

**Northwards Housing - ALMO Board Meeting
Board Room, Hexagon Tower**

Tuesday 11 November 2008 at 6:30pm

Chair: Sue Ratchford

Present	Sue Ratchford (SR) Paul Seymour (PS) Mark Hackett (MH) Joan FitzGerald (JF) Marjan Bazargan (MB) Anna Trotman (AT) Fatima Adamjee (FA) Martin McKeivitt (MM) David Leah (DL) June Hitchen (JH)	Board Member (Chair) Board Member (Vice Chair) Board Member Board Member Board Member Board Member Board Member Board Member Board Member Board Member (part)
In Attendance	Robin Lawler (RL) Larry Patrick Mike Stevens (MS) Steve Wood (SW) Diane Roberts (DR) Elaine Upton	Chief Executive Director of Property Services Director of Neighbourhood Services Director of Business Services Governance Support Manager (Minutes) Audit Commission
Observers	Mark Burke Tina Little (Interpreter)	

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
1	Welcome and Introductions SR welcomed Elaine Upton. She also welcomed MB to her first Board Meeting and MB expressed her delight at being recruited to the Board. The meeting was confirmed as being quorate.	
2	Apologies for Absence Apologies were given by Michelle Carmichael and Rachel Christie.	
3	Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair For the first item of business RL took the Chair. He asked if there had been any nominations other than SR and PS and DR confirmed that no other names had been notified. SR was elected as Chair unanimously. SR took the Chair. PS was elected unanimously as Vice Chair.	
4	Declaration of Interests/Confidential Matters/ Requests to Un-Star Information Items/ Equality & Diversity Matters Arising There were no declarations of interest. Items 5b, 9b, 11b, 12f, 13d, 14d and 15b were confidential. These items would be taken at the end of the meeting when observers would be asked to leave the meeting. Agenda items for information marked by * could be released for discussion by request of Board Members or Officers but there were no requests to unstar information items.	

	All Equality and Diversity matters would be covered under relevant items.	
5	Minutes of Previous Meeting	
a	The minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2008 and subsequently the confidential minutes of the same date were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.	
b	The minutes were approved	
6	Matters Arising from 11 March Minutes 6b Removing Barriers Training DR reported this was now incorporated into the Board Learning Plan. Matters Arising from 22 May Minutes Item 7e Study Visit DR reported this was now incorporated into the Board Learning Plan. Matters Arising from 9 September 2008 Minutes Item 6a Chairs Items – CIH Sheltered Housing Conference and Exhibition RL reported that JF concerns about CIH administration of the seminar had been fed back and RL hoped an apology would be given to JF. Item 8b Resource Pool Panel Decisions SW reported this was covered under item 14f on the Board agenda. Item 9d Board Support DR had sent Enlighten Consultants contact details to Board Members by email. Item 17 IMPACT Manchester Signing DR reported this had been completed and the agreement signed.	
7	Chair's Items	
a	AGM and northAwards review SR reported that there had been good feedback from the event. She reported that Vera Salvatore's sister had attended to present the award in Vera's name and had enjoyed the evening. RL thanked DR and the planning team. The Board asked that the sponsors were thanked and photographs of the award ceremony forwarded. AT noted that the description of Jim Burke did not record all of the great work he does for the community. The Board noted the report	RL/DR
b	LAA Briefing PS gave a summary of the briefing. The guest speakers had given a good view of the strategic areas, which had led to lively debate around strategies and services and how Northwards fits into the bigger strategic picture. SR noted that this gave ideas for the future for Northwards. RL reported that that the speakers were pleased to attend Northwards and that Northwards is involved with the Regeneration Agencies. MM was impressed how switched on to all areas, including the private sector, MCC and the agencies are. JH highlighted the partnership work with New East Manchester. RL reported that an apprentice placement would be beginning work with Northwards the following week. There will be four placements over the next few months.	
8	Audit Commission Inspection	

