

**Northwards Housing - ALMO Board Meeting
Norton Grange Hotel, Rochdale**

Friday 18 July 2008 at 5:00pm

Chair: Sue Ratchford

Present	Sue Ratchford (SR) Rachel Christie (RC) Mark Hackett (MH) Joan FitzGerald (JF) Paul Seymour (PS) Anna Trotman (AT) Michelle Carmichael (MC) Fatima Adamjee (FA)	Board Member (Chair) Board Member Board Member Board Member Board Member Board Member Board Member Board Member
In Attendance	Robin Lawler (RL) Mike Stevens (MS) part Steve Wood (SW) part Larry Patrick (LP) Steve Finegan (SF) Diane Roberts (DR)	Chief Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services Director of Business Services Director of Property Services Head of Business Support Governance Support Manager (Minutes)

Observers None

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
1	Welcome and Introductions The meeting was confirmed as being quorate.	
2	Apologies for Absence Apologies were given by Martin McKeivitt.	
3	Declaration of Interests/Confidential Matters/ Requests to unstar information items/ Equality & Diversity Matters Arising MC declared interest in item 7c – Literacy Training. PS declared interest in item 9a – Neighbourhood Wardens Items 4b, 7a, 8e, 9d, 12d, 12g, 12i, 13c, 13d and 15b were confidential. Agenda items for information marked by * can be released for discussion by request of Board Members or Officers. There were no requests to unstar information items. All Equality and Diversity matters would be covered under relevant items. It was noted that items for information and some appendices were posted onto the Governance website and not printed within Board agenda and papers. This was for efficiency and environmental reasons. The Board had no objections to this new method of working.	
4 a b	Minutes of Previous Meeting: 22 May 2008 The minutes of the meeting held on 22 May and subsequently the confidential minutes of the same date were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.	Approved

5	<p>Matters Arising from 15 January minutes Item 7a Governance Performance DR advised that the Governance website has been updated.</p> <p>Matters Arising from 11 March minutes 6b Removing Barriers Training DR is arranging a date when all members will be available</p> <p>Matters Arising from 22 May minutes Item 5a Board Champions Board Champions will be reviewed in September. Item 7a Board Membership Board agenda item 8a. Item 7b Board Skills Board agenda item 8b. Item 7d Board Away Day Complete. Item 7e Study Visit New date to be arranged. Item 7g Mileage Rates The new mileage rate has been implemented. Item 10b Performance Management Framework MS has resolved the issue about BVPI for opportunities for involvement and SW had updated the Business and Delivery plan to reflect the changes.</p>	<p>DR</p> <p>DR</p>
6	<p>Chair's Items</p>	
a	<p>Board Development Agency Governance Conference SR gave a verbal report and stated that Northwards was well advanced in its governance arrangements, including e-governance.</p>	
b	<p>Community Activity Victoria Square SR, JF and DR had attended Victoria Square planting for RHS Tatton Show. SR asked for ideas for placement of garden pods post the show. LP suggested sheltered blocks as they are away from public areas and can be adopted by residents. SR recommended that the Board visit Victoria Square. Board Members to contact Diane to arrange if required. Respect Briefing SR reported this event was a well-attended event. MS confirmed that feedback from the event would be considered at the next Neighbourhood & Quality Services Sub-Committee. Tenant Group Feedback SR reported that a recent Tenant Group AGM had 35 people attend, and has resulted in a committee of 14. This is a result of residents feeling so pleased with their improvements and Northwards service. Grace Chourlarton Grace had sent a note of thanks to the Board for their good wishes on her recent birthday. Cartmel Court The group had written to the Board to thank them for their recent garden improvements</p>	<p>Board</p>

