

NEWARK AND SHERWOOD HOMES

Minutes of the Meeting of **THE BOARD OF NEWARK AND SHERWOOD HOMES** held on Thursday 3 November 2011 at 5.00pm in the Lady Chapel, Kelham Hall.

Present:

- Mrs G Hughes (Chair)
- Mr R Tracy (Vice-Chair)
- Cllr Mrs NA Armstrong
- Cllr R Bradbury
- Cllr Mrs B Brooks
- Mrs J Clark
- Mr A Fell
- Mr E Lowe
- Miss S Miles
- Cllr Mrs C Rose
- Mrs J Solder
- Mr K Sutton
- Cllr B Wells

Officers in Attendance:

- Mrs R Rance (Chief Executive)
- 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)

62. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs L Clayton and Mr D Roebuck.

63. **MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 28 JULY 2011**

AGREED (unanimously) that:

the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2011 were accepted as a correct record of events and signed by the Vice-Chair.

64. **CONFIDENTIAL ITEM –
Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 28 July 2011**

The Chair introduced the confidential minutes.

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

a) **CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENT - Customer Service Excellence Report**

The Chair announced the Newark and Sherwood Homes had successfully maintained its Customer Service Excellence award following a recent review by an independent external assessor. Customer Service Excellence is the Government's standard for customer service which Newark and Sherwood Homes first achieved in

2009. The award is a reflection of the high quality customer service delivered by staff across the Company in their everyday work and shows that Newark and Sherwood Homes continues to put our customers at the heart of what we do.

b) CONFIDENTIAL ITEM - URGENT ITEM – Management Agreement

The Directors of the Board considered the Urgent Item from the Chief Executive.

c) URGENT ITEM - Cambridge Close

(Ben Wells declared a conflict of interest for this item, took no part in the debate and did not vote)

The Chair introduced the report on the update to the Company's actions to progress the reinstatement of the bungalows at Cambridge Close following the recent fire damage.

The report outlined how two supported housing properties were recently damaged on Cambridge Close by a fire on nearby land which spread to these properties.

The Board discussed the work the Company is progressing to reinstate the properties and the opportunity identified, to include an additional unit on the site. In supporting the proposal to integrate an additional unit, consideration was given to any delay this would cause to the timescales of the reinstatement work and it was concluded that the delay would not be significant and by progressing in this way financial gain would be provided to the Housing Revenue Account and therefore the Company and tenants.

The initial actions progressed with Council officers to establish potential funding available and an indication of planning advice was also outlined.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) **the actions to progress the reinstatement of the bungalows at Cambridge Close be ratified.**
- b) **the proposal to integrate an additional unit within the reinstatement be approved on the basis that it supports the delivery of housing to meet housing need and will pay back on investment in 2034/35.**
- c) **the proposal of the option to add an additional unit within the reinstatement subject to consultations and approvals be forwarded, along with the rationale for approval in recommendation (b), to the Council for consideration for funding and inclusion in the Council's investment programme, enabling if approved an additional unit to be progressed in the most efficient mechanism; through the ongoing reinstatement being progressed by Newark and Sherwood Homes.**

(d) ANNOUNCEMENT – Resignation of Cllr Nora Armstrong

Nora Armstrong joined the meeting at this point and advised the meeting of her resignation from the Board.

The Chair said of Nora, she had joined the Shadow Board in early 2004 and became one of the inaugural Directors of the Board of Newark and Sherwood

Homes in October of the same year. On behalf of the Company the Chair thanked Nora for her time, energy and commitment over the past seven years and how she had made a significant difference for Council tenants in the District of Newark and Sherwood.

Nora Armstrong left the meeting at this point.

66. **MINUTES FROM COMMITTEES**

a) **Audit Committee held on 26 September 2011**

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

b) **Human Resources Committee held on 28 September 2011**

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

67. **URGENT DECISION NOTIFICATION: ANNUAL REPORT TO TENANTS 2010/11**

DECISION that:

- a) **the 2010/11 Annual Report to Tenants be approved.**

68. **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. Additionally, to consider the outputs and related actions from: CKT11-02 – Review of Board Succession Plan.

The report outlined changes to the Company's governance arrangements to deliver the Company's Vision, Objectives and Core Values. The Board were provided with the Schedule of Governance Dates for 2011/12, circulated at the meeting.

