

THE BOARD

MINUTES of the **Public Meeting** held on **27 JANUARY 2010** at 14 Hounds Gate from 5:25 pm to 7.30 pm.

Board Members:

Ade Aderogba MBE
Hassan Ahmed
Tim Bell
Dave Bennett-Bull
Merlita Bryan
Kevin Butt
Suhail Hashmi
Peter Linford Arrived 6:10 pm
Margaret Pugsley
Paul Rowe
Valerie Schneider
Janet Storar (Chair)

Also in Attendance:

Julie Crook	Director of Finance, ICT & Governance
Janet Glass	Head of Business Improvement & Development
Mark Johnson	Director of Property Services
Chris Langstaff	Chief Executive
Janet Locker	Senior Governance Officer
George Pashley	Director of Organisational Development
Mario Recchia	Member of the Public

09/30 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS & CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair opened the meeting and asked the attendees to introduce themselves for the benefit of the member of the public.

09/31 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology was received from Malcolm Wood.

09/32 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

**09/33 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON
26 NOVEMBER 2009**

The Board adopted the minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

09/34 MATTERS ARISING FROM BOARD MINUTES

09/34 .1 **Minute 09/20.3** referred to an update being provided to the Board, the Board was advised that the update would be provided under agenda item 7 – Chief Executive's Report.

09/34.2 **Minute 09/22** Paul Rowe sought clarification with regards to the Chief Executive's confirmation that three Committees would monitor the voids matter. The DFIG confirmed that the three Committees would monitor the different aspects of the item.

09/35 COMPANY SECRETARY'S REPORT

The Director of Finance, ICT & Governance (DFIG) presented the report.

09/35.1 Casual Board Member Vacancy

In consideration of the appointment of the Casual Board Member, Kevin Butt was asked to leave the Board Room at 17:30. The Board was asked to approve the appointment of Kevin Butt as a Casual Board Member for a term of office until the Annual General Meeting scheduled for 7 October 2010.

09/35.2 Terms of Reference

The Board was asked to consider the Terms of Reference for the Business Development Committee and the Human Resources & remuneration Committee. The Board was advised that some minor changes had been made to the Business Development Committee in relation to the powers of delegation in respect of audit matters which had already been delegated to Finance & Audit Committee.

The Chair of the Business Development Committee proposed two further amendments in relation to the areas covered by the Committee and the Delegated Powers – General Governance.

- (i) A new first bullet point to be included in the areas covered by the Committee:
 - Oversight of the Company's strategies and plans; and
- (ii) An amendment to the wording of the Delegated Powers – General Governance, to insert the word 'related' to read:

Receive and consider related reports from staff on any statutory, regulatory or inspection reportsetc.

The Board approved the Terms of References subject to the agreed minor amendments.

09/35.3 Meeting Planner 2010 and 2011

The Board was asked to approve the Meeting Planners for 2010 and 2011.

Paul Rowe expressed concern regarding the decision for the Board to meet on a quarterly basis and asked when the decision was made. Tim Bell advised that the Board had discussed the need for a structure that fitted around the formation of the new committees following the Governance review.

The Chief Executive clarified that the discussion had taken place at the last Board Away Day session when consideration was given to what the governance of the organisation should be, thus ensuring that the operational Committees took the lead for the operational activities, and the Board would give the strategic direction to the Company.

The Chair re-assured the Board that should the Board be required to discuss urgent business, a meeting could be called giving the prescribed notice.

Paul Rowe expressed his concern about the number of meetings scheduled and the ability for the Governance Team to service them. The Board was re-assured that the Governance Team would be able to service the forthcoming meetings.

In the main the Board approved the Meeting Planners for 2010 and 2011; Paul Rowe and Valerie Schneider had reservations about the decision.

