



NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE HOMES BOARD MEETING

Held on Wednesday 5 August 2009
5.30pm Meridian House, Scunthorpe

MINUTES

Attendance:

Members: Tony Lightfoot (Chair)
Cheryl Leaning
Roni Wilson
Colin Boyce
Edgar Patchett
Rob Waltham
Len Foster
Peter Clark
Gordon Rowlands
Tony Scrase-Walters
Edna Kenyon
Richard Leach
Sandra Bainbridge

NLH: Andy Orrey – Director of Finance & Deputy Chief Executive
Steve Hepworth – Director of Housing
Steve Wardrope – Head of Business Improvement
Pete Stones – Assistant Director of Regeneration/Investment
Fiona Ruddick – Governance Officer (Minutes)
Linder Melbourne – Empty Homes Manager

Guest: Paul Johnson – 3DK Solutions
Dave Wood – Northern Housing Consortium (Item 604 only)

Observers: Danny Moore (Tenant)
Tony Sanderson (Tenant)
Mrs Turner (Leaseholder)
Cherrill Page (Tenant)
Toni Mosley (North Lincolnshire Homes)

Apologies: Mark Harland
Jane Duncan

592 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

593 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 June and 6 July 2009 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

594 Matters Arising

A member queried Action 004 relating to the cleaning of communal areas at Market Hill. As reported in the action list, enquiries have been made. It appears that the cleaners are being asked to clean more areas in less time. The service is due to be re-tendered so negotiations will be taking place shortly. Residents will be consulted with regarding cleaning service charges and the balance between the quality/quantity of cleaning undertaken and the cost of the service.

595 Deputy Chief Executive's Report

Andy Orrey presented his report to Board. Despite last minute setbacks, the Staff Conference on 5 July went well. A summary of the conference is available from the Governance Officer if any Board member wishes to see this. A recent meeting was held with the TSA and this was positive – a formal letter is expected shortly.

An item at the recent Resources Committee, held on 29 July, had been deferred for decision at this Board meeting. A paper had been submitted providing an update on the DLO Review and NLH Contracts of Employment. A request had been made to form a sub-group from the Resources Committee to enable NLH to proceed with drawing up the contract and subsequent negotiations with the Trade Unions. Resources Committee felt the option to join this sub-group should be opened up to all Board Members to ensure the right mix of skills, e.g. negotiating in an industrial setting were achieved. It was agreed to arrange an additional Board meeting for the next couple of weeks to set the scope and parameters for negotiation with the workforce.

Action 001: Ad hoc Board meeting to be convened for one agenda item discussion regarding scope and parameters for negotiating with Trade Unions.

The AGM is due to be held on 23 September 2009. It was recognised that this clashed with the NHF's National Conference. Council Members explained that this also clashed with a full Council meeting. Therefore, a decision was made to change the AGM date to 16 September 2009.

Action 002: AGM date to be changed to 16 September 2009.

The SFL training is ongoing for staff and reports from those who have attended have been positive. A member queried if this opportunity had been afforded to "up and coming" managers. It was explained that a programme called "Stepping Up" has just started and this is specifically aimed at managers of the future or those officers who have to lead people or projects. This has attracted approximately 40 additional participants.

Regarding the Customer Access Review it was clarified, following a query from a member, that the questionnaire was sent to every tenant and 813 (8%) responses were returned.

Noted:

The report was noted.

596 5 Year Service Review Programme

Board had previously asked to consider this. Steve Wardrope presented the report and felt it was good practice to further review the content on an annual basis. It was agreed at an earlier Board meeting to take this proposal to Community Voice, and this was confirmed as having been done.

One Board Member felt there was a wider group of residents who were interested in being consulted other than just those on Community Voice and felt NLH should maintain a list of such interested tenants to consult with. It was explained that Community Voice comprises residents from 27 residents associations. There is also the menu of options. NLH have to choose which way to consult with tenants for each projects. On 5 August, Community Voice met to review their constitution and there was a suggestion that some working groups could comprise of Community Voice members and those people who have made contact via the menu of options.

Approved:

Board approved the initial 5 year programme and that it be brought back annually in future.

597 Tenant Scrutiny Panel

Steve Hepworth presented the report to Board and explained that this had come from an idea raised at Community voice. Richard Leach and another member of Community Voice attended a TPAS event recently and shared the information he had gained from that.

Paragraph 3.1.2 outlined where members would be recruited from. It has previously been agreed that Board members could not partake in this.

A member queried what action will be taken on the scrutiny reports as they come to Board. It was expected that scrutiny reports would have recommendations for which officers would present options for Board decisions.

Approved:

The formation of a Tenant Scrutiny Panel was approved.

598 Code of Conduct for Staff and Board Members

This paper returned following deferral at the last board meeting to enable Council Board Members to obtain legal advice. This advice has now been obtained and the Council solicitors will be writing to NLH. Following a discussion with Trowers and Hamlin, the Chair of the Board has now altered his approach and amended the suggested new wording. This now puts the emphasis on individual members to make a judgement on whether they can make objective decisions or not. The advice from Trowers and Hamlin is that if a report is tabled which requires a decision making on where to allocate resources, if this affects the neighbourhoods where tenant Board members reside, they should declare an interest and not vote.

The proposed amendments suggest that members should liaise with the Chair outside of the meeting. Some members suggested such discussions may appear secretive and this was accepted with the Chair undertaking to amend this concern.

Discussions around this issue followed and it was agreed that this needed to be brought back after all members had been fully consulted. This would be re-tabled at the meeting after the AGM.

Action 003: Revised Code of Conduct to be tabled at meeting on 11 November 2009

Not Approved:

The Board did not approve the amendments to the Code of Conduct.

