**Northamptonshire Partnership Homes Limited**

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

**Minutes and actions**

**NPH Board Meeting**

**12 February 2025**

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

*And Teams.*

**Present**

**Board Members:**

Andrew Woods (AHW) *Chair*,Clive Williams (CDW), David Godfrey (DG), Jon Sawyer (JS), Rebecca Purnell (RP), Simon Lewis (SL), Suzanne Williamson (SW), Xanthia Ncube (XN)

**Officers:**

Steve Feast (SF), Nicky McKenzie (NMc), Winston Williams (WW), Katie Macey (KM), Kathy Brooks (KB), Liza Ellis (LE) *minutes*

**Apologies:**

Rakesh Thakarar (RT), Chris Webb (CAW) *Vice Chair*

**Observers:**

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| **Minutes and Actions** | | | | | |
| **Meeting Commenced: 18:00** | | | **Action** | | |
| **Item 1: Welcome and apologies** | | | | | |
| 1 | | The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and in particular Xanthia Ncube to her first board meeting as a newly appointed Tenant Board Member.  Apologies were noted as above.  AW advised that CAW had tendered his resignation effective from 12 February 2025 due to ill health and family commitments.  The Board thanked CAW for his commitment to NPH and the dedication and energy he brought to the role during his tenure.  The Executive Team also gave thanks to CAW for his service to NPH.  The Board requested that a card and gift be sent to CAW in recognition of the time and effort he had dedicated to the Company.  **Action:** The Governance Managerto arrange a thank you card and gift to be sent to CAW | | **GM** | |
| **Item 2: Declaration of interests** | | | | | |
| 2 | | None | |  | |
| **Item 3: Minutes of last meeting** | | | | | |
| 3 | | The minutes of the Board meeting held on 15 January 2025 were approved by the Board. | |  | |
| **Item 4: Matters arising** | | | | | |
| 4 | | Actions from 15 January 2025 Meeting  **Action 1**: Completed – responses as below. i. Electrical Safety Remedial Actions – What is the target date to progress this area from weak to adequate?  May 2025. The procurement of new compliance software is complete, and the implementation has commenced. Once complete this will support higher assurance levels through the compliance dashboard.  ii. Communal Gas Remedials – More information required on why that is a limited assurance score when there are no outstanding remedial actions.  What is the target date to progress this area from limited to adequate?  The assurance for communal gas remedials in now rated at adequate in the January 2025 dashboard. Due to the time limitations, the validation exercise only covered what was possible in the time available, and consequently resulted in limited assurance being given to this area for December 2024. Going forward, plans have been put in place to ensure adequate time for validation.  iii. Water Hygiene Remedial Actions - More information required on why there is a limited assurance score when there are no outstanding remedial actions. What is the target date to progress this area from limited to adequate?  See above  iv. Damp and Mould – How are the number of cases awaiting inspection being tracked to ensure they don’t get missed? What mitigations are in place to address these?  The damp and mould data are held in Open Housing, and a workflow has been created to enable the team to review cases and raise remedial works. The damp and mould data are monitored/reported through Power BI dashboards, where daily reports are run to track no access visits.  The team meet on a weekly basis to discuss any open Cat 1 cases (which are currently at 0), and also to review any blockers in the process (such as no access visits) and how these can be mitigated/resolved.  **Action 2:** Completed  Outstanding Actions - 13 November 2024 Meeting:  **Action 1**: In progress. Further investigation is taking place on the potential costs  **Action 3**: In progress. The Gas Safety process is being reviewed and the date will be confirmed within the near future.  Other matters arising:  A Board member raised that the Complaints Policy on the NPH Website is due for renewal in February 2025  **Action:** The Head of Service – Customer Excellence to review and update the Complaints Policy on the NPH Website. | | CEx  CEx  HoSCE | |
| **Item 5: Chief Executives Update** | | | | | |
| 5 | | The Board received an update on the recruitment process undertaken by the People and Governance Committee to recruit two Tenant Board Members. This process was successful, and Xanthia Ncube (XN) and Connor Salter (CS) were offered and accepted the two Tenant Board Member positions.  The process to recruit tenants to the Service Quality Committee (SQC) has not proved to be successful. A revised recruitment campaign has been devised and these roles will be subject to another recruitment process.  The Board discussed the need for the customer voice to be heard and whether members of the now disbanded Scrutiny Panel could apply for the SQC vacancies. The need to ensure the recruitment process to that committee is open to all tenants to ensure inclusivity was acknowledged.  **Action:** The Director of Customers to meet with the outgoing Tenant Scrutiny Panel members to explain in more detail the new SQC and to explain the process for people to apply.  A Board Member asked for clarity on the process to recruit to the replacement Chair of the Board/ Independent Board Member role.  **Action:** CEx to circulate details of the process to recruit to the Chair of the Board/ Independent Board Member role.  The Board discussed the decision to not extend the contract for the investment programme contractor partner beyond March 2025. A demobilisation plan is in process to end the contract term in March 2025. Alternative contractors are being secured to ensure smooth service delivery continues.  The Board discussed the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) update. The RSH has indicated a full inspection of the landlord will be undertaken later this calendar year. Actions to prepare for this inspection are included in the Business Improvement Action Plan including the need to procure additional support to prepare for an inspection.  Feedback from the inspections already undertaken of other Arm’s Length Management Organisations (ALMOs) indicate that the RSH inspectors did not require significant interaction with the ALMO Board rather representatives from the Local Authority, ALMO Chair and ALMO Chief Executive were questioned extensively.  **The Board:**   * **Considered the Chief Executives Update and advised of any additional actions identified as necessary** * **Considered and approved the Board Member Profile Plan** * **Considered and approved the Board Training and Development Programme** | | DOC  CEx | |