a	<p>Inspection Action Plan Update (2006)</p> <p>SW updated the Board on the Inspection Action Plan noting that Sub-Committees were continuing to receive detailed reports. Performance to date was 97% completion. Two areas remained outstanding; the development of rent arrears profiling is a continuing process (50% complete) and Equality Standard Level 3 had not been achieved in October. A report on the latter had now been received and reported that Northwards was close to the standard but had not quite been there.</p> <p>AT asked why recommendation six was still showing as outstanding and SW explained that this was the measure of completion of all other actions and would be 100% complete once the other two outstanding items were completed.</p> <p>AT also asked why in relation to the Level 3 Equality Standard action, the date had not been amended. SW reported that the original action dates had been maintained within the report and were not changed. RL reported that HR & Equality Sub-Committee would consider the written report from the Equality Standard Assessment at their November meeting and they would make a judgement how far this action point had progressed between 40% and 100%.</p> <p>The Board noted the report and the progress to date</p>	RL
b	<p>Inspection Preparation</p> <p>RL gave the Board an update on the Inspection timetable. Elaine Upton had provided Northwards with a Pre-Inspection briefing and RL confirmed that he would circulate the briefing to Board Members.</p>	RL
9	<p>Finance & Performance</p>	
a	<p>Business and Delivery Plan 2009-2014</p> <p>SW presented a report setting out the timetable and plans for the review of the Business and Delivery Plan and asking the Board to reflect on the Mission, Values and Objectives. It was not anticipated that a fundamental re-write was necessary this year although there would be some areas to review including the LAA briefing which would require incorporation into the Performance section of the plan. MH raised the dramatic social and political changes that were taking place and the effect these would have on tenure and housing. He recommended that the Board considers the strains and demands this may put on the service. RL reported that Board agenda item 9b sought to capture some of this change and he updated the Board on work with partners, Councillors, private developers and other agencies.</p> <p>In reviewing the Mission, Values and Objectives as a context for the Plan, SW reported that a review of developing a “short” mission statement was proposed for 2009 by tenants, residents and other stakeholders with a view to Northwards’ work beyond 2010. AT asked that reference to the date of the “YES” vote be included to give context and also requested that the timetable be dated to express the year of consideration for clarity. JH asked that the Mission include East Manchester to ensure all tenants are included.</p> <p>PS had reviewed the statements and believed that it says what we actually do and reflects our vision. He further reflected that he thought that the TSA is reflected in the statements. SW reported that this would be captured in the Plan.</p>	<p>SW</p> <p>SW</p> <p>SW</p> <p>SW</p>

	<p>RL added that the HRA Subsidy Review would also be included as discussed at the Away Day when considering the options for 2010.</p> <p>MM asked that pictures be used to illustrate the Values and Objectives as a memory aid. He stated that the most meaningful Missions are those that can be remembered. MH and DL raised concerns about the use of the castle image and asked if this reflected Northwards' openness as an organisation.</p> <p>RL reported that Area Panels would begin to consider the Plan at their meetings the following week and the annual tenant Business Plan event was planned for 17 January 2009.</p> <p>The Board confirmed the current statement of Mission, Values and Objectives subject to comments raised for Northwards and noted the proposed timetable and consultation processes for completion of the Business and Delivery Plan 2009-2014</p>	
b	<p>Current Financial Context</p> <p>See confidential minutes</p> <p>JH left the meeting at this point.</p>	
c	<p>Quarter 2 Performance</p> <p>SW presented a report on performance for Quarter 2, reminding the Board that the live and most up-to-date information was always on Covalent. He summarised the latest position commenting that the Scorecard showed five objectives as green and two at amber. The objectives where targets were not quite being hit were on Equality & Diversity and Value for Money. On the former the position was that a number of the employee targets were not being achieved due to low labour turnover. HR & Equality Sub-Committee would be continuing to review longer-term plans. In relation to Value for Money, the risks matrix had been added to the Scorecards and high impact/high probability risks were feeding through to the overall result even when they are controlled. RL and SW reported that Sub-Committees would consider detailed reports.</p> <p>AT asked why NHL810, the percentage of routine repairs completed on time showed a long term down trend when the service was improving. LP explained that this upturn would take some time to be reflected, due to past performance. RL reported that it was hoped that the Quarter 3 report would reflect the change.</p> <p>AT also highlighted BV66a Rent Collected. SW reported that income collection in September and October had been good and this should be reflected in future reports.</p> <p>The Board noted the report and delegated detailed analysis to the Sub-Committees</p>	
10	Governance	
a	<p>Sub-Committee Review</p> <p>SW presented a report outlining some proposals for a review of the Sub-Committee structure and highlighted the key points of the report.</p> <p>The most significant proposal to combine Resource & Audit and Human Resources & Equality Sub-Committees was discussed in detail. The proposal was due in part to the Equality Assessment Standard 3 recommendation that Equality & Diversity needed to be shown to be more embedded and this could be done by splitting the reports across all Sub-Committees.</p>	

