



Northampton Partnership Homes Limited

Company No: 09019453 Registered Address: The Guildhall, St Giles Square Northampton NN1 1DE

Minutes and actions from the 2nd November 2022 Board Meeting

*Lee Room, Westbridge Depot, St James Mill Road, Northampton NN5 5JW
And Teams.*

Present

Board Members:

Andrew Woods (AHW) *Chair*, John Connolly (JC) *Vice Chair*, Andrew Kilbride (AK), Bob Purser (BP), Chris Deery (CD), Godfrey Kanengoni (GK), Nigel Hinch (NH), Rakesh Thakarar (RT), Rebecca Peck (RP).

Officers:

Mike Kay (MK), Dale Robertson (DR), Julie Petrie (JP), Linda Cherrington (LC), Davina Sylvan (DS) *minutes*

Apologies: Chris Webb (CAW), Zafir Bhatti (ZB).

Minutes and Actions		
Meeting Commenced: 18:00		
Item 1	Standing Items	Action
Item 1.1: Welcome and apologies		
1.1	The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies were noted as above.	
Item 1.2: Declaration of interests		
1.2	None	
Item 1.3: Minutes of last meeting		
1.3	In reference to Item 4.2 in the minutes dated 7th September 2022, the Board requested a review of the benefits of the REACT system. A review of the system was agreed to be shared at a future Board meeting. Minutes of the Board meeting held on 7th September 2022 were approved by the Board with the suggested amendment.	



Item 1.4: Matters arising	
1.4	<p>Action 1: Complete.</p> <p>Action 2: Complete.</p> <p>Action 3: It was noted this action will be reviewed in relation to the REACT ASB system.</p>
Item 1.5: Mission, Vision and Values	
1.5	<p>Mission, vision and values were acknowledged in the meeting. The Chair highlighted vision, 'NPH provides homes which enable people to live happy and healthy lives in enriched communities'.</p>
Item 1.6: Happy to Help CIC Report 08.09.22 & 13.10.22	
1.6	<p>The two reports were taken as read and questions invited.</p> <p>The Board are in agreement with the suggestion for 360 appraisals, noting in the first year it was difficult to complete the paperwork.</p> <p>In relation to the terms of reference for the CIC, The Board raised the current restriction of the requirement of the CIC Chair to be an Independent Board Member enquiring if there is value in amending this going forward. This point will be taken away and brought back to the Board.</p> <p>The Board highlighted 'Warm Packs' it was noted the bid has just been submitted and if successful allocation will be subject to the bid parameters and management will be existing NPH staff from the customer engagement and housing teams.</p> <p>The Board noted the resignation of Oscar Woodcock from the Happy to Help CIC Board.</p> <p>The Board noted the comments of these reports.</p>
Item 2 For Decision	
Item 2.1: 4OC Report: WNC/NPH Governance Framework verbal update	
2.1	<p>The report was presented and taken as read. Apologies given for the late submission as the papers were only received late on 31st October.</p> <p>It was noted the 4OC report was still incomplete however it was noted the joint view of officers of NPH and WNC officers and members that this needs to be signed off and the new reporting groups implemented. An approvals and governance assurance system between NPH and WNC has been agreed.</p> <p>The Board shared their disappointment regarding the report produced by the 4OC. It was noted professionally that NPH did not appoint 4OC, it was clarified that 4OC were commissioned by WNC and cost is not known. No funding was accessed from the HRA and there is no cost to tenants.</p> <p>The Board raised concerns regarding the administration burden if fully implemented. It was advised there would be no additional funding toward this and it would be adjusted to suit the existing staff to deliver the service.</p>



