

# Charnwood Neighbourhood Housing Limited

Meeting of the Board of Directors  
18 May 2010, 6:00pm, Schofield Centre



**Board Member Attendees:** Roger Merchant (Chair), Diane Horn, Ann Watkinson, Paul Day, Neville Stork  
Tony Buck, Mushtaq Khan, Helen Isaac, Ian Montgomery, Richard Osborne, Marie Hannabuss, Cynthia Popley.

**Also Present:** Sue Taylor, Steve Wilson, Maria Maltby, Richard Paterson, Martinette Proud, Shaun Plant, Chris Moore

**Public Attendees Notified in Advance:** Siva Balaratnam

**Apologies:** Kenneth Jones, Ron Jukes, William Cavender, Patrick Cole

**Minutes:** Louise Gough

## Minutes

ITEM	Action
<p><b>1) Apologies for Absence</b></p> <p>Apologies were received and recorded from Kenneth Jones, Ron Jukes, William Cavender and Patrick Cole</p>	
<p><b>2) Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
<p><b>3) Minutes of the Meeting on 30 March 2010</b></p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <p>That the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 20 April 2010 be agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting, and duly signed.</p> <p><b>Matters Arising</b></p> <p><b>Page 3 –Board Away Day Feedback–</b> additional Board away day was organised and took place last Saturday 15 May 2010. Item to be discussed further under Exempt part of the meeting.</p> <p>MM confirmed the Performance and Scrutiny Committee meetings are to start in June 2010.</p> <p><b>Page 3- Partnership working and Income Streams-</b> ST attended the East Midlands ALMO's Chief Officers Group. A briefing paper is to be devised by NFA examining the additional streams of funding available. RM requested this subject to be pushed forward as a matter of urgency.</p> <p><b>Page 3 - Risk Management-</b> Finance and Audit Committee took place last night and was agreed for a risk management strategy to be produced in time for the next meeting taking</p>	<p><b>ST</b></p> <p><b>RP</b></p>

place on 5 July 2010.

**Page 5- National News- Council Housing Finance-** During the HRA review the Council has been working with HQN. ST advised that she will be liaising with HQN during the review ensures the Board are informed of the implications to the ALMO. ST to update Board at next meeting.

ST

**The Board received the report.**

#### 4) Gas Audit Update

Shaun Plan (Gas & Ancillaries Manager) presented a report on the gas maintenance quality assurance Audit Commission and HQN findings. The report provides the Board with the assurance that the company has a robust quality assurance for gas maintenance service.

The HQN independent audit resulted on a list of 51 recommendations on which 50 are now completed and one remains as it relates to wider market testing and the organisation restructure to be completed by April 2011. The majority of the recommendations were based on back office evidence gathering and monitoring systems which has now been addressed accordingly.

The exercise did identify a poor condition of heating systems with the properties falling into the category 4 (not to current standard), stating the equipment is still safe to use but no longer meets the current NCS legislation.

In relation of the NCS legislation our main concerns fall into one of the following 6 areas:

1. Earth continuity bonding
2. ECV Emergency cut off valve
3. Flue position/termination
4. Ventilation
5. Old lead pipe work at meters
6. Tenant cooker not having a chain or flame safety device fitted.

To rectify the NCS the cost occurred would be £916,525 and recommend action not to be taken at the moment.

PD questioned is the report a result of a knee jerk situation and why have we not had a rolling programme in place over the past 3 years of service.

SP advised in the past we have been updating gas system during the replacement of heating systems. There are no health and safety risk link with using this process and it is good practice to apply this procedure.

CP asked the extra money that was given from the management fee for heating systems why has this not been used as this situation and further asked who the responsibility lies with when something goes wrong. ST advised the responsibility is with herself and the Board and agrees action needs to be taken to avoid any incidents occurring. The extra funding from CBC was not given for upgrades but for boilers renewal and has been used according within the stock.

RB concerns raised over the tone of the letter from the Audit Commission as damning and that the team is in denial of the situation. He advised that a technical audit needs to take place in conjunction with an audit from HQN to ensure all levels of the service are adequate for propose and the suggested recommendations have been implemented. SP advised a third party technical audit does take place through Aston Gas Service.

RB is not comfortable with the checks that are being taken as not enough information is being provided and feels that the figure given for current gas certificates of 99.9% is questionable and is not happy to sign off the report tonight.

MK seconded RB notion and further advised that the landlord has an obligation of annual gas checks to take place and if we are not complying with the set standard we are leaving ourselves open to ridicule this does need to be addressed.

SP advised that the current figure for gas certificates for 99.9% is correct and the audit commission only completed a sample of gas checks during their inspection.

RM suggested that the subject be taken forward by ST and RB to complete a technical audit and further probing for assurance to be given that the correct system is in place.

RM proposed that a technical audit be taken of the current gas maintenance service by an independent third party and a HQN audit review of the recommendations. The new holder of SW post to address the backlog of maintenance required as first issue. The Council are to be informed of the situation by ST tomorrow.

