



**Minutes of Berneslai Homes Board held 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2024 at 4.00pm**  
**Gateway Plaza**

**Present:**

- Ken Taylor - Chair
- Richard Fryer - Board Member
- Adam Hutchinson - Board Member
- Gez Morrall - Board Member
- Eric Smith - Board Member (Co-optee to the Board)
- Jo Sugden - Board Member
- Sarah Tattersall - Board Member
- Mahara Haque - Independent Chair of Customer Services Committee (Co-optee to the Board)

**In attendance**

- Amanda Garrard - CEO
- Dave Fullen - Executive Director, Customer & Estate Services
- Arturo Gulla - Executive Director, Property Services
- Lee Winterbottom - Managing Director Construction Services
- Kulvinder Sihota - Executive Director, Corporate Services
- Sam Roebuck - Head of Governance and Strategy and Company Secretary
- Kathy McArdle - Service Director BMBC

Due to the change in circumstances of ES (tenant Board member) and the information/ recommendation included in the Governance update report, it was agreed that this item be taken first (Item 4). ES left the room.

	ACTION
<p><b><u>Item 1 – Apologies</u></b></p> <p>Kevin Osborne Board Director Mark Johnson Board Director</p>	
<p><b><u>Item 2 – Declarations of Interest</u></b></p> <p>ES (Item 4 Governance Update).</p>	

<p><b><u>Item 3 – Building and Fire Safety – Video Presentation</u></b></p> <p>AGu introduced the video. He advised that BH had worked closely with the Building and Safety Engagement Panel for high rise buildings in producing.</p> <p>The video was well received and discussion followed. Board were informed of the composition of the panel, a mix of tenant and leaseholders who meet every 6 weeks. They were advised of how information is disseminated to the residents and informed of an electronic display board which will shortly be available; this will further enhance how messages are circulated and received. The good practice being developed for the high rise blocks will also be introduced for low rise buildings.</p> <p>Board acknowledged the positive work taking place with the Panel and a suggestion was made on the potential for active tenants to also be involved in any Strategy Session discussions – agreed to explore.</p> <p>The Chair on behalf of the Board requested thanks be extended to the Engagement Panel.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b></p> <p><b>The Board received the presentation.</b></p>	<p>CD</p>
<p><b><u>Item 4 – Governance Update</u></b></p> <p>ES left the meeting for this item.</p> <p>SR presented the report and brought Board’s attention to the annual Board Development Plan which includes training activities. A slight amendment was requested to highlight the training that is deemed to be mandatory or optional. The report also included a recommendation that the Board Register of Interests be published on the website. At the previous Board meeting Board also agreed to the appointment of a trainee Councillor; the Memorandum of Articles have been amended to reflect this (Appendix D) and these are progressing through the Council’s governance process.</p> <p>Board were made aware of the changes in the circumstance of ES, that he is no longer a Council tenant. However, due to the skills required it was recommended that he be retained on the Board as a co-optee, however Board were asked to note that he would no longer have voting rights. Board acknowledged the major contributions ES made at the recent away day, particularly around IT and fully supported the co-optee recommendation, to be reviewed after 12 months.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Board approved the proposed annual Board Development Plan for 2024, subject to amending to reflect the mandatory and optional training</b></li> <li>• <b>Board reviewed and were satisfied with the Board Personal Development Programme</b></li> </ul>	<p>SR</p> <p>SR</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Board agreed to the publication of the Board Member Register of Interests as recommended by Audit and Risk Committee</b></li> <li>• <b>Board noted the proposed amendments to the Memorandum of Articles</b></li> <li>• <b>Board agreed that Eric Smith be appointed as a Co-optee to the Board from 22/2/2024 and the arrangement be reviewed in 12 months</b></li> </ul> <p>ES returned to the meeting and was congratulated on his appointment.</p>	
<p><b><u>Item 5 – Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report 2023</u></b></p> <p>AH in his capacity as Chair of Audit and Risk Committee presented the report, commenting on the assurance the Committee provides to Board.</p> <p>The main points were highlighted: -</p> <p>Adriana Rrustemi left the Board. Gez Morrall commenced. The importance of reflecting on the gender change dynamics was noted and it was felt this needs keeping at the forefront of people’s minds.</p> <p>Board noted the good attendance at Audit and Risk Committee – a slight error on attendance was observed, GM had been included as a retired member, should be in current.</p> <p>The report also details how the terms of reference are discharged and an additional delegation to the Terms of Reference has been included, being more specific on the oversight on business continuity.</p> <p>Attention was drawn to the Plans for 2024. AH advised he will be meeting with SR to discuss succession planning and induction. He also referred to the 2 year zero based review of risk, issues and concerns which he attends, advising that at the next review, other Board members will be asked to join.</p> <p>Committee budgets were discussed. Board advised that although there is a training plan in place, it may be as changes occur i.e. professionalism etc further training may be required for individuals or groups which would be added to the plan. Board noted the significant spend on Internal Audit.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b></p> <p><b>Board approved the report and recommendations, as recommended by Audit and Risk Committee.</b></p>	<p>SR</p>

**Item 6 – Quarter 3 Performance Report 2023/24**

DF presented the report, advising Board that the full Performance report was scrutinised at the last Customer Services Committee, along with the Q3 PRIP report and Q3 Your Comments Count.

The report is positive with sustained good performance on building safety.

Customer Services Committee spent considerable time discussing void rent loss and the impact and the actions in place. They acknowledged the challenges in managing major voids in budget.

