

## Minutes of the Eighty-Eighth Board Meeting

Held on 26 April 2016 at 5.30pm  
At Room 1, CBH, Rowan House,  
33 Sheepen Road, Colchester CO3 3WG

### Present:

Anne Grahamslaw (Chair)  
Alan Blois (Vice Chair)  
Nigel Chapman (Vice Chair)  
Julie Parker  
Glenn Houchell  
Geoff Foster  
Michala Carey  
Mike Lilley

### In Attendance:

Greg Falvey  
Michael Hadjimichael  
Karen Loweman  
Mark Wright  
Gerardine Murphy  
Polly Hardy  
Nikki Bedford

Owen Howell (Minutes)

### Observing:

Gareth Mitchell (CBC)  
Jan Sexton (TLCC)  
Lynda Buxton (TLCC)  
Jimmy Watson (TLCC)  
Michael Campbell (TLCC)  
Dawn Tibble (TLCC)

## 1. Apologies and quorum

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Gerard Oxford, Julia Havis, Tina Graves and Dionne Philp. The Chair declared the meeting as quorate.

## 2. Declaration of interests by Board Members and Officers

- 2.1 There were no new declarations of interest.

## 3. Minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2016 and Matters Arising

- 3.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.
- 3.2 It was confirmed that all actions had been completed.

## 4. Voice your view

- 4.1 CBH tenant Jan Sexton spoke regarding mature trees which were causing problems for residents in her street. These included blocked light, sap damage to vehicles and leaf mulch making pathways slippery. Several requests had been made for trimming, but this has yet to be carried out. She requested that these trees be trimmed or replaced with shrubs or smaller trees.
- 4.2 Karen Loweman explained that CBC officers prioritised the maintenance of mature trees and would only take action in cases where danger to individuals and property was likely. Karen explained that CBH had now changed its grounds

maintenance contractor, with a slightly different approach. They will be resurveying to decide which trees would benefit from trimming. Karen suggested that they conduct a 'walkabout' in the area to survey the trees and re-evaluate the situation.

## **5. Annual Committee Terms of Reference**

5.1 Owen Howell presented this item and instructed Board that they must approve or reject the amended Committee Terms of reference. A further decision was being sought on whether to move to a biennial review process for these Terms of Reference. This was a move to cut the burden on Committees and Board.

5.2 **Decision:** Board approved the amended Terms of Reference for Operations, Governance & Remuneration and Finance & Audit Committees

5.3 **Decision:** Board approved the move to a biennial review of Terms of Reference. The next review was set for 2018/19

5.4 In response to questions, the Chair confirmed that the Chair of the Board was automatically and specifically given a place on the Governance & Remuneration (G&R) Committee, owing to their necessary involvement and influence in governance matters, but did not sit on the Finance & Audit (F&A) Committee as this body was responsible for oversight of all other CBH bodies below Board level.

## **6. Revised Contract Procedure Rules**

6.1 Michael Hadjimichael presented the revised Rules and confirmed that this was recommended for approval by F&A Committee so as to ensure compliance with new EU rules on procurement.

6.2 **Decision:** Board unanimously voted to approve the updated Contract Procedure Rules.

## **7. Strategic Risk Register**

7.1 Michael Hadjimichael presented the current Strategic Risk Register. One new Risk had been added concerning the recruitment of the new Chief Executive for CBH. All other risks remained unchanged.

7.2 Board discussed the ongoing risk concerning the Housing & Planning Bill and noted the continuing uncertainty regarding this Risk.

## **8. Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy**

8.1 Michael Hadjimichael presented this item and explained that F&A Committee had recommended it for approval, subject to a reference to 'Standards for England' being removed as now being out of date.

8.2 **Decision:** Board noted the importance of this item and voted unanimously to approve the updated Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy.

## 9. Value for money Strategy Action Plan

- 9.1 Michael Hadjimichael presented the Action Plan.
- 9.2 In response to questions, it was explained that (regarding 6.1) the deadline for performance reports was set at April 2017 owed to the fact that CBH is undergoing a fundamental review of how it monitors performance. A timetable has yet to be set but was expected to conclude within this financial year (e.g. by April 2017).
- 9.3 With regard to the average repair cost target, Mark Wright informed Board that this was calculated from the average number of properties, the average number of repairs per property and the average cost of these repairs.
- 9.4 Karen updated Board on the latest rent collection figure, which was now 98.85%, and confirmed that changes to the welfare system would likely see this figure drop in future periods.
- 9.5 Board were reminded that the target for re-let/void turnaround had significantly changed as a result of the old KPI relating to this no longer being able to be benchmarked. The new KPI could not be compared to the previous KPI or previous targets (as detailed in the Board Meeting of 22 February 2016).  
**Decision:** Board formally accepted the update on the Value for money Strategy Action Plan.