	<p>The Board queried when this would be approved by WNC. It was noted it has been submitted to the council and accepted, it is thought to be closed down.</p> <p>The Board noted the content of the report and noted the new set of KPI's</p>	
Item 2.2: Cost of Living Pay Rise 2022/23		
2.2	<p>The report was presented and taken as read. It was noted from the report the national pay offer refers to the NJC pay scales and clarified that NPH do not operate the NJC pay scales there is no alignment between the offer and final situation. WNC's pay scales do align with NJC.</p> <p>It was clarified that WNC are clear in relation to NPH's requirement to meet any salary demand through existing budgets with no option to overspend or for additional funding.</p> <p>Clarity was given regarding a 'salary lag' query, a saving by not having a member of staff in post for a period of time. It was noted the turnover of staff has been higher this year, it is a national phenomenon.</p> <p>4 options were discussed in detail and the Board queried modelling of the WNC offer. It was noted this was modelled and it was circa £500k increase, above the budget and NPH are not entitled to overspend as this is a breach of the Management Agreement.</p> <p>It was noted NPH are a national living wage employer and lower end of the wage pay scale is in line.</p> <p>The Board enquired if there is a need to freeze recruitment in order to meet this option. It was confirmed the proposal is not consolidated; it is a one off. NPH has a robust establishment process which is controlled weekly.</p> <p>The Board noted the decision is inevitable and stated it does store up problems in terms of staff retention in coming years which could affect service provision.</p> <p>The Board noted the one-off lump sum payment, and noted it is subject to normal deductions and is pensionable.</p> <p>The difficulty of this is appreciated and the council's position is understood. The Board asked does this all need to be backdated it was noted the 0.5% is backdated to 1st April 2022 honouring the Board's commitment and subject to criteria.</p> <p>The Board noted when WNC staff receive the lump sum there may be issues. It was clarified the pay scales, grades and jobs are different to WNC.</p> <p>The Board noted the contents of the report and approved Option 4 being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To award a further, consolidated pay increase of 0.5%, in line with the Board previous anticipated increase. • To award a one-off, non-consolidated payment of £700 to every member of staff subject to completion of 6-months minimum employment with NPH. • 8 votes in favour and 1 abstention. 	
Item 2.3: Pay, Terms and Conditions 2023/24 annual review		
2.3	<p>The report was presented and taken as read. Highlights from the report include the reintroduction of pay progression, within the 5% envelope</p>	



	<p>requested to align to the rent cap increase, and additional days leave for company closure over Christmas.</p> <p>The Board noted this is for consultation with unions and is not set. The Board also noted reservations about the 5% flat rate, inflation is forecast to drop, struggling to give employees 2.5%, noting it is too simplistic. It was noted that the Chair feels 5% is not sufficient.</p> <p>It has been aligned to the rents as expenditure is aligned to our income.</p> <p>The Board asked how certain are we that rent cap will be set at 5%? Officers confirmed that the government has announced its 2022 rent statement (CPI plus 1% or 5% cap whichever is lower, However, there is an expectation this may change in the autumn (November) budget statement.</p> <p>It was noted the 5% is not a flat rate on the overall budget for everything, it is just salaries with higher increases for materials.</p> <p>The Board authorised the Director of HR and OD to commence negotiations with the Trade Unions for changes effective 1st April 2023 within the anticipated 5% envelope for 2023/2024, subject to West Northamptonshire Council budget provision. 8 votes in favour with 1 abstention.</p>	
Item 2.4: 2022 HTH Board Director Reappointments		
2.4	<p>The report was presented and taken as read with a brief on the purpose of the report noting that the customer directors were appointed on a two-year term to avoid the reappointment of all tenant directors at the same time. No questions were taken.</p> <p>Board approved the reappointment of Carol Barker and Sarah Balkham as Customer Directors for a three-year term; effective from an EGM of Happy To Help Board, to be held on 24th November 2022.</p>	
Item 3	For Decision Recommended by Committee	
Item 3.1: General Scheme of Delegations <i>annual review</i>		
3.1	<p>The report was presented and taken as read. Noting a minimal amendment to reflect change from NBC to WNC last year and for this year the restructure of the removal of the Executive Director post and the alignment of responsibilities into the new Director posts and line management of the governance support team to the Chief Executive's designation.</p> <p>Board approved the updated NPH General Scheme of Delegation.</p>	
Item 3.2: S2 Strategic Risk Register		
3.2	<p>The report was presented and taken as read, noting this report is reflective of the existing risks set in January 2022. There is one new red risk relating to the cost of living for tenants. Change and update to the risk controls within the board assurance framework, moderate assurance to risk, the focussed areas of concern. It did reflect discussions held by committee; those will be reflected in the new risks presented to Board for approval.</p> <p>The Board commented around risk 3, the failure of key service providers e.g. Capita, could the definition be broadened? It was noted there were concerns a year ago this did not negate the risk and monitoring takes place across the</p>	



