



# Northamptonshire Partnership Homes Limited

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

## Minutes and actions

### NPH Board Meeting

**20th March 2024**

*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), Clive Williams (CDW), Nigel Hinch (NH), Rakesh Thakarar (RT), Rebecca Purnell (RP), Suzanne Williamson (SW)

##### Officers:

Steve Feast (SF), Dale Robertson (DR), Julie Petrie (JP), Linda Cherrington (LC), Nicky McKenzie (NMCK), Winston Williams (WW), Liza Ellis (LE) *minutes*

##### In attendance:

Peter Walters (PW) (HQN)

##### Apologies:

David Godfrey (DG), Godfrey Kanengoni (GK), Jane Carr (WNC),

Minutes and Actions		
Meeting Commenced:		
Item 1	Standing Items	Action
Item 1.1: Welcome and apologies		
1.1	The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and introduced Peter Waters from HQN in relation to item 2.1. Apologies were noted as above.	

<b>Item 1.2: Declaration of interests</b>		
1.2	None declared.	
<b>Item 1.3: Minutes of last meeting</b>		
1.3	Minutes of the Board meeting held on 7 <sup>th</sup> February 2024 were approved by the Board. <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.	
<b>Item 1.4: Matters arising</b>		
1.4	Action 1: The R & R review will be done as part of the actions from the governance review.  Action 2: Completed	
<b>Item 1.5: Mission, Vision, and Values</b>		
1.5	Vision, Mission, and Values were acknowledged as important to the meeting. The Chair highlighted the Values; Open and Strong, Listen and Respond for all to be mindful of during the meeting and in particular in relation to item 2.1.	
<b>Item 1.6: Chairs Update <i>verbal</i></b>		
1.6	The Chair updated on his work undertaken with SF and PW regarding the recommendations from the Governance assessment; meetings with SF regarding the EMT restructure; attendance at the TPAS seminars and that meetings are in place with the political leaders at West Northamptonshire Council (WNC).	
<b>Item 1.7: Chief Executives Update</b>		
1.7	The report was presented and taken as read.  The Board noted the progress with the Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) surveys and the findings that no RAAC was found to be present within any of the schemes/properties surveyed.  An update on office accommodation was given including progress with producing a business case and draft planning application. Plans to improve efficiency linked to the office move were noted.	

	<p>The Board noted progress on the Management Agreement and the engagement of Trower and Hamlin as NPH legal advisors.</p> <p>The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) consultation on the requirement for senior housing managers and executives of both registered providers and service providers to have a professional qualification in housing management was discussed.</p> <p>The Board noted the National Federation of ALMO's (NFA) research on ALMO performance when a service returns to council management and how this can adversely impact on tenants.</p> <p>Staffing matters including the restructure of the Executive Management Team (EMT) were discussed. DR is retiring at the end of March. The Board thanked DR for her contribution to NPH and the council and wished her all the best for the future.</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 2</b>	<b>For Decision</b>	
<b>Item 2.1: Review Against NHF Code of Governance and Governance Assessment</b>		
2.1	<p>The report was presented and taken as read.</p> <p>The HQN Consultant thanked the Board Members and NPH Officers for enabling a full and frank exchange of views during the assessment process.</p> <p>A presentation was given covering areas of non-compliance with the NHF code and recommendations from the governance assessment. The Board agreed that the outputs of the review presented an opportunity to consider the current structure and membership to ensure effective governance in line with the code.</p> <p>It was agreed that minor recommendations such as changing the agenda format will be actioned within the next 2 meeting cycles. A log of these actions against the recommendations will be maintained and reported to the board at each of its future meetings.</p> <p>The Board agreed that the best way to address more complex areas would be to hold a number of away days to further debate and make decisions on the way forward. It was agreed that retaining the services</p>	

