

Non-Confidential Minutes

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

Monday 22nd July 2019 at 6:30pm

Chair: Hilary Vaughan

Present

Sue Abbott (SA)	Board Member (Chair)
Hilary Vaughan (HV)	Board Member
Naeem Ul Hassan (NH)	Board Member
Veronica Kirkpatrick (VK)	Board Member
Olusegun Ogunbambo (OO)	Board Member
Guy Johnson (GJ)	Board Member
Sharon Thomas (ST)	Board Member
Fiona Sharkey (FS)	Board Member
Janice Gotts (JG)	Board Member

In Attendance

Robin Lawler (RL)	Chief Executive
Mike Stevens (MS)	Director of Neighbourhood Service
Andy Plant (AP)	Director of Property Services
Robbie Chapman (RC)	Director of Business Services
Yvette Newton (YN)	Governance Support Manager (Minutes)

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
1	Welcome and Introductions SA welcomed everyone to the meeting and confirmed the meeting as quorate.	
2	Apologies for Absence Eunice Orlu (EO), Gary Lamb (GL) and Wayne Melia (WM).	
3	Declaration of Interests / Confidential Matters / Requests to un-star information items ST declared an interest in item 6a Board Member Recruitment Update.	
	CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS	
4	MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS	
a	Board Confidential 14 May 2019 Please see confidential minutes.	
b	Resources Confidential 22nd May 2019 Please see confidential minutes.	
c	Matters Arising Please see confidential minutes.	
5	STRATEGIC AND PERFORMANCE	

a	R&M Contract Options Report Please see confidential minutes.	
6	GOVERNANCE	
a	Board Member Recruitment Update Please see confidential minutes	
	NON-CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS	
7	MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS	
a	Board 14 May 2019 The Board approved the minutes of the Board meeting held 14 May 2019.	
b	Matters Arising 8d – Q4 2018/19 Corporate Performance RC informed the Board that there had been no significant improvement in the Customer Service Centre (CSC) performance. He confirmed that the new Head of Customer Experience, Belinda, Rourke, was now in post. He explained to Board that Belinda would attend September Board to provide a position statement and to make a recommendation to Board on our telephony strategy.	RC/BR
8	CHAIR'S ITEMS	
a	AGM 2019 SA reminded the Board that the AGM was taking place on 15 th October @ 6pm. The Board noted the update	
b	Board Appraisals SA informed the Board that appraisals were currently being arranged. If anyone had not yet confirmed a date, then please could they respond to Hayley Crane. The Board noted the update RL informed the Board meeting that the Horizons meeting due to take place on 23 rd July had been cancelled and a review of the group would be completed for the AGM.	
9	FINANCIAL Capital Programme Update – Fire Risk Assessment related works and extension to the ‘Homes as Energy Systems’ project AP presented the report. He informed the Board that the costs of the FRA works were significantly higher than had been budgeted for.	

	<p>HV asked if the ERDF funding is secure. It was confirmed that allocated funding was secure but any future funding rounds were not guaranteed because of Brexit.</p> <p>FS asked for clarification on paragraph 1.2.2. and did we now know the number of blocks this effected. It was confirmed that it was 59 blocks or schemes.</p> <p>VK asked how many tenants had refused the sprinklers. AP confirmed there was a 60% refusal rate in the blocks in Collyhurst, but that we do expect the refusal rate to be lower in the other multi storey blocks.</p> <p>RL explained to the Board that if the current tenant refuses the sprinkler works when the flat becomes vacant the system will be fitted then. He confirmed that Leaseholders had been offered the fitting of the sprinklers free of charge but, if accepted, there would be a slight increase to their service charge for the maintenance of the system.</p> <p>VK asked if tenants could be persuaded. RL explained the consultation process, but the Council allows the people who do not want it fitting to refuse.</p> <p>JG asked if 60% of tenants have refused then what does this mean for the capital programme in terms of staff resourcing and could other work be accelerated. AP explained that the programme spend is constantly under review.</p> <p>The Board noted the update and also the increase in scope and funding of the 'Homes as Energy Systems' project.</p>	
<p>10</p> <p>a</p>	<p>RELATIONS WITH THE COUNCIL</p> <p>MCC Allocations Scheme Consultation</p> <p>MS presented the report. He explained that the deadline for consultation is end of August and MCC had arranged a post consultation event meeting for 11th September. The plan is for the Council to take a report to the Executive Committee in October.</p> <p>MS informed the Board that Northwards is in the process of obtaining the views and feedback from tenants. ST suggested that the consultation should consider those who have just been rehoused and not just involved tenants.</p> <p>MS explained that a notification of the consultation had been sent to all current applications on the Manchester Move site.</p> <p>JG commented that currently 1500 single people and homeless families were in Temporary Accommodation, some of which is outside of the city boundaries and the residence criteria needs to be made absolutely clear.</p>	

