

Open minutes of Tower Hamlets Homes Board Meeting
Thursday 9th June 2022 **6:05 – 7:05pm**
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:

Ann Otesanya (AO)	-	Acting Chief Executive
Neil Isaac (NI)	-	Director of Finance
Beverley Greenidge (BG)	-	Director of Neighbourhoods
Gulam Hussain	-	Head of Regulatory Assurance and Acting Head of NHDs
Darren Cruice	-	Head of Asset Management & Compliance
Elizabeth Skillen	-	Governance Officer

In Attendance:

Rupert Brandon (RB)	-	LBTH Head of Housing Supply
Karen Swift (KS)	-	LBTH Divisional Director of Housing & Regeneration

Apologies:

Val Whitehead (VW)	-	Cllr Board Director
Paul Davey (PD)	-	Director of Business Transformation

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 24th February 2022	
4.1.	AO provided an update on action 5.21. At the most recent Quarterly Strategic Meeting with LBTH, the Business Plan was signed off after a final change which detailed the transition between Susmita's departure and Ann acting into the role.	
4.2	<i>The THH Board AGREED minutes of meeting held on 24th February 2022 were an accurate record.</i>	
5.	New Town Hall Move and City Reach Break Notice	

5.1	CS provided a report which outlined plans for the New Town Hall move in early 2023, early cost proposals from LBTH for the space and how we plan to manage the move to minimise disruption.	
5.2	Questions were submitted prior to the meeting concerning the charges in the Whitechapel area and space allocations. CS explained that LBTH have not set out the rationale for the proposed charge of £45psf but THH estimated £30-40psf and increasing to £50psf towards the City end of Whitechapel Road. The space allocation provided allows for 160 workstations, collaboration and break out spaces, and a large meeting room. CS confirmed that whilst savings may be relatively modest, the move will ensure HRA funds are kept within the council's finances and that the council's objective to strengthen collaboration is met, any net savings will filter through to residents however minor.	
5.3	CS noted that there is more work to be done with LBTH on confirming the costing and understanding the breakdown e.g., service charges.	
5.4	AI commented that layouts are reliant on the Mayor's plans for the council.	
5.5	CS responded that, although there might be some changes, there will still be a need for space for the 'essential' housing management function teams.	
5.6	JW asked whether there is a roadmap for the next steps including milestone dates and dependencies that may impact decisions e.g., break clause and how much information THH receive from LBTH regarding the status of the preparations.	
5.7	CS explained that we are still awaiting a report from the developers which should provide a clearer picture. LBTH are still expecting a handover from developers on 31 st August and decant by December. THH decisions on moving dates need to be made by July, 6 months ahead. CS noted that THH have the Harford Street Office on lease until March 2023 so there is possibility to use this as an option if a need arises to exercise the City Reach Break Clause. LBTH are aware of our terms/break clause options.	
5.8	AL added that if there is any slippage, THH will not sign the break clause and have budgeted for the costs of City Reach until March.	
5.9	SA asked whether THH will be operating from Rushmead, as an office.	
5.10	AO clarified that Rushmead had been marked as a development site and THH had been asked to leave by the end of August. THH has now been advised that we will not be asked to leave Rushmead and have been asked to stay possibly until the end of March.	
5.11	Action: To consult with NI regarding City Reach Break Notice and let Board know of any changes or concerns	AL
5.12	<i>The THH Board NOTED the report on the New Town Hall move and City Reach break notice.</i>	
6.	The new Tenant Satisfaction Measure Regime	
6.1	LO outlined the requirements of the new Tenant Satisfaction Measures, the timelines and the implications for THH, particularly around the recategorizing of 'positive' measures to not include the fair rating.	
6.2	LO explained that we are awaiting results of the consultation, due in 'summer 2022' and the new regime will commence in 2023/24.	
6.3	LO outlined factors to consider which mean negatively impact satisfaction including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The London effect – up to 10% difference if compared in a national league table 	

