

NEWARK AND SHERWOOD HOMES

Minutes of the Meeting of **THE BOARD OF NEWARK AND SHERWOOD HOMES** held on Thursday 25 November 2010 at 5.15pm in the Drawing Room, Kelham Hall.

Present:

- Mrs G Hughes (Chair)
- Mr R Tracy (Vice Chair)
- Cllr Mrs NA Armstrong
- Cllr Mrs B Brooks
- Mrs J Clark
- Mrs L Clayton
- Mr A Fell
- Mr E Lowe
- Miss S Miles
- Cllr D Nixon
- Mr D Roebuck
- Cllr Mrs C Rose
- Mrs J Solder
- Mr K Sutton
- Cllr S Wallace

Officers in Attendance:

- Mrs R Rance (Chief Executive)
- Mr S Feast (Business Services Director)
- Mr F Bartle (Property & Estates Manager)
- Mr A Dewberry (Asset Management & Investment Manager)
- Mr P Harley (Business Development Manager)
- Ms M Jenkins (HR & Communications Manager)
- Ms C Meek (Customer Access & Support Manager)
- Miss S Williamson (Finance Manager)

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence were received.

2. **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR**

The report of the Business Services Director detailed that under the Company's Constitution at the first Board Meeting following each Annual General Meeting (AGM) that Directors of the Board shall appoint a Chair of the Board and a Vice-Chair to action in the absence of the Chair may also be appointed.

Nominations for the Chair were requested by the Business Services Director as Company Secretary.

Ginette Hughes was the sole nomination and was appointed as Chair of the Board.

In accepting her appointment Ginette Hughes, as the Chair, thanked all who had voted for her and looked forward to her third year as Chair of the Board. The Chair went onto thank Arthur Fell for his support as Vice-Chair over the last two years.

The Business Services Director requested nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Board.

Arthur Fell and Richard Tracy were nominated and a ballot therefore took place. Richard Tracy received the majority of votes and was appointed as vice chair of the Board.

The Chair also welcomed Jean Solder to her first full Board meeting.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

a) Ginette Hughes be appointed as Chair of the Board.

b) Richard Tracy be appointed as Vice-Chair of the Board.

3. **CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT ITEMS**

a) CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENT-Inward investment CESP funding Devon Ward

The Chair announced that due to a significant amount of work over recent months between the Asset and Investment Team and British Gas, Newark and Sherwood Homes has been able to access approximately £263,000 of Community Energy Savings Project (CESP) funding as inward investment towards a community based energy saving project in the Devon ward on the Hawtonville Estate.

The scheme that Newark and Sherwood Homes has developed in partnership with British Gas includes 113 Council owned properties of 80 are solid wall construction.

The total estimated project value is around £489,000 of which Newark and Sherwood Homes will contribute just £226,000 – approximately 46%. It is anticipated to commence in December 2010.

b) CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENT-ISO 9001 Re-awarded

The Chair was delighted to announce that Newark and Sherwood Homes had successfully been re-awarded its ISO 9001 certificate for its Quality Management System. ISO 9001 is an internationally recognised quality standard held by over a million companies world wide, which Newark and Sherwood Homes first achieved in 2007.

The ISO accreditation is only possible because of the hard work and effort put in by many staff across the Company in the course of their daily jobs.

c) CONFIDENTIAL ITEM - CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENT-Draft Subsidy Determination

The Chair introduced the Chair's Announcement.

d) CONFIDENTIAL ITEM - URGENT ITEM-Provision of Third Party Service

The Directors of the Board considered the Urgent Item from the Business Development Manager.

4. **MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 22 SEPTEMBER 2010**

AGREED (unanimously) that:

the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2010 were accepted as a correct record of events and signed by the Chair.

5. **CONFIDENTIAL ITEM –
Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 22 September 2010**

The Chair introduced the confidential minutes.

6. **MINUTES FROM COMMITTEES**

a) **Human Resources Committee held on 4 October 2010**

The Chair introduced the minutes for Boards information and consideration.

