

FREEBRIDGE COMMUNITY HOUSING BOARD

Minutes of a Meeting of the Board held on Monday 15 May 2023 at 4.05pm in the Conference Room, Juniper House Austin Street, King's Lynn

PRESENT:

Andy Walder (Chair)
Jo Barrett
Gil Fernandes
Andrew Hill
Anita Jones (Chief Executive)
Donald McKenzie
Gill Rejzl (via video link)
Jasmine Rigg
Simon Smith

IN ATTENDANCE:

Anna Simpson	-	Director of Resources & Deputy Chief Executive
Sophie Bates	-	Director of Customer & Communities
Paul Newbold	-	Director of New Homes & Commercial
Dave Seaton	-	Director of Homes & Community Maintenance
Angus MacQueen	-	Governance Manager

23/23 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Vicky Savage.

24/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Gill Rejzl declared an interest in discussion around the Vice-Chair role (minute number 41/23 refers) and withdrew from the meeting for that discussion and vote.

25/23 CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair gave an update, as described below:

- He had attended meetings of the Placeshapers group, East of England Chairs and the National Housing Federation equalities group. Decent Homes and damp and mould were the main topics currently under discussion in the sector.

- New Chairs were being appointed at three Independent East associations: Orwell, Saffron and Broadland.
- The Queen Elizabeth Hospital, King's Lynn, now had a new Chair and a new Chief Executive. They were looking to take the Hospital in a different direction. They were continuing the campaign for a new building.
- The recent local elections had resulted in no overall control at the Borough Council; it was not yet clear who would take on the leadership of the Council.
- He had shadowed an operative for a day; this had given him a useful insight into the impact of the restructure of the Homes and Community Maintenance team.
- He had attended an "out and about" event earlier that day at Outwell.
- He had been working on Board succession planning.
- He had noted with interest the takeover of Swan Housing; it was disappointing that Swan had encountered difficulties around the viability of modern methods of construction.

The Board noted the update.

26/23 OPERATING CONTEXT

The Chief Executive presented a report which sought to support the Board's understanding of the Freebridge operating context at the current time and factors that could impact on that in the short/medium/long term.

Key points of the discussion were as set out below:

Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk

- The Chief Executive said that, following a long period of stability at the Borough Council, with the same party being in control over many years, it was now entering a new phase of no overall control. This would likely result in a change of direction. She was keen to strengthen Freebridge's strategic relationship with the Borough Council.

In-Depth Assessment (IDA)

- The Chief Executive stated that Freebridge's recent IDA had concluded. The Regulator would now consider their judgement, their initial conclusions being expected in early June 2023. The Regulator had been impressed with the transparency and cooperation of the Freebridge team.

[Confidential wording]

The Board noted the report.

27/23 **RISK MANAGEMENT**

Confidential item

28/23 **CUSTOMER VOICE**

The Director of Customer & Communities presented a report which brought together customer service performance data, intelligence gained from Freebridge's involved tenants and the MyFreebridge framework, and the key trends from complaints performance. This provided an insight and holistic overview of the current voice of Freebridge's customers.

The Director of Customer & Communities highlighted the following points:

- A video detailing the results of the second wave survey in relation to the Tenant Satisfaction Measures had been circulated to the Board via a link in the report.

[Confidential wording]

Key points of the discussion were as follows:

[Confidential wording]

- The Chair asked about the next steps in relation to the Tenant Satisfaction Measures. The Director of Customer & Communities replied that Freebridge would undertake the third wave survey in summer 2023, and the fourth in late winter 2023/early spring 2024. At the end of 2023/24, a return would need to be made to the Regulator.
- The Director of Customer & Communities highlighted that the report contained four key messages from the Customer Voice Panel for the Board. These were noted by the Board.

The Board noted the report.

29/23 **STOCK CONDITION UPDATE**

Confidential item

30/23 **LSVT BUSINESS PLAN MAY 2023**

Confidential item

31/23 STATISTICAL DATA RETURN 2022/23

The Director of Resources & Deputy Chief Executive presented a report which introduced the Statistical Data Return 2022/23.

The Board was content that it did not need to approve the Statistical Data Return in future.

RESOLVED: That the submission of Freebridge's Statistical Data Return 2022/23 to the Regulator be authorised.

32/23 NEW BANK ACCOUNTS

The Director of Resources & Deputy Chief Executive presented a report which sought approval to open two new bank accounts, in light of the requirement in the Treasury Management Policy to limit the amount of money that could be placed on deposit with any one institution.

