

## Minutes from Board meeting - Non-Confidential held 24<sup>th</sup> April 2024

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| Attendance | Christine Gore (CG) (Acting Chair) (Vice Chair), Cllr Glenn Andrews (GA), Trish Blain (TB), Sarah Godfrey (SG), Ian Mason (IM), Andrew Parfitt (AP), Cllr Richard Pineger (RP), John Rawson (JR), Gareth Edmundson (GE), Paul Jones (PJ), Paul Leo (PL), Paul Minnis (PM), Julie McCarthy (JM), Caroline Walker (CW), Mark Way (MW) ( <i>attended remotely</i> ) |
| Recorder   | Rhian Watts (RW)   |
| Apologies  | Martin Surl (MS) (Chair), Cllr Victoria Atherstone (VA)  |
| Quorate?   | Yes  |

| Item | Notes   | Action for |
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| 1    | <p>Meeting commenced at 17:30</p> <p>Apologies received from MS and VA.</p> <p>No declarations of interest.</p>   |            |
| 2    | <p><u>Agree non-confidential minutes of the 27.03.24 meeting and to note progress on current action points</u></p> <p>The Board agreed the non-confidential minutes of the 27.03.24 meeting as a true record and noted progress on current action points.</p>   |            |
| 3    | <p><u>CEO Briefing (including Transition Update)</u></p> <p>GE introduced a highlight report on the transition and confirmed that the project is progressing well. He thanked colleagues for their ongoing dedication and commitment to making the process as smooth as possible. GE explained that no significant risks to the transfer had been identified but that we were continuing to carry out due diligence to ensure everything is in order.</p> |            |

GE noted that we are currently focusing on compliance as Covid 19 and other issues had led to around 80% of property surveys being over 5 years old. He highlighted the fundamental importance of understanding our stock and explained that we would be developing a series of action plans to ensure our data is up-to-date, supported by high quality audits. GE noted that we had set a target of 12 to 18 months to have all stock condition surveys in place. He explained that we would also be working transparently with the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH). PL explained that now the transfer workstreams were progressing well he would be working closely on compliance and understanding the background of the new regulatory requirements. He noted that it was important that we establish a plan to address compliance issues as quickly as possible to ensure that the RSH do not lose confidence. IM asked for further detail on the planned audits. PL confirmed that we are working with internal audit to re-prioritise our current audit plan. He noted that he had discussed their pilot inspection with Oxford City Council to understand what problems had been identified and would be using this information and working closely with internal audit to establish an effective plan.

JR agreed that it was sensible to prioritise stock condition surveys and welcomed the continued focus on asbestos. AP noted that Audit & Risk had recently reviewed our approach to legionella and asked if there were any particular concerns in this area. PL confirmed that we have processes in place but that we need to ensure that the records are stored correctly and are easily accessible. He noted that the RSH will want assurance that anyone going into a property can access all the information available on that property, so it was important information was available through QL and not stored in separate spreadsheets. IM commented that concerns over the functional limitations of the QL system had been raised in the past and discussed with Aareon. PL confirmed that Oxford City Council are using QL to record all their assets and that we would be working with them to understand how they had overcome the functionality issues. He noted the progress we had made with the system to record damp, mould and condensation and highlighted the importance of ensuring we were making the best use possible of QL. RP commented that the Board had been watching

