

FREEBRIDGE COMMUNITY HOUSING BOARD

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Board held on
Monday 6 October 2014 at 7.40pm in
"The Barn", 2 Chapel Lane, King's Lynn**

PRESENT:

Lesley Bambridge
Matthew Brown
Steve Clark
Marie Connell
Kimberley Ely
Tony Hall (Chief Executive)
Ray Johnson
Sean Kent (Deputy Chief Executive)
Ian Pinches
Jasmine Rigg
Colin Sampson

IN ATTENDANCE:

Robert Clarke - Director of Housing
Colin Davison - Director of Property
Angus MacQueen - Company Secretary

191/14 APPOINTMENT OF BOARD CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN

(a) Introduction

The Company Secretary presented a report which sought to appoint the Board Chairman and Vice-Chairman, and to make an amendment to the Vice-Chairman's role description.

(b) Appointment of Board Chairman

Ray Johnson was proposed and seconded for the position of Board Chairman. There being no other nominations, it was

RESOLVED: That Ray Johnson be appointed Board Chairman until the start of the first Board meeting following the 2015 Annual General Meeting.

Ray Johnson in the Chair

(c) Appointment of Board Vice-Chairman

Steve Clark was proposed and seconded for the position of Board Vice-Chairman. There being no other nominations, it was

RESOLVED: That Steve Clark be appointed Board Vice-Chairman until the start of the first Board meeting following the 2015 Annual General Meeting.

(d) Vice-Chairman's Role Description

RESOLVED: That section c. of the Vice-Chairman's role description be amended as follows (additional words in italics):

- c. To carry out the Board Chairman's appraisal and monitor the Board Chairman's performance on an ongoing basis.

192/14 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

193/14 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

194/14 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

195/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Board noted that Board appointments, some of which attracted additional remuneration, were being made at this meeting, but considered that no declaration of interest was necessary as any Board Member was entitled to stand for the positions.

Marie Connell declared an interest in the item at minute number 208/14 – Appointment of Shareholders – as her application for shareholding was one of those being considered. The Board was content that she should remain in the room for the item, but she did not vote.

196/14 CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

The Chairman said that he had continued to hold his weekly meetings with the Chief Executive. He and the Chief Executive had additionally attended the National Housing Federation's Social Housing Conference in Birmingham.

The Chairman stated that he was pleased that the Freebridge Annual General Meeting, held on 22 September 2014, had run smoothly. The video version of this year's Annual Report had been shown before the meeting and had been well received, although comments about accessibility for partially sighted people had been noted.

The Chairman reported that he, along with the Head of Customer Services, had represented Freebridge at a charity golf event hosted by Searles Leisure in Heacham, and had won the event.

The Chairman advised that he was continuing to attend meetings as Freebridge's representative on the Governors' Council at the Queen Elizabeth

Hospital, King's Lynn. He had also had a personal meeting with the new Chairman of the Hospital, Edward Libby.

197/14 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S UPDATE

Confidential item

198/14 HEALTH AND SAFETY BRIEFING

The Director of Property gave a presentation which reminded the Board of its responsibilities for Health and Safety and which explained how the Board could take assurance that it was meeting its responsibilities. Copies of the slides used in the presentation were tabled.

The Board noted that the Health and Safety Committee received audit reports from the Health and Safety Adviser and asked the Company Secretary to investigate whether it would be appropriate for the Audit Committee also to consider any of this work.

The Board noted the briefing.

199/14 AFFORDABLE HOMES PROGRAMME FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT

The Director of Property presented a report which sought approval to enter into the Homes and Communities Agency's Framework Agreement in relation to the 2015-18 Affordable Homes Programme and to enter into the revised e² Consortium Agreement.

With regard to the Framework Agreement for the Affordable Homes Programme, the Board acknowledged that it was a standard document which Freebridge would need to agree to in order to access grant funding. However, the Board indicated that it would have found it useful for the officer report to contain further details, particularly around risk. It was also noted that clarification around the wording in the Agreement "no more conversions or disposals" was awaited, and that the Agreement should not be signed until this had been resolved satisfactorily.

In answer to a question about changes in membership to the e² Consortium Agreement, the Chief Executive explained that the two local authorities which had asked to join would not have a place on the Board. They would, therefore, have no opportunity to influence the direction of the Consortium.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the terms and conditions contained within the Homes and Communities Agency Framework Agreement for the 2015-18 Affordable Homes Programme be accepted, subject to the final details being agreed by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairman.
- 2) That the new e² Consortium Agreement be accepted.

200/14 CONTRACT SIGNING – THORNAGE HALL EXTENSION

Confidential item

201/14 LEASEHOLDER LEASE EXTENSION – HILLINGTON SQUARE

Confidential item

202/14 ACTIONS ARISING FROM COSMOPOLITAN HOUSING GROUP LESSONS LEARNED REPORT

The Company Secretary presented a report which set out actions arising for Freebridge from the Cosmopolitan Housing Group Lessons Learned Report published in June 2014 by Altair.

The Board agreed that the suggested actions were good practice and would assist Freebridge in preparing for the changes to the Regulatory Framework which were expected imminently. It was also noted that the Lessons Learned Report had been the subject of a Board “Thinking Session” in July 2014, and some of the suggested actions reflected comments made on that occasion.

