

**FREEBRIDGE COMMUNITY HOUSING BOARD**

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Board held on  
Monday 16 May 2022 at 4.30pm in the  
Property Services Meeting Room,  
Hamlin Way, King's Lynn**

**PRESENT:**

Andy Walder (Chair)  
Joanna Barrett  
Andrew Hill (via video link)  
Anita Jones (Chief Executive)  
Donald McKenzie  
Gill Rejzl  
Vicky Savage

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Anna Simpson	-	Director of Resources & Deputy Chief Executive
Sophie Bates	-	Director of Customer & Communities
Paul Newbold	-	Director of Development
Adam Colby	-	Lead Business Architect (Minute Number 30/22)
Angus MacQueen	-	Governance Manager

**OBSERVER:**

David Seaton	-	Director of Assets Designate
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**23/22      APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Jasmine Rigg and Simon Smith.

**24/22      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Joanna Barrett, Andrew Hill, Donald McKenzie and Vicky Savage declared an interest in relation to the recommendation around members of the Board who were employed by other housing associations, as contained in the Report of the Chair of the Governance and Remuneration Committee (minute number 39/22). The Board was content that they remain in the room, as there was no discussion, but they did not vote.

Andrew Hill declared an interest in relation to the recommendation around his continued Freebridge shareholding, as contained in the Report of the Chair of the Governance and Remuneration Committee (minute number 39/22). The

Board was content that he remain in the room, as there was no discussion, but he did not vote.

## **25/22**      **CHAIR'S UPDATE**

The Chair gave a verbal update. Key points were as follows:

- The Chair welcomed David Seaton, who was observing the meeting. He would be joining the organisation as Director of Assets in July 2022. Those present introduced themselves.
- The Chair referred to a letter which had recently been sent to all Registered Providers by the Regulator. The letter highlighted issues that Providers would need to consider in light of new consumer regulation, particularly around service improvement and tenant consultation. Further discussion on the letter would take place at the Board's strategy afternoon in June 2022.
- The Chair highlighted that the current economic environment presented two strategic challenges for Freebridge. The first was whether Freebridge should continue to pursue the same Corporate Strategy. He believed that it should, albeit possibly in a different way or to a different timescale. The second was around looking ahead to the future; he believed that Freebridge should continue to grow its estate.
- The Chair said that the National Housing Federation Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group, of which he was a member, was looking at improving the diversity of boards, through more innovative recruitment practices. There were some good examples of tenant recruitment locally. The Group also considered it important that the remuneration committees included the diversity of thought provided by an independent member. The Chair was pleased that both the independent members on Freebridge's Governance and Remuneration Committee and Audit and Risk Committee were making a significant impact.

[Confidential wording]

## **26/22**      **OPERATING CONTEXT**

Confidential item

## **27/22**      **CUSTOMER CHARTER**

The Director of Customer and Communities presented a report which introduced Freebridge's proposed Customer Charter.

The Director of Customer and Communities apologised that the infographic referred to in the report had not been included. The infographic illustrated the outcomes sought by the Regulator from reshaping consumer regulation and how these were addressed through the Charter.

The Director of Customer and Communities said that three actions would need to take place following adoption of the Charter, as follows:

- an extensive piece of work to embed the Charter with colleagues and contractors;
- development of performance measures with the Tenant Panel and the Customer Service Committee; and
- a gap analysis against the Charter and a plan as to how to address the gaps.

In answer to questions, the Director of Customer and Communities made the following points:

- It was intended that the Charter would be a “live” document, and would be updated as and when necessary.
- Some of the commitments in the Charter were already being met; others would be achieved over time.

The Board welcomed the principles of the Charter. However, the Board was concerned that the Charter did not make it clear that some of the commitments it contained were intended to be delivered over time. The Charter implied that all of the commitments were already being met, and, therefore, there was the potential for reputational damage should the Charter be published without this being clarified.

The Board was also of the view that there should be further tenant consultation in the development of the Charter, and that the Charter should include quotations from tenants.

The Board asked that it be provided with a further draft of the Charter for approval at its next meeting which took account of the points above.

## **28/22      CUSTOMER VOICE UPDATE**

The Board noted a video, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting, and which provided an update on customer engagement initiatives.

## **29/22      BUSINESS PLAN MAY 2022**

Confidential item

## **30/22      TARGET OPERATING MODEL PROGRAMME**

The Lead Business Architect presented a report which outlined the programme of change activity underway in the business to transition to the new Target Operating Model (TOM) and support delivery of the Corporate Strategy.

Key points of the discussion were as follows:

- In answer to questions, the Lead Business Architect confirmed that there would be post-implementation evaluation of TOM initiatives, including impact on tenants.
- In response to questions, the Lead Business Architect said that there had been good engagement with TOM initiatives from colleagues who had so far been directly affected. Wider communication with all colleagues on the objectives of the TOM could be enhanced.
- The Board requested that future reports include a three-year programme plan, showing progress made to date and future tasks. The Chief Executive stated that the newly-appointed Programme Manager would be able to assist in preparing this.
- The Board acknowledged that the TOM was key in delivering the Corporate Strategy. It, therefore, requested ongoing monitoring reports at each Board meeting. Once the Board was content that clear monitoring reports were in place, it would consider delegating the oversight of the TOM to a Committee.

