



## **NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE HOMES BOARD MEETING**

**Held on Wednesday 6 January 2010  
5.30pm, Board Room, Meridian House**

### **MINUTES**

#### **Attendance:**

##### **Members:**

Tony Lightfoot (Chair)  
Cheryl Leaning  
Roni Wilson  
Colin Boyce  
Edgar Patchett  
Rob Waltham  
Len Foster  
Edna Kenyon  
Gordon Rowlands  
Sandra Bainbridge  
Richard Leach  
Mark Harland  
Cherrill Page  
Gill Shaw

##### **NLH:**

Andy Orrey – Director of Finance & Deputy Chief Executive  
Steve Hepworth – Director of Housing  
Steve Wardrope – Head of Business Improvement  
Pete Stones – Assistant Director of Regeneration/Investment  
Jo Sugden – HR Manager  
Fiona Ruddick – Governance Officer (Minutes)

##### **Observers:**

Mary Southgate (Tenant)  
Ann Harland (Tenant)

##### **Apologies:**

Peter Clark

Prior to commencing the meeting, the Chair welcomed Gill Shaw to the meeting as the new Independent Board member.

## **641 Training Item**

Due to the inclement weather, Mears and Bullocks were unable to attend to talk about partnering – they would be re-scheduled to come to the next Board meeting.

## **642 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made.

## **643 Minutes and Matters Arising**

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.

## **644 Deputy Chief Executive's Report**

The Deputy Chief Executive presented his report to the Board explaining that Gap funding was expected to be confirmed for the next two years. Earlier in the day the Audit Commission provided their draft report. They have graded North Lincolnshire Homes (NLH) as 1 star with promising prospects. The Executive Management Team (EMT) were pleased with this and felt there were many positive comments within the report. The two weak areas were Aids and Adaptations and diversity. The Audit Commission though did recognise that NLH have robust plans in place. Board members wanted to read the document before deciding whether there were any grounds to appeal against this rating. The EMT though felt this was the best possible score.

**Action 001:** Audit Commission report to be emailed to all Board members to consider and send any comments/thoughts to Steve Wardrope by 11 January 2010.

**Noted:** The Board noted the Deputy Chief Executive's report.

## **645 Service Review - Allocations and Lettings**

The report provided an overview of the allocations and lettings service for the last year. Improvements have been made, such as reducing the application form from 19 pages to 7. Other areas, such as the medical assessments on applicants, still do need further improvement. An appendix was presented to Board which attempted to provide simple rules on the type of residents suitable for differing types of properties.

Regarding paragraph 3.1.4 in the report, a Board Member asked if this prevented people from guide dogs applying for properties that did not have self contained access (i.e. their own front door). No feedback was received regarding assistance dogs. If an existing tenant in a flat needed an assistance dog, then consideration would have to be made as to whether that property remained a suitable one for the tenant. This does raise a concern and a separate report on assistance animals will be brought back to Board to be added into the lettings criteria.

**Action 002:** Report on assistance animals to be brought to future Board meeting.

**Approved:** The Board approved the lettings criteria.

## **646 Board Succession Planning**

Discussions took place regarding the report by the Chair which arose from the recent interviews to recruit into the independent vacancy. Members generally agreed that the organisation needs to be more tenant led and consideration needs to be given as to how tenants can be supported to prepare them for becoming Board members. One suggestion was to co-opt them on to sub-committees. There is currently no definition regarding co-optees on to sub-committees as to whether they can vote or not. Co-optees on to the Board are not entitled to a vote but would be permitted to partake in discussions. Therefore, there was the ability for them to influence voting member's opinions.

At present there was no skills matrix to identify any skills there were missing on the Board. This would be undertaken. Members had a lot to say about this topic and it was decided it was best suited for further discussion at the Away Day. This item will then return to Board in June for a decision.

**Deferred:** Further discussions to be held at Away Day.

## **647 TSA Regulatory Framework**

The Tenant Services Authority (TSA) have published their proposals for regulating the social housing sector – this is out for consultation until February and will be implemented from 1 April 2010. NLH have to undertake a self assessment against the new regulatory standards by October 2010. It is suggested that the self assessment is completed by April 2010 and factor in anything that needs to be done into the work plans for 2010/11. This task could be delegated to the Self Assessment Working Group – members are Gordon Rowlands, Edna Kenyon, Colin Boyce plus one vacancy (was Tony Scrase-Walters).

54 circulars are being abolished from April, one of which is Schedule 1. A report will be brought to the next board meeting to discuss options of what can replace this. This piece of work could also be overseen by the Self Assessment Working Group.

**Action 003:** To call a meeting of the Self Assessment Working Group.

**Approved:** Board approved completion of the Self Assessment by April 2010 – to be led by the Self Assessment working Group.

## **648 Audit Commission Inspection – Progress Report**

As discussed earlier in the meeting, the draft report had been received from the Audit Commission.

**Noted:** The Board noted the report.

## **649 Service Review 2009/10 – Aids and Adaptations**

Aids and adaptations, in the Audit commission inspection, was not seen as a current strength. It was acknowledged though that much progress has been made in recent months to reduce the number of people on the waiting list. Currently the waiting list has 100 people on – these people should all have had their work done by March

2010. North Lincolnshire Council (NLC) are providing training to NLH staff to enable them to help people complete the application form for the disability facilities grant. People have to complete the form for the grant and submit through the council. NLC's target for people to get the work done is six months.

The register of houses that have been adapted is almost complete – the new computer system will help marry all of the information up.

A member suggested bringing all of the work back in house. This is not a feasible option as NLH would need a substantial amount of money to fund this. Another member explained that the backlog on aids and adaptations has been a problem for a long time, even before transfer, but the partnership arrangements over the last couple of years has made good progress.

**Noted:** The Board noted the report.

### **650 Service Review 2009/10 – Resident Involvement**

Steve Wardrope provided an overview of the year for Resident Involvement which included submitting an application to the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) for Resident Involvement accreditation. As part of this accreditation assessment, the inspectors will come on site but before they do, they have completed a desk top assessment.

**Noted:** The Board noted the report.

### **651 Review of Governance Improvement Plan**

The Governance Improvement Plan had been updated and the action taken stated in the relevant column. Some of the actions now seemed dated as they related to issues in 2008. Future versions of the plan will be amended to more clearly show completed actions. The Self Assessment Working Group can fine tune the analysis of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) proposed for Board. When this has been done a monitoring report will be issued regularly.

**Noted:** The Board noted the report.

### **652 Balanced Scorecard**

A member queried why tenancy visits were falling behind. Steve Hepworth will email the reason to all Board members.

**Action 004:** Steve Hepworth to email all Board members with reason why falling behind on tenancy visits.

**Noted:** The Board noted the report.

### **653 Sub-Committee Minutes**

The minutes of the Audit and Risk (19 November 2009), Operations (26 November 2009) and draft Resources (16 December 2009) meetings were noted.

#### **654 Action List**

It was agreed that the target date for the action from 6 May 2009 relating to reviewing the Service Standards with customers would be reviewed in line with the TSA changes and Audit Commission report. It was estimated for completion by July 2010.

#### **655 Attendance List**

The attendance list was noted.

#### **656 Any Other Urgent Business**

There was no other business for discussion.