	<p>RL reported that this was a refreshing of Sub-Committees to ensure they were still fit for purpose. Further work on co-option to the Sub-Committees would be carried out to ensure that technical and community links were covered. Membership of Sub-Committees and gap analysis would be considered through the skills matrix and the succession strategy would also be considered.</p> <p>MM commented that the proposal should help to embed Equality & Diversity and that more staff would be involved in the development of these areas. Tara Kelly (Equality & Diversity Officer) would support Sub-Committees on relevant issues.</p> <p>DL asked that Sub-Committees be asked to consider the proposal and make recommendations to Board in January and the Board agreed to amend the recommendation to incorporate this.</p> <p>The Board approved that Sub-Committees should consider the following changes and associated terms of reference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Neighbourhood & Quality Services Sub-Committee be renamed Customers & Communities Sub-Committee ii) Procurement & Property Sub-Committee be renamed Asset Management Sub-Committee iii) Resource & Audit Sub-Committee and HR & Equality Sub-Committee be combined, renamed Resources Sub-Committee and give up the remit for Audit. iv) A new Audit Sub-Committee be created v) Sub-Committees should review the revised terms of reference for the Sub-Committees as set out in revisions to paragraphs 14.1 to 14.4 inclusive vi) Sub-Committees should report back to the January Board with a view to make changes effective in January 2009 vii) The Governance Support Manager will discuss with individuals their preferences as to which Sub-Committees they wish to serve on. 	<p>DR</p> <p>EMT</p>
<p>b</p>	<p>Board Learning</p> <p>DR summarised the key points within a report summarising the outcomes and conclusions from the Board Appraisals. She noted that the results overall were positive.</p> <p>MH commented that the process for the Appraisals had been unnecessarily complex and that the mechanisms used had not been appropriate. The process had been unduly time-consuming, and compulsory training would not make it easier for Board Members to participate. Northwards needed to question whether this is the best way to increase Board capacity.</p> <p>AT supported MH's comments and also said that the process was unduly subjective.</p> <p>DL supported MH's comments to some extent, but noted that the criticism should not all be aimed at Northwards, as it was something that similar public sector organisations were required to do. Also it was important that Northwards tried to increase the knowledge and capacity of Board Members.</p> <p>MM said he had not found it unduly time-consuming, but agreed that the process could be improved and we should customise it for our own</p>	

	<p>purposes.</p> <p>RL clarified that Northwards is not governed by the Housing Corporation, but that there is a great deal of experience in the RSL sector in relation to governance.</p> <p>PS said that he had not found the process unduly time-consuming, but it was important going forward to review the various options available.</p> <p>JF said that although she had found the process valuable, she thought it could be off-putting for tenants.</p> <p>MH took MM's point about customising a mechanism for our own purposes going forward and commented that there would be different ways of doing this, and Northwards should give careful thought to the matter and find the right one for us.</p> <p>DR noted that the appraisals were about leadership rather than housing. The Board had requested a 360-degree, email appraisal system and the system used had been researched and recommended as an effective system. Officers would, however, take away Board Members' comments and review the range of options available for the future. Individual interviews with the Chair would review the process.</p> <p>The Board approved the Learning Plan 2008-09 including carrying out the 360 degree appraisal process again in June 2009 after a review by Officers on the system to be used.</p>	DR
c	<p>Board Equality Monitoring and Targets</p> <p>DR summarised a report on equality monitoring and targets and drew the Board's attention to its main points.</p> <p>AT raised a question whether carers who have an awareness of disability were included in the disability category. SW reported that this would be investigated.</p> <p>RL confirmed that succession and recruitment planning would review how to progress the targets over five years but that Northwards would continue to appoint the best person for the job.</p> <p>The Board noted the report and recommended the proposed targets for membership over the next five years.</p>	SW
d	<p>Board Meeting Dates 2009</p> <p>DR presented the report setting out proposed dates for meetings in 2009.</p> <p>The Board approved the meeting dates for 2009</p>	
e	<p>It's a Northwards Knockout Evaluation</p> <p>DR presented a report setting out an evaluation of the It's a Northwards Knockout event. AT reported that it had been an excellent event and proposed that the Board gave their thanks to staff, tenants and to Jim Burke, Chair of the Steering Group.</p> <p>Agreeing with this proposal, the Board noted the report.</p>	
11	Strategic	
a	<p>Worklessness</p> <p>RL presented a report proposing that, following on from work done together with partners, Northwards should develop its own Worklessness Strategy. He noted that Worklessness would be an element of the Business and Delivery Plan.</p> <p>MH celebrated the contribution Northwards had made to north Manchester in two years in relation to Worklessness and felt that the report undersold</p>	SW

