

Nottingham City Council

Companies Governance Executive Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at Ground Floor Committee Room - Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG on 21 March 2023 from 3.10 pm - 5.00 pm

Membership

Present

Councillor Neghat Khan
Councillor David Mellen (Chair)
Councillor Adele Williams
Councillor Linda Woodings

Absent

Councillor Audra Wynter

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Kevin Barr	- Shareholder Unit
Ross Brown	- Corporate Director for Finance & Resources
Ian Edward	- Strategic Adviser for Companies
Stephen Feast	- Director of Transition, Nottingham City Homes (NCH)
Frank Jordan	- Corporate Director for Communities, Environment and Resident Services.
James Lavender	- Governance Officer
Jiayue Wang	- Corporate Governance Compliance Officer

Call-in

Unless stated otherwise, all decisions are subject to call-in. The last date for call-in is 29 March 2023. Decisions cannot be implemented until the working day after this date.

80 Apologies for absence

Councillor Audra Wynter – Annual Leave.

81 Declarations of Interest

In the interests of transparency, Councillor David Mellen declared that he is a Director of Blueprint and Cllr Neghat Khan declared that she sits on the Board of Futures.

82 Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 17 January and 21 February 2023 were confirmed as correct records and signed by the Chair.

83 Work Programme

The work programme was noted. Ian Edward, the Strategic Adviser for Companies explained that a new work programme for 2023/24 will be produced for the next meeting in May.

84 Council owned company discussion - Nottingham City Homes

This item does not contain any decisions that are eligible for call-in.

The Committee received a presentation from Stephen Feast, the Director of Transition at Nottingham City Homes (NCH), which highlighted the following information:

- (a) the social housing service provided by NCH is moving back 'in-house' to the Council;
- (b) the media profile of social housing with regard to damp, mould and disrepair cases had resulted in a marked increase of reporting in those cases. The increased regulatory function focuses on the need to hear the opinions and concerns of tenants. A more active and critical Housing Ombudsman (the regulator for social housing in the UK) is referring cases to NCH which they have picked up in the media;
- (c) NCH is meeting the requirements and recommendations of the Improvement and Assurance Board (IAB);
- (d) the impact of the Cost of Living Crisis and the implementation of Universal Credit has had an impact upon the housing service;
- (e) there is a chronic shortage of council/affordable housing within the city, however, NCH has a strong record of building strong, safe accommodation and has made great progress in making their housing stock carbon neutral;
- (f) there is a high demand from homeless people for temporary accommodation;
- (g) new working practices and customer engagement processes were introduced due to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- (h) the tenant satisfaction survey has seen a slight drop in the Overall Satisfaction with the Service from 88% in 2021/22 to 84% in 2022/3, whilst other measures remained broadly the same;
- (i) NCH is meeting building safety compliance measures, although improvements are needed in responding to requests for fitting smoke alarms and Carbon Monoxide detectors;
- (j) in terms of the transition to being a Council-run service, the TUPE (Transfer of Undertaking (Protection of Employment) process is almost complete with the novation of contracts and new contracts progressing well;
- (k) NCH are communicating the expectations to current NCH staff about what they will be providing when they start working for the council. This includes weekly communications and training on council policies and procedures;
- (l) work is ongoing on building a new NCC payroll system for former NCH employees;

- (m) the NCH group companies (NCH Limited, NCH Registered Provider and NCH Enterprises Ltd) will continue a 'business as usual' position;
- (n) services will continue to be provided by staff "lifted and shifted" to NCC under a service agreement;
- (o) NCH Registered Provider will continue to provide temporary accommodation in order to contribute to the Council's objectives;
- (p) an Asset Option appraisal is being undertaken by a joint working group to focus on NCH Limited and NCH Enterprises Limited assets;
- (q) there will be a focus on embedding the housing service into the Council and creating a new Housing Division. There is an aim to resolve the long term future of the NCH Group Companies through an asset strategy, as well as ensuring the short to medium term operation of the NCH Group Companies;
- (r) the service will implement Tenant Satisfaction Measures;
- (s) there will be a review to the approach to damp, condensation mould and disrepairs to ensure they are dealt with promptly and efficiently;
- (t) the service will ensure the requirements of evolving building safety legislation are met and the Transformation Team will complete an end to end review to tenanted and empty properties. Measures will be developed to alleviate the impact of the Cost of Living Crisis;
- (u) a review of Independent Living will be undertaken to ensure it meets future need;
- (v) work will continue to reduce the number of void properties;

During discussion and in response to questions from the Committee, the following points were raised:

- (w) NCH and the new housing service will have the capacity and resources for meeting new housing legislation and regulations. Budget restructuring has ensured that the organisation can meet this;
- (x) two rounds of consultation have taken place regarding TUPE and a restructuring will take place in the future. Assurances will be made to staff transferring over to the new service and recruitment opportunities will be available;
- (y) an increase in the reporting of damp and mould is consistent across the sector every time a news story is featured about it. New technologies include video calling which tenants can use to contact the service and diagnose/prioritise work.

85 Exclusion of the public

The Committee decided to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the remaining agenda items in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the basis that, having regard to all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

86 Exempt Minutes

The confidential minutes of the meetings held on 17 January and 21 February 2023 were confirmed as correct records and signed by the Chair.

87 Creative Quarter Company

Robert Dixon and Ian Edward, Strategic Advisor for Companies, presented the report regarding the Creative Quarter Company. Details of the discussion are set out in the exempt minute.

Resolved to approve the recommendations as set out in the exempt report.

88 Council owned company discussion - Nottingham City Homes

This item does not contain any decisions that are eligible for call-in.

The Committee received a presentation from Stephen Feast, the Director of Transition at Nottingham City Homes, details of which are set out in the exempt minute.

89 Council owned companies - financial update

This item does not contain any decisions that are eligible for call-in.

Ian Edward, Strategic Advisor for Companies, presented the report, updating the Committee on the latest position in respect of Council owned companies, details of which are set out in the exempt minute.