

**BOARD UPDATE**  
**BOARD PERFORMANCE MEETING**  
**WEDNESDAY 4<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2024**



## **CUSTOMER STORY**

The September performance meeting opened with a story from a customer who had experienced antisocial behaviour because of visitors to the blocks of flats where they lived. The story focussed on the impact to other residents, some of whom had mental health issues and the impact of the visitors potentially cuckooing certain residents.

The Board recognised the bravery of the customer who had first raised the concern. The Board also congratulated officers for the involvement in this matter and at a recent community ASB event held at Westgate.

## **CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT**

The Chief Executive provided an update which highlighted the headline themes across the organisation.

A recent audit had been carried out by the local fire and rescue service at Clapham Court. Two minor recommendations had been made by the fire service which had already been put in place by officers.

Although civil riots had taken place in various parts of the country recently, these had not taken place in Gloucester. Officers were continuing to monitor the ongoing situation with external partners.

The new repairs scheduling and management system (Total Mobile) had recently been introduced and the Homes and Communities Committee had monitored the implementation. The Board congratulated officers on the system and the positive impact it would have to the business both internally and externally.

## **BOARD ASSURANCE REPORT**

The Board discussed the target aspirations, highlighting the importance of setting targets that were challenging but realistic.

The Board praised recent work relating to rent, and the percentage of tenancies sustained in the first year. However, the Board felt that the satisfaction of repairs service needed an increased focus. It was recognised that the data available via the RepairSense system (which helps to track repair requests, work order histories and identifies potential repairs issues before they escalate) would help improve this going forward when used in conjunction with the Total Mobile system.

The Board discussed the follow up of historic internal audit recommendations made by the previous auditor and a recent safety and compliance award that had been won.

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## HEALTH AND SAFETY PERFORMANCE

The Executive Director of Customer Experience presented the report as the designated health and safety lead for the organisation. The report included the number of disrepair cases the organisation had received and information on staff training.

Company risk assessments was currently undergoing review. As part of the review staff were being trained to be dynamic to situations and regular engagement with an external health and safety consultant was taking place to ensure guidance was correct and up to date.

Recent tests of the lone working devices had resulted in several false alerts; however, the system was now functioning correctly and had been discussed at the recent internal Health and Safety Board meeting.

The Board questioned the leaseholder door replacement service and if this was a GCH responsibility. Officers confirmed that the door service could be provided to leaseholders and then recharged however one challenge was the type of lease the leaseholders were bound by.

The Board also questioned the fire doors which were currently out of date and if work was being undertaken to replace these. Officers advised that the work was based on a 10-month cycle and there was a reasonable level of confidence that this would be completed in time.

## ANNUAL ACCOUNTS AND MANAGEMENT LETTER

The Director of Finance introduced the report and explained that the GCH and Nerva statements had been reviewed at the Audit and Risk Committee meeting in July 2024, where the external auditor had also attended. The Nerva statements had been approved by the Nerva Board at its meeting in August 2024.

The key headlines from the accounts were then reported.

There had been an increase in the amount that was invested in the existing stock. Planned Maintenance and Revenue Major Repairs had increased by over £1m, and Capital Expenditure had increased by £2m, as had expenditure on the EPC-C works which had increased by £1.4m last year.

### **The Board AGREED to:**

- **Approve the GCH Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024;**
- **Approve the Letter of Representation for signature by the Chair of the Audit, Risk, and Assurance Committee;**
- **Approve the re-appointment of Beever and Struthers as external auditors for the Group;**
- **Note the Management Letter from Beever and Struthers;**
- **Note the Statement of Assurance to the Directors; and**
- **Note the Financial Statements for Nerva Homes for the year ended 31 March 2024.**

## QUARTERLY MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

The Director of Finance presented the accounts and advised:

- The forecast was to be fully compliant with the loan covenants for 2024/25;
- Current forecasting suggested a surplus including sales of £4.2m against an annual budget of £2.4m, a favourable variance of £1.8m; and
- As in the previous three years, property sales were the driver behind the strong performance.

There had been an overspend on responsive repairs as at the end of June, which had been caused by a 35% increase in the number of jobs, and an increase in the average void cost. Controls had been put in place to prevent any reoccurrence and to better manage the expenditure. The spend for July and August was now more in line with the budget.

A cost reduction had been achieved by now managing voids in house, instead of via a contractor.

The Chair advised that she and two other Board members were meeting with the Finance team regarding the presentation of the accounts. The revised presentation was planned to be prepared in time for the quarter 2 accounts presentation to Board.

**The Board approved the Management Accounts.**

## RISK MANAGEMENT QUARTERLY REVIEW

The Company Secretary presented the report and highlighted that following the risk internal audit undertaken in May 2024, the Risk Register was currently being reviewed. The revised format would be presented to the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee at its October 2024 meeting.

A review of the company's risk appetite by the Board would now take place in quarter four of the calendar year, following the review of the Register.

## SERVICE CHARGE UPDATE

Additional resource had been brought into provide support on service charges.

A report on Budget Plan Assumptions would be presented at the November 2024 Board meeting in addition to a separate report on the Rent Policy and a Service Charge Policy. All reports would give due consideration to customers and affordability.

The Board discussed the impact a service charge and rent increase could have on customers.

Officers advised that the charges would impact accountability and that communication to customers was already starting via a letter and input into the edition of GCH Connect. Training had also started with the Customer Experience team to help them better customers.

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## BUSINESS PLAN VARIATION LETTER

The letter was presented for approval by the Board subject to some minor amendments that had been suggested by NatWest.

The Board AGREED to:

- **Approve the terms of the Business Plan Variation Letter ;**
- **Approve the Officer's Certificate, including the Authorised Signatories who are delegated to execute the Variation Letter on behalf of GCH;**
- **Approve the delegation of authority to the Authorised Signatories including authorising of amendments to the Variation Letter.**

## COMMITTEE MEETING UPDATES

The Board received the following updates of the recent Committee meetings.

- Colleague and Culture Committee – May 2024
- Customer Experience Committee – June 2024
- Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee – July 2024
- Homes and Communities Committee – July 2024
- Nerva Homes Board – August 2024

## OTHER MATTERS

The meeting concluded with the Board reviewing their action plan and forward plan.