

Minutes of the Saffron Housing Trust Ltd Board Meeting

23rd June 2011

Present:

Board: David Frost (DF)
Graham Minshull (GM)
John Overton (JO)
Peggy Phinn (PP)
Arley Turner (AT)
Ken Warman (KGW)
Terry Woods (TW)
Michael Harrowven (MH, Vice Chair)
Tony Palmer (TP)
Derek Player (DP)
Karen Wooddissee (KW, Chair)

Apologies Linda Sinclair (LS)

Officers: Adam Ronaldson, Chief Executive (CE)
Steve Burns, Director of Asset Management (DAM)
John Whitelock, Director of New Business (DNB)
Stephen Flowitt-Hill, Director of Housing & Finance (DHF)
Stuart Tinkler, Human Resources Manager (HRM)
Pauline Hough – Assistant Director Housing Management (ADHM)

Observers: Warren Burge (WB)
Denise Burke (DB)

MH opened the meeting as KW was not expected till 7.30pm and welcomed TP as a new board member to his first meeting, WB and DB as observers from CAP and the HRM & ADHM.

891. Standing Items

Declarations of Interest

TP and JO as South Norfolk Councillors declared interests relating to the potential land swap at Fritton and item 12 on the agenda the South Norfolk Council (SNC) annual review of the LSVT agreement. Their interests were not considered personal or substantial.

Minutes of Previous Meetings

It was noted that LS had attended the previous meeting.

Item 880 – KGW felt the resolution should be amended to match the introduction as no changes had been made to the policy and this was agreed.

It was **RESOLVED:**

- That the minutes of the meeting on 26th May 2011 were a true record of that meeting.

Matters Arising

TW asked for an update on 885 and whether the Ipswich Building Society had agreed to provide HOLD mortgages in Suffolk. The DNB advised that he understood that the building society had.

AT asked if there was any news about the resource centre at Silfields and PP was pleased to report that a new management group had been formed.

Performance Indicators

The CE provided an overview of the May performance information noting in particular R12 and R15. R15 although currently red he felt would quickly return to green. However R12 was a concern as this area of work was falling behind and the member of staff managing it had just resigned. To rectify this, project management of the large DFG projects will be transferred over to the DNB's team and the Head of Property was seeking a replacement to concentrate on the rest of the work.

892. Sale of land - Fritton

The CE updated members with the progress on this item following the last meeting. SNC has now confirmed that no contract had been entered into. He noted the good relationship with SNC that Saffron had developed over the past few years and recommended that in line with previous meeting that the land sale should now be agreed. The DNB also commented that the land in question was currently outside the development boundary and would be viewed as "backland" development which would make a successful planning application unlikely.

It was **RESOLVED**:

- To approve the sale of land at Fritton to South Norfolk Council.

893. Wind Turbines

The DAM introduced the paper and advised that he felt the issue required a decision about Saffron's position on the environment rather than a financial assessment.

KGW started the debate stating his opposition on the 4 grounds of,

1. a growing questioning of the technology of wind power and its efficiency
2. the impact turbines had on the landscape
3. better alternatives existed such as solar farms and these should be considered first
4. the strong local objections to previous wind turbine planning applications and the likely adverse effect on Saffron's local reputation.

TP commented on the excellent alternatives such as ground and air source heat pumps in the production of clean energy and DF voiced his support for the need to embrace new forms of energy and his view of the positive contribution that turbines make to the landscape. PP asked whether Saffron would make full use of the electricity produced and the DAM advised it would. GM noted these turbines were only 15 metres high and DP supported the recommendation. TW questioned the technology and felt that if subsidies were not available none of the existing wind farms would ever have been developed.

MH noted the different views held and asked members to vote on the recommendation to install a single turbine on a rental basis and consider purchasing further once the initial results are available. As the recommendation was supported by a majority,

It was **RESOLVED**:

- To initially install a single wind turbine on a rental basis and to consider purchasing up to 5 further wind turbines if initial results are in line with expectations.

KW joined the meeting and took the chair from this point

894. Policy Reviews

Data Protection Policy

The DHF introduced the paper noting the minor changes to the Data Protection Policy and following a short discussion,

It was **RESOLVED**:

- To approve the Data Protection Policy revision

Procurement Policy

Following the CE explaining that the Head of EPC had reviewed the policy and had suggested the amendments shown,

It was **RESOLVED**:

- To approve the Procurement Policy revision

Feedback and Complaints

The CE highlighted the proposed changes particularly round the move from calendar days to working days, which MH and DP supported.