	<p>this work. He gave thanks to everyone involved and was proud that Northwards had been quick to pick up on this issue.</p> <p>The Board noted action at citywide and district level to tackle Worklessness and agreed that Northwards develops its own Worklessness Strategy.</p>	
b	<p>On Call Contract Negotiations See confidential minutes.</p>	
12	Involvement Of Residents	
a	<p>Area Panel AGM's and Year Report 2007-08 SR congratulated the Area Panels on the level of work undertaken in the year and commented that they are invaluable to Northwards. The Board noted the report</p>	
b-i	The Board noted the Area Panel Minutes	
13	Procurement and Property	
a-d	<p>Sub-Committee Minutes The minutes were noted.</p>	
e	<p>Charlestown, Victoria Avenue East Multi-Storey Work LP presented a report on an action plan for some multi-storey work that was required. AT asked for clarification on the cost of £188,000 per block, when all blocks required different works. LP explained that this was an average, and that the set-up costs are similar for each block. AT asked for confirmation that the proposed solution would deal with issues in their entirety and that all replacements required would be done. LP confirmed that this was the case. JF asked about ability to clean both sides of windows and agreed to come back with this information. The Board approved the proposed rectification action plan and that the additional funding of £216,000 be provided by the savings from elsewhere in the home improvements programme</p>	LP
f	<p>Void Position Update and Targets for 2008-09 LP presented a report updating the Board on the position with voids performance and targets. The Board noted the report and agreed the revised targets for management void numbers for Monsall Street and Cheetham Hill offices.</p>	
14	Resource & Audit	
a-e	<p>Sub-Committee Minutes The minutes were noted.</p>	
f	<p>ICT Infrastructure Business Case SW presented the a report summarising the work done by Resource & Audit Sub-Committee in giving approval for Northwards to procure its own IT Network. AT asked for an explanation of PASA and SW provided some information about the Purchasing and Supplies Agency and how this was being used to comply with OJEU compliant procurement. Resource & Audit Sub-</p>	

	<p>Committee had asked for some assurances about the procurement methods and as a result more work had been done to ensure that the proper procedures were followed.</p> <p>DL asked for clarification on the voice/data aspects and SW confirmed this was for telephone and communication systems.</p> <p>The Board noted the report and the work done by Resource & Audit Sub-Committee.</p>	
15	Human Resources & Equality	
a-c	<p>Sub-Committee Minutes</p> <p>The minutes were noted.</p>	
d	<p>EIA Briefing</p> <p>The Board were given an update on the briefings that had taken place around Equality Impact Assessments.</p>	
e	<p>Board Report Template</p> <p>DR presented the report proposing changes to the Equality section of future Board and Sub-Committee reports.</p> <p>PS asked if all reports would be assessed in this way and SW responded that if the Board thought that a report should have an assessment they could challenge this and defer a decision. It was hoped that the new format would ensure the organisation gave full consideration to equality issues.</p> <p>The Board approved the new Board Report Template.</p>	DR
16	Neighbourhood & Quality Services	
a	<p>Sub-Committee Minutes</p> <p>The minutes were noted</p>	
17	Relations with the Council	
	RL noted various meetings that had taken in the past few months with the Council.	
18	Any Other Business	
	There was no further business for the Board to consider.	
	Date of Next Meetings	
	<p>Strategy Meeting (topic to be confirmed) – Tuesday 9 December, 6.30pm, Board Room, Hexagon Tower</p> <p>JF gave her apologies in advance for this meeting.</p>	
	End of Meeting	
	With thanks to everyone the chair closed the meeting at 8.35pm	