RESOLUTION:

The Board:

- 1. approved the appointment of Kevin Butt as the Casual Board Member for a term of office until the Annual General Meeting scheduled to be held on 7 October 2010;**
- 2. approved the Terms of Reference and Delegated Powers for:**
 - (i) the Business Development Committees subject to the agreed minor amendments to include the oversight of the Company's strategies and plans within the areas covered by the Committee and to insert the word `related' to the Power of Delegations – General Governance; and**
 - (ii) The Human Resources & Remuneration Committee; and**
- 3. approved the forthcoming meeting dates for the Board and its Committees and noted the reservations of the two Board Members.**

09/36 THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S UPDATE REPORT

The Chief Executive (CEX) presented a report which provided an update on the ongoing key issues for the Company:

09/36.1 Management Agreement

The CEX updated the Board on the current position with the Management Agreement and advised the current position with the change of the Nottingham City Council's organisational restructure and the effect this would have on the discussions. The Board was informed that the discussions with Nottingham City Council (NCC) had been positive. The aim was to achieve a ten-year Management Agreement as a partnership agreement rather than a contract. The Board was informed that external solicitors had been appointed.

The CEX confirmed that discussions with the lead member for Housing, Council David Liversidge had identified a point from which the Company could progress.

The CEX also confirmed that a number of discussions had already taken place with the leadership of NCC and indicated that a conclusion was expected by the end of the current financial year.

The CEX reminded the Board that the Board had chosen to delegate the matter to the Business Development Committee (BDC), Members of which had received a briefing at the first meeting of the Committee. The CEX confirmed that Tim Bell would be the Company's lead representative.

Paul Rowe and Hassan Ahmed raised concerns about the lack of input the Board had. Hassan Ahmed made the point that the Board needed proper consultation. The Board was assured that the CEX would undertake to ensure the Board was properly consulted on the matter and that it was hoped a paper would be presented at the meeting on 25 March 2010. Tim Bell confirmed the BDC was due to meet on 17 March 2010 and the outcome of the discussions would be reported to the Board for overall approval.

09/36.2 Corporate Services – Strategy & Partnerships

Ade Aderogba expressed concern about the long delay in the Company appointing its Head of Equalities & Diversity and that the current postholder only worked on a part-time basis and the difficulties this situation had caused. Ade Aderogba went on to report that he had received an email from an officer of NCC reporting that the Company had not participated in a National Housing Federation survey, where twenty-eight other organisations had. The Board was advised by Ade Aderogba that the Company had been granted an extension of time in order that it may participate.

The Head of Business Improvement & Development informed the Board that the Company was not to blame for not participating in the survey, the Company was omitted from the organisation list of the stakeholder and the matter has now been rectified.

Ade Aderogba informed the Board that the Tenant & Leaseholder Involvement Team had transferred to the Strategy & Partnership Directorate and confirmed that an organisational chart had not been issued to reflect the change. The CEX apologised to the Board for not bringing the matter to their attention and confirmed that the re-organisation had only recently taken place. The purpose of the re-organisation was to ensure the Company was in the best position to respond to the TSA.

Ade Aderogba requested that a letter of congratulations be forwarded to the Tenant & Leasehold Involvement Manager on behalf of the Board in relation to achieving a position on the National Tenants Voice.

09/36.3 New Build Council Housing Allocation

The Board was in support of the new build allocation. Valerie Schneider enquired whether there would be any input from the Board on the design of the new houses. In response, the Director of Property Services (DPS) confirmed that the design codes had already been set and the new houses would be designed to code 4, however consultation to engage with tenants was to be undertaken and should Board Members wish to volunteer to be involved, their contribution would be appreciated.

09/36.4 Government Assessment of Decent Homes

The Board discussed the potential risks to the future of the Decent Homes (DH) programme. The CEX advised that in view of the forthcoming Parliamentary elections, any incoming Government would have to deal with outstanding national debt and it was likely the Decent Homes would be a matter for the Government's consideration.

The Board was informed that the National Federation of ALMO's (NFA) was in the process of organising a national campaign and it hoped to deliver a forty thousand strong signature petition from tenants and MPs to lobby 10 Downing Street.

The CEX pointed out that DH had brought additional benefits to Nottingham, mainly in the reduction of burglary rates in the north of the city, significant improvements in the reduction of fuel poverty, reduction in carbon emissions, the appointment of fifty-one apprentices and the implementation of schemes such as the Forest Factor.

The Board held a full and frank debate on the issues raised.

The Board noted the report.

09/37 FINANCE REPORT

The Director of Finance, ICT & Governance (DFIG) presented the report which contained a financial overview for the Company.

The DFIG confirmed that the current number of lettable void properties was three hundred and forty-one and the aim was to reduce the number to three hundred by

the year end. The current number of non-lettable voids was five hundred and twenty. The DFIG reported a significant reduction due to the implementation of the action plan.

