

# Northamptonshire Partnership Homes Limited

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

## Minutes and actions

### NPH Board Meeting

**7<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

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

#### Present

##### Board Members:

Andrew Woods (AHW) *Chair*, Andrew Kilbride (AK), Bob Purser (BP), Clare Whitehead (CLW), Clive Williams (CDW), David Godfrey (DG), Godfrey Kanengoni (GK), Nigel Hinch (NH), Rakesh Thakrar (RT), Rebecca Purnell (RP), Suzanne Williamson (SW)

##### Officers:

Steve Feast (SF), Julie Petrie (JP), Linda Cherrington (LC), Nicky McKenzie (NMCK), Liza Ellis (LE) *minutes*

##### Observers:

Peter Walters (PW) HQN

##### Apologies:

Chris Webb (CAW) *Vice Chair*, Dale Robertson (DR), Jane Carr (JCa) WNC,

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.	

<b>Item 1.2: Declaration of interests</b>		
1.2	None.	
<b>Item 1.3: Minutes of last meeting</b>		
1.3	Minutes of the Board meeting held on 22 <sup>nd</sup> November 2023 were approved by the Board.	
<b>Item 1.4: Matters arising</b>		
1.4	<p>Action 1: Completed –</p> <p>The Committee Terms of Reference state that the Remuneration and Review Committee (R &amp; R Committee) should be constituted of a minimum of 3 members, this is currently satisfied.</p> <p>The Board discussed the resolution to Action 1 regarding whether a West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) nominated Board member should be part of that Committee membership and what the timescales for that inclusion should be. It was acknowledged that there is a provision to co-opt a Board member to the R &amp; R Committee for individual meetings and this had been done for previous recruitment processes.</p> <p>A new action was proposed to bring a review of the R &amp; R Committee membership to the next Board meeting, in conjunction with the recommendations from the Governance review being undertaken by Peter Walters, HQN consultant.</p> <p>This action was approved by a vote with 9 members for the action and 2 members abstaining.</p> <p>Action: JP to bring a review of the R &amp; R Committee membership to the next Board meeting, in conjunction with the recommendations from the Governance review being undertaken by Peter Walters, HQN.</p> <p>Action 2: Completed</p> <p>Action 3: Completed</p>	JP
<b>Item 1.5: Vision, Mission, and Values</b>		
1.5	Vision, Mission, and Values were acknowledged in the meeting. The Chair highlighted “we provide services which endeavour to meet the needs and aspirations of all tenants and residents.”	

<b>Item 2</b>	<b>For Decision</b>	
<b>Item 2.1: Pay Award 2024/25 in Principle</b>		
2.1	<p>The report was presented and taken as read.</p> <p>This report was considered in conjunction with item 4.3 Draft Budget 2024-25. The options contained within this report are affordable within the proposed budget but are subject to WNC agreeing the final budget at the Full Council meeting on 22 February 2024.</p> <p>Following an agreement in principle by the Board, the proposal will be discussed with the Trade Unions who will ballot their members. A further paper will be brought to the Board in March confirming the changes for implementation on 1 April 2024, subject to the approvals as detailed above.</p> <p>A concern was raised that some NPH sections are not meeting their Key Performance Indicator (KPI) targets and therefore it was queried whether making the extra day a contractual obligation would send out the wrong message. The relationship between annual leave and staff resourcing was discussed in terms of whether there is a negative impact from closing the company for the Christmas break.</p> <p>The Board were given reassurance that sickness levels are now on a downward trajectory and that the extra day has not and would not in the future, have a material impact on staff resource levels. There is an emergency service in place over the Christmas period and historically this has been an exceptionally quiet period across the company. The decision was previously made to close over Christmas as it was the most economically viable option. The maximum number of annual leave days matches WNC at 28 days.</p> <p>The Board discussed the proposed non-contractual pay progression and cost of living increase.</p> <p>A query was raised as to whether the pay grades have been benchmarked against comparable companies within the sector and whether NPH are offering competitive enough rates and benefits to attract and keep the best talent.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the majority of organisations within the sector are offering 4.5-5% increases. This figure was set at a level to ensure NPH is competitive to attract new and retain existing employees.</p>	