ST/RB

CP seconded the proposal and vote was taken agreed unanimous.

**The Board received the report.**

**5) Public Questions**

There were no public questions.

**6) Chair's Report**

***Nomination for CEO as CNH account signee***

RM proposed the notion for the Board to accept ST to be granted the authority to sign cheques on behalf of CNH.

**Resolved: notion was agreed unanimous.**

***Board member retirement and recruitment***

RM advised 2 tenants and 1 independent are to step down at this year AGM. The nominees are based on the longest service since last appointed as a Board Member. IM has volunteered to step down as independent Board Member and shall not be standing for re-election to the Board.

***Further Engagement with staff***

NS put forward the notion that our priority as the Board is to further increasing engagement with staff below EMT level. This will be a 2 way process and involve members attending tenancy walkabouts, various events and training programmes. Board members will be informed of the event via MM.

**7) Chief Executive's Report**

***Cherie Tinenti – Award Winner***

ST advised the Board that Cherie Tinenti, one of our active tenants, achieved the Housing Heroes national award within the Inspirational Tenant category. The ceremony was held in London on 14 May 2010. This is an enormous achievement within community involvement for CNH and a press release will be given within CNH news and via various media sources.

**Final Response to Audit Commission Report**

The final joint response from the Council and CNH has been presented to the Audit

Commission. The report is embargo until this Thursday and press releases have been devised through various media sources.

An error occurred yesterday via Leicester Sound releasing CNH results yesterday morning in breach of the embargo date given. In light of this action staff were formally informed of the result yesterday.

The Audit Commission have been informed of the breach and have contacted Leicester Sound who has assured it was accidental. The subject has been left with Audit Commission to take further action if required.

CP registered her dissatisfaction with this recent event and RM advised any future approaches from the media to be directed to MM.

### ***Isobel Rickard and Steve Wilson Leaving CNH***

IR and SW are to leave CNH employment. Isobel has left the company as of last week and Lynn Aston has now taken over the role as interim Director of housing operations. SW will be leaving CNH as of 25 June 2010. The item will be addressed further under the exempt section of the meeting.

ST further advised that she has now taken over the role as the Chair of the Health & Safety meetings, Trade Union Briefing meetings and is the EMT champions for Equality & Diversity.

An interim Equality and Diversity Officer has been appointment to start on 27 May and the costing will be paid out of existing budgets.

### ***Forthcoming Events***

ST will be attending a number of events- Harrogate Conference and NFA ALMO's meeting. This will enable us to increase our position in the market and make CNH more dominate player within this area.

### ***LGA Annual Conference***

CNH has been contacted by the Local Government Agency to take part in the annual conference on 6-8 July in Bournemouth via the production of a DVD of CNH success. The DVD will be played on the big screen during the conference and the week after will be shown on Sky news government today.

The cost of the DVD will be £14k on which support has been given from Community Safety Partnership, Police and the Council which we are waiting on confirmation.

Suggestion for the DVD to be focused around Mario Tinenti Centre and the good work taking place on Warwick Way estate.

NS raised concerns on the costing of the DVD as yet we have not yet received confirmation from the Council on their side of the funding. CP asked has there been investigation into the event taking place in the past. ST confirmed that she has made contact with organisations that have been involved in past event and has viewed the final DVD produced.

RM confirmed the subject is to be left with the EMT to finalise.

**EMT**

### **The Board received the report.**

## **8) 2009/10 Year End Performance Report**

MM presented the CNH year end performance report for 2009/10. The report provides a summary of our performance during the financial year 2009/10 in conjunction with Appendix One – company performance report for April to March 2010.

An independent view of the performance framework and system took place in January

2010 and identified significant weakness:

- Gaps in the information that was being recorded;
- The veracity of some of the data being collated;
- Inadequate links between service planning, prioritisation of activity and performance outturns;
- Inadequate links between performance and financial management information;

The Board approved the revised performance management framework at March 2010 meeting and will be fully embedded within the company 30 June 2010.

A Performance and Scrutiny Committee will also be established from June 2010 to meet monthly to over see the new framework and approve quarterly performance reports to be submitted to Board.

MM advised the information that is provided within Appendix One is based on the target setting for 2009/10 was weak and are now being addressed through the new framework with profile indicators linked to the service standards.

The key areas of performance for consideration of the Board as outlined in the report are:

- Call handling from Contact Centre.
- Complaints.
- Repairs and maintenance
- Gas servicing
- Vacant property management
- Income management
- Sickness absence

PD challenged what are the reasons for our continuing situation with voids. ST advised in the past CNH has not been challenging the Council within this area of service. LA is now the lead for this area and is actively challenging the Council on the decisions taken with voids thus resulted in a number of long term voids being let which has affected the overall figure for voids. We are to separate the old properties from the new and identifying underlying trends to address the subject proactively.

DH stated that the subject has been brought to every Board meeting and should have now been addressed.