7	Governance	
a	<p>Board Membership and Recruitment RL reported that he, SR and HN had interviewed David Leah for the Independent Board Member vacancy. They had offered the post subject to Board approval and David Leah would be delighted to accept. The date of appointment will be 1 September 2008. The appointment will need to be approved by the Council and confirmed at the AGM. This will be included in a formal report to Board on 9 September. AT had noted that staff members serve on other housing organisation boards. AT asked if Northwards would have co-optees from other organisations. RL confirmed that PS worked for a housing association.</p> <p>The Board approved the recruitment panel's recommendation to appoint David Leah as Independent Board Member from 1 September 2008</p>	SW
b	<p>Board Skills DR presented the report. AT noted the weakness in the skills area of social work. RL suggested we might need to strengthen this area through recruitment or co-option. DR highlighted that the Board can buy in experts when required on a short-term basis.</p> <p>The Board;</p> <p>a) Noted the report and agreed to use as a reference when recruiting or making decisions.</p> <p>b) Agreed to consider hiring experts or co-opting people on occasions with the requisite skills where a skill gap exists.</p> <p>c) Agreed to request that the Resource and Audit Sub-Committee consider appointing a co-opted with finance and/or Treasury Management to reinforce this expertise.</p> <p>d) Agreed that the skills audit should be carried out annually to test the strength of the Board skill mix.</p> <p>e) Agreed to review identified training needs together with the outcome of the current Board appraisal process to develop an overall training plan.</p>	
c	<p>Board Appraisals DR reported that all Board Members were now in the process of giving and seeking feedback. An average of 60% of returns had now been received. DR asked that outstanding feedback be provided in order to progress individual development plans and a Board development and training plan.</p>	Board/ EMT
d	<p>Annual General Meeting 2008 DR informed the Board that arrangements were in place for the AGM to be held at Heaton Park Orangery on 2 October 2008. AT raised concerns about Car Parking. DR has been reassured that gates would be opened to allow parking close to the venue.</p>	
e	<p>Standards Panel (Confidential) See confidential minutes</p>	
8	Strategic	
a	<p>Review of Neighbourhood Wardens Service MS presented the report. The Board discussed the implementation of the new model. The risks</p>	

	<p>and benefits of a phased or full implementation were discussed. It was agreed that a balanced approach should be used. RL reported that partners had been consulted and payment for coverage outside Northwards area is in place. A detailed plan of action would be presented to Neighbourhood & Quality Services Sub-Committee in September. An annual impact assessment would be presented to Sub-Committee.</p> <p>FA asked if there were any financial implications. MS reported that the proposal was within the budget previously approved by the Board. The Board discussed the positive effect that the Wardens have in Northwards area. MS reported that “hot spots” may need to be prioritised and this would involve consultation with Area Panels and Tenants Groups. RC asked if the review included a review of hours. MS advised that a review of working times was required. The Board approved the recommendation with full implementation to be completed by early 2009.</p> <p>The Board noted and discussed the report. The Board approved that Northwards Housing will fund the Neighbourhood Warden Service, on the basis that the service is extended to all Northwards-managed areas and will service mainly Northwards-managed estates.</p> <p>The Board agreed that a staged approach should be adopted to implementation on the basis of a detailed plan which will be monitored by Neighbourhood and Quality Services Sub-Committee; with full implementation of the new service completed in early 2009.</p> <p>The Board agreed that coverage of the Miles Platting and Collyhurst PFI areas will continue on the basis of funding contributions being received from MCC and/or the PFI contractor.</p> <p>MS left the meeting. SW joined the meeting.</p>	
9	Finance	
a	Annual Accounts 2007-08 (Confidential) See Confidential Minutes	
b	<p>Financial Inclusion Strategy</p> <p>This item was deferred until SW joined the meeting. SW presented the report. It was noted that Alison Foster had achieved accreditation from CIH for her work on this report. RL and the Board asked for thanks to be given to Alison.</p> <p>Neighbourhood & Quality Services Sub-Committee would work on an implementation strategy. The range of services Northwards provides was noted and it was considered timely in the current economic situation. Worklessness was discussed; RL responded that a report would be brought to Board in due course. MH asked about fuel poverty. RL reported that an energy efficiency strategy is being worked on.</p> <p>The Board noted the report and Financial Inclusion Strategy for 2008/09</p>	SW
b	Tenant Incentive Scheme	

