



Northamptonshire Partnership Homes Limited

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

Minutes

NPH Board Meeting

14 August 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), Clive Williams (CDW), David Godfrey (DG), Godfrey Kanengoni (GK), Rakesh Thakarar (RT), Rebecca Purnell (RP)

Officers:

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

Apologies:

Suzanne Williamson (SW), Clare Whitehead (CLW)

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 15 May 2024 were approved by the Board.	
Item 4: Matters arising		
4	Action1: Completed Action 2: Completed	
Item 5: Chief Executives Update		
5	<p>The Board received an update on the additional assurance required by West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) regarding the Decent Homes standard and the impact of the stock condition surveys on the numbers of properties classed as “non-decent”.</p> <p>An action plan has been produced based on a review by an independent consultancy commissioned by NPH – Pennington Choices. This has been shared with WNC and will form the basis of the response to the regulator.</p> <p>An updated position for Category 1 failures and the movement since year end will be available shortly.</p> <p>Action: WW to share the updated position for Category 1 failures and the movement since year end with the Board.</p> <p>The Board sought and received reassurance that NPH is not alone with the impact of the stock condition surveys on the reported figures for non-decent homes and the majority of social housing providers are experiencing the same challenges. WNC and NPH are working together to address and resolve the issues with the assistance of two external consultancy firms. The mitigating actions that have been identified should provide enough assurance to the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) to not issue a regulatory notice.</p> <p>NPH need to build comfort, resilience, and assurance to WNC colleagues and support each other to that end.</p> <p>Action: SF, WW, and RP to have a pre-meet to agree the actions to reassure WNC colleagues on the mitigating actions relating to the results of the stock condition surveys and the RSH Decent Homes standard.</p>	<p>WW</p> <p>SF</p>

	<p>The Board discussed whether there were differences in demographics and locations for the tenants affected by non-compliance with the Decent Homes standards. It was agreed that it would be useful for the Board to have sight of the data analysis for the reasons behind the non-compliance with the Decent Homes standard.</p> <p>Action: WW to circulate detailed analysis to the Board of the significant trends in the Stock Condition Survey data.</p> <p>The Board discussed feedback from work undertaken by WNC's consultants with particular the NPH policy for gaining access to a property by forced entry, where entry for compliance checks has been denied and subsequent capping of a gas supply. Board members were assured that NPH will use emergency access measures if there is a concern that the gas in a property is not safe. In order to make the gas supply safe capping may be used, to add context that measure has been used very minimally (twice in 5 years). There may also be occasions when entry has been forced to a property due to a risk to the occupant and/or others in the area. Professional curiosity and care for the tenants welfare are essential attributes for NPH as a responsible landlord.</p> <p>Action: The Board to be provided with the detail of the WNC consultants findings and NPH's response</p> <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>The Board noted the progress with the new management structure consultation and welcomed the creation of the customer experience team to improve the management of complaints and support customer insight to improve the service provision.</p> <p>The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considered the Chief Executives Update and any additional actions necessary. 	<p>WW</p> <p>SF</p>
Item 6: Q1 Strategic Risk Register Review and Sources of Assurance		
6	<p>At the end of June (Q1), 15 risks are being monitored, of which two are currently identified as being outside NPH's risk appetite, compared to four in Q4 2023/24. Details of the current position of those risks</p>	

