

*Non-Confidential Minutes*

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

**Tuesday 14 May 2019 at 6:30pm**

**Chair: Sue Abbott**

<b>Present</b>	Sue Abbott (SA)	Board Member (Chair)
	Fiona Sharkey (FS)	Board Member
	Hilary Vaughan (HV)	Board Member
	Naeem Ul Hassan (NH)	Board Member
	Veronica Kirkpatrick (VK)	Board Member
	Janice Gotts (JG)	Board Member
	Olusegun Ogunbambo (OO)	Board Member
	Gary Lamb (GL)	Board Member
	Sharon Thomas	Board Member
	Guy Johnson	Board Member
Wayne Melia (WM)	Board Co-optee	
<b>In Attendance</b>	Robin Lawler (RL)	Chief Executive
	Stephen Brown (SB)	Director of Property & Business Services
	Mike Stevens (MS)	Director of Neighbourhood Service
	Andy Plant (AP)	Director of Property Services
	Robbie Chapman (RC)	Head of Finance & ICT
	Emma Broom (EB)	Head of Communications

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Welcome and Introductions</b> SA welcomed everyone to the meeting and confirmed the meeting as quorate.	
<b>2</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence</b> Eunice Orlu	
<b>3</b>	<b>Declaration of Interests / Confidential Matters / Requests to un-star information items</b> There were no declarations of interest or requests to un-star information items.	
	<b>CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS</b>	
<b>4</b>	<b>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS</b>	
<b>a</b>	<b>Board Confidential 27 March 2019</b> Please see confidential minutes.	
<b>b</b>	<b>Matters Arising</b> Please see confidential minutes.	
<b>5</b>	<b>STRATEGIC AND PERFORMANCE</b>	

a	<b>R&amp;M Contract Options Report</b> Please see confidential minutes.	
<b>NON-CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS</b>		
6	<b>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS</b>  <b>a Board 27 March 2019</b> The Board approved the minutes of the Board meeting held 15 March 2019.  <b>b Northwards EGM 27 March 2019</b> The Board noted the minutes of the EGM held on 27 March 2019 to appoint external auditors.  <b>c Matters Arising</b> The matters arising for YN and MS have been completed. RC has been discussing the VfM report with GJ as Finance Lead on the board. The issue about cooker spare parts has been resolved by AP, although he noted that he will need to consider at what point replacement of cookers becomes a more economical alternative to repairing them.	
7	<b>CHAIR'S ITEMS</b>  <b>a NFA Conference</b> SA gave a brief feedback report on the NFA Conference she had attended. <b>The Board noted the update</b>  <b>b Board Away Day Actions</b> RL said that notes of the Board Away Day would be circulated shortly. He noted that these will include an analysis to right to buy sales and RC's financial modelling of various potential management fee settlements. <b>The Board noted the update</b>  <b>c Regen Tours – 15<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2019</b> These are still open for booking for those who would like to attend. <b>The Board noted the update</b>	<b>ALL</b>
8	<b>STRATEGIC AND PERFORMANCE</b>  <b>a Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2019/22 and Action Plan</b> SB presented this report on JN's behalf who was not able to attend the meeting, and asked if there were any questions. JG asked if the action plan would come for regular reviews on progress, and SB confirmed that it would, at Resources Sub.  RL reminded the Board that the strategy and action plan had been developed using external consultants. <b>The Board approved the EDI Strategy and Objectives 2019/22 and the 2019/20 action plan.</b>	