<p>b</p>	<p>VK asked for thoughts on the impact the changes would have on the length of waiting times. MS confirmed that the overall number of people in bands 1, 2 and 3 should not change, but the relative priority of these people will change</p> <p>It was agreed that a draft of our response to the consultation would be brought to the Board training/strategy meeting scheduled for Tuesday 6th August 2019 for final comments.</p> <p>The Board noted the update.</p> <p>Relationship with the Council</p> <p>There were no further updates for the Board other than the R&M Contract and the consultation on the Allocations Scheme that had already been discussed.</p>	
<p>11</p> <p>a</p> <p>b</p>	<p>STRATEGIC AND PERFORMANCE</p> <p>VFM Strategy and Action Plan</p> <p>RC presented the report. He informed the Board that the strategy had been circulated in advance to SA as Chair, HV as Vice Chair and GJ as Board Lead for VFM for comment. Their comments and these had been incorporated into the document.</p> <p>RC informed the Board that he has tried to set out the Board's vision for how VFM can be achieved across the organisation.</p> <p>It was agreed that the progress against the action plan will be brought to Board annually and individual items that need approval will go through the Resources Sub-Committee.</p> <p>The Board approved the VFM Strategy and Action Plan.</p> <p>Business Plan Action Plan Year 2</p> <p>RC presented the report and confirmed that the action plan is the final one for the current Business Plan period.</p> <p>RC informed the Board that the new 3 Year Business Plan (which commences due April 2020) is on the agenda for discussion at the next EMT meeting. The intention is to bring a timetable for production of the new Business Plan to the next Board meeting in September which will then give time for a draft of the Business Plan to be brought to the March 2020 Board meeting.</p> <p>FS commented that not much progress had been made on individual actions. RC explained that this document had been due to be approved by Board in June but was not agreed. An update of the actions would be brought to Board in November.</p>	

RC informed the Board that Action BP192011 – ‘Review the performance of the customer service centre and deliver improvements’ is vague. He explained the new Head of Customer Experience, Belinda Rourke, has some ideas around performance she would like to discuss with the Board. A report will be brought to the September Board Meeting.

The Board approved the Business Plan Action Plan Year 2

c Digital Roadmap Update

RC presented the report. He explained that the current Digital Strategy needs to be continued on an independent basis but in the future could be linked into the ICT Strategy.

RC informed the Board that there has been a slight delay with the repairs service going live on the website and the issue is being looked into by Aareon and Mears.

RC confirmed that there had been a significant increase to the amount of rent payments made via the website and this is with no promotion. Once the repairs part of the website goes live then there will be an formal launch with customers.

FS asked if there was nothing similar to the preferred Huawei tablet for the mobile working in surveyors. RC informed the Board that similar devices with a good processing speed were cost prohibitive. He explained that ICT had pushed the Samsung fablet which is a tablet and phone combined but the Surveyors are concerned they will receive calls whilst trying to work on the device. It has been agreed to alleviate this issue the surveyors will be issued with a blue tooth headset.

RC informed the Board that an accommodation review is due and, before we enter into conversations with the Council, it would be beneficial to have a steer from the Board. He explained that this had been looked at previously and efficiency savings could be made with the consolidation of the neighbourhood offices.

FS asked if it was worth getting a steer of the Council. RL confirmed he would broach, the subject with Jon Sawyer but it would be helpful to hear the Boards view before we progress with the Council. It should form key discussions with MCC around the Management Fee and where savings can be made.

JG suggested it would be useful to know what the footfall is at the offices and how they are used. FS commented that is only a small amount of people then we will look at how we meet their needs.

RC informed the Board that anything other than consolidating all the offices would not result in a cost saving and it should also be noted that the terms of the lease at Hexagon Tower had declined significantly.

