oct 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Review of BME targets • Annual CORE report 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self Assurance Statements Update
Nov 2011		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Markets Briefing • Financial Plan Update (if anything to report) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operations Performance Overview 	
4/5 Nov 2011	Board Planning Weekend Consider key policy areas and review current plan			
Dec 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Planning Process • Hillington Square Regeneration Project 			
Jan 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Appraisal & Assessment • Governance Review (Board and Committees) • Rent Increase • Draft Business Plan • Financial Plan 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Audit Plan
Feb 2012		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget • Staff Survey Feedback • Annual Efficiency Statement • Financial Plan Update (if anything to report) • Benchmarking Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operations Performance Overview 	

Date	Board	Resources & Risk	Operations	Audit
Mar 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Business Plan 			
Apr 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Review of Local Offer to Tenants 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Audit Annual Report • Post Implementation Review of Electronic Purchasing
May 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulatory and Statistical Return • Annual Health and Safety Update • Annual Equality and Diversity in Employment Update 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treasury Strategy for the year to March 2013 		
Jun 2012				
July 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Controls Review • Review of Tenant Promises • Annual Accounts • Stakeholder and Partner Perception Survey • Tenant Satisfaction Survey 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory Accounts • Internal Controls Review • External Auditor's Key Issues Memorandum
Sept 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Report to Tenants 			
Sept 2012	A G M			

Freebridge Community Housing

Report to the Board

Author	Tony Hall	Report Type		Impact		
Related Work Ref.		For Decision		High	Medium	Low
		For Information	√		√	
Consultation	Management Team					

Meeting Date: 5th December 2011

Report Title: 2011/12 Business Plan 2nd Quarter Update

Purpose: To approve the 2011/12 Business Plan second quarter update.
Policy/Strategy Implications: None as a result of recommendation in this report
Finance and VFM Implications: None as a result of recommendation in this report
Customer Care/Equality and Diversity Implications: None as a result of recommendation in this report
Risk Assessment (cross-reference with FCH 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) Note the 2011/2012 Business Plan - 2 nd quarter update

1) **Background**

1.1 The 2011/12 Business Plan second quarter update is set out at Appendix 1. Each action has been assessed with a RAG indicator and where appropriate there is commentary from the responsible officer. For clarity the RAG status is categorised as follows:

Red Won't be completed within the year
Amber In progress
Green Completed

1.2 This update shows the progress made on the implementation of the plan to the end of September 2011. As the Board is aware there have been some changes within the senior management structure that have required the Plan to be re-appraised. Members were taken through the Plan in detail at the Board Planning Day and it is still feasible to deliver the objectives as set out in Appendix 1.

2 **Progress Report on Key Projects**

2.1 At this stage of the Plan's implementation the majority of the RAG status reports are 'Amber' with some early completions already identified 'Green' as completed. Although this is the case there are some major activities that will require closer management attention. The Board will receive separate updates on these during the year.

2.2 Set out below are a number of projects with corporate implications that have been identified for specific updates.

- Re-shape Sheltered Housing Services. A Board member steering group has been established and met on the 26th September. The interim structure commenced on the 1st November based on providing mobile services from three hubs, via Support Advisors rather than Scheme Managers. To date the change has been implemented smoothly, although there has been some negative press coverage regarding a very small number of self payers. The service will be monitored closely through the interim period.
- Hillington Square - this project is the subject of a separate report on this agenda. Meetings have taken place with the Borough Council regarding the VAT Shelter. A paper will be considered by the Council's Cabinet on the 6th December.
- Remuneration Strategy - negotiations are continuing with the Unions regarding changes in the Strategy. Management have agreed to a simplified approach in order that the changes can be better communicated to employees. The Board will be consulted on any changes to the implementation of the Strategy.
- Establish Tenant Panel - the Tenant Panel is now in place and they have agreed a work programme. The Panel has been looking at our Local Standards, members have asked specific questions about how the Standards are monitored, promoted and how they are managed.

