

Non Confidential Minutes

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

Tuesday 14th January 2020 at 6:30pm

Chair: Sue Abbott

Present	Sue Abbott (SA) Sharon Thomas (ST) Michelle Carmichael (MC) Marina Teat (MT) Gary Lamb (GL) Fiona Sharkey (FS) John Farrell (JF) Veronica Kirkpatrick (VK) Wayne Melia (WM)	Board Member (Chair) Board Member Board Member Board Member Board Member Board Member Board Member Board Member Board Member Board Co-optee
In Attendance	Robin Lawler (RL) Mike Stevens (MS) Andy Plant (AP) Robbie Chapman (RC) Michael Franklin (MF) Kevin Lowry (KL) Yvette Newton (YN)	Chief Executive Director of Neighbourhood Service Director of Property Services Director of Business Services Business Analyst Interim Director of Housing & Residential Growth, MCC Governance Risk & Compliance Manager (Minutes)
Observers	Anna Wierzbicka (AW)	

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
1	Welcome and Introductions SA welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.	
2	Apologies for Absence Donna Bowler (DB), Janice Gotts (JG), Olusegun Ogunbambo (OO) and Carol Southern (CS).	
3	Declaration of Interests / Confidential Matters / Requests to un-star information items There were no requests to un-star information items. JF informed the meeting that he was a Unite Union Member in case anything arose during the meeting.	
	CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS	
4	GENERAL BUSINESS	
a	Board Minutes Confidential 5 November 2019 Please see confidential minutes.	
b	Confidential Matters Arising Please see confidential minutes.	

<p>c</p>	<p>Resources Sub-Committee Confidential Minutes 13th November 2019 Please see confidential minutes.</p>	
<p>d</p>	<p>Audit Sub-Committee Confidential Minutes 17th December 2019 Please see confidential minutes.</p>	
<p>e</p>	<p>Board Member Recruitment Please see confidential minutes.</p>	
<p>5</p>	<p>STRATEGY AND POLICY</p>	
<p>a</p>	<p>R&M Update Please see confidential minutes.</p>	
<p>b</p>	<p>Business & Delivery Plan 2020 Update Please see confidential minutes.</p> <p>AW joined the meeting at 7:05pm. RL informed the Board that AW is an employee of Northwards and is currently studying for CIH Level 3 and had requested to observe a Board meeting to assist with her studies. The Board welcomed Anna to the meeting.</p>	
	<p>NON CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS</p>	
<p>6</p>	<p>GENERAL BUSINESS</p>	
<p>a</p>	<p>Board Minutes 5 November 2019 The Board approved the minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2019.</p>	
<p>b</p>	<p>Matters Arising There were no matters arising.</p>	
<p>c</p>	<p>Chairs Update SA informed the Board that she, ST and MT had attended the NFA Conference on 27th November 2019.</p> <p>ST gave an overview of the conference and it was agreed that the slides and handouts would be circulated to the Board.</p> <p>The Board noted the Chair's update.</p>	<p>YN</p>
<p>d</p>	<p>Chief Executives Update RL presented the report. He explained to the Board that the aim of the report aim is to give a brief summary of work he is involved in and key issues for Northwards.</p> <p>RL highlighted to Board that Northwards had retained its Customer Service Excellence Accreditation and the feedback report would be shared with Board Members.</p> <p>RL informed the Board that Northwards continues to work with the Council and other partners responding to the Homelessness Crisis in</p>	