**CONFIDENTIAL ITEM –
Human Resources Committee held on 4 October 2010**

The Chair introduced the confidential minutes.

b) **Audit Committee held on 14 October 2010**

The Chair introduced the minutes for the Boards information and consideration.

**CONFIDENTIAL ITEM –
Audit Committee held on 14 October 2010**

The Chair introduced the confidential minutes.

7. **ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE BOARD**

The Chair introduced the report to review the Board's governance performance for the year and decide any changes to how the Board governs.

The report discussed changes to the Company's governance arrangements to continue to deliver the Company's Vision, Objectives and Core Values. Development of the Board has taken place this year through external appraisals for each Director of the Board with an output of learning identified for the whole Board.

(Nora Armstrong joined the meeting at this point)

The Board discussed the proposals and recommendations within the report, to ensure that governance structures in place will enable the Board to meet future challenges.

Clarification was sought on the Langland's governance self assessment; in terms of completion. It was confirmed that the assessment had been completed internally and was a subjective assessment.

The Terms of Reference for the Tenants' Panel were discussed and the membership was amended to 7, with the quorum amended to 3 members. An amended Committee Cycle at Appendix N was issued to set a cycle of December, March, June and September.

The Board discussed how they could develop strategic planning further to maximise involvement by all Directors of the Board. The Chair advised this was important and in addition to setting a performance indicator, this would be included at the strategic planning event on 2nd December 2010.

The Chief Executive clarified that the strategic planning process was well embedded within the Company, through the Improvement Planning Process. The output of which, was the setting and approval of the Business Plan (Annual Performance Plan), Annual Delivery Plan, Property Investment Programme, Company Capital Programme and Budget annually at the January Board meeting. This ensured that the strategic direction of the Company, related plans, targets and tasks were all integrated with resources aligned to meet these, at the point of approval by Board.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) **the Company adopt the Langlands Good Governance Standard for Public Services.**
- b) **the Company appraise its performance against the National Federation of Housing Code of Governance and consider adoption of the code.**
- c) **a quarterly Customer Feedback Report be forwarded to the Board commencing with the first quarter of 2011/12 financial year.**
- d) **access for tenants to the Directors of the Board opportunities be incorporated in the Governance Diary.**
- e) **a review of the Scheme of Delegation be incorporated in the 2011/12 Business Plan as a Corporate Task.**
- f) **the Board Succession Plan be reviewed and a task included in the 2011/12 Business Plan accordingly.**
- g) **the Director of the Board individual appraisal be amended for the 2010/11 governance year to cover consideration of succession planning and the internal appraisal form be amended for use in the 2011/12 governance year.**
- h) **a Tenant Panel be established with the terms of reference and procedures as detailed in Appendix G, as amended.**
- i) **a report be brought to a future meeting to enable implementation of the role of the Tenant Panel to consider Third Stage of Complaints.**
- j) **a length of time on the Board for a Director of the Board of 3 x 3 year terms be adopted as the usual overall term for Directors of the Board; with the first term period starting from 25/11/10 for all existing Directors of the Board.**
- k) **the term on roles within the Board be deleted and the meeting procedure be amended.**
- l) **the Reimbursement Scheme for Directors of the Board as Appendix J be approved.**
- m) **the Conference Attendance Principles at Appendix M be approved.**

- n) the target for Director of the Board attendance at Away Day /Development/Strategic Planning events be 75%.
- o) the Board Training Plan at Appendix K and Board Training Delivery Principles at Appendix L be approved.
- p) the Schedule of Governance dates be at Appendix O be approved.
- q) the Meeting Cycle as contained in Appendix N, as amended be approved.
- r) the Committee membership and remits be as detailed in Appendix H.
- s) Lynn Clayton be appointed as Chair of the Audit Committee, Sarah Miles be appointed Vice Chair of the Audit Committee, Christine Rose be appointed as Chair of the Human Resources Committee and Richard Tracy be appointed as Vice Chair of the Human Resources Committee.

