

# Agenda



## ALMO BOARD MEETING

**1 September 2020, at 5.30pm via Microsoft Teams \***

- |     |  |          |      |
|-----|--|----------|------|
| 1.  | WELCOME  |          | 5.30 |
| 2.  | APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE  |          |      |
| 3.  | ANYTHING TO DECLARE  |          |      |
| 4.  | ITEMS FROM THE CHAIR   |          |      |
| 5.  | SIGN OFF OF THE 7 JULY 2020 MINUTES  | Attached | 5.30 |
| 6.  | <b>FEEDBACK FROM</b><br>- Repairs Working Party  |          | 5.30 |
| 7.  | <b>REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS</b>   |          |      |
| 7.1 | Quarter One Monitoring Report  |          | 5.50 |
| 7.2 | Deep Dive into Voids and Lettings  |          | 6.20 |
| 7.3 | Commission Scrutiny Review to CEP and other Agreed Actions   |          | 7.20 |
| 8.  | <b>CLOSING ITEMS</b><br>ANY OTHER BUSINESS<br>ITEMS ON THE NEXT ALMO MEETING AGENDA – <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Deep Dive into Grounds Maintenance and Garden Assistance</li><li>• Annual review of the use of the HRA</li><li>• Housing Ombudsman Self-Assessment approval</li></ul> DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 3 NOVEMBER 2020 |          |      |

\* Members of the public wishing to attend this meeting should email [boardmeetings@nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk](mailto:boardmeetings@nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk) for joining details

**NOTTINGHAM CITY HOMES LIMITED**

**THE ALMO BOARD**

**MINUTES** of the **PUBLIC MEETING** held on **7 JULY 2020** at via Microsoft Teams

**Board Members**

Adeola Adeleke  
Geoff Bagnall  
Lynn Clayton  
Dave Pitt  
Georgia Power (Until item 7.5)  
Ethan Radford (Until item 7.6)  
Sarita-Marie Rehman-Wall (Chair)  
Michael Savage  
Karen Humble

**Also in Attendance:**

Jacquie Beacroft (Items 7.3 & 7.4)	Customer Experience and Insight Manager
Cathy Dobb (Minute Taker)	Head of Governance
Steve Edlin (Item 7.2)	Assistant Director of Asset Management
Phil Saunders (Item 7.2)	Business Improvement and Performance Manager
Darren Phillips (Item 7.2)	Assistant Director of Finance and Procurement
Kathy Sheldon	Assistant Director of Tenancy and Estate Services
Darrell Smith (Item 7.5)	Director of Construction, Repairs and Maintenance Service

**1 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS & CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed Board Members. It was noted that there has been a clash with the Councillors' diaries for tonight's meeting. There is a Labour Group Meeting at 18.30. Therefore Cllrs Radford and Power will need to leave the meeting early.

**2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None.

**3 ANYTHING TO DECLARE**

Nothing declared.

## **4 ITEMS FROM THE CHAIR**

The Chair informed the Board that she wrote a letter to all Nottingham City Homes (NCH) staff in her position as Chair of the ALMO Board. The letter was to thank staff for the excellent work they have undertaken during the pandemic and to pass on the thanks and appreciation of the Board.

## **5 SIGN OFF OF THE 5 MAY 2020 MINUTES**

The minutes were agreed as a true record. The Chair electronically approved the minutes.

## **6 FEEDBACK FROM BOARDS AND COMMITTEES**

### **6.1 GROUP BOARD**

6.1.1 The Chair fed back to the meeting the key actions from the Group Board held on 18 June 2020:

- Cllr Linda Woodings attended the Group Board Meeting in her capacity as the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Heritage.
- Board had a Covid -19 update where it was confirmed that NCH furloughed 100 employees under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. NCH continues to work on the Business Recovery and Reinvention Plan. NCH has written to all Black and Minority Ethnic and other more vulnerable employees to provide them with additional support. Staff were surveyed and 89% of staff said they would recommend NCH as a place to work.
- Board agreed to again waive Standing Orders and agreed to make all approval electronic for another three month period.
- Board were given, and approved, the Financial Outturn reports. Board also accepted the consolidated Financial Statements for 2019/20.
- The review of the supply and demand on homes in NCH was also presented, and there are an additional 937 applicants on the housing register, which is an increase from last year.

