

Charnwood Neighbourhood Housing Limited

Meeting of the Board of Directors
19th May 2009 6:00pm – 9.00pm
Committee Room 1



Board Members Present:	Cynthia Popley, Diane Horn, Helen Isaac, Ian Montgomery (Vice Chair), Kenneth Jones (Arrived at 8.00pm), Marie Hannabuss (Vice Chair) (left the meeting at 8.15 pm), Neville Stork (left the meeting at 7.15 pm), Patrick Cole, Peter Gardner, Roger Merchant, Ron Jukes (Arrived at 8.00pm), Zoe Wortley (Chair)
Officers Present:	Ian Saville, Maria Maltby, Chris Hewis, Steve Wilson, Louise Gough, Peter Field
Apologies	Elizabeth Holland, William Cavender, Paul Day, Ann Watkinson, Isobel Rickard

MINUTES

The meeting started at 6.00pm

ITEM	Action
<p>1) Apologies for Absence</p> <p>Apologies were received and recorded from Paul Day, Ann Watkinson, Elizabeth Holland and Isobel Rickard.</p>	
<p>2) Declarations of Interest</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
<p>3) Minutes of the Meeting held on 30 March 2009</p> <p>The Board were informed that the minutes circulated with the papers were an incorrect version and a revised set were tabled.</p> <p>Accuracy</p> <p>The following points of accuracy were identified:</p> <p>Page 1- 's' missing from both instances of Hannabuss. Page 2- None Page 3- Paragraph 3 in the 'Personal Claims' section to be removed Page 4- Paragraph 3- 'subsidiary' to be replaced with 'subsidy' and 'ZW' to be removed from the action column. Page 5- None</p> <p>With amendments made the minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting. .</p>	
<p>4) Matters arising</p> <p><i>Page 2 - CNH Vulnerable Persons Strategy</i></p> <p>The Board was advised that amendments identified at the meeting of 30 March was being made to the document. The Board would receive a revised version at the June</p>	

Board meeting.

IR

Page 5 - Elizabeth Holland

ZW advised the Board that Elizabeth Holland wished to remain a Board member and that a discussion would take place to ascertain if a regular contribution could be made.

ZW

Page 5 - Performance Assessment Day

ZW advised that notes and documentation from the performance assessment day had been circulated to Board members. Board Members would be contacted within the next few weeks to schedule 1:1 meetings.

5) Delivery Plan 2009/10 Final Version

The Board received a revised version of the 2009/10 Delivery Plan for consideration and approval for submission to the Council. The original draft version of the document had been submitted to the Council for consideration in October 2008 and the document had been revised to take into account comments from the Council and include delivery progress on the 2007 – 2009 service delivery action plan as at 31 March 2009.

Discussion took place and highlighted issues were:

Capital Programme:

PG highlighted inconsistencies in the document with regard to the delivery date of Decent Homes and requested that only dates agreed by the Board should be published. It was also highlighted that the section only reflected one of the funding profiles submitted to DCLG and not both.

The Board agreed that to ensure complete transparency about what CNH could deliver, the document should outline both the £36m and £44m funding profiles with explanation and implications of achieving decency and timescales of both.

SW

PG stated that his organisation had taken a 'menu' approach to delivery of the Decent Homes programme to allow achievement at an affordable price. SW confirmed that Charnwood also had a similar approach.

NS advised that Loughborough University was involved in a scheme with housing providers to bring housing stock up to higher standards. It was agreed that NS would provide details to SW.

NS

Service Level Agreements:

IM remarked that it would have been preferable if customers were involved in designing the services transitioning into CNH rather than the focus being based totally on financial savings.

PC highlighted that the SLA costings was not consistent with those agreed in the budget. CH advised that they are but the table needed to be changed to reflect this and some text added to explain the table.

CH

It was agreed that a report outlining progress of transition plans would be considered at the June Board meeting.

IS

Deliverables from the 2007 – 09 Action Plan:

ZW expressed concern that some deliverables had not been achieved from the 2007 – 09 action plan, particularly in the Housing Operations directorate. This would be discussed with IS outside of the meeting.

