

Minutes from Board meeting - Non-Confidential held 29th March 2023

Attendance	Martin Surl (MS) (Chair), Trish Blain (TB), David Clowes (DC), Sarah Godfrey (SG), Christine Gore (CG), Ian Mason (IM), Andrew Parfitt (AP) (<i>attended remotely</i>), Cllr Richard Pineger (RP), John Rawson (JR), Steve Slater (SS), Arthur Dzido (AD) (<i>attended remotely</i>), Adam Waller (AW)
Recorder	Rhian Watts (RW)
Apologies	Cllr Glenn Andrews (GA), Beverley Grimster (BG), Cllr Victoria Atherstone (VA), Emma Wall (EW)
Quorate?	Yes

Item	Notes	Action for
1	<p>Meeting commenced at 17:35</p> <p>Apologies received from GA, BG, VA, and EW</p>	
2	<p><u>Board Champion for Risk Appointment</u></p> <p>JR thanked DC for the tremendous work DC has done as Board Champion for Risk. DC thanked the Board for their support and noted that IM had been working with him and AW since July and had a strong understanding of the role.</p> <p>IM left the meeting</p> <p>The Board confirmed they were happy to appoint IM as Board Champion for Risk.</p> <p>IM joined the meeting</p> <p>MS thanked IM for taking on the role and noted that he would like to attend a future challenge meeting. IM thanked the Board for appointing him and for DC's support. He commented that seeing the wonderful</p>	

	<p>system that CBH have built has been really interesting and that he is looking forward to working on it in the future.</p> <p>The Board appointed Ian Mason as Board Champion for Risk from the 1 April 2023.</p>	
3	No declarations of interest.	
4	<p><u>Confirmation of Written Resolution</u></p> <p>MS confirmed that the contract had been approved using a Written Resolution. He noted that this contract had been part of a joint tender with CBC and asked who was responsible for the daily management of CBC's contract. AD confirmed that with partnership contracts CBH are responsible for actively managing the day-to-day process but engage with CBC colleagues regularly. SS confirmed that whilst CBH will manage the bulk of performance, there are elements that CBC manage directly.</p> <p>The Board noted that the Written Resolution had been approved.</p>	
5	<p><u>CEO Report</u></p> <p>SS introduced the CEO Report and highlighted the 'Lived Experience' project. He explained that this would reflect on the lens we use as a business to look at colleague and customer interactions to ensure we continue building strong engagement into these interfaces. SS noted that Senseia will be conducting around 30 interviews across the business and collating the information gathered in advance of using this insight during workshops with Heads of Service, some managers and the Executive Team. He added that we will then ensure this work cascades through the business and is fully embedded to broaden the caring, empathetic view of each CBH interaction (with customers and colleagues alike).</p> <p>SS highlighted the range of Training and Employment Services (TES) activities included in the report and recorded his thanks to the team and</p>	

