



## MEETING NOTES

**Board/committee:** Riverside Foundation ('the Charity'), Registered Charity No. 513727

**Date and time:** 10am, 13/07/2018

**Location:** Crowne Plaza Liverpool John Lennon Airport, Speke Aerodrome, Liverpool, L24 8QD

**Present:**

- Mrs S Jee (SJ) – Chair
- Ms J Kennefick (JK) – Trustee

**In attendance:  
(The Riverside  
Group (TRGL)):**

- Mr H Owen (HO) – Director of Strategy and Public Affairs
- Rebecca Rew (RR) – Financial Accounting Manager
- Mr R Brint (RB) – Research Assistant – For item 2.1
- Miss J Hoyle (JH) – Governance Officer

Min ref:	Agenda item	Action
767/18	<p><u>Quorum</u></p> <p>Clause 3 of Riverside Foundation's Constitution states that there shall be a quorum when three Trustees are present at any meeting. With only 2 Trustees present today the meeting was not quorate therefore all decisions agreed will be ratified and approved via written resolution following the meeting.</p>	JH
768/18	<p><u>Clarification of Foundation Finances and Commitments to Projects</u></p> <p>In reference to item 5.1, a letter from Riverside's CEO Carol Matthews, Trustees were pleased that they had now received a commitment that £900k would be gifted to the charity by TRGL over the next two financial years, although they were concerned that reports contained in today's meeting pack were proposing the commitment of some of this money when cash had not yet been received.</p> <p>£400k of this donation has already been accounted for in the 2017/18 accounts, however with cash yet to be received, Trustees were reluctant to formally approve any spending beyond the funds immediately available to the Foundation (subject to the reserves policy). Trustees therefore sought to clarify the position, and secure the transfer of funds as soon as possible.</p> <p>SJ summarised that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Charity's policy was to retain a minimum reserve of £150k. Large projects had been favoured over the past 12 months in order to make a better impact. Post rent reduction issues had had a knock on effect on Riverside's requests from the Charity, specifically from 2017-2020.</li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [REDACTED] Taking this into account (and the £150k reserve policy), there was technically up to £313,764k available for Trustees to commit now, given other commitments made up to 2020. Following the planned commitment of £100k to Ladders of Aspiration and the receipt of the £900k pledged by Riverside, [REDACTED] funds to commit to new projects, equating to [REDACTED] beyond 2020.</li> <li>• Following a query from JK about when the charity would be in receipt of the £900k, it was confirmed that there were restrictions on TRGL in terms of amounts they were able to donate to third parties in a single year, without funder consent.. A £400k commitment had already been made in 2017/18 and this was reflected in both TRGL and The Foundation's accounts. However no cash payment had yet been made.</li> <li>• Clarity was sought as to when the £900k would be transferred in 2018/19 and in 2019/20, as if this was delayed, this would have an impact on the Charity's work.</li> <li>• RR agreed to speak to Andy Gladwin to gain clarity on the timing of payments so that Trustees could be clear on future commitments.</li> <li>• Once Impact Housing Association joins TRGL, clear rules would need to be in place relating to funding possible projects. This would also need to be in place before new Trustees were recruited following the retirement of SJ, BG and JK.</li> </ul>	RR
769/18	<p><u>Apologies for absence (Item 1.1)</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from B Guile (on the day of the meeting due to an illness in the family) and L Wright. This resulted in the meeting not being quorate.</p>	
770/18	<p><u>Declaration of Interests (item 1.2)</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interests.</p>	
771/18	<p><u>Minutes of the Previous Meeting (item 1.3)</u></p> <p>It was noted that RR was not included on the attendance list for the meeting on 24 April 2018 and that this should be updated. Otherwise the minutes were approved and signed as an accurate record.</p>	JH
772/18	<p><u>Matters Arising (item 1.4)</u></p> <p>The status of Matters Arising from the previous meeting were noted and it was agreed to close the items identified as complete for the purposes of the report. In addition the following items should also be marked as complete and removed from the report for future meetings:</p> <p><b>Minute 747/18 &amp; 763/18 – Riverside 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Proposal</b> The letter confirming receipt of £900k had now been received by the Charity and included in today's pack. Therefore this item could be marked as complete and removed from Matters Arising.</p> <p><b>Minute 722/17 &amp; 764/18 – Whole Board Appraisal Results</b></p>	JH

