



# Northamptonshire Partnership Homes Limited

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

## Minutes and Actions

### 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023 Board Meeting

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

#### Present

##### Board Members:

Andrew Woods (AHW) *Chair*, Chris Webb (CAW) *Vice Chair*, Andrew Kilbride (AK), Bob Purser (BP), Clare Whitehead (CLW), David Godfrey (DG), Godfrey Kanengoni (GK), Nigel Hinch (NH), Rebecca Purnell (RP), Suzanne Williamson (SW)

##### Officers:

Steve Feast (SF), Dale Robertson (DR), Linda Cherrington (LC), Paul Tucker (PT), Winston Williams (WW), Liza Ellis (LE) *minutes*

##### Apologies:

Clive Williams (CDW), Jane Carr (JCa) WNC, Rakesh Thakrar (RT), Julie Petrie (JP)

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	Minutes of the Board meeting held on 13 <sup>th</sup> October 2023 were approved by the Board.	
<b>Item 1.4: Matters arising</b>		
1.4	None	
<b>Item 1.5: Mission, Vision, and Values</b>		
1.5	Mission, Vision, and Values were acknowledged in the meeting. The Chair highlighted the value – Listen and Respond.	
<b>Item 2 For Decision</b>		
<b>Item 2.1: Review of Membership</b>		
2.1	<p>SF updated that as a result of the appointment of CAW as Vice Chair of the Board, a further Board member is required to complete membership of the Remuneration and Review Committee (R&amp;R).</p> <p>The Terms of Reference of the R&amp;R Committee state “The membership will comprise of three Board members, of which the Chair and Vice Chair of the Board will be two”. It is proposed that Rakesh Thakarar, Independent Board Member (IBM), joins the R&amp;R Committee.</p> <p>It was proposed that as Tenant and Independent Board members are represented on the R&amp;R Committee consideration should be given to a West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) nominated Board member to be added to the R&amp;R committee membership to provide all key stakeholders perspectives. The Board supported this suggestion.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> JP to consider how an additional Council representative could added to the R&amp;R Committee membership.</p> <p><b>The Board approved the new membership of the R&amp;R Committee to include Rakesh Thakarar, IBM.</b></p>	JP
<b>Item 2.2: Road Map to the New Asset Management Strategy</b>		
2.2	<p>WW gave an overview that NPH (in consultation with WNC) is in the process of establishing a fit for purpose (now and into the future) Asset Management Strategy. There will be regular update reporting to NPH Board and WNC to include business plan implications.</p> <p>NPH have engaged ARK Consultancy to support the development of the new strategy and undertake asset grading and stock ranking, prioritising under-performing assets, establish improvement plans and where appropriate disposals strategies.</p> <p>It was confirmed that there is a good working relationship between the WNC Executive team and the NPH Asset Management team.</p>	

	<p>It was asked if the voice of the tenants has been considered within this strategy as this will be a key regulatory requirement next year? Confirmation was given that the framework includes a clear need to seek the customer views. To facilitate this a customer group will be developed with input from the NPH Resident Engagement team. Capacity issues were considered in regard to delivering the strategy in a timely manner. The recent Asset Management restructure will ensure NPH have the right skills to deliver the strategy.</p> <p>A concern was raised in relation to the planned Asset Grading and in particular where homes are identified as Class C; stock that needs to be reviewed, including possible options appraisal. The options appraisal process includes consideration of disposal of the asset. The process will need to be handled sensitively to ensure the residents understand the process at every stage. The Board discussed the issues relating to Class C properties and were reassured that the whole process will be managed with the customer central to the implementation of any solutions. The aim is to have open dialogue and communication with customers whilst ensuring NPH are providing safe and secure homes for our customers to live in.</p> <p><b>The Board:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Discussed the content of the report and recognised the key stages in the development of the new Asset Management Strategy</b></li> <li>• <b>Considered the financial implications of the investment required to maintain and establish a net zero housing stock and agreed recommendations can be made to WNC.</b></li> </ul>	
<b>Item 3</b>	<b>For Decision Recommended by Committee</b>	
<b>Item 3.1:</b>	<b>Sustainability Strategy 2020-23 Review (O&amp;R Committee)</b>	
3.1	<p>PT presented a review of the NPH Sustainability Strategy 2020-23 as it approaches the end of its intended lifetime. Carbon reductions of at least 10% were achieved year on year leading to an overall reduction in carbon emissions of 30%.</p> <p>Training, workshops, and resident engagement were delivered, inspiring a vast wealth of ideas and potential projects contributing to NPHs sustainability objectives. Over the period of this strategy NPH and WNC have collaborated on several high-profile workflows including the SHDF programme and a heat network feasibility study.</p> <p>A new Sustainability Strategy is currently being drafted for consideration by the board. Whether the NPH One Planet ambitions are achievable was queried by the Board. PT confirmed they are aspirational but also achievable and can be made relevant to what NPH want to achieve with smart outcomes so deliverables can be tracked, and communities can understand what that means for them. The next Sustainability Strategy for 2024 onwards is under development and in order for this to be meaningful it will need to take into account the Asset</p>	

