

Open minutes of Tower Hamlets Homes Board Meeting
 Thursday 24th February 2022 **7.15 – 7:40pm**
 Harford Centre, Harford Street, E1 4FG

Board Directors Present:

- Ann Lucas (AL & Chair) - Chair, Independent Board Director
- Claire Tuffin (CT & Vice Chair) - Resident Board Director
- Safia Jama (SJam) - Independent Board Director
- Nikesh Shah (NS) - Independent Board Director
- John Wu (JW) - Independent Board Director
- Simon Hart (SH) - Resident Board Director
- Mahbub Anam (MA) - Resident Board Director
- Asma Islam (AI) - Cllr Board Director
- Sabina Akhtar (SA) - Cllr Board Director
- Tarik Khan (TK) - Cllr Board Director

Co – Optees Present:

- Iain Lawson (IL) - Co-Optee to Finance & Audit Committee
- Pam Haluwa (PH) - Co-Optee to Gov.& Remuneration Committee

Officers Present:

- Susmita Sen (SS) - Chief Executive
- Neil Isaac (NI) - Director of Finance
- Ann Otesanya (AO) - Director of Neighbourhoods
- Paul Davey (PD) - Director of Business Transformation
- Will Manning (WM) - Director of Asset Management
- Gulam Hussain - Head of Regulatory Assurance
- Darren Cruice - Head of Asset Management & Compliance
- Elizabeth Skillen - Executive Support Officer

In Attendance:

- Rupert Brandon (RB) - LBTH Head of Housing Supply
- John Kiwanuka (JK) - Housing Partnerships Manager
- Flavia Schofield - Graduate Trainee
- Jameela Mulla - Graduate Trainee

Apologies:

- Val Whitehead (VW) - Cllr Board Director
- Karen Swift (KS) - LBTH Divisional Director of Housing & Regeneration

	Recruitment to THH CEO	
	A confidential item was discussed 18:15 – 19:10 regarding the recruitment plan for THH CEO. Only Board members were present during this discussion. The notes of this are included in the closed minutes.	
	<i>Prior to leaving the meeting at 19.10, TK, AI, SA and SJam confirmed their agreement to all recommendations in all reports.</i>	
1.	Welcome	
1.1.	AL welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies for the above were noted.	
2.	Declaration of Interest	
2.1.	CT, IL, PH and SH declared their interest as leaseholders of Tower Hamlets Homes.	
3.	Questions from Members of the Public	

3.1.	None.	
4.	Minutes of the Open Minutes of the Board Meeting Held on 9th December 2021	
4.1.	<i>The THH Board AGREED minutes of meeting held on 9th December 2021 were an accurate record.</i>	
	PD introduced the first three reports in Part 1 of the agenda, all of which formed the bulk of the agenda at the Board Discussion on 27 th Jan.	
5.	Business Plan 2022/23	
5.1.	The paper presented a working draft of the 2022/23 THH Business Plan which builds on the outline Business Plan agreed by Board on 9 th December 2021.	
5.2	The covering report outlines the focus of the 2021/22 Business Plan and the changes made for 2022/23.	
5.3	MA asked about more information regarding the New Town Hall move – timescales, services, staff numbers, modernisation and current leases.	
5.4	Exact timings for THH are not confirmed, likely late 2022/early 2023. Desk to staff ratios of 4:10, a total of 159 desks and an environment to support our Agile Working Policy. Face to face services to be run through the Customer Hub. A requirement to serve notice on the lease for City Reach 6 months in advance, the earliest June.	
5.5	MA asked whether we have made reference to the Social Housing White Paper and upcoming social housing.	
5.6	The Business Plan is centred on the changes introduced by the Social Housing White Paper, reflected in the foreword and within the deliverables, for example the Tenant Satisfaction Measures and Building Safety work. We will include upcoming social housing in the plan where best placed.	
5.7	CT asked whether it is worth monitoring percentage of high risk actions arising from FRAs completed to timescale.	
5.8	A good suggestion which will be picked up as part of our Health and Safety dashboard.	
5.9	CT asked whether we need to amend the wording on Tenant Satisfaction Measures to demonstrate proactivity.	
5.10	The wording will be amended to cater for this suggestion.	
5.11	CT requested, for clarity, if £'000 could be added to the table on management fees.	
5.12	This has been updated as suggested.	
5.13	MA commented that THH has previously done work on LBTH's Youth Services contract which was then awarded to Poplar HARCA.	
5.14	LBTH did award its Youth Services contract to Poplar HARCA but this was subject to a protracted challenge which has prevented mobilisation. THH will engage with Poplar HARCA as part of the mobilisation process to ensure benefits to our estates are obtained. THH will separately commission its own services to provide something more bespoke for residents.	
5.15	MA asked what percentage is appropriate for reserves?	
5.16	Approximately 10% of turnover.	
5.17	NS requested that the deliverables are connected to the output using more specific	