3 Progress Report on Corporate Bond Targets

3.1 90% Customer Satisfaction

Revised survey scheduled for March 2012.

3.2 Average days lost to sickness (10.7%)

Current average is 2.96 days lost to sickness.

3.3 Conclude Tenancy Visit pilots (500)

Following the pilot a programme of visits is now in place monitoring is in progress and the number of visits completed will be available by December.

3.4 85% Satisfaction with views taken into account

Revised survey scheduled for March 2012.

3.5 95% Decent Homes

Revised figure at the end of September 85.9% of properties are now decent [This figure stands at 90.1% at the end of October].

3.6 18 New Homes

On track to deliver 20 new homes within the financial year. Current position:

Fairstead Estate	12 units due for completion February 2012 [completed ahead of schedule, keys will be handed over in December 2011]
Ferndale	1 unit completion November 2011
Lady Jane Grey Rd	2 units completion November 2011
Hillington Square	4 buybacks - 3 completed, 1 due for completion November 2011

21 Hollycroft Close 1 buyback completed

3.7 200 New Skills

The 2011/12 appraisals are currently being completed which identify the areas for the development of new skills.

3.8 £333,000 cost reduction target

Management Team discussions have commenced on the development of a cost reduction strategy.

4 Board members are asked to note the report.

VISION	2011 - 2012	STATUS	RESPONSIBILITY AND TIMESCALE	PROGRESS
1. INCREASING SATISFACTION				
1.1 Increasing employee satisfaction in order to develop a corporate culture that supports Customer Excellence	1.1.1 Implement the Remuneration Strategy.	A	Sean Kent Mar 12	All staff now briefed, summary feedback and considerations for Executive discussion. Final response to Unions due.
	1.1.2 Embed the Mary Gober training/coaching. Commence in-house induction.	A	Sean Kent Mar 12	Further group of coaches to be trained November 2011. Gober, staff inductions continuing.
	1.1.3 Identify External Validation scheme and self assessment.	A	Sean Kent Mar 12	To be taken forward by new post-holder.
1.2 Embed customer engagement in continuous improvement	1.2.1 Establish Tenant Panel.	G	Michelle Playford June 11	Nine members appointed to the Panel; first meeting held to agree Terms of Reference. Further monthly meetings planned. Recommendations around the Local Offer have been made and will be presented to MT in December.
	1.2.2 Develop Local Offer to include customer satisfaction and improving repairs and maintenance.	A	Robert Clarke Mar 12	Tenant Panel are now involved in monitoring the Local Offer to ensure 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.	A	Peter Nourse Nov 11 Mar 12	Recruitment process for Assistant Director Assets. Working on revised priorities with Interim AD to ensure implementation of Decent Homes improvements remain the priority.

VISION	2011 - 2012	STATUS	RESPONSIBILITY AND TIMESCALE	PROGRESS
	1.2.4 Tenant Engagement Service Review.	G	Michelle Playford July 11	This has now been completed and has been presented to and approved by the Board. Recommendations from the review are being implemented [Changed from Amber to Green]
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.	A	Sean Kent	Review planned with Tenant Panel in December 2011. Improved monitoring is already improving response times.
	1.3.2 Feedback mechanisms - re-launch Mystery Shopping. Focus Groups.	A	Sean Kent /Robert Clarke Mar 12	New trainer identified. In progress - Next 'Shop' due shortly.
	1.3.3 Annual Satisfaction Surveys.	G	Michelle Playford	STATUS survey completed in April and showed overall improvement in satisfaction. The Star Survey will take place in March 2012.
1.4 Improve communication and access to services, ensuring that FCH is 'Easy to do business with' whilst providing VfM	1.4.1 Customer Contact Centre - develop strategic plan and implement the first phase.	A	Robert Clarke Dec 11	New First Contact Centre Manager now recruited. Plan to be developed during December.
	1.4.2 Behavioural Influencers - assess opportunities and establish pilots.	A	Sean Kent	Still awaiting response from Cabinet Office. Do Something Different pilot commissioned.
1.5 Improve choice in order that individual needs are met	1.5.1 Revise Customer Profiling survey and collect additional data.	A	Robert Clarke July 11	Customer Profiling Survey revised. Circulation to tenants in January 2012.
	1.5.2 Diversity Impact Assessments - continue rolling review and integrate into service reviews.	A	Sean Kent	Ongoing

