

ASHTON PIONEER HOMES

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Held on Thursday 30th March 2017

Commenced : 6.00 pm

Terminated : 8.15pm

Present :	David Postlethwaite (Chair)	Council
	Jane Atherton	Independant
	Stephen Greenwood	Independent
	Jordan Messer	Independent
	Joyce Bowerman	Council

Also in Attendance :

Tony Berry, Chief Executive
John Auty, Director of Finance & Administration
Peter Marland, Director of Housing

Lavinia Ferguson – Prospective Co-Optee Member

17/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Apologies were received from Ged Cooney, David McNally, Helen Bradbury, Sheila Tolley and Katie Teasdale.	
17/15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST There were no interests to declare at this meeting.	
17/16 WELCOME / APPOINTMENT OF NEW MEMBER The Chair welcomed to the meeting Lavinia Ferguson, who had expressed a wish to become a Co-Optee Member of the Board. RESOLVED – That the appointment of Lavinia Ferguson, as Co-Optee Member of Ashton Pioneer Board, be approved. The Chair also congratulated Councillor Bowerman upon her recent appointment as Civic Mayor Elect at Tameside MBC. He also made reference to the recent promotion of Katie Teasdale as National External Affairs Manager for the National Housing Federation.	
17/17 MINUTES The Minutes of the Ordinary Board Meeting held on 16 th February 2017, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.	

<p>There were no matters arising therefrom.</p>	
<p>17/18 2017/2018 BUSINESS / FINANCIAL PLAN AND BUDGET</p> <p>The Chief Executive gave a detailed presentation in relation to the mission, values and defined objectives for each core area of business in support of the Company's proposed Business and Financial Plan and Budget for 2017/2018.</p> <p>The context for the Plan related to –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Politics • Economy • De-Regulation • Environment and energy • Market <p>The Plan also focussed upon the following themes:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenant involvement and empowerment • Home standard • Tenancy standard • Neighbourhood and community standard • Value for money • Governance and financial viability <p>In relation to the specific themes for the 2017/2018 Plan and questions from Board Members relating to tracking progress, it was noted that a progress report would be issued bi-annually and also via the Chief Executive's annual appraisal.</p> <p>With regard to the Financial Plan and Budget, details were submitted of the value for money areas, covering, economy, efficiency and effectiveness, together with details of projected income and expenditure for the year.</p> <p>Specific mention was also made to a number of assumptions as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1% rent reduction for the next three years ▪ No increases to car park or furnished properties ▪ Capital works – subject to tender results ▪ Additional income from new phone masts ▪ Revenue up-grades for Sageline 200 and additional software ▪ Start of major empty homes projects ▪ Increased salary costs ▪ Additional recruitment costs for the post of Director of Finance and Administration ▪ Inclusion of £10,000 for legal expenses against possible disrepair claims ▪ Additional consultancy charges – stock survey £10,000, Experien £6,000 and marketing consultants £6,000. ▪ Know costs of re-financing were included where appropriate ▪ Inclusion of £65,000 for IT up-grades to develop the system of back-ups onto the Cloud base and replacement of servers. 	

<p>In conclusion the Chief Executive stated that the efficiencies arising from the recent exercise had set a stronger foundation for the future, with the Budget and forecasts for 2017 to 2020, continuing to be prudent, yet sufficiently robust to meet the Company's requirements. The costs in the Finance Plan facilitated delivery of the Business Plan for the next three years, with the completion of the re-financing and conversion to Community Benefit Society, securing the future of Ashton Pioneer Homes.</p> <p>RESOLVED – (1) That the Business and Financial Plan and Budget for 2017/2018 be approved and adopted.</p> <p>(2) That Board Members meet, on a date to be confirmed, to prioritise the specific themes, as set out in the Business Plan.</p>	PA
<p>17/19 BUDGET 2017 – 2020</p> <p>The Director of Finance and Administration submitted a report providing the Board with details of the proposed Budget for 2017 – 2020.</p> <p>Specific reference was made to income particularly in relation to the effects of Right to Buy and Voluntary Right to Buy. The main changes to expenditure were in relation to staffing costs and additional pension deficit from SHPS. With regard to capital, income for the capital programme related solely to the empty homes programme and included grants and owners contributions for the projects; details were also subject in relation to capital expenditure.</p> <p>Up-dated summary pages were circulated showing the implications of the detailed budget by area of spend.</p> <p>The Chair expressed concern regarding late issuing of the budget reports earlier in the week, together with the up-dated version tabled at the meeting, stating that he found the situation disconcerting and felt it showed a lack of credibility. He further stated that he expected future information well in advance.</p> <p>The Chief Executive apologised to Board adding that he had been late in finalising elements of the Business Plan.</p> <p>RESOLVED – That the Budget for 2017 – 2020, as submitted, be approved.</p>	
<p>17/20 TREASURY MANAGEMENT UP-DATE</p> <p>The Director of Finance and Administration submitted a report seeking the Board's approval to the revised Treasury Management Policy and Annual Treasury Management Statement.</p> <p>The proposed change to the Policy related to up-dated data on the Approved Financial Institutions and the inclusion of GB Social Housing on the Approved List of Contractors.</p> <p>The Director also submitted a cash flow statement for the three year period upto 31st March 2020, showing a strong financial position and indicating more available cash than anticipated six months earlier.</p>	

