



Board Meeting 7 March 2011

Minutes and Associated Reports

Developing Homes and Creating Opportunities for People within West Norfolk

FREEBRIDGE COMMUNITY HOUSING (FCH) BOARD

Minutes of a Meeting of the Board held on Monday 7 March 2011 at 6.30pm in the Conference Room, Juniper House, Austin Street, King's Lynn

PRESENT:

Ray Johnson (Chairman)
Lesley Bambridge
Sylvia Calver
Nigel Donohue
Irene Gammon
Michael Jervis
Paul Leader
Colin Sampson

IN ATTENDANCE:

Tony Hall	-	Chief Executive
Sean Kent	-	Executive Director (Resources)
Abigail Ellis	-	Executive Director (Operations)
Angus MacQueen	-	Company Secretary

21/11 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Matthew Brown, Bill Guyan and Geoffrey Hipperson.

22/11 MINUTES

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

23/11 MATTERS ARISING

• Hillington Square

In answer to a question, it was confirmed that Nigel Donohue had supplied the Chief Executive with Government guidance on how far tender specifications could insist on sustainable employment and apprenticeship initiatives. The guidance was now being considered by the Legal Services Manager and the Hillington Square Project Manager.

24/11 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 27/11(c) – Committee Recommendations – as this included a specific recommendation relating to the Hillington Square budget. The Board was content that they should remain in the room during the item, but they did not vote.

Paul Leader declared an interest in the item at minute number 32/11 – Board Recruitment – as he was applying for reappointment to the Board. The Board was content that he should remain in the room during the item, but he did not vote.

25/11 CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

The Chairman tabled a list of his activities as Chairman since the last meeting.

The Chairman referred specifically to a talk he had given to the Rotary Club. This had been a good opportunity to promote the work of FCH.

The Chairman also advised that, following a presentation from five firms to members of the Hillington Square Steering Group, a preferred firm of architects had been identified to work on the Hillington Square project.

26/11 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S UPDATE

(a) Potential Development Plans

Confidential item

(b) “Fairer Futures”

The Chief Executive advised that thinking within the sector was that the proposals within the Government's “Fairer Futures” consultation paper would have not only financial, but also housing management implications. These could include implications for terms of tenure, the operation of choice-based lettings schemes and approaches to under occupation. Funders might also be concerned about the changing risk profile of housing associations. It may be that there was a lull in new build by associations, whilst a full understanding was reached on the Government's funding proposals.

(c) Regulatory Judgement

The Chief Executive reported that FCH's regulatory judgement from the Tenant Services Authority was expected during the week commencing 14 March 2011.

(d) Development at Wisbech Road, King's Lynn

Confidential item

(e) Appointment of Internal Auditors

The Company Secretary said that the Audit Committee was currently undertaking a tendering process for the new Internal Audit contract. Two firms had been shortlisted, both with plausible bids, and would be interviewed on 14 March 2011. Under Standing Order 4, the Audit Committee could appoint the Internal Auditors in conjunction with the Board. So as not to delay

the process, it would be helpful if the Board could give delegated authority to the Audit Committee to award the contract.

RESOLVED: That delegated authority be given to the Audit Committee to award the new contract for the Internal Audit service.

(f) European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Bid

The Executive Director (Operations) reported that meetings were being held with partners to take the ERDF bid forward. An extension to the original deadline for submission of 28 February 2011 had been negotiated, and it was now intended to submit the bid by the end of March 2011.

27/11 [COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS \(click here to go to the report\)](#)

(a) Introduction

The Board received a report which introduced the recommendations of recent committee meetings.

(b) Audit Committee

The Board considered the recommendations of the Audit Committee meeting held on 24 January 2011.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the revised External Audit letter of engagement be approved, the main changes to the original letter being:
 - inclusion of a section relating to “pre-conditions” for audit in terms of the directors acknowledging certain responsibilities. By signing the letter the Board was agreeing that it acknowledged and understood its responsibilities fundamental to the conduct of the audit.
 - inclusion of a section relating to a specific written representation which External Audit would ask for at the end of the audit, in relation to the fact that FCH had made External Audit aware of all the information required for the audit.
- 2) That the Board adopt the Anti Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy, as presented to the Audit Committee

(c) Resources and Risk Committee

The Board considered the recommendations of the Resources and Risk Committee meeting held on 14 February 2011.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the 2010/11 update to the Financial Plan, as presented to the Resources and Risk Committee, be adopted.
- 2) That the revised budget for 2010/11, as presented to the Resources and Risk Committee, be approved.
- 3) That the budget for 2011/12, as presented to the Resources and Risk Committee, be approved.
- 4) That a roll forward of £3.586 million in relation to Hillington Square improvements be approved.
- 5) That the revised Information Communications Technology Policy, as presented to the Resources and Risk Committee, be adopted.

28/11 2011 - 2014 BUSINESS PLAN (click here to go to the report)

The Chief Executive presented a report which sought approval for the initial drafting of the revised Business Plan and for arrangements to complete the drafting.

The Chairman apologised that he had been unable to attend the business planning day held at the end of January. He had received very positive feedback on the event, which had included considerable engagement with external partners.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the FCH mission statement and values be reaffirmed.
- 2) That the draft high level corporate objectives be approved as:
 - Increasing Satisfaction
 - Community Focus
 - Appreciating Assets
 - Increasing Capacity.
- 3) That a group consisting of the Board Chairman, the Committee Chairmen and Matthew Brown be used for consultation on the drafting of the revised plan.

29/11 REVIEW OF THE SIZE OF THE BOARD (click here to go to the report)

The Company Secretary presented a report which sought a conclusion on the Board's view with regard to consideration of reducing the size of the Board, in light of tenant consultation.

It was noted that there were ongoing difficulties with finding tenants who were prepared to put themselves forward for Board membership.

Some concern was expressed that reduction in the size of the Board from 15 to 12 members could result in an increased workload for each Board member. In response, it was explained that the size of the committees could be retained at four, rather than five members, although there would be an increased onus on attendance. Additionally, provided that the scheme of delegation was sufficient, the Board concentrated on strategic issues, and good use was made of the new Tenant Panel, it was hoped that the increase in Board members' workload would not be considerable.

A member pointed out that the make-up of the Borough Council was likely to change after the local elections on 5 May 2011. It would, therefore, be sensible to delay consultation with the Council until after that date. This being the case, the Board was of the view that, depending on how long the consultation took, it may be appropriate to wait until the Annual General Meeting in September to seek approval on the Rule changes, rather than calling a Special General Meeting.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That, in light of tenant consultation, the Board agree that the size of the Board should be reduced from 15 members to 12, the component parts being five independents, five tenants and two Council nominations.
- 2) That consultation be undertaken with the Borough Council and the funders on this proposal, subject to delaying consultation with the Council until after the local elections on 5 May 2011.
- 3) That solicitors be engaged to draft the necessary Rule changes.
- 4) That, depending on timing, either a Special General Meeting be called to consider the Rule changes or the Rule changes be referred to the Annual General Meeting on 20 September 2011.

30/11 [CUSTOMER CARE POLICY REVIEW \(click here to go to the report\)](#)

The Executive Director (Resources) presented a report which reviewed the Customer Care Policy.

The Executive Director (Resources) said that he had become aware that the Cabinet Office were using the principles behind Mary Guber customer care techniques to improve the service offered by Government departments. Consequently, he had contacted the Cabinet Office with a view to sharing good practice, after which he and the Chief Executive had attended a meeting with them. Some ideas had been gained with regard to structuring service delivery, and these would be taken forward by FCH. A further meeting would be held with the Cabinet Office shortly. The Cabinet Office had also put FCH

in touch with an organisation in Cambridge that was involved in improving the energy efficiency of homes.

The Board thanked the Executive Director (Resources) for making this contact with the Cabinet Office and thereby increasing FCH's profile. It was noted that FCH's profile and standing generally appeared to be increasing, and this had been borne out by the experience of two Board members who had attended the recent annual Board Members' Conference.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the revised Customer Care Action Plan, as presented, be approved.
- 2) That it be agreed that, other than the revisions to the Action Plan, no changes are required to the Customer Care Policy document, and that the document be placed on a two-yearly review cycle, the next review being in March 2013.

31/11 AMENDMENT TO STANDING ORDERS (SCHEME OF DELEGATION) (click here to go to the report)

The Company Secretary presented a report which sought an amendment to Standing Orders to reflect the day-to-day working of the Association.

RESOLVED: That Standing Order 9 (Delegated Authority to the Association's Executive Director (Operations)) be amended through the addition of a paragraph 4.7, to read as follows:

“Authority to approve terms for and complete sales of further shares in shared ownership leases to the shared ownership leaseholder and sale of the freehold where permitted by the shared ownership lease, in each case in accordance with the terms of the shared ownership lease”.

32/11 BOARD RECRUITMENT (click here to go to the report)

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

The Company Secretary read out the names of the applicants for Board membership. Some Board members indicated that they knew at least one of the applicants to the extent that they would feel uncomfortable with being part of the Recruitment Panel.

The Board was of the view that, as Finance would be one area that the recruitment process would focus on, Matthew Brown, as an accountant, should be included on the Panel.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That a Recruitment Panel be established to pursue the 2011 recruitment of independent and tenant Board members and to report back with its recommendations to the Board meeting on 11 April 2011.
- 2) That the Panel consist of four members, namely: Ray Johnson, Matthew Brown, Sylvia Calver and Irene Gammon. (Nigel Donohue to substitute should Matthew Brown be unavailable.)
- 3) That the quorum for the Panel be three members.