	<p>board. The Board are concerned if this is now graded right. It was clarified the system would not stop overnight, there are consultants who have knowledge, we have considered the risk. We have mitigations in place around it should a situation arise.</p> <p>The Board noted the updated Strategic Risk Register and Sources of Assurance update.</p>	
Item 4	For Information	
Item 4.1: Board 360° Appraisal Process		
4.1	<p>The report was presented and taken as read. It was noted this is an information item informing the Board of the timeline for the appraisal process. There are no proposed changes to the questionnaire this year. Discussion took place on the process and assessment for Board Members undertaking appraisals.</p> <p>The Board ask to be aware that members on both the HTH and the parent Board are not overwhelmed with requests which is noted. The Board highlighted the frequency of the reminder emails.</p> <p>The Board noted the approach and timeline for the 2022/23 Board Member appraisals.</p>	
Item 4.2: NPH Forward Plan Update		
4.2	<p>The report was presented and taken as read. It was confirmed the Forward Plan is presented to the Board every 6 months. The Board are welcome to submit additions and suggestions via email outside of the meeting. It was highlighted there are discussions for WNC and NPH to develop a forward plan, for the range of various meetings.</p> <p>Discussion took place on KPI's, and it was noted the Board will be brought the proposed 47 agreed KPI's.</p> <p>The Board reviewed the Board and Committees Forward Planner and make recommendations as they feel appropriate.</p>	
Item 4.3: NPH Insurance (includes insurance renewal) <i>annual review</i>		
4.3	<p>The report was presented and taken as read. It was noted this report had been presented to the Audit and Risk Committee. It was noted the appendix will be circulated after the meeting. A full tender process was undertaken by Cambridgeshire Insurance Services (CIS) and the renewal exercise has been completed with minimal movement in the premium. It was noted the process has worked incredibly well with CIS and they have worked very closely with the NPH Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager. The Board noted the really good work for the tiny increase.</p> <p>The Board noted the contents of the report</p>	
Item 4.4: Q2 Finance Report		
4.4	<p>The report was presented and taken as read. highlighted at present NPH are running at £7.6m behind year-to-date budget, a combination of £6.8m under</p>	



	<p>the capital and 0.8m under revenue anticipating full year position at 0.6 m over predominantly due to repairs, cost of materials etc.</p> <p>In the salaries table slippage has not been included as it was likely to be allocated against the 22/23 provision. Major voids first quarter results are an average lower cost of £3000 per void. It was noted Property Maintenance looking at an aggressive recruitment drive to support with savings. Good news as material costs are rising, Happy to Help are benefitting, receiving over £6000 per month.</p> <p>The Board queried the allocation of homes in Beaumont House as it does not look occupied.</p> <p>The Board noted the contents of the report.</p>	
Item 4.5: Q2 Performance Report		
4.5	<p>The report was presented and taken as read. Key points noted performance shows 2 of 9 core measures are on or above target and 7 are below target. 11 out of 23 KPI measures are not on target. It was noted due to a recent upgrade the REACT service reporting was not possible. This is now complete, and reporting will recommence.</p> <p>Minor and Major voids performance discussed in detail at Committee with assurances provided around the improving picture. The issue with the satisfaction with complaint handling response was asked to be clarified by committee and an additional explanation is included in the report.</p> <p>The Board raised the recruitment drive for Property Maintenance as unsure why recruitment is not taking place at places where trades frequent. It was noted that there are multiple events and a variety of mediums used to notify people of the vacancies, including a leaflet drop to tenants, an event at the Saints Rugby ground and an event at the Park Inn. It is targeted.</p> <p>The Board noted the complaints statistic, unsure of the clarity of the narrative. It was noted prior to April the definition enabled NPH to assume people who didn't respond were happy with the way their complaint had been handled. From April 2022 onwards with the new ombudsman rules, only people who respond are recorded. The Board expect going forward lower scores.</p> <p>The Board noted the performance for this period.</p>	
Item 4.6: Q2 Corporate Plan Progress Report		
4.6	<p>The report was presented and taken as read. It was noted NPH are reporting against 64 actions with 8 completed. One action has been cancelled leaving 55 open actions and 13 completion dates extended.</p> <p>The Board enquired if the 55 open actions will be completed by April 2023, it was clarified by next quarter there should be some serious challenges regarding completion dates.</p> <p>The Board noted the contents of the report and the categorisation of actions and details shown in Appendix 1.</p>	
Item 4.7: Chairs Update <i>verbal</i>		