Paul Rowe sought clarification on three areas covered by the report, budget variances, voids and arrears. In response the DFIG advised that the variances in the budgets were due to a number of reasons including the employee pay awards being significantly less than had been budgeted for, an over provision made within the energy budget based on estimated increases, the repairs service trading account had been budgeted to break even which had not occurred and the significant number of employee vacancies the Company had at present.

The DFIG explained that the current number of voids exceeded the number of voids that had been budgeted for which resulted in a projected shortfall of one hundred and thirty-five thousand pounds (£135k) in rent income.

The CEX explained that all of the rent and arrears collected was passed to NCC. NCC then allocates money to the Company for the payment of the management fee. The Board was advised that more importantly the Company needs to collect in excess of one hundred per cent (100%) in order to reduce the historic arrears. The CEX confirmed that the current collection rate was one hundred point nine per cent (100.9%) and informed the Board that this was very positive for the Company and the Company is the best performing ALMO in rent collection.

Paul Rowe sought clarity of the terms non management and management voids. The CEX advised that the management voids were the lettable voids and the non management voids were properties earmarked for decommission and the corporate properties (known as street properties). The CEX informed the Board that following the NCC re-organisation, the approach to the management of the street properties was likely to change.

The Board noted the report.

09/38 NOTTINGHAM CITY HOMES DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN

The Board considered the draft Business Plan. Hassan Ahmed was of the opinion that the key elements of the plan to be achieved appeared to be vague ambitions and needed to be more precise. Paul Rowe was of the same opinion as his fellow Board Member and highlighted items where further attention was required:

- (i) the plan did not make reference to employer/employees and their welfare;
- (ii) although reference made to the securing of new business, insufficient details provided;
- (iii) weak finance projections and unclear how the Company was to achieve the savings.

The CEX advised the Board that the draft Business plan was a three year plan and it would be developed over the coming year and the Boards comments had been noted.

The Board considered the report, commented and advised on the amendments to be made to the Business Plan prior to the final plan being presented to the Board meeting scheduled on 25 March 2010.

09/39 BUDGET 2010/2011

The DFIG presented the report and advised that the NCC Executive Board was due to meet on 16 February 2010 to set the rent increase for the forthcoming year.

The DFIG confirmed the calculation used in the Governments guidance for rent setting, and re-affirmed that the final decision would lay with NCC.

Following a full discussion some Board Members were of the opinion that the subject matter and the reporting format was complicated and suggested that in the future the information is presented in a simplified format. The CEX proposed to provide the Board Members a briefing on the HRA account, a date to be proposed.

RESOLUTIONS:

The Board

- 1. noted the report; and**
- 2. agreed the general principles which are being adopted in the formulation of the Nottingham City Homes budget.**

09/40 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEES

The DFIG presented the report and invited the Chairs of the Committees to provide feedback.

Hassan Ahmed requested a list of the Committee membership be circulated.

09/40.1 Business Development Committee

The Chair of Business Development Committee (CBDC) referred to the activity and performance in relation to equality and diversity and confirmed that there was no analysis provided in the report. The Committee agreed to accept a further report in six months time.

The CBDC informed the Board that a positive report had been presented to the Committee on partnerships, it was reported that there were issues and gaps and a further evaluation exercise was to be considered at the next meeting of the Committee on 17 March 2010.

Hassan Ahmed informed the Board of NCCs equality scheme 'Just and Fair' and proposed that the Company links up with NCC.

09/40.2 Property Services Committee

The Chair of Property Services Committee (CPSC) made a general comment about the duplication across the Committees and indicated it had already begun and suggested that there was a need to undertake an exercise within the Committee management process.

The Board noted the report.

09/41 FIRE SAFETY POLICY

The Director of Organisational Development presented the report which introduced the new Fire Safety Policy which had been developed by the Company's Fire Strategy Group.

RESOLUTION:

The Board approved the Company's Fire Safety Policy.

09/42 FORWARD PLAN

The Board noted the Forward Plan.

09/43 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

09/44 DATE OF THE MEETING

The Board agreed that the date of the next meeting is scheduled for 25 March 2010 in the Board Room, 14 Hounds Gate, Nottingham, NG1 7BA.

The Meeting ended at 7:30 pm

SIGNED..... DATE.....