33/11 **GOVERNANCE WORKING GROUP REPORT** (report not available – confidential)

(a) Introduction

The Company Secretary presented a report from the Governance Working Group following its meeting held on 21 February 2011.

(b) Action Plans Relating to the National Housing Federation’s “Excellence in Governance” Code for Members and “Excellence in Standards of Conduct” Code for Members

The Board noted the current positions regarding the action plans relating to the National Housing Federation’s “Excellence in Governance” Code for Members and “Excellence in Standards of Conduct” Code for Members.

(c) Board Improvement Action Plan Arising from the 2009 Appraisal Process

The Board noted that the Board Improvement Action Plan arising from the 2009 appraisal process was now complete.

(d) Board Improvement Action Plan Arising from the 2010 Appraisal Process

The Chairman commented that there were some outcomes of the 2010 appraisal process that Campbell Tickell had put a different emphasis on from him. He would, in future, ensure that he agreed clear outcomes with the consultants.

RESOLVED: That the Board Improvement Action Plan arising from the 2010 appraisal process be approved and that the Governance Working Group be requested to oversee its implementation and report back to the Board.

(e) “Secret Societies”

RESOLVED: That the requirement to declare membership of secret societies be removed from the Board Member Agreement and the Board members’

declaration of interest form, and a section inviting declarations of any other relevant interests (as described in report) be included on the form.

(f) Policies

RESOLVED: That the current position regarding Board approval of policies, as set out in the report, be retained.

34/11 BOARD MEMBERS' ANNUAL DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (report not available – confidential)

The Company Secretary presented a report which set out the Board members' annual declarations of interest.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the full schedule of Board member declarations of interest, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be noted.
- 2) That the schedule of Board member declarations of interest, attached at Appendix 2 to the report, be approved for publication on FCH's website.

35/11 QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE MONITORING (click here to go to the report)

The Executive Director (Resources) presented a report which provided quarterly performance information for the period to 31 December 2010.

The Board was pleased to note that the key performance indicators were generally positive.

The Board noted the report.

36/11 BUSINESS PLAN 2010/11 – THIRD QUARTER UPDATE (click here to go to the report)

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

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

- There was no definite revised date for the asset management database to be operational, but it would be during the next financial year.
- FCH was intending to complete the development of 34 new dwellings by 31 March 2012.

- Some sheltered scheme units were proving very difficult to let, partly because of their location. A report would be made to the Board in due course considering options for these.

The Board noted the report.

37/11 LOCAL OFFER TO TENANTS (click here to go to the report)

The Executive Director (Operations) presented a report which described the approach taken to deliver the local offer to tenants.

RESOLVED: That, with effect from 1 April 2011, the local offer to tenants be based upon FCH's existing service standards (as attached to the report), with particular emphasis on customer care and repairs and maintenance.

38/11 STONEWALL WORK PLACE EQUALITY RESULTS 2011 (click here to go to the report)

The Executive Director (Resources) presented a report which set out the results from FCH's Stonewall Work Place Equality 2011 submission and identified necessary actions to address areas of weakness.

The Executive Director (Resources) said that feedback from Stonewall had been very positive, and that the level of improvement from the first year to the second year was one of the highest that they had seen. FCH was now above the average for the housing sector. This would provide good evidence of FCH's commitment to equality and diversity.

The Executive Director (Resources) stated that there was generally a need to increase understanding and awareness of diversity issues within the housing sector. One initiative that he was considering was to make use of a "human library" event in conjunction with another local housing provider. This would allow attendees the opportunity to meet with people from a range of backgrounds to hear about their experiences of diversity and social housing.

In answer to a question, the Executive Director (Resources) explained that it was appropriate to place a particular emphasis on sexuality as it was largely accepted that this was the most difficult diversity strand to monitor. There would be occasions when FCH would focus on other diversity strands.

The Board noted that one action arising from the Stonewall report was for the Board to identify at least one Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual (LGB) issue for the Board to support. It had been suggested that the Board could take a stance arising from the recent case of an LGB couple being excluded from a bed and breakfast establishment. The Executive Director (Resources) would shortly be interviewed by the press, when he could communicate the Board's position. The Board requested that the recent case was not mentioned, as it was concerned that there could be ongoing legal arguments, and because this case related to the views of individuals, rather than an organisation. However, the Board was keen to make clear that it had an inclusive approach to all diversity strands, including LGB.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted and the recommended actions be endorsed.
- 2) That it be the Board's stance that FCH does not discriminate in the allocation of housing or the provision of support against any diversity strand, including LGB, and that this be communicated in the press interview to be undertaken shortly by the Executive Director (Resources).

39/11 **APPOINTMENT OF SHAREHOLDERS** (report not available – confidential)

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

RESOLVED: That the five applications for tenant shareholding contained in the list at Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

40/11 **MERGERS AND ACQUISITIONS** (report not available – confidential)

The Chief Executive presented a report which explored the role of mergers and acquisitions in developing the Board's business objectives.

The Board stressed the importance of FCH's local focus, and wished to give a clear steer to the Executive on its position in respect of mergers and acquisitions.

RESOLVED: That the Board's position on mergers and acquisitions be as follows:

“The Board has taken the opportunity to restate its vision, and believes that the best way of achieving this is not through merger, but through looking to work with appropriate partners to enable economies of scope”.

41/11 **RIGHT TO BUY TRANSACTION** (report not available – confidential)

The Company Secretary presented a report which described a Right To Buy transaction undertaken with a partner of a member of staff.

The Board noted the report.

42/11 **URGENT ACTION TAKEN – SALE OF FUTURE SHARES IN SHARED OWNERSHIP LEASE AND SALE OF FREEHOLD TO SHARED OWNERSHIP LEASEHOLDER** (report not available – confidential)

The Board noted a request for urgent action that had been approved, to sell further shares in a shared ownership lease and to sell the freehold to the shared ownership leaseholder.

43/11 **URGENT ACTION TAKEN – DEVELOPMENT AT LADY JANE GREY ROAD, KING'S LYNN** (report not available – confidential)

The Board noted a request for urgent action that had been approved, to undertake the development of two new units at Lady Jane Grey Road, King's Lynn.

44/11 **URGENT ACTION TAKEN – PROVISION OF A TENANCY TO A CLOSE RELATIVE OF A FORMER EMPLOYEE** (report not available – confidential)

The Board noted a request for urgent action that had been approved, to provide a tenancy to a close relative of a recent former employee.

45/11 **WORK UPDATE** (report not available – confidential)

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

- Action Sheet
- Future Work Programme of the Board.

The Board noted the update.

46/11 **COMMITTEE MINUTES** (Committee minutes not available – confidential)

(a) Audit Committee

Paul Leader, Chairman of the Audit Committee, presented the minutes of the Committee's meeting held on 24 January 2011.

(b) Operations Committee

Nigel Donohue, Chairman of the Operations Committee, presented the minutes of the Committee's meeting held on 2 February 2011.

The Board noted that the Committee had asked that its thanks be passed on to all staff involved in the recent successful development bids and to all staff responsible for the continued excellent performance against the key

performance indicators. The Board requested that its thanks also be passed on to the staff involved.

(c) Resources and Risk Committee

Michael Jervis, Chairman of the Resources and Risk Committee, presented the minutes of the Committee's meeting held on 8 February 2011.

47/11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

• **National Housing Federation's Planning Sub-Committee**

The Chairman advised that he would be attending a meeting of the National Housing Federation's Planning Sub-Committee on 11 March 2011.

48/11 NEXT MEETING

The Board noted that its next ordinary meeting was scheduled for Monday 11 April 2011 at 6.30pm, and that a special meeting was scheduled for Monday 28 March 2011 at 6.30pm.

The meeting closed at 8.15pm.

CHAIRMAN

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: 7 March 2011

Report Title: Committee Recommendations

<p>Purpose: To present the recommendations from the following committee meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit Committee – 24 January 2011 • Resources and Risk Committee – 14 February 2011
<p>Policy/Strategy Implications: None directly arising from this report.</p>
<p>Finance and VFM Implications: None directly arising from this report.</p>
<p>Customer Care/Equality and Diversity Implications: None directly arising from this report.</p>
<p>Risk Assessment (cross-reference with FCH Risk Map): Risk assessment will have been considered at the committee stage for each recommendation.</p>
<p>Recommendations: It is recommended that the Board:</p> <p>(i) Consider the recommendations set out in the body of the report.</p>

1. Audit Committee – 24 January 2011

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

Recommendations –

1. That the Board approve the revised External Audit letter of engagement, the main changes to the original letter being:
 - Inclusion of a section relating to “pre-conditions” for audit in terms of the directors acknowledging certain responsibilities. By signing the letter the Board is agreeing that it acknowledges and understands its responsibilities fundamental to the conduct of the audit.

- Inclusion of a section relating to a specific written representation which External Audit will ask for at the end of the audit, in relation to the fact that FCH has made External Audit aware of all the information required for the audit.
2. That the Board adopt the Anti Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy, as presented to the Audit Committee, subject to confirmation from Internal Audit that Bribery Act compliance does not require a separate policy. **[Note: This confirmation was subsequently received from Internal Audit.]**

The revised letter of engagement and the proposed Anti Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy can be seen on the Board member area of FCH's website, within the agenda for the Audit Committee meeting held on 24 January 2011. If you would like hard copies, please contact Angus MacQueen (tel: 01553 667754).