	<p>of the HQN consultant throughout this process would enable adequate resourcing to support the delivery of changes and provide significant challenge to the Board's deliberations.</p> <p>All agreed that there is a need for the Board to add value through their strategic role rather than getting into too much operational detail. It was agreed that the role that WNC representatives play should be maximised to ensure open and honest communication continues and productive working relationships are facilitated between NPH and WNC Officers and Members. It was agreed that key WNC stakeholders would be included in at least one of the awaydays to provide focus on the key areas that NPH can have influence on and provide improved value to WNC.</p> <p><b>The Board:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Considered the HQN assessment of NPH governance against the NHF code.</b></li> <li>• <b>Agreed actions to ensure compliance against the NHF Code and to address issues identified through the assessment process.</b></li> <li>• <b>Retained the services of HQN to provide support in addressing the recommendations of the review and assessment process.</b></li> </ul>	
<b>Item 2.2: Final Budget 2024-25 and Medium-Term Financial Plan 2024-28</b>		
2.2	<p>The report was presented and taken as read.</p> <p>The Board noted that the budget presented is an increase of circa £2.5m on 2023-2024 HRA revenue budget. This is less than had been pitched for through the STAR chamber process and will require considerable management to deliver housing services particularly given the expansion of the RSH regulatory requirements. This includes a one-off cost to meet the second half of the stock condition surveys to inform the future Asset Management programme. Once the initial survey work is completed, a rolling programme of surveys will be put in place to keep the momentum with maintaining good stock condition.</p> <p>If there are changes to funding needs throughout the year a discussion will take place with WNC representatives to address these as they arise.</p> <p><b>The Board:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Considered and approved the proposed 2024-2025 budget (both management fee and NPH specific activities), and</b></li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>noted the medium-term financial plan as presented to WNC Council on 20 February.</li> </ul>	
<b>Item 2.3: 2024 Pay Award and 2024 EMT Pay Award (Recommended by Remuneration and Review Committee)</b>		
2.3	<p>The report was presented and taken as read. <i>NPH EMT Officers left the meeting at 20:30 at the request of the Board.</i></p> <p>The Board discussed the implications of some NPH sections not meeting their Key Performance Indicator (KPIs) targets and it was queried whether making an extra day a contractual obligation would send the wrong message. The relationship between annual leave and resourcing was discussed.</p> <p>The recommendation from the Remuneration and Review (R &amp; R) committee regarding the EMT annual pay award was discussed and the Chair of the R &amp; R committee gave an overview of the discussions that took place at the committee. A discussion took place around performance and incentivising senior employees. The Board noted that the on-going EMT re-structure would have a significant impact on the salary costs associated with EMT.</p> <p>The Board voted unanimously to approve the amended recommendations below.</p> <p><b>The Board:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confirmed the 'in principle' annual pay award for all staff excluding EMT of 5% or £1,500, whichever is the greatest.</li> <li>Confirmed the 'in principle' percentage increase of allowances (out of hours standby and call out) at 5%.</li> <li>Confirm the 'in principle' increase to annual leave of one additional day for all staff, pro-rata for part-time staff.</li> <li>Confirm the 'in principle' agreement to pay the non-contractual pay progression within the grade for staff (not applicable for Heads of Service and above).</li> <li>Confirm the annual pay award for EMT of 4% as recommended by R &amp; R committee.</li> <li>Confirmed the agreed changes will be effective from 1 April 2024.</li> </ul> <p><i>NPH EMT Officers re-joined the meeting at 20:50</i></p>	
<b>Item 2.4: Key Performance Measures and Targets 2024-25</b>		



2.4	<p>The report was presented and taken as read.</p> <p>The Board noted that the proposed corporate KPI set and targets for 2024-25 have been developed in consultation with Directors and their service teams and EMT. The set includes all regulatory Tenant Satisfaction Measures and covers key areas of the business. Targets have been developed with a clear rationale based on previous and current performance, benchmarking information where available, and known planned service improvement projects.</p> <p><b>The Board:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Reviewed and approved the proposed KPI suite and targets for 2024-25 and;</b></li><li>• <b>Recommend the proposed measures and targets to WNC for reporting against at the quarterly NPH/WNC Assurance Meetings.</b></li></ul>	
<b>Item 2.5: Strategic Risk Register Review and Risk Appetite Review 2024-25</b>		
2.5	<p>The report was presented and taken as read.</p> <p>The Board noted that the strategic risk register informs Committee and Board of the changing risk environment. NPH management have effectively identified and challenged that the appropriate mitigations against the risks identified are being effectively managed.</p> <p><b>The Board:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Agreed the proposed Strategic Risk Register for 2024-25 detailed in Appendix 2</b></li><li>• <b>Approved the updated NPH Risk Appetite and Statement for 2024-25.</b></li></ul>	
<b>Item 2.6: Compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Code</b>		
2.6	<p>The report was presented and taken as read.</p> <p>The Board noted that work is underway to ensure the NPH's Complaints and Feedback Policy complies with the Housing Ombudsman (HO) Code by 1 April 2024. The processes and training are in place to support the go-live. NPH are completing a self-assessment against the Code to provide to WNC for submission to the HO. The code</p>	



	<p>requires the appointment of a Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC) to have lead responsibility for complaints oversight and to support a positive complaint handling culture. Therefore, expressions of interest were invited from the Board Members.</p> <p>CW volunteered for the role and the Board approved the nomination.</p> <p><b>The Board:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Noted the update on NPH compliance with the revised Housing Ombudsman Code and;</b></li><li>• <b>Nominated Chris Webb to be NPH’s Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC)</b></li></ul>	
<b>Item 2.7: Interim Board and Committee Meeting Dates to August 2024</b>		
2.7	<p>The report was presented and taken as read.</p> <p>The Board noted that the proposed dates were interim based on the possibility of changes to the structure from the governance review outcomes.</p> <p>The Board requested that consideration be given to not holding meetings during school holidays, particularly those in July/August.</p> <p><b>The Board:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Approved the proposed revised Board and Committee meeting dates to August 2024</b></li></ul>	
<b>Item 3</b>	<b>For Information</b>	
<b>Item 3.1: HTH Budget 2024-25</b>		
3.1	<p>The report was presented and taken as read.</p> <p>The Board noted that the approved budget had been prepared with due consideration of the environmental and operational changes during the year in particular the CSR monies, and lower demand on the handyperson and gardening service.</p> <p><b>The Board:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Noted the approved HTH budget and that this aligns with the 3- year business plan as approved by NPH Board in March 2023.</b></li></ul>	



<b>Item 3.2: Happy To Help CIC Report 01.03.2024</b>		
3.2	<p>The HTH Vice-Chair presented the 01/03/2024 Happy to Help CIC report including details of the two approved applications received in the period.</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><b>AOB</b></p> <p>NH tendered his resignation effective from 31 March 2024. The Chair accepted the resignation and gave thanks to NH for his commitment to NPH and his hard work during his tenure.</p>	
<b>Date of next meeting: Wednesday 15th May 2024, 18:00</b>		
<b>Close of meeting: 21:15</b>		

**Action Summary - None**