

FREEBRIDGE COMMUNITY HOUSING BOARD

Minutes of a Meeting of the Board held on Monday 7 April 2014 at 6.30pm in “The Barn”, 2 Chapel Lane, King’s Lynn

PRESENT:

Ray Johnson (Chairman)
Lesley Bambridge
Matthew Brown
Steve Clark
Tony Hall (Chief Executive)
Sean Kent (Deputy Chief Executive)
Paul Leader
Ian Pinches
Colin Sampson

IN ATTENDANCE:

Colin Davison - Director of Property
Michelle Gant - Director of Engagement
Angus MacQueen - Company Secretary

The meeting was observed by three members of the Tenant Panel.

64/14 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

65/14 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

66/14 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

67/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Ian Pinches declared an interest in the item at minute number 72/14 – Plaxtole House Update – as he was a Board Member of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Trust. The interest was not significant to the report on this occasion, and the Board was content that he should remain in the room for the item, but he did not vote.

68/14 CHAIRMAN’S UPDATE

The Chairman said that, in addition to his weekly meetings with the Chief Executive, he had attended the following:

17 March
25 March

Complaints Panel
Stakeholder Business Planning Day

69/14 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S UPDATE

(a) Written Update

A written update from the Chief Executive, covering a number of issues, was noted by the Board.

In particular, the Board was pleased at the success of the Stakeholder Business Planning Day. This event had included the launch of the Freebridge "Working Together" booklet. The Board was delighted to note that Stonewall would be using this booklet as an example of good practice.

(b) Business Plan Bond 2013/14

Confidential

(c) Value for Money Self-Assessment

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that, in common with many other housing associations, Freebridge's 2013 Value for Money Self-Assessment had been rated by the Regulator as "Partially Compliant". He was looking to put together a working group to consider the guidance that was available and compile this year's Value for Money Self-Assessment. He intended to invite two Non-Executive Board Members and two Tenant Panel Members to join the group.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That Matthew Brown and Steve Clark be appointed to the working group to prepare this year's Value for Money Self-Assessment.
- 2) That the Self-Assessment, once prepared by the working group, be presented to the Board for approval.

(d) Board Recruitment

The Company Secretary advised that there had been an unprecedented level of interest in this year's Board recruitment, with around 120 expressions of interest to date. Some interest had come from people based a significant distance away from King's Lynn, and there had been enquiries as to whether travel/accommodation expenses would be payable for attendance at meetings. The Board agreed that, once Board remuneration had been introduced, it would not be appropriate to pay for travel/accommodation for meetings held in King's Lynn. The Board also noted that, once applications had been received, it might be suitable to give additional weighting to those based relatively locally, to ensure an understanding of the issues affecting the area.

(e) Freebridge Community Awards 2014

Board Members were invited to the Freebridge Community Awards 2014, which would be held at the Providence Street Community Centre on Friday 25 April.

70/14 ANNUAL BUDGET 2014/15

Confidential item

71/14 REFINANCING "STRATEGY"

Confidential item

72/14 PLAXTOLE HOUSE UPDATE

Confidential item

73/14 TENANT PANEL WORK PLAN UPDATE 2012/14 AND WORK PLAN FOR 2014/15

The Director of Engagement presented a report which provided an update on the Tenant Panel work plan from October 2012 to March 2014 and which set out a new 12-month work plan from April 2014.

The Board was interested to receive these details of the activities of the Tenant Panel and confirmed that it would like to receive quarterly updates on the work of the Panel. It was noted that some Board Members had personal objectives this year around increasing the Board's engagement with the Panel.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the update on the Tenant Panel work plan 2012-14 be noted.
- 2) That the Tenant Panel 12-month work plan from April 2014 be endorsed, this being in addition to the work being undertaken as part of the Panel's enhanced role.

74/14 REVIEW OF THE TENANT SAFETY POLICY

The Director of Property presented a report which reviewed the Tenant Safety Policy.

RESOLVED: That the revised Tenant Safety Policy be approved, as presented.

75/14 REVIEW OF THE FIRE SAFETY POLICY

The Director of Property presented a report which reviewed the Fire Safety Policy.

RESOLVED: That the revised Fire Safety Policy be approved, as presented.

76/14 CONTRACT SIGNING - WATERSIDE

The Director of Property presented a report which sought approval for Freebridge to enter into a contract with Orwell Housing to develop two properties at Waterside, King's Lynn.

The Board was pleased to note that, although the contract would be with Orwell Housing, these properties would be handed over to Freebridge when completed. This was effectively, therefore, the first time that Freebridge properties would be constructed by Freebridge operatives.

In answer to questions, the Director of Property said that both the quality and the costs of the work would be kept under review. The intention was to exceed the design brief if this could be achieved within budget. The Board noted that this would be a useful learning opportunity for future developments carried out by Freebridge staff.

RESOLVED: That it be agreed to enter into the contract with Orwell Housing to develop two properties at Waterside, King's Lynn.

77/14 APPOINTMENT OF SHAREHOLDERS

The Board considered a report which listed an application for tenant shareholding.

RESOLVED: That the application for tenant shareholding set out in Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

[Note: The applicant for shareholding in this case wrote to advise that the application had been made in error. It was, therefore, not processed.]

78/14 FRAUD AWARENESS WORKSHOP FOLLOW-UP ITEMS ACTION PLAN

The Deputy Chief Executive presented a report which set out an action plan to monitor the follow-up items from the fraud awareness workshops held by PricewaterhouseCoopers for Freebridge staff and Board Members in February 2014.

The Board noted the report and asked that the action plan be referred to the Audit Committee for future monitoring.

79/14 REGULATORY INVESTIGATION

The Chief Executive presented a report which provided the Homes and Communities Agency's conclusions of their investigation into a recent case

involving a Freebridge tenant, and which set out proposed management actions.

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the Regulator's findings had been reported to the funders, who had noted them but would be taking no further action.

The Board noted the report.

80/14 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.

81/14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(a) Fire Alarm, Emergency Lighting and Fire-Fighting Equipment Servicing and Maintenance

Confidential

(b) Employment of a Close Friend of an Existing Member of Staff

Confidential

(c) Chief Executive's Appraisal

The Chief Executive's Appraisal Panel had met on 24 March 2014 to perform the annual appraisal of the Chief Executive and to set his targets for 2014/15. It was noted that the outcomes of the Panel's meeting had been reported by Matthew Brown, Chairman of the Panel, to the Non-Executive Members of the Board immediately before this Board meeting.

(d) Risk Management Guide

The Company Secretary reported that Freebridge had obtained a copy of the National Housing Federation's new Risk Management Guide for Board Members. Board Members would be welcome to borrow the Guide on request to the Governance team.

(e) Simon Gathercole

The Board noted that, under the Freebridge Rules (at D7.3) no one could remain a Board Member if "they have absented themselves from four consecutive meetings of the Board without special leave of absence". Simon Gathercole had now missed four consecutive Board meetings (those held on

20 January 2014, 3 February 2014, 10 March 2014 and 7 April 2014), and had not sought nor been granted a special leave of absence for this period. He was, therefore, no longer a Freebridge Board Member, with immediate effect. The Company Secretary would write to Mr Gathercole to confirm the position.

(f) “Out and About” Visits

Board Members who wished to take part in any of the forthcoming “Out and About” visits were asked to indicate their interest to the Company Secretary.

82/14 NEXT MEETING

The Board noted that its next meeting was scheduled for Monday 19 May 2014 at 6.30pm.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm.

CHAIRMAN