2. Resources and Risk Committee – 14 February 2011

Presentation of recommendations by: Michael Jervis (Chairman of the Resources and Risk Committee)

Recommendations –

1. That the Board adopt the 2010/11 update to the Financial Plan, as presented to the Resources and Risk Committee.
2. That the Board approve the revised budget for 2010/11, as presented to the Resources and Risk Committee.
3. That the Board approve the budget for 2011/12, as presented to the Resources and Risk Committee.
4. That the Board approve a roll forward of £3.586 million in relation to Hillington Square improvements.
5. That the Board adopt the revised ICT Policy, as presented to the Resources and Risk Committee.

All of the documents listed in the recommendations above can be seen on the Board member area of FCH's website, within the agenda for the Resources and Risk Committee meeting held on 14 February 2011. If you would like hard copies, please contact Angus MacQueen (tel: 01553 667754).

Freebridge Community Housing

Report to the Board

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

Meeting Date: 7th March 2011

Report Title: The 2011 - 2014 Business Plan

Purpose:

To seek the Board's approval for the initial drafting of the revised Business Plan and to obtain agreement to consult with the Chair's Group through the drafting stage, prior to the final report being presented to the Board on the 11th April.

Policy/Strategy Implications:

This report starts the process of revising the Board's Business Plan. The final report on the 11th April will seek to establish new priorities.

Finance and VFM Implications:

None as a result of this report.

Customer Care/Equality and Diversity Implications:

None as a result of this report.

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

1.2 Governance Framework - Board direction not implemented

Impact: Critical, Likelihood: Very Low

Board involvement in developing the plan will ensure that Board members direct the plan and prioritise its objectives.

Recommendations: It is recommended that the Board:

- (i) Reaffirm the Freebridge Mission Statement and Values.
- (ii) Approve the draft high level corporate objectives set out in paragraph 4.3.
- (iii) Agree that the Chair's Group, including Matthew Brown, are used for consultation on the drafting of the revised plan.

1. Background

- 1.1 In 2006 the Board developed a six year business plan with a 2012 vision that was designed to establish Freebridge as an independent organisation and deliver the tenant transfer promises. Inevitably as the Board has reviewed the plan on an annual basis it has evolved incrementally.

- 1.2 The new plan will take account of the outturn of the existing plan. This will form the content of a separate report and some specific actions will be carried forward. Having made this point the world has changed: new legislation 'Fairer Futures' and 'Welfare Reform' will have a huge impact on the business and the communities we serve. These changes reflect a tougher economic environment. The Board indicated at its planning day in Cambridge in March 2010 that it wanted a more in-depth review of the plan this year in order to ensure that the business is in the best position to respond to these changing demands.

2 Business Planning Day - January 2011

- 2.1 The Board were invited to attend a business planning day along with representatives of key stakeholders. In total fifty seven external stakeholders attended the day. Feedback showed 100% of respondents had:
- Found the presentations interesting/useful
 - Felt they had gained new information/knowledge
 - Felt they would be able to use the new information/knowledge
- 2.2 Presentations were given by:
- Pippa Read, NHG - The Housing Sector
 - Richard Williams, BEHA Williams - the Economy
 - Ray Harding, BCKLWN - Local Demographics
 - Richard Maun, Primary People - Organisational Development
- 2.3 The key objective of the day was to create an opportunity for Board members to be immersed in conversations with Stakeholders to help shape their thinking about the content of the plan. Feedback from Board members that attended suggested that the day was successful.

3 Developing the 2011 - 2014 Plan

- 3.1 The starting point for the plan must be a question to Board members: "Is the Mission Statement still relevant and do the Values support what you are trying to achieve?"

"Developing Homes and Creating Opportunities for People Within West Norfolk".

Values

- Working Together
 - Empowerment
 - Integrity
 - Customer Focus
 - Enthusiasm
- 3.2 The Executive Team are currently working through detailed information from within the organisation and the external environment. Prior to the Board meeting members are invited to take part in a debate around a set of key questions that have been designed to gauge the extent to which you support a particular approach to each of the plan's objectives. For example: to what extent the Board would wish to support the local economy against maximising cost reduction.

4 High Level Business Plan Objectives

4.1 The current plan has seven high level objectives:

- Growth
- Empowering Tenants
- Financially Sound
- Fit for Purpose
- Investing in People
- Regeneration Through Partnership
- Responsive Landlord

4.2 When the original plan was developed Board members were asked to prioritise these objectives and they are listed in priority order.

4.3 The Executive Team have started to group some of the actions we feel should be incorporated into the plan and at the same time attempted to simplify the document. The Board is asked to consider reducing the number of the objectives to four and to prioritise them:

- Increasing Satisfaction
- Community Focus
- Appreciating Assets
- Increasing Capacity

5 Process

Subject to the feedback from the pre-Board meeting exercise and discussions about this report, it is proposed that the Executive continue to draw information into the plan, identifying key activities that support these objectives over the next three years. The Executive could work with the Chair's Group, and possibly Matthew Brown (as part of the succession plan) to refine the document before it is submitted to the Board for approval at its meeting on the 11th April.

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

Meeting Date: 7 March 2011

Report Title: Review of the Size of the Board

Purpose: The purpose of this report is to reach a conclusion on the Board's view with regard to consideration of reducing the size of the Board, in light of tenant consultation.

Policy/Strategy Implications: A decision to reduce the size of the Board would require a change to the Rules, and therefore implementation would be subject to consultation with key stakeholders and the outcome of a Special General Meeting.

Finance and VFM Implications: Solicitors would need to be engaged to draft any changes to the Rules, the estimated cost being around £300.

Customer Care/Equality and Diversity Implications: A decision to reduce the size of the Board would lessen the opportunity for increasing diversity on the Board. On the other hand, if it is decided that a smaller Board is a more effective Board, it could be argued that this would result ultimately in a better run organisation for FCH's customers. There will also be opportunities for wider tenant engagement, for instance through the Tenant Panel.

Risk Assessment (cross-reference with FCH Risk Map):
Risk 1.1 – Failure to Comply with Regulatory and Legislation Requirements – Critical Impact, High Likelihood. Consideration of the size of the Board is in line with the regulatory requirement of good governance.

Recommendations: It is recommended that the Board:

- (i) Determine, in light of tenant consultation, whether it is its wish to reduce the size of the Board from 15 members to 12, the component parts being five independents, five tenants and two Council nominations.
- (ii) Should this be the Board's wish, agree that the Borough Council and the funders are consulted, and that solicitors are engaged to draft the necessary Rule changes.
- (iii) That a Special General Meeting be called to consider the Rule changes.

1.0 Background

1.1 At its meeting on 6 December 2010, the Board considered a report from the Chief Executive seeking its views on options for the size of the Board.

- 1.2 The Board requested that tenant consultation be undertaken on the proposal to reduce the size of the Board to 12 members, the component parts being five independents, five tenants and two Council nominations. As this proposal would be a departure from the Offer Document to tenants at transfer, it would require consultation with all tenants, and the Board wished that the consultation be undertaken at an early stage, so as to inform its decision.

2.0 The Consultation

- 2.1 Consultation with all tenants took place by means of an article in the December 2010 issue of Streets Ahead. No responses (negative or positive) were received. There was some feedback from TOWN that the article could have been more eye-catching, with a better headline. Nevertheless, TOWN acknowledged that the article was in a prominent position in the newsletter (page 3) and that it was clear and well-written.
- 2.2 Consultation with TOWN took place at TOWN's meeting on 28 January 2011. TOWN was supportive of the proposal, highlighting in particular the difficulties that had been experienced with recruiting tenants to the Board. The comment was also made that the percentage of tenants on the Board would not change significantly under the five-five-two proposal as compared to the current arrangement of seven- five-three.

3.0 Next Steps

- 3.1 The Board is now asked to consider its position on the proposal, in light of the results of the consultation.
- 3.2 Key points in favour of the proposal include:
- It is a requirement of the NHF Code of Governance that Boards comprise a maximum of 12 members. Any departure from the Code requires strong justification.
 - A Board of 12 people is likely to be more easily manageable, and therefore more effective, than a Board of 15.
 - There has been difficulty in recruiting tenants to fill the seven tenant seats on the Board.
 - Now is an opportune time to reduce the size, given that there are currently three tenant Board member vacancies.
- 3.3 Key points against the proposal include:
- It would be a departure from the Offer Document to tenants at transfer, and would reduce the number of tenant seats on the Board.
 - The Board is working well as it is.
 - It would reduce the opportunity for increasing diversity on the Board.
- 3.4 Should the Board decide that it wishes to reduce the size, consultation would need to be undertaken with the Council and the funders. It was felt sensible to delay this consultation until after the Board's decision was known. Solicitors would also need to be

engaged to draft the necessary changes to FCH's Rules. It is suggested that a Special General Meeting would need to be called to agree the changes to the Rules, so that they could be in place as soon as possible, rather than waiting until the AGM in September. The Special General Meeting would probably be held around the end of April.

Freebridge Community Housing

Report to the Board

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

Meeting Date: 7 March 2011

Report Title: Customer Care Policy Review

<p>Purpose: To review the Customer Care Policy and Strategy, and to present the revised Action Plan.</p>
<p>Summary: This report reviews the Customer Care 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 improved services that put our tenants at the heart of everything we do.</p> <p>The report also updates on the introduction of the 'Mary Gober' Method, as a significant organisational development intervention to support this policy and strategy.</p>
<p>Policy Implications: This report introduces a revised Customer Care Action Plan.</p>
<p>Financial Implications: There are no immediate financial implications as a result of this report.</p>
<p>Risk Assessment (cross-reference with FCH Risk Map): 2.1 Failure in customer satisfaction Impact-Critical Likelihood-Low.</p>
<p>Recommendations: It is recommended that the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Note the report and to approve the revised Customer Care Action Plan attached at Appendix 1. (ii) Agree that, other than the revisions to the Action Plan, no changes are required to the Customer Care Policy & Strategy document, and that the document be placed on a two-yearly review cycle, the next review being in March 2013.