MK questioned the sickness level for CNH is high compared with private sector organisations at 9.11 days this is a concern and needs to be tackled. Suggestion an action plan to be put in place and benchmarking with other ALMO's completed.

DH asked is there a policy in place to get staff back to work as soon as possible. MM confirmed we have.

IM advised that we need to concentrate on the year ahead for the Contact Centre performance and asked has avoidable contacts been addressed good practice. He further suggested an action of addressing the performance for calls to be split into categories of service and attain if the trends identified could be dealt though better information provided. Involvement tenants with the exceptions desired from the service may be desirable to apply.

MM informed the Board that CNH has joined a benchmarking group for this area of service this year.

DH stated that she visited the Contact Centre on their open day and found polite service from the staff. The only criticism was that further probing could have been taken from the staff to gain greater information from the tenants on the subject raised.

NS asked where are CNH going with their current performance and suggested action plans are put in place immediately to tackle the situation.

RB questions how the number of voids decreased but rent loss has gone up. Can clarification be provided.

MM

**The Board received the report.**

## 9) 2010 Board Member Retirements and Recruitment

MM presented the Board member retirement and recruitment report. The document seeks agreement from the Board on the draft policies and procedures to be applied for the independent and tenant/ leaseholder recruitment and retirement.

In accordance with the articles 15 and 16 of CNH's Articles of Association, 3 Board Members are due to stand down- 1 independent and 2 tenant of which the records state:

### ***Tenant nominees***

Helen Isaac- Leaseholder  
Diane Horn- Tenant

### ***Independent nominees***

Ian Montgomery- Independent  
Mushtaq Khan- Independent

In the past there has not been written procedures to be applied during the recruitment. The proposed procedures ensure that a guideline is followed to provide a fair and transparent process to all involved.

The tenant procedures takes of a 5 stage process:

- Stage 1 - Recruitment Panel Formation
- Stage 2 - Expressions of Interest
- Stage 3 - Interviews
- Stage 4 - Election Nominations
- Stage 5 - Ballot and Appointment

And the independent a 3 stage process:

- Stage 1 - Recruitment Panel Formation
- Stage 2 – Application Process
- Stage 3 - Interviews

MM invited any comments to be given from the Board on the proposed documents and if approved of the formation of the recruitment panel.

RM requested the independent procedures to state flexibility for the panel to conduct a skills analysis of the members to step down in view of reappointing Board Member.

AW gave her support for the introduction of a vetting process to be applied during the tenant/ leaseholder recruitment and for support to be given to the candidates for the creation of statements.

The processes are to comply with the Council policy and they will be in preparation for the AGM in September.

**Resolved: Cavite subject to changes to the independent policy being made. Voting took place unanimously agreed.**

**The Board received the report.**

## 10) Variation of CBC Tenancy Agreement

Chris Moore ( Tenancy Services Manager) presented the variation of CBC tenancy agreement report seeking approval from the Board of the recommended amendments to the council's revised agreement,

The agreement was last reviewed in 2003 and is a legal requirement to update the tenancy agreement in accordance with recent legalisations.

The proposed agreement was presented at Cabinet in November 2009 in view of planned implementation in April 2010. Due to legal advice a tenant consultation commenced during April of which a number of key changes were requested:

- Formatting
- Notice of 24hr emergency access
- Tenants obligation for repair work to be completed
- Clarification of pets clause
- Clarification of ASB
- Clarification of permission to erect satellite dishes.

There were 2 areas of objection to the new agreement:

- The holding of photographs of tenants.
- Not all tenants being required to sign the new agreement.

The revised implementation timetable is:

- 18 May 2010- Board approval
- 10 June 2010- Council cabinet approval
- 12 July 2010- implementation of new agreement

The agreement was presented at the senior citizen forum for comment and has completed an equality and diversity assessment of the documentation.

IM expressed his thanks that tenants were consulted and their feedback was taken into account. Within the final publication need to differentiate what has been changed due to tenant consultation and inform tenant why the agreement is not stated within plain English.

MH question Section 6, page 11- it is the responsibility for tenants to replace electrical sockets. ST advised that a number of tenants have commented on this section of the agreement.

MK advised that minimum requirements of the landlord to complete certain repairs. We need to reword the section careful as so not want to over extend our service and leave us open to breach of contract.

CP asked that we state tenants are allow to complete the repair as long as it complies with regulatory standards.

RB suggested that we state tenants are to get qualified technicians in to complete the work with a valid certificate or ourselves of which we will recharge the tenant.

On the erection of satellite dishes we need to be sure that frontline staff are clear on execution process. CM advised all officers have been informed of the new process and guidance has been written.

RB asked have we informed tenants that have given feedback that the comments have been noted. CM have been informed there are few that require follow up.

**Resolved: Approval of the agreement subject to delegation ST to update the**

**ST**

**agreement accordingly prior to implementation.  
Board agreed via voting unanimously.  
The Board received the report.**



**The meeting ended at 9pm. LG and MM left the meeting.**

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CHAIR

Signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting held on 18 May 2010.