	<p>other colleagues around the business that support them for all their hard work. He noted that this work has involved Gloucester College and explained that he has also been discussing the possibility of a new collaboration around retrofitting and green training if Gloucester College can secure funding.</p> <p>SS explained that following engagement sessions 5 new members have joined TSIP. He noted that there had been discussion around engagement at the Board Away Day and JR had suggested ways we could strengthen engagement between Board and customers. SS highlighted that we will be exploring these ideas for inclusion in the new customer engagement action plan to ensure strong engagement with customers across the whole business.</p> <p>SS updated the Board that 1 April would be the 20th anniversary of CBH and that we would be celebrating by encouraging colleagues to reminisce and reflect, will add a logo on CBH's website and to events, will interact with colleagues, customers, partners and CBC, and will be holding a tea and cake day for colleagues on the 12 April.</p> <p>SS explained that he had been discussing the recently announced government Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) action plan with MS. He noted that currently there was limited detail but that we would be working through the consultation as it progresses. SS highlighted the 3 strikes and you're out headlines and noted that we need to understand where the bar is set to get a strike and how quickly people will be expected to move on. He added that any action will also need to carefully reflect how central we are to Cheltenham, our responsibility to ensure people are housed and sustain tenancies, and the support we provide to communities. IM noted that he has worked with the ASB Team and that these can be very complicated and challenging situations. He raised concerns that the proposals could take this to the opposite extreme and lead to failed tenancies and wider issues. SS agreed and noted that an eviction would lead to the tenant presenting as homeless to the Homeless Options Team (HOT) and needing to be rehomed. TB agreed that it was important to find the balance between working with people early to resolve issues and to successfully manage eviction when it</p>	
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	<p>becomes necessary for communities. MS commented that it would be helpful for Board to understand more on this matter and the potential impacts. SS confirmed that we will continue to feed back on the consultation process and the detail that develops.</p> <p>SG noted that the Benefit and Money Advice (BMA) Team had been running support sessions in the sheltered schemes and asked whether these would be rolled out to the community hubs. SS explained that the elderly are recognised as an in need group who budget closely and who have been heavily impacted by the cost of living crisis. He noted that the sessions had been heavily attended in the sheltered schemes. SG commented that it was important to consider how we reach the wider population. SS agreed that accessibility is crucial and confirmed that we are offering a wider range of support particularly with the Universal Credit (UC) migration and the move to digital. He highlighted that we will be sending out letters to make sure everyone is aware of the changes happening and that the BMA team will be continuing to offer individual support. SS reassured Board that customers will still have access via phone to make a UC claim. SS added that the team are working with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and running drop-in sessions at the Jobcentre to reach more people. He noted that we are also working with partners to ensure they are able to recommend the support we offer and will be running a social media campaign with the Shared Comms Team. MS commented that this work shows how CBH are far more than just a landlord.</p> <p>JR noted the report on the progression of CBC's Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and commented that CBH are heavily involved in the delivery of the strategy. He suggested it would be good to share the Action Plan with Board once it has been approved.</p> <p>ACTION – Share CBC's Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Action Plan as a briefing note.</p> <p>DC asked for an update on the review of the Management Agreement and Articles of Association. AW confirmed that the Management Agreement was being reviewed by CBH, CBC and Trowers and was 95% complete. He confirmed that an update would be brought to Board in</p>	<p>RW</p>
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	<p>May. AW explained that the review of the Articles of Association would begin once the Management Agreement review had been completed.</p> <p>AD provided an update on the ongoing Professionalisation review and explained that the sector is still waiting for guidance on the essential qualification requirements. He noted that this work will enhance the project of making CBH an employee of choice. AD added that we are also currently refining role profiles to ensure they reflect essential qualification requirements for specific roles. He highlighted that once the government's position has been clarified this will allow us to create a more active response. SS noted that this was an active area of discussion with other CEOs and there are currently a lot of grey areas. He explained that we will be carrying out a review of all colleagues to understand what qualifications are already held and identify any gaps, which can then be fed back into the consultation. SS highlighted that it was also important that we continue to recognise the value of experience as well as qualifications. DC commented that it was very positive that we were being proactive and taking a root and branch approach. He asked what housing qualifications are available for colleagues below senior levels. SS explained that the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) offers qualifications for a series of levels. AD noted that our partnership with Gloucester College may provide opportunities for us to understand what tailored qualifications could look like with other providers. IM commented that there is also a difference between development and professionalisation and that colleagues don't necessarily need a certificate to be developed and well trained. He highlighted that it was important that proposed qualifications add value to people in their roles and are fit for purpose. SS agreed and commented that following the consultation we will be aligning the qualifications with experience, to ensure the amazing work colleagues carry out is recognised. RP noted that many people have issues with exams and may require additional support. AP asked whether colleagues will be able to take the time needed to prepare for qualifications. He also asked whether there was a danger that early action presents a risk of additional costs if the government changes direction. SS agreed that both of these points will need to be considered during the consultation. He noted that we will be feeding back both as</p>	
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	<p>CBH and through the NFA. MS agreed that it was important we remain flexible. He thanked everyone for the excellent points made and highlighted that it was important we recognise the value of qualifications, skills and experience as the consultation progresses.</p> <p>The Board considered and provided feedback on the content of the report.</p>	
6	<p><u>Feedback from the Audit & Risk Committee</u></p> <p>JR updated the Board on the Audit & Risk Committee meeting on the 9 February 2023. He noted that the Committee had discussed the HR – New Starter audit completed by SWAP and received assurance that appropriate business controls had been put into place to reduce business risk. JR highlighted that they had also discussed damp, mould and condensation and the work being carried out to ensure the quality of data and access to data. He explained that the aspiration is to have an automated system to assess data, monitor the problem and determine the action. He commented that this had been a very positive discussion.</p> <p>SG noted that the minutes from the November 2022 meeting had talked about CBH properties potentially being let on air bnb. She asked whether this had been checked. JR confirmed that enquiries had been made by both officers and the Counter Fraud Enforcement Unit particularly around the time of Cheltenham Races and no evidence was found that this was an issue.</p> <p>MS noted the discussion of the incident at Peabody Housing Association and asked how likely it was that something similar could happen at CBH. DC confirmed that they had discussed during risk challenge situations how long could pass between visits to tenants. He noted that this conversation has since broadened to consider customers overall vulnerability. AW confirmed that following these initial discussions a report would be brought to Audit & Risk in May. SS commented that this report had been developed to make use of information from around the business to build a snapshot of activity with tenants and enable data to</p>	

