



Northamptonshire Partnership Homes Limited

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

Minutes and Actions

NPH Board Meeting

15 May 2024

Lee Room, Westbridge Depot, St James Mill Road, Northampton NN5 5JW / 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), Godfrey Kanengoni (GK), Rakesh Thakarar (RT), Suzanne Williamson (SW)

Officers:

Steve Feast (SF), Linda Cherrington (LC), Nicky McKenzie (NMc), Winston Williams (WW), Liza Ellis (LE) *minutes*

Apologies:

David Godfrey (DG), Rebecca Purnell (RP)

Minutes and Actions		
Meeting Commenced: 18:00		Action
Item 1: Welcome and apologies		
1	The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies were noted as above.	
Item 2: Declaration of interests		
2	None	
Item 3: Minutes of last meeting		

3	Minutes of the Board meeting held on 20 March 2024 were approved by the Board.	
Item 4: Matters arising		
4	None.	
Item 5: Chief Executives Update		
5	<p>The Board noted the progress with implementing the recommendations from the assessment against the NHF Code of Governance and governance arrangements in general.</p> <p>Positive progress continues to be made with regard to the provision of new office accommodation for NPH. A planning application has been submitted for the proposed new site at the front of the current Westbridge location. It was noted that the decision to award permission is within the gift of the planners so should be treated with caution.</p> <p>If the proposal goes ahead, it will include a flexible space where collaborative working can be undertaken with all stakeholders including customers and council colleagues.</p> <p>The NFA policy update was well received by Board members and recognised as a valuable resource.</p> <p>The outcome of the Ark review of the responsive repairs service is due imminently. This will support the development of a transformation plan of all services relating to repairs including the customer service centre.</p> <p>Staffing matters including the implementation of the new structure and re-alignment of the next tier of management were discussed. JP and GD are leaving at the end of May. The Board thanked JP and GD for their contribution to NPH and wished them all the best for the future. WW, LC and NMc were congratulated on their new roles.</p> <p>The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considered the report and any actions arising. 	
Item 6: End of Year Performance Report		
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	<p>The Board noted that of 19 measures with targets reported within the period, 8 are either meeting or exceeding targets (42%). 11 measures fell below target (58%).</p> <p>The 16 other measures that do not have targets currently set will have targets set for 2024/25 following an appropriate baseline data capture period. There are also 12 Regulator of Social Housing Tenant Satisfaction Measures.</p> <p>The reasons for underperformance and mitigating actions for the 11 measures that fell below target were discussed.</p> <p>Measure RP01 - Proportion of homes that do not meet Decent Homes standard was discussed in detail including the planned approach to deal with the outcomes from the stock condition surveys where a property is identified as non decent.</p> <p>All non-decent properties will be brought up to decency standards as part of the Asset Management programme of works and a continuous review will be undertaken on all emerging risks to ensure these are added to the programme when found, with particular emphasis on Health and Safety risks including damp, mould, and condensation.</p> <p>The Board noted that the targets are very ambitious and discussed whether they are achievable within the 2024/2025 financial year. It was agreed that there is a positive overall direction of travel which should improve the results by the end of the year.</p> <p>It was noted that some of the graphs contain a lot of data and are therefore hard to digest and understand. The Board asked that the format of the graphs be reviewed and simplified for future reporting cycles. It was noted that the accompanying comments are very important and should give assurance to the Board on planned mitigations.</p> <p>Action: LC to review and revise the annual performance report to simplify the graphs and ensure the content of the accompanying comments gives appropriate assurance on planned mitigations to the Board.</p> <p>The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed the contents of the annual performance report 2023/24 against targets and endorsed the associated actions. 	LC
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Item 7: Q4 Corporate Plan Progress Report

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The Board noted that the plan covers a five-year rolling period and is carried forward while awaiting new targets and priorities via the new management and development agreements currently being negotiated with West Northamptonshire Council (WNC).

28 actions have been completed and 14 actions remain open, of which 2 are not on track as follows:

NPH 5.1 Complete Phase 2 (appeals); develop Phase 3 systems (repairs recharges recovery and reporting) – Recharge Phase 2 appeals process is completed and embedded.

Recharge Phase 3 refers to recharging tenants for any wilful damage i.e. any damage caused by themselves, which would not be classed as a repair. The process for determining wilful damage was discussed and the Board received assurance that this step has been taken to encourage some Tenants to change their behaviour towards the properties. The expectations between the Tenants and NPH are clear in terms of what the Tenant can expect and what will be expected of them.

It was agreed that for the next iteration of the Corporate Plan, there will need to be a review and refresh of the format to make the actions more meaningful and easier to understand.

NPH 5.1 Projects 2023-24: Housing Systems Review – the planned internal work to gather business requirements and system cleansing in readiness for the Capita Open Housing system review has been suspended at WNC's request. This was to prioritise project resources to support the delivery of the new WNC allocations policy system implementation into Open Housing.

