

FREEBRIDGE COMMUNITY HOUSING BOARD

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Board held on
Monday 3 April 2017 at 7.30pm in
The North Lynn Discovery Centre, Columbia Way, King's Lynn**

PRESENT:

Ray Johnson (Chairman)
Steve Clark
Marie Connell
Tony Hall (Chief Executive)
Brian Long (arrived during minute number 78/17)
Ian Pinches
Pauleen Pratt
Jasmine Rigg
Colin Sampson (arrived during minute number 78/17)
Simon Smith
Andy Walder

IN ATTENDANCE:

Robert Clarke	-	Director of Housing
Colin Davison	-	Director of Property
Angus MacQueen	-	Company Secretary
Judith Carter	-	Executive Assistant

Note: The meeting was preceded by a tour of the North Lynn Discovery Centre and a talk from one of the Centre's trustees, Graham Middleton, on the current situation of the Centre, followed by a Board "Thinking Session" on Freebridge's position in relation to the Centre.

76/17 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

The Chairman advised that Tina Smiddy had resigned from her position as a co-opted Board Member. The Board asked that the Chairman write on its behalf to Mrs Smiddy, to thank her for her services as a Board Member and to offer her best wishes for the future.

7717 MINUTES

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

78/17 **MATTERS ARISING**

• **Safeguarding (Minute Number 63/17)**

It was requested that the Board be provided with an annual report on safeguarding compliance. Concern was expressed that such a report could be operational, but the Board was of the view that the report was needed to give it assurance in its strategic role to oversee safeguarding compliance. The Chief Executive undertook to provide the report annually, as requested, but would look to avoid it straying into operational detail. He would consult with colleagues in the sector to investigate whether they presented such a report to their boards which he could use as a template.

79/17 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Confidential item

80/17 **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:

- a photo-shoot at Freebridge's new development on the Old Police House site in North Lynn;
- a Governance Committee meeting;
- the Board's away afternoon; and
- a meeting at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital attended by the Duke of Gloucester.

81/17 **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:

- Electronic Tendering
- Press Coverage of Blockbuster Site
- Feedback from Senior Engagement Meeting with the HCA
- Stock Rationalisation Opportunity
- Hillington Square Future Planning Meeting
- Meeting with the Housing Minister
- West Norfolk Partnership
- Energy Advisor Update

[Confidential wording]

82/17 **NORTH LYNN DISCOVERY CENTRE**

Confidential item

83/17 **NEW BUSINESS PLAN**

The Chief Executive presented a report which introduced the draft Business Plan 2017-18.

The Chief Executive highlighted that the Business Plan had been discussed in detail at the Board's away afternoon on 27 March 2017. It had been decided at the away afternoon that an additional project, on Governance, should be included, and this had been done. Six introductory pages had also been added, showing the flow from the vision, mission and strategic goals to the Business Plan.

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

- Where individuals' names were used, these would be changed to job roles.
- The timescales in some of the projects were better developed than in others; however, Management Team were working on this so as to give similar clarity to each project.
- Monitoring of the Business Plan would be conducted on a quarterly basis by the Management Team and the Board.
- A programme plan would be developed, showing the timescales for each project against each other. Overall, the projects would take three years to complete.
- A review of Freebridge's approach to risk management (part of the Governance project) was already underway, and would focus in particular on residual risk and risk appetite.
- The Plan contained the current capacity for the delivery of new homes. If it was decided to consider increasing that capacity to meet local need, this would require a separate piece of work, looking, for instance, at disposals, finance restructuring and more efficiencies.
- A paragraph on community leadership would be added.

RESOLVED: That the draft 2017-18 Business Plan, including the strategic goals and the project portfolio, be approved, subject to the following amendments:

- replace individuals' names with job roles; and
- add a paragraph on community leadership.

84/17 **BOARD MEMBER RECRUITMENT 2017 PART 1**

Confidential item

85/17 **PROCUREMENT APPROVALS**

Confidential item

86/17 **PENSION REVIEW**

The Chief Executive presented a report which provided indicative costs to complete a review of pension provision at Freebridge.

RESOLVED: That Freebridge proceed with the pension review within the cost parameters set out in the report.

87/17 **PROVISION OF A TENANCY TO A CLOSE RELATIVE OF AN EXISTING EMPLOYEE**

Confidential item

88/17 **GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

Confidential item

89/17 **HOUSING BENEFIT DIRECT PROJECT**

The Director of Housing presented a report which advised of the progress of the Housing Benefit Direct project, following its commencement in July 2016.

The Board welcomed the project, which was providing useful learning in anticipation of the full roll-out of Universal Credit.

In answer to questions, the Chief Executive said that resources in the Income team were being kept under close review, and would be increased if necessary. It was clear that Freebridge would be carrying more debt once Universal Credit had been fully rolled out.

The Board noted the report.

90/17 **POLICY FRAMEWORK REVIEW**

The Chief Executive presented a report which provided an update on the progress of the policy framework review. The review was being undertaken as part of the identified actions arising from the Business Improvement Strategy agreed by the Board in January 2017.

The Board noted the report.

91/17 PROMOTION OF A CLOSE RELATIVE OF AN EXISTING EMPLOYEE

Confidential item

92/17 COMMITTEE MINUTES

Marie Connell, Chairman of the Governance Committee, presented the minutes of the Committee's meeting held on 13 March 2017.

The Committee noted the report.

93/17 PROVISION OF A TENANCY TO A CLOSE RELATIVE OF AN EXISTING EMPLOYEE

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

94/17 WORK UPDATE

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

- Action Sheet
- Future Work Programme of the Board.

The Board observed that there were several examples of slippage in the action plan. It was suggested that the execution dates set could be too ambitious. Where slippage occurred, the Board requested that a clear explanation be given. When possible, it would be useful for the Board to know in advance where it was clear that actions were likely to slip.

The Board noted that the work programme for the Board meeting on 15 May 2017 was particularly large. This being the case, the Board agreed that there would be no "Thinking Session" or briefing on that occasion, and that the meeting would start at the earlier time of 4.45pm (with a short pre-meeting at 4.30pm).

The Board noted the update.

95/17 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

96/17 NEXT MEETING

The Board noted that its next meeting was scheduled for Monday 15 May 2017 at 4.45pm (see minute number 94/17 above).

The meeting closed at 8.40pm.

CHAIRMAN