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	<p>Although it was agreed that in 2019 the appraisal process still required review and adaptation in order to better serve Riverside Foundation, this has been included on Matters Arising separately to remain in sight until the next set of appraisals. Trustees agreed that a discussion before the appraisals in 2019 would be helpful in order to develop a collective understanding of what is required.</p> <p>HO provided clarity on what it means to ‘Drive Success’ and ‘Having the right skills and knowledge to drive success’ and confirmed that it related to having a clear strategy, understanding how projects are funded, driving performance and managing improvements (i.e. challenging Gate Buddies), assessing emerging problems and having the ability to learn from this.</p> <p>It was agreed that Trustees had scored themselves too moderately due to lack of clarity on the definitions and that the Charity functioned very well in these areas. It was therefore agreed that this could be removed from Matters Arising and marked as complete.</p> <p><b>Minute 760/18 – Veteran’s Housing Pathway</b> HO confirmed that this project had now taken a different route and the Foundation were not expecting to receive any applications, although they may come back with an alternative suggestion in the future. It was therefore agreed that for now this no longer needed to be considered by Trustees and should be removed from Matters Arising.</p> <p>The following additional updates were also provided:</p> <p><b>Minute 762/18 – Riverside Foundation Staff Resource</b> HO confirmed that 4 promising expressions of interest had now been received, all with a significant amount of appropriate experience. Interviews would be held before the end of the month. Trustees would be advised on future progress.</p> <p><b>Minute 746/18 – Affordable Warmth</b> Following the submission of a new bid, it was agreed that due to the scale of the proposal, it was not an appropriate application given the steer that Trustees had provided. An alternative future bid may be submitted. Trustees advised that unless HO and KH supported future submissions and were confident that they contained the appropriate information, then they should not be submitted as a report to Trustees.</p>	<p>JH</p> <p>JH</p> <p>JH</p> <p>KH/HO</p>
773/18	<p><u>Guest Slot – Universal Credit (UC) Research (item 2.1)</u></p> <p>Trustees received a presentation from Richard Brint; Research from Riverside’s Strategy and Planning Team. Following a telephone research study commissioned by Voluntas which included all customers known to be in receipt of UC, RB presented the main findings to Trustees, summarising in particular that;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The first survey was conducted in 2015 and has been repeated each year since then. The sample size for 2018 was 1800, with data returned from a total of 302 respondents.</li> <li>• The North West saw the highest response rate, coinciding with the geographical roll out of UC.</li> <li>• The aim of the survey was to gain better understanding of the impact of UC on customers’ debt.</li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most (32%) had been transferred to UC from another benefit system, followed by 29% who had been made redundant or lost their job. This was in comparison to the 2016 survey results which saw almost half on UC following a job loss and just 15% transferred from another benefit system.</li> <li>• 15% waited over 8 weeks for their first payment, 32% waited 6-8 weeks, and 42% waited 4-6 weeks. 53% confirmed that they had applied for an advance payment to cover the initial period which they were required to pay back over 1 year once they were in receipt of UC. RB stated that the government assumed that people had savings to cover the gap in receiving benefits.</li> <li>• Claimants were asked if there had been significant changes to their claim since first receiving UC, with 45% stating that there had and the main reasons for this included 44% gaining employment and 21% receiving sanctions. It was confirmed that for sanctions, the payments were stopped altogether rather than just withheld.</li> <li>• When asked if they had received help from a work coach or the job centre, 55% confirmed that they had in terms of finding work and 20% received personal budgeting support. Riverside had been in discussions with DWP and they confirmed that they could not receive referrals from us. It was agreed that the system was too inflexible and there could be a better way of working, especially if we could refer tenants at risk.</li> <li>• From Riverside, 66% did not receive UC support although of the remaining 34% who did, 67% found the services helpful. This was a 20% increase from 2017. The Board were pleased to see customers finding the assistance from Riverside helpful.</li> <li>• When asked if they felt better able to get a job, only 34% of UC claimants said they did. Customers felt they were actually worse off compared to the previous system. More than half felt less able to manage money and bills, with 75% preferring rent to be paid directly to their landlord. 54% said their debts had increased since UC.</li> </ul> <p>Trustees agreed that the introduction of UC appeared to have a negative impact not just for customers but for Riverside too. It was recognized that change can be difficult although it was thought that this was not the reason for customers getting into more debt when on UC, but was more because of issues with the inflexible system, delays in payments and an unwillingness from DWP to receive referrals from Riverside.</p> <p>Trustees agreed that the presentation highlighted that the charity were funding the right things, such as Money Advice and Intensive Intervention, although queried how projects could be adapted to ensure they were adding the greatest value.</p> <p>It was thought that following the 2019 survey there would be a better understanding of the impact of UC on tenants and the difference Foundation funded projects are making. Given that this would coincide with the currently funded core projects reapplying for funding beyond 2020, it was agreed that this would be a better time to reshape ways of working to make the biggest difference.</p>	

