



NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE HOMES BOARD MEETING

**Held on Wednesday 15 December 2010
5.30pm, Meridian House**

MINUTES

Attendance:

Members:

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

NLH:

Andy Orrey – Chief Executive
Steve Wardrope – Director of Corporate Services
Pete Stones – Assistant Director – Regeneration/Investment
Steve Hepworth – Director of Operations
Allan Kelley – Interim Director of Technical Services
Ian Dixon – Finance Director
Karen Cowan – Resident Involvement and Community Development Manager
Fiona Ruddick – Governance Officer (Minutes)

Guests:

Neil Robertson – Brammall Construction (item 745 only)
Pamela Jepson – Resident Scrutiny Panel (items 745 and 756 only)
Jo West – Resident Scrutiny Panel (items 745 and 756 only)

Apologies:

Edna Kenyon	Len Foster	Sandra Bainbridge
Liz Redfern		

745 Presentation – Evolve

Neil Robertson delivered an interesting presentation to the Board regarding Evolve houses which are built in a factory and then delivered to site to be assembled.

746 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

747 Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 October 2010 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

748 Appointment of Vice Chair of Audit and Risk and Vice Chair of Operations

Efforts had been made to establish additional people to join both the Operations and Audit and Risk. No further nominations had been received. A nomination had previously been made for Cherrill Page to be to the Vice Chair of Operations. No objections were made so this was agreed. Initially no volunteers came forward for Vice Chair of Audit and Risk. After discussions, Mark Harland volunteered for this position. This was approved by the Board which covered points 2.6.4 (a) and (b) in Standing Orders.

749 Chairs Actions

There had been no Chairs Actions taken since the last meeting.

Noted: Board noted the report.

750 Chief Executive's Report on Current Issues

The effects of the recent bad weather were discussed. In one day 3000 phone calls were received – an average day would see 400 incoming calls. Great efforts were made by staff who were able to get to work. Gas fitters were working until midnight some days to try and get to jobs. Staff with 4x4 vehicles were helping their colleagues by transporting them to their jobs. There are 3000 condensing boilers which are causing difficulties. Approximately 600 tenants have been written to and provided with advice on a simple procedure which should cure the majority of boiler faults. NLH need to consider their long term options to prevent problems in the future. The more likely option will be to re-route the pipe work internally on affected properties which may cost £200 per property. This would need an urgent decision and Board agreed that this could be made by the Chairs of the Board and sub-committees. In readiness for future bad weather, all of the vans have now been kitted out with snow socks.

Agreed: When costs are known to rectify heating issues, Chairs of Board and Sub-committees to take the decision on what action to take.

Noted: The Board noted the report.

751 Rent Increases

Community Voice had been notified of their proposed rent increases at their meeting on 15 December.

Agreed:

- The Board agreed the principle for the annual increase relating to rental accommodation charges, to take effect from Monday 4 April 2011. The proposed increase will achieve rent convergence for the majority of NLH properties by 2012.
- The Board agreed the increase for the weekly garage rent charge of £4.71 (excluding VAT if applicable).

752 Services Charges

The meeting noted the work carried out in consulting tenants and residents on proposals to de-pool service charges, following the Audit Commission inspection. The following actions were agreed:

Agreed:

- That the existing service charge setting policy is amended to include the following outcomes from the service charge review and consultation:
 - Services that are provided to specific properties or groups of properties should be identified, charged and collected separately to the normal rent charges.
 - Services should be identified to a block of flats or group of homes and the costs calculated so residents can clearly see how much they are paying for a service and decide if they are getting value for money.
 - These changes will not be applied to existing tenants and the newly calculated charges should only apply to new tenants. Charges should be made clear before someone accepts a tenancy so they can make an informed choice about the property.
 - Where residents wish to take responsibility for a service (e.g. cleaning windows in communal areas) then NLH should not insist on providing and charging for this as long as residents are meeting the standards required.
 - Where services such as communal lighting are provided, residents should be given choices about energy and money saving measures.
 - Services such as the use of laundry equipment could be paid for in different ways and residents at sites affected should be consulted as to the most appropriate method
 - A draft policy based on the principles above should be prepared and circulated to customers for consultation before submitting to the board for approval.

