

NOTTINGHAM CITY HOMES

REPORT OF THE COMPANY
SECRETARY/SOLICITOR

THE BOARD
21 MAY 2009

THE COMPANY SECRETARY'S REPORT

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out current administrative and governance issues requiring consideration by the Board.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Board:

- 2.1 Note the progress of preparations for Board member recruitment 2009.
- 2.2 Note the proposed review of the Company's Standing Orders
- 2.3 Approve the terms of reference of the Housing Management Working Group and to consider the proposals for the formation of a Property Services Working Group.
- 2.4 Note Board expenditure for the financial year 2008 - 2009

3. REPORT

3.1 BOARD MEMBER RECRUITMENT 2009 UPDATE

The Governance Team has been working closely with the Marketing and Communications Team on the recruitment campaign to include a recruitment pack, an open day scheduled for the beginning of June.

Tenant Board Member Vacancies

The forthcoming Tenant Board member elections are scheduled for July 2009. The process has been widely publicised through the Tenants Newsletter and leaflets were sent out to leaseholders and to tenants enclosed with rent cards.

The process was further publicised by sending posters to Nottingham City Homes and Nottingham City Council reception areas, libraries, high rise blocks, community centres, medical centres and religious establishments. To ensure that the campaign reached our diverse service users the Company's Equalities Team provided a list of establishments and organisations to target. At the date of this report, there were eight expressions of interest. The deadline for expressions of interest is 29 May 2009.

Independent Board Members

The Independent Board Members vacancies are being publicised primarily through the Business Champions programme of the East Midlands Development Agency (“EMDA”). The vacancies were first advertised in the April edition of their newsletter which is circulated to all three hundred and fifty business champions. This has already generated expressions of interest.

The Business Champions programme is a unique pool of independent business volunteers, committed to shaping the region by sharing their knowledge and inspiring others.

The programme - created and funded by EMDA forms a link between the private and public sector and recruits high calibre, proactive business figures to support a whole range of projects and programmes where a commercial perspective is needed. The Company is specifically looking for skills in housing management, finance/accounting, construction or regeneration.

Administration of Recruitment

The Marketing Team has prepared a feature for the *Nottingham Evening Post* (Business Section) and *Inside Housing* and for both categories of vacancies.

Board members are requested to confirm their availability to the Company Secretary to sit as recruitment panel members.

Recruitment packs and application forms will be available from the Governance Team from 29 May 2009 for both categories of vacancies.

Progress on the recruitment process will be reported at future Board meetings.

3.2 REVIEW OF THE COMPANY’S STANDING ORDERS

The Company’s Standing Orders (Governance, Financial Regulations and Tender and Contract Procedure Rules) are currently under review by the Company Secretary and the Director of Finance, ICT and Governance. The proposed revisions to the Standing Orders will be submitted at the July Board meeting for consideration.

3.3 TASK GROUPS

The Company’s governance arrangements allow the Board to form task groups to enable it to carry out its functions and discharge its responsibilities. The Board therefore needs to ensure that it has clarity about a task group in terms of:-

- The role and responsibilities
- The terms of reference and the extent of any authority delegated by the Board

- Membership and chairing arrangements
- Frequency of meetings
- Duration of the group
- The conduct of business

Housing Management Working Group

The Board is requested to approve the formation of the group and is referred to the Terms of Reference at Appendix 1.

Proposed Property Services Working Group

At the Board Away Day on 8 May 2009, the Board requested more background and involvement at an early stage in the Company's property related strategies and policies. To facilitate this request, the Board is asked to consider the formation of a Property Services Working Group.

3.4 BOARD EXPENSES

The Audit Committee met on 11 May 2009 and raised the issue of Board expenses for the purposes of transparency and the need to monitor Board expenditure. A more detailed report will be submitted at the July 2009 Board meeting however the Board is requested to note that expenditure for the financial year 2008/2009 was £4616.42 representing travel and other subsistence expenses directly incurred by the Company and monies reimbursed.

The Board expenses policy will be reviewed as part of the Governance Standing Order review.

4 OTHER OPTIONS

Not applicable.

5 FINANCIAL & RISK IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Board Member Recruitment

Costs are included within the current budgetary provision.

5.2 Company's Standing Orders and Board Expenditure

Operating within appropriate and effective corporate governance arrangements reduces the Company's exposure to financial, accountability and reputational risks.

6 IMPLICATIONS FOR NOTTINGHAM CITY HOMES OBJECTIVES

- 6.1 Ensuring that the Board is working towards appropriate levels of diversity in its own composition to match the community it serves, is considered crucial for the achievement of NCH objectives.

Robust corporate governance arrangements are necessary for good practice and for the effective operation of the Company.

7 VALUE FOR MONEY & EFFICIENCY ISSUES

7.1 A high performing Board will be more efficient and effective.

8 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Effective governance arrangements will ensure that equality and diversity matters remain a continued focus for the Company.

9 BACKGROUND MATERIAL AND PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

9.1 The Company's Standing Orders.

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