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774/18	<p><u>Management and Operational Update (item 3.1)</u></p> <p>HO summarised the report and highlighted that issues with Gate Buddies were ongoing. They were still behind target in terms of recruiting 16 volunteers however the volunteer coordinator was back from long term sickness so an increase was now expected. HO confirmed that good progress was being made in recruiting volunteers. More evidence would be provided in October when staff from Gate Buddies had been invited as the guest speaker. This will give them reasonable chance to build a volunteer base and begin to deliver other outcomes.</p> <p>HO confirmed that the report contained only 2 months' worth of data for all projects and that work was generally progressing well.</p> <p>Trustees noted the information contained within this report.</p>	
775/18	<p><u>Management Representation Letter and Annual Financial Statements for year ended 31 March 2018 (item 3.2)</u></p> <p>Trustees queried whether a reference to the new TRGL donation should be referred to in the Chair's Welcome Letter. RR agreed that this would be revised before signing.</p> <p>RR summarised the key figures and invited Trustees to ask questions. Following a query from SJ it was confirmed that the auditors had not raised any issues.</p> <p>Following discussion Trustees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approved the draft management representation letter and authorised the Chair and the Secretary, or any other Trustee, to sign for and on behalf of the Company.</li> <li>• Approved the financial statements for Riverside Foundation; and</li> <li>• Approved delegation to the Chief Financial Officer of TRGL authority to complete non-material adjustments prior to signing. Any material changes to the statements will be circulated to Trustees for approval.</li> </ul>	RR
776/18	<p><u>Citizen's Supermarket (item 4.1)</u></p> <p>The report proposed a Citizen's Supermarket stocking food and goods at a reduced price to eliminate hunger and malnutrition in Birkenhead. This was not a typical request for funding and had been referred from LCR, but was well within the charitable objectives. Capital of £10,000 had been requested. Trustees queried if guarantee that Riverside customers specifically would benefit from the supermarket would be available and it was advised that they would be provided with a membership card, not all tenants but those in need. Following a query from JK, HO advised that he would check what anti-fraud measures had been considered to prevent the system being exploited.</p> <p>Trustees approved funding for £10,000 the Citizen's Supermarket, subject to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An agreement that a minimum number of Riverside customers are guaranteed membership</li> <li>• Monies are not released until all capital monies are in place.</li> <li>• Anti-fraud measures are reviewed and agreed to prevent abuse of the scheme.</li> </ul>	HO

