

Good governance – the key to success

Why is it so important to support the development of non-profit making board members? Are they a key to your organisation achieving success? What is the best way to get the most out of your board?

Background

Peterborough City Council elected to transfer their housing stock to form a new Housing Association - Cross Keys Homes - to give them more financial freedom. A shadow board of fifteen members was then formed which included five elected councilors, five tenant representatives and five independent members from local businesses or voluntary organisations. The board members all had different backgrounds and experiences. Q. Learning was recruited to support the development of the shadow board members during the transition of the Association being formed. It was important that they all got to know each other well, felt good about working together, were clear about their role and what is required and confident to carry it out.

The Solution/Process

The Q. Learning programme included a series of three workshops combined with one to one coaching sessions. These provided the board members with the required skills and knowledge to fulfill the strategic element of their role effectively.



The first workshop focused on building relationships amongst the Board, recognizing the qualities each member was bringing to the table, understanding each others motivation and what everybody wanted to achieve. The day then went on to focus on the role of the Board and the importance of good governance and achieving high standards for the new Association.

The next stage of the programme was a series of one-to-one coaching sessions for the board members to build their confidence. The tenant representatives, who were finding it particularly hard to understand the new language and were struggling with the meeting agendas and paperwork found that the coaching sessions were invaluable.

Building on from the first workshop, the second one looked at real current issues and the task ahead. The issues reviewed included risk management, funding streams, insurance and legal issues. Housing Officers were invited to this session to provide real scenarios and scene settings for the board so they could apply and integrate their learning.

Another set of coaching sessions was then offered, building on the confidence which was now becoming apparent during board meetings.

Cyril Brown, Chairman of the Board, "It was noticeable that the Board was now working much more effectively as all members could represent their case better."

After the Association was formed, the final workshop concentrated on the Board's strategy, how they would manage risks and looked at their future objectives.

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Outcome

Mick Leggett, Chief Executive of Cross Keys Homes, said: "Q Learning played a pivotal role in helping our tenant board members to gain self esteem and to feel empowered."

The company helped to facilitate two board away days which took place prior to our stock transfer in October 2004. Their involvement centred very much on one-to-one training with board members and building their confidence as team members.

"I firmly believe Q Learning's training helped us to establish a strong board from day one which has enabled us to produce a visionary corporate plan within six months of launching the company."

Q. Learning delivers:

- Leadership
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- Change Management & Organisational Change
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