### **6.2 AUDIT, RISK AND COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE**

6.2.1 Dave Pitt, Board Member, fed back to the meeting the key actions from the Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee (ARCC) held on 30 June 2020:

- The Committee was presented with the internal audit findings of a recent General Data Protection Regulation audit. Moderate assurance was given with two medium and one low recommendations made. The audit recommended that NCH increases its uptake of training across the organisation with a focus on Construction, Repairs and Maintenance.
- A Fire Safety internal audit report was discussed, and the audit provided significant assurance with four medium recommendations.
- It was noted that the sprinkler works have recommenced in the Victoria Centre flats.
- The Audit Register has 14 audit recommendations that have yet to be implemented, four of which are high level, nine medium and one low. This

compares with nine at the end of the last quarter. There have been 11 audit actions added from the new audits.

- The Committee had an update on Compliance and it was confirmed that we have been able to gain access to most properties for these compliance checks.
- The meeting also looked at the Group Risk Register and discussed the strategic risks to the Group.
- The Annual Tenancy Fraud Report was presented and overall there were 116 new cases of tenancy fraud. This is a reduction of one case when compared to 117 cases in 2018/19. ALMO Board requested that the headline information on these fraud cases be issued to Board Members after the meeting.

## **7 REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS**

### **7.1 CONSULTATIONS ON THE NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY AND RENT PROPOSALS.**

7.1.1 The Assistant Director of Tenancy and Estate Services (ADTES) informed Board that the draft Neighbourhood Policy and the draft Rent Recovery proposal was issued to Board Members prior to the meeting for their consideration. It was confirmed that a number of Board Members have submitted their feedback and largely agree with the proposals. Feedback has been issued to the lead officers for the proposals. Any additional feedback was requested by the 10 July. Board agreed to approve the proposals.

### **7.2 QUARTER FOUR MONITORING REPORT**

7.2.1 The Business Improvement and Performance Manager (BIPM) presented to Board Members the Quarter Four Performance Monitoring Report. The key items brought to the Board's attention were:

- The ALMO has achieved a small surplus of £65k. This is an improvement against the budgeted position, which forecasted a deficit of £191k. It was explained that the variance in the refund to Nottingham City Council (NCC) was due to the return of the investment monies in the Arboretum project.
- NCH is performing well compared with other organisation in the vast majority of areas benchmarked and that the targets set within NCH are stretching.
- Six in ten of the measures are either above target or improving on last year. Some tenant satisfaction measures have, however, dipped slightly this year compared to last, although still remain in the second quartile for most satisfaction indicators when compared with others.
- The percentage of repairs completed right first time has shown a consistent improvement over the last few quarters and the outturn is the best for eight years, despite ending up just below target. Despite a reduction in satisfaction with repairs and maintenance our performance is still in the second quartile compared to others and there is a significant focus on improving the service over the next year.
- The number of properties with an EPC rating of E or below has almost halved this year. There are currently just 490 properties that are Band E or

below. Board Members requested a breakdown of the information to be sent to them after the meeting.

- There have been some changes since the report was compiled due to Covid-19. Electrical safety compliance stands at 93% and Gas safety compliance is at 99.89%. Detailed records have been kept to show compliance in this area. Managers are taking steps to access properties. Other areas are at 100%.
- We have achieved the target of 100% rent collection for the year despite the challenges resulting from the continued roll out of Universal Credit and the other welfare reform measures brought in by the Government. Performance was also impacted at the very end of the financial year by the coronavirus and the associated job losses.
- Re-let times has improved this year from 33.8 to 32.5 calendar days. We were on track to meet the target of 150 voids for year end, but due to Covid-19, this has increased to 173.
- In Quarter Four we achieved our first 5 Star rated estate.
- Eight Green Flag awards have been achieved.
- The percentage of tenants and residents engaging with Employability Support is at 32.1%, which is an increase on last year. There was 166 referrals made. The breakdown of how many went on to be employed by NCH will be issued to Board Members after the meeting.

7.2.2 Board Members requested that Report Authors and Presenting Officer to refrain from using acronyms without including their definition first.

7.2.3 Board stated that any issues that cause a concern needs to be looked at, such as satisfaction levels and performance which impacts on income e.g. rent collection and voids/lettings. Board were reminded that the remit of the Board is to scrutinise performance and they have the ability to request more details in any areas they are concerned about. Board were also reminded that they are able to ask more detailed and probing questions if they are not happy with the response given.