ZW

Performance Targets for 2009/10:

IM requested that this section reflect that as new services are absorbed through SLA termination further measures would be added.

MM

NS enquired about the competitiveness of the Southfields rent and would it be possible to commence a search for new accommodation. IS advised that the rental had been set following assessment by an independent commercial surveyor. He added that alternatives would be sought but currently inspection preparation took priority.

Resolved:

- 1) Delegated authority to ZW, IS and MH to approve the document once the necessary amendments were made.**

6) March 2009, Quarter 4 and 2008/09 Performance Monitoring

The Board received a report outlining the March 2009, Quarter 4 (08/09) and 2008/09 annual performance on the key performance indicators reported to the Council.

The Board was advised that a positive trend had been achieved month on month during 08/09 and an improvement had been achieved on the 07/08 outturns. In March 09 significant improvement had been achieved, with 18 indicators showing an improvement on the previous month and only 4 showing slight deterioration.

PG enquired about the 100% targets set for the Customer Service indicators and suggested that they was not realistic targets. IS clarified that the 100% targets was inherited from the Council. All Council Customer Service indicators was set at 100%. Attempts to renegotiate these with the Council had been made on numerous occasions but the Council was not willing to negotiate.

MM added that once CNH's Customer Charter was published, currently scheduled for completion in July, the Customer Service indicators would be replaced with CNH's service standard indicators and realistic targets would be set for these indicators.

IS advised the Board that no agreement had been made with the Council with regards to the 66b indicator. The Council would not accept CNH's proposal of 6% and CNH considered the Council's proposal of 4.16% as unrealistic, given that the target of 4.16% had not been achieved in previous years.

ZW added where targets cannot be agreed between officers of the Council and CNH that escalation to the Board was required so that this could be taken up with the Chief Executive of the Council.

IM requested that for future reporting, where indicators was not achieving target, it would be useful if more commentary on the impact assessment outlining the implications to service could be shown.

PF

MH enquired why some data was not available for some indicators. This was because some data was not available at the time of the report being written and other data was dependent on the Council providing data to CNH which was not possible currently. It was agreed that this would be made clearer in future reports.

PF

Resolved:

- 1) The Board noted the report and supporting appendices.**
- 2) Recommendations for enhancements to the report would be implemented for future reports.**

6) Proposed Key Performance Indicators

The Board received a report outlining a proposed suite of indicators for CNH.

The Board was advised that at present CNH reports on a monthly and quarterly basis to the Council on 65 indicators (reduced to 55 for 2009/10). These indicators were determined by the Council at the time of establishment of CNH and cover a wide range of activities as part of the Performance Monitoring Framework agreement. However, they do not focus on all the key business aspects of the ALMO and the new suite has been developed to cover all areas with qualitative and quantitative data to allow managers and the Board to assess progress that CNH is making as a business. It was highlighted that a third of the indicators proposed measure outcomes for customers and half of the indicators could be benchmarked externally with Housemark.

The Board was advised that the indicators had been developed with tenants at the TRG meeting and as well as reporting to managers and Board. The TRG would receive regular updates on a selection of indicators they deemed important to tenants.

RM enquired if historical data was available for the new indicators. PH confirmed that historical data was only available for indicators in the suite that currently existed.

IM suggested that there may be a requirement to report on National Indicator 14. It was agreed that this would be investigated.

IM also stated that satisfaction indicators should be recorded by diversity strands.

PC asked for confirmation that CNH had the resources to measure these extra indicators. This was confirmed. PF also reassured the Board that many of these new areas were already being measured but were not being reported so the production of this data would not have a significant impact on CNH resources.

MH expressed concern regarding the return rate of the Decent Homes satisfaction questionnaires. SW confirmed that this was currently due to the small amount of Decent Homes work currently taking place and would increase when the programme commences fully. PF confirmed that other surveys were providing representative samples.

Resolved:

- 1) **The Board noted the report and approved the proposed indicators as fit for purpose for measuring progress of the organisation.**

7) Asbestos Management

The Board received a report outlining proposals for an Asbestos Management Policy and improvement plan and Tenants' Guide to Asbestos for CNH. The purpose of the report was to provide the Board with the necessary assurances that effective asbestos management and control was in place and where improvement areas had been identified, appropriate actions were being taken to ensure the safety of tenants and staff.