[Confidential wording]

33/23 PERFORMANCE UPDATE QUARTER 4 2022/23

Confidential item

34/23 CORPORATE STRATEGY AND KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2023/24

Confidential item

35/23 ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT 2022/23

The Director of Homes & Community Maintenance presented the annual report into the overall accident/incident statistics and analysis, including data for both colleagues and tenants.

Key points of the discussion were as follows:

[Confidential wording]

- A Board Member stated that it would be useful for the Board to have some oversight around compensation and insurance payments. *The Director of Homes & Community Maintenance undertook to prepare a report for the Audit and Risk Committee on this issue.*

The Board noted the report.

36/23 INDEPENDENT EAST UPDATE

Confidential item

37/23 **REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE REPAIRS TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

[Confidential wording]

RESOLVED:

- 1) That, in line with the Group's terms of reference and the original delegation intentions of the Board, the Repairs Task and Finish Group be disbanded.

- 2) That the Chair of the Task and Finish Group undertake a handover exercise with the Chair of the Board and the Chair of the Customer Voice Panel, to ensure that any outstanding actions and issues are assimilated.

38/23 **REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE**

Donald McKenzie, Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, presented the Chair's report of the Committee's meeting held on 24 April 2023.

The Board noted the report.

39/23 **REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Confidential item

40/23 **REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE TREASURY TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

Andrew Hill, Chair of the Treasury Task and Finish Group, presented the Chair's report of the Task and Finish Group's meeting held on 23 March 2023.

The Board noted the report.

41/23 **REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE GOVERNANCE AND REMUNERATION COMMITTEE**

Simon Smith, Chair of the Governance and Remuneration Committee, presented the Chair's report of the Committee's meeting held on 20 March 2023.

Key points of the discussion were as set out below:

- The Chair stressed that any new Board Member must have the required level of skills.

- The Chair referred to one of the Committee’s recommendations, “that a new Board Vice-Chair, to assume office following the Annual General Meeting on 18 September 2023, be identified from within the current Board membership”. He had previously contacted all Board Members to express the view that Gill Rejzl would be appropriate to appoint to this role: she had the aptitude, desire and time to carry out its duties. If her appointment could be agreed now, it would enable her to prepare to take on the role in September; the role would include chairing the Governance and Remuneration Committee and leading on the recruitment of a new Board Chair.

RESOLVED:

- 1) **That the Board expand its membership in relation to Board Members with lived experience.**
- 2) **That recruitment be undertaken through the customer voice framework for at least one new Board Member with lived experience and with the necessary skills to be appointed at the Annual General Meeting on 18 September 2023.**
- 3) **That recruitment be undertaken using the “recruiting for difference” initiative for a Board Member to replace Simon Smith, to be appointed at the Annual General Meeting on 18 September 2023.**
- 4) **That recruitment be undertaken for an asset management specialist to join the Development Committee as an Independent Committee Member from October 2023.**
- 5) **That Standing Order 4 be amended, once a plan was in place to address the findings of the stock condition survey, to allow for the Development Committee to assume responsibility for strategic asset management and for an additional Independent Member to sit on the Development Committee.**
- 6) **That Gill Rejzl be appointed to assume office as Board Vice-Chair following the Annual General Meeting on 18 September 2023.**
- 7) **That an external process be undertaken to recruit a new Board Chair, to assume office in September 2024.**
- 8) **That the amendments to the Board and Committee Member Agreements for Services be approved, as set out in the report.**
- 9) **That a declaration of full compliance with the National Housing Federation Code of Governance 2020 be made in the statutory accounts 2022/23.**

42/23 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

43/23 **MATTERS ARISING/ACTION SHEET**

There were no matters arising.

[Confidential wording]

44/23 **WRITTEN RESOLUTIONS**

The Board noted the following written resolutions:

- Policy Statements Review
- [Confidential wording]
- Settlement Agreement Delegation.

45/23 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Board noted its work programme.

46/23 **EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW OF THE MEETING**

The Chair said that the meeting had taken longer than he had intended. He would welcome any feedback on the effectiveness of the meeting.

47/23 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- **Jasmine Rigg**

The Chair said that this was Jasmine Rigg's final meeting as a Board Member, as she was stepping down after nine years on the Board. He expressed the Board's great gratitude to Jasmine for her exemplary service. She had ensured that the customer voice was at the heart of the Board's decision-making and had kept the Board focused on the needs of tenants. It had been a pleasure to watch her develop into an effective Board Member.

48/23 **NEXT MEETING**

The Board noted that its next ordinary meeting would be held on Monday 24 July 2023 at 4.30pm [Confidential wording]

The meeting closed at 7.25pm.

CHAIR