### 7.3 STAR SURVEY 2019/20 ANNUAL REPORT

7.3.1 The Customer Experience and Insight Manager (CEIM) presented to Board Members the STAR Survey 2019/20 Annual Report. The key items brought to the Board's attention were:

- The level of customer satisfaction has increased steadily until 2016 before levelling at around 89% for the last four years. Against a target of 91.3%, this year we achieved 93% satisfaction for Independent Living Scheme (ILS) customers but fell short within other customers at 85%. This gave us an overall score of 89% of customers who were very or fairly satisfied with the service provided by NCH.
- After remaining consistent at 88% for two years, customer satisfaction with the quality of their homes has dropped slightly to 87%.
- The value for money (VFM) on service charges were introduced mid-point last year, so there is no data to compare to previous years. However, there was already been significant variation within levels of satisfaction during the three reported quarters. As with other areas, there is a significant difference between results for General Needs at 81% and ILS customers at 87%.

- There has been a further decline recorded for this year's satisfaction levels with repairs and maintenance. As is the general trend, we have witnessed in service areas across the board, Independent Living customers are more satisfied, though their score has dropped from 92% to 89%. General Needs customers have seen the biggest drop however, going from 82% satisfied last year to 75% this year. The drop in satisfaction appears to be consistent across the industry and is not exclusive to NCH.
- Satisfaction in Tenant Involvement Opportunities has seen a minor drop but remains consistent with the rolling average at 69%.
- After making a slight improvement last year, satisfaction in Taking Tenants' Views into Account has dropped back to levels last seen in 2015. The overall drop has been driven by General Needs customers whose score dropped from 76% last year to 70% this year.

7.3.2 Board noted that whilst the ILS satisfaction rate is good, it can be more difficult to let ILS that have not gone through the Grander Designs programme. In addition to this, customers prefer ground floor accommodation, which means that first floor flats take longer to let. Board considered that the next Deep Dive topic could be Voids.

7.3.3 Board were informed that the survey results are accurate as there number of returns make the data reliable. There is some weighting done with the results to ensure they are useful and provide a true reflection.

#### 7.4 3C'S 2019/20 ANNUAL REPORT

7.4.1 The Customer Experience and Insight Manager (CEIM) presented to Board Members the 3Cs 2019/20 Annual Report. The key items brought to the Board's attention were:

- This year has been one of steady progress, with improvements being made in several areas and ongoing projects beginning to produce results. Volumes have remained consistent from last year as a business but have varied in departments.
- Performance as a whole is improving but has yet to return to the exceptional performance levels of 99.68% and 94.36% as seen in 2016/17 and 2017/18 respectively.
- The review carried out by the Customer Excellence Panel (CEP) has informed and shaped our plan and helped guide us towards improvements in not only performance and customer satisfaction but it has helped us maintain an approach of putting the customer at the forefront and encouraged us to look at issues from a customer's perspective.
- Although complaint numbers have increased, less than four in every 100 complaints lead to a request to escalate and approximately one in every 100 actually proceed to the Tenant Complaints Panel. However, a greater number were resolved within NCH prior to the intervention of the panel.
- The increase of Housing Ombudsman cases seen last year has reversed, with volumes in 2019/20 lower than they have been for some time. In addition to this, there were no cases of maladministration during 2019/20.
- The overall complaints total for the year is 2,236, down by just nine from the 2,245 in 2018/19.

- Overall compliment numbers have increased from 175 to 200, most notably within Responsive Repairs and Planned Repairs. The main driver of compliments seems to be provision of a more personal, helpful service and mostly relates to actions of individuals rather than policies or general actions carried out by departments.
- The department is working with the Housing Ombudsman with regard to the revised complaint handling guidance. Board understood that there is an expectation that Landlords will undertake a self-assessment by 31 December and that the self-assessment will be shared with Board. It was also noted that the Housing Ombudsman would like a response from Boards on any serious maladministration complaints.
- Unjustified complaints can include those where they are unable to manage the customer's expectations. An example would be where the customer expects large areas of re-plastering, when all that is needed is a patch repair.
- It was confirmed that there were 2,200 justified complaints, which equates to 51%.
- It was confirmed that the Customer Excellence Panel also undertook a review of complaints and Board requested a copy of this review. This will be shared with Board Members after the meeting.

