

FREEBRIDGE COMMUNITY HOUSING BOARD

Minutes of a Meeting of the Board held on Monday 14 May 2018 at 4.40pm in “The Barn”, 2 Chapel Lane, King’s Lynn

PRESENT:

Andy Walder (Chairman)
Steve Clark
Marie Connell
Tony Hall (Chief Executive)
Shelley Lamprell-Josephs
Marcus Hopkins
Brian Long (Minute Numbers 79/18 – 98/18)
Ian Pinches
Pauleen Pratt
Jasmine Rigg
Simon Smith
Richard Spilsbury

IN ATTENDANCE:

Robert Clarke	-	Director of Housing
Alex Dixon	-	Director of Assets and Development
Birgit Lenton	-	Director of Corporate Services and Culture
Dave Marshall	-	Director of Finance and Resources
Clare Flynn	-	Finance Business Partner (Minute Numbers 68/18 – 70/18)
Angus MacQueen	-	Company Secretary

OBSERVERS:

Frances Fox	-	Tenant Panel
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68/18 WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Philip Porter of ARK Consultancy, Freebridge’s treasury management advisers, and Frances Fox, from the Freebridge Tenant Panel, who was observing the meeting as part of her personal development.

69/18 FREEBRIDGE 30-YEAR FINANCIAL PLAN 2018

Confidential item

70/18 FINANCIAL FORECAST RETURN 2018

The Director of Finance and Resources presented a report which introduced the Financial Forecast Return 2018. He highlighted that the Financial

Forecast Return contained the same information as that set out in the Financial Plan.

RESOLVED: That the Financial Forecast Return 2018 be approved for submission to the Regulator of Social Housing.

The Chairman thanked Philip Porter for his advice and input, and Mr Porter left the meeting.

71/18 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence. Brian Long had sent an apology that he would be late for the meeting.

72/18 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

73/18 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

74/18 ACTION SHEET

The Board noted the action sheet.

75/18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

All members of the Management Team declared an interest in the item at minute number 85/18 – Revised Management Team Structure 2018. The Board was content that they should remain in the room for the item.

76/18 CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

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

- He had attended a dinner with the Housing Minister during the Minister's visit to King's Lynn on 11 May 2018. He had had an opportunity to talk to the Minister and had impressed on him the need for funding for development in rural areas. It was important that the visit was followed up in writing.
- He had attended a meeting of East of England Housing Chairs. The meeting had received an interesting presentation from Altair on governance, leadership and committee structures; he would circulate the slides to the Board.

77/18 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:

- Rampant Horse Pub Site
- Data Protection 2018: Revised Data Protection Policy and Appointment of Data Protection Officer
- The Appointment of Shareholders
- Declaration of Interest – ICT Business Partner
- Change to Declaration of Interest – Head of Housing Services
- Procurement
- Visit to King's Lynn by the Housing Minister and the Chair of Homes England

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

(b) Rampant Horse Pub Site

The Board welcomed the quality of the development on the Rampant Horse site, in Gayton. The Chief Executive reported that 92 bids had been received for the four units.

(c) Data Protection 2018: Revised Data Protection Policy and Appointment of Data Protection Officer

In answer to a question, the Director of Finance and Resources confirmed that significant work had been undertaken to prepare Freebridge for the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation on 25 May 2018.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That Birgit Lenton, the Director of Corporate Services and Culture, be appointed as Freebridge's Data Protection Officer.
- 2) That Tony Hall, the Chief Executive, be appointed as the Board Data Protection Sponsor.
- 3) That the revised Data Protection Policy be approved, as presented, and that it replace the Information Management and Breach Management Polices in the Policy Handbook.

(d) Confidential

(e) Visit to King's Lynn by the Housing Minister and the Chair of Homes England

The Chief Executive said that Freebridge had jointly hosted with the Borough Council the visit to King's Lynn by the Housing Minister and the Chair of Homes England. The visit had mainly focused on the work of the Council's development company in South Lynn and North Lynn, but had been an opportunity to pitch for funding. He would be following up the visit with two letters. One would be to the Housing Minister, to request the re-introduction of the funding to bring empty properties back into use. The other would be sent in conjunction with the Council to the Chair of Homes England, with the Housing Minister copied in, to request funding to enable a 4,000 home development at West Winch to go ahead.

