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Announcement

DTZ Director Paul Harding Takes Helm of RealService Best Practice Group

DTZ Director, Paul Harding, is the newly elected chairman of the RealService Best Practice Group (RSBPG), an organisation of leading property companies that strives to improve customer service standards to occupiers.

Founded in 2004 with the support of the British Property Federation, the RSBPG is a not for profit organisation funded by membership fees and sponsorships. It is made up of property owners, managers and investors including British Land, SEGRO, Land Securities, The Crown Estate, PRUPIM, DTZ, GVA Grimley and Broadgate Estates. New members in 2010 include Manchester Airports Group (MAG Developments) and Mainstay. Together the 20-strong Group controls gross assets worth in excess of £100 billion.

Harding takes over the Chairmanship from British Land's Justin Snoxall, who remains as a member of the Steering Group – the RSBPG's governing body. Other members of the new Steering Group include Lisa Riva (GVA Grimley) as treasurer, David Woodman (PRUPIM) and Tim Stephen (Marchday).

The Group's founding mission, which remains today is: *to improve customer service to occupiers through benchmarking and the sharing of best practice - and in so doing gain a better understanding of the link between improved customer service and performance.*

Harding says: "As the recently appointed Chairman of the RealService Best Practice Group my priorities are to broaden the membership, increase our profile, improve our engagement with occupiers and to make sure that our benchmarks for Service Charges, Best Practice and Customer Satisfaction provide our industry with data to enable us to continually raise standards and ultimately delight our customers."

He adds: "Whilst the very worst of the recession may be over for every owner, occupier retention and hence cash flow is right at the top of the agenda. The relevance of the RSBPG's initiatives has therefore never been higher and the impact we as a Group can make never more pronounced."

A key component of RSBPG membership is participation in the RealService Best Practice Index, an independently verified annual scorecard that measures the engagement and skills of member organisations in delivering high levels of customer service.

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The benchmark measures the elements that the Group has identified as driving customer service including: Service Strategy, Customer Engagement, Product and Service Innovation, People and Leadership Skills, Operational Excellence and Performance Measurement. This collectively is known as the 'Best Practice Framework', which essentially defines best practice in the property industry.

The results show that RSBPG members are making big strides in customer service performance. For example, the average Benchmark Index among members has risen from an average of 54% in 2004 to 77% in 2010. Six years ago less than 20% of members scored an Index of over 70% compared to 60% scoring highly today.

Commenting on the value of the RSBPG to DTZ, Harding adds: "Membership of the RealService Best Practice Group brings real benefits to my DTZ team. Our investor clients' priorities are occupier retention and improving cash flow. There is no better way to assure this than having a team focused on delivering consistent high standards of customer service to occupiers.

"The RealService Best Practice Index enables us to give our team focused training, creates an agenda to drive innovation and allows us to benchmark our services against our peers."

(Ends)

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