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|  | <p>improvements over stock condition management over the last 3 years and agreed that it was important that this work continue. JR noted that it was important that the new governance proposals provide a robust enough scrutiny process to satisfy the RSH.</p> <p>GE highlighted that a contractor had discovered potential RAAC (Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete) during work at one of our properties. He explained that the RAAC was extremely hidden, so had not been identified in the desktop exercise carried out in September 2023. GE noted that three additional properties may potentially also have RAAC due to similar construction methods. He explained that we would be assessing the extent and condition of the RAAC to establish what action should be taken. TB asked whether tenants would need to be moved in order to deal with RAAC. RP noted that this could be particularly challenging as this is a sheltered living property. PL confirmed that the structural engineer had identified that the RAAC was surrounded by wood wall behind an artex ceiling, that is likely to contain asbestos. He noted that there is a guest room in the property that should enable us to carry out investigative work to establish the condition of the RAAC. PL confirmed that if we do need to carry out work it will be necessary to remove the artex, so some tenants would need to be rehoused during the duration of the works. He noted that we should have a clearer understanding of what is required in the next few days. CG asked that RP be kept informed of progress in his role as Ward Member for the area.</p> <p><b>ACTION</b> – PL to keep RP informed on the progress of the RAAC investigation</p> <p>GE explained that the TUPE conversation had begun with the Trade Unions (TU). He noted that colleagues’ contractual conditions are almost identical at CBH and CBC but conversations with colleagues had stressed the importance of non-contractual benefits, particularly the BUPA health care plan. GE explained that we are proposing replacing BUPA with the Medicash Level 2 scheme currently used at Publica. He noted that whilst the thresholds are not as generous as BUPA, it does provide benefits that have not been available before to provide a wider wellbeing package. JM commented that she had met with the local TU</p> | <p>PL</p> |
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representatives and that their feedback had been that this was a fair package that will be well received by colleagues. She noted that this would be shared with colleagues during a briefing on the 1 May. RP commented that the provision of a health plan would also be beneficial to the organisation, as well as colleagues.

GE explained that recruitment for vacancies would be carried out on CBC terms and conditions from the 22 April for practicality reasons.

TB raised concerns around the loss of some other non-contractual benefits. CW commented that GE has invested a lot of time in speaking to colleagues and the health plan had emerged as a clear priority. She noted that it was important to ensure that colleagues at CBC and CBH are being treated fairly and equally. GE explained the need to harmonise benefits as we become one organisation and highlighted that we must retain a focus on delivering value for money for our tenants and customers.

IM noted the importance for the council of maximising the financial opportunities of the transfer and the risk that if this is not achieved this could lead to a reduction in services. He asked what the current financial position is for the council. PJ explained that there are challenges following a decade of austerity, the impact of the pandemic and the cost of living crisis but that CBC are currently fully functioning with the majority of services maintained. He highlighted that the transfer will allow both organisations to be more commercially active and to use our assets to better effect. PJ explained that combining management teams will provide £300k of savings and as of the last pension valuation, is expecting to see the pension fund 145% funded. He noted that we may see further uplifts at the next valuation which could potentially reduce pension contributions from the employer's side by £2m per annum.

The Board noted the contents of the report.

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| <p>4</p> | <p><u>Annual Risk Review</u></p> <p>PL introduced the annual risk review and explained that following review by the Executive Team one risk level had been changed and an additional risk had been added to the register relating to In-Depth Assessments.</p> <p>IM noted that references within the risk to the transition announcement and the Sector Risk Profile seemed to be out of date. He asked whether there were issues with updating the risks following the departure of colleagues. PL apologised for the clumsy wording and explained that some of the references would not be updated until the transfer has been completed. He noted that many of the risks identified in the Sector Risk Profile now fell under CBC’s responsibility. PL added that further reviews would be taking place to consider whether risks should be moved into the CBC register instead and to align the different scoring approaches between CBC and CBH. IM agreed that it was important to understand the differences in approach and ensure that the value of squaring the impact of a risk to help prioritise risks was recognised. He noted that he was hoping to meet with Ann Wolstencroft (AW) (Head of Performance, Projects and Risks) to consider this before the next Audit &amp; Risk meeting. JR commented that the Committee had anticipated that more risk scores would fall as the transition progressed. He noted his concerns that risk of loss of skills and knowledge was still prevalent this far along in the process. GE agreed that these risks should be reviewed to provide an updated report before the next meeting.</p> <p>ACTION – Arrange for IM to meet with AW<br/>         ACTION – Review risks prior to the next Audit &amp; Risk meeting</p> <p>The Board noted the contents of the report.</p> | <p>GE<br/>         ET</p> |
| <p>5</p> | <p><u>Development Update</u></p> <p>Please see confidential minutes.</p>   |                           |

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| 6 | Agree confidential minutes of the 27.03.24 meeting<br><br>Please see confidential minutes. |  |
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Meeting Closed at 18:51

Signed.....*Christie Gore*.....  
Chair of Cheltenham Borough Homes

Date.....*29/5/24*.....