

ASHTON PIONEER HOMES

MEETING OF THE Board of Directors Held on Thursday 31st March 2016

Commenced : 6.00 pm

Terminated : 8.40pm

Present :	David Postlethwaite (Chair)	Council
	Joyce Bowerman	Council
	Helen Bradbury	Tenant
	Gerald Cooney	Council
	David McNally	Council
	Jane Atherton	Independent
	Sheila Tolley	Independent

Also in

Attendance : Tony Berry, Chief Executive

John Auty, Director of Finance & Administration

Peter Marland, Director of Housing

Stephanie Morton, Personal Assistant

16/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence had been received

16/15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of interest were noted from all staff members present in relation to Item 7 of the papers relating to the Terms and Conditions Review.

16/16 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18th FEBRUARY 2016

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18th February 2016 were agreed as being a true and accurate record.

16/17 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

16/18 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Business & Financial Plan 2016/17

The CE informed the Board that a presentation will be given later in the meeting on the Business & Financial Plan 2016/17.

Housing Benefit / LHA Changes

Board were made aware of some of the problems which could arise with the

**CEO/
DoFA**

changes to Housing Benefit / LHA. These are factors which have been picked up in the Stress Reporting paper to be tabled later in the meeting.

National Housing Federation Activity

The Board's attention was drawn to section 3.4 of the CEO report which is a minute from the National Housing Federation's Director and Officer Liability Insurance Cover.

The Chair questioned whether the limit of cover is sufficient - £45m for the whole of the Federation.

The CE stated that the cover is proportionate over 12 months and to date, the sum has never been exceeded.

Board agreed to note and approve the Director and Officer Liability Insurance Cover secured by Ashton Pioneer Homes via the National Housing Federation.

"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.

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.

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."

Board Resignations and Recruitment

It was brought to Board's attention that previous resignations from the Board had not been appropriately noted in the Minutes. Therefore, it was agreed to note and approve the resignations of, Martin Cone 26.03.15, Rekha Patel Harrison 15.10.15 and Colin McCord 21.01.16.

At this point in the meeting, the Chair introduced Sheila Tolley to the Board meeting. Sheila has re-joined the Board as an Independent Director.

Board members agreed to the appointment of Sheila Tolley to the Board.

The Chair also informed members that it was expected that Jordan Messer will be joining the Board at the May meeting.

Empty Homes Programme

Members noted and approved that for the current programme, the grant requirement was above the grant allocation. Permission had been requested from the HCA to top-up the schemes (if required) with monies from the Disposals Proceeds Fund held by APH.

Governance

The CE brought to Board's attention Appendix C of his report which is a copy of the latest Trowers' paper on Modernising Governance. This paper had been sent to TMBC and a meeting had taken place last month between APH CEO and representatives from TMBC. Following the meeting, it would seem that TMBC would be happier once reassurance had been given that APH would not seek to make fundamental decisions without their input. Cllr Cooney is organising a follow up meeting to progress this matter.

CCTV / Concierge Tender

A brief update was provided to Board on the CCTV / Concierge upgrade. The Chair questioned how the tender figure compared with the original budget figure.

The DoFA stated that the original figure in the budget had been in excess of £800k, therefore, the figure received from Openview of £475,941.69 was significantly under budget, even when VAT was considered.

Board approved the tender from Openview in the sum of £475,941.69 for the upgrade contract to the CCTV & Concierge services.

Voluntary Right to Buy

Board were informed of several large Associations who are running pilot programmes assessing demand and the processes which are required to make VRTB work. The feedback is expected in Summer which will inform the roll-out which is now not anticipated until the Autumn.

A member of the Board questioned whether APH have any tentative enquiries to which the DoFA informed her that APH have had enquiries as transferring tenants retained their RTB, even before VRTB came into play.

Repairs & Maintenance Update

The Board's attention was drawn to Appendix D within the CEO Report.

Recruitment has now taken place for the vacant Estate Services posts. One new member of staff had already commenced employment and the other was due to start imminently. This means that void works can now be brought back in-house rather than contracted out to Redmire.

16/19 BOARD TRACKER REPORT

148 Webinair Training

A member of the Board stated she had not received her details for Webinar. SM confirmed that she had been in contact numerous times to set these up for new members and would contact them again following the meeting.

149 Improving Processes

The CE highlighted a typo within 149 which should read "The Chair is to meet with the Chair of the Asset Group to review operation of the BOARD and improve processes. "

16/20 REMUNERATION COMMITTEE 2016 – TERMS AND CONDITIONS REVIEW

Board were informed of the Remuneration Committee held on 18th February 2016 where discussion took place to consider the review of staff terms and conditions and any performance based awards for 2016.

The various appendices contained within the report were briefly discussed by the CEO. It was then:-

Agreed to a settlement of 1% for April 2016 with a non-consolidated performance award of £300 for each full time equivalent in post for that performance year (pro rata where appropriate).

Four roles were also recommended for adjustment in 2016 by the CEO and it was noted that budget provision for these had been included in the plan. Board therefore:-

Agreed that the two finance roles be adjusted over a single year (DoFA & FM) with the two R&M roles (MI & MA) being phased over two years linked to a review by the CEO of the roles and job profiles.

A member of the Board questioned what impact the recent news on National Insurance increasing will have on the budget.

The DoFA informed members that this is only applicable to members of staff who are in a final salary pension scheme – meaning nine members of staff would be affected.

16/21 BUSINESS / FINANCIAL PLAN & BUDGET 2016/17

The CEO and DoFA presented the Business / Financial Plan and Budget 2016/17 to members talking through each slide.

Questions were answered following the presentation then the Board:

Approved the Business Plan and Budget for 2016/17.

16/22 STRESS TESTING OF FINANCE PLAN

The DoFA presented to Board the results of the Stress Testing exercises carried out. He stated that DTP are willing to independently review and provide some assurances around the base finance plan and model accuracy.

After discussions with DTP they have confirmed that the re-financing amount will not need to be as high as previously stated by JC Rathbones at the last Board meeting. DTP will be carrying out a 30 year BRIX audit on the Finance Plan prior to re-financing launch.

The Chair of the Board requested additional figures from stress testing taking into account 10 RTB requests in order to see how the figures will change. The DoFA stated that this is highly unlikely but will look at the figures and feedback outside the meeting.

DoFA

16/23 TREASURY MANAGEMENT

As part of the refinancing project, the DoFA stated that DTP will be reviewing the Treasury Policy, therefore, the current Policy may be superceded in the next few months.

Board's attention was drawn to Appendix B – Deposits and Investments - which now includes a list of approved banks along with their credit ratings.

The Board approved the Treasury Management Policy Version 6 and the Treasury Management Statement for 2016-2017.

16/24 INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16

Prior to the Board approving the approval of the Internal Audit Annual Report, the Chair and Members requested that further action be taken with staff members who still have follow up items on the audit tracker report. Some of these items have been outstanding for a lengthy period of time.

The CEO stated that all follow up items will now be addressed through the Performance Group and if follow up action has not been addressed, the staff member will be invited to attend the Performance Group to give their reasons why.

Board accepted the Audit Committee recommendation to approve the annual report from BDO.

16/25 APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR 2016/17

Board noted the re-appointment of Mazars as external auditors.

16/26 HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY REVIEW

Minor changes were brought to Board's attention within the Health & Safety Policy review.

Board approved the updated Health & Safety Policy.