Achievements to date

The Board will be familiar with the fact that the association adopted the 'Mary Gober' customer care method early in 2010. All staff have now been trained in the Mary Gober techniques. The Board themselves had a special abbreviated training session. The Executives and a number of key managers have been trained to support staff in the use of 'Mary Gober' and are known as 'Mary Gober Coaches'. In addition to this the Executive together with Kassie Melnyk have also been trained to be able to deliver a half day induction for all new staff in the 'Mary Gober' technique. New staff will still need to go through the two day 'Mary Gober' training. However by using the initial induction it is envisaged that we may only need to hold one or two of the two day training sessions each

year. Key contractors have been briefed on our use of 'Mary Gober' and our expectations of them.

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

Customer Care Strategy 10-12 Action Plan

Area	Actions
Corporate Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop behaviours to support Customer Care Values
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised Customer Care Policy and Strategy • Customer Care Training
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess Mary Gober Method • Deliver Corporate Customer Care Training • Specific PS Customer Care Training
Communication & Access to Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a Customer Contact Centre • Annual Tenant Feedback Report
Service Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and Revise Service Standards
Mystery Shopping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing program
Surveying & Focus Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STATUS Surveys • Assess effectiveness of Climate Surveys • Initial Focus Groups • Continue GTKY Survey
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade Open Housing to enhance CRM functionality • Develop use of texting • Develop use of Social Media
Consultants & contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate requirements

Future developments in Customer Care

It is envisaged over the next 12 months that Freebridge will continue to embed the 'Mary Gober' techniques into day to day operations, procedures and communications. During this period the Executive will be researching how to further develop the techniques and it is envisaged this will enhance customer care further. The long term intention is that we will development the 'Freebridge method' which will be based on the Mary Gober techniques but will further enhance them and tailor them to specifically to our tenants preferences.

In addition to improving customer care Freebridge are also researching how the same techniques; specifically the use of language and behavioural influencing; can have a greater impact on operations and service delivery. Behavioural influencing is a technique currently being used by a large number of Governments and public sector agencies with a high degree of success. Particular results have been achieved within the UK by the National Health Service and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs. The Chief Executive and the Executive Director (Resources) meet with the Cabinet Office on the 25th January 2011 to discuss Freebridge's research and plans in the use of behavioural influencing

techniques and were invited to participate in one of their environmental pilots. Further details of this will be provided in due course.

To further embed the customer care within the culture of the organisation Freebridge is looking at a number of quality marks or assessments to maintain the impetus, provided in the previous year by the Mary Guber training. Currently we are assessing the Government's sponsored Customer Service Excellence Standard and also the QHS Criteria for Excellence.

Following a review of the policy and strategy the only changes required are to update the action plan. The revised action plan is presented at Appendix 1. In the light of this review it is proposed that the future review of the customer care strategy moves onto the usual two yearly cycle and will therefore be reviewed in March 2013.

Customer Care Strategy 11-13 Action Plan

Appendix 1

Area	Actions	Responsibility (Deadline)
Corporate Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include assessment against the Values in the appraisal process • Revised Remuneration Strategy • Assess relevant quality mark/customer care quality mark/corporate quality standard introduced to Freebridge 	MT/March 11 AD HR / Apr 11 Executive / June 11
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous Improvement (scrutiny) Tenant, Board and Staff Group established 	Exec/Apr 11
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Refreshers 	AD HR /Sept 11
Communication & Access to Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Opening Hours • Develop the use of behavioural influencing techniques to further improve customer service in operational areas. 	AD(O)/June 10 Ongoing
Mystery Shopping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed programme to be delivered 	ED(O) March 11
Surveying & Focus Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STATUS Surveys • Focus Group Training • Service Reviews • Revise GTKY Survey 	BAM /Apr 11 TBA MT/Ongoing ED(R)/Ongoing
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop use of texting • Develop use of Social Media 	AD IT/Sept 10 ED(R)/Ongoing
Consultants & contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training • Include specific requirements in all new tenders and contracts 	AD HR/Sept 10 MT/Ongoing

Key CEO= Chief Executive; MT=Management Team; ED(R)= Executive Director (Resources); ED(O)=Executive Director (Operations); AD HR = Assistant Director of Human Resources; AD IT=Assistant Director of ICT; BAM= Business Assurance Manager; TBA=To be agreed.

Freebridge Community Housing

Report to the Board

Author	J. Beckett	Report Type		Impact		
Related Work Ref.		For Decision	√	High	Medium	Low
		For Information				√
Consultation	Executive Director (Operations)					

Meeting Date: 7th March 2011

Report Title: Amendment to Standing Orders (Scheme of Delegation)

Purpose:

To make an amendment to Standing Orders (Delegations) to reflect the day to day working of the Association.

Policy/Strategy Implications:

Standing Orders are part of the Association's governance framework

Finance and VFM Implications:

None

Customer Care/Equality and Diversity Implications:

None directly although having authority delegated means that customers will not be delayed whilst waiting for a Board decision

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

The amendments to the Scheme of Delegation will ensure that there is less risk of challenge that the Association is acting outside of its powers

Recommendations: It is recommended that the Board

- (i) Approve the amendment to Standing Order 9 as set out in the body of this report.

1. As FCH now has a number of shared ownership properties there is a potential for the leaseholders to wish to purchase further shares or the freehold in accordance with the terms of the shared ownership lease. There is currently no reference in the scheme of delegation authorising the sale of further shares in a shared ownership property and/or the sale of the freehold in accordance with the terms of the lease and therefore Board authority would be required.

2. It is therefore proposed to include within Standing Order 9 – Delegated Authority to the Executive Director (Operations) the following paragraph:

“4.7 Authority to approve terms for and complete sales of further shares in shared ownership leases to the shared ownership leaseholder and sale of the freehold where permitted by the shared ownership lease, in each case in accordance with the terms of the shared ownership lease.”

Freebridge Community Housing

Report to the Board

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

Meeting Date: 7 March 2011

Report Title: Board Recruitment

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

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

Finance and VFM Implications: Savings will be made by combining the current recruitment process with that which would have taken place in the summer to fill the vacancies that will occur at September's AGM through the usual cycle.

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

Risk Assessment (cross-reference with FCH Risk Map):
1.4 – Skill Deficiency in Board or Management Team – Critical Impact, High Likelihood

Recommendations: It is recommended that the Board:

- (i) Establish a Recruitment Panel to pursue the 2011 recruitment of independent and tenant Board members and report back with its recommendations to the Board meeting on 11 April 2011.
- (ii) Agree that the Panel comprise three members.
- (iii) Agree that the quorum for the Panel be two members.

1.0 Background

1.1 A explained at the last Board meeting, there are currently four vacancies on the Board (three tenant Board member vacancies and one independent Board member). The number of tenant Board member vacancies may reduce to one, depending on the outcome of the current consideration around reducing the size of the Board.

1.2 In order to save on time and resources, it has been decided to include in the current process recruitment to the vacancies that will occur through the normal cycle at this year's AGM in September. The two Board members whose terms of office come to an end in September are Nigel Donohue (independent) and Paul Leader (tenant). Both have indicated that they are happy for the recruitment process for those positions on the

Board to take place now, and both have been informed that they may re-stand for Board membership, but their applications would be considered alongside all of the other applications that are received.

- 1.3 Effectively, therefore, we are seeking to fill two independent vacancies, one with immediate effect and one with effect from September. We are seeking to fill two or four tenant vacancies, one or three with immediate effect and one from September. Anyone new to the Board who is appointed to take up a position in September will have a long-term and thorough induction during the intervening months, with the aim of them “hitting the ground running” on assuming full Board membership in September.

2.0 Recruitment Process To Date

- 2.1 The vacancies have been advertised in the following ways:

- an article in the December 2010 issue of Streets Ahead;
- a newspaper advertisement in both the Lynn News (twice) and the Citizen, at the end of January 2011;
- a press release that accompanied the newspaper advertisement;
- targeted letters to selected local employers; and
- word of mouth.

- 2.3 An open evening for anyone interested in applying was held on Wednesday 16 February, and attended by 16 people (three of which were tenants). All were issued with application packs at the event. Three other people (including one tenant), who could not attend, were also sent application packs.

- 2.4 The closing date for applications was Friday 4 March, and the Board will be informed orally at the meeting of the applications received.

3.0 Recruitment Panel

- 3.1 The Board is asked to establish a Recruitment Panel of three members (with a quorum of two), to pursue this year’s recruitment of Independent Board members. It is suggested that the Panel be required to report back to the Board’s meeting on 11 April 2011 as to its recommendations.

- 3.2 As the recruitment of tenant Board members will be part of the Panel’s remit, the Panel must include at least one tenant, in line with our Policy

- 3.3 The Panel should aim to identify more suitable tenants than there are tenant Board member vacancies, in order to initiate a ballot in which all FCH tenants would have the opportunity to vote.