| **Item 6: Draft Budget 2025-26** | | | | | |
| 6 | | The Board received an update on the draft Budget 2025-26 and noted the key elements including areas of growth and areas of reduction in spending.  The NPH Management fee has been set at £67.2m of which £36.1m is revenue funding. This represents a £0.7m increase on the previous year. This level of management fee has enabled a balanced budget to be proposed for 2025-2026.  The Board noted that the works associated with Temporary Accommodation are fully recharged to the General Fund.  The Board discussed the extra resource needed to deal with repairs and maintenance and noted the significant year on year increase as a result of increases in disrepair claims, insurance claims and damp, mould, and condensation cases. This was recognised to be an area that had been under-resourced in the past and the need to ensure appropriate capacity to drive improvements in this service was acknowledged.  The Board asked for a comparison across the service areas of savings and efficiency targets.  **Action:** The Head of Service – Financeto circulate a breakdown of the savings and efficiency targets as a comparison across the service areas.  The Board discussed the relationship between WNC and NPH in terms of the development capital budget; which is now solely for completing the schemes that are currently under construction. The position relating to responsibilities for contingencies for contractor delays was discussed in detail.  **The Board:**   * **Approved the draft budget position in relation to the proposed 2025-2026 management fee and Housing Revenue Account medium-term financial plan.** | | HoSF | |
| **Item 7: Q3 Finance Report** | | | | | |
| 7 | The Board noted the overview of the financial performance of NPH during Q3 2024-2025. The report highlighted areas of significant variance from budget.  The Board noted that actions have been put in place and will be closely managed to mitigate the impact of the revenue pressures particularly in relation to repairs and maintenance. The mitigations aim to deliver a balanced budget at year end and are currently on track to achieve this.  The Finance team have been working closely with Finance colleagues at WNC to agree the capitalisation of voids works and a percentage of the assets team. This has created capacity within revenue budgets. The treatment of abortive costs relating to new homes development projects is subject to a decision from WNC, this decision is likely to be received in the new financial year and any budget surplus will be held in reserve to address this at a future date.  The cost of legal fees relating to the insurance and disrepair claims was discussed. The Board noted that new processes, controls, and training have been implemented supported by the legal team at WNC. WNC legal colleagues now deal with the legal advice for this area of work, therefore delivering a reduced cost against using external advice.  The Board discussed the potential reputational impact relating to the discontinuation of some development schemes. It was noted that when these schemes are discussed at WNC Cabinet meetings in the new year there will potentially be a corresponding increase in media interest in NPH and that the Communications team will need to be ready with a robust response.  **Action:** The Governance Manager to make the Communications Manager aware of the potential for increased media interest in discontinued development schemes in the near future.  **The Board:**   * **Considered the information presented and noted the activities positively delivered to date** * **Considered the emerging budget themes including cost pressures and mitigating actions and determined any additional required actions.** | | | | GM |
| **Item 8: Q3 Performance Report** | | | | | |
| 8 | | The Board observed 34 measures with targets reported this period, 3 (9%) are meeting profiled targets and 31 (91%) are below profiled targets.  Overall, 12/34 (33%) show an improving performance trend.  The Board noted that although performance was not achieving the challenging internal targets at this point performance was improving and compared well against other organisations.  The Board discussed the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) tenant satisfaction measures survey results. The Board noted that there is likely to be a seasonal variance between results reported in the summer months and the winter months, with the winter months recording a drop in satisfaction related to Damp, Mould, and Condensation.  The Board discussed the mitigations relating to improvements with dealing with complaints within Housing Ombudsman (HO) timescales.  A new team has been created and they are focussed on reducing the number of complaints progressing to Stage 2 by being more proactive at the earlier stages. The aim is to get that result up to 100% of complaints dealt with within HO timescales.  **The Board:**   * **Scrutinised and challenged the performance for the period and the mitigating actions identified to improve performance** * **Scrutinised and challenged the performance and mitigating actions on the Compliance Performance Dashboard**   The Board advised that the training session on the Compliance Dashboard that was held directly before the board meeting was particularly helpful and has expanded the Board Members knowledge of compliance reporting.  The Board received training and explanation to improve understanding of the Compliance Dashboard. The following actions arose from this session:  **Actions:** The Lead Data Analyst to add a tab into the Compliance Dashboard to include definitions of the measures to aid understanding. This will be available for the next dashboard which will be circulated in March, reflecting the position as at the end of February.  LDA to look at community rooms which are not within NPH buildings and ensure they are being captured correctly within the Compliance Dashboard.  LDA to ensure that going forward, the commentary for overdue actions by timescale includes a breakdown of where the high, medium, and low risk actions fall within these categories. | | LDA | |
