

**Housing Transfer Programme Board**  
**31<sup>st</sup> October 2007**

**Attendance:**

**Councillors** – Graham Butland (Chairman), John Gyford, Eric Lynch (from 7.30pm) and Simon Walsh.

**Consultants** – Simon Martin, Price Waterhouse Cooper (PWC)

**Officers** – Chris Fleetham, Finance Director and Allan Reid, Chief Executive.

**Action by**

1 **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Michael Lager,

2 **Minutes**

**DECISION:** That the minutes of the Board meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2007 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. **Matters Arising from the minutes of the last meeting.**

Chris Fleetham, the Finance Director, updated the Board on the position of any matters outstanding as recorded in the minutes of the last meeting.

- (a) **Valuation.** Members were informed that alterations had been made to the valuation based upon the Grounds Maintenance Service Level Agreement (SLA) being resolved. In addition other changes affecting the valuation included the cost of the bond for the pension fund being £400k rather than the estimated £500k.

These changes meant that the latest tenanted market value (TMV) was £36.9m leaving a net capital receipt of £23.1m and a Community Fund of £11.3m.

- (b) **Community Fund.** This had now been agreed at 3 nominees from each side but discussions needed to continue on the quorum for any decisions. A number of suggestions were put forward including unanimous agreement from both sides / substitutes being appointed, approval being subject to no vote against etc. Mr Fleetham agreed to take these suggestions away for further consideration with GCH representatives. **CF**
- (c) **Transfer Agreement.** Mr Fleetham reported that the Single Tier Work Force had been agreed. The charges for the Area Offices had been revised as GCH admitted to an error. In response to a question from Councillor Gyford Members were informed that the Council could decide to hold up to a maximum of 50 properties back from the transfer. As a result of various projects including a redevelopment of some sheltered housing and a few properties being held for emergency accommodation there would be some properties being held but this was not expected to be near to the 50 property limit.
- (d) **Temporary Accommodation.** Following the concerns expressed by Joanne Albini further discussions had been undertaken with representatives from GCH and an understanding had been established which met some of the concerns expressed – in particular that GCH would re-house certain categories of homeless persons.

- (e) **Sheltered Accommodation.** Members were informed that negotiations were progressing with the Care Trust.
- (f) **Staffing.** Mr Fleetham reported that three more GCH posts had been advertised and GCH had agreed that BDC staff would be given the first offer of any new posts in GCH for a period of three months after transfer.
- (g) **Sewers.** Members noted the position with regard to sewers but asked for officers to negotiate a claw back agreement if the sewers transferred to Anglian Water within the period of the business plan.
- (h) **Shops.** The Leader informed Members that an understanding had been reached with the Chairman of the GCH Board that the transfer of the shops was not part of the transfer of the housing stock. It had also been made clear to GCH that the Council was required to receive a market value for its assets, some of which attracted substantial rental income, but that provided agreement could be reached post transfer then the Council would look favourably on the transfer of shops to GCH.

#### 4 **Valuation Update**

The Chief Executive asked that the report presented at the last meeting by Lesley Day, the Audit Services Manager be deferred to a further meeting. This report looked to review the issues surrounding the substantial change in the valuation and Mr Reid was concerned that there were still a number of issues in the report which needed to be answered.

Councillor Gyford asked the question “should there have been an audit trail”. Other Members were asked to email any further questions to the Chief Executive.

DECISION: That consideration of the report be deferred to a subsequent meeting in order that the remaining questions and issues can be considered.

#### 5 **Project Plan**

Simon Martin from PWC advised the Board that the only outstanding issue of concern was that of the conveyancing. A final position report could be given during the early part of next week. It was mainly an issue for the GCH lawyers so that they could give a view to the GCH funders.

#### 6. **Outstanding Issues**

Mr Fleetham advised the Board that the transfer agreement was almost ready. The overwhelming majority of issues had been resolved but there remained one or two matters to be resolved some of which would happen post transfer.

Members noted that GCH had found some difficulty in finding accommodation within the District but agreement had been reached that the new accommodation would be inside the District.

Consideration had been given to the issue of deferred TUPE rights which would apply to the Grounds Maintenance staff in the event that the contract was won by another provider in 15 months time. Agreeing the deferred TUPE rights could mean there would be a pension fund deficit to GCH and therefore Members agreed to these costs being met 50:50 between the Community Fund and the Council if this situation arises.

The Finance Director reported that the other outstanding matters at the time of transfer were likely to be as follows:-

- Service Level Agreements
- Conveyancing
- Care Call/Sheltered Accommodation
- Pension Fund
- Members Protocol
- The precise list of staff with deferred TUPE rights
- Shops

**7. Council Meeting – 5<sup>th</sup> November**

Members noted that an updated Cabinet report was being prepared to be sent to all Councillors before the weekend. It was agreed that the Council's Legal and Financial Advisers would be asked to make a short statement before the Leader puts forward the recommendations for transfer.

**8 Date of Next Meeting**

It was agreed that a further meeting be held at 7.15pm on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2007 at Causeway House and this meeting will consider an updated Valuation report together with an opportunity for any further review/learning of the whole housing transfer process.

**9 Any Other Business – there was no other business.**

The meeting commenced at 7.15pm and 7.52pm

CLLR G BUTLAND

Chairman