6.4	<p>2. All 12 of the new TSMs are captured using perception only – a random sample of tenants as opposed to those who have recently received a service, perception scores are lower on similar questions</p>	
6.5	<p>Work is being done by THH to understand the drivers of the 'fair' rating and what work needs to be done to improve within each service area. After results of the consultation become available, THH will run a pilot scheme with the new measures and questions to fully understand and analyse the impact of the changes.</p>	
6.6	<p>PH asked whether reasons for satisfaction are shared with the contractors.</p>	
6.7	<p>LO responded that this information is regularly shared and alerts are sent for any poor/terrible scores. GH added that contractor satisfaction form part of key performance indicators which the contracts are measured against. AO explained that THH are currently considering how the repairs service is structured with the aim of strengthening contract management.</p>	
6.8	<p>AI commented that it might be useful for THH to report back to Board on the new contracts and specifically how updates are logged onto the system.</p>	
6.9	<p>AO responded that information about the contracts is included in the CE report and AL added that more detailed discussions around lessons learnt and effective contract management will be reported back to the Asset Management and Building Safety Committee.</p>	
6.10	<p>JW asked how confident THH are in the accuracy of the mapping/matching of measurement scales for satisfaction.</p>	
6.11	<p>LO responded that the measurement indicators are not the same in most cases, so for the analysis we opted for best fit, but some are not collected at all. Removing the fair rating is the worst-case scenario but as many measures are transactional there could be a further drop. This will be challenging for THH and satisfaction results will be lower than we usually see.</p>	
6.12	<p>JW asked whether there have been any thoughts on what the actions would be from these 'predicted' lower results, is there a framework or plan in place?</p>	
6.13	<p>AL explained that the Regulator would expect us to tell them what we are doing to improve scores as they will have similar powers to Ofsted. LO added that we are trying to pre-empt this and the pilot will give us more information. The KWEST survey that has been drafted to mirror the regime also includes some 'why' questions.</p>	
6.14	<p>IL asked when we will get details of other organisations and their results from surveys and JW asked whether we have any indication on where THH sits relative to other housing organisations.</p>	
6.15	<p>AL responded that it is likely the NFA will do something across all ALMOs. AO added that for THHF, they are looking to realign the benchmarking information supplied to the Council scrutiny to the new regime. Through Housemark benchmarking, we will also be able to see others results in league tables. GH commented that what might skew reporting is the requirement for larger landlords to report at a group level, particularly those with a mixture of urban and rural stock. Housemark will be useful at providing analysis of this.</p>	
6.16	<p>JW asked what the implications would be if THH is found to have too many metrics on the 'terrible' end.</p>	
	<p>LO responded that the TSMs are designed to be one tool of several that enables the Regulator to build a picture of how organisations are performing. Low satisfaction measures alone are unlikely to trigger an inspection but would raise the alert level for THH.</p>	

6.17	LO explained that we will see our first outputs from the new regime in March 2024.	
6.18	<i>The THH Board NOTED the report on the new Tenant Satisfaction Measure Regime.</i>	
7.	Resident Panel Annual Report	
7.1	GH presented the Resident Panel Annual Report which provides an outline of it's the groups key work outputs and achievements. This was presented at the most recent Standards & Customer Experience Committee.	
7.2	<i>The THH Board NOTED the Resident Panel Annual Report.</i>	
8.	CE Report	
8.1	AO introduced the CE report and picked up on key areas for the Board to note, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private Sector Enforcement – this previously had particular interest from the Board, there is a full programme of work planned but this is a large workload for one person • Recruitment – the new Director of Asset Mgmt will commence at the end of July and an internal applicant has been permanently recruited to Head of Property Services/Capital Delivery • New Repairs Contracts – more detailed information will be reported to the Asset Management & Building Safety Committee in July • External Wall Surveys – pilot programme is underway. It is anticipated that alternative arrangements will be required once the survey on Cranbrook has been completed • Unauthorised occupancy – have requested that the Fraud team do more promotion for residents to report cases • Build for Sale – details are as it is currently but there is potential for change as the new administration looks at priorities and the supply pipeline 	
8.2	JW asked, relating the hardship vouchers for residents, how often this type of funding is available, how involved are THH in obtaining funding for residents and whether there are any resident demographics which have not been sufficiently targeted.	
8.3	AO responded that we are closely connected with the LBTH tackling poverty team and use any opportunities that come our way. BG added, that this is the first time a voucher scheme this large has been available. THH are meeting regularly with the LBTH team to see what else is available and we are in discussions with our local partners of how to help people. There is more work to be done by THH in this area and build it into our offer. Distribution of vouchers has been through a programme of staff referrals and self-referrals, basic analysis of recipient data shows a good level of diversity in the uptake.	
8.4	AI added that she assumes THH has a good partnership with LBTH to deliver the summer holiday and half term free school meals on a continued basis.	
8.5	SH enquired, regarding hardship in winter, what THH are doing about accessing energy efficiency measures through the GLA.	
8.6	DC responded that THH have looked at opportunities in the last 12 months however there are some reasons why these haven't been successful including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus is rightly on properties with SAP score D&E and most THH properties are C and above • Majority of the housing stock has got gas central heating • The volume of leaseholders in our blocks impacts bids 	