- 3.4 The Panel will need to take into account that the Board appraisal and review process held at the end of 2010 identified that the Board would benefit in particular from housing management skills and further finance/audit skills. The Panel will also need to take into account a further recommendation arising from that process, relating to diversity of representation on the Board, regarding age, gender and ethnicity.

Freebridge Community Housing

Report to the Board

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

Meeting Date: 7 March 2011

Report Title: Quarterly Performance Monitoring Report

Purpose:

To provide the Board with performance information to 31st December 2010.

Policy/Strategy Implications:

None

Finance and VFM Implications:

None as a direct consequence of this report.

Customer Care/Equality and Diversity Implications:

Performance monitoring is essential to maximising customer care.

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

2.6 Poor Income and Benefit Collection: Likelihood - low; Impact - critical

4.3 Incorrect balance of responsive and planned maintenance/Increase in demand for responsive maintenance: Likelihood – significant; Impact - critical

4.7 Fuel Servicing – Gas/Oil/Solid: Likelihood – low; Impact - critical

Recommendations: It is recommended that the Board:

- (i) Notes the report.

Attached are the Performance Reports to provide the Board with an overall strategic view of Freebridge's performance as at 31st December 2010.

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

Appendix 1 – Monthly Performance Reporting.

This report focuses on the three months to 31st December 2010 of performance to highlight current trends and a year to date figure to be compared against target.

Responsive emergency repairs remain above the target figure of 98.5% with an average of 99.3% in the third quarter and year-to-date of 99.6%. There were 4 jobs not completed on time in November 2010 resulting in a reduced figure of 98.7% and an overall decrease year-to-date from 99.9% to 99.6%. Urgent repairs remain above the target figure of 96.5% with an average of 99.5% for third quarter and a year-to-date figure of 99.1%. Routine repairs remain above target of 96% with an average of 98.9% in the third quarter and a year-to-date figure of 98.3%. In October 2010 routine repairs achieved 99.0% for the first time due to monitoring and daily checks.

The number of properties without gas servicing certificates has decreased from 28 in September 2010 to 8 in December 2010; with 5 properties more than 8 weeks overdue. PSD have been working closely with housing officers to try and gain earlier access to the properties.

Re-let times have increased in the third quarter from 10 days to 12 days but remain on target as at 31st December 2010. Close monitoring is continuing by the First Contact Centre. This includes spot checks on all of the void work to ensure the various steps of the process are being carried out within a satisfactory time period.

This report now includes KPI's for Right First Time Repairs and Appointments Made and Kept. Work is currently being undertaken to refine these KPI's. The right first time repairs report is only reporting Property Services Department and does not take into account any other contractor. The ICT Department are able to create a new report to include all contractors. The appointments made and kept report is being reviewed by the Assistant Director of Property Services as not all jobs in categories 1 and 2 are being recorded as reported jobs. A meeting has been scheduled for the 3rd March 2011 by the Executive Director (Operations) to discuss KPI's.

Appendix 2 – Trend Report

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

Emergency repairs done within KPI's are above target as are urgent and routine repairs. The trend indicates that the target figures should remain above target throughout the financial period 2010/2011.

Non-decent homes are currently running at 22.8%, higher than target of 15%, although the Assistant Director of Assets believes this target will be delivered for the financial year 2010/2011.

The overall customer satisfaction survey is planned to be conducted in quarter 4 for the financial period 2010/11. This survey should be available at the beginning of April 2011.

Appendix 3 - Complaints

In the third quarter from 1st October 2010 to 31st December 2010 a total of 17 complaints were logged. This is an increase on the last two quarters; however 10 of the 17 were solved within the time scale at stage 1 with no complaints progressing to stage 2 and beyond. The reason for the other 7 remaining outstanding were due to the fact we were in the 14 days waiting to hear from the customer period as per our complaints procedure and therefore could not close these complaints down as at 31st December 2010.

There will be two training sessions in using Open Housing Complaints logging system for staff as some staff have expressed concerns around using the system.

Additional reporting has also been set up. The first report informs the relevant Assistant Director they have 5 days remaining to reply to the customer regarding their complaint, and a second allows the Complaints Co-ordinator to progress those complaints over 14 days since the response.



FREEBRIDGE COMMUNITY HOUSING – MONTHLY PERFORMANCE REPORTING

AS AT 31st DECEMBER 2010

Description	Target 2010/11	Monthly			Year to Date	Comments	A.Dir. Resp.
		31 st Oct 2010	30 th Nov 2010	31 st Dec 2010	Year to Date as at Dec 2010		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Rent Arrears as a % of Gross Rent:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inc HB Arrears % 2.0% 1.9% 1.9% 1.4% 1.4% Inc HB Arrears (in £'000) 436 439 319 319 Excl HB Arrears % 1.5% 1.7% 1.7% 1.8% 1.8% Excl HB Arrears (in £'000) 385 389 419 419 • <u>Former Tenant Arrears %</u> 0.6% 1.22% 1.24% 1.23% 1.23% • <u>Other Arrears (in £,000)</u> 60 220 228 227 227 • <u>Write Offs (FTD) %</u> 0.5% (£8978.78) (£6388.76) (£5758.27) (£34,279.06) 						<p>Due to the free weeks and early payment of HB prior to Christmas, at this time we were in receipt of £99.5k HB credit.</p> <p>Total rechargeable repair debt o/s (£53,421.22 invoiced April – Dec 2010). Provision is £175,000.</p>	RC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>% Responsive Repairs and Planned works completed on Time (includes PSD and External Contractors): (Monthly)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency 98.5% 99.8% 98.7% 99.4% 99.6% Urgent 96.5% 99.3% 99.5% 99.8% 99.1% Routine 96.0% 99.0% 99.1% 98.6% 98.3% 						<p>Emergency repairs – above target for Dec – very good considering adverse weather conditions</p> <p>Urgent – above target</p> <p>Routine – above target</p> <p>Considering adverse weather conditions in Dec and volume of calls, the stats show a very positive result for the month and in turn a good yearly result.</p>	CD

Description	Target 2010/11	31 st Oct 2010	30 th Nov 2010	31 st Dec 2010	Year to Date as at Dec 2010	Comments	A.Dir. Resp.
• <u>Right First Time Repairs</u>	96%	98.19%	99.26%	98.74%	98.5%	Currently on target to year end. (Right First Time is defined as repairs completed first time without any follow on work, linked jobs or recalls to related completed works.)	CD
• <u>Appointments</u> Made Kept	90%	39.9% 94.5%	40.3% 94.3%	40.10% 93.13%	37.50% 95.10%	Missed appointments to be reviewed to establish reasons. These are appointments made and kept by jobs completed and includes categories 1, 2, 3 and 4. Only Reported Jobs are counted as appointments made and kept. Categories 1 and 2 are being reviewed as not all jobs are being recorded as Reported Jobs.	CD
• <u>Gas Servicing Certificates completed on time</u> <u>Number of properties without certificates</u>	100% 0	99.38% 20	99.66% 11	99.75% 8	99.75% 8	8 properties are outstanding as at 31 st December 2010. Please see note 1 on page 3 below for details.	CD
• Total Void Rental Loss – Monthly (in £'000) Less: Decants (Monthly) Shared Ownership (Monthly) Major Repairs & DHS (Monthly)		21 7 0 5	20 8 0 4	20 8 0 6	173 70 1 38	77 Properties void in the month of December 2010. 25 Held for Decant – average days void 701 9 Major Repairs – average days void 521 14 DHS works – average days void 31 21 Sheltered – average days void 601	RC
Adjusted Void Rental Loss (in £'000)	150	9	8	6	64	8 Standard – average days void 14	

Description	Target 2010/11	31 st Oct 2010	30 th Nov 2010	31 st Dec 2010	Year to Date as at Dec 2010	Comments	A.Dir. Resp.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>“Average Re- Let Times”:</u> <u>(In Days) – From CORE Report. (General Needs)</u> <p>CORE Stands for “Continuous Recording System” data is collected by Social Housing Sector.</p>	12 Days	13 Days	14 Days	14 Days	12 Days	On target but close monitoring will continue until end of March 2011.	RC

Note 1:

Gas Servicing

July	1 x Tenant - 1 x Tenant -	Moving to Windsor Park Service Appointment booked on 13/01/11 - now complete
September	1 x Tenant - 1 x Tenant - 1 x Tenant -	Service Appointment missed on 18/01/11, court paperwork is currently being processed Property empty now requiring void works, new heating system is being installed Eviction booked for rent arrears on 01/02/11
November	1 x Tenant - 1 x Tenant -	Service Appointment booked for 28/01/11 Court hearing 31/01/11
December	1 x Tenant -	Service Appointment booked for 02/02/11, legal instructed to process paperwork to court if appointment missed

Performance Indicator	Target	Previous Year	Year to Date as at Dec 2010	Improvement Trend	2008/09 House Mark Benchmark Comparisons		Actions Only	
	2010/11	2009/10	2010/11		QUARTILE			
					UPPER			
% of Non-Decent Homes	15%	28%	22.8%		2.0%			
Arrears as % of rent debit (Housing Quality Network GNPI 134) (Excl Housing Benefit Arrears)	1.5%	1.4%	1.8%		2.5%			
Former Tenant Arrears %	0.6%	1.09%	1.23%		-		Report to be tabled at MT in Mar 2011.	
Service Charges and Other Arrears (in £,000)	-	55	49		-		Shop arrears of £17,427, is being monitored.	
Rent Loss Voids + Bad Debts (in £,000)	292	285	149		-			
% repairs done within KPI's (Year to date)	Emergency	98.5%	99.3%	99.6%		99.3%		
	Urgent	96.5%	95.2%	99.1%		97.6%		
	Routine	96.0%	93.5%	98.3%		98.2%		
Right First Time Repairs	96%	97.3%	98.5%		-			
Average time to re-let (GN excluding Major Repairs and New Lets) from Core (Days)	12	30	12		24.73			
Overall customer satisfaction (STATUS Survey)	83%	N/A	N/A		88.24%		Survey to be conducted in Qtr 4 for the financial period 2010/11. To be available early April 2011.	
Gas Servicing Certificates Completed on Time	100%	99.15%	99.75%		99.88%			
	No of Properties without Certificates	0	27	8		-		