<p><b>b</b></p> <p><b>c</b></p> <p><b>d</b></p>	<p><b>Communications Plan 2018/19 Update</b>  EB presented her report. She highlighted the work encouraging tenants to get on-line as part of our digital strategy, and noted that Whitebeck Court had been a key piece of responsive communications.</p> <p>JG asked whether there was any numerical evidence available about which comms methods were the most effective and had the most reach. What are the measures for success? EB acknowledged that this was not something that the Comms Team had evaluated in a ‘scientific’ way, but that they were planning more numeric analysis of the kind suggested.</p> <p>VK asked how residents were ‘selected’ for the digital inclusion sessions. EB said that in the initial stages of planning this work the assumption had been made that it would be older residents who were most likely to need encouragement and assistance to get online. Thus many of the sessions took place in retirement housing schemes. However, it was becoming clear that the greatest need was amongst younger residents especially those who were trying to get into work or were wrestling with the new benefits processes around Universal Credit.</p> <p><b>The Board noted the progress of the Communications Plan 2018/19</b></p> <p><b>Communications Plan 2019/20</b>  EB presented the plan for the current financial year, and highlighted the work planned to support our efforts to bring down the cost of void work by encouraging tenants to look after their properties so that they would be left in a better condition after an end of tenancy.</p> <p><b>The Board approved the Communications Plan for 2019/20</b></p> <p><b>Q4 2018/19 Corporate Performance</b>  RC presented the report, and advised that the CSC would now have a new senior person to manage the service following SF’s retirement.</p> <p>FS asked about the CSC performance figures, and whether these were now correct. SB assured her that they were, but could not yet share what had happened with the figures originally as there was a live investigation currently taking place. FS asked about how far back in time the figures had been corrected. SB said that for the purposes of this report, all the way back to the beginning of the financial year (April 2018), but that the figures had been recalculated back to the time Northwards took the CSC in-house. SB explained that once the investigatory process has been resolved he would share all the numbers with the Audit Sub Committee.</p> <p>FS also asked about the figures for satisfaction with repairs and maintenance. AP explained that the new Voicescape system, which would bring great advantages. However, this would produce figures that could not be directly compared with those generated under the previous system.</p>	<p><b>SB</b></p>
---	---	------------------

<p>e</p>	<p>There was a discussion about the figure for “fixed at first visit” and AP explained that meant fixed from the tenant’s point of view. That did not necessarily mean either that the issue was fixed, or that it wasn’t – it was merely recording the tenant’s opinion. It was agreed that the descriptor for this KPI was confusing and should be changed.</p> <p>JG asked about the absolute number of complaints received (as opposed to the percentage that were dealt with inside the specified target time). MS said that it was generally between 150-200 per year.  <b>The Board noted the report</b></p> <p><b>Performance Targets 19/20</b></p> <p>RC introduced his report. He prefaced it by making it clear that the summary introduction to the report should have made it clearer that all changes to targets would have to be approved by MCC; even if the Board had approved a given change or changes.</p> <p>RC explained that the void loss figure had been slightly understated in past reports, and performance was in fact a little better than it had been reported.</p> <p>AP explained that the number of gas certificates that had slipped out of date within the month (i.e. by the end of the month they had been corrected) was greater in March than it should have been, and that Mears had not sufficiently increased resources for the increase of gas services in that month. GJ asked that in future NHL806b be reported to Audit Sub Committee rather than NHL806, and this was agreed.</p> <p>AP explained that the target for non-decency (NI 158) took account of the maximum this number at start of the year could be before surveys established how many of the potential non-decent homes actually were.</p> <p>MS explained about the detailed discussions that had been had last year on the targets for Neighbourhood Services. It was clear that often residents’ overall satisfaction or otherwise with their neighbourhood (including things for which Northwards was not responsible) was colouring their responses to how satisfied they were with Northwards. The targets he was proposing were being adjusted downwards to take these things into account, and thereby retain targets that were both stretching, but still achievable. Some Board members were unhappy with this and felt that it might create a complacency.</p> <p>RC said that the new Head of Customer Services will be given the task of seeing how we can increase the amount of ‘transactional’ data (i.e. data about customers’ satisfaction with specific services that had been delivered to them individually by Northwards) and make us less reliant on a more retrospective and sense of overall satisfaction with life, as it were.</p> <p>JG noted that satisfaction could be influenced by 2 key things: engagement and perception. Northwards should be finding ways to increase engagement and correct misperception.</p>	<p>AP</p>
----------	---	-----------