	<p>drive us to where colleagues can have the most impact and provide necessary support. MS noted it was also important to build community to support vulnerable individuals. IM noted this issue had also been discussed with Eamon McGoldrick from the NFA in relation to the pros and cons of Housing Officers vs specialised officers. He noted that there were advantages to both approaches and it was something we should continue to consider.</p> <p>The Board noted the content of the report.</p>	
7	<p><u>Feedback from the Remuneration & Nominations Committee</u></p> <p>TB updated the Board on the Remuneration & Nominations Committee meeting on the 16 March 2023. She noted that they had discussed the NED Appraisal Policy, NED Induction Policy and the NED Disciplinary and Removal Policy which they had recommended to Board for approval. TB explained that the Committee had considered succession as well and had discussed co-optee roles. MS commented that this had been a very good meeting and a positive discussion.</p> <p>The Board noted the content of the report.</p>	
8	<p><u>Agree non-confidential minutes and actions of the 29.01.23 meeting and to note progress on current action points</u></p> <p>The Board agreed the non-confidential minutes of the 29.01.23 meeting as a true record and noted progress on current action points.</p>	
9	<p><u>Approve Internal Audit Plan 2023-2024</u></p> <p>AD introduced the Internal Audit Plan for 2023-2024 and confirmed it had been reviewed by Audit & Risk and recommended to Board in February. He noted that the Plan was being presented in a new format which had been developed in conjunction with SWAP to give a picture of previously completed audits and identify future audit areas. JR noted that the Audit & Risk Committee had been very happy with the new format which was much more informative and provides a clearer overall</p>	

	<p>view. AD highlighted that we will be linking this with risk in the future to ensure that the plan is risk driven. He noted that the plan is agile and adaptable and highlighted that the ICT audit is currently being developed and that following post out it had been recommended that an audit be carried out on fire door procurement at James Donovan Court. AD explained that this audit would be replacing the governance audit into compliance with the NHF Code of Governance. He noted that tendering for an external governance review would be carried out in 2023. AD asked Board to approve the Plan subject to the discussed changes. He noted that he would discuss any further changes with SWAP and would present recommendations to Board.</p> <p>The Board approved the 2023-24 Internal Audit Annual Plan.</p>	
10	<p><u>Closure of the New Supply Committee</u></p> <p>AW explained that the report recommended the official closure of the New Supply Committee following the development of enhanced meetings and a robust governance framework around new supply. AW highlighted the joint approach taken with CBC's Cabinet Member Working Group (CMWG). JR commented that he supported the closure of the Committee, particularly following positive discussions at recent CMWG meetings.</p> <p>The Board approved the formal closure of the New Supply Committee.</p>	
11	<p><u>Recommendations from the Remunerations & Nominations Committee – NED Appraisal Policy, NED Induction Policy and NED Disciplinary and Removal Policy</u></p> <p>AW introduced the report and explained that the NED Appraisal Policy, NED Induction Policy, and NED Disciplinary and Removal Policy had been discussed by the Remuneration & Nominations Committee on the 16 March and recommended to Board for approval. He noted that the Committee had requested Sherbornes Solicitors review the NED Disciplinary and Removal Policy which had recommended one change,</p>	