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777/18	<p><u>Business Planning (item 4.2)</u></p> <p>Following on from the discussions that took place at the start of the meeting in relation to £900k from TRGL and possible available funds, it was agreed that the proposed commitments contained in the Business Planning report could not be formally agreed at this stage, given the current funding position. However it was acknowledged that funds could be reserved ‘in principle’ for core projects beyond 2020, including Intensive Intervention, although applications would not be invited until mid-2019, and only then subject to performance, the demonstration of further added value, and the confirmation by Riverside that they remain a priority and that any co-funding is still in place. It was felt to be important that those managing these core projects do not take ongoing funding for granted.</p> <p>Following discussion, Trustees noted the available funds and agreed a funding strategy for the future that would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reserving sufficient funding for the “core projects” for a further two years beyond 2020, subject to funding.</li> <li>• Reserving funding for a further year of Intensive Intervention, subject to a new application next year demonstrating significant added value.</li> <li>• Consideration of smaller projects on their merits (in the light of the above), prioritising applications from Impact and Affordable Warmth (as previously agreed).</li> </ul>	
778/18	<p><u>Ladders of Aspiration (item 4.3)</u></p> <p>HO discussed the contents of the report and advised that the proposal had now been scaled back and was suggesting a more modest pilot in order to assess demand. The proposal would be managed by Employment and Training and would only be available to those engaging in the service. It was also suggested that impact should be assessed 6 months after completion of the course rather than 6 months after receipt of the grant. Trustees were keen to see the proposal focus on training and education rather than jobs although it was hoped that this would also improve.</p> <p>JK suggested that the proposal focuses on recipients in Liverpool although after discussion it was agreed that it must be inclusive for all, as some of the subsidiaries that had become part of the group had been in service for longer than 90 years. The Board were keen to see the response rate once the project was underway.</p> <p>Trustees approved Ladders of Aspiration with a £100,000 allocation; £50,000 to be allocated now, and the remaining £50,000 to be allocated in 6 months’ time if the project has delivered its outcomes.</p>	
779/18	<p><u>Letter from Carol Matthews (item 5.1)</u></p> <p>Trustees noted the letter and were keen for the donation to be transferred to Foundation as soon as possible allowing the charity to commit to funding. SJ confirmed she would respond to the letter including in particular the Charity’s appreciation of the money, that Trustees were content with the direction of spending proposed and finally seeking further clarification of when funds would be transferred.</p>	

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780/18	<p><u>Trustee Recruitment (item 5.2)</u></p> <p>Trustees noted the report and were keen to see new faces apply for the available trustee roles, although it was agreed that the Charity also needed Trustees with knowledge of Riverside as a whole, and internal candidates may be best placed given the current funding strategy.</p> <p>It was recognised that a Trustee recruited from the Customer Voice would be beneficial as long as this would not pose as a conflict of interest. Also, Trustees were keen to recruit a young person and it was suggested that a member of staff be considered if the constitution allows for this. It could not however be someone involved in the projects funded by Foundation. This would be reviewed and fed back to Trustees.</p> <p>Applicants from Impact Housing Association's Board should be encouraged once they have joined the Group, to encourage integration, especially since Impact would be able to apply for Foundation funds for smaller projects. Impact has a good track record of delivering such projects.</p> <p>It was agreed that a formal interview process should take place when recruiting new members. Following discussion, Trustees approved the approach to Trustee recruitment.</p>	JH
781/18	<p><u>Appointment of Auditors</u></p> <p>The re-appointment of the Auditors KPMG LLP was proposed by SJ, seconded by JK, and carried unanimously.</p>	
782/18	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p><b>Barbara Guile</b> Trustees noted their thanks and appreciation to Barbara Guile for her service to both Foundation and Riverside as a whole over the last 9 years. Barbara had provided an invaluable contribution and would be greatly missed.</p> <p><b>Staff Expenditure</b> RR requested flexibility on how the Foundation reimburses Riverside for staff expenditure. Trustees confirmed they were happy provided there was assurance that money was only being spent on approved items and also as long as outcomes were being met. This may require additional monitoring and it was agreed that KH and RR would discuss and resolve accordingly, ensuring Trustees had sight of the issue via submission of a quarterly update.</p>	RR
783/18	<p><u>Date and Time of Next Meeting (Item 7)</u></p> <p>It was agreed that the next meeting would be held at Riverside, 2 Estuary Boulevard, Estuary Commerce Park, Liverpool L24 8RF on 24 October 2018.</p>	

Signed.....  
Date.....