The Committee also considered in detail complaints handling and compliance, particularly in relation to the implementation of the new Housing Ombudsman Code which starts on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024. There was a full and open debate at the meeting. The Committee felt that current performance on the proportion of Stage 1 complaints being dealt with in time is not acceptable and improvement is required. However, RF as a member of the Committee advised that they were provided with assurance that the Executive Director of Customer and Estate Services and the Executive Director Property Services have been tasked with producing an action plan which will then be shared with the Customer Services Committee and they look forward to receiving the report.

Board noted that complaints are more than double than what they were 12 months ago and with the implementation of the new Code and approach, will increase in the short term, until the funding is addressed in relation to the accumulated works.

General performance in Q3 is good. January's performance information is now out and there are no significant changes in the trends or performance from Quarter 3.

The format of the report was discussed. It was felt this needs to be more succinct for Board, with key information and more visuals etc, linking back to strategic discussion. Board welcomed the benchmarking information, providing helpful context and highlighting the strong performance in some areas. DF advised that the table (dashboard) which Board felt was confusing is the information requested by the Council, so they are sighted. S. Drafz to amend future quarterly performance reports for Board to reflect feedback.

SR

Board requested that consideration be given to all Board reports on the level of information they require, and also the level required at Committees.

SR/AG

An observation was made on the staff satisfaction level being significantly lower than the target and how this would be tracked. DF confirmed this had also been discussed at Customer Services Committee. They were satisfied as the information was that used for the IIP assessment last year. IIP are returning in March to undertake a new survey. It was noted that last year's survey was carried out during the period of in depth restructuring taking place, with lots of uncertainty. Since then significant progress has been made.

<p>To conclude DF summarised the priorities for Customer Services Committee which includes a programme of ‘deep dives’, informed by cumulative performance information.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Board considered the quarter three performance.</b></li> <li>• <b>Where performance targets have not been achieved, Board were satisfied with the explanations provided and that there are adequate controls and actions in place.</b></li> <li>• <b>Board did not identify any further areas where they feel more detailed consideration is required by Customer Services Committee.</b></li> </ul>	
<p><b><u>Item 7 – Repairs First Update</u></b></p> <p>KS provided the update to Board.</p> <p>Repairs First went live on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> February, following a delay in issues arising from switching from the testing to the live server which delayed training. She advised that teething problems are expected with a project of this size and complexity. Most of these are around the interfaces in relation to the bespoke elements. However, there are also some user errors. Training is ongoing and there are a number of super users. It is estimated that bedding in will take around 4 to 6 weeks. Teams are however more positive. A lessons learned report will be submitted to Audit and Risk Committee in April and Board in May. This will be useful to collectively learn how to set up similar projects in the future in the right way and the resources required.</p> <p>KMcA congratulated KS and the team and extended thanks to everyone involved. She acknowledged the pressures and hard work that has gone into achieving this implementation.</p> <p>LW provided comment from an operative perspective. There had been some frustration initially due to work being frozen. However, looking forward to next week and beyond, operatives are seeing the positives as appointments are going in. Already there is minimal travel between jobs, with an increase in appointments. Workload of teams can be tracked and he provided an example where it had been identified that bricklaying teams will shortly be available to assist with accumulated works. An earlier concern of operatives with regard to start and finish times etc is now resolved with additional training having taken place. Some very positive comments have been received so far.</p> <p>Board noted that with regard to efficiencies, these will be minimal in the first six months, improving over the full year, when they will be built into the CS budget. Reports will also be developed, which will include information on the impact on complaints.</p> <p>The Chair on behalf of the Board requested thanks be passed on to the Team for their huge effort in achieving this significant milestone.</p>	<p>KS</p>

<p><b>Resolved:</b></p> <p><b>Board received the verbal update.</b></p>	
<p><b><u>Item 8 – Quarterly Risk Update</u></b></p> <p>SR presented the report, summarising the key points contained in the Executive Summary of the report.</p> <p>Reference was made to the Strategic Risks, particularly around the HRA and its inability to cover service requirements and business continuity. AGa advised that with regard to the HRA, this is a national issue and is being picked up by the LGA and the NFA, trying to raise awareness, lobbying etc. The Business Continuity is around cyber security threats being contained in service areas business continuity plans. SR advised service areas have been asked to review their plans with regards to cyber security and this may result in the rating/concern lessening.</p> <p>AH referred to the RSH Sector Risk Profile and advised that Audit and Risk Committee had reviewed the self-assessment, appreciating the good work that has taken place on this. AH felt that this is essential reading for Board. RF advised that he had found the self-assessment to be very helpful, is aligned and highlights the management of risks.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Board reviewed and commented on the Quarterly Risk update and confirmed their satisfaction</b></li> <li>• <b>Board reviewed and commented on the Strategic Risks</b></li> <li>• <b>Board approved the RSH Sector Risk Profile Self-Assessment carried out by BH</b></li> </ul>	<p>ALL</p>
<p><b><u>Item 9 – Board Terms of Reference</u></b></p> <p>SR presented as part of the annual review of the Board Terms of reference . Although the role of the BMBC shareholder is not included currently, discussion will take place to agree appropriate wording. Board were asked if any further changes were required. An error was highlighted with regard to consistency of EMT/SMT in narrative. SR advised any reference to SMT should be EMT and the document will be amended.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b></p> <p><b>The Terms of Reference were noted.</b></p>	<p>SR/KMcA</p> <p>SR</p>

**10. Resource Information Papers**

**10.1 Board Members Fact Sheet**

Board noted the fact sheet which they felt was useful to receive on a regular basis.

DF brought to Board's attention 2024 being a 53 week rent year. This will mean all tenants on Universal Credit will not receive it for 1 week of the year, which will affect around 5000 tenants. This scenario occurs every 5/6 years. Similar to last time, national campaigns and lobbying is taking place. This presents a risk to rent collection, particularly as more are being migrated onto UC this year.