<p>e</p> <p>f</p> <p>g</p> <p>h</p>	<p>the city. He explained that there are currently 2,200 people classed as homeless and living in dispersed temporary accommodation.</p> <p>JF commented on the GM Housing First Programme. He asked about the impact it could have on existing tenants and neighbours when people are moved into an area they may not be familiar with and have no support network in place.</p> <p>RL informed the Board that extra support and resources had been put in place by Housing First to manage resettlement of people.</p> <p>MS confirmed that this was a good point and that he touches on this issue in the Housing Allocations Scheme report that is coming up later on the agenda.</p> <p>MS explained that Housing First is an experiment that is based on international good practice. There are lots of challenges involved and we need to make sure the correct support is in place and it is closely monitored. MS confirmed that we also need to be honest where it doesn't work.</p> <p>The Board noted the Chief Executive's update.</p> <p>Board Leads Review YN presented the report. She explained that there are currently five areas with dedicated Board Leads and it is felt that now is an opportune time to review the current positions and report back to the next Board Meeting in March.</p> <p>The Board approved the approach to appointing Board Leads.</p> <p>Resources Sub-Committee Minutes 13th November 2019 The Board approved the minutes of the Resources Sub-Committee meeting held 13 November 2019, subject to Sub-Committee approval at their next meeting.</p> <p>Operations Sub Committee Minutes 20th November 2019 The Board approved the minutes of the Operations Sub-Committee meeting held 20 November 2019, subject to Sub-Committee approval at their next meeting.</p> <p>Audit Sub-Committee Minutes 17th December 2019 The Board approved the minutes of the Audit Sub-Committee meeting held 17 December 2019, subject to Sub-Committee approval at their next meeting.</p>	<p>YN</p>
<p>7</p> <p>a</p>	<p>STRATEGY AND POLICY</p> <p>Capital Programme 2020/21 AP presented the report. He explained that most of the works on the high-rise schemes will continue into next financial year and 70% of the Capital Programme for 2020/21 will be committed at 1st April.</p>	

	<p>AP highlighted new schemes due to start are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communal gas boiler replacement with ground source heat pumps - Kitchen and bathroom replacement in low rise properties. <p>AP informed the Board that there is match funding available for the Homes as Energy Systems (HAES) and that work needs to be completed before March 2021.</p> <p>FS commented that the proposed Capital Programme 2020/21 had been discussed in detail at Operations Sub-Committee and she had no further questions.</p> <p>VK queried if there had been a lot of refusals for the sprinkler works. AP informed the Board that the refusal rates at the Collyhurst blocks was running at 60%, but on other blocks it is between 4% and 11%.</p> <p>The Board approved the Capital Programme 2020/21 and recommended it to Manchester City Council through the Council's Capital Approval Process.</p> <p>b Board Training Plan 2020 YN presented the report. She confirmed that all Board Members have received individual emails about their training requirements and how this is being arranged.</p> <p>RL noted that the Training/Strategy session on Risk arranged for 18th February 2020 could be used for a full Board Meeting if required for urgent business.</p> <p>The Board approved their Training Plan for 2020</p> <p>c Governance Gap Analysis RC presented the report. He informed the Board that proposals had been received from four companies for the Board Effectiveness Review.</p> <p>IT was agreed that once a consultant had been appointed the Board would be informed of the timetable and their engagement in the review.</p> <p>The Board noted the update</p> <p>d Fire Safety Policy AP presented the report, He explained that the Fire Strategy and policy had been approved by Audit Sub-Committee and the policy was now before the Board for ratification.</p> <p>The Board approved the Northwards Housing Fire Safety Policy</p> <p>e Update on Housing Allocations Policy Review MS presented the report to Board. He confirmed that he had tried to make the report as comprehensive as possible.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">RC</p>
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	<p>MS explained that there were no surprises as the proposals are broadly in line with what was proposed in the consultation.</p> <p>VK asked about implementation and will people be aware of the changes.</p> <p>MS confirmed that communication will be key in the implementation plan. He explained that any communication needs to be done in a timely manner, so there is not a huge increase in enquires as changes are introduced.</p> <p>MS informed the board that the allocations policy was last amended 10 years ago, and experience tells us there will be an increase in enquiries, but these will tail off. He explained that MCC will review the impact after year 1,2 and 3 of implementation.</p> <p>The Board noted the update about the changes to the Council’s housing allocations scheme and implications from Northwards arising from this.</p>	
<p>8</p> <p>a</p> <p>b</p>	<p>PERFORMANCE</p> <p>Northwards Performance Future Reporting RC presented the report. He explained that during previous discussions the Board had raised concerns on the presentation of performance information.</p> <p>RC informed the Board that the performance report had not been completely overhauled but had been re-structured to give the Board more detailed explanations.</p> <p>RC explained that the proposed format for future performance reports is a traffic light system (appendix to the report). If Board Members have any comments or changes to the proposal, then these can be incorporated. It is planned to share the report monthly with the Board as well as an agenda item at each Board Meeting.</p> <p>RC asked for comments on the format of the performance report that has been used for quarter 3 and also any comments on the future reporting proposal. Furthermore, if there is anything the Board would like to see included.</p> <p>RC informed the Board that discussions with MCC are underway around Performance and what reporting we are looking at putting in place and what key data they would like to see.</p> <p>The Board noted the update.</p> <p>Northwards Housing Performance Report – Qtr 3 MF presented the quarterly performance report to Board. He informed the Board that the Customer Service Centre (CSC) performance had taken a bit of a hit in quarter 3. The reason for this is the CSC received</p>	