The Board:

- **Scrutinised the progress and remedial actions identified to recover performance where necessary.**

Item 8: Q4 Finance Report <i>(Finance and Development Committee)</i>		
8	<p>The Board reviewed the financial position at the end of the 2023/2024 year for revenue, capital, voids, and development schemes. The areas where unexpected/emergency work was required were covered as far as possible by areas of underspend. Progress on the delivery of housing management services is reported to WNC through the monthly finance forum, the place forum, and the capital assets board.</p> <p>The high costs relating to legal fees for disrepair claims were discussed. An alternative service provision from the WNC legal team will improve processes and reduce exposure for NPH and therefore WNC from 2024/25.</p> <p>The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussed and scrutinised the information presented and the discussion points from the Finance and Development Committee. 	
Item 9: Q4 Strategic Risk Register Review and Sources of Assurance <i>(Audit and Risk Committee)</i>		
9	<p>At the end of March (Q4), 18 risks are being monitored, of which four are currently identified as being outside of NPH's risk appetite, a reduction of one since the last review completed at the end of December (Q3). Details of the current position of those risks currently outside of NPH's risk appetite and mitigations to reduce those risks were discussed.</p> <p>The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scrutinised and discussed the updates to the strategic risks and; Noted the assurance that the current Strategic Risks identified are being appropriately managed, where possible and where within NPH's control. 	
Item 10: RSH Self-Assessment		
10	<p>The Board were provided with an overview of the process and timeline for NPH and WNC (as landlord), to collectively produce the self-assessment against the new consumer standards for the Regulator for</p>	

	<p>Social Housing (RSH). The new regulatory framework came into place on 1 April 2024.</p> <p>Collaborative work is well underway between NPH and WNC to complete a self-assessment against the new RSH Consumer Standards which will be considered by NPH Board at its Away Day on 4 June 2024.</p> <p>The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considered the content of the report and agreed the proposed process and timeline for producing the RSH Self-Assessment document against the new Consumer Standards with WNC. 	
Item 11: TSM Tenant Survey 2024-25		
11	<p>The Board noted the key results from the Tenant Satisfaction survey and that the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) form part of the new regulatory framework. Board members acknowledged the results show low levels of satisfaction in key service areas and also noted positive progress in recent months</p> <p>Responsive Repairs was identified as a key influencer in overall satisfaction so it is reasonable to assume that actions to address this area will result in an improvement in overall satisfaction.</p> <p>Additional engagement activity outside of the Tenant Survey will continue to support on-going customer feedback and insight to help shape service design and improvements.</p> <p>All providers will be inspected in the next four years. The results of the TSMs will help inform when inspections will be conducted.</p> <p>The Board concurred that NPH has been forward thinking with the improvement plans in place and that the direction of travel is that NPH performance should continue to improve.</p> <p>The Regulator has indicated that they will be focusing on the plans to improve areas of concern and not just the numbers from the surveys. The Board discussed how they can collectively support the Executive Management Team to drive the company forward and improve results.</p> <p>The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considered the contents of the report regarding the TSM Tenant Survey performance for 2023/24. 	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approved the remedial actions identified to improve performance to target levels.	
Item 12: Annual Complaints Report		
12	<p>The Board considered the annual complaints report. During 2023/24 NPH received 1,050 complaints.</p> <p>NPH's Complaints and Feedback policy is compliant with the Housing Ombudsman complaint handling code.</p> <p>Areas for service improvement have been clearly identified and actions are underway to deliver improvements to the complaint handling process and to meet the target of 100% of all complaints received responded to on time.</p> <p>The staffing requirements to meet the target were discussed and the Board were assured that recruitment is planned to fill the gaps in staff capacity and knowledge. A Customer Complaints Manager role is being created to take overall responsibility for driving improvements in the complaint handling process.</p> <p>It was suggested that the complaint referrals to the ombudsman could be included in the Key Performance Indicators and the action plan corresponding to the annual complaints report could be shared with the Board.</p> <p>The 3 cases formally determined by the Housing Ombudsman during the year related to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• NPH's handling of an infestation of bedbugs as well as our communication with the resident and associated complaint handling.• NPH's response to the resident's request for a shower bench to be fitted in their wet room and its associated complaint handling.• NPH's handling of the resident's reports of suspected subsidence causing damage and unlevel flooring and its associated complaint handling. <p>The Board requested information on the cost to NPH of the 3 cases referred to the ombudsman.</p> <p>Action: NMk to circulate to the Board information on the cost to NPH of the 3 complaints cases referred to the ombudsman.</p>	NMk



	<p>The Board discussed the number of complaints NPH have received compared with the Housemark average and asked for an explanation for why NPH appear to be 4 times higher than the average.</p> <p>It was felt that there is some under reporting and there is a difference in how complaints are classified across the sector. The requirement to submit annual reports to the ombudsman will give a clearer picture from the data on any disparity with how complaints are being classified across the sector. The ombudsman will then likely provide clarity on how complaints should be classified to improve consistency across the sector.</p> <p>The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Considered the contents of the report regarding complaint handling performance for 2023/24 and the self-assessment.• Approved the remedial actions identified to improve performance to target levels	
Item 13: Committee Reports		
13	<p>Audit and Risk Committee The report was taken as read. The Board noted the contents of the report.</p> <p>Finance and Development Committee The report was taken as read. The Board noted the contents of the report.</p> <p>Operations and Resources Committee The report which was taken as read. The Board noted the contents of the report.</p>	
Item 14: Happy To Help CIC Report 19.04.2024		
14	<p>The HTH Chair presented the 01/03/2024 Happy to Help CIC report including the approval of the HTH Board expenses policy, 3 applications approved, and 1 application rejected.</p> <p>The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Noted the contents of the report.	

Item 15: New EMT Structure Remuneration <i>confidential item</i>		
15	<p><i>NPH Officers left the meeting at 20:30</i></p> <p>This item is confidential therefore no minutes were recorded.</p>	
Date of next meeting: Wednesday 14 August 2024, 18:00		
Close of meeting: 21:00		

Action Summary		
Action 1 (item 6)	LC to review and revise the annual performance report to simplify the graphs and ensure the content of the accompanying comments gives appropriate assurance on planned mitigations to the Board.	LC
Action 2 (item 12)	NMk to circulate to the Board information on the cost to NPH of the 3 complaints cases referred to the ombudsman.	NMk