

FREEBRIDGE COMMUNITY HOUSING BOARD

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Board held on
Monday 3 February 2020 at 4.45pm in
"The Barn", 2 Chapel Lane, King's Lynn**

PRESENT:

Andy Walder (Chair)
Joanna Barrett
Marie Connell
Tony Hall (Chief Executive)
Marcus Hopkins
Ian Pinches
Pauleen Pratt
Jasmine Rigg
Simon Smith

IN ATTENDANCE:

Sophie Bates - Director of Housing
Birgit Lenton - Director of Corporate Services and
Culture
Dave Marshall - Director of Finance and Resources
Angus MacQueen - Deputy Company Secretary

01/20 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Shelley Lamprell-Josephs, Brian Long, Richard Spilsbury, and Mike Britch (Chair of Bridgegate Homes and Freebridge Board observer).

02/20 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

03/20 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

04/20 ACTION SHEET

(a) Hillington Square Project

The Board was pleased to note that Hillington Square tenants and leaseholders had been contacted regarding the plans for the remainder of the project.

(b) Sharing Expertise with Other Agencies

The Chief Executive confirmed that he had raised with the West Norfolk Partnership whether there were opportunities for sharing expertise. There had been a willingness to share resources and to investigate providing a “West Norfolk Middle Managers” training programme.

05/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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06/20 CHAIR’S UPDATE

In addition to his weekly meetings with the Chief Executive, the Chair described the following activities that he had undertaken since the last meeting:

- He had attended an Eastern Region Chairs meeting. This had been a useful session, which had included presentations on Norwich City Council’s award-winning Goldsmiths Street housing development and on offsite construction. He would circulate the slides to the Board.
- A key focus had been progressing the recruitment of a new Chief Executive.

07/20 MANAGEMENT TEAM UPDATE

(a) Introduction

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

The written update covered the following issues:

- Customer Service Committee
- Audit and Risk Committee Recruitment
- Asset Management Strategy – Electrical Periodic Inspection and Testing
- Plaxtole House Demolition
- Property Services Improvement
- Human Resources
- Financial Conduct Authority Senior Managers and Certification Regime
- RACI Matrix (Standing Orders)
- Discovery Placeshaping Centre
- AMC Cladding
- Service Charging
- Code of Governance Review
- Future of Fairstead Surgery Consultation

Discussion took place on some aspects of the update, as set out below:

(b) Customer Service Committee

Jasmine Rigg, who had chaired the panel which had recruited to the Customer Service Committee, said that the recruitment process had been successful, and that the panel was able to put forward three good candidates for appointment.

[Confidential wording]

(c) Audit and Risk Committee Recruitment

The Board considered the appointment of a panel to recruit the Independent Member of the Audit and Risk Committee. In view of a concern expressed around a possible conflict of interest with a potential applicant, the Board agreed to put in place an option to replace a member of the panel if necessary.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That a panel be appointed to recruit the Independent Member of the Audit and Risk Committee with the following membership:
 - Richard Spilsbury (Audit and Risk Committee Chair)
 - Ian Pinches (Audit and Risk Committee Vice-Chair)
 - Pauleen Pratt (Governance and Remuneration Committee Chair).
- 2) That, should a member withdraw from the panel, the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee be given delegated authority to appoint any other Board Member as a replacement.
- 3) That the quorum for the panel be two members.

(d) Asset Management Strategy – Electrical Periodic Inspection and Testing

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08/20 PERFORMANCE PACK

(a) Introduction

The Chief Executive and the Director of Finance and Resources presented the Performance Pack for the Quarter ending 31 December 2019.

Discussion took place on aspects of the Performance Pack, as set out below.

(b) Operational Performance Report and Financial Statements

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(c) Treasury Management and Strategy Update

The Board noted the update.

(d) Business Plan Project Update

The Board noted the update.

(e) Risk Management and Business Assurance Update

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(f) Health and Safety Compliance

In answer to questions, the Chief Executive made the following points:

- Fire risk assessments and resulting remedial work were being prioritised on a risk-based approach.
- Domestic asbestos checks would need to be completed before the electrical installation checks were carried out, and so the original target date for completion of 2025 would need to change.