	<p>SF presented the report. He explained that feedback from Area Panels had resulted in a change of the type of reward offered. AT was concerned about rule 12 the deduction of debt from the prize. The Board discussed this; it was agreed that the eligibility criteria 13 needed to include exclusion of tenants with more than £150 debt. FA asked what the budget implications are. SF confirmed that this was within the budget previously approved by the Board. The Board were supportive of the idea of “make-overs” and asked that this be developed further.</p> <p>The Board approved the setting up of the tenant incentive scheme from September 2008 and programmed a review of the scheme in 12 months with a report and impact assessment for consideration by the Neighbourhood & Quality Services Sub Committee.</p>	
c	<p>Partnership Working</p> <p>RL presented the report; this had resulted from discussion at the previous Board meeting. This showed the wide range of partnership working with which Northwards is engaged at national, regional, city and local level.</p> <p>The Board noted the report.</p>	
d	<p>On Call Project Update (Confidential)</p> <p>See confidential minutes</p>	
10	Audit Commission Inspection	
a	<p>Inspection Action Plan Update (2006)</p> <p>SW presented the report. It was noted that there was an 11% improvement in the plan since the last Board update. There are four over-due items. AT asked if recommendation R1.2 – “Completing the actions in the existing action plan” progress was correct. It was agreed that the report would be updated and reported to Sub-Committees.</p> <p>The Board noted progress to date</p>	EMT
b	<p>Inspection Preparation and Timetable</p> <p>RL presented the report. He explained that the Audit Commission would conduct interviews, shadowing, and some mystery shopping. There would be some tenant focus groups.</p> <p>PS asked if Board Members would have individual or group interviews. SW replied it would be a varied small group. RL outlined the timetable.</p> <p>RL advised that Graeme Foster from the Audit Commission would attend September Board Meeting</p> <p>The Board noted the report.</p>	
11	Performance	
a	<p>Quarter 1 Performance</p> <p>Discussion was deferred as the report was not available. This would be uploaded to the Governance Website when available. Board Members can email Steve Finegan with any questions.</p>	SF
12	Involvement of Residents	
	The Board noted the Area Panel Minutes.	
13	Human Resources & Equality	

d	Sub-Committee Minutes Minutes were noted. Remuneration Panel 15 July 2008. See confidential minutes	
14	Neighbourhood & Quality Services	
	Sub-Committee Minutes Minutes were noted.	
15	Procurement & Property	
	Sub-Committee Minutes Minutes were noted. 15d Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) LP presented the report. He reported that HQN Asset Management Group had asked how organisations were implementing this. Northwards' proposed approach is best practice. The Board approved the proposal as recommended by the Procurement and Property Sub Committee to employ a trained Assessor produce the EPC's in house.	
16	Resource & Audit	
	Sub-Committee Minutes Minutes were noted.	
17	Relations with the Council	
	RL reported that an initial discussion about post 2010 options had been scheduled. The Council will support Northwards with Inspection.	
18	Any Other Business	
	Wilton Area Panel DR presented a proposal for the use of "Pot of Gold" funds from Wilton Area Panel. The Area Panel has requested that £10,000 be allocated to each ward for the benefit of young people. The Board approved this recommendation Tenant Conference- It's a Northwards Knockout : 13 September DR reported that Manchester Working have kindly agreed to be headline sponsors for this event.	
	Date of Next Meetings	
	Board Strategy Discussion- Development of Strategic Plan Tuesday 12 August, Hexagon Tower, 6.00pm Area Panel Social Event and Regeneration Briefing, 24 July, Heaton Park Bowling Club, 4.30pm Board Meeting – Tuesday 9 September, Hexagon Tower, 6.30pm	
	End of Meeting With thanks to everyone the Chair closed the meeting at 7pm	