## 10. Future Proofing Project End Report

- 10.1 Greg Falvey introduced his report and opened it up for questions from Board Members.
- 10.2 Regarding the obtaining of a trading guarantee from CBC, Greg confirmed that the head of CBC's Legal Team was assisting with this and has requested that this be based upon a real example of trading, rather than as a generic guarantee based on hypotheticals. The proposal is to use CBH's proposal for trading with education providers. CBH is now awaiting the first concrete proposal in this area in order to proceed with drafting the guarantee.
- 10.3 With respect to the past proposal for a member of the Executive Team (DMT) to sit on the Board, this had been shelved for now. As such a move would necessitate a change in the Memorandum and Articles of Association, it was agreed with the CBC Portfolio Holder that it would be sensible to wait to see what the political climate was like following CBC's elections in May 2016.
- 10.4 **Decision:** Board unanimously voted to accept and approve the Future Proofing End of Project Report.

## 11. Corporate Facilities Management Annual Review

- 11.1 Mark Wright introduced and explained this report. He confirmed that the Corporate Facilities Management (CFM) Team had now been fully integrated within CBH. The funding of this team has been supported both through its own work and from internal recharges back to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

The Service Level Agreement (SLA) with CBC guiding the charging for additional works has proved a success and has benefited both CBC and CBH. Whilst the terms of this SLA means that a profit is not allowed, a slight inflow of capital from this team has moved to the trading fund which is shared with CBC.

- 11.2 Noted: a reference to the 'Mayoral Bench' should read 'Deputy-Mayoral Bench.'
- 11.3 'Un-adopted HRA footpaths' were explained as being footpaths which had not yet been adopted by the Highways Authority or Essex County Council. CBH and CBC have carried out risk assessments on those footpaths which have not been adopted and which remain the responsibility of CBC.
- 11.4 The issue of CBC's e-financial and e-procurement links with the Capita Housing Management system was discussed, e.g. with work being raised through e-procurement but managed by Capita Housing. Work on these links has been hampered by updates to the respective software. It is hoped that these updates will conclude by August, at which time a long-term solution will be worked upon.
- 11.5 It was noted that the additional types of work being taken on through the CFM Team were proving attractive to recruit new members of staff who would otherwise have sought work in the private sector instead. Mark Wright gave examples of this.
- 11.6 The Chair and the Board gave their congratulations to Mark and to the CFM Team for the success of their endeavours.

## **12. Financial Assurance Report**

- 12.1 Michael Hadjimichael introduced the report and explained that whilst the report gave information as it stood at the end of February, he could now give a verbal update to give the position as at year end.
- 12.2 The outturn position was very close to the position as stated in the report, with the Audit (by Scrutton Bland) due to commence on 27 April and its report expected to go to F&A Committee in July, prior to September Board.
- 12.3 The position of CBH's delegated budgets are broadly in line with expectations and have progressed in a manner beneficial to both CBC and CBH.
- 12.4 It was explained that the list of carry-forwards had yet to be analysed so he was not yet able to answer questions on these, but that intensive scrutiny of these would be carried out.
- 12.5 The noting of 'superseded' carry forwards led to an explanation that this included carry forwards that were no longer needed and some which had been cancelled owing to other factors.

## **13. Performance Assurance Report**

- 13.1 Karen Loweman laid out the report for Board and explained that the written report had the information as correct at the end of February 2016. Karen gave a verbal update to explain the end of year statistics which were now available.

Aside from one KPI (on B&B use), all other KPIs were green as of end of year.

#### **14. Committee Minutes**

- 14.1 With regard to the future Resident Involvement Strategy, it was confirmed that this would be examined by Operations Committee in July before going to Board for approval in September.
- 14.2 Answering a Member's question, Karen Loweman explained the distinction between a tenant being in serious arrears (owing more than seven weeks rent) and a tenant with a County Court Judgement (which remains until all arrears have been cleared).
- 14.3 Regarding the minutes from G&R Committee held on 7 April, it was explained that discussions had been had regarding Health & Safety liability in CBH. Owen Howell explained that the Board does hold liability for Health & Safety within CBH, but that it was the Chief Executive's responsibility to ensure the annual updating and signing of the Health & Safety Policy Statement. It was explained that a proposal would be put to a future Board meeting that the Policy Statement be removed from the Code of Governance and replace with the Health & Safety Policy itself (from which the content of the Statement is taken). This would simplify the process and ensure that Board are given the opportunity to amend and approve the Policy and, by extension, the content of the Policy Statement.

#### **15. Forward Look**

- 15.1 This was approved without amendment.

#### **16. Any other Business**

- 16.1 Michael Hadjimichael proposed that the Standing Financial Instructions should be amended to include the following addition:

*'In the event that the Chief Executive is unavailable, for whatever reason, the following duties will be delegated as follows;*

- *Financial, HR and Governance matters will be delegated to the Director of Resources.*
- *Operational matters will be delegated to the Directors of Housing and Property Services as deemed appropriate.'*

- 16.2 This addition was unanimously approved by the Board
- 16.3 Geoff Foster informed Board that he had attended the Essex Digital Awards on 14 April and gave his congratulations to the CBH members of staff involved with our entry (which had been selected as a finalist).
- 16.4 Chair formally gave Board's formal thanks to Greg Falvey for his work at CBH, including the negotiation of the current Management Agreement. Greg expressed his appreciation for this vote of thanks and invited Members to his leaving do.

**With no further business, the open meeting concluded at 6.20pm.**