	<p>4000 more calls compared to quarter 2 and there had been significant sickness absence issues.</p> <p>MF informed the Board that Rent loss had increased slightly in quarter 3 and Rent collected was above target and quarter 3 included a rent-free week (week 39).</p> <p>In summary MF advised the Board that in summary 9 of the performance indicators were above target and 8 were below.</p> <p>MF asked if there were any questions on the new format of the report. The Board confirmed they were content with the report.</p> <p>The Board noted the update.</p> <p>c YES Performance Report MF presented the YES Performance Report.</p> <p>The Board noted the update.</p> <p>d HR Update Report RC presented the HR Update and asked for any questions.</p> <p>RL highlighted page 10 of the update which is a summary of the employee engagement survey that has recently been carried out.</p> <p>WM asked about the Mental Health training. RC explained that historically Northwards has been more proactive and has held a number of Mental Health Workshops for all staff. However, there has generally been a spike in sickness after the workshops have taken place.</p> <p>RL explained to the Board that we hold other initiatives (e.g. 'Time for a chat',) which encourages people to chat over tea and toast. The conversations are aided by prompt cards.</p> <p>RC informed the Board that managers and HR deal with any Mental Health sickness as soon as it presents.</p> <p>MS informed the Board that a specific piece of work was currently being carried out with Housing Officers, who deal with some very difficult issues as part of their role on the front line. He explained that sickness levels are low, but the work can take its toll and we want to know what we can do to help staff to be resilient.</p> <p>Discussion was had about job role risk assessments, and how stress is now a standard item on them. Discussion was also had on how Health and Safety is carried out for the organisation.</p> <p>The Board noted the update.</p>	
9	INFORMATION	

<p>a</p> <p>Use of Seal RC confirmed the seal had not been used since the last meeting.</p> <p>The Board noted the update.</p> <p>b</p> <p>Board Away Day YN informed the Board that the Board Away Day had been arranged at for Tuesday 28th April 2020.</p> <p>YN informed the Board that feedback from the Board Effectiveness Review would form part of the agenda.</p> <p>She explained that proposed items to include on the away day agenda had been picked up from Board Member appraisals and included</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regeneration and work in communities - Housing Finance and HRA - Digital Agenda and Customer Insight - Welfare Reform - Governance to include Role of the Chair <p>YN welcomed any suggestions/agenda items from Board Members.</p> <p>YN confirmed that a draft agenda would be brought to the March Board Meeting for approval.</p> <p>The Board noted the update.</p>		<p>ALL</p>
<p>10</p>	<p>Board Work Plan/Rolling Agenda 2020 YN presented the Board Work Plan for 2020. She informed the Board that the list at the start of the plan are standing items which will be included on every agenda. There are then specific items that are listed for each Board Meeting.</p> <p>Following on from previous discussions in the meeting it was agreed that the following items would be added to the March Board agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - R & M Contract - Tenant Board Member Recruitment - Board Leads - Business & Delivery Plan 2020 <p>The Board approved the Board Work Plan/Rolling agenda for 2020.</p>	<p>YN</p>
<p>11</p>	<p>AOB</p> <p>None.</p>	
	<p>Date of Next Meeting Northwards Training/Strategy Session Risk Tuesday 18th February 2020, 6:00pm-8.00pm, Board Room, Hexagon Tower</p>	

	Board Business Meeting Wednesday 25 th March 2020, 6.30pm-8.30pm, Hexagon Tower Board Room	
	End of Meeting SA thanked everyone for attending and closed the Board Meeting at 7:58pm.	