PG advised that the policy should include:

- 1) Structural work – the need to consider type 3 surveys rather than type 2.
- 2) Clone surveys – where properties were identical clone surveys could be undertaken,

It was also agreed that the wording in the leaflet and covering letter needed to be very careful to ensure customers did not panic.

PF

PF

SW

SW

Resolved:

- 1) **The Asbestos Policy to be amended as discussed at the meeting and implemented with immediate effect.**
- 2) **The Asbestos Management improvement plan be accepted.**
- 3) **The Tenants Guide to Asbestos in the Home leaflet be accepted and approved for publication subject to proof reading.**

8) Revised Void Standard Report and Improve Customer Choice

The Board received a report outlining proposals for a revised void standard, increase in the decoration allowance for new tenants, implementation of a decoration service to new customers and introduction of a Crown void paint pack scheme.

Revised void standard – The Board were advised that the revised void standard had been developed in consultation with tenants. The main change would be a reduction in internal decoration and a 'repair not replace' approach to void repairs. The Board was advised that the standard was now more aligned to other similar housing organisations. It was anticipated that the revised void standard would generate savings in the region of £100,000 per annum. The Board agreed the revision to the void standard.

PG advised that during inspection, Audit Commission would be looking for evidence that properties are being repaired to the published standard. SW agreed to develop a checklist for tenants to complete and sign on receipt of a property.

SW

PG also advised that it was practice in other organisation to undertake some repairs post occupation of a property. This would help with void turnaround time. SW agreed to take this proposal back to the tenants group.

SW

Increased decoration allowance – Due to the proposed reduction of internal decoration to voids, the Board was asked to consider an increase in the decoration allowance for new tenants. The Board was advised that acceptance of this proposal would generate an increase in cost for decoration allowance of approximately £20,000 per annum. The Board rejected this proposal pending further clarification of the savings generated from the reduction of the void standard and consideration and recommendation from the Executive Team regarding the use of savings generated.

SW

Decoration Service – The Board was asked to consider the provision of a decoration service to new tenants who had difficulty decorating for themselves. If implemented this would not only provide good service to customers but would generate income for CNH. The Board accepted this proposal subject to a six month review.

Crown Void Paint Pack Scheme – The Board was asked to consider provision of introducing a scheme that offered paint and painting products to customers at a discounted price through CNH's preferred paint supplier, Crown Paints. The scheme would be at no cost to CNH but would provide a value added service to customers. The Board supported and welcomed the introduction of such a scheme but requested that other proposals from other local suppliers be considered prior to implementation of a scheme.

SW

Resolved:

- 1) **Approval of the revised void standard.**
- 2) **Rejection of the proposal to increase the decoration allowance subject to further clarification of the savings generated from the reduction of the void standard and consideration and recommendation from the Executive Team regarding the use of savings generated.**

- 3) **Approval of implementation of a Decoration Service subject to a six month review.**
- 4) **Approval of the introduction of a void paint pack scheme subject to consideration of proposals from other suppliers.**

9) Statement of Internal Financial Control

The Board received a report clarifying the responsibilities of the Board of Directors and requesting consideration to sign up to a prescribed statement for financial control. The statement had not been agreed previously due to the company only being in existence for four months.

RM advised that following a discussion to clarify the requirements of such a statement, with CNH's auditors, Beevers and Struthers, it had been confirmed that it was not necessary to include such a statement in the financial accounts. RM recommended that at this stage the statement should not be included.

PG stated that if such a statement were used he would advise that it would need to be strengthened.

Resolved:

- 1) **The Board of Directors acknowledge and accept the responsibility for ensuring that CNH has in place a system of business controls.**
- 2) **Rejection of inclusion of a statement of internal financial controls to be included in the financial accounts.**

10) Value for Money Strategy

The Board received the draft Value for Money Strategy with action plan and efficiencies register for consideration and approval.

PG highlighted the Decent Homes delivery date and requested consistency with the Delivery Plan.

