**Northamptonshire Partnership Homes Limited**

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

**Minutes and actions**

**NPH Board Meeting**

**19 March 2025**

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

*and Teams.*

**Present**

**Board Members:**

Andrew Woods (AHW) *Chair*, Connor Salter (CS), David Godfrey (DG), Jon Sawyer (JS), Rakesh Thakarar (RT), Rebecca Purnell (RP), Simon Lewis (SL), Suzanne Williamson (SW), Xanthia Ncube (XN)

**Officers:**

Steve Feast (SF), Nicky McKenzie (NMc), Winston Williams (WW), Cam Whyld (CW), Kathy Brooks (KB), Katie Macey (KM), Daniel Sabel (DS), Liza Ellis (LE) *minutes*

**Apologies:**

Clive Williams (CDW)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Minutes and Actions** | | | | | | |
| **Meeting Commenced: 18:00** | | | | **Action** | | |
| **Item 1: Welcome and apologies** | | | | | | |
| 1 | | | The Chair welcomed all to the meeting including Connor who was attending his first Board Meeting.  Apologies were noted as above. | |  | |
| **Item 2: Declaration of interests** | | | | | | |
| 2 | | | JS declared an interest regarding work he undertakes as a consultant providing housing development advice to West Northamptonshire Council (WNC). This related to an update given on proposed and current developments under agenda item 10. | |  | |
| **Item 3: Minutes of last meeting** | | | | | | |
| 3 | | | The minutes of the Board meeting held on 12 February 2025 were approved by the Board with one change: page 6. paragraph 2. Insert the word “works” after capitalisation of voids. | |  | |
| **Item 4: Matters arising** | | | | | | |
| 4 | | | Action1: Completed  Action 2: Completed. The Complaints policy desktop review has been completed in February 2025. The website has been updated to reflect this. The Policy will come to Board in May as part of the Complaints Annual Report and Housing Ombudsman Code Self-Assessment annual review.  Action 3: Completed  Action 4: Completed  Action 5: Completed  Action 6: Completed  Action 7: Completed  Action 8: Completed  Outstanding Actions - 13 November 2024 Meeting:  **Action 1**: Completed – A prudent estimate of £250k has been included within the 2025/2026 budget for increased NI contributions. The impact of the living wage changes is negligible.  **Action 3**: In progress. The Gas Safety process is being reviewed and the date will be confirmed within the near future. | |  | |
| **Item 5: Chief Executives Update** | | | | | | |
| 5 | | | The Board received an update on Tenant Board Member recruitment following the resignation of Chris Webb. This will be deferred until early April to avoid any clash and subsequent confusion with the Service Quality Committee member recruitment.  The Service Quality Committee member recruitment has had a large number of applications, and the interviews are planned to take place in early April.  The Board were asked for nominations for the role of Vice Chair of the Board, a role previously held by Chris Webb. SW nominated RT. DG nominated CDW. A confidential ballot was held, and RT was appointed to the role of Vice Chair by a majority vote of the Board.  A volunteer was sought to fill the role of Board Member Responsible for Complaints. DG volunteered and was appointed.    The opportunity for a Tenant Board Member to become a member of the National Federation of ALMO’s (NFA) Tenant Advisory Panel was not nominated to at this time, however, should any Tenant Board Member wish to become part of this group in future then the nomination can be made.  The Board received an update on the fire safety remediation quarterly survey return to the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH). NPH has identified an issue with the pro-forma and are currently working with the RSH to align the proformas and auto-validation checks to prevent the issue re-occurring.  A verbal update was provided to the Board on the meeting on 17 March between WNC, NPH and RSH. This was the first time NPH have had representatives at this meeting. All queries were answered comprehensively, and positive dialogue was held. The feedback from the WNC Chief Executive relating to this meeting has been positive.  **The Board:**   * **Delegated the recruitment of a Tenant Board member to the People and Governance Committee** * **Appointed RT to act as Vice Chair of the Board** * **Appointed DG to act as the Board Member Responsible for Complaints** | |  | |
| **Item 6: Recruitment of Independent Chair of the Board** | | | | | | |
| 6 | | | The Board received an update on the progress of the recruitment to the Independent Chair of the Board role.  Following a robust recruitment and shortlisting process involving representatives from the NPH Executive, the Board and WNC; two candidates had been interviewed on Monday 17 March and one further candidate will be interviewed on Friday 28 March. A recommendation to appoint is to be decided by the interview panel on Monday 31 March.  The Board were given the following identified options in line with the Articles of Association to approve the appointment of the successful candidate when recommended by the interview panel:   1. Hold a single item board meeting, either virtually or in person 2. Make a decision by written resolution   A Board Member suggested for expediency that the decision to appoint the successful candidate be delegated to the members of the interview panel.  The Board agreed that the decision be delegated to the Board Members on the interview panel.  The Current Chair of the Board stated that this would be his last Board meeting and gave thanks to colleagues on the Board and Executive Management Team for all their support during his tenure.  **The Board:**   * **Noted the progress made in recruiting a new Independent Board Member as Chair of the Board** * **Determined the mechanism to appoint the Independent Chair of the Board** * **Recorded their appreciation of the efforts of the previous incumbent during his time as Chair of the Board** | |  | |
| **Item 7: Health and Safety Policy and Action Plan – removed** | | | | | | |
| 7 | | This item was deferred to a future board meeting. | | | |  |
| **Item 8: Review of Key Performance Measures and Targets 2025-26** | | | | | | |