VISION	2011 - 2012	STATUS	RESPONSIBILITY AND TIMESCALE	PROGRESS
2. COMMUNITY FOCUSED				
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	2.1.1 Complete Community Development Strategy to include employment, training and capacity building opportunities and commence implementation.	A	Robert Clarke Dec-11 Mar 2012	To commence in 3 rd Quarter.
	2.1.2 Tenancy Visits - agree and implement programme of pilots.	A	Robert Clarke	Pilots completed in July 2011. Further programme commencing in November 2011.
2.2 Working in partnership to improve our residents economic and social well being	2.2.1 Local Partnerships - Influencing partnerships' objectives to meet tenants' needs.	A	Tony Hall	Ongoing - Membership of key partnerships. Attendance at Norfolk Chamber LEP events.
	2.2.2 Local Procurement - establish baseline data and set target for future activity.	A	Malcolm Fry Aug 11	Ongoing
	2.2.3 Revise Financial Inclusion Strategy and Develop Digital Inclusion Strategy.	A	Malcolm Fry / Dave Clements March 12	Digital Inclusion: Research taken place, discussion paper being prepared for Management Team - November 2011. Strategy & Action Plan to go to Resource & Risk Committee February 2012.
2.3 Demonstrate a commitment to improving neighbourhoods	2.3.1 Hillington Square - Consult and complete design pilot - start on site.	A	Peter Nourse Mar 12	Pre-planning consultation stage commenced in early October 2011 and runs until 1 st November. On track to complete design stage by March 2012
	2.3.2 Local Charters - Grow Neighbourhood Charters as appropriate.	A	Robert Clarke April 11	Ongoing work with Hillington Square Charter. Intensive Housing Management to commence in December 2011 to assist in delivery of Charter promises.

VISION	2011 - 2012	STATUS	RESPONSIBILITY AND TIMESCALE	PROGRESS
	2.3.3 Estate Walkabouts - Agree approach and set targets. Publish programme for residents.	G	Robert Clarke	Programme published.
2.4 Influence local and national policy makers to help meet the needs of our communities	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 first edition of the e-bulletin will be distributed in November 2011. 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.	A	Tony Hall/Sean Kent	Revised date for Arts Centre transfer 1 st December 2011, but still under review.
3. APPRECIATING ASSETS				
3.1 Develop an effective Asset Management Strategy that delivers a range of approaches, products and priorities reflecting our assessment of local markets	3.1.1 Revise Asset Management Strategy and agree corporate objectives.	A	Tony Hall	Working on revised priorities with Interim AD to ensure implementation of Decent Homes improvements remain the priority. Focus on recruitment of Assistant Director Assets.
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	3.2.1 Asset Management Database - analysis of requirements for stock condition information. Validate and collect information.	A	Peter Nourse Nov 11	An analysis of requirements was undertaken in conjunction with ICT and a report was considered by Management Team that concluded that Open Housing meets our current requirements. An action plan has been produced to ensure that the Assets data held on Open Housing is robust and up