78/18 OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE – FINANCIAL YEAR 2017/18

Confidential item

79/18 BUSINESS PLAN 2017/18 FINAL OUTTURN

The Chief Executive presented a report which set out the 2017/18 Business Plan final outturn.

In answer to a question, the Director of Housing said that useful feedback had been obtained through the consultation on future uses for the Discovery Centre, and would now be considered.

RESOLVED: That the 2017/18 Business Plan Outturn Report be approved.

80/18 TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND STRATEGY UPDATE

The Director of Finance and Resources presented a report which provided an update on the Association's current position with regard to treasury matters.

The Board observed that Freebridge was financially strong, and that this was reflected in the report.

The Board noted the report.

81/18 RISK MANAGEMENT AND FRAUD AWARENESS UPDATE/AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORTS

Confidential item

82/18 REVISED RISK MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS 2018/19

The Director of Finance and Resources presented a report which introduced revised risk management arrangements that aimed to promote the development of meaningful risk management activity in Freebridge's business operations and activities.

In answer to questions, the Director of Finance and Resources explained that risks would be scored by Service Directors in conjunction with their teams, and the scoring would be checked by the Management Team. Any risks with a residual risk score of over 16 would be reported to the Board, and the Board would always see the six highest risks.

The Board welcomed the report and, in particular, the progress it represented in respect of the approach to risk management. The following points were made:

- It may not be necessary for the Management Team to consider risks that were always scored low as often as every month.
- Risks must be recorded as risks, rather than as issues.
- As a large number of risks were being consolidated into a smaller number, the Management Team should keep a record of those no longer being monitored, in the interests of transparency.
- Pauleen Pratt would meet separately with the Director of Finance and Resources to discuss whether there was a need for a Risk Management Strategy in addition to the Risk Management Policy and Procedures.
- It was good that the new risk management arrangements reflected the recommendations in the Campbell Tickell report following their Board appraisal and review at the end of 2017. The new risk management arrangements should be implemented with the Campbell Tickell report in mind.
- The Board should have an input annually into consideration of strategic risks. This would best take place at a strategy afternoon, alongside consideration of the Sector Risk Profile.
- The Board would benefit from a workshop on the new risk management arrangements. This should take place at the strategy afternoon in September 2018.
- The Board requested that the diagram in the report showing the assurance framework be extended for the next meeting to include the role of Internal and External Audit.

RESOLVED: That the proposed revision to risk management and reporting be approved.

83/18 HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE

The Director of Corporate Services and Culture presented a report which provided an update on health and safety activity over the year (2017/18). She

highlighted that, while this report had previously been presented to the Board annually, this would be quarterly going forward.

The Director of Corporate Services and Culture said that all relevant staff would be receiving health and safety refresher and induction training as necessary. She also advised that a new Health and Safety Manager would be joining in June 2018 and that this would provide an opportunity to take a fresh look at health and safety for the organisation.

In answer to questions, the Director of Assets and Development said that, following the approval of the Asset Management Strategy, scheduled for July 2018, he would produce a compliance dashboard which would enable the Board and management to monitor health and safety compliance, such as asbestos removal. The Board welcomed this and also requested a workshop session at a future strategy afternoon on health and safety regulations and how Freebridge was complying with them.

A Board Member requested details on the programme to check and repair smoke alarms, and said that he would pursue this with the Director of Assets and Development after the meeting.

In response to questions, members of the Management Team made the following points:

- [Confidential wording.]
- Accidents at work had been the result of procedures not being followed, rather than lack of training.
- Staff would be encouraged to report near misses more frequently, as these were important to enable potential issues to be identified.

The Board noted the report.

84/18 TENANT PANEL QUARTERLY UPDATE

The Director of Corporate Services and Culture presented a report which provided a quarterly update of the Tenant Panel's work to date.

The Director of Corporate Services and Culture highlighted that the Panel had been contributing to the review of the Freebridge service standards. The updated service standards would be reported to the Board at its next meeting for information.

The Chairman invited Frances Fox to address the meeting. In answer to issues raised by Mrs Fox, members of the Management Team made the following points:

- The resourcing and operation of the scheme whereby tenants could pay Freebridge to provide a gardening service was being reviewed.