| 8 | | | The Board was presented with the proposed suite of corporate Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 2025/26, including the associated targets and the rationale for each. A review of the existing corporate KPIs had been undertaken to ensure their continued relevance. In addition to the Tenant Satisfaction Measures three new indicators were proposed:   1. Complaints Handling: Housing Ombudsman Maladministration Findings 2. Tenant Engagement: % of tenants participating in decision-making 3. Voids & Allocations: Average re-let time for void properties (days)   The approach taken in setting the targets aimed to ensure that performance expectations remain challenging yet attainable, fostering continuous improvement without creating unrealistic goals. The Board endorsed this approach, acknowledging the importance of balancing ambition with practicality to drive meaningful progress  The Board welcomed the inclusion of an indicator to measure tenant engagement but queried how it would be assessed in practical terms.  The Board were advised that the intention was to track the number of tenants involved in formal governance structures as well as other forms of engagement, including consultations. The newly established, customer-led Service Quality Committee would contribute to shaping and informing this measure.  The Board discussed TSM TP09 – satisfaction with the landlord’s approach to handling complaints. Members emphasised the importance of distinguishing between satisfaction with the complaints process and satisfaction with the outcome. Tenants may recognise the process as logical and well-handled, yet still feel dissatisfied with the resolution. Tenant feedback from the complaints transactional survey will capture both elements—satisfaction with the process and satisfaction with the outcome—and these will be reported separately.  The Board requested that explanatory commentary be provided when the KPIs are proposed to Council colleagues to ensure that perceptions of performance targets are presented within the appropriate context.  It was noted that RSM, NPH’s internal auditor, had been commissioned to review the organisation’s KPIs. The aim was to benchmark them against sector best practice and streamline the suite.  **Action:** It was noted that the proposed method for calculating the Housing Ombudsman Maladministration Findings Rate had been presented incorrectly. The correct approach was to place the number of maladministration findings as the numerator and the total number of cases investigated by the Ombudsman as the denominator. Head of Service – Regulations and Governance to make the correction.  **The Board:**   * **Approved the draft corporate KPIs as the basis for performance and delivery reporting to the Board and WNC for 2025-26; and** * **Agreed that the proposal be submitted to WNC for comment and review before its formal adoption by NPH** | | HOSRG | |
| **Item 9: Budget 2025-26, and Medium-Term Financial Plan 2024-2028** | | | | | | |
| 9 | | | The Board received the finalised Budget for 2025-26 and Medium-Term Financial Plan 2024-2028 and noted the key elements including areas of growth and areas of reduction in spending.  The Board noted that the works associated with Temporary Accommodation (TA) are fully recharged to the General Fund. The increase in TA costs is associated with providing an increased quantity of TA properties, to reduce general fund TA costs.  The Board noted that colleagues from across the business have worked intensively with support from the finance team and the WNC Assistant Director of Finance to challenge all elements of the budget. The revised submission has closed the gap between the initial proposal and the balancing of the HRA to an acceptable level.  The capital programme is now built from the detailed data in the stock condition surveys.  **The Board:**   * **Approved the NPH 2025/2026 budget and Housing Revenue Account Medium-Term Financial Plan** | |  | |
| **Item 10: Customer Feedback Report** | | | | | | |
| 10 | | | The Board received an overview of the profile of the tenants living in NPH managed properties to focus on knowing who our customers are.  The Board welcomed the information as being informative and interesting. A discussion was held on the significant amount of under occupancy in the households and what measures can be taken to address this. The Board noted that people can be encouraged to consider moving to a smaller property to free up larger properties for those who need them but even with incentivising schemes, take up is low. It was noted that this data should be utilised to influence strategies for development.  The Board received an update on the current development schemes, which should be completed within the next two weeks. Future development schemes are currently under consideration.  The Board noted that the current allocations scheme does not give incentives for people who may wish to downsize, and there is a lack of suitable and attractive properties. NPH will provide feedback to WNC when the allocation policy is reviewed.  **The Board:**   * **Considered the content of the report and the tenant profile information presented and how this will be used in combination with satisfaction data to tailor future approaches to service delivery and inform decision making.** | |  | |
| **Item 11: HTH Budget 2025-26** | | | | | | |
| 11 | | | The Board received the proposed Happy to Help (HTH) Budget 2025/26 and associated plans.  The budget has been based on the changes to demand for services and the fluctuations within income sources, also considering the latest NPH contract awards.  This budget acknowledges the need to pivot from a focus on service provision towards support for community investment projects and working with community partners to increase HTH impact.  The Board noted that the increase in the management costs reflects an accurate assessment of staff time spent to deliver the service.  **The Board:**   * **Noted the 2025/26 budget and associated plans.** | |  | |
| **Item 12: HTH Board: Recommendation to Appoint to the Senior Management Vacancy** | | | | | | |
| 12 | HTH’s Articles of Association Article 12.2 gives NPH as the Parent Board the power to appoint all Directors.  The Board were requested to appoint a replacement Senior Management Director as a result of Linda Cherrington resigning from her position of Senior Management Director on the HTH Board.  It was recommended that Kelly Fitzgerald, Head of Housing Support be appointed to the position effective from 1 April 2025.  **The Board:**   * **Approved the appointment of Kelly Fitzgerald, as a Senior Management Director to the HTH Board.** | | |  | | |
| **Date of next meeting: Wednesday 21 May 2025, 18:00, stock tour (timing to be confirmed) followed by meeting at 18.00** | | | | | | |
| **Close of meeting: 19:25** | | | | | | |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Action Summary** | | |
| Action 1  (item 8) | It was noted that the proposed method for calculating the Housing Ombudsman Maladministration Findings Rate had been presented incorrectly. The correct approach was to place the number of maladministration findings as the numerator and the total number of cases investigated by the Ombudsman as the denominator. Head of Service - Regulation and Governance to make the correction. | HOSRG |