8. **APPOINTMENT TO CASUAL VACANCY**

The Chair introduced the report to consider the appointment of Mr Ed Lowe to the current casual Director of the Board vacancy.

The report explained the process which had been undertaken to fill the vacancy by the Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations and subsequently the Board to ensure that the incoming Director of the Board has the necessary skills and knowledge to discharge the duties of a Director of the Board in line with the Company's Act.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) Mr Ed Lowe be appointed as a Director of the Board of Newark and Sherwood Homes.

9. **REVENUE BUDGET 2010/11 – REFERRAL REPORT**

The Chair introduced the referral report to consider the recommendation of the Audit Committee from their meeting held on 14 October 2010.

The report considered the recommendations of the Audit Committee and the major changes compared to the original budget.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) the revised Revenue Budget for 2010/11 be approved.
- b) the Budget plan for setting the original budget for 2011/12 be approved.

10. **GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY – REFERRAL REPORT**

The Chair introduced the referral report to consider the recommendation of the Human Resources Committee from their meeting held on 4 October 2010.

The report considered the recommendations of the Human Resources Committee to amend the Gifts and Hospitality Policy to reflect the increasing practice of suppliers

to provide high value prizes as part of relationship formulation and obtaining contact data.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) **the policy concerning Gifts and Hospitality for Directors of the Board and staff be amended to include:**
 - i) **the requirement to declare prizes and;**
 - ii) **the requirement that any prize or gift (if accepted) over the value of £25 be raffled for charity and the detail and donation recorded accordingly.**
- b) **legal advice be taken to inform the terminology of the amended Policy.**

11. **HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT**

The Chair introduced the report to the Board of the Company's progress and key outcomes achieved with specific regard to Health and Safety activity for the year ending 30 September 2010.

The Board discussed how Health and Safety is tracked through the Audit Committee and the Chair of the Committee thanked the Asset and Investment Manager in the achievement of the RoSPA Gold Award.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) **the actions taken throughout the last 12 months to embed and robustly manage Health and Safety throughout the Company be ratified.**

12. **HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY**

The Chair introduced the report to consider the revised Company Health and Safety Policy.

The report outlined how the current Health and Safety Policy had been in place since November 2009 and that the Policy had been reviewed taking into account the existing Health and Safety legislative requirements which impact upon the Company both strategically and operationally.

Minor changes have been made to ensure the Company continues to meet the requirements for maintaining the RoSPA accreditation.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) **the Health & Safety Policy attached at Appendix A be approved.**
- b) **the Chief Executive be given delegated authority to make non substantive amendments and amendments to Appendix I of the Policy to reflect any changes to the staffing structure.**

13. **REVISED PROPERTY INVESTMENT PROGRAMME**

The Chair introduced the report to consider a revised Property Investment Programme for 2010/11 compared to the original programme as a result of additional finance resources being available and make recommendations to the Council.

The Board discussed identified property investment priorities such as retrofitting photovoltaic (PV) pilot scheme, retrofitting air source heat pumps, removal of redundant un-metered electricity supplies following digital tv installation and additional resources to deliver a number of environmental improvement schemes.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) **the revised Property Investment Programme for 2010/11 be approved.**

14. **FEED-IN TARIFF PHOTOVOLTAIC SCHEME**

The Chair introduced the report to the Board which appraised the Government's 'Feed-in-Tariff' (FIT) Scheme using solar photovoltaic (PV) panels to the roof spaces of homes managed by the Company and the opportunities / benefits that a Solar PV Scheme can deliver, for example reduced carbon emissions, reduced energy costs and Inward Investment.

The report detailed the inclusion within the Property and Investment Programme 2010/12 of a Photo Voltaic Solar Panel Programme utilising the Government's Feed-in-Tariff of up to 300 properties.