The Board discussed Directors of the Board training attendance and a report would be considered by the Human Resources Committee.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) **the Committee membership and remits be as detailed in Appendix E.**
- b) **the Schedule of Governance dates be approved.**
- c) **the Schedule of Board and Committee dates as contained in Appendix F be approved.**
- d) **Human Resources Committee consider a report on Directors of the Board training attendance and make recommendations to improve the performance.**
- e) **the actions in the self assessment of the adopted governance standard (Langlands) be progressed within the Business Plan 2012/13.**

69. **REVIEW OF BOARD SUCCESSION PLAN**

The Chair introduced the report advising of the completion of the corporate task to review the Board Succession Plan and revised plan.

The report outlined how the plan had been amended to reflect the need to enhance internal succession planning and related Director of the Board development.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) **the Board Succession Plan at Appendix A be approved.**

70. **TENANTS' PANEL APPOINTMENTS**

The Chair introduced the report to consider the appointment of Tenants to the Tenants' Panel.

The Chair thanked those tenants who are taking part in the Tenants' Panel, of which John Clark and Richard Hayward were in attendance at the Board meeting. The Tenant Panel members and Directors of the Board introduced themselves. The Chair of the Tenant Panel, John Clarke, advised the Board he welcomed this opportunity for tenants to scrutinise the work of the Board and hoped his experience as a former District Councillor and Director of the Board would stand him in good stead to take the Panel forward.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) **the appointment of John Clark, Ginnette Hardy, Kizzy Carter, Ron Havelock, Richard Hayward and Graham Tomlinson be approved.**
- b) **the Tenants' Panel Terms of Reference and Procedure Rules in relation to membership be amended as detailed in paragraph 4.5.**

71. **SELF FINANCING**

The Chair introduced the report to consider the Self Financing Prospectus and the Growth Strategy which is reflective of the Audit Committee's work in progressing self financing and their associated decisions and recommendations to support the Council in successful implementation and post management under Self Financing.

The Chair outlined how the Self Financing Prospectus captures the key opportunities and challenges relevant to the implementation and onward management of Self Financing. The Chair also advised that the base business plan demonstrates financial viability over the 30 year period and the Prospectus sets out clear business principles to enable robust management for the future.

The Board discussed the report and a query was raised regarding the figures on page 118, 6.1 v and vii to be checked by the Finance Manager after the meeting. Amendments were highlighted to Appendix A page 91, 1.4, second line to read 'has a direct impact on Company finances' and page 95, 5.4.2 fourth line to read 'set by tenants (see 5.4.3).'

The Chair thanked the Audit Committee and staff for the work carried out on Self Financing.

AGREED that:

- a) **the Self Financing Prospectus be approved, as amended.**
- b) **the Growth Strategy be approved.**
- c) **the mandatory attendance meeting to gain a shared understanding of the proposed principles for the viable and prudent 30 year self financing business plan be approved.**
- d) **the Self Financing Prospectus 2012/13 is forwarded to the Council's Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committees:**
 - i. **to provide assurance and advise the Council of the work and recommendations of the Board to ensure the effective and robust implementation and onward management of the Self Financing HRA from 2012**

and

- ii. **that the Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committees consider the Self Financing prospectus in the formulation and approval of relevant policies and key decisions in the forward plan to support the implementation and onward effective management of the Self Financing HRA.**

72. **REVISED BUDGETS**

The Chair introduced the report to consider the revised budgets for 2011/12 and the main changes compared to the original budgets approved in January 2011.

(Christine Rose and Robert Bradley left the meeting at this point)

The report explained the revisions to the revenue budget, capital programme and property investment programme.

The Board discussed the additional revenue contribution to fund an additional Photo Voltaic (PV) Scheme, and that the Company are well on the way to completing the current PV project ahead of schedule.

The Finance Manager advised that the Feed-in-Tariff income from the early PV installations has been paid and had not yet been released by the Council to the Company and this was being progressed with the Councils Section 151 Officer.

It was confirmed that the level of Feed-in-Tariff income has exceeded the original prudent estimates and it is therefore anticipated that the higher income return rate on the investment will provide a further positive impact to the Self Financing Business Plan and tenants services.

As the Government has announced changes to the Feed-in-Tariff rates that will potentially half the payments for new systems installed after the 12 December 2011.

The Board recognised how positive it was for Newark and Sherwood Homes to have been proactive in getting the current PV scheme done swiftly and noted other

providers/landlords slower to progress a scheme may no longer be able to yield the same level of return. This means that the Company's income is secure and the project will reap rewards for all tenants, despite any changes that are brought forward.