The Board requested that all of the actions be given a definite deadline. Therefore, where actions were listed for completion by “summer 2015”, this should say “August 2015”. The action to “Develop Leader Managers”, described as “ongoing”, should be changed to “Present plan for the development of Leader Managers” by December 2014.

In answer to a question, the Deputy Chief Executive said that he and the Finance team would be investigating how the BRIXX financial planning system could be used to provide some of the information that might be required.

RESOLVED: That the actions for Freebridge arising from the Cosmopolitan Housing Group Lessons Learned Report be agreed as presented, subject to the amendments described above, and that these be added to the Governance Improvement Action Plan.

203/14 BOARD APPOINTMENTS

The Company Secretary presented a report which sought to undertake the annual process of making Board appointments for the ensuing year.

The Chairman had previously circulated a sheet of recommendations, and these were agreed. Accordingly, it was

RESOLVED: That the annual Board appointments be made as follows:

Audit Committee: Steve Clark, Ian Pinches (Chairman), Jas Rigg, Colin Sampson (Vice-Chairman), Karen Sly (co-opted member) (plus Tony Hall or Sean Kent to take a seat on the Committee in exceptional circumstances

where otherwise a quorum would not be achieved, in accordance with Standing Order 4)

Chief Executive's Appraisal Panel: Matthew Brown (Chairman), Colin Sampson, Ray Johnson (as Board Chairman)

Complaints Panel Pool: Ray Johnson (as Board Chairman), Steve Clark (as Board Vice-Chairman), Lesley Bambridge, Colin Sampson

e² Joint Members Group: Steve Clark, Ray Johnson, Tony Hall (as Chief Executive)

204/14 REVIEW OF THE MOVING OUT POLICY

The Director of Housing presented a report which reviewed the Moving Out Policy.

[Confidential wording]

In answer to a question, the Director of Housing confirmed that all of the suggested amendments to the Policy reflected standard practice.

RESOLVED: That the revised Moving Out Policy be approved as presented.

205/14 REVIEW OF THE DISQUALIFYING TENANTS IN BREACH OF TENANCY AGREEMENT CONDITIONS FROM BOARD MEMBERSHIP POLICY AND OF THE BOARD MEMBER CONDUCT ISSUES POLICY

The Company Secretary presented a report which reviewed the Disqualifying Tenants in Breach of Tenancy Agreement Conditions from Board Membership Policy and the Board Member Conduct Issues Policy.

It was noted that no amendments were suggested to the Policies, other than minor changes to put them into the new format.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the revised Disqualifying Tenants in Breach of Tenancy Agreement Conditions from Board Membership Policy be approved as presented.
- 2) That the revised Board Member Conduct Issues Policy be approved as presented.

206/14 MEETINGS TIMETABLE 2015

The Company Secretary presented a report which set out the proposed timetable for Board, committee and AGM meetings in 2015.

RESOLVED: That the 2015 meetings timetable be approved as presented.

207/14 **PROVISION OF A LEASE AT THE FRIARS TO AN EXISTING EMPLOYEE**

The Director of Housing presented a report which sought approval to offer a 12-month lease to an existing Freebridge employee.

RESOLVED: That the lease of one unit at the Friars for a period of 12 months to an existing Freebridge employee be agreed as described in the report.

208/14 **APPOINTMENT OF SHAREHOLDERS**

The Board considered a report which listed applications for shareholding.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the applications for tenant shareholding set out in Appendix 1 to the report be approved.
- 2) That the application from Marie Connell to become an independent shareholder be approved.

209/14 **TENANT PANEL QUARTERLY UPDATE**

The Company Secretary presented a report which provided the quarterly update from the Tenant Panel.

The Board was pleased to note that, following the recent recruitment process, all vacancies on the Tenant Panel had now been filled.

The Board asked that its thanks be passed on to the Tenant Panel for the progress made to date on its work plan.

The Board noted the report.

210/14 **BLACK AND MINORITY ETHNIC (BME) LETTINGS**

The Director of Housing presented a report which sought to set a new BME indicator for lettings.

The Board noted that the three-year local connection criteria recently introduced by the Borough Council had affected this year's figures. Next year's figures would provide a clearer view.

RESOLVED: That a new BME lettings indicator of 16.01% be adopted and reviewed annually.

211/14 SWARM APPRENTICESHIPS UPDATE

The Director of Housing presented a report which provided an update on progress with the SWARM Apprenticeship programme. He confirmed that the Board would be provided with the next update in February 2015.

The Board noted the report.

212/14 URGENT ACTION TAKEN – PROVISION OF A TENANCY TO A CLOSE FRIEND OF AN EXISTING EMPLOYEE

The Board noted a request for urgent action that had been approved, to enable the Association to provide a tenancy to a close friend of an existing employee.

213/14 URGENT ACTION TAKEN – PROVISION OF A TENANCY TO A CLOSE RELATIVE OF A RECENT TENANT PANEL MEMBER

The Board noted a request for urgent action that had been approved, to enable the Association to provide a tenancy to a close relative of a recent Tenant Panel Member.

214/14 WORK UPDATE

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

- Action Sheet
- Future Work Programme of the Board.

The Board noted the update.

215/14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- **Customer Focus Week**

The Chairman said that, as part of Customer Focus Week, Freebridge staff were currently involved in a number of activities and initiatives.

216/14 NEXT MEETING

The Board noted that its next meeting was scheduled for Monday 3 November 2014 at 6.30pm.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm.

CHAIRMAN