

# Board meeting minutes

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## Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Keniston Housing Association Limited

held on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2017 at 6.15 p.m.at The Conference Room,  
13 Artington Close, Farnborough, Kent, BR6 7UL

**Board members in attendance** Shehla Husain (Co-Vice-Chair)  
Seema Jassi  
Barry Luhmann  
Julian Miles (Chair)  
Anthony Mills  
Sheila Sackey  
Peter Voisey (Co-Vice Chair)  
Lucy Worrall

**Also present** Jonathan Card (Chief Executive)  
Tracy Day (Minute Secretary)  
Andrew Shiat's (Finance Director and Company Secretary)  
Vivienne Astall (Housing Services Director)  
Tony Coward (Property Services Director)  
Jackie Oakes (Audit Partner at Nexia Smith and Williamson)  
Stephen Bull (Campbell Tickell)

### **Agenda Item 1 Apologies for absence, Declaration of interest and Health and Safety items to note**

Minute 250/17 Julian Miles welcomed Jackie Oakes from Nexia Smith & Williamson. He also welcomed Stephen Bull from Campbell Tickell.

Minute 251/17 Apologies for absence were received from Simone Bailey.

Minute 252/17 After enquiry there were no declarations of interest.

Minute 253/17 Health & Safety – Tony Coward advised that this would be included as part of the Property Services Director's report due to be presented later in meeting.

### **Agenda item 2 Minutes of the Board meeting held 15 June 2017, matters arising and actions**

Minute 254/17 Seema Jassi clarified her comment in relation to minute 214/17 which was to consider whether resident involvement activities reflected Value for Money. **Action: Andrew Shiat's to update the matters arising summary accordingly.**

Minute 255/17 The minutes of the Board meeting held on 15 June 2017 were approved.

#### **Matters Arising and Actions**

Minute 256/17 Minute 205/17 – Tony Coward advised that he had not yet completed his review of whether the repairs fixed on first visit indicator could be analysed between what could and couldn't possibly be completed in one visit and that this item would be included in the next quarter's report due for the October

meeting.

Minute 257/17 Minute 40/17 – Vivienne Astall advised that the draft policy on Under Occupancy would now be brought to the September 2017 meeting.

**Agenda item 3 Audit Risk Committee – Matters arising from meeting, approval of Financial Statements and Letter of Representation for the year ended 31 March 2017.**

Minute 258/17 Jackie Oakes presented the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2017 together with the Audit Management Letter and Letter of Representation. It was noted that these documents had been reviewed by the Audit Committee earlier. She stated that this had been a very smooth audit process. She summarised that there were no key control points that had been noted during the audit for inclusion in the Management Letter. She briefly highlighted that Value for Money still remained a key area of focus for the National Housing Federation.

Minute 259/17 Jackie Oakes expressed her thanks to Andrew Shiatīs for all the hard work he and his team had put in to ensure that all the required papers and documents for the audit had been prepared in a timely manner.

Minute 260/17 Barry Luhmann as Chair of the Audit Committee, informed the Board that it had been a very stable year and that the Board should take assurance from the fact that there was little of note to discuss. He stated that the Audit Committee had agreed to recommend to the Board the approval and signing of the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2017 and also the approval and signing of the Letter of Representation. The general consensus of the Board was to approve the Financial Statements and the Letter of Representation. There were no objections.

**Agenda item 4 Governance Review – Stephen Bull, Campbell Tickell**

Minute 261/17 Stephen Bull presented a summary of the main findings from the Governance Review to the Board. He explained that a draft of the report would be finalised by the end of the week.

Minute 262/17 He advised that the implementation of the findings would represent a slight cultural shift for the organisation especially in relation to reducing the number of documents and reports which were of a more operational nature from coming to and being discussed by the Board, amending the delegated authorities in order to provide the executive team with more operational authority and reducing the number of Board meetings.

After discussion it was agreed that this could be discussed as part of a separate working group and also at the Board away day. **Action: Jonathan Card to set up a working group to receive the full report and to consider the recommendations.**

**Agenda item 5 Self-assessment of compliance with regulatory standards**

Minute 263/17 Jonathan Card presented this review to the Board stating that this was an annual exercise that was required by the National Housing Federation. He explained that following an internal audit review last year, as advised by the

review, the assessment this year was more detailed and included links to various evidence documents to help demonstrate compliance.

Minute 264/17 It was noted by the Board that the content was very informative and provides good assurance for the Board. Lucy Worrall asked if another column could be added in future which highlighted any further actions that needed to be addressed and whether the assessment could be presented at an earlier Board meeting so that areas of non-compliance could be reviewed for inclusion within the financial statements. **Action: Jonathan Card to amend the format of the assessment for next year and to bring the assessment forward to an earlier meeting.**

**Agenda Item 6 Health & Safety Update – Statement of Intent**

Minute 265/17 Tony Coward presented the Statement of Intent to the Board for approval. He advised that this statement underpins the Health & Safety policy.

Minute 266/17 There was a discussion regarding the wording “so far as is reasonably practical” in the first paragraph. The general consensus of the Board was to approve the Statement of Intent. There were no objections.

**Agenda item 7 Fire Safety Update**

Minute 267/17 Jonathan Card presented the fire safety update to the Board. He advised that the Fire Risk Assessments had now been carried out at both Burnhill House and Silver Court, the recommendations required some actions to be carried out but that there was nothing too significant.

Minute 268/17 A discussion was had about the leaseholder properties which were part of Burnhill House. It was noted that Keniston was in the process of taking legal advice regarding leaseholders’ front entrance doors where these opened onto internal corridors; the legal advice was that in most cases we could not enforce the installation of fire doors especially where the existing door was in good repair and that this was likely to become a matter of negotiation between Keniston and the leaseholder.

