

**FREEBRIDGE COMMUNITY HOUSING BOARD**

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Board held on  
Monday 9 March 2015 at 6.30pm in  
"The Barn", 2 Chapel Lane, King's Lynn**

**PRESENT:**

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

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

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

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

**51/15      APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received from Matthew Brown.

**52/15      MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**53/15      MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

**54/15      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**55/15      CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE**

The Chairman said that, since the last Board meeting, he had continued to attend his weekly meetings with the Chief Executive. He had also attended a meeting of the Freebridge Complaints Panel and had opened two tenders.

**(a) Introduction**

A written update from the Chief Executive had been previously circulated and was noted by the meeting.

The written update covered the following issues:

- Rule changes
- Bank mandate
- Budget
- Lovell contract – Hillington Square Phase 1
- Fire damage at Elizabeth Close
- Development update
- Plaxtole House
- Charitable activities

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

**(b) Rule Changes**

The Chairman advised that he had met with the Borough Council's Portfolio Holder for Community when, among other things, the proposed Rule changes had been discussed. They were now intending to meet every six weeks, to keep each other up-to-date on key issues.

**(c) Bank Mandate**

The Board noted that, although it had been agreed at the last meeting that the Chairman should sign the Printed Signatory Bank Indemnity, the bank had stated that this should be signed by someone included on the Bank Mandate; the Chairman was not included. In answer to a question, the Deputy Chief Executive said that it would not be practical to include a Non-Executive Board Member on the Bank Mandate, as cheque signatories needed to be available in the office at short notice.

**RESOLVED:** That the Printed Signatory Bank Indemnity form be signed by the Chief Executive.

**(d) Budget**

[Confidential]

**(e) Data Protection**

[Confidential]

**57/15**            **DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN 2015/16**

The Chief Executive presented a report which introduced the draft 2015-16 Business Plan, strategic targets, and the three-year planning framework.

The Chief Executive said that the draft Plan had been prepared as a result of a great deal of hard work by the Board, at its away day and thinking sessions, and by the Management Team. It focused on both improving the business in the short-term and on longer-term strategic direction. It was part of a suite of documents, including the Operational Plan, and so avoided a long list of activities.

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

- The Management Team would populate the Plan with timescales and more detail following its approval.
- The aims set out in the three-year Plan provided a means of measuring the Plan's success.
- Much of what was included in the Operational Plan was already seen by the Board in the action plans contained within individual policies. They were monitored by the Management Team and ultimately by the service assurance and business assurance processes. To give the Board additional assurance, updates would be included in the quarterly Operations Performance Overview report.
- When Freebridge developed its Placeshaping Strategy, it would need to be clear on the types of activities that Freebridge would take part in and the type of activities that it would not become involved in. Such decisions would be communicated in a careful and sensitive way to the outside world.

**RESOLVED:** That the draft 2015-16 Business Plan, strategic targets, and the three-year planning framework be approved as presented.

**58/15**            **LOVELL/PROPERTY SERVICES SUB-CONTRACTOR CONTRACT**

[Confidential item]

**59/15**            **REVIEW OF THE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY AND OF THE SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY**

The Director of Housing presented a report which reviewed the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy.

In answer to a question, the Chief Executive stated that some employees would be attending training on radicalisation. The Director of Housing said

that he would check whether the Safeguarding Policies should include a reference to radicalisation, and would present an amendment to the Policies to the Board should this be necessary.

**RESOLVED:** That the revised Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy be approved as presented.

**60/15            APPOINTMENT OF SHAREHOLDERS**

The Company Secretary presented a report which listed applications for tenant shareholding.

In answer to a question, the Company Secretary advised that there were now over 200 tenant shareholders.

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

**61/15            REVIEW OF HOUSING NEED AND CHOICE BASED LETTINGS**

The Director of Housing presented a report which described a review that had been undertaken by the Management Team of housing need in King's Lynn and West Norfolk and of Freebridge's continued use of West Norfolk Homechoice. The review had followed the release of the Borough Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment in June 2014; a full copy of this report was available to Board Members on request.

The Director of Housing explained, that since writing the report, he had been informed by the Borough Council that it would shortly be buying new software for West Norfolk Homechoice. Freebridge would be involved in the procurement process. Once the new software was in place, Freebridge would have access to the system; this would be more efficient than the current arrangement and would allow Freebridge to produce its own reports.

In answer to questions, the Director of Housing made the following points:

- Six months' notice would be required on either side to terminate the choice based lettings agreement with the Borough Council.
- The figure of 35.45 bids per property, whilst appearing high, was actually lower than previously.

The Board noted that the number on the housing waiting list had reduced as a result of the introduction of the "three-year connection rule". However, the figure would rise as more people became eligible to join the list.

The Board acknowledged that Freebridge would have strategic decisions to make around whether to focus on the housing needs of its existing tenants or to take a wider view of housing need.

The Board noted the report.

**62/15            MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES AND LEADER MANAGER DEVELOPMENT**

The Director of Engagement presented a report which set out the revised Management Competencies and provided an update on Leader Manager development towards the Competencies.

It was noted that the report was presented in light of the Lessons Learned report into the Cosmopolitan case, and following the Board's thinking session on the case. One of the issues that had emerged at Cosmopolitan was skills gaps among managers.

The Board welcomed the revised Competencies, and it was suggested that additional Competencies could be developed for the Board.

The Board noted the report.

**63/15            COMMITTEE MINUTES**

Ian Pinches, Chairman of the Audit Committee, presented the minutes of the Committee's meeting held on 26 January 2015.

**64/15            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.

**65/15            ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

**66/15            NEXT MEETING**

The Board noted that its next meeting was scheduled for Monday 13 April 2015 at 6.30pm.

**The meeting closed at 7.20pm.**

**CHAIRMAN**