Appendix 3 – Complaints to 31/12/2010

Service Area	Received 01/10/10 to 31/12/10	Resolved at Stage 1	Resolved at Stage 2	Outstanding
<u>HOUSING MANAGEMENT</u>				
General	4	3		1
Staff Attitude				
Anti-social Behaviour				
Estate Management				
FCH				
Service Standards				
Tenancy	1	1		
Poor state of property				
Unfair Treatment				
Total	5	4		1
<u>ASSETS</u>				
General	9	4		5
Repairs				
Staff Attitude				
Estate Management				
Decent Homes Work				
Tenancy				
FCH				
Standard of Workmanship				
Poor state of property				
Unfair Treatment				
Incomplete Repair				
Total	9	4		5
<u>PSD/REPAIRS</u>				
General	2	2		
Staff Attitude				
Freebridge Community Housing				
Decent Homes Work				
Procedure Failure				
Service Standards				
Standard of Workmanship				
Poor state of property				
Unpaid Invoice				
Unfair Treatment				
Incomplete Repair	1			1
Total	3	2		1
Member of staff				
HR				
Grand Total	17	10		7

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: 7th March 2011

Report Title: Business Plan 2010/11 - Third Quarter Update

Purpose: To present the 2010/11 Business Plan third quarter update.
Policy/Strategy Implications: None as a result of recommendations in this report
Finance and VFM Implications: None as a result of recommendations in this report
Customer Care/Equality and Diversity Implications: None as a result of recommendations in this report
Risk Assessment (cross-reference with FCH Risk Map): The risk map was used as one of the reference points for the development of the original plan. 1.2 Governance Framework – Board direction not implemented, Impact Critical, Likelihood Very Low. Regular reporting of progress against the Plan will help reduce the risk.
Recommendations: It is recommended that the Board: (i) Note the 2010/2011 Business Plan - third quarter update.

1 Background

1.1 The 2010/11 Business Plan third quarter update is set out at Appendix 1. Each action has been assessed with a RAG indicator, please note that on this update the RAG status coding has been reviewed and where an action did not follow the stipulated criteria it has been recast. For clarity details of status changes are included in the progress column. Commentary from the responsible officer has been added for all items.

1.2 For clarity the RAG status is categorised as follows:

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

A detailed explanation is included in the 'progress' section where items have changed, and where dates have been changed track changes are used so that any slippage is identified.

2 Monitoring

2.1 A full outturn report will be produced for the Board at its June meeting. At this stage it is worth highlighting the following points:

1 Growth

1.2.1 Freebridge has completed 13 new social housing units and has now received HCA approval for a further 34 units to be completed during 2011.

1.3.1 The Asset Management Review deadline has been extended to the end of the year. Some detailed work has been carried out; for example on the options for non-traditional homes; however, an overarching strategy is required. This is likely to be a significant focus within the new business plan

1.4.1 Land in Chapel Lane has been acquired. Plans are being developed for the Tenant Resource Centre, and planners have indicated that the site may accommodate 5 residential units.

2 Tenant Empowerment

2.1.1 The Tenant Empowerment Service Review has been significantly refocused and the deadline has been extended to July 2011.

3 Financially Sound

3.4.1 New Housemark benchmarking data is now available and detailed analysis will be used to help prioritise cost reduction in the revised business plan.

4 Fit For Purpose

4.1 The Customer Contact Centre has been implemented resulting in both an improved reception service and telephone enquiry system.

4.3.1 At December 2010 the completion of the Stock Condition Survey had been switched to Red status as we were concerned that it had been significantly delayed. The report has now been completed and is being used to inform financial planning.

4.4.3 Asset Management Database still under review - unlikely to be resolved by March 2011. Decision required to use existing Open Housing system, or invest in a dedicated database.

5 Investing in People

5.7.2 New Appraisal System for PSD operatives, has been delayed, however it has a revised deadline at March 2011.

VISION	2010/11	Status	Responsibility & Timescale	Progress
1. Growth				
1.1 Developed balanced tenure portfolio in and around West Norfolk	1.1.1 Alignment of development plans with sub-regional priorities/risk/submarkets	A	Tony Hall Ongoing	Development plans agreed with the Borough Council as part of the HCA process. New implication form Fairer Futures
1.2 To deliver a sustainable new build programme	1.2.1 Implement and review annual development plan	G	Stuart Mansell January 2011	Completed 13 units. December HCA approval for Q4 2010/11 start 32 units. [Status- change from Amber to Green]
1.3 Completed Asset Management Review - identifying all possible development sites within existing land holding and implementation plans	1.3.1 Review assets for development potential or disposal and prioritise	A	Stuart Mansell August 2010 March 2011	Data collection / analysis in progress January 2011
1.4 To establish a land bank to support development plans	1.4.1 Identify sites for acquisition	A	Stuart Mansell Ongoing	Chapel Lane Kings Lynn purchased November 2010
1.5 Strategy in place for merger, acquisitions and partnerships	1.5.1 Research and review successful implementation of completed mergers.	A	Tony Hall March 2011	Meeting arranged with James Tickell
1.6 Increase the supply of affordable housing under new management	1.6.1 Explore options to increase supply and identify most viable opportunities	A	Executive Ongoing	Evaluating the impact of "Fairer Futures"

VISION	2010/11	Status	Responsibility & Timescale	Progress
2. EMPOWERING TENANTS				
2.1 Fully developed empowerment framework with meaningful opportunities for customers to be involved as individuals and representative groups at all levels	2.1.1 Complete Tenant Empowerment Service Review	R	Michelle Playford March 2011 Revised to July 2011	First stage report complete. Individual reviews (e.g. Streets Ahead) underway. [Status- change from Amber to Red]
	2.1.2 Identify options for tenant scrutiny and implement	A	Michelle Playford April 2011	Setting up of Tenant Panel underway.
	2.1.3 Develop structure for opportunities for customer involvement on individual and collective basis	A	Executive April 2011	Tenant Panel proposals out for consultation. Social media usage developing.
	2.1.4 Identify partner to assist in the delivery of Tenant Empowerment training.	A	Michelle Playford Ongoing	This will form part of the Tenant Empowerment Service Review.
2.2 A clear and transparent mechanism in place for tenant involvement to improve service delivery	2.2.1 Establish a tenant panel to monitor service improvement	A	Executive April 2011	Proposals out for consultation. Recruitment planned for March 2011

VISION	2010/11	Status	Responsibility & Timescale	Progress
3. FINANCIALLY SOUND				
3.1 Operating within Funding Covenants/ Requirements	3.1.1 Compliance with funding covenants	G	Malcolm Fry March 2011	Still complying - forecast to comply by March 2010.
3.2 Financially out-performed, transfer Financial Plan by £1m	3.2.1 £0.33m out performance	G	Malcolm Fry March 2011	Forecast to achieve
3.3 Financial capacity for the future plans	3.3.1 Review funding options	G	Sean Kent September 2010	Ongoing
	3.3.2 Explore opportunities to increase financial capacity	A	Sean Kent September 2010	Met with funders. Financial markets remain light.
3.4 Overall core cost - basic average for LSVT's - more spent on 'front line' services, less on 'support'	3.4.1 Efficiencies targeted in Service Reviews and Operational Plans	A	Malcolm Fry June 2010 November - December 2010 January 2011	First draft to Executive by end of January 2011
3.5 Property Services operating at a surplus and winning external work	3.5.1 Property Services in surplus for year	A	Colin Davison March 2011	Currently on target to breakeven
	3.5.2 Planning for winning external work - Market analysis Capacity Planning and annual plan.	A	Colin Davison March 2011	Areas of external work being reviewed and advice being obtained on tax implications for growth.
3.6 £5.5M VAT money allocated to specific plans	3.6.1 £2.0m VAT contribution	A	Executive March 2011	Retainable receipts so far for this financial year have totalled £507k. Expectation is for receipts to be in the region of £660k for the year.

