

## **Minutes of the Committee of Management meeting, held on 27<sup>th</sup> August 2004**

**Present:** Neil Marsden (ANUK) in the Chair; Martin Blakey (Unipol); Andrew Cardy (UUK); Lindsey Fidler-Baker (NUS); Ian Fletcher (ANUK, on behalf of Alan Wright); Andrew Griffiths (CIEH); Paul Harris (ASRA, on behalf of Jayne Conboye); Charles Kerr (UPP, on behalf of Mark Allen).

**Apologies:** Mark Allen (UPP); Jayne Conboye (ASRA); John Daniels (ODPM); Victoria Loveseed (Unipol); Helen Symons (NUS); Rod Truter (Opal); Simon Williams (Unite); Alan Wright (ANUK).

**In Attendance:** Simon Kemp (Unipol)

### **Minutes of the last Meeting:**

LF-B requested that the reference to NUS publicising the Code in the September edition of *Which* should read “NUS would flag the existence of the Code and the article may refer to it.” NM wanted it recorded that the meeting agreed to include a section in the Code relating to accredited tenancy schemes. Otherwise the minutes were agreed.

### **Matters Arising:**

- 2) At the request of the Chair, it was agreed that arrangements between the consortium and committee of management be discussed after a year of operation;
- 3) Both NUS and ODPM did raise the possibility of DfES joining the CoM with the Minister, Alan Johnson and it was agreed to repeat the request to the DFES that they send a representative to future meetings of the CoM.
- 4) The CoM welcomed Andrew Cardy on behalf of UUK who had attended a briefing prior to the meeting. The commitment of UUK to the Code was also welcomed.

### **Agenda Items**

- 4) Three items relating to content of the code were tabled for discussion.
  - (i) *Amendment to clause 2.06:* It was reported that Unite and NUS had agreed an alteration to clause 2.06. The meeting further agreed to amend the section by deleting “made” in the final paragraph with “provided”;
  - (ii) *Code Preamble:* A draft of a preamble stating that the intention of the Code was to promote reasonable behaviour was tabled. It was agreed that all references to “Unipol” be replaced by “The scheme”. It was also agreed to add into the paragraph beginning “The criteria...”, before “achievable” the word “normally”. Otherwise the preamble was agreed.
  - (iii) *Deletion of clause 4.14:* The clause relating to the provision of fire extinguishers and fire blankets in kitchens was deleted.
  - (iv) *Clause 4.25:* This clause was amended slightly – the word “as” was inserted between “retained” and “a”.

(v) *Title of Code*: It was agreed that the Code for large developments should be referred to as The National Code. The document also needed to state that the Code was endorsed by the ODPM.

On this basis the final content of the National Code was agreed without dissent.

6) MB reported that letters had been sent to certain large providers requesting some financial commitment to the Code. Questions were raised about whether providers needed to register all of their buildings. As had been decided earlier, members were reminded that for a period of 3 years providers would be able to decide which of their developments to include under the Code, although the CoM would make decisions about this. The website will list which developments are included. It was important that owners made an annual declaration of membership.

### **Finance:**

A paper outlining a proposed budget and fee levels was discussed. MB reported that four of the large providers (Opal, Primeliving; Unite and UPP) had been asked to provide seed corn funding of £5,000 each; Unipol would also be making the same financial contribution.

All owners signing-up to the Code would be required to pay a set fee per bedspace, although the maximum fee level should not exceed £10,000 (providers contributing seed corn funding would have their fee levels reduced by £5000 and the upper limit would be capped for a period of three years). It was agreed that the National Code should be as cost effective as possible, however, future fee levels may depend on the resource implications of how much promotional activity would be required and how many complaints needed to be processed.

It was agreed that Unipol should write to all providers of large developments, on behalf of the CoM, inviting them to join the National Code. Fee levels were set for the first year at £0.35 per bedspace, with a minimum registration fee of £100.

### **Launch Details:**

ODPM had already been approached about hosting a launch event for the National Code on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> October, but no response has yet been received. It is envisaged that about 150 people will be invited and that the event should last for around two hours and include short speeches and presentations about the Code – especially about what it is. If ODPM were unable to host the launch then the following venues were suggested: House of Commons; Camden's Council chamber; The British Library; or London University's Senate House.

It was agreed that a VIP list should be drawn up. Unipol agreed to email all CoM members to provide names. UUK agreed to supply a list of vice chancellors. It was also suggested that the event should be marketed to the Local Government

Association. NUS agreed to consider what assistance could be provided by their press office, they also reported that their design team were currently working on a Code logo and proofs for Code document itself and these would be circulated soon. NUS had also agreed to design some publicity leaflets and postcards.

NM offered to compile a press pack that would include a standard article about the launch.

**Complaints Procedures and Tribunal Arrangements:**

A revised version of the complaints procedure for students was circulated, along with a paper entitled "Tribunal Procedures for the ANUK, NUS, Unipol Code of Standards – General Notes for Guidance".

It was reported that should a complaint not be resolved following an initial complaint then the Chair of the Complaints Tribunal would decide what course of action should be taken. She/he could decide to rule on the matter themselves or convene a hearing of either the fast track or full Tribunal. It was agreed that the timescales of these should be made clear to all parties involved. It was also agreed that the procedures should include the facility for any Chair's ruling to be subject to the agreement of two vice chairs, should either party to a complaint request it. This also requires some consideration as to timescales.

NUS reported that, following discussions with their members, they had some additional questions about the procedures. It was agreed that they be emailed to Unipol and the resulting correspondence would be reported to members of the CoM via email.

**Appointment of Tribunal Chair:**

MB suggested names of two people who might be willing to act as Tribunal Chair: Lawrence Greenberg, the former Independent Housing Ombudsman and now an independent housing consultant; and John Martin, a Barrister, formally of Bradford Law Centre. If other members of the CoM have any suggestions then they should email them to Simon Kemp at Unipol before the end of September 2004.

**Specialist arrangements for dealing with complaints against members of the CoM:**

A paper on this matter was circulated and the proposed arrangements were agreed and welcomed.

**Impact of Housing Bill on the need for self-regulation:**

This item was deferred to a future meeting of the CoM

**Date of next meeting:**

Possible dates would be circulated via email.