(Robert Bradley rejoined the meeting at this point)

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) **the revised revenue budget for 2011/12 be approved.**
- b) **an additional 2011/12 revenue contribution of £200,000 be approved to fund a Photo Voltaic (PV) Scheme. This additional scheme will be progressed subject to the feasibility of the PV installations being completed prior to the proposed changes to the Feed-in-Tariff payment rates.**
- c) **the revised capital programme for 2011/12 be approved.**
- d) **the revised property investment programme for 2011/12 be approved for inclusion in the Councils revised Investment Programme.**

73. **ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT POLICY**

The Chair introduced the report to consider the Asbestos Management Policy.

The report outlined the Asbestos Management Policy had been reviewed and revised to ensure it remains fit for purpose and includes current legislative requirements. A survey would take place on the whole of the stock in the District.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) **the Asbestos Management Policy at Appendix A be approved.**
- b) **the Chief Executive be given delegated authority to make non-substantive amendments and amendments to Appendix A of the Asbestos Management Policy, to reflect any changes to the staffing structure.**

74. **FINANCIAL INCLUSION STRATEGY**

The Chair introduced the report to consider the Financial Inclusion Strategy.

(Christine Rose rejoined the meeting at this point)

The report outlined the development of the Financial Inclusion Strategy was taken in consultation with tenants and residents for their views and ideas.

The Board discussed the formal title of the strategy and requested that the title be amended for different audiences.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) **the Financial Inclusion Strategy be approved.**
- b) **this strategy and future strategies be given two titles to ensure they are meaningful to stakeholders.**

75. **QUARTERLY CUSTOMER FEEDBACK REPORT**

The Chair introduced the report to consider the feedback received from customers for the quarter April to June 2011.

The report provides the three main areas of customer feedback - customer satisfaction, customer comments including compliments and complaints and customer feedback through the monitoring groups.

The Board in discussing the monthly customer satisfaction found that one person's response can make a significant change to the monthly statistics. Two areas have been highlighted for improvement and actions identified.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) **the high level of customer satisfaction received through customer feedback be acknowledged.**
- b) **the actions identified at paragraph 7.3 of this report to address the areas for improvement be approved.**

76. **PERFORMANCE MONITORING**

The Chair introduced the report to advise of the actions being taken to improve performance relating to the Corporate Performance Indicator; priority repairs as a percentage of all reactive repairs.

The report outlined how the modernisation of the responsive repairs service continues to provide improvements and further improvements are to be realised, through investment such as multi-skilling of the workforce. The Board found the report to be very informative.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) **the actions taken to improve performance be ratified.**

(Arthur Fell left the meeting at this point)

77. **PROCUREMENT STRATEGY – REFERRAL REPORT**

The Chair introduced the report to consider the recommendation from the Audit Committee from their meeting held on 26 September 2011.

The report outlined how the Procurement Strategy had been revised and the Audit Committee had considered the main updates and future procurement tasks to be undertaken over the three year life of the strategy.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) **the revised Procurement Strategy be approved.**

78. **FIRE SAFETY GUIDANCE**

The Chair introduced the report to consider the impacts of the Local Government Groups new guidance document 'Fire safety in purpose built blocks of Flats' and the actions undertaken by Newark and Sherwood Homes.

(Christine Rose left the meeting at this point)

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.

The report outlined how the Company works closely with the fire authorities in undertaking periodic inspections to communal areas managed by Newark and Sherwood Homes. Rigorous enforcement to maintain a sterile environment to these areas and supported accommodation is essential for the safety of all residents in flats.

The Board discussed the cost to the Company and were informed that additional funding had been put aside through self financing for additional risk.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) **the actions being undertaken to consider and manage the full impacts of the Local Government Groups new 'Fire safety in purpose built blocks of Flats' guidance document be endorsed.**

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.

(Christine Rose rejoined the meeting at this point)

79. **CONFIDENTIAL ITEM – PROLONGED ABSENCE OF A DIRECTOR OF THE BOARD**

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

80. **CONFIDENTIAL ITEM – SUPPORTING PEOPLE SERVICES UPDATE**

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

81. **CONFIDENTIAL ITEM - URGENT DECISION NOTIFICATION: SELECTION OF SPECIALIST CONTRACTOR**

The Chair introduced the urgent decision.

The meeting closed at 19.55

Chair