	<p>highlighted in the report. TB noted that if these policies are approved they will be reviewed again in 2 years.</p> <p>RP asked for further clarification on the annual declarations mentioned in the appraisal form. RW confirmed that these were confirmation of NEDs suitability to stand as a NED, annual declarations for insurers, register of interests and related parties form, personal detail, and acceptance of the NED Code of Conduct. She explained that these would be included as part of the appraisal pack for each NED and the appraisal form would be used to confirm that these had been completed by the NED. AW commented that we will clarify this within the appraisal form.</p> <p>ACTION – Clarify annual declaration process in appraisal form</p> <p>IM noted there were a few areas of the recommended induction programme that hadn't been completed and highlighted that site tours had not been possible. He asked whether there were plans to reintroduce these. AW confirmed that we were planning to run a site tour this year which will be open to all NEDs. SS commented that we are aiming to involve teams around CBH to bring the work CBH carries out to life. TB agreed that it would be positive for Board to understand the work, environment and conditions. RP commented that it will also be good for Board to understand CBH's properties and communities. MS agreed that this would be a valuable experience for the Board. TB commented that in line with the induction programme NEDs should also attend a TSIP meeting and that it would be beneficial to build relationships between TSIP and Board. JR commented that it was also important for Board to feel closer to customers beyond TSIP and that it would be good to look for opportunities to encourage this.</p> <p>The Board reviewed and approved the:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NED Appraisal Policy subject to the changes noted in the minutes 2. NED Induction Policy 3. NED Disciplinary and Removal Policy 	<p>RW</p>
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12	<p><u>Annual Risk Review</u></p> <p>AW introduced the report and explained that it provides an overview of risk management, assessment of CBH's position and the current list of corporate risk. He noted that the report also highlights the top 3 risks. CG commented that this was a very good report with a significant amount of information included.</p> <p>RP asked when Board were scheduled to review the PESTLE and SWOT. AW confirmed that this would be reviewed at the Board Away Day in June.</p> <p>IM commented that he was surprised to see that there were no changes to the risk given the current volatility of the operating environment. AW explained that this was due to the risks being very broad, long lived and fundamental to the running of the business. He noted that most of the changes occur in the controls behind the risks. AW added that there had also been changes to risks during the year particularly around governance and recruitment.</p> <p>JR commented our risk on the 40-year financial model becoming unviable may not entirely reflect the short-term issues. He noted that as reviewed in February there is currently a lot of change within the year and things could rapidly move outside our expectations and comfort. JR highlighted that as the HRA budget is annual there is not a huge amount of flexibility. He suggested that the narrative around the risk should reflect the short-term challenges in addition to longer term challenges. MS noted this together with the Board.</p> <p>AP commented that we have seen the challenges relating to new property supply in recent development updates and noted that this didn't seem to be reflected in the risk register. He asked if there were areas, such as new supply, DMC and professionalisation that we may not be considering through a risk lens. AD explained that some areas are considered through more appropriate methods such as the HRA Business Plan priorities, budget monitoring or the PESTLE and SWOT. SS commented that whilst there have been delays to the new supply</p>	
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	<p>programme he is comfortable that the 5 year programme is delivering on the waiting list, with a pipeline for 450 new homes. He highlighted that we will continue to monitor this progress with Board.</p> <p>The Board considered and provided feedback on the contents of the report and discussed whether this is a true and proportionate reflection of risk exposure, and an appropriate and relevant response.</p>	
13	<p><u>Tenant Satisfaction Measures Update</u></p> <p>AW introduced the report and explained that it provides an update on our current position on the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) and meeting the Regulator of Social Housing's (RSH) requirements. CG commented that the report was very comforting and noted that we are in a good place to gather information. She noted that it will be important to see where we sit in the benchmarking and asked how often this will be reported to Board. AW confirmed that the report will be quarterly. He noted that we are already reporting on the Acuity figures and the rest of the KPIs will be introduced from May onwards.</p> <p>IM noted that one of the TSMs relate to homes that don't meet the Decent Homes Standard (DHS) he asked if there had been any progress on the government's planned improvement to the DHS. AW confirmed that this work was currently still on hold but was expected to resume in the summer. He noted that we are working to the current standard.</p> <p>SG noted that she had received an Acuity phone call during the week and asked how often customers don't answer these calls due to it coming from a private number and how we can encourage customers to respond. AW confirmed that Acuity provide figures on response rates. He noted that we publicise the calls and provide details to customers regularly through CBH News.</p> <p>The Board considered and provided feedback on the context around and progress establishing the reporting of Tenant Satisfaction Measures.</p>	

Meeting Closed at 19:19

Signed.....*John Newman*.....
Chair of Cheltenham Borough Homes

Acting

Date.....*26/4/2023*.....