5.18	wording. NS commented that the indicators and targets are very clear. The major deliverables have been intentionally left a little vague as they are underpinned by a number of key activities which will be detailed in a delivery plan. This ensures the document is accessible, read and isn't overburdened with information.	GH
5.19	NS asked what percentage of over programming is included in the indicative THH Capital Programme.	
5.20	Against a budget of just over £88.3 million for the next 3 years, we are over programming at £13.6 million which equates to 15.4%.	
5.21	Action: Final amendments to the Business Plan to be sent to SS and AL	
5.22	<i>The THH Board NOTED the Draft Business Plan 2022/23 and delegated to the Chair & Chief Executive any final amendments and agreement of BCIs and targets with the Client.</i>	
6.	Resident Engagement Strategy	
6.1	This report provided an outline of the revised Resident Engagement Strategy 2022-26, setting out the principles to THH's approach which aim to meet the requirements outlined in the Tenant Involvement & Empowerment Standard.	
6.2	Papers included the draft Engagement Strategy and a draft Consultation toolkit for Board approval.	
6.3	MA commented, regarding "Principle 2: Show the impact of engagement," should be straight forward to put information on the website and social media.	
6.4	This is being planned and our new Digital Comms Officer will be leading work on refreshing content across our website.	
6.5	MA asked, regarding "Principle 4: Make it easy to become involved," can we use technology to better engage residents?	
6.6	That is proposed and explored in more detail in the strategy under "Principle 5: Embrace technology"	
6.7	JW asked, regarding "Principle 5: Embrace technology," what considerations have been made for residents who have poor tech literacy.	
6.8	THH's approach to embracing technology so far has been conservative and mindful of the impact a transition to digital engagement may have on those less able to make use of technology. Intention is to use a traditional approach which is enhanced through options for remote engagement. THH have made clear our commitment to supporting residents to set up systems to participate where this may be requested.	
6.9	CT commented that she would like to see more reference to co-production of solutions rather than an emphasis on consultation, which is quite a low level of engagement.	
6.10	Co-production is our aspiration for the organisation, this needs to be taken in stages and our initial objective is creating a consistent and cohesive offer around consultation which delivers meaningful engagement. We recognise that work is needed in opening up more opportunities for involvement. We welcome advice on firming the steps towards co-production.	
6.11	CT asked if there are measurable targets for the strategy.	
6.12	There are no direct measurables to this strategy, however our activities do contribute to wider organisational measures e.g., THH does what it says.	
6.13	CT requested that the link to these organisational measures is made clearer.	
6.14	MA asked how people sign up and become aware of low level engagement	