The Board noted the update.

(g) Empties Performance Information and Management Action

The Board was pleased to note the improved performance around empty property repairs.

(h) Tenant Panel Quarterly Update

Simon Smith advised that he would be attending the Tenant Panel's next meeting, on 14 February 2020, at which point he would feed back the management responses to the key issues that the Panel had asked to be raised with the Board. He would additionally confirm to the Panel that it would have some involvement in the recruitment of the new Chief Executive.

The Board noted the update.

09/20 BUSINESS PLAN – 2020/21 DELIVERY PLAN

The Chief Executive presented a report which sought approval of the 2020/21 Delivery Plan that would support the implementation of the 5-year Business Plan and its strategic objectives. He highlighted that the Delivery Plan reflected current issues, for instance the need to address repairs performance and the expected Government Housing White Paper.

Following a question from a Board Member submitted in advance of the meeting, the Chief Executive said that there was no need currently to review the 5-year Business Plan, as the Plan was only in its third year. It would be

appropriate for the new Chief Executive to lead on a review of the Plan next year. In the meantime, the Chair had asked him to look to make the targets in the 5-year Business Plan “SMARTER”, and he would do this.

In response to a question, the Chief Executive confirmed that he would ensure handover of the aspects of the Delivery Plan allocated to him, in advance of his retirement.

It was highlighted that, while the Delivery Plan included 48 new homes, the budget paper sought approval for 30 disposals, which would impact on the number of additional properties actually available.

The Board identified the green and digital agendas as issues that they would like to consider, and asked that these be placed on future strategy afternoon agendas.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the 2020/21 Delivery Plan, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.
- 2) That the current high level KPIs and targets contained within the Performance Pack be retained.

[Note: These resolutions were approved following consideration of the budget paper – minute number 10/20 below.]

10/20 BUDGET 2020/21

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11/20 BOARD EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW

The Deputy Company Secretary presented a report which monitored the effectiveness of the Board over the last year in order to comply with section E4 of the adopted Code of Governance.

As a general point, the Chair suggested that the Board and Management Team would benefit from looking at how they could work more closely together.

Pauleen Pratt advised that she had attended the Board strategy afternoon in March 2019; the report indicated that she had not attended.

Board Members suggested that future reports of this nature could include responses to the survey that was sent to Board Members at the end of each Board meeting and display of the values.

RESOLVED: That it be determined that the Board is effective and, thereby, meets the requirements of section E4 of the Code of Governance.

12/20 GOVERNANCE AND REMUNERATION COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

The Board considered the recommendation of the Governance and Remuneration Committee meeting held on 6 January 2020.

RESOLVED: That a statement of compliance with the National Housing Federation Code of Governance 2015 be included within the 2019 Financial Statements.

13/20 APPOINTMENT OF SHAREHOLDERS

The Board noted a report which listed applications to become shareholders that had been approved.

14/20 WRITTEN RESOLUTION – RURAL RESTRICTIVE COVENANT

The Board noted a written resolution regarding the removal of a rural restrictive covenant.

15/20 WRITTEN RESOLUTION – PROPOSALS FOR CHIEF EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT

The Board noted a written resolution regarding the process for the recruitment of a new Chief Executive.

16/20 WRITTEN RESOLUTION – CONTRACT FOR INSTALLATION OF FIRE DOORS

The Board noted a written resolution regarding additional expenditure on the contract for installation of fire doors.

17/20 COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Board received the minutes of the Governance and Remuneration Committee meeting held on 6 January 2020 and of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 13 January 2020.

18/20 FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME OF THE BOARD

The Board noted its work programme for the ensuing year.

As discussed at minute number 09/20 above, the Board requested that the green and digital agendas be added for consideration at future strategy afternoons.

It was also suggested that the Board and Management Team should have a session, at a future strategy afternoon, on how they could improve working together, as discussed at minute number 11/20 above.

19/20 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

20/20 NEXT MEETING

The Board noted that its next meeting was scheduled for Monday 11 May 2020 at 4.30pm. The Board's next strategy afternoon would be held on Monday 2 March 2020 at 12noon.

21/20 COMPANY SECRETARY

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The meeting closed at 7.10pm.

CHAIR