	<p><b>The Board approved the initial performance targets for 2019/20, and noted that their approval was subject to agreement by MCC.</b></p> <p><b>f Risk Management Report</b> SB presented the report, and noted that there were only the two higher level risks this time as noted in the report – and both of them were concerned with Mears in one way or another.</p> <p>There were many risks which shared a slightly lower risk score than these two, and so instead of a ‘top five’ risks this time there was only this ‘top 2’.</p> <p><b>The Board noted the report</b></p> <p><b>g Building a Safer Future Recommendation – Progress Report</b> AP presented his report which noted that there is now more clarity about the likely shape of new regulations than was available when MT presented his report at the last meeting.</p> <p>RL highlighted point 2.6 in AP’s report concerning service charges for additional monitoring.</p> <p><b>The Board noted the report</b></p> <p><b>h Welfare Reform Update</b> This item was starred for information purposes only.</p>	
<p><b>9</b></p> <p><b>a</b></p> <p><b>b</b></p> <p><b>c</b></p>	<p><b>GOVERNANCE</b></p> <p><b>Use of the Company Seal</b> SB presented the report. <b>The Board noted the Chairs Action and the Company Seal was used to sign the European Regional Development Fund project via Procure Plus</b></p> <p><b>Annual Board Attendance 2018/19</b> FS noted that she was not a member of the Resources Sub. The analysis will be amended <b>The Board noted the annual attendance for 2018/19</b></p> <p><b>Independent Board Member Recruitment</b> RL mentioned that HV and GJ will have completed their maximum 9-year terms at this year’s AGM. We will shortly advertise for replacements, and also for potential co-optees. We will be looking specifically for skills in finance and housing management.</p> <p>ST was asked to leave the meeting temporarily.</p> <p>RL explained that ST 3-year term ends at this year’s AGM. ST has expressed a wish to be re-appointed. <b>The Board noted the verbal update and approved the re-appointment of ST for a further 3-year term.</b></p> <p>ST re-joined the meeting.</p>	<p><b>YN</b></p>

10	<p><b>INVOLVEMENT OF RESIDENTS</b></p> <p><b>Tenants View – An investigation into Northwards Housing’s day to day responsive repairs service.</b></p> <p>This item was taken earlier in the meeting. TV members presented their report on the repairs and maintenance service. AP thanked them for an insightful report which reinforced the message that although Mears’ performance was not consistently in line with the KPIs to which they were contractually bound, their performance was not seriously deficient. There are issues with ‘after care’ which Mears have been made aware of and the TV report has been shared with Mears for their review.</p> <p>As always with TV reports, a full response to the report and its recommendations will be made in due course.</p>	AP
11	<p><b>RESOURCES</b></p> <p>There has been no meeting since the last Board meeting. Next Resources Sub-Committee meeting is due to take place on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2019.</p>	
12	<p><b>OPERATIONS</b></p> <p>There has been no meeting since the last Board meeting. Next Operations Sub-Committee meeting is due to take place on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2019.</p>	
13	<p><b>AUDIT</b></p> <p>There has been no meeting since the last Board meeting. Next Audit Sub-Committee meeting is due to take place on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2019.</p>	
14	<p><b>HORIZONS</b></p> <p>There has been no Horizons Group Meeting since the last Board Meeting. – Next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> April.</p>	
15	<p><b>BOARD ROLLING AGENDA</b></p> <p><b>The Board noted the rolling agenda.</b></p>	
16	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>There were no items of A.O.B.</p>	
	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p><b>Board Training/Strategy Session – Housing Finance/HRA</b> Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2019, 6:00pm-8.00pm, Hexagon Tower Board Room</p> <p><b>Board Business Meeting</b> Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2019, 6.30pm-8.30pm, Hexagon Tower Board Room</p>	

	<b>End of Meeting</b>	
--	-----------------------	--

SA thanked everyone for attending and closed the Board Meeting at 2040