**Northamptonshire Partnership Homes Limited**

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

**Minutes of the NPH Board Meeting held on 21 May 2025**

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

*And Teams.*

**Present**

**Board Members:**

Aileen Evans (AE) *Chair*, Rakesh Thakarar (RT) *Vice Chair*, Clive Williams (CDW), Connor Salter (CS), David Godfrey (DG), Jon Sawyer (JS) (via Teams), Rebecca Purnell (RP) (via Teams), Simon Lewis (SL) (via Teams), Suzanne Williamson (SW), Xanthia Ncube (XN) (Via Teams)

**Officers:**

Steve Feast (SF), Julian Beaney (JB), Nicky McKenzie (NMc), Winston Williams (WW), Liza Ellis (LE) *minutes*

**Apologies:**

None received

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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. No apologies were received.  The Chair gave thanks to Board Members and Officers for all the help and support she has received during her induction.  It was noted that the Board members had been proactive by making comments and raising queries on the Board pack in Convene prior to the meeting.  The Board agreed that this was a positive way to enable the meeting to flow more efficiently.  **Action:** A proposal on how to effectively use Convene for future meetings will be developed. | CEx |
| **Item 2: Declaration of interests** | | |
| 2 | None |  |
| **Item 3: Minutes of last meeting** | | |
| 3 | The minutes of the Board meeting held on 19 March 2025 were approved by the Board. |  |
| **Item 4: Matters arising** | | |
| 4 | Action 1: Meeting 19/03/25  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.  The formula was revised and included in the final version submitted to WNC for approval – Completed. |  |
| **Item 5: Chief Executives Update** | | |
| 5 | The report provided an update on the outcome of the local elections, the future of NPH, preparation for Regulatory Inspection and new council housing development schemes.  The Board noted that West Northamptonshire Council’s (WNC) political make-up has significantly changed as a result of the elections.  The new council membership includes a significant number of the new members have not served on a Local Authority before and therefore will need support and guidance.  The Board received an update on the discussions between NPH and WNC concerning the future of NPH. WNC are preparing a paper for the WNC Cabinet meeting at the end of June. The Board discussed the key areas that NPH would need to manage in light of any future decision on NPH’s future.  The Board suggested a separate working group be set up to support the executive in the management of any actions arising from the Council’s decision and provide a means for the Board to input into any process that is put in place following any such decision by WNC.  A proposal was made and agreed that the main part of the next Board awayday in June be focussed on considering the implications of the WNC decision.  The Board discussed the preparations for the Regulatory Inspection, which is anticipated to happen later in the calendar year. A Board member raised a concern that there are some significant activities in the near future which will impact on the available resources and asked whether it is possible to request that the inspection be deferred.  The Board were advised that the timescale for the inspection is not within the control of NPH or WNC. The Regulator of Social Housing (RoSH) will inform WNC of the inspection date and expect all parties to be ready to accommodate that timeframe.  The presentation of the outcome of the “readiness for inspection” audit undertaken by Housing Quality Network is scheduled for next week and the final report will follow two weeks after that. This will be circulated to the Board members when received.  The Board discussed communications that will need to be made to stakeholders following any potential announcement by WNC relating to NPH’s future and requested to have a copy of such communications before they are made public. The Board also requested a copy of the WNC Cabinet report relating to the future of NPH when it is published.  **Action:** Any communication relating to WNC announcements on the future of NPH be shared with the Board prior to publication**.** The Chief Executive to check with WNC that the Cabinet report can be shared with the Board when published.  **Action:** The “readiness for inspection” report from HQN will be shared with the Board members when it becomes available.  **Action:** A working group of the Board to be established to support the executive and update the Board in relation to WNC’s decision making on the future management of its housing stock.  The Board discussed new Council housing development schemes.  The Board were given an update on the legal negotiations in relation to two large sites. NPH have allowed a contingency within the year-end budgets to cover the potential legal costs.  New Southbridge Road has reached practical completion and the Building Control sign-off has been given to obtain a final Building Control Completion Certificate.  The 24 affordable rent homes at Castle Street will be advertised next week following the resolution of the local lettings plan by WNC colleagues. No further delays are anticipated with the scheme.  **The Board:**   * **Considered the Chief Executives Update and determined a actions to progress matters raised.** | CEx  DoR  Chair |
| **Item 6: Corporate Plan 2025/26** | | |