<p>RESOLVED – That approval be given to the revised Treasury Management Policy and Treasury Management Statements for 2017/2018.</p>	
<p>17/21 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT</p> <p>The Chief Executive submitted a report providing information and seeking approval on a range of topics, making specific reference to the following items:-</p> <p>Retirement of the Director of Finance and Administration</p> <p>Reference was made to the impending retirement of the Director and the proposals for recruiting a new Director.</p> <p>RESOLVED – That delegated authority be given to the Chair of the Board, together with Jane Atherton and Jordan Messer to organise the recruitment process for the post of Director of Finance and Administration and to up-date Board appropriately.</p> <p>Empty Homes Programme</p> <p>The Board were advised of the financial difficulties faced by the owners of the Methodist Church and Stockport Road developments, adding that AGMA and been made aware and had agreed to roll the programmes over to June 2017. Further meetings with the owners had taken place and a positive solution was expected.</p> <p>Modernising Governance</p> <p>The Chief Executive reported upon the legal agreements required with the Greater Manchester Pension Scheme and the Social Housing Pension Scheme in order to complete the conversion to Community Benefit Society.</p> <p>Director and Officer Liability Insurance Cover</p> <p>The Chief Executive reported upon the above recently renewed insurance liability policy making specific reference the undermentioned clause which, in order to comply with the conditions of the policy, Board Members were required to formally acknowledge their understanding and compliance therewith:-</p> <p><i>“It was reported that the National Housing Federation has purchased an Indemnity Policy protecting all Board, committee or staff members and volunteers from claims made against them in their capacity as representatives of Ashton Pioneer Homes.</i></p> <p><i>It was noted that cover for Ashton Pioneer Homes under such policy is conditional upon immediate notice in writing to the insurer of any claim made against any person insured by the policy or of the receipt of notice from any persons of intention to make a claim against any person insured by the policy.</i></p>	

<p><i>Accordingly, it was agreed that if any Board Member (present or absent) or senior executive is aware of any such claim or any such notice of intention or of any circumstances of incident which may give rise to a claim he or she will immediately notify the Company Secretary of Ashton Pioneer Homes in order that notice in writing together with all relevant details can be submitted to the insurer. Notification of this minute has been made to all Board Members and senior executives who are required to make necessary disclosure to the Company Secretary."</i></p> <p>RESOLVED – That approval be given to the Director and Officer Liability Insurance Cover as detailed above.</p>	
<p>17/22 BOARD TRACKER REPORT</p> <p>In noting the report and, further to Minute 17/5 of the last meeting, the Chair expressed concern regarding the fixing of dates for stress testing and basic finance training for Board Members.</p>	
<p>17/23 AUDIT COMMITTEE – 16TH MARCH 2017</p> <p>The Director of Finance and Administration submitted a report on the actions taken in the light of recommendations from a recent internal audit in respect of rent reductions and debt recovery, together with the draft Minutes from the Audit Committee held on 16th March 2017.</p> <p>It was also noted that the issue relating to the rents on empty property homes was a reportable breach and as such the Homes and Communities Agency had been notified and their response was awaited.</p> <p>With regard to the unauthorised rent change on Sassa, Members enquired as to whether any more properties were affected and if a training issue had been highlighted.</p> <p>In response the Board were advised that all rents had been checked and only the one had been affected and the tenant had been unaware and continued to pay the correct rent. Discussions were on-going in relation to making certain cells on Sassa password protected.</p> <p>The Board noted the draft Minutes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CHAIR</p>	