It was **RESOLVED**:

- To approve the Feedback and Complaints Policy revision.

895. Company Secretary

The DAM explained that a new Company Secretary would need to be appointed in view of his imminent departure. Following discussions with the CE and with the HRM's agreement it was recommended that the HRM was appointed as the new Company Secretary. This met with universal approval and,

It was **RESOLVED**:

- To note the resignation of the current Company Secretaries.
- To appoint the Human Resources Manager S Tinkler as the Company Secretary.

896. Crocus Contractors Ltd – Board Members

The DAM again noted his departure and that two functions needed to be addressed and from the last Crocus Contractors Ltd Board meeting it was being recommended that the DNB be appointed as a Board member and the HRM as the Company Secretary for Crocus Contractors Ltd.

It was **RESOLVED**:

- To note the resignation of S Burns as Board Member and Company Secretary of Crocus Contractors Ltd.
- To appoint the New Business Director J Whitelock as Board Member and to appoint the Human Resources Manager S Tinkler as the Company Secretary for Crocus Contractors Ltd.

897. Sheltered Housing and Supporting People

This whole minute has been removed due to confidentiality.

898. Affordable Rents Overview

The ADHM provide a through overview of the new affordable rented tenure from a housing management perspective, concentrating on the changes that will need to be introduced and the risks.

KGW asked the basis for assessing the new rent level and the DNB explained that for each new letting the rent must be set in accordance with the RICS red book methodology.

GM expressed concern for existing assured tenants who wished to transfer but the ADHM assured him that their rights were protected and that this was likely to be extended into mutual exchanges as well.

AT questioned whether extra costs were likely with the new regime and the DHF confirmed this was the case.

899. Updates

Chair

KW reported that she was due to attend the Norfolk Strategic Housing Board and that the main discussion point was DFG's. The DAM undertook to provide KW with an overview of the current position.

CE

The CE and the DAM explained the recent difficulties the PV project had run into with UK Power Networks and their slowness to respond to the issue over whether each installation would be counted as separate or all 1000 installations would be lumped together. KGW highlighted the visual impact of PV installations on single storey dwellings.

The CE then directed members' attention to the office extension plans on display, which would be shortly submitted for planning permission. The DAM noted that during construction visitors would experience some inconvenience.

A recent meeting of Norfolk MPs had been held and the CE had attended. The potential downturn in development and the impact of changes to direct payments of housing benefit were discussed.

For the all day Board meeting on the 7th of July the CE distributed papers including a few questions which Board members should come prepared to answer.

The CE provided a brief update on Home Options.

Board Development

KW and KGW are attending the e2 training on Friday 24.6.2011.

Board Feedback

DF had met with the HRM to discuss training and had visited the Hastoe development in Saffron Walden as part of the CaRe project.

AT & GM had both attended the information exchange, with GM taking part in a Diss estate walkabout.

JO and KGW had both attended a walkabout in Poringland and were concerned with the condition and poor standard they had encountered. The ADHM undertook to investigate further to find out the issues involved.

KGW noted the positive work that Saffron had contributed to the Brooke play park that had just opened.

TP noted his induction had gone well.

PP had been on two walkabouts. The first was in Costessey and the second at Carbrooke. The latter had been very successful as all properties had been visited and a new residents association may be formed.

MH had visited the Diss community farm.

CAP

PP circulated the CAP calendar for the coming month.

TSA/NHF/HCA update

The CE advised that despite an exchange of emails the TSA regulatory judgement had still not been received.

The DNB updated members on the progress of the HCA offer from e2 and that it had been forwarded for national consideration.

900. Minutes from Associated/Controlled Bodies

Information Exchange:

PP circulated the minutes from the meeting of the 6th of June and summarised the meeting.

901. SNC Annual Review

The CE introduced the paper noting the SNC recommendation that this would be the last review of the transfer agreement. KW felt that overall the report was very favourable. TW expressed his annoyance at some of the detailed comments made by SNC.

902. Management Accounts – May 2011

The DHF gave an overview of the accounts and highlighted the continuing strong performance of Saffron.

903. Development Pipeline Progress report

The DNB updated members on progress in development and noted the planning decision at Denton and thanked SNC members and staff for the balanced approach they had taken in the matter.

904. Next Meeting

Thursday 7th July 2011 – 9.30 am
Venue – Park Farm Hotel Hethersett

The meeting closed at 9.00pm