| 6 | The Board considered the revised purpose of NPH and the Corporate Objectives for inclusion in the new corporate plan.  There has been an extensive consultation process with the staff, residents and partners to ensure the purpose and objectives are aligned with stakeholder views. As previously discussed at the Board awayday in February, underpinning the new corporate plan is the opportunity to refresh NPH’s values and behaviours. This will emphasise the positive culture change that is in progress across the organisation.  The refreshed values and behaviours will be discussed at the next meeting of the People and Governance committee before being presented to the Board for sign off.  **Action:** The Company Secretary and Governance Manager to add refreshed values and behaviours to the forward plan for People and Governance committee.  **The Board:**   * **Approved the revised purpose and corporate objectives.** | CSGM |
| **Item 7: Annual Performance report** | | |
| 7 | The Board were invited to scrutinise the year-end performance against corporate Key Performance Indicator (KPI) targets. The Board considered where progress has been made, where challenges remain, and the mitigations in place to improve the KPIs.  The annual Rent Income Performance report has been uploaded to the document library in Convene for information. The path to access this is within Convene: NPH; Document Library; Board and Committees; Board Information System  The performance targets are set annually by the Executive Management Team (EMT) in consultation with the Board and WNC colleagues. The targets are benchmarked against the sector and approved by WNC.  The Annual Performance Report presents a cumulative overview of performance, drawing on the reports provided to Board throughout the year. These Board reports are underpinned by more detailed performance reporting considered each month by the Executive Management Team and the wider Senior Leadership Team. WNC receives monthly updates through a joint assurance meeting, ensuring ongoing oversight. If targets are not met, mitigations will be agreed and implemented alongside timescales for improvement.  The Board requested that monthly performance reporting be provided via Convene so that they are able to support colleagues through the upcoming period of uncertainty.  **Action:** The Director of Resources to share monthly performance reporting with the Board members via Convene.  The Board were informed that the Customer Insight team will analyse the complaints data to provide information on trends in terms of location and type of complaints, this information is then used to target works on specific areas to improve and reduce the number of complaints and therefore, improve performance.  A Board member raised a query that BS01 gas safety checks and BS05 lift safety checks have reduced in performance from last year. It would be useful to see some narrative explaining that downwards movement, particularly considering that WNC colleagues will see these results, and many Cabinet Members will be new to the role.  The Board agreed that given the new WNC Cabinet Members will not be familiar with this style of report, additional narrative will be provided against significant movements. A brief commentary on Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) will also be provided.  **Action:** The Director of Resources to ensure additional narrative against significant movements in the KPIs and an explanation of TSMs is included in future performance reporting to WNC.  The Chair noted that congratulations are due to the staff for the improvements made in performance over the past year and asked that managers filter this message to colleagues.  **The Board:**   * **Scrutinised the performance for 2024/25.** | DoR  DoR |
| **Item 8: Complaints Annual Report and Housing Ombudsman Code Self-Assessment annual review** | | |
| 8 | The Board scrutinised the complaint handling performance for 2024-25 and the self-assessment.  The Housing Ombudsman (HO) Code requires the publication of an Annual Service Improvement and Performance Report for Complaints to be submitted to them annually by 30 June. The report provides an overview of performance, the issues relating to that performance and mitigations in place to deliver improvements alongside HO case outcomes and lessons learnt.  The self-assessment demonstrates that NPH’s Complaints and Feedback Policy is compliant with the HO Code.  The Board were requested by the Chair to review the NPH Board Statement included within the report. No amendments were proposed. Board Members were in agreement with the statement subject to any final amends for which delegated approval was agreed.  The report will be reviewed by WNC colleagues and reported to Cabinet on 24 June prior to final submission.  The Board confirmed they are content with the Board statement.  A Board Member asked if the diversity data could be linked to show NPH is focussed on the issues affecting the different demographics of our customers.  **Action:** The Head of Customer Excellence to link the diversity data in the two papers to show how NPH used its customer data to deliver improvement.  The Board discussed the categorisation of the complaints and whether the categorisation of complaint reasons as “other” was appropriate.  The Board received confirmation that all the categorisations would be reviewed and analysed to consider whether further breakdown of the reasons is needed to better inform the improvement plan.  Complaints handling was centralised in November 2024. This was done in order to give a more consistent service and to ensure the response times improved. There is continuing improvement work around the policy and improving the service to the residents. Year on year results show an improving picture.  **The Board:**   * **Considered the contents of the report regarding complaint handling performance for 2024-25 and the self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman code.** * **Approved the remedial actions identified to improve performance to target levels detailed in the Annual report.** * **Delegated final approval of the Board Statement to the Chair of the Board, Board Member Complaint Champion and Chief Executive.** | HoCE |