	<p>currently outside NPH's risk appetite and mitigations to reduce those risks were discussed.</p> <p>The Board noted that the cladding issue has been immediately managed, however a long-term solution is still to be agreed by WNC regarding the cost and resource implications. Priority will be given to removal of cladding.</p> <p>The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutinised and discussed the updates to the strategic risks and; • Were assured that the current Strategic Risks identified are being appropriately managed. 	
Item 7: Consolidated Financial Statements, Going Concern Review and Forvis Mazars Audit Completion Report		
7	<p>The Board were advised that more clarity had been sought from WNC around the rationale behind the decision for the treatment of the pension asset valuation. A suggestion was made to WNC that NPH should use the same accounting treatment as previous years and noted that WNC could apply a different methodology on consolidation of the accounts. WNC agreed to this, therefore allowing the NPH accounts to revert to the same treatment of the pension asset (nil provision in line with IAS19) as previous years.</p> <p>The Going Concern review gives assurance of the viability of NPH and certainty of the management fee from WNC. The letter of support confirms that WNC will provide ongoing financial support to NPH.</p> <p>The letter of representation confirms that NPH have been transparent in providing all the required information to the Auditors.</p> <p>An unqualified Audit opinion, without modification has been issued.</p> <p>Action: A correction was highlighted on the Financial Statements Appendix A. Page 16. Committee Structure – Clive Williams to be removed from Finance and Development Committee.</p> <p>The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed and considered the going concern review, audit completion report and WNC letter of support, 	LC

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutinised and approved the consolidated financial statements, • Delegated authority to the chair to sign the consolidated financial statements on behalf of the Board, and • Delegated authority to the chair to sign the Letter of Representation on behalf of the Board. 	
Item 8: Interim Corporate Plan 2024/25		
8	<p>The Board noted that following the end of NPH Corporate Plan for 2018/23, the process for developing a new business plan is underway. In the meantime, it is important that NPH continues to work towards its priorities and an Interim Corporate Plan for 2024/25 has been developed for the Board to review and approve.</p> <p>The process for developing a new Corporate Plan will commence in September 2024 with a new plan ready in the first quarter of 2025/26 following engagement with all relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>The Board expressed a desire to get involved in shaping the engagement with the corporate plan in order to articulate the future direction of the company. An inclusive approach to engagement is planned to empower all relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>The Board welcomed the positive tone of the narrative that runs through the interim Corporate Plan. The timescales for production of the final iteration of the plan were discussed and the Board received assurance that the timescales are achievable.</p> <p>The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved the interim Corporate Plan 2024/25 and; • The process for developing the new Corporate Plan 	
Item 9: Governance Review		
9	<p>The Board were provided with an update on the progress with completing the actions to ensure compliance with the National Housing Federation (NHF) code of governance and to address the issues identified through the governance assessment process.</p> <p>The Board considered the outputs of its recent away days and noted the changes to be made to the Board membership, constituent parts,</p>	

	<p>and committee structure to ensure the future effectiveness of the Board. The Board welcomed the proposed changes.</p> <p>Action: the following corrections were identified: Point 4.3 – should read: a maximum 2 terms of 3 years (6 years in total). Page 30. Item 1.1.3.c – should read: tenant scrutiny exercises.</p> <p>The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noted the progress in delivering the actions within the Governance Improvement Plan to ensure compliance with the NHF code of governance. • Agreed the changes to the Companies constitution relating to the term of Board Members resulting from the adoption of the code of governance as detailed at paragraph 4.3 and recommends these changes to West Northamptonshire Council for approval. • Considered and approved the revised committee structure and functions to be delegated to the committees. • Considered and agreed the level of Board Membership required to effectively undertake its duties as detailed at paragraph 6.4 and recommends these changes to West Northamptonshire Council for approval. • Considered and agreed changes to the constituent parts of the Board and recommends these changes to West Northamptonshire Council for approval. 	SF
Item 10: Q1 TSM Self-Assessment		
10	<p>The Board noted an independent firm (Acuity) conduct the surveys on behalf of NPH. Residents experiences relating to repairs is a substantial driver of low satisfaction with NPH.</p> <p>Some areas such as; dealing with anti-social behaviour and safety at home, have improved when compared to the previous quarter. The Board were advised that the results for Quarter 2 have now been received and show significant improvements in every area. The results are likely to fluctuate given a different section of the customer base will be surveyed each time.</p> <p>There is a comprehensive action plan in place to improve the customer experience within the repairs service.</p>	