	<p>Management Strategy objectives, therefore, it will be brought back to the Board for consideration in the first quarter of 2024.</p> <p><i>PT left the meeting at 19:04</i></p> <p><b>The Board:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Noted the progress made against the strategic objectives of the NPH Sustainability Strategy 2020-23</b></li> <li>• <b>Noted the timescales and indicative ambitions of the next iteration of the Sustainability Strategy</b></li> <li>• <b>Considered the NPH carbon reduction targets in the context of the WNC UK100 pledge</b></li> </ul>	
<b>Item 3.2: Q2 Strategic Risk Register Review and Sources of Assurance (A&amp;R Committee)</b>		
3.2	<p>DR updated that the Sources of Assurance framework has been reviewed for Quarter 2 against each of the current risks on the NPH Strategic Risk Register and progress made against any gaps in controls has been recorded. An overall 'moderate' level of assurance is maintained. The Board were requested to approve the recommendation from the Audit and Risk Committee that a new risk be added to the register following the recent report that RAAC has been used within social housing construction between 1950 and 1990. In addition to the new risk proposed above, cladding is now being addressed as a known issue and has been considered within the existing risks.</p> <p><b>The Board:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Noted the updates to the strategic risks and approved the recommendation from Audit and Risk Committee to add a new risk 'Potential use of RAAC in NPH managed properties'</b></li> <li>• <b>Noted that the current Strategic Risks identified are being appropriately managed, where possible and where within NPH's control.</b></li> </ul>	
<b>Item 3.3: Scheme of Delegation to Officers &amp; Annual Review of NPH Financial Regulations (A&amp;R and F&amp;D Committee)</b>		
3.3	<p>LC updated that the Audit and Risk Committee discussed the Scheme of Delegation and recommended for Board approval. However, discussions continued with the request that in future this should be presented together with the Financial Regulations and Contract Procedure Rules as they are inter-related documents. In future, both documents will also be provided to Audit and Risk Committee for consideration.</p> <p>The Board considered whether reviewing these policies annually created a lot of work and whether bi-annual reviews would be more sensible.</p> <p>Action: The joint review of the Scheme of Delegation and Financial Regulations and Contract Procedure rules to be undertaken bi-annually.</p> <p><b>The Board:</b></p>	LC

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Approved the annual update to the NPH Scheme of Delegation to Officers</b></li> <li>• <b>Approved the proposed Financial and Contract Procedure Rules</b></li> </ul>	
<b>Item 3.4: Q2 Performance Report (O&amp;R Committee)</b>		
3.4	<p>DR presented the report and advised that of the measures reported in Quarter 2; 17 out of 28 measures are either meeting or exceeding targets and 11 have not achieved target. The reasons for underperformance and any mitigating actions being taken are set out in the report.</p> <p>A question was asked; whether vacancies in the Rent Income team are contributing to targets not being achieved. The Rent Income team have recently had a restructure. A new Rent Income Officer has started, and another is due to start shortly. The one outstanding Team Manager vacancy is being covered by the Head of Service and we are actively recruiting through more avenues to increase the chance of filling that post.</p> <p>It was queried if the completion of actions relating to fire risk assessment data is known? Confirmation was given that the completion of actions arising from fire risk assessments can be included in the report in future.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> GD to provide data on completion of actions arising from fire risk assessments to be included in the performance reporting in future.</p> <p><b>The Board:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Noted the contents of the report detailing performance for this period and associated actions</b></li> <li>• <b>Recommend the approval of the proposed revised set of 33 measures reported at corporate level</b></li> </ul>	GD
<b>Item 4</b>	<b>For Information</b>	
<b>Item 4.1: Q2 Finance Report</b>		
4.1	<p>LC presented the report and noted that the full year forecast has been updated with due consideration of known and arising cost pressures and unbudgeted expenditure that has to be incurred. As a result, the forecast position shows a reduction of £6.5m below budget, £0.3m overspend in revenue offset by £6.8m underspend in capital. Capital underspend is predominately relating to schemes awaiting WNC outcomes (£8.8m) offset by SHDF schemes expenditure pulled forward.</p> <p>Legal services costs are continuing to rise. As a result, the full forecast has been increased by £200k recognising the ongoing rise in repairs and maintenance claims.</p> <p><b>The Board noted the contents of the report.</b></p>	