| **Item 9: Finance Report 2024/25** | | |
| 9 | The Board scrutinised the 2024/25 Finance outturn report. The report provided an analysis of NPH financial performance at the end of the 2024/25 financial year including an overview of financial performance across the areas of operation split across capital, revenue and general fund activities.  The Board noted that expenditure at the end of the year was £64.6m, which is a £23.5m underspend, predominately due to an underspend on the capital budget relating to the development of new council housing of £19.1m. A number of mitigating actions were undertaken throughout the year to arrive at this underspend position given the projections during the early part of the financial year.  The Board noted the write-offs in the year as follows:   1. There have been three current tenancy debt write offs which were over the £1k threshold. This is lower than last year. 2. 1 declaration of bankruptcy and 2 debt relief orders. 3. The total current tenancy debt write offs in the year were £12,627.   A Board member queried if there are sufficient resources to deliver the company objectives for the coming year.  The Board received reassurance that the management fee contains increased levels of resources in areas relating to building safety, managing damp and condensation mould, compliance and customer experience.  The Board discussed the conditions for the lease relating to the House of Multiple Occupancy (HMO) at Greenwood Road. The Board were advised that WNC are in discussion with the support provider to consider options for this site in conjunction with the need to provide housing for homeless people.  The Board recognised the hard work and change in the financial management culture and gave thanks to Audra Statham, WNC Director of Finance for her help in driving forward the year-end reporting.  **The Board:**   * **Scrutinised the 2024/25 financial report.** |  |
| **Item 10: Quarter 4 Strategic Risk Register Review and Risk Appetite Review 2025/26** | | |
| 10 | The Board scrutinised the Quarter 4 Strategic Risk Register and sources of assurance.  The Strategic Risk Register was reviewed by EMT on 19 March 2025 and subsequently considered by the Audit and Risk Committee on 30 April 2025.  The movement in risks is as follows:   1. Two risks have decreased in score 2. No risks have increased 3. No new risks have been added 4. No risks have been reworded   The current Strategic Risk Register does not provide visibility of movements over time. Future iterations of the register will include a trend indicator for each risk. Additionally, the mitigations to control each risk will be clarified and further mitigations planned where the current risk score exceeds target.  **Action:** The Chair, Chief Executive and Director of Resources willmeet to consider how the reports are presented and how they can be streamlined.  The Board discussed the risk relating to fire regulation and when the large amount of work that has gone into this area will be translated into a reduction of that risk.  The Board received an update that the direction of travel is positive, but the risk remains high as a new set of requirements are due to be implemented.  The building safety and compliance areas are combined into one risk which can make each area look more negative.  **Action:** The Head of Regulation and Governance to ensure compliance and building safety are reported as two separate risks in future.  **The Board:**   * **Reviewed the Strategic Risk Register** | DoR  HoRG |
| **Item 11: Treasury Management Strategy** | | |
| 11 | The Board were invited to review the revised Treasury Management Strategy as part of the three-year review cycle.  The Board noted the changes in relation to job titles, staff structures and the Company name.  **The Board:**   * **Approved the revised Treasury Management Strategy.** |  |
| **Item 12: Health and Safety Policy** | | |
| 12 | The Board were invited to review the Health and Safety Policy.  This forms part of an annual review of this policy. The policy now covers all business activities including contractors.  Contractors and suppliers will be supported to understand the NPH requirements when working on the Company’s behalf including accident and incident reporting and participation in safety forums.  A Board Member asked what challenges are anticipated with implementing the policy. The Board were informed that an additional 16 safety standards had been identified in the process of updating the policy and additional communication and training will be required.  A communication and training plan has been produced for Managers and the wider staff group and this training will be phased. The training will be refined for the level of involvement the staff member has within their role with health and safety procedures. All health and safety training will be written and delivered in-house by the Head of Health and Safety.  The Board discussed where the monitoring of health and safety would sit within the new committee structure. The Board indicated that operational health and safety matters should report through the Audit and Risk Committee and employee matters should report through the People and Governance Committee.  **Action:** The Company Secretary and Governance Manager to add operational health and safety reporting to the Audit and Risk Committee and employee health and safety matters to the People and Governance Committee forward plans.  **The Board:**   * **considered and approved the Health & Safety Policy and Action Plan.** * **Delegated to NPH CEx authority to make minor amendments to the Health & Safety Policy after consultation with SMT and employees.** | CSGM |
| **Item 13: Decent Homes Update Report** | | |