	<p>It was queried why the Executive Team (EMT) and Chief Executive (CEO) pay awards are not included in this report.</p> <p>The EMT and CEO pay awards are considered by the R &amp; R Committee and a recommendation is taken to the Board for approval. Traditionally, these have been separate reports.</p> <p>Action: JP to combine all pay awards into one report next year.</p> <p><b>The Board held a vote with 9 members for and 2 members abstaining to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Confirm agreement in principle to the proposals contained in this report at section 3 for the 2024-2025 changes to terms and conditions.</b></li> </ul>	JP
<b>Item 2.2: NPH People Strategy</b>		
2.2	<p>The update report was presented and taken as read.</p> <p>The report detailed progress updates on recruitment and selection processes, learning and development, and wellbeing initiatives. A new People Strategy and competency framework are being developed through 2024 aligned to the new corporate plan.</p> <p>The Board discussed the number and type of apprenticeships that NPH supports. NPH has apprenticeships across a range of business areas including repairs, finance, and administration. The number of apprenticeships exceeds the target set within the current Corporate Plan. The Board and Tenants will have an opportunity to feed into the strategy as it is formed.</p> <p><b>The Board:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Noted the significant progress made against the NPH People Strategy 2019/2023</b></li> <li>• <b>Approved the extension of the NPH People Strategy to 2024</b></li> </ul>	
<b>Item 2.3: NPH Internal Audit Strategy 2024-25</b>		
2.2	<p>The report was presented and taken as read.</p> <p>The Internal Audit Strategy is refreshed annually. It has been prepared considering the appropriate factors to provide the necessary levels of assurance across specific risk areas of the business.</p>	

	<p><b>The Board:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Noted the contents of the report.</b></li> <li>• <b>Approved the adoption of the proposed Internal Audit Strategy</b></li> </ul>	
<b>Item 3</b>	<b>For Decision Recommended by Committee</b>	
<b>Item 3.1: Chief Executive Performance Targets</b>		
3.1	<p>The report was presented and taken as read.</p> <p>The performance targets were reviewed by R &amp; R Committee and an additional target - Task no.15 added in relation to culture, colleagues, and employee satisfaction.</p> <p>The outcome of Task no.6 to develop at least five hundred new council homes by March 2028 was queried in terms of whether it is challenging enough.</p> <p>It was confirmed that housing development is within WNC strategy and as such the CEX role is to support WNC to develop their strategy. The CEX will proactively push WNC to achieve and exceed this target by bringing forward suggestions for development sites across the county.</p> <p><b>The Board:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Noted the significant progress made against the targets set for 2023/2024</b></li> <li>• <b>Approved the proposed targets for 2024/2025</b></li> </ul>	
<b>Item 3.2: Q3 Strategic Risk Register Review</b>		
3.2	<p>The report was presented and taken as read.</p> <p>The update informed the Board of the changing risk environment and highlighted the mitigations to manage the risks.</p> <p>Strategic Risk 12 – continued increased housing demand was discussed in terms of the impact of fraud on the demand.</p> <p>It was confirmed that demand will increase when the new allocation policy comes into force as more people will be eligible to register. More than 300 applications are received per week currently. There is a 3-stage verification process to combat housing allocation fraud.</p> <p><b>The Board:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Noted the updates to the strategic risks and;</b></li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Noted that Board can be assured that the current Strategic Risks identified are being appropriately managed, where within NPH's control</b></li> </ul>	
<b>Item 3.3: Board Remuneration and Expenses Policy</b>		
3.3	<p>The report was presented and taken as read.</p> <p>The changes to the policy were noted.</p> <p>It was noted that the remuneration and expenses policy will be reviewed by the Board every three years, with EMT reviewing annually and the Board approving any significant interim changes as required. The review will take place before the start of the fiscal year, with revisions to the policy coming into force from the April 1st each year unless otherwise stated.</p> <p><b>The Board:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Noted the changes to the proposed policy.</b></li> <li>• <b>Noted the discussion points from Finance and Development Committee</b></li> <li>• <b>Approved the draft Board Remuneration and Expenses Policy as presented</b></li> </ul>	
<b>Item 4 For Information</b>		
<b>Item 4.1: Housing Allocations Service Update</b>		
4.1	<p>The report was presented and taken as read.</p> <p>It was noted that one officer has taken early retirement therefore there is one NPH employee to TUPE over to WNC.</p> <p><b>The Board:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Acknowledged the Councils notice that it will no longer require Northamptonshire Partnership homes to undertake the allocations function from 1 April 2024</b></li> <li>• <b>Noted the impacts and risks of the Council's decision and the steps being taken to manage these impacts</b></li> </ul>	
<b>Item 4.2: NPH Board Forward Plan Update <i>quarterly review</i></b>		
4.2	<p>The report was presented and taken as read.</p> <p>It was noted that the Governance review currently underway may result in some changes to meeting dates and Committee structures.</p> <p><b>The Board:</b></p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviewed the Board and Committee Forward Plan</li> </ul>	
<b>Item 4.3: Draft Budget 2024-25</b>		
4.3	<p>The report was presented and taken as read.</p> <p>The Board recognised that that the budget for 2024-2025 was still £2.5m more than the current 2023-2024 budget. The amended budget proposed represents a challenge to deliver effective housing services ensuring decent homes, compliance and regulatory requirements are met. The importance of the impact of the stock condition surveys on the asset investment capital programme was acknowledged.</p> <p>There is a commitment to collaborative working to adjust to the cost pressures on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and budget meetings continue between WNC and NPH accordingly.</p> <p><b>The Board:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Noted the current position in relation to the proposed 2024-2025 budget and medium-term financial plan, and</li> <li>Noted the discussion points from the Finance and development Committee</li> </ul>	
<b>Item 4.4: Q3 Finance Report</b>		
4.4	<p>The report was presented and taken as read.</p> <p>It was noted that review and challenge continue across capital and revenue areas.</p> <p><b>The Board:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Noted the contents of the report and the discussion points from Finance and Development Committee</li> </ul>	
<b>Item 4.5: Q3 Performance Report</b>		
4.5	<p>The report was presented and taken as read.</p> <p>It was noted that the report incorporates the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) new Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) for the first time, these bring the customer voice to the fore. As some measures are new it will take time for trends to materialise.</p> <p><b>The Board:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Noted the content of the report and the discussion points from Finance and Development Committee</li> </ul>	