- It would be difficult to resource a programme of inspections of all properties, but all employees were encouraged to report back any issues of concern that they became aware of when working in the properties.
- It would be checked as to whether tenants were made aware when an Out and About event was to take place in their area.

Mrs Fox said that the Tenant Panel's away day had been very useful and enjoyable. The Panel had found it interesting to look round Thornage Hall and to observe the work that was being undertaken there with people with learning difficulties.

The Board welcomed the large amount of work that the Panel was undertaking and asked that Mrs Fox pass on its thanks to the Panel.

The Board noted the report.

85/18 REVISED MANAGEMENT TEAM STRUCTURE 2018

Confidential item

86/18 BOARD RECRUITMENT – BRIDGEGATE HOMES

The Company Secretary explained that it had been intended to bring a recommendation to this meeting with regard to the appointment of an independent specialist to the Bridgagate Homes Board. However, the applications received had not had been of sufficient quality, and so the position was being readvertised.

87/18 Confidential item

88/18 REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS

The Board considered a report which reviewed the Standing Orders.

The Company Secretary explained that, in addition to the amendments proposed in the report, the Standing Orders would need to be updated to reflect the changes to the Management Team agreed earlier in the meeting (minute number 84/18 above refers). The Board was content that the Company Secretary make these changes without further recourse to the Board.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the amendments to the Standing Orders be approved as presented.
- 2) That the Standing Orders be updated to reflect the changes to the Management Team.

89/18 GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board considered the recommendations of the Governance Committee meeting held on 26 March 2018.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That, having reviewed the statement of skills required on the Board in light of the establishment of a development company, it be agreed that there are no changes required at this time to the Board Membership, Recruitment and Succession Planning Policy; however the Policy be amended as presented in relation to Board appraisal and review.
- 2) That Board Member remuneration be increased annually by a percentage which is in line with an average of staff salary increases applied, other than from time to time when Board Member remuneration may be subject to a market testing exercise.
- 3) That Rule amendments be commissioned which enable 2) above, subject to there being no requirement for independent advice on increases which are in line with staff increases and for the need for an independent remuneration committee to be removed and replaced with a requirement for independent advice where there is a market testing exercise.

90/18 PROCUREMENT APPROVAL – ELECTRONIC PAYMENT SERVICES

Confidential item

91/18 REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

The Board considered a report which sought approval for a statement of compliance with the Governance and Financial Viability Standard to be included in the annual accounts for the year ending 31 March 2018.

RESOLVED: That a declaration of compliance with the Governance and Financial Viability Standard be made in the annual accounts for the year ending 31 March 2018.

92/18 STATISTICAL DATA RETURN 2017/18

The Board considered a report which presented this year's Statistical Data Return.

RESOLVED: That the submission of Freebridge's Statistical Data Return 2017/18, as presented, be authorised.

93/18 ANNUAL FRAUD RETURN

The Board considered a report which set out the Annual Fraud Return 2018.

RESOLVED: That the submission of Freebridge's Annual Fraud Return 2018, as presented, be authorised,

94/18 COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Board received the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 30 April 2018 and of the Governance Committee meeting held on 26 March 2018.

95/18 URGENT ACTIONS TAKEN

Confidential item

96/18 FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME OF THE BOARD

The Board noted its work programme for the ensuing year. Risk management and health and safety sessions would be added to the work programme, as discussed earlier in the meeting.

In answer to a question, the Chief Executive said that he would look to include opportunities to use the Time To Think method at the Board's Strategy Afternoons.

97/18 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(a) Ross Edwards

The Board was delighted to note that Ross Edwards, Placeshaping Manager, was on the shortlist for an Inside Housing Magazine Rising Stars Award, and asked that its congratulations be passed on to him.

(b) Board Strategy Afternoon

The Chairman reminded the Board that its next strategy afternoon would be held on Monday 11 June 2018, at the Riverside Restaurant, King's Lynn.

98/18 NEXT MEETING

The Board noted that its next meeting was scheduled for Monday 23 July 2018 at 4.30pm.

The meeting closed at 7.10pm, having resolved to continue to sit at 6.40pm.

CHAIRMAN