8.7	DC added that this has been identified as an objective in the Asset Management Action Plan and the restructure of the Asset Management and Compliance team should help support this with regards to capacity. Deadlines for bid submission and spending of the allocated money are very tight.	PD/BS
8.8	SH commented that there are some success stories that THH are not promoting enough e.g. operation Elkhart.	
8.9	AO agreed and shared with the group the ASB team's nomination for the Housing Heroes Award.	
8.10	Action: More comms to share success stories	
8.11	IL asked whether we have a feeling of how many unauthorised occupancy properties there are in the stock.	
8.12	BG responded that the National Audit Office estimate 10-12% of social housing properties are occupied by unauthorised residents. At THH we currently have 88 known unauthorised occupants who are either awaiting offers of alternative accommodation or with legal for possession action. The Social Housing Fraud Team are currently investigating 59 cases for THH. We have an ongoing programme of tenancy audit checks which allows us to uncover irregularities and unauthorised occupation. We expect to complete approximately 1025 audits this year, the Fire Safety Team also help us to identify potential unauthorised occupation.	
8.13	MA asked whether THH are doing any other outdoor activities during the summer holidays.	
8.14	<i>Fokrul Hoque provided a written response –</i> We have advertised and received applications from TRAs and estate-based groups for summer holiday activities to be considered by the ICF panel. We are organising an Eid celebration event and are in the final stages of commissioning our Estate Based Youth Programme where we hope to select several providers to deliver youth activities throughout summer and beyond, over the next 27 months.	
8.15	JW asked whether the issues with the OCO contract mobilisation has had an impact on the ability to conduct works, as well as an impact on the accuracy and completeness of data.	
8.16	<i>Hillary Kelly provided a written response -</i> The issues with OCO during mobilisation have impacted largely internally on THH, re our visibility of information and actions, as well as our ability to robustly manage the contract and produce performance information. They also impacted on OCO having to double-handle admin in two systems. Manual workarounds have been in place to reduce these difficulties but not completely negate them. The main impact on ability to conduct works arose through OCO's delay in recruiting sufficient resources, partly impacted by the current recruitment market. They had to rely on third party contractors to mitigate the risk.	
8.17	<i>The THH Board NOTED the CE Report.</i>	
	<i>TK left the meeting at 18:55</i>	
9.	Committee and Board Forward Plans	
9.1	Draft forward plans for all Committee's and the Board were presented for oversight, regular updates will be provided to members if there are any changes.	
9.2	No comments or amendments were made.	

9.3	<i>The THH Board NOTED the Committee and Board Forward Plans.</i>	
	<i>RB and KS left the meeting at 19:05</i>	

Actions Log: Open Board Meeting
9th June 2022 6:05 – 7:05pm

Item	Action	Who	Due	Status
5.11	To consult regarding City Reach Break Notice and let Board know of any changes or concerns	AL/NI		Complete - ongoing
8.10	More comms to share success stories	PD/BS		Successes are shared externally across our social media feeds, predominantly Twitter and sometimes Facebook. Work ongoing within the Comms Team regarding consistent external Comms.

Ann Lucas
Chair

20.07.2022
Date