4.7	<p>The Chair of Board presented the report, highlighted the following, a positive meeting was held with the Leader and the Deputy Leader of the Council noting the relationship between NPH and WNC is continuing to get better and better. It was noted the Chair attended the ALMO Members Board Autumn event. The message was encouragement to take on the forthcoming changes and the need for ALMO Boards to undertake all necessary requirements with regard to good governance structures, working relationships with parent, and relationships with tenants. There will be some changes in order to comply and ensure NPH and WNC are in tune with each other when the regulator visits.</p> <p>The Board noted the contents of the report.</p>	
Item 4.8: Chief Executives Update		
4.8	<p>The report was presented and taken as read and several points were highlighted including, REACT it was noted a performance comparison will come back to the Board. Rent consultation, expected at 5% but awaiting the autumn statement. The WNC response return regarding rents. The Board were unclear about WNC's response to question 4, it was noted the response was correct and rents can vary depending on circumstances and variations. Void rent loss has been benefited by a suggestion from the Board which has now been implemented. The Housing strategy has now been approved by Cabinet. Swale Drive has now been closed down. An office accommodation update for Westbridge, including an update on HSE blocking the redevelopment of the CEDOS Block. The fuel poverty policy update this will be continued in future meetings.</p> <p>The Board noted fuel poverty in relation to communal heating, noting a London council have been switching off heating and water in blocks, causing issues, would this be something we would do in blocks. Officers stated they are unaware and shocked that would be done and there are no plans to do so. It was highlighted there was a burst water supply pipe at an NPH managed block for 3.5 days. Temporary heaters supplied and materials to repair were imported in. The system has been rebooted which is a 24-hour process.</p> <p>The Board noted the pay on the risk register regarding Board members and Board retention, specifically Independent Board member replacement noting with the cost of living is it relevant and should it be looked at? It was noted this discussion will brought back to a future board meeting; a discussion paper will be submitted shortly.</p> <p>The Board noted the contents of the report.</p>	
Item 4.9: Committee reports		
4.9	<p>Audit and Risk Committee</p> <p>The report was taken as read. It was noted the committee meeting was productive and discussion was timely. RSM presented a very good write up. Several actions, over 40 had been closed, a good outcome overall and tremendous progress.</p> <p>The Board noted the contents of the report.</p> <p>Finance Committee</p> <p>The report was taken as read.</p>	



	<p>The Board noted the contents of the report.</p> <p>Operations and Resources Committee</p> <p>The report was taken as read. It was noted as much as possible was discussed in the meeting as there were a number of officers on holiday and officers who couldn't attend. Questions then had to go forward as actions. It was noted it was difficult to have effective discussions without the officers.</p> <p>The Board noted the contents of the report.</p>	
Item 4:10: Any Other Business		
4.10	<p>It was noted that a resignation has been received from Board Member Zafir Bhatti. It was noted this has been received with immediate effect.</p> <p>The Board were advised of a proposal if approved, 2 Independent Board Members will be recruited with one appointed as a co-optee to enable future forward planning.</p> <p>The Board are reminded to update their details on the contact form, if details have changed, please inform the Governance Team.</p>	
Date of next meeting: Wednesday 7th December 2022, 18:00		
Close of meeting: 20:23		

Action Summary		
Action 1 (item 1.3)	A review of the system was agreed to be shared at a future Board meeting.	MK
Action 2 (item 1.6)	The requirement of the CIC Chair to be an Independent Board Member will be reviewed and brought back to Board	MK