

## Barnsbury HA Board Meeting July 21 2022

### Summary of the meeting and decisions taken

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**Board members present:** Sean McLaughlin (Chair), Janice Walsh (Tenant Board member), Chyrel Brown, Annie Gray, Charles Culling and Chris Bell (Tenant Board member).

**Staff present:** Susan French (Chief Executive), Yung Yung Lee (Finance Director), Michael Bunker (Asset Manager), Viv Astall (Homes & Communities Director) and Patrick Penny-Annang (Engagement & Communications Manager).

1. The Board had feedback from the **recent review of Board performance**. Overall, the review found that BHA was very well run. There were a few areas to tighten up on including making sure that the Board really challenge staff on how well we are performing and finding more ways for the Board to meet and hear directly from tenants. The Board agreed that the upcoming Strategy Day agenda would cover tenant engagement, the rent increase for 2023, how BHA can help support tenants with the cost of living and making sure that we justify our running costs. They also agreed to seek a third tenant Board member and look to invite tenants to observe/contribute to Board meetings in person.
2. The Board approved Nancy Korman, a long-standing Board member who retired last year, as the **independent Chair of the Resident Panel**.
3. The Board agreed that the team could go out to further consultation with tenants about a **new community facility** on Morland Mews, which had been suggested by tenants through the landscaping and Take Stock Exchange focus groups.
4. The Board agreed a **plan for BHA to move offices**. They heard that the lease on 16b was up for renewal in early 2023 and that, with the team working partly from home, the office was now too large. The Board heard that BHA could save over £20,000/year by moving, which could be better spent on improving homes and felt that a proposal to share space with another landlord in the borough was good value for money. The Board heard that staff now meet tenants in their homes, or on our estates and that they new office would have space to meet tenants who wanted to visit us in the office.
5. The Board looked at value for money and noted that our **running costs** are higher than average, partly down to the costs of maintaining our homes. Many other larger landlords are selling the type of homes we own, as they are expensive to repair, spending the money on other new homes in cheaper areas. The Board confirmed that BHA's origins lie in providing homes for people on low to moderate incomes in what is a very high value area and that we are committed to doing this in the future.
6. The Board **approved updates** to our Financial Regulations, along with four policies which had been approved by the Resident Panel: Safeguarding Adults, Safeguarding Children, Pets and Hoarding policies.
7. The Board heard that the **garage conversion project** is progressing slowly, and it is hoped that work will start in early 2023.
8. The Board talked about the **rent increase for April 2023**. This is based on a set formula related to inflation, which is very high at the moment. The Board is concerned about the affect this could have on residents who are affected by the cost-of-living crisis but also worried about the costs of repairs which are rising fast. We are waiting for government guidance later this year.