<b>Item 4.6: Q3 Corporate Plan Progress Report</b>		
4.6	<p>The report was presented and taken as read. It was noted that the development of a new Corporate Plan is currently underway.</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> </ul>	
<b>Item 4.7: Chairs Update <i>verbal</i></b>		
4.7	<p>AHW updated on his activities as Chair including that the majority of the Board appraisals have been completed with the one outstanding appraisal scheduled for next week.</p> <p>AHW has been attending the TPAS seminars which cover tenant influence on the Board. Meetings continue with WNC representatives.</p>	
<b>Item 4.8: Committee Reports</b>		
4.8	<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. The movements between the capital and revenue accounts in relation to the abortive costs at the Fraser Road development were discussed. <b>The Board noted the contents of the report.</b></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 4.9: Happy To Help CIC Reports</b>		
4.9	<p>CLW presented the 24/11/2023 and 26/01/2024 Happy to Help CIC reports.</p> <p>The Board noted that HTH have been shortlisted for the EEM Building Better Communities Awards in the Community Impact category.</p> <p><b>The Board:</b></p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Noted the contents of the report</b></li> </ul>	
<b>Item 4.10: CEO Update</b>		
4.10	<p>The report was presented and taken as read.</p> <p>The Board noted that good progress is being made with the proposed new office site. Plans have been drawn up which meet NPH specifications and early discussions held with planning officers with a view to submitting a planning application.</p> <p>It was acknowledged that the Asset Management team won the National Housing Maintenance Federation (NHMF) - 'Best Net Zero Carbon Initiative' for the SDHF project and have been nominated for the Housing Digital Innovation awards - 'most innovative retrofit scheme'.</p> <p><b>The Board:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Noted the contents of the report.</b></li> </ul> <p><i>NPH officers left the meeting at 20.40. SF provided the Board with a verbal update on several confidential staffing matters. This item was minuted separately.</i></p> <p><b>Post Meeting Note:</b> one amendment to item 4.10 The confidential staffing matters were a verbal update only and therefore there will not be a minute for that item.</p>	
<b>Date of next meeting: Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024, 18:00</b>		
<b>Close of meeting:</b>		

<b>Action Summary</b>		
Action 1 (item 1.4)	JP to bring a review of the R & R Committee membership to the next Board meeting, in conjunction with the recommendations from the Governance review being undertaken by Peter Walters, HQN consultant.	JP
Action 2 (item 2.1)	JP to combine all pay awards into one report next year.	JP