

FREEBRIDGE COMMUNITY HOUSING BOARD

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Board held on
Monday 6 March 2017 at 7.35pm in
“The Barn”, 2 Chapel Lane, King’s Lynn**

PRESENT:

Ray Johnson (Chairman)
Steve Clark
Marie Connell
Tony Hall (Chief Executive)
Brian Long
Ian Pinches
Pauleen Pratt
Colin Sampson
Simon Smith
Andy Walder

IN ATTENDANCE:

Robert Clarke - Director of Housing
Dave Marshall - Director of Finance and Resources
Sophie Bates - Head of Housing Services
Angus MacQueen - Company Secretary

Note: The meeting was preceded by a presentation from Duncan Hall and Nikki Patton of the Borough Council of King’s Lynn and West Norfolk on “The Housing Needs of the Borough”.

56/17 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Jasmine Rigg and Tina Smiddy.

5717 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

58/17 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

59/17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Confidential item

60/17 CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

The Chairman said that, since the last Board meeting, he had attended his usual regular meetings with the Chief Executive. In addition, he had attended the following:

- meetings at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, in his capacity as a member of the Governors' Council;
- the visit of David Orr, Chief Executive of the National Housing Federation, to Hillington Square on 21 February 2017;
- the risk and control simulation workshop held for Board Members and senior staff on 23 February 2017; and
- a meeting with Camphill Communities at Thornage Hall around developing the working relationship with them.

61/17 MANAGEMENT TEAM UPDATE

A written update from the Management Team had been previously circulated and was noted by the Board.

The written update covered the following issues:

- Thornage Hall Rent Setting
- David Orr Visit to Hillington Square
- Unlet Garages – Impairment
- Closure of Norwich and Peterborough Branches
- Beha Williams – Treasury Advisors
- Meeting with Thornage Hall about Joint Working Opportunities

The Board was very pleased that David Orr, Chief Executive of the National Housing Federation, had visited Hillington Square on 21 February 2017. Mr Orr had appeared to be impressed with the project and had spoken positively about it. Good feedback on the event had also been received from a member of the Tenant Panel who had attended.

The Chairman referred to two items that had appeared in the Management Team Update which had been presented to the Board on 6 February 2017. Firstly, he was pleased to report that Freebridge had finished runners-up in two categories of the Tenant Participation Advisory Service Central Region Awards 2017. Secondly, he advised that the development at Priory Road, North Wootton, had now been completed and that the first tenants were moving in.

62/17 BUDGET 2017/18

Confidential item

63/17 REVIEW OF VARIOUS HOUSING POLICIES

The Head of Housing Services presented a report which reviewed the following Policies:

- Safeguarding Children and Young People;
- Safeguarding Adults at Risk of Abuse or Neglect;
- Domestic Abuse; and
- Anti-Social Behaviour, Harassment and Hate Crimes.

The Board highlighted that the Safeguarding Policies signposted the reader to the “Recruitment and Selection Policy”, which was contained in the Employee Handbook, for information on Freebridge’s approach to Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. It was suggested that the wording in the “Recruitment and Selection Policy” could be strengthened, so as indicate that Freebridge would insist on, rather than just request, an employee having a DBS check if this was deemed necessary. The Head of Housing Services undertook to look into whether a change in the wording of the “Recruitment and Selection Policy” would be appropriate, and to report back to the Board.

In answer to questions, the Head of Housing Services said that she was the Designated Officer for safeguarding issues, as stated in the Safeguarding Policies. The Head of Customer Services was the Deputy Safeguarding Officer, whilst a junior manager within the Housing team was being trained to become a second Deputy. Sufficient resources had been allocated to deal with safeguarding matters.

In response to a question, the Head of Housing Services stated that she would ensure that rubbish dumping was covered in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Harassment and Hate Crimes Policy.

RESOLVED: That the following revised Policies be approved as presented:

- Safeguarding Children and Young People;
- Safeguarding Adults at Risk of Abuse or Neglect;
- Domestic Abuse; and
- Anti-Social Behaviour, Harassment and Hate Crimes,

subject to it being confirmed that rubbish dumping is covered in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Harassment and Hate Crimes Policy.

[Note: The Head of Housing Services subsequently confirmed that rubbish dumping is covered in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Harassment and Hate Crimes Policy.]

64/17 SELECTION OF NEW CHAIRMAN

Confidential item

65/17 **CHIEF EXECUTIVE REMUNERATION**

Confidential item

66/17 **TENANT INVOLVEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT STANDARD CONSULTATION**

The Company Secretary presented a report which advised of a consultation document received from the Homes and Communities Agency in regard to proposed amendments to the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard. He highlighted that the consultation document posed six questions.

Steve Clark reported that he had been present when the Tenant Panel had considered the consultation document, and the Panel had asked him to pass on its observations to the Board, as follows:

- (Question 1) Only affected tenants should be consulted where it was proposed to dispose of tenanted stock; however, the proposals should be communicated to the wider tenant body.
- (Question 6) It was important that people were consulted in the ways that suited them as individuals.
- Questions 2 – 5 were agreed.

The Board supported the Tenant Panel's views. It was stressed that the Standard set out minimum expectations; Freebridge would look to achieve best practice.

RESOLVED: That the proposed response to the consultation, as set out in section 6 of the report, be supported, subject to the inclusion of the comments of the Tenant Panel set out above.

67/17 **REVISED MANAGEMENT TEAM STRUCTURE 2017**

Confidential item

68/17 **APPOINTMENT OF SHAREHOLDERS**

The Board noted a report which advised of shareholder applications that had been approved under the Company Secretary's delegated authority.

69/17 **COMMITTEE MINUTES**

Ian Pinches, Chairman of the Audit Committee, presented the minutes of the Committee's meeting held on 30 January 2017.

70/17 Confidential item

71/17 URGENT ACTION TAKEN – EMPLOYMENT OF A CLOSE RELATIVE OF AN EXISTING EMPLOYEE

The Board noted a request for urgent action that had been approved, to enable the employment of a close relative of an existing employee.

72/17 Confidential item

73/17 WORK UPDATE

The Company Secretary presented the work update, which included the following:

- Action Sheet
- Future Work Programme of the Board.

In answer to a question, the Chief Executive advised that there were no new updates on the position regarding Plaxtole House at this time.

The Board noted the update.

74/17 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Confidential item

75/17 NEXT MEETING

The Board noted that its next meeting was scheduled for Monday 3 April 2017 at 6.30pm.

The meeting closed at 9.45pm.

CHAIRMAN