VISION	2011 - 2012	STATUS	RESPONSIBILITY AND TIMESCALE	PROGRESS
<p>[Making best use of what we have got]</p>				<p>to date. These actions will be completed by 21 October. A business case is currently being prepared in relation to the potential for the introduction of mobile technology.</p>
	<p>3.2.2 Devise Under Occupation Strategy and action plan. Implement pilots.</p>	A	Sean Kent	<p>Draft strategy being reviewed by Management Team to come to Board December 2011</p>
<p>3.3 Improve analysis of our asset portfolio to maximise new affordable housing in order to meet local need</p>	<p>3.3.1 Stock Rationalisation Plan.</p>	A	<p>Peter Nourse Oct 11</p>	<p>Production of the plan has been put on hold pending the appointment of a new permanent Assistant Director of Asset Management.</p>
	<p>3.3.2 New Affordable Homes - deliver 18 new homes.</p>	A	<p>Peter Nourse Mar 12</p>	<p>On track to deliver 20 new homes Review options for land disposal</p>
<p>3.4 Improve overall satisfaction in the quality of tenant homes including optimising energy efficiency measures</p>	<p>3.4.1 Decent Homes and Development of Investment Plan - program Stock Condition Survey work plan. Procurement of partners.</p>	A	<p>Peter Nourse Nov 11</p>	<p>Savills' Stock Condition data loaded onto Open Housing. All Survey data loaded onto Open Housing. Current Decency level is 85.9% of the stock. Investment plan will be completed by end of November 2011.</p>
	<p>3.4.2 EEDA Bid for retrofitting pilot successful. Prepare and commence.</p>	A	<p>Tony Hall Dec 11</p>	<p>Review cost/benefit re: continuing with the scheme due to complexity</p>
	<p>3.4.3 Complete approach analysis to wider energy efficiency measures - identify funding including "Green Deal". Consider pilots.</p>	A	<p>Tony Hall Aug 11</p>	<p>Initial analysis done on the potential for solar PV installation on some of our properties. Further analysis will be undertaken once the Government has made further announcements on the Green Deal and other measures which have been delayed.</p>

VISION	2011 - 2012	STATUS	RESPONSIBILITY AND TIMESCALE	PROGRESS
4. INCREASING CAPACITY				
4.1 Clear understanding of our operating costs in order to achieve cost reductions	4.1.1 Benchmarking and Reducing costs - target reductions from agreed areas.	A	Malcolm Fry July 11 Nov 11	Analysis is underway and being collated
	4.1.2 Revised Procurement Strategy produced	A	Malcolm Fry Sept 11 Dec 11	To be confirmed by December 2011
4.2 Improve internal capacity	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. [Changed from Amber to Green]
	4.2.2 ICT Strategy - map and review existing information storage, improve access to reporting tools, improve usage of existing systems.	A	Dave Clements Information Storage: Target Dec 11	To commence 3rd quarter
		A	Reporting Tools: Target Sep 11	To commence 3rd quarter
		A	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. Asset Management Systems action plan agreed by Management Team.
4.2.3 Agree and implement Succession Planning approach.	A	Sean Kent Sept 11 Mar 12	Deferred for new post holder to take forward.	

VISION	2011 - 2012	STATUS	RESPONSIBILITY AND TIMESCALE	PROGRESS
4.3 Income maximisation and impact on affordability	4.3.1 Fairer Futures Investment Plan - identify funding options.	A	Sean Kent March 12	Ongoing discussions with funders and advisers to identify other opportunities.
	4.3.2 Service Charging - implement phase 2 of sheltered and identify general needs charges.	A	Robert Clarke April 12	Phase two of Sheltered Housing complete. General needs service charging being reviewed pending outcome of decision on rent increases for 2012/13
	4.3.3 Supporting People Strategy - restructure sheltered services.	A	Robert Clarke Dec 11	Sheltered Housing (interim) restructure completed. Ongoing work with the Task Group to explore a long term approach to service delivery. Norfolk County Council tender specification due out December 2011.
4.4 Selling services	4.4.1 Stock management opportunities - agree approach and develop draft systems and procedures. Review current opportunities.	A	Tony Hall	QSH model will not progress due to Council Planning Policy - considering alternative opportunities
	4.4.2 Agree and implement PSD Business Plan.	A	Colin Davison Mar 12	The Plan is moving forward with key areas identified for discussion prior to implementation by March 2012
4.5 Improving governance	4.5.1 Revise Board Development Plan.	A	Tony Hall Jan 12	Review of Committee Structure January 2012

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