<b>Item 4.2: Q2 Corporate Plan Progress Report</b>	
4.2	<p>DR provided a progress update on the achievement of NPH Corporate Plan objectives and actions.</p> <p>NPH Corporate Plan sets out five key objectives, against which there are 44 actions for delivery by service areas in 2023/24. At the end of Quarter 2, of the 44 agreed actions, 2 have been completed and 42 remain open. Of those actions that remain open, 8 are marked as not on track.</p> <p><b>The Board noted the contents of the report and the categorisation and update against actions</b></p>
<b>Item 4.3: Star Chamber and Draft Budget</b>	
4.3	<p>LC highlighted the difference of £2m between the NPH management fee/budget and the wrap around budget vs the HRA affordability as at the original submission at the STAR chambers. Following the first budget clinic meeting on 1 November this has reduced to £1.2m variance. Whilst this is still a significant gap, all areas continue to be reviewed and challenged and will be resolved over the remaining budget clinic meetings prior to publication for consultation on 4 December. Board will receive an update on the final proposed budget and feedback from the consultation at the February meeting, which will include confirmation of the rent increase and include the non HRA activities (the subsidiary Happy to Help and the rent property at Greenwood Road).</p> <p><b>The Board:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Noted the contents of the report and the current progress made in relation to the final budget proposal for the management fee to deliver housing services for WNC</b></li> <li>• <b>Noted that an updated report will be provided to Board at the February meeting, providing the final proposed management fee as published for consultation by WNC in December 2023, together with non HRA activity budgets for 2024/25</b></li> </ul>
<b>Item 4.4: CEO Update</b>	
4.4	<p>SF updated that as discussions are ongoing with WNC colleagues regarding the nature and extent of the future council housing development programme including a planned review of the HRA it would be more appropriate for the previously discussed Board briefing on the development programme to take place in the new calendar year, therefore, this will be scheduled in February or March.</p> <p>The Board discussed the movement of the Housing Allocations Scheme back to WNC and the likely timescale and budget impacts of this move.</p> <p>An update on the current position with the office accommodation for NPH was requested and this was provided.</p>

	<b>The Board noted the contents of the report.</b>	
<b>Item 4.5: Chairs Update <i>verbal</i></b>		
4.5	AHW updated on his activities as Chair including planned meetings with WNC colleagues.	
<b>Item 4.6: Committee Reports</b>		
4.6	<p><b>Audit and Risk Committee</b> The report was taken as read. <b>The Board noted the contents of the report.</b></p> <p><b>Finance and Development Committee</b> The report was taken as read. <b>The Board noted the contents of the report.</b> LC advised that Mazars have merged with another organisation, and they will now be known as Mazars Forvis. This is a name change and will not affect the working relationship.</p> <p><b>Operations and Resources Committee</b> The report which was taken as read. <b>The Board noted the contents of the report.</b></p>	
<b>Item 4.7: Happy To Help CIC Report 25.08.23 &amp; 12.10.23</b>		
4.7	<p>CLW presented the 25/08/2023 and 12/10/2023 Happy to Help CIC reports.</p> <p>A question was asked on how long applications take to be processed from submission to approval. It was confirmed it is generally no longer than six weeks from receipt of application to approval.</p> <p>The Board discussed how diverse the applications generally are, as the majority of the reported current awards were for young people’s activities. It was confirmed that the applications follow seasonal trends and a lot of young people related applications had been received because of half term activities. Over the year there is a good mix of diversity in the applications including ethnicity, age, and gender.</p> <p><b>The Board noted the contents of the report.</b></p>	
<b>Date of next meeting: Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2024, 18:00</b>		
<b>Close of meeting: 20:30</b>		

**Action Summary**

Action 1 (item 2.1)	JP to consider how an additional Council representative could added to the R&R Committee membership	JP
Action 2 (item 3.4)	GD to provide data on completion of actions arising from fire risk assessments to be included in the performance reporting in future.	GD
Action 3 (item 3.3)	The joint review of the Scheme of Delegations and Financial Regulations and Contract Procedure rules to be undertaken bi-annually.	LC