	<p>Recruitment is underway for a new role of Complaints Manager to challenge and make improvements in complaints handling across the business.</p> <p>A communications strategy is in place to deliver positive messages about the outstanding work that is being delivered across the organisation.</p> <p>The Member with Responsibility for Complaints advised that they are working closely with NPH colleagues to make a positive contribution and will be attending the next Housing Ombudsman conference for Members Responsible for Complaints.</p> <p>The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considered the final benchmark position for NPH's 2023/24 survey results and Q1 2024/25. • Endorsed the progress made in delivering the remedial actions identified to improve performance to target levels. 	
Item 11: Q1 Performance Report		
11	<p>The Board noted of the 46 measures with targets reported this period, performance shows 19 (41%) are meeting profiled targets (green) and 27 (59%) are falling below profiled targets.</p> <p>Overall, 20/46 (43.5%) show an improving performance trend. Of the 27 below profiled targets, 7 (26%) have improved.</p> <p>There are three measures reported in Development that do not at present have targets set. Targets will be set once the annual build pipeline figures have been agreed with WNC.</p> <p>The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutinised and challenged the performance for this period and the actions identified to address performance that is not achieving target. 	
Item 12: Q1 Finance Report		
12	<p>The Board noted the overview of financial performance split across the areas of operation including capital, revenue, and general fund activities. The report highlights areas of significant variance from budget.</p>	

	<p>The full year capital forecast has been adjusted to reflect the year-to-date slippage in relation to the development schemes. Costs associated to the Drayton Walk scheme have been written off to revenue and therefore development revenue costs are showing an overspend however this will not impact the full year outturn position. The Board discussed the rationale behind the decision by WNC to abandon some development schemes.</p> <p>The Board were updated that NPH are working closely with WNC colleagues on the principles of asset management to influence place shaping and regeneration.</p> <p>Action: WW to deliver a session for the Board on the appraisal of assets.</p> <p>The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussed and scrutinised the information presented noting the activities delivered to date • Discussed and noted the emerging themes including cost pressures and reprofiling of the capital programme over the medium-term financial plan (MTFP) • Considered the comments and discussions held at Finance and Development Committee. 	WW
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>Extra 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>	

	The Audit and Risk Committee Chair gave thanks on behalf of the Board to the Director of Resources and Finance colleagues for all their hard work producing the Financial Statements and Annual Reports.	
Item 14: Happy To Help CIC Reports 07.06.24 & 19.07.24		
14	<p>The Board noted the increased number of applications to the communities fund.</p> <p>The Board noted the resignation of Sarah Hayman, Customer Director due to ill health.</p> <p>The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> noted the contents of the report. 	
<p>Date of next meeting: AGM - Wednesday 16 October 2024, 17.30</p> <p>Board - Wednesday 16 October 2024, 18:00</p>		
Close of meeting: 19:40		

Action Summary		
Action 1 (item 5)	WW to share the updated position for Category 1 failures and the movement since year end with the Board.	WW
Action 2 (item 5)	SF, WW, and RP to have a pre-meet to agree the communications that will be needed to reassure WNC colleagues on the mitigating actions relating to the results of the stock condition surveys and the RSH Decent Homes standard.	SF
Action 3 (item 5)	WW to circulate detailed analysis to the Board of the significant trends in the Stock Condition Survey data.	WW
Action 4 (item 7)	A correction was highlighted on the Financial Statements Appendix A. Page 16. Committee Structure – Clive Williams to be removed from Finance and Development Committee.	LC
Action 5 (item 9)	<p>the following corrections were identified:</p> <p>Point 4.3 – should read: a maximum 2 terms of 3 years (6 years in total).</p> <p>Page 30. Item 1.1.3.c – should read: tenant scrutiny exercises.</p>	SF



Action 6 (item 12)	WW to deliver a session for the Board on the development strategy.	WW
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