

South and South West E&D Forum

Date: 5 June 2013

Venue: Sovereign Housing Association, Bristol

Minutes

No.	Item	Actions
1.	Welcome and Attendance	
1.1.	Nikki Wickham – Orbit Group Clifton Robinson – Housing Diversity Network Dawn Lang – Homes in Sedgemoor John Thornhill – Chartered Institute of Housing Gary Smith – Texthelp Limited Rachel Searle – Sovereign Andy Perry – Alliance Homes Andrew Petrie – Housing Diversity Network Kate Wilson – Merlin Housing Society Emily Burdfield – First Wessex Nicki Brackenbury – Aster Communities Elaine Curtis – Aster Communities Kamaran Rasheed – A2Dominion Alison Flaherty – Homes in Sedgemoor Sally Huggins – Magna Housing Group	
2.	Apologies	
2.1.	Jan Waters – Sovereign Mayur Bhatt – Curo Group	
3.	Minutes and Action Points from Meeting 26 February 2013	
3.1.	The Minutes were approved	
3.2.	Presentation by John Thornhill, CIH on Welfare Reform, Change in Regulation, CIH Charter etc. and delivered by CR in John's absence, to be circulated.	
3.3.	Matters Arising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online Form – RS confirmed this is being used but not regularly, needs more promotion. Link to be re-sent by RS. • Annual Report discussion to be held back until the next meeting. • The question of new members to the forum to be discussed during the meeting. • NB has plotted all current members of the forum, to be discussed during meeting. • Future meeting dates have been agreed and circulated, confirmation of venue to be issued. • Annual Practitioners Day to be revisited at a later date. • Housemark – no responses received to date. 	RS

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CR will contact EHRC to invite a member to the December meeting. 	CR
4.	Presentation by Gary Smith – Texthelp Limited	
4.1.	GS explained the origins of the company and gave a demonstration of Read and Write Gold.	
4.2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Texthelp are a software company established in the 1990s and assist those with literacy problems. Around 5.2m adults in the UK are affected. Around 10% of population have dyslexia and 16% have other literacy difficulties. Those having difficulties rarely come forward and develop their own mechanisms to cope with their problems. Dyslexia affects not only reading (speed/comprehension) but also writing and organisational skills. On a positive note many suffering with dyslexia are very innovative and often see the bigger picture. Negative effects include taking longer to read/comprehend, slower written work which can be of poorer quality and also increased stress levels due to having to meet targets. 	
4.3.	<p>GS gave a demonstration of their software.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a facility to convert text into speech; the text is also highlighted as spoken so the user can follow what is being said. A speech maker has been devised to convert documents to speech which can then be loaded onto an MP3 player and listened to by the user as many times as required. The system is compatible with all Windows products plus those from other companies. Numerous accents are available to the user, i.e. if of Polish background can select English spoken with a Polish accent. Speed can also be regulated. Photographs can be taken of text, i.e. from a book, convert to a pdf document and this can then be read in the same way as a word document. The system also works with information sourced from the internet. There is an option “read the web”, once clicked, hover over required information and this will be read out. It can also work with hyperlinks. The spell checker facility is phonetic as well as showing the traditional spelling and it also has a Thesaurus. Highlight pens can be used to highlight text from different sources these can be saved together as one document and the system will also create a bibliography so can revisit original information if required. Single user licences can be purchased or a group licence that can be used by a company via a USB stick. <p>Housing Diversity Network and Texthelp are currently working together</p>	

	<p>to negotiate a deal in terms of pricing. CR to update the group at the next meeting.</p> <p>CR thanked Gary for attending and giving the group a very informative presentation.</p>	CR
5.	Presentation by John Thornhill – Chartered Institute of Housing	
5.1.	<p>Please find a copy of John Thornhill’s presentation attached with the minutes.</p> <p>If you wish to contact John for more information:</p> <p>johnthornhill@cih.org</p> <p>Twitter: JohnAThornhill</p> <p>www.cih.org/equalityanddiversitycharter</p>	
6.	Discussion re the Future Direction of the SW and SE Forum	
6.1.	Requests to sign the revised Terms and Conditions have been sent out to members. To date only 8 responses received.	
6.2.	Some emails have been returned undeliverable, updated contact information required.	
6.3.	Town and Country HA from Tunbridge have previously been an active member but feel too far to travel to meetings. Would like to continue to receive information but not attend meetings. Agreed to retain them as a member of the forum and request information input even if cannot attend meetings.	
6.4.	Aster have done some work on locations and venues and plotted HA offices on a map. Curo based in Bath have just joined the forum. NW to follow up those members who have not been in contact then Aster will reset the map.	NW
7.	HDN Update	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CR has attended a couple of events on Welfare Reform and Equalities in Manchester and Durham and had conversations with Government officials. They are happy to have on-line forums for practitioners to register their views and these can then be taken to the Shadow Cabinet. There is the possibility of an event in Birmingham is there interest within SW/SW to hold a similar event here? • Board Members and Mentoring. Approach was made 15 months ago. Launching a Board Members Mentoring Programme in Watford on 6 July 2013. If more information is required contact HDN, possibly roll-out programme in other regions next year. • HDN are working with the HCA on a number of programmes around Mentoring for Managers with HDN offering extra support. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midlands Equalities Forum had their inaugural launch with second meeting being held in September. David Corrigan from HCA is attending to discuss HCAC and Inside Housing has been asked to attend. • CR meeting up with David Corrigan after this meeting would group like CR to ask him to attend a future group meeting, possibly December or April. • CIH/HDN conference being held on 2 October. Theme this year is Disability. Former CEO of Breakthrough UK is chairing. There will be various workshops including Welfare Reform impact, disabled housing professionals, disability, harassment, hate crime. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AP has been with HDN for 6-7 weeks. • DNA Showcase events being held around the country looking at areas of distinction from those who have completed the process. • Survey has been issued asking organisations what they are doing around Equality and Diversity and how they are coping with the changes. Information will be published in Inside Housing. • Event in July in the North West. Train the E&D Trainer sessions. A repeat of this event to be held in North West with possibility of rolling-out to whole country. Log interest for future events. • Mentoring – tenant programme building on other pilot programmes. Funding possibly coming from grants and the Lottery. Log interest if wish to participate. • Mentoring Conference in Birmingham on 4 July 2013 to celebrate achievements from the previous year and how to benefit organisations. Register with HDN if interested in attending. 	
8.	Benchmarking – Staff Profiling Data	
8.1	Merlin, Soha and Orbit have provided staff profiling information but this has not yet been input onto a spreadsheet. Would others like to participate 3 responses do not provide sufficient information. RS has sent through information on hate crime, ASB and domestic abuse.	
8.2	KR felt there were gaps in data currently held so there was work to be done to complete.	
8.3	All members to provide NW (by email) with a breakdown of their staff profiling figures, including a breakdown of senior management along with a breakdown of each Board profile by the end of June 2013	ALL
8.4	All members to provide NW with numbers of reported cases of hate crime and domestic abuse within the last financial year.	ALL
8.5	CR and AP have a meeting with Housemark in a couple of weeks; will invite them to attend a future meeting for a discussion around benchmarking data.	CR/AP

9.	Any Other Business	
9.1.	Move next meeting to avoid clash with CIH/HDN Conference being held on 2 October 2013.	
10.	Date of Next Meeting	
10.1.	23 October 2013, venue to be confirmed.	