599 Approval of the Statutory Accounts for the period ending 31 March 2009

Andy Orrey explained that the Accounts had been considered at the Resources meeting held on 29 July 2009. They were now submitted to Board for final approval, after going through a unqualified audit review. Board were reminded of their obligations in preparing the accounts and the importance of the Statement of Internal Control. Board were asked to approve these accounts to enable them to be adopted at the AGM on 16 September 2009.

Approved:

Board approved the accounts.

600 Board Appraisals and Development Plan

This item had originally been placed on the confidential agenda. It was decided however that this was not necessary and therefore it was discussed in the open meeting. Paul Johnson from 3DK Solutions had undertaken appraisals with Board members on a one to one basis.

The Board had undertaken a self assessment using the HQN Toolkit "To see ourselves as other see us". Board had scored themselves high on the gold thread running throughout the organisation. It was anticipated that the Audit Commission will probe into that and will expect everyone to have a good understanding of the golden thread. Through the individual appraisal discussions, Paul Johnson had felt that the areas of team working had moved forward. There will be an expectation for all Board Members to have received diversity training, and undertake 360 degree feedback next year.

The Chair thanked Paul Johnson and said the feedback he had received from this process was positive.

It was suggested, and agreed, that the Board develop a set of KPIs for governance. A small working group will be set up to consider these. Cheryl Leaning, Gordon Rowlands and Colin Boyce volunteered to form this group - Gordon Rowlands to lead.

Following the recent meeting with the TSA, Nick Berish has asked that the independent vacancy is filled quickly. The Chair will work with the Governance Officer to place an advert in the local press.

Approved:

The Board:

- approved the outcome of the appraisal and review process
- agreed to review progress in six months
- agreed to review individual Board member progress in 12 months time to include a form of 360 degree feedback
- agreed to form a working group to determine KPIs for the Board. Gordon Rowlands to lead, Cheryl Leaning and Colin Boyce to be members.

Action 004: Working group to be established as above to determine Board KPIs.

Paul Johnson then left the meeting.

601 Ratification of Self Assessment Compliance Statement 2009

The Self Assessment Working Group met on 21 July to discuss this. Steve Wardrope thanked the Board members for their help with this work.

Colin Boyce thanked the staff involved for their hard work on this.

Approved:

The Board approved the Self Assessment Compliance Statement.

602 Non-Traditional Stock

Pete Stones presented the report to Board regarding the current progress on refurbishments of non-traditional stock. This is a specialist area of work so will require consultant services as the required skills are not available in-house.

A member wondered if this non-traditional stock would have more asbestos than traditional stock. The answer was no, as the houses would have been built using the same materials.

Kingsway House was not included in this report as the intention is to call a meeting of the Development Panel and table a report to that meeting. The only three missing non-traditional stock properties from this report are the three high rise flats as they were refurbished prior to stock transfer from the council.

Approved:

Board approved the use of consultants on the non-traditional stock refurbishment programme and the approached outlined in the report.

603 Environmental Works Update

Pete Stones provided an update to Board on the environmental works progress. A report was submitted to Resources in June with the initial plans for hotspot areas.

Noted:

The report was noted.

604 Review of DLO and Technical services – Progress Report

Dave Wood of the Northern Housing Consortium joined the meeting for this item only. He presented the report to Board which outlined the process that had been followed for the review, which had been undertaken using a systems thinking approach. He reported that gas fitters are now working on test and the initial figures show a vast improved service in terms of right first time jobs and reduction in the number of repeat calls for service. As part of the review, Northern Housing Consortium are going to produce an option appraisal for the stores function.

The plan is to hold negotiations with the staff by late autumn on revised terms and conditions to be in place by November. A stakeholder group is going to be established as part of the work. Board members were asked if they wanted to be part of this, with Edna Kenyon and Richard Leach both volunteering.

Noted:

The report was noted.

605 Review of Caretaking Service Pilot

Linder Melbourne presented this update to the Board. The changes were implemented in June 2008 with a rota for estate caretakers as well as changes to the use of fleet vehicles. Improvements in standards and turnaround times that the changes were looking to achieve have been delivered in part and work is now underway to ensure consistency in these areas. Satisfaction of communal areas has increased to 87% with the aim being 95%. The Chair thanked Linder for her update.

Noted:

The report was noted.

607 Fire Safety in High Rise buildings – What NLH Currently Does

Following the unfortunate recent events in London, members had asked for a paper on this subject. Pete Stones explained that all Housing Associations had been written to and reminded of their responsibilities. NLH have very good positive working relationships with the Fire Brigade which is very important. The Fire Brigade have recently used a vacant flat for training purposes. NLH need to ensure that risk assessments are updated and acted upon and that tenants are kept informed about fire procedures.

Steve Hepworth explained that management recognised some work needed to be done on the lettings policy. As part of this he wants to liaise with the Fire Brigade for their opinion on the types of persons that should be housed in high rise buildings.

Action 005: Steve Hepworth to bring report back to future Resources Committee when work has been undertaken on the lettings policy.

Noted:

The report was noted.

608 Balanced Scorecard

Steve Wardrope presented the Balanced Scorecard to the Board for their information. The spotlight on the reds has previously been reported to the relevant committees.

Noted:

The report was noted.

609 Action List

The completed actions will not be reported at the next meeting and all outstanding actions will be carried forward.

610 Sub Committee/Working Group Minutes

The minutes of the Self Assessment Working Group held on 21 July were noted.

611 Attendance List

The attendance list was noted.

612 Any Other Business

With no other business, the meeting closed.