| **Item 9: Q3 Corporate Plan Action Plan** | | | | | |
| 9 | | The Board scrutinised progress against the interim Corporate Action Plan for 2024-2025. To date seven out of 42 actions are completed, a number of actions are longer term and will continue into 2025-2026.  Two actions are deferred pending new agreed timelines: the co-production of a new Management Agreement with WNC (Action 27) and the approval and timeline to move to the new office accommodation (Action 30).  The process for developing a new Corporate Plan has commenced with several Community Summits taking place with stakeholders including Tenants, WNC, Police and Community Groups to help shape the new plan.  A new plan will be ready in the first quarter of 2025-2026 following engagement with all relevant stakeholders.  **The Board:**   * **Scrutinised the progress made against the interim Corporate Plan Action Plan for 2024-2025.** | |  | |
| **Item 10: Q3 Customer Feedback Report** | | | | | |
| 10 | | The Board considered the approach for future Customer Feedback reporting which ensures that NPH can demonstrate that the Customer Voice will be heard and actively influence the services being provided.  A quarterly overview will be presented to the board summarising the key measures emerging from customer feedback within the period including complaints handling and tenant satisfaction survey results.  This will provide NPH with a clear customer voice that will enable feedback sources to be cross-referenced to build a clear picture of the customer experience of NPH services.  The Board noted that Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) aspects of the feedback will be used to inform improvements for marginalised tenants. The communications plan will concentrate on increasing access methods for inclusion of all tenants.  **The Board:**   * **Considered and endorsed the approach for future Customer Feedback reporting** | |  | |
| **Item 11: Q3 Strategic Risk Register Review and Sources of Assurance** | | | | | |
| 11 | | The Board scrutinised the Q3 Strategic Risk Register and sources of assurance.  The Executive Management Team (EMT) reviewed and updated the strategic risk register in November 2024 to reflect the recent compliance and financial challenges that arose in the second half of 2024 and the publication of the RSH sector risk profile.  The Board undertook an annual review of the strategic risk appetite against the RSH sector risk profile in December 2024. During 2025-2026 NPH will have an overall and in the main “minimalist” appetite for taking on inherent business risk moving from a “Cautious to Open” position last year. This recognises the current situation of moving into strong central management control which is strategically focused on delivering our core services.  The Audit and Risk Committee scrutinised Q3 Strategic Risk Register at their meeting on 21 January 2025 and highlighted the need to be aware of the wider political and economic landscape nationally, regionally, and locally and how those emerging external risks may impact on the organisation. Three recommendations have been made by the Committee:   1. To have a risk ‘watch list’ item to monitor changes to local, regional, and national politics that may impact on the housing sector and NPH locally. 2. To identify and include where there are interdependencies and interfaces between risks and 3. Consider the risk appetite for each individual risk.   The Board discussed mapping and grouping individual risks together into categories against which an appetite could be set.  **Action:** Audit & Risk Committee to consider grouping individual risks into categories and set an appropriate risk appetite for each grouping to help to identify whether they are within the NPH risk appetite.  **The Board:**   * **Scrutinised and discussed the updates to the strategic risks** * **Considered the recommendations made by NPH Audit and Risk Committee** * **Approved the updated NPH Risk Appetite Statement and Sources of Assurance for 2025-2026.** | | HoSCE | |
| **Item 12: Draft Asset Management Strategy** | | | | | |
| 12 | | The Board discussed the draft Asset Management Strategy.  The actions that have been undertaken to better inform the stock investment needs were considered and welcomed as a proactive approach to assess the needs of stakeholders including tenants and WNC to ensure we have the right assets in the right places that meet current and future needs.  The Board queried whether innovative procurement i.e. added value from contractors, has been considered as part of the strategy.  The Director of Property and Deputy CEO confirmed that innovative procurement is implicit throughout the strategy and specific reference will be made to this in the next iteration.  The Board discussed the target for achieving SAP C by 2030. Currently 11.5% of stock does not meet EPC C. An action plan will be developed to deliver EPC C compliance by 2030 with option appraisals on which assets are going concerns or need a different solution.  **The Board:**   * **Reviewed and** **approved the 2025-2030 Draft Asset Management Strategy** * **Agreed to recommend the Draft** **Asset Management Strategy to WNC Cabinet for their approval** * **Delegated authority to the NPH Chair and Director of Property and Deputy CEO to make the necessary changes to the Asset Management Strategy following the conclusion of the consultation** | |  | |
| **Item 13: Committee Reports** | | | | | |
| 13 | | **Audit and Risk Committee**  The report was taken as read.  **The Board:**   * **noted the contents of the report.**   **People and Governance Committee**  The report was taken as read.  **The Board:**   * **noted the contents of the report.** | |  | |
| **Item 14: Happy To Help CIC Report** | | | | | |
| 14 | | The Board noted that 4 communities fund applications were approved and 2 were declined at the meeting on 22 November 2024, the reasons for declining were noted.  The Board noted that 2 communities fund applications were approved, and none were declined at the meeting on 24 January 2025.  The Board noted the proposal to transition HTH from a Community Interest Company to a charitable organisation in order to ensure the optimal governance structure is in place for the future.  **The Board:**   * **noted the contents of the report.** | |  | |
| **Date of next meeting: Wednesday 19 March 2025, 18:00, Training session 17.00-17.45 followed by meeting at 18.00** | | | | | |
| **Close of meeting: 20:00** | | | | | |