VISION	2010/11	Status	Responsibility & Timescale	Progress
4. FIT FOR PURPOSE				
4.1 Business– infrastructure fully aligned to future plans	4.1.1 <i>Key initiative:</i> Investigate options for introduction of Customer Contact Centre and implement	G	Abigail Ellis November 2010	Complete - live 13 th December [Status - change from Amber to Green]
	4.1.2 Sheltered Housing Service Charge Review and implementation	G	Abigail Ellis	Two remaining consultations with existing residents will be completed by end of Jan 11. Incremental service charge to be added over six years with an initial £5 per week starting this year. Consultation with s/c liaison Officer if any resident put in financial difficulty.
	4.1.3 Prepare for short notice inspection.	A	Executive Ongoing	Ongoing - pending clarification of the nature of future inspections.
4.2 Upper quartile/Beacon Performance (quality/cost/ volume) across key processes	4.2.1 <i>Key initiative:</i> Implement Performance Management Strategy including training	A	Sean Kent Ongoing	All ADs have now gone through coaching training. Mary Gober coaching launched.
4.3 Asset Management Strategy fully implemented	4.3.1 Commission stock condition survey with external validation	G	Stuart Mansell January 2011 February 2011	Savills completed survey Sept 2010. Final report December 2010. Report now February 2011. [Status - change from Amber to Green]
4.4 ICT/Systems capacity aligned to current and future needs	4.4.1 Website Phase 2b (Content Management) developed	G	Dave Clements August 2010	Completed
	4.4.2 Electronic Document Management Phase 1 planned and implemented	A	Dave Clements September 2010	POP/PIP system being tested with user training planned from February 2011 [Status - change from Green to Amber]

VISION	2010/11	Status	Responsibility & Timescale	Progress
	4.4.3 Asset Management database operational	R	Dave Clements October 2010	System requirements being reviewed with AD of Assets [Status - change from Green to Red]
4.5 Health & Safety fully embedded, mainstreamed and promoted within the organisation	4.5.1 Develop and deliver annual Health & Safety Plan	G	Jo Whaley Development – April 2010 Re-schedule August 2010	Progressing satisfactorily to timescale for delivery by year end
4.6 Embedded culture to support future plans	4.6.1 Develop, agree and communicate behaviours that embed the values	G	Jo Whaley April 2010 December 2010	Completed. Further work in progress to develop a behaviours competency framework during 2011.
4.7 Effective Governance Structure	4.7.1 Implement Governance improvement plan	G	Tony Hall December 2010	Completed - Revised Action Plan followed Board Appraisals.
	4.7.2 Assess compliance with TSA new regulatory framework	G	Executive	Regulatory Judgement Expected Feb/March. All submissions completed on time. Delays with TSA.
4.8 Effective Communicator to external Stakeholders	4.8.1 Agree and implement Communications Strategy	G	Michelle Playford Ongoing	Ongoing

VISION	2010/11	Status	Responsibility & Timescale	Progress
5. INVESTING IN PEOPLE				
5.1 High calibre people want to work for and stay with Freebridge	5.1.1 Review flexible working arrangements including Home Working	G	Jo Whaley – March 2011	2010 staff survey suggested 91% satisfied with ability to strike right balance between home and work life. Guidelines to be drawn up on how flexible working should operate and informal home working arrangements.
	5.1.2 Review Organisational Development Strategy	G	Sean Kent/Jo Whaley March 2011	Principles relating to people elements of OD added to revised HR Policy (Sept.10): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing Structures and Succession Planning • Training and Development (incl. Leadership Development) • Performance Management.
5.2 Effective/visionary leadership within the organisation and wider sector	5.2.1 Coaching and mentoring approach developed	A	Jo Whaley – March 2011	Contributed to by Gober coaching programme. Only one senior manager now awaiting ILM coaching course. [Status - change from Green to Amber]
5.3 A workforce representative of the community we serve, and of an organisational culture which values diversity and offers equality of opportunity	5.3.1 E&D refresher training linked to Customer care	A	Jo Whaley – March 2011	Gober courses supportive of E&D principles. E&D Training for new staff to be carried out by year end. [Status - change from Green to Amber]
5.4 Values embedded and lived	5.4.1 Develop Staff Charter	A	Jo Whaley – June 2010 Re-schedule December 2010 Re schedule to March 2011	Working with Michelle Playford on review of internal communications. Staff feedback survey being conducted, results to feed into overhaul of internal comms. to include Staff Charter.

VISION	2010/11	Status	Responsibility & Timescale	Progress
5.5 Principles of IIP embedded (IIP accredited)	5.5.1 Self Assessment for accreditation and action plan	A	Jo Whaley – March 2011	Self assessment will be completed to support a review of the value of going for accreditation 2011/12. [Status - change from Green to Amber]
5.6 Effective channels of communication throughout the organisation	Target 75% satisfaction 5.6.1 Implement internal Communication Strategy	G	Jo Whaley – Sept 2010 Split between Jo Whaley and Michelle Playford – December 2010 Revised to March 2011	Completed. 80% satisfaction 2010. See 5.4.1 above.
5.7 Implemented competitive Remuneration Policy - rewarding staff according to their performance and contribution to the business	5.7.1 Revised pay and benefits package rolled out at PSD	G	Jo Whaley March 2011	Completed
	5.7.2 New appraisals for PSD	A	Colin Davison/Jo Whaley June 2010 October 2010 Revised to March 2011.	Pilot project completed, currently being reviewed to incorporate values competencies.
	5.7.3 New Remuneration Strategy agreed and implementation begun	G	Jo Whaley – staged process through 2010/11 and 2011/12	Presentation to R&R Feb 2011. Union consultations begun. A number of elements are due to be implemented from 1 April 2011.

VISION	2010/11	Status	Responsibility & Timescale	Progress
6. REGENERATING THROUGH PARTNERSHIP				
6.1 A key partner in community development activities to build community capacity	6.1.1 Targeted networking	G	Executive Team Ongoing	Ongoing
	6.1.2 Agree and implement Community Development Plan	A	Robert Clarke March 2010	Plan in draft stage at present.
	6.1.3 Support key local initiatives	G	Robert Clarke Ongoing	Ongoing
6.2 Delivering homes within sustainable communities and developing skills, capacity and employment opportunities through effective partnerships	6.2.1 Establish project framework for the redesign of Hillington Square	G	Tony Hall Ongoing - Key Milestones to be established by September 2010	Project Plan milestones agreed.
	6.2.2 Secure 8 new training places and jobs	G	Stuart Mansell Ongoing	Training opportunities difficult to deliver. To date 9 full time jobs. 1 electrical apprenticeship. [Status - change from Amber to Green]
6.3 Completed the Decent Homes Programme and agreed 'Decent Homes Plus'	6.3.1 Delivery in accordance with all targets	A	Stuart Mansell March 2011	The programme was not on track for 2010/11. At the end of the 3 rd Quarter Management intervention has resulted in alternative works being brought forward. Revised programmes are being developed for 2011/12. The remaining under-spend is due to refusals by residents. [Status - change from Green to Amber]

VISION	2010/11	Status	Responsibility & Timescale	Progress
7. RESPONSIVE LANDLORD				
7.1 Doing the 'Basics' very well	7.1.2 Complete Sheltered Housing Service Review	A	Jan Mitchell Due for completion late 2010 March 2011	Two of the three sections of the review have been implemented. The final section has started and a proposal of how the Sheltered Housing Service can be delivered in light of proposed SP cuts will be available end March 2011
	7.1.2 Asset Management Review	A	Stuart Mansell	Ongoing
7.2 Upper quartile on 'customer satisfaction with opportunities for involvement'.	Target 85% customer satisfaction	G	Tony Hall/Executive	Status Survey planned for March/April 2011
7.3 Deliver personalised customer care	7.3.1 <i>Key initiative:</i> To agree and implement a customer care strategy	G	Tony Hall Mary Gober Pilot March 2010	Training completed. Coaching supervision framework being developed.
	7.3.2 Develop local service standards	G	Robert Clarke March 2011	On target.
	7.3.3 Customer care and complaint handling training.	G	Tony Hall/Abigail Ellis	Focus now on complaints procedure, training planned for mid February.

Freebridge Community Housing

Report to the Board

Author	Robert Clarke, AD Housing	Report Type		Impact		
Related Work Ref.		For Decision	√	High	Medium	Low
		For Information			√	
Consultation	Abigail Ellis, Executive Director of Operations, Tenants, Tenants Focus Group, Project Team, AD Assets, AD Property Services.					

Meeting Date: 7th March 2011

Report Title: Local Offer to Tenants

Purpose:

To describe the approach taken to deliver the Local Offer to tenants.

Policy/Strategy Implications:

None as a result of this report

Finance and VFM Implications:

None as a result of this report

Customer Care/Equality and Diversity Implications:

Customer Satisfaction is expected to improve – Key corporate objective in 2010/11 Business Plan

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

None as a result of this report

Recommendations: It is recommended that the Board

- (i) Note the contents of this report and
- (ii) Agree that with effect from 1st April 2011 the Local Offer to tenants will be based upon our existing Service Standards with a particular emphasis on customer care and repairs and maintenance.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Tenant Services Authority (TSA), requires all Registered Providers (RP`s) to have developed and have in place a local offer by 1st April 2011.
- 1.2 A local offer could be defined as: “Services Freebridge Community Housing provide to tenants and leaseholders living in or across a defined area. In providing services we will ensure the services meet the needs of the community and individual households, and inform residents of the following:
 - Standards of Performance i.e. targets and cost of service
 - How performance will be monitored, reported to and scrutinised by tenants
 - If performance is not met what FCH will do about it

- Arrangements for reviewing local offers”

1.3 Local offers will relate to four operational TSA standards:

- Tenant Involvement and Empowerment
- Home
- Tenancy
- Neighbourhood and Community

1.4 As well as the four operational standards identified, two others cover the overarching need for:

- Value for Money
- Governance and Financial viability

2.0 Context

2.1 The TSA have not defined `local` and have left it for each RP to consider their obligations under the Neighbourhood and Community Standard in relation to local area consultation, which requires meaningful co-operation with any Local Strategic Partners and the strategic housing function of the local authority.

2.2 This approach can already be demonstrated by the offers (Charters) which we have worked with our residents to put in place at Terrington St Clement, Hillington Square and Fairstead. These offers have been created in partnership with residents alongside other direct community agencies. The Charters have enabled us to take a tailored approach to tackling specific issues at a neighbourhood level. We would like to grow this out for more schemes and communities across our stock, but for the period that we identify and develop further Charters, the local offer takes a wider approach, taking into account tenant views from all of our estates..