6.15	opportunities Approach to low engagement varies and include targeted online and telephone consultation and survey participant referrals. We plan to publicise the offer more in Open Door going forward.	
6.16	JW asked what provisions are in place to conduct consultation tasks in a language other than English, to risk those being overlooked.	
6.17	Our experience of offering access to interpreting and translation has shown there is a very low uptake to these services. THH employs a diverse group of staff which allows us to engage with a wider group of residents. For major consultations we supplemented online consultation with physical visits and stalls. We have also historically engaged the services of third sector organisations that are better placed to work with specific communities.	
6.18	NS asked how we can ensure strategy compliance	
6.19	We will be formally launching our consultation guideline internally and encouraging staff to seek advice from the Regulatory Assurance team before undertaking consultation activities. All directorates have been asked to produce plans which include their proposals for resident engagement allowing for oversight activity.	
6.20	PH asked who is responsible for updating the THH website.	
6.21	PD responded that staff across the organisation have undergone training and changes are to go through the Communications team for approval. It does need more work to keep it up to date and information accurate.	
6.22	PH gave an example of unclear information and the confusion that can cause for residents.	
6.23	IL commented that THH need to ensure oversight of projects such as the community food gardens to ensure that all residents are included and able to get involved as per the ED&I requirements.	
6.24	Action: To raise this point with the Community Partnerships Team and ensure this is in place.	PD
6.25	<i>The THH Board NOTED the the key engagement principles and the engagement toolkit, and APPROVED the Resident Engagement Strategy 2022-26,</i>	
7.	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement	
7.1	The papers include a report outlining the refresh of the ED&I statement in addition to the draft statement, 'Altogether Different.' The refresh reflects the angle agreed prior to the disruption of the pandemic.	
7.2	JW asked whether we are able to provide examples of what LBTH is looking for in THH demonstrating due diligence.	
7.3	Action: To respond to the question around THH demonstrating due diligence with more detail.	LO/GH
7.4	CT asked whether there are any measurable targets associated with this strategy.	
7.5	We are proposing to bring a paper to the Standards & Customer Experience Committee that sets out current data on a wide range of ED&I measures. The Committee will be able to select with measures they wish THH to prioritise and report regular progress on.	
7.6	NS asked whether there is a tactical implementation plan to follow the Statement.	
7.7	We have consciously moved away from producing a separate diversity delivery plan as this approach contributes to a disconnect between broader business plan objectives and activities within the Diversity Strategy. Directorate plans have been set up to encourage services to consider ED&I implications which can be supplemented with additional actions.	

7.8	AL commented that this is an area that the Committees will be drilling down into more detail.	PD
7.9	CT added that it would be good for accountability to schedule in an annual review for the Board/Committee of the original strategy, any actions and KPIs to monitor progress.	
7.10	<i>The THH Board APPROVED the new approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and the refreshed Diversity Strategy.</i>	
8.	Growth and Savings Report	
8.1	This report on growth and savings was also presented to the Finance & Audit Committee on 16 th February.	
8.2	NI presented an overview of the paper, focusing on key headlines. The Management fee is set to be fixed next week. Rent increase is at 4.1% and service charges, 3.1%, in line with government guidance. There continues to be struggle concerning the HRA Business Plan, particularly balancing investment needs and resources to maximise income.	
8.3	Internal discussions around budget setting took place in a Star Chamber format and 2023/24 may well require more savings to the HRA so THH are beginning planning for this.	
8.4	<i>The THH Board NOTED the Growth and Savings Report.</i>	
9.	Building Safety Group Minutes – 8th December 2021	
9.1	CT requested that these minutes are included in the Asset Management & Building Safety Committee Papers.	
9.2	Noted and actioned by ES.	
9.3	<i>The THH Board NOTED the Building Safety Group Minutes from 8th December 2021.</i>	
10.	CEO Report	
10.1	This report provided an update across all directorates including THH performance as of the end of December 2021.	
10.2	<i>The THH Board NOTED the CEO Report.</i>	
	<i>RB and JK left the meeting at 19:40</i>	

Actions Log: Open Board Meeting
24th February 2022 7.15 – 7:40pm

Item	Action	Who	Due	Status
5.21	Action: Final amendments to the Business Plan to be sent to AO and AL	GH		Amendment – SS now AO. Still awaiting final sign off from LBTH, delays due to post-election.

6.24	Action: To raise this point with the Community Partnerships Team and ensure this is in place.	PD		PD confirmed that as well as regular check ups on gardens, we also have an annual check-up on all community food gardens to ensure that they are following the terms and conditions of the community food garden licence that THH issues to all groups, which includes ED&I requirements
7.3	Action: To respond to the question around THH demonstrating due diligence with more detail. <i>“JW asked whether we are able to provide examples of what LBTH is looking for in THH demonstrating due diligence.”</i>	LO/GH		This may be a misunderstanding, we do not seek specific approval for our EDI statement from LBTH.

Ann Lucas
Chair

08.03.22
Date