| 13 | The Board received an update on the Decent Homes position as of 31 March 2025.  The stock condition survey programme is now complete and the  new data has been analysed in line with the Decent Homes Standard.  The TSMs and Local Authority Housing Survey results have been reported via the regulatory returns as of 31 March 2025.  At this date, NPH had 19.15% of stock categorised as non-decent.  The Asset Investment Programme will focus on improving the properties categorised as non-decent as a priority over the next 18 months.  A Board member asked for the timescales for completion of Category 1 hazards, where they are within NPH control.  The plan is to achieve decency within the 2025/26 year.  The Board requested to have the information on completion of Category 1 hazards regularly. It was suggested this information could be added to the FRA report that is already circulated bi-weekly.  **Action:** The Director of Property to ensure the additional information requested on Category 1 completions is circulated to the Board on a regular basis.  **The Board:**   * **Scrutinised the contents of the report** | DoP |
| **Item 14: Board and Committee Membership Update** | | |
| 14 | The Board received an update on Board and committee membership including movements in relation to the Board recruitment campaigns and suggested committee membership.  In line with the resolutions passed at the March Board meeting, and following an assessment process, Aileen Evans was offered, and has accepted, the role of Independent Chair of the Board, effective 1 May 2025.  As agreed by the Board in March, recruitment is now underway to appoint a new Tenant Board Member.  As the next Board meeting is not scheduled until 3 September, it is proposed, in line with the constitution, that the appointment be delegated to the interview panel, which will include the Chair of the Board  All appointments to the Board made between Annual General Meetings will be made as casual vacancies, effective until the next Annual General Meeting in October 2025, at which point the appointment will be formally ratified by the Member. The initial term will be three years, with the option to reappoint for a further three years, in line with the NHF Code of Governance and the Articles of Association, for a maximum term of six years.  The Service Quality Committee will comprise 10 members, including two Tenant Board Members.  The Board were invited to agree the proposed membership of the Service Quality Committee (SQC), as below:     1. John Atkinson 2. Yvette Baker 3. Katie Crouch 4. Emma Culverhouse 5. Kristin Hatherly 6. Maryna Kudlai 7. Caroline Mutanhaurwa 8. Layla Nakabiito   The existing Tenant Board Member currently serving on the SQC is well placed to lead the Committee. It was therefore proposed that the Board approve the appointment of Connor Salter as Chair of the SQC.  The Board noted the revised committee membership position following approval of the recommendations at this meeting.  **The Board:**   * **Noted the outcome of the recruitment processes for the Chair of the Board** * **Considered the update on the progress of recruiting a new Tenant Board Member, and approved the delegation of authority to the interview panel including members of the People and Governance Committee to make the appointment** * **Agreed that, once appointed, the newly selected Tenant Board Member will join the SQC** * **Approved the appointment of the members of the SQC** * **Approved the appointment of Connor Salter as Chair of the SQC** |  |
| **Item 15: Customer Feedback 2024/25** | | |
| 15 | The Board received an overview of resident insight for 2024/25 drawn from satisfaction surveys, MP and Councillor enquiries, complaints and compliments and resident service requests.  The Board discussed the need for the information presented in the report to be used to improve service delivery.  The Board were assured that data analysis by the Customer Insight team will be used to turn the feedback into actionable insights which will continue to improve and deliver services in a way that meets the customers’ needs.  The SQC will have a role to play in scrutinising the detail of the data to look at key drivers that can be used by service areas to address issues and potentially vary the service offered depending on specific needs.  A review of data quality is currently being undertaken with a view to improving quality and processes.  **The Board:**   * **Considered the content of the report and the resident feedback presented which will be used to inform the new corporate plan objectives and the initiatives for 2025/26** |  |
| **Item 16: Committee Reports** | | |
| 16 | **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 17: Happy To Help CIC Reports** | | |
| 17 | The Board noted that 7 communities fund applications were approved and 1 was declined at the meeting on 21 March 2025, the reasons for declining were noted.  The Board noted the business transacted at the meeting on 2 May 2025 including operational and financial performance.  The Board discussed the future of Happy to Help (HTH) including changing the status of the entity from a Community Interest Company to a Charitable Trust. It was noted that any decision relating to HTH would be affected by a decision from WNC on NPH’s future, therefore HTH should continue in its current form until further notice.  **The Board:**   * **Noted the contents of the report.** |  |
| **Item 18: Any Other Business** | | |
| 18 | The Board discussed plans for the awayday on 25 June 2025. It was agreed to consider inviting WNC colleagues to take part in the awayday. |  |
| **Date of next meeting: Wednesday 3 September 2025, 18:00, Training session 17.00-17.45 followed by meeting at 18.00** | | |
| **Close of meeting: 20:05** | | |

