

Summary of the BHA Board Meeting held on Thursday July 18 2024

Board: Sean McLaughlin (Chair), Micah Gold, Jonathan Bunt, Janice Walsh, Kenny Johnson, Chris Bell, Ben Kelly, Katri Wilson

Staff: Susan French (CEO), Cheryl Whittle (Housing & Communities Director), Lynsey van Aswegen (Finance Director), Michael Bunker (Asset Manager)

1. The Chair welcomed the two new members, Katri and Ben.
2. Cheryl updated board on our tenant engagement projects, highlighting the ground maintenance procurement and the new resident panel member. Janice commented that the paperwork for the residents panel may put residents off and it was agreed that we would experiment with how information is presented to make it more accessible.
3. The Board discussed the main risks facing BHA. They liked the new format and the action plan to reduce risk. The key risks are property condition, the costs of making our homes net zero and compliance with health & safety.
4. Susan updated the board on current projects including:
 - the positive outcomes from the staying connected visits, with over £20,000 in direct benefits for tenants. Board were pleased to hear this and agreed to monitor this at each meeting.
 - a favourable finding from the Housing Ombudsman around how we handled an anti-social behaviour case
 - a health and safety audit to make sure we are fully complying with our legal obligations
5. The Board approved the Financial Statements for the year 2023/24 and heard how the auditors had said that it was one of the most positive and best managed audits they had seen.
6. Lynsey reported that we are about to take out a new loan from Charities Aid Foundation to fund the retrofit and garage project.
7. Sean reported back on the board appraisal. Overall members are very positive. They would like to find more opportunities to meet tenants directly and it was agreed to find new ways to do this.
8. The Board approved the new complaints policy which is in line with the new Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code. Kenny offered to be the Board Member Responsible for Complaints. Chris raised an issue about compensation and it was agreed to review how compensation is paid if tenants are in arrears.
9. The Board were pleased to hear that rent arrears are reducing - they now stand at 4.6% but there was some concern about the number of tenants over £500 in debt. Janice said the new housing officer being on site is much appreciated by residents.
10. It was agreed to look at voids in more detail to see how we can let homes more quickly.
11. The next Board meeting is on September 19.