Minute 269/17 Shehla Husain stated that the DCLG public enquiry on fire safety was likely to strongly recommend that sprinkler systems and fire doors be installed in high rise properties and that advice – which she supported – from the National Fire Chiefs Council is to install sprinklers in all high rise buildings. She asked if Keniston would be following these guidelines. Jonathan Card said that this was not a requirement made in the Fire Risk Assessment but we would be keeping a close watch on emerging findings. Tony Coward advised that on average it might cost somewhere in the region of £6,000 per property to install a sprinkler system.

Tony Coward advised that he was in the process of writing to all leaseholders about the installation of smoke alarms in their properties and would offer to install these at no cost if necessary.

Minute 270/17 Discussion was had with regards to Keniston’s Emergency Planning. Jonathan Card advised a review of all emergency procedures was in the process of being carried out by Keniston staff but that this was in its early stages at present.

**Agenda item 8     Housing Services Director's report**

- Minute 271/17     Vivienne Astall presented her report to the Board. She highlighted that the arrears were on target at 3.20% for the first quarter of the year. She updated the Board on the Authorised Evictions. It was agreed that table 1b regarding court proceedings could be removed from the paper in future. Voids and lettings at 8 days were currently ahead of target although slightly higher than as at the end of last year.
- Vivienne Astall informed the Board that the income team had recently attended a very good welfare reform training session. She explained that there was a significant steer towards everything being done online. She also highlighted that the benefit cap at present was only affecting a few people but once this all change to Universal Credit more people will be affected as the new system is not as generous. Vivienne Astall said that her team were planning what publicity could be sent to tenants to help keep them informed of changes.
- Minute 272/17     Anthony Mills expressed an interest in being invited to the next Welfare training session.
- Minute 273/17     Discussion was had on how the rent arrears KPIs could be improved so that they were better than target. Vivienne Astall advised that Keniston had looked at a multitude of things including the expansion of the new texting services which was due to be rolled out to rents within the next few weeks. She also stated that the agreement by the Board to evictions had definitely helped with arrears.

**Agenda item 9     Property Services Director's report**

- Minute 274/17     Tony Coward presented his report to the Board. In particular he highlighted the Darrick Wood fencing tender where RPM had been invited to review their submission based on the extremely low original quote since they had not priced properly for the total number of units within the specification; RPM had been awarded the contract but due that the Board should note that for the reasons given above, this had been awarded slightly outside the normal tender procedure.
- Minute 275/17     Stock reinvestment – Tony Coward advised that all contracts scheduled to commence in July had now started. Electrical testing – Tony Coward advised that all but 3 had now been completed from the 40 outstanding last quarter and that one property had been served a NSOP notice.
- Minute 276/17     It was noted that following the recent Fire Risk Assessments, there was a recommendation for smoke alarms be installed in all properties. This has now been added to the outstanding actions in the fire safety report.

**Agenda item 10     Finance Director's report**

- Minute 277/17     Andrew Shiatis presented his report to the Board highlighting the results for the 3 months to 30 June 2017; he explained that operating costs were currently lower than budget and last year, but that this was predominantly due to timing differences rather than genuine savings.
- Minute 278/17     Andrew Shiatis apologised for an error on the Total Spend Analysis graph

within his report which showed a current year spend of £180k on Other Fixed Assets, whereas the spend for the current year was actually only £2k.

Minute 279 /17 Andrew Shiatas drew the Board's attention to the financial performance indicators, stating that these now included a measure on Return on Capital Employed and Operating Margin and that also benchmarking figures had now also been included.

#### **Agenda item 11 Chief Executive Report**

Minute 280/17 Jonathan Card presented his report to the Board. He advised that he had attended the auction of Flat 4, 65 Elliotts Row earlier in the day. The reserve price for the property was £320k and the flat had sold for £460k, a very good result for Keniston.

Minute 281/17 Seema Jassi asked if the HR review was now complete. Jonathan Card explained that an initial report had been received and that this was being reviewed by the management team. **Action: Jonathan Card to include a summary of the headline recommendations in his next report to the Board.**

Minute 282/17 Jonathan Card presented the Action Plan updates to the Board. A discussion was had about the format of the report. **Action: Jonathan Card to review the format of the Action Plan report to help make this more succinct and clearer.**

Minute 283/17 Anthony Mills asked about the book keeping function for the G320 which Andrew Shiatas was looking at taking on within Keniston. Jonathan Card clarified that the G320 was an organisation which encouraged and facilitated the sharing of good practice and collaboration. He explained that the bookkeeping function would not be particularly onerous for Keniston.

#### **Agenda item 12 Options appraisals for 44 Elliotts Row**

Minute 284/17 Jonathan Card presented the report to the Board which appraised some of the main options available in relation to 44 Elliotts Row which had been vacant since early 2017 and now required some significant investment before it could be rented out again. He highlighted the 5 options outlined in the report and advised that the Board needed to decide which option they felt was best for Keniston.

After discussion and a vote by all members the favoured options were to refurbish and retain as a 4 bed house at affordable rent or to dispose of the property in its current condition. As the Board was tied on this, Julian Miles, as Chair, made the final decision to refurbish and retain the property.

#### **Agenda item 13 Company seals**

Minute 285/17 There were no company seals.

#### **Agenda item 14 Any other business**

Minute 286/17 Anthony Mills stated that he had received a visit from the Green Doctor and

that he was pleased with the advice he had been given, which included a potential rebate on his water bill and to switch his electricity from economy 7 to a different tariff. Anthony Mills thanked Keniston for providing this service and said that he felt it was excellent.

**Agenda item 15    Date of next meeting**

Minute 287/17      AGM: Thursday 14 September 2017 starting at 6.15pm, followed by the Board meeting

Minute 288/17      The meeting ended at 9.45pm