2.3 Following extensive consultation in June 2010, residents have fed back that their two main areas for attention on service improvement are customer care and repairs and maintenance.

2.4 On this basis the local offer to our tenants will be based on how we deliver against our existing service standards (attached at Appendix 1).

3.0 Creating the Local Offer

3.1 In December 2010 a project team was set up with Abigail Ellis, Executive Director of Operations, as sponsor and Robert Clarke, AD Housing as project manager. Other members of the team were drawn from across our service areas and also included Lesley Bambridge in her capacity as Board member and local Councillor.

3.2 Tenant consultation was crucial to ensuring the local offer was relevant. During January 2011 a survey was sent to each tenant asking them if they thought the existing service standards were set at the right level and were there any areas for improvement.

- 3.3 The survey was incentivised with a prize of £25 of shopping vouchers being offered. We received 1042 responses (15.62%) which is a very positive return rate. Of those who responded 948 (91%) indicated that they were satisfied that the existing standards represented what they would want monitored as part of a local offer.
- 3.4 There were 94 comments recorded from the survey responses that indicated tenants would like to see some minor amendments to the service standards but these comments were spread across different service areas and had no significant weighting (background papers available).
- 3.5 In February 2011 the project team and tenant focus group agreed that current service standards should be the basis of the local offer and this decision represented the information received back from the tenant survey.

4.0 Next Steps

- 4.1 In drawing together the new processes and structure, in response to the new regulatory framework, account has been taken that the establishment of the new Tenant Panel and the ensuing reporting processes will be the mechanisms by which our Board can be assured that residents requirements are continuously tailored to meet local priorities.
- 4.2 The local offer has been agreed following commensurate consultation with tenants and it is the Tenant Panel which will have the means and empowerment to report on FCH Service performance against the local offers. Performance will be continually measured by using our current KPI's, and surveys.
- 4.3 The local offer will be reviewed on an annual basis. (First review April 2012) The review will take into account feedback from the Tenant Panel, the Project Team and tenants via surveys.
- 4.4 As the local offer develops, tenants will have the opportunity to tailor the services they receive. This will encourage more local community based offers or Charters to be worked up where these are requested by residents

Service Standards



1 When you telephone us we will:

- a) Answer within 6 rings with our name and section we work in
- b) Try to deal with your query and only transfer you to another individual when it is necessary to do so
- c) Respond to a voicemail message, within 1 working day

2 When you write to us by letter or email we will:

- a) Answer you within 10 working days. When it is not possible to give you a full answer, we will write to you and let you know when you can expect a full reply
- b) Include in the letter or email the name, job title and contact details of who is dealing with your enquiry

3 When you visit our offices we will:

- a) Ensure that our reception is clean, tidy, safe and suitable for all people
- b) Display relevant leaflets and information in the reception area
- c) If you have an appointment, see you at that time. If you do not have an appointment, see you within 10 minutes
- d) Offer a private interview area for confidential enquiries
- e) Provide or arrange translation or interpreting facilities

4 When you request a home visit we will:

- a) Offer a home visit within 5 working days of your request at a mutually convenient time
- b) Always show our identification, take notes at the meeting and confirm details in writing if necessary

5 If you make a complaint we will:

- a) Try to resolve it informally first, and to your satisfaction
- b) Inform you on how to make a formal complaint if you remain unhappy
- c) Aim to resolve your complaint within 10 working days. Where we need more time to investigate, we will keep you informed.
- d) Give you the right of appeal if you are not satisfied with our response

6 When responding to reports of anti-social behaviour we will:

- a) Listen to your concern in a prompt and understanding way
- b) Investigate reports of serious cases, such as domestic violence and racial harassment, within 24 hours and other cases within 4 working days

- c) Agree with the victim what support they need and how, and take appropriate action to meet all reasonable expectations, offer support to the offender where it will help them stop their anti-social behaviour and arrange mediation where it is appropriate
- d) Record and monitor all incidents of anti-social behaviour, and explain why and when we close the case

7 When providing estate management services we will:

- a) Inspect all estates and communal areas at least annually and invite you to an estate walkabout in your area
- b) Keep communal areas and facilities in a clean, tidy and safe condition
- c) Take appropriate action on reports of abandoned cars within 3 working days
- d) Respond to reports of abandoned properties within 24 hours
- e) Arrange for removal of offensive or obscene graffiti within 24 hours and all other graffiti within 5 working days

8 When you ask about buying your home we will:

- a) Provide an application form within 5 working days
- b) Respond to your application within 4 weeks, and tell you if it has been accepted. If we have to turn you down we will tell you the reasons why.
- c) Send you an offer within 8 weeks of your application being accepted

9 When we need to do any work to your home we will:

- a) Offer a morning or afternoon appointment for non-urgent repairs Monday to Friday
- b) Respond to all emergency repairs within 24 hours, and make your home safe within 4 hours
- c) Respond to all urgent repairs within 7 calendar days
- d) Respond to all other repairs within 31 calendar days
- e) When you report a repair that needs to be inspected, we will offer you an appointment slot which is within 3 working days. We must gain entry to your home annually to make sure the boiler is working well and operating safely.
- f) Consult with you before any major work is undertaken and give you at least 31 days notice of any work that is likely to cause significant disruption. Where appropriate, we will arrange alternative accommodation

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	Management Team, Equality & Diversity Steering Group					

Meeting Date:

Report Title: Stonewall Work Place Equality (WEI) Results 2011

Purpose: To present results from our Stonewall Work Place Equality 2011 submission and identify necessary actions to address areas of weakness.
Policy/Strategy Implications: Updates to Equality & Diversity Action Plan and some staff policies may be required.
Finance and VFM Implications: None
Customer Care/Equality and Diversity Implications: As set out in the report.
Risk Assessment (cross-reference with FCH Risk Map): <i>12.0 Failure to address E&D issues effectively – marginal impact, significant likelihood</i>
Recommendations: It is recommended that the Board: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Note this report and endorse the recommended actions.

Stonewall who support and champion Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual (LGB) issues run an annual Top 100 Employers Index for Equality which focuses on LGB issues. We are under-represented on both LGB staff and tenants in their respective profiles and many diversity experts believe that sexuality is the most difficult diversity strand for organisations to address effectively.

This is the second year that Freebridge has participated in the Stonewall WEI, previous year's results are in brackets. This year Freebridge increased its score to 114 (82) out of a maximum of 200 points which improved our place to 184 (242) out of 378 (352) submissions. Our results were also now above the average for our sector and closer to the average for the Top 100 Employers of 163.

Freebridge could demonstrate improvement from last year in all but one area (supplier policies) of assessment. When compared to the Housing sector in 2011 there is only one area where Freebridge score below average, this being monitoring. This is set out in the table below.

Area	Total	FCH		Housing Sector 2011	Top 100 2011
		2011	Var 2010	Variance	Variance
Policies and Practices	50	38	+9	+3	-8
Staff Engagement	34	16	+10	+2	-15
Training and Support	32	21	+5	+4	-3
Monitoring	30	14	+4	-3	-9
Supplier Policies	10	5	0	0	-2
Community Work	20	12	+2	+5	-4
Pink Plateau and role models	12	6	+1	+2	-3
Further Innovation	12	2	+1	0	-5
TOTAL	200	114	+32	+13	-49

The main areas we need to improve against the Top 100 are Policies and Practices, Staff Engagement, and Monitoring.

Following detailed individual feedback from our Stonewall Representative, Daniel Danso, the following actions are suggested.

Area	Actions
Policies and Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify at least one LGB equality issue the Board can support Develop Diversity section of intranet to include specific LGB resources Provide specific guidance on what constitutes anti-gay bullying and harassment based on statutory examples of "outing" and perceived orientation. Undertake an analysis of grievances to identify trends and common issues. Regular communication to promote inclusive nature of staff benefits.
Staff Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send out staff questionnaire to all staff in future. Develop an E&D calendar of events and issues to aid communication Develop our virtual LGB Employee Network Group in connection with other organisations Undertake LGB awareness education with staff Promote relevant LGB issues in FCH Bulletin Include Stonewall logo on website (consider recruitment area)
Training and Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure diversity training and updates specifically includes LGB issues. Include specific LGB diversity awareness in Managers competency framework Ensure that E&D specific questions are included in management recruitment and appraisal processes Ensure Employee Assistance facilities are accessible to LGB staff
Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor internal promotion by diversity strands Analyse exit interview themes by diversity strands Monitor training take up by diversity strands Communicate findings from monitoring exercises to Board and staff including any relevant variation by any diversity strand. Include specific questions around homophobic and racist bullying in staff survey
Supplier Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include specific clauses in future contracts to enable termination for breach of E&D policies
Further Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop similar actions in relation to service delivery to support LGB tenants

These actions will be incorporated into the next update of the Equality and Diversity Action Plan.

Several of these actions can also be widened to ensure they address other protected groups of staff and tenants.

Many of these actions will be quite easy to implement. The annual E&D calendar of activities will provide a strategic focus for the organisation to promote all aspects of diversity by linking up with national and internal initiatives.

I would suggest that the could Board take a stance on the recent case of exclusion of an LGB couple from services at Bed and Breakfast by issuing a clear statement that Freebridge do not discriminate in the allocation of housing or the provision of support against LGB couples, as their LGB issue to align with.