## 7.5 DEEP DIVE INTO REPAIR COMPLAINTS

- 7.5.1 The Director of Construction, Repairs and Maintenance Service presented to Board a deep dive into Repairs. The key items brought to the Board's attention were:
- The ALMO Board meeting in March had a deep dive in to the Repairs Service, which focused on statistics and the performance measures undertaken.
  - Repairs completed per year for all work streams (Responsive Repairs, Planned Works, Mechanical and Electrical, Commercial Services) was 158,621, which equates to 3,050 repairs per week.
  - There are 247 Trade Colleagues and 84 Support Staff. There is stock of 25,150 and 0.85% of complaints received.
  - Customer Satisfaction with the Repairs and Maintenance Service has shown a steady decrease since Quarter 4 2018.
  - Analysis was undertaken of what is driving the dissatisfaction and the three top issues area; length of time taken to complete a repair; missed appointments; and poor communication between NCH and tenants.
  - Over the past 12 weeks, the numbers of 'no access' (12%), 'work failed Right First Time' (20.5%) and the productive outcome highlight why satisfaction is falling.
  - A Repairs and Improvement Working Party is to be set up, made up of ALMO Board Members, Tenants and NCH officers and the Working Party will report back to the Board.
  - Four Task and Finish Groups to be established to review four key areas: Performance; Process; Technology; and Engagement and Productivity.
- 7.5.2 The Board were appreciative of the DCRM's forthright and refreshing approach to reporting the issues with regard to repairs. It was clear that he has a tenant-centric

approach to reporting issues. This has provided Board with confidence that this area is moving forward. There has been some collaborative working with the Customer Service Centre and Construction, Repairs and Maintenance Service during the pandemic, and this will continue going forward.

7.5.3 Board discussed the establishment of the Repairs and Improvement Working Party and the make-up of the participants. It was suggested that there would be one Councillor, at least one tenant Board Member and an Independent Board Member. Cllr Radford, the Chair of the Board, Dave Pitt, Michael Savage and Lynn Clayton expressed a preference to be on the Working Party. It was agreed that the preferred approach would be to have a nucleus of members, who would set the agenda and remit of the Working Party. Additional members could be approached to make a contribution to the group as and when needed.

## 7.6 AGREED ACTIONS

- 7.6.1
- For information on the headlines on the tenancy fraud item from ARCC be issued to ALMO Board Members after the meeting - CD
  - Board Members requested a breakdown of the EPC information to be sent to them after the meeting - SE
  - Employability: The breakdown of how many of the 166 referrals went on to be employed by NCH will be issued to Board Members after the meeting - PS
  - The Customer Excellence Panel review of complaints report to be issued to Board Members - JB
  - A Repairs Improvement Working Party to be established. The Chair of the Board to nominate the nucleus group from the volunteers - SMRW
  - Four Task and Finish Groups to be established: Performance; Process; Technology; and Engagement and Productivity- DS
  - The Deep Dive into Repair slides to be circulated to Board Members - CD
  - The headline of the Recovery and Reinvention Plans to be issued to Board Members - CD

## 8 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

8.1 Board discussed the future activity of the ALMO Board and looked at current trends and issues to formulate the next suite of Deep Dives to include on the Forward Plan. Areas put forward for consideration were; Voids and Lettings; Garden Assistance Scheme/Grounds Maintenance; Complaints – focus on percentage of justified complaints; Lessons Learnt from Covid-19. Board also noted that there should be an understanding of the cost of improving performance and assessing its financial worth; It was agreed that the first area to review will be Voids and Lettings as this has an impact on revenue generation.

8.2 Board discussed the impact on the Victoria Centre Flats with regard to Intu now being in administration. It was confirmed that NCH is liaising with (Nottingham City Council (NCC) on the terms in the lease and its implications. It is understood that it will be business as usual and that work on the lift renewal programme will continue. There should be no negative impact on the Victoria Centre residents.



The ADTES stated that there will be a communication coming out shortly to the residents.

8.3 Board discussed their previous agreement that their preference is to have officers provide presentations rather than lengthy reports. However, it was also noted that there needs to be a balance between reports that need to be read before meetings, and presentations that are given at the meeting itself without Board having not been able to see them beforehand.

**9 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

**The next scheduled meeting will be on the 1 SEPTEMBER 2020.**

**The meeting closed at 19:41**

**SIGNED..... DATE .....**