The Board discussed the opportunity for Newark and Sherwood Homes to take advantage of the Feed-in-Tariff scheme as Inward Investment for services; noting that each £1 invested would return approximately £3 for investment in homes and services.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) **a Photo Voltaic Solar Panel Programme utilising the Government Feed-in-Tariff be included in the Property Investment Programme 2010-12 for up to 300 properties.**
- b) **the amendment to the Property Investment Programme 2010-12 be included in the Annual Delivery Plan for 2011/12 and be advised to the Council for appropriate approval of the Council's Capital Programme.**
- c) **the Council be requested to agree in principle the application of service charges to support delivery of high quality services and identified investment needs.**
- d) **legal advice is taken to protect ownership of the PVs and related income in the event of sale.**
- e) **a carry forward revenue contribution to the Photo Voltaic Programme of up to £200,000 from the 2010/11 budget be approved.**
- f) **the revised revenue budget 2010/11 be adjusted to reflect the carry forward and balance budget provision.**

(Arthur Fell left the meeting at this point)

15. **21ST CENTURY WELFARE REFORM AND HOUSING BENEFIT REFORM**

The Chair introduced the report as the Government has recently announced a series of reforms to deliver a 21st Century Welfare System. The report provides information regarding the reforms and considers the impact the proposals could have on Newark and Sherwood Homes, Tenants and Residents.

The Board discussed the Government's proposal that future council housing should only be available on a fixed term tenancy and at the end of the fixed term the circumstances of tenants would be reassessed. Under occupied houses could also be reassessed at the end of a fixed term tenancy to consider if the property was still suitable in size or free up larger homes for families on the waiting list. It was identified these changes would have an impact on the Company's services and costs.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) **the strategic risk register be updated to include the risk relating to potential loss of income following benefit reform.**

16. **EMPLOYEE TURNOVER**

The Chair introduced the report to consider the rationale and further explanation for the continued under performance of the 2010/11 Performance Indicator PI1.4 - Turnover of Staff.

The Board discussed what had been agreed previously and the culture change taken place in the Company. Monitoring will continue and be brought to the January Board meeting as part of the Business Plan.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) **the Performance Indicator PI1.4 – Turnover of Staff continues to be monitored at the current level and the rationale for the breach be acceptable.**

To enable the Directors of the Board to complete the agenda, in accordance with Meeting Procedure Principle 2, the Chair extended the meeting for one hour.

17. **SYSTEMS THINKING**

The Chair introduced the report to consider the potential costs and impacts of the application of a systems thinking methodology to the business operations of Newark and Sherwood Homes.

The Board recognised that the Company, through its policies and processes, already embraces the principles of systems thinking which has contributed to the Company's excellent performance record. The Board further recognised that given this high level of performance the high level of investment required to undertake a wide

ranging implementation of system thinking or any other similar methodology would not be cost effective.

The report identified and explained the systems thinking approach and a relevant example methodology; the lean systems approach.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) the Company's approach to people, systems and processes has been effective in delivering effective and efficient services to customers.
- b) the potential impacts and costs of adopting a systems thinking approach are not cost effective given the Company's performance.

In compliance with Principle 6 of the Company's Meeting Procedure, the public observing the meeting were asked to leave at this point as confidential information would be discussed.

18. **CONFIDENTIAL ITEM – THE FUTURE OF NEWARK AND SHERWOOD HOMES – UPDATE ON THE DELIVERY OF COMPANY OBJECTIVE 2: 'TO BE PROVIDING HOUSING SERVICES WITHIN THE COMMUNITY'**

The Directors of the Board considered the exempt item from the Chief Executive.

19. **CONFIDENTIAL ITEM – RECEPTION SERVICES AT KELHAM HALL**

The Directors of the Board considered the exempt item from the Business Services Director.

20. **CONFIDENTIAL ITEM – SUPPORTING PEOPLE**

(Stuart Wallace declared a conflict of interest and left the meeting at this point)

The Directors of the Board considered the exempt item from the Business Services Director.

To enable the Directors of the Board to complete the agenda, in accordance with Meeting Procedure Principle 2, the Chair extended the meeting for fifteen minutes.

The meeting closed at 20.26

Chair