**Hexagon Housing Association**

**Board of Management**

**29 September 2015**

**Agenda item 6**

**Strategic matters arising from annual review of Resident Involvement**

**Report by the Operations Director**

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| *1* | ***Summary*** |
|  | The report summarises progress on the matters it agreed 12 months ago in relation to the work of the Resident Involvement team and sets out four priority areas for the coming year, including progressing via a mechanism to be agreed by the Board the ideas for resident involvement which came out of the Away Day in early September |
| *2.* | ***Recommendations*** |
| 2.1 | That the progress on the 2014 strategic matters is noted. |
| 2.2 | Once the Board has made a decision on the method of recruitment for TBMs, the implementation becomes a strategic priority for the Resident Involvement team supported by Directors’ Group. |
| 2.3 | The implementation of the Board’s decisions on the Residents’ Forum review should become a strategic priority for the Resident Involvement team. |
| 2.4 | The Resident Involvement team continue to monitor the co-ops closely in relation to compliance with the regulatory code. |
| 2.5 | That once the Board has decided how it wishes to take forward the policy change ideas mentioned at the Away day, the Resident Involvement team draw up an action plan for implementation. |
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| *3.* | ***Progress on strategic matters identified in 2014*** |
| 3.1 | There were three priorities identified last year following the annual review:     * To endorse the more rigorous approach adopted to any co-op non-compliance with gas safety legislation; * To approve the proposal to review the role and constitution of the Residents Forum with a report back to the Board in early 2015; * To approve the new Resident Involvement policy.   The progress on these is set out below. |
| *3.2* | *Gas safety compliance* |
| 3.2.1 | Co-op performance on gas safety compliance over the last five quarters, although not always 100%, has improved compared with previous years. The performance at the end of each quarter is set out below:   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Quarter** | % | **Number overdue** | | Q1, 2014/15 | 99.3 | 2 | | Q2, 2014/15 | 99.9 | 1 | | Q3, 2014/15 | 98.0 | 6 | | Q4,2015/16 | 100 | 0 | | Q1, 2015/16 | 100 | 0 | |
| 3.2.2 | In addition to the quarterly reporting to the Board, there is monitoring internally and as a result, for 2014/15 a total of seven Breach Notices were served individually on Acceptable Face, Balfour St, LFSA, BTC and Kirkdale, with the latter two each receiving two separate Notices. In all seven cases the co-op claimed that the safety check had been carried out and indeed the LGSR certificates were received straight away after the Notices were issued. However last year, and against a background of the HCA issuing of judgements against RSLs with late or non-existing gas safety certificates, we responded immediately to cases of late certificates and in spite of appeals from co-ops, the message has been received that we will not tolerate anything less than 100% compliance with the gas safety regulations. |
| *3.3* | *Review of the Residents Forum* |
|  | The proposal to review the Forum has been implemented and after some discussion at the Board and in the Forum, an external review was agreed and a brief approved by both the Forum and the Board. A market testing exercise was carried out and HQN selected by the panel. The review has been carried out and it had been hoped to make a decision on the way forward at this meeting as planned. The report is contained within a separate item on this agenda. However the Residents Forum which met on 9 September with the report on the agenda needs more time to consider the recommendations so the Board will not see the Forum’s views till November. |
| *3.4* | *Resident Involvement policy* |
|  | This was approved last year and has set the basis of the resident involvement activities over the last year. The Board received a report in May which assessed the impact of each of the activities mentioned in the policy. |
| *4.* | ***Strategic priorities for the next 12 months*** |
|  | There are three pieces of work which need to be priorities for the coming year:   * Implementing the Board’s decision in relation to recruiting and supporting Tenant Board members; * Implementing the recommendations which are agreed following the review of the Residents Forum; * Focus on ensuring that our co-ops especially BTC are operating in a way which allows Hexagon to maintain compliance with the regulatory code, not only in relation to safety compliance but also in relation to governance issues.   In addition, if the Board make decisions on the issues raised at the Away-day in relation to resident involvement, the Resident Involvement team will work on the implementation. |
| *5.* | ***Method of selecting Tenant Board members*** |
| 5.1 | This issue was not one of the strategic matters coming out of last year’s review but it has been an important governance issue discussed at the Board and at the away day during the year. The need to comply with a suitable code of governance is a requirement under the HCA’s regulatory code and Hexagon has decided that it wishes to use the NHF’s code. This places emphasis on assessing the skills of Board members prior to selection and our current method of recruiting Tenant Board Members does not meet the requirements. The Board agreed that a panel of Tenant Board Members should be tasked with looking into this issue and coming up with some alternatives. This was done and Rosalind Watson’s presentation at the Away day in early September provided the Board with “food for thought” although no specific recommendations were made. There is therefore a need to do more work on this in the coming few months so that new arrangements can be put in place for next year.  This work is essential to ensure that Hexagon complies with the regulatory code in future.  **It is therefore recommended that, once the Board has made a decision on the method of recruitment for TBMs, the implementation becomes a strategic priority for the Resident Involvement team supported by Directors’ Group.** |
| *6.* | ***Follow up to the Residents’ Forum review*** |
|  | Assuming that most of the recommendations of the review are agreed, there will be work to do , e.g. to draw up a draft constitution and standing orders and devise a suitable induction and training programme for members and officers of the new Forum.  Therefore  **It is recommended that the implementation of the Board’s decisions on the Residents’ Forum review should become a strategic priority for the Resident Involvement team.** |
| *7.* | ***Ensuring that our co-ops are compliant with the regulatory code*** |
|  | There needs to be continued focus on compliance within the co-ops as has been demonstrated by the recent need for high level intervention to get BTC back on track. There is a separate brief report about the BTC issues on the agenda. The emphasis on safety issues with gas checks and Fire Risk Assessment reviews should be continued with close monitoring and immediate action on any areas of non-compliance. In relation to BTC, the co-op has now agreed to our input into the external reviews of alleged impropriety and governance and so we will need to be involved during the year in ensuring these are followed up properly.  Therefore  **It is recommended that the Resident Involvement team continue to monitor the co-ops closely in relation to compliance with the regulatory code.** |
| *8.* | ***Responding to possible policy changes arising from the Away-day*** |
| 8.1 | Board Members at their away day discussed a number of issues and ideas which may impact on the work of the resident involvement team e.g. Ideas about having a committee of the Board with residents on it to look at performance issues, considering offering a qualification for residents involved in scrutiny, having a “tenant empowerment officer” to support and mentor residents, the need to review the resident involvement policy with perhaps fewer activities, the need to have more appealing material in our communications with residents, the greater use of IT for communicating with residents and the greater use of social media.  It is assumed that the Board will set up a mechanism to progress or otherwise some or all of these ideas. Whatever the outcome, it is likely that there will be some demands on the capacity of the resident involvement team to respond to any resulting initiatives.  **It is recommended that the Board decide how it wishes to take forward the ideas mentioned at the Away day in relation to these matters and then the Resident Involvement team draw up an action plan for implementation.** |