The Board noted the report.

**31/22            PERFORMANCE OUTTURN FOR 2021/22**

Confidential item

**32/22            PERFORMANCE APRIL 2022**

Confidential item

**33/22            IN-DEPTH ASSESSMENT PREPARATION**

The Director of Resources & Deputy Chief Executive presented a report which described progress on the preparations for the In-Depth Assessment which was expected later in 2022.

The Board noted the report and

**RESOLVED: That oversight of the preparation for the In-Depth Assessment be delegated to the Governance and Remuneration Committee.**

**34/22            RISK MANAGEMENT**

Confidential item

**35/22            STATISTICAL DATA RETURN 2021/22**

The Director of Resources & Deputy Chief Executive presented a report which introduced the Statistical Data Return 2021/22.

Key points of the discussion were as follows:

- In answer to a question, the Director of Resources & Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that the Statistical Data Return would be reconciled to the statutory accounts.
- The Board highlighted the relatively high number of Right to Buy and Right to Acquire purchases that had taken place during the year.

**RESOLVED: That the submission of Freebridge’s Statistical Data Return 2021/22 to the Regulator be authorised.**

**36/22            REPORT OF THE TENANT PANEL – QUARTER 1 ACTIVITY TO DATE**

The Director of Customer and Communities presented a report which described the activities of the Tenant Panel during March – April 2022.

In answer to a question, the Director of Customer and Communities said that the results of the TPAS customer engagement work would be reported in June 2022.

The Board noted the report.

**37/22            REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE CUSTOMER SERVICE COMMITTEE**

Jo Barrett, member of the Customer Service Committee, presented the Chair’s report of the Committee’s meeting held on 28 April 2022.

[Confidential wording]

The Board noted the report.

**38/22            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 25 April 2022.

Key points of the discussion were as follows:

[Confidential wording]

- The Board noted that the Committee’s recommendation regarding residual risk and risk appetite had been considered earlier in the meeting under the Risk Management item (minute number 34/22 refers).
- In terms of risk reporting, it was suggested that it would be useful for the Board to see the top three risks listed with remediation actions.

The Board noted the report.

**39/22            REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE GOVERNANCE AND REMUNERATION COMMITTEE**

The Board Chair, a member of the Governance and Remuneration Committee, presented the Chair’s report of the Committee’s meeting held on 16 March 2022.

The Board noted that the Committee’s recommendation to approve a declaration of full compliance with the Code of Governance 2020 was partly on the basis of forecast compliance. The Board felt uncomfortable with this, and asked that the recommendation be brought forward again once compliance was complete.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) **That the Social Media Policy be approved.**
- 2) **That it be agreed that it is in Freebridge’s interests for the Board to retain all four of the Board Members who are employees of other housing associations.**
- 3) **That Andrew Hill retain his Freebridge shareholding.**

**40/22            REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Vicky Savage, Chair of the Development Committee, presented the Chair’s report of the Committee’s meeting held on 30 March 2022.

Vicky Savage highlighted that the Committee believed that it would be sensible for it to oversee all voids, not just those relating to development. The Board was content with this, but it was stressed that there must be triangulation, particularly with the Repairs Task and Finish Group.

The Board noted the report and

**RESOLVED: That the Development Committee’s terms of reference, as set out in Standing Order 4, be amended as follows:**

**“to keep under review the number, value and impact of development **all** voids.”**

**41/22**            **REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE REPAIRS TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

Gill Rejzl, Chair of the Repairs Task and Finish Group, presented the Chair's report of the Task and Finish Group's meeting held on 31 March 2022.

The Board noted the report.

**42/22**            **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 24 March 2022.

The Board noted the report.

**43/22**            **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2022 were confirmed as a correct record.

**44/22**            **MATTERS ARISING/ACTION SHEET**

There were no matters arising.

The Board noted the action sheet.

**45/22**            **WRITTEN RESOLUTIONS**

The Board noted the following written resolutions:

- Financial Regulations Document Review
- Review of Standing Orders and Governance Policies
- Homes England Funding Deed 2021-26
- Customer Service Committee Membership

**46/22**            **FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME OF THE BOARD**

The Board noted its work programme for the ensuing year.

**47/22**            **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**(a) Office Strategy**

In answer to a question, the Chief Executive said that colleagues were currently being supported in settling into new working styles following the pandemic. Those who were operating the "mixed" style would normally be in the office for two days a week. Part of Juniper House had undergone a refresh to support

the new styles and it was intended that a refresh at Hamlin Way would take place over the coming months. [Confidential wording]

**(b) Hillington Square**

The Director of Development advised that the consultation on plans for the completion of the Hillington Square project would commence on the following day.

**(c) Garages**

In response to a question, the Director of Development agreed to work on a plan for Freebridge-owned garages.

**(d) “Out andABOUTs”**

The Chair reminded all Board Members that they were each expected, as part of their appraisal objectives, to attend two “out and abouts” during this year.

**48/22      NEXT MEETING**

The Board noted that its next meeting would be held on 25 July 2022. The Board would also be holding a strategy afternoon on 13 June 2022, while all Board Members had been invited to attend the Development Committee sites tour on 27 June 2022.

**The meeting closed at 7.40pm.**

**CHAIR**