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| **Action Summary** | | |
| Action 1  (item 1) | A proposal on how to effectively use Convene for future meetings will be developed. | CEx |
| Action 2  (item 5) | Any communication relating to WNC announcements on the future of NPH be shared with the Board prior to publication**.** The Chief Executive to check with WNC that the Cabinet report can be shared with the Board when published. | CEx |
| Action 3  (item 5) | The “readiness for inspection” report from HQN will be shared with the Board members when it becomes available. | DoR |
| Action 4  (item 5) | A working group of the Board to be established to support the executive and update the Board in relation to WNC’s decision making on the future management of its housing stock. | Chair |
| Action 5  (item 6) | The Company Secretary and Governance Manager to add refreshed values and behaviours to the forward plan for People and Governance committee. | CSGM |
| Action 6  (item 7) | The Director of Resources to share monthly performance reporting with the Board members via Convene. | DoR |
| Action 7  (item 7) | The Director of Resources to ensure additional narrative against significant movements in the KPIs and an explanation of TSMs is included in future performance reporting to WNC. | DoR |
| Action 8  (item 8) | The Head of Customer Excellence to link the diversity data in the two papers to show how NPH used its customer data to deliver improvement. | HoCE |
| Action 9  (item 10) | The Chair, Chief Executive and Director of Resources willmeet to consider how the risk management reports are presented and how they can be streamlined. | DoR |
| Action 10  (item 10) | The Head of Regulation and Governance to ensure compliance and building safety are reported as two separate risks in future. | HoRG |
| Action 11  (item 12) | The Company Secretary and Governance Manager to add operational health and safety reporting to the Audit and Risk Committee and employee health and safety matters to the People and Governance Committee forward plans. | CSGM |
| Action 12  (Item 13) | The Director of Property to ensure the additional information requested on Category 1 completions is circulated to the Board on a regular basis. | DoP |