RM expressed concern at item 6 in the action plan referring to 'Business case template used for all capital schemes over £100,000'. It was agreed that this item would be amended to apply to all schemes, capital and revenue and the figure should be reduced to £50,000.

IS

IS

Resolved:

- 1) **That the Value for Money strategy be approved subject to the required amendments.**
- 2) **That the efficiencies register be updated and costed on a regular basis.**

11) Risk Management Strategy

The Board received a draft of the CNH Risk Management Strategy for consideration and approval.

IS advised that the strategy would be reviewed every two years. He added that risks identified in Board reports would be transferred to the Corporate Register.

The Board was advised that the risk register would remain a working document and would be reviewed and updated regularly by the Executive Team. The Audit and VFM sub-committee would review the document twice annually.

IS advised that the accompanying risk register was an initial list and would be subject to

further review by Executive Team and the Audit and VFM Sub Committee.

IS

Resolved:

- 1) **The Risk Management Strategy be approved.**
- 2) **Executive Team and Audit and VFM Sub Committee review the Risk Registers as a working document.**

12) General Update

CBC Structure Change

IS advised the Board of some potential changes to the Senior Management structure of the Council. There had also been a change to the leadership of the Council with Councillor Mike Preston now leader. Councillor John Bush was now lead member for housing.

ZW advised that she and IS would approach the Council to understand the changes and implications for CNH and start building relationships with the new appointees. Feedback would be provided to Board at the June Board meeting.

ZW/IS

Annual Accounts

IS advised the Board that the financial position would be reported to Board in June.

CH advised that the account was complete but was subject to final checks and auditing and a decision from the Council on capitalisation of some voids work. The Board was advised that currently the loss for the year was £435,000 and was almost entirely due to voids spend.

SW added that he did not support the statement that the overspend was entirely due to voids as weekly figures provided by finance over the last 3 months had shown underspend.

IS stated that there was still checking work to do to ensure that the figures were correct and for Executive Team to understand the reasons for any additional overspend to that forecast in the budget.

RJ stated that the voids situation needs to be addressed and efforts need to be put into addressing the bedsits.

IS advised that this was correct. He stated that the Council was suffering a loss of approximately £570,000 per annum on voids and there were approximately 100 bedsits that had been empty on a long term basis. He stated that as the properties were the Council's asset it was the Council's responsibility to develop a strategy to deal with the bedsits.

IS added that although the void turnaround time was still high the April figure had shown a significant improvement at 53.64 days. He stated that there were three teams involved in the process, CBC allocations, CNH repairs and CNH tenancy. Currently CNH elements of the process were achieving agreed targets of 27 and 5 working days respectively.

13) Any Other Business

Youth Zone Play- ABC – Life Ain't That Easy

ZW advised Board members that Youth Zone were putting on a production called ABC –

Life Ain't That Easy. Taking place Friday 23 May at 7pm and Saturday 24 May at 2pm, all Board Members are invited to attend. Details could be obtained from Nick Jones, Tenant Participation Officer.

Forthcoming Board Meetings

The Board was advised that due to changes in the CBC committee structure the dates of our forthcoming Board Meetings would be changed. A revised schedule would be circulated to all Board members

IS

Midlands ALMO Board Members Meeting, 20 April 2009-05-22

CP expressed disappointment that a meeting of Midlands ALMO Board Members had taken place at Charnwood where Ann Watkinson was present but no invites was sent before the event.

IS confirmed that the meeting did take place but was not a meeting organised by CNH. He added that the meeting was a Board member only meeting. He stated that CNH Board members who had attended a previous meeting had offered to host the meeting at Charnwood. All requests had been met in terms of provision of a room and refreshments.

It was agreed that Wolverhampton Homes, who organise the meeting, would be provided with Board member contact details.

MM

Audit and VFM Sub Committee

RM advised the Board that the minutes from the Audit And VFM Sub Committee would be circulated to all Board members for information.

CH

7) Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 23 June, 6pm, Committee Room 1, Charnwood Borough Council

The meeting ended at 9.00 pm.

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CHAIR

Signed as true and accurate record of the meeting held on 19 May 2009.