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| **Action Summary** | | |
| Action 1  (item 1) | The Governance Managerto arrange a thank you card and gift to be sent to CAW | GM |
| Action 2  (item 4) | The Head of Service – Customer Excellence to review and update the Complaints Policy on the NPH Website. | HoSCE |
| Action 3  (item 5) | The Director of Customers to meet with the outgoing Tenant Scrutiny Panel members to explain in more detail the new SQC and to explain the process for people to apply. | DoC |
| Action 4  (item 5) | CEx to circulate details of the process to recruit to the Chair of the Board/ Independent Board Member role. | CEx |
| Action 5  (item 6) | The Head of Service – Financeto circulate a breakdown of the savings and efficiency targets as a comparison across the service areas. | HoSF |
| Action 6  (item 7) | The Governance Manager to make the Communications Manager aware of the potential for increased media interest in discontinued development schemes in the near future. | GM |
| Action 7  (item 8) | The Lead Data Analyst to add a tab into the Compliance Dashboard to include definitions of the measures to aid understanding. This will be available for the next dashboard which will be circulated in March, reflecting the position as at the end of February.  LDA to look at community rooms which are not within NPH buildings and ensure they are being captured correctly within the Compliance Dashboard.  LDA to ensure that going forward, the commentary for overdue actions by timescale includes a breakdown of where the high, medium, and low risk actions fall within these categories. | LDA |
| Action 8  (item 11) | Audit & Risk Committee to consider grouping individual risks into categories and set an appropriate risk appetite for each grouping to help to identify whether they are within the NPH risk appetite. | HoSCE |