753 Audit Commission Inspection Action Plan

A meeting was held with Community Voice members on 3 November 2010 to review progress in implementing the Audit Commission's recommendations. The minutes of that meeting had been approved by Community Voice on 8 November 2010. The minutes of the meeting and updated action plan were attached to the Board papers as Appendix 1 and 2. The Board were satisfied with progress and a member wished to express thanks to Toni Mosley and Steve Wardrope on their efforts

Agreed: Board agreed to note the minutes of the Community Voice meeting and the updated action plan.

754 Future for Social Housing

A report was provided to advise Board of the recent consultation on the Future of Social Housing and its Regulation.

Noted: The report was noted.

755 Repairs and Maintenance Strategy

The majority of members had not received the report relating to this issue, due to the postal delays. As it was a lengthy document, members did not want to discuss it without the chance to read it properly first. Therefore, all members were asked to email Allan Kelley.

Action 11/10: All members to email Allan Kelley by 22 December to make any comments on the report and state whether they approve or otherwise the strategy.

756 Resident Scrutiny Panel

This item was taken after item 745. Pamela Jepson and Jo West read out the findings from the first scrutiny review. The remit of the panel was to make recommendations on where satisfaction could be improved. There was a general feeling that as a board, there needed to be assurances that recommendations which were cost effective, were implemented. It was not the role of the scrutiny panel to cost out recommendations or to create an action plan to monitor recommendations. Any actions arising from a scrutiny review will be adopted into the service improvement plans, which are monitored at EMT, Performance Review Group and Board. It was agreed that an action plan be drawn up of the recommendations for the next Board meeting. The Board thanked the Resident Scrutiny Panel for their work. Pamela Jepson and Jo West then left the meeting.

Noted: Board noted the report by the Resident Scrutiny Panel

Agreed: Board agreed recommendations put forward within the report and that an action plan to monitor these would be created for the next Board meeting

757 PV Panels

There was a further discussion regarding the issues surrounding the PV panels

Agreed:

- Officers to progress with the Community Energy Solutions model and work towards agreeing the Heads of Terms.
- Officers to clarify the points in 3.6 of the report and to explore the merits of Investment. Officers to return to Board for a decision on the type of investment e.g. no investment, 50% investment, full investment.
- Where appropriate, solar PV panels are to be integrated into future re-roofing programmes.

758 Choice Based Lettings (CBL)

Initial feedback from the CBL scheme is that it is working well. At a future meeting, Board would like to see a report on the effect of refusals and voids. This could be brought as a regular quarterly update.

Noted: The Board noted the report and the successful commencement of the CBL Scheme.

Agreed: That key staff involved in the scheme, namely Steve Evans, Jane Crookes and Becky Johns are commended by the Board for their efforts in making the scheme successful and the whole of the lettings team are commended for their efforts in organising adverts and viewings during the recent adverse weather.

759 Balanced Scorecard

The balanced scorecard was discussed.

Noted: Board noted the balanced scorecard

760 2011 Meeting Planner

A report was submitted outlining the proposed meeting dates for 2011. Resources had been moved to quarterly meetings rather than every seven weeks. Audit and Operations meetings were being held at the same frequency as in 2010. The thinking behind this was that Board members would receive enhanced and more regular information packs keeping them informed of issues. The less frequent meetings were also intended to reflect the maturity of the organisation. Some members felt that fewer meetings would mean they were not as involved which prompted lengthy discussions.

Action 12/10: The Chair would meet with Andy Orrey, Steve Wardrope and Fiona Ruddick to discuss further and agree a schedule of meetings for 2011.

761 Sub Committee Minutes

The minutes of Audit and Risk and Operations meetings were noted. The minutes of Community Voice (CV) were also noted – CV had requested that their minutes were issued to Board for information. The Resources minutes from 24 November 2010 would be included on the next Board meeting for information.

762 Action List

The action list was noted.

763 Attendance Register

The attendance register was noted. A member asked that her attendance be double checked.

764 Any Other Urgent Business

A member expressed her thanks to Pete Stones and his staff regarding the environmental works. Another member wanted to express his appreciation to staff in the Cole Street office. He had recently visited twice and both times had received excellent service.

With no further business, the meeting closed at 8.25pm. The next meeting will be held on 9 February 2011.