After much discussion it was agreed that the accommodation options should be looked at in more detail and further discussion to take place with the Council to see what their view is.

The Board noted the update

Fire Safety Update – Government Consultation on Building a Safer Future

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AP presented the report. He explained that consideration will be given to how the proposals included in the consultation document will be applied to Northwards' Retirement Blocks.

AP informed the Board that Northwards needs to make a start and preparing for the recommendations contained in the consultation document. The proposal is to recruit a Building Safety Manager and an Administration Assistant. The structure of this team in the long term will be reviewed later in the year as part of a larger review across the Property Service Directorate.

AP informed the Board that the roles had not been market tested but a similar organisation had recently advertised a Building Managers Post at a salary of £50k. He explained that if all organisations go to market for this post at the same time then salaries could be inflated.

HV asked how these posts are to be funded. AP explained that initially they will need to be funded from the current budget and once a full review has been completed the additional costs will need to form part of the management fee negotiations.

JG commented that when this had been discussed previously was it agreed that the information required already exists. AP confirmed that documentation required is already there but the initial posts are to bring all the information together in the form of case folders and to prepare for "license" applications.

OO asked when the positions would be filled. AP confirmed he would hope to recruit as soon as possible with the posts holders in place by October 2019.

The Board noted the update and supported the implementation of the recommendations as contained within the consultation document. The Board approved the request for the additional staff needed to ensure that Northwards start preparing for the new building safety regime. The Board supported the request for additional provision to be included in the management fee.

Voicescape Update

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RC presented the report. He confirmed that it was felt that the trial had been successful so far, but we are continuing to monitor. He confirmed that Voicescape have been good company to deal with, but if this type

f	<p>of work is to continue then the service will need to be tendered appropriately.</p> <p>FS noted that work was being carried out as overtime for staff and asked what the comparison of overtime payments to arrears collected was. RC confirmed that arrears collected was over eight times greater than overtime payments.</p> <p>RC informed that Northwards are looking at mainstreaming these hours and there is currently a member of staff trialling working outside of core hours.</p> <p>The Board noted the update</p> <p>Welfare Reform Update</p> <p>RC presented the report. The Board had no further questions.</p> <p>The Board noted the Update</p>	
12	<p>INVOLVEMENT OF RESIDENTS</p> <p>Response to Tenants View investigation into Northwards Housing’s day to day responsive repairs service.</p> <p>AP presented EMT’s response to Tenant’s View investigation into Northwards Housings day to day responsive repairs service. He explained that Northwards are working with the Contractors to implement the recommendations.</p> <p>It was note that paragraph 2.1 should read “minimal inconvenience to tenants”.</p> <p>The Board considered and approve the response to the Tenants’ View scrutiny report.</p>	
13	<p>RESOURCES</p> <p>The Board approved the minutes of the Resources Sub-Committee held on 22nd May 2019, subject to Sub-Committee approval at their next meeting.</p>	
14	<p>OPERATIONS</p> <p>There has been no Operations Sub-Committee meeting since the last Board meeting. Next Operations Sub-Committee meeting is due to take place on 18th July 2019.</p>	
15	<p>AUDIT</p> <p>Audit Sub-Committee meeting took place on 27th June 2019. Minutes will be brought to the September Board.</p>	

16	<p>HORIZONS</p> <p>There has been no Horizons Group Meeting since the last Board Meeting. – Next meeting is scheduled for 23rd July 2019.</p>	
17	<p>BOARD ROLLING AGENDA</p> <p>It was confirmed that the following reports would be added to the September Board meeting agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - R&M Contract Options Update - Business Plan Update - Customer Service Centre (CSC) Report <p>The Board noted the rolling agenda.</p>	
18	<p>AOB</p> <p>There were no items of A.O.B.</p>	
	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>Board Training/Strategy Session – Media Training Tuesday 6th August 2019, 6:00pm-8.00pm, (subsequently cancelled) Hexagon Tower Board Room</p> <p>Board Business Meeting Tuesday 10th September 2019, 6.30pm-8.30pm, Hexagon Tower Board Room</p>	
	<p>End of Meeting</p> <p>SA thanked everyone for attending and closed the Board Meeting at 8:15pm.</p>	