



**Halton**  
Housing

# Board Meeting Summary



**INVESTORS  
IN PEOPLE** | Gold



**Investors  
in People** | Health &  
Wellbeing  
Award  
Good Practice



**disability  
confident**  
EMPLOYER

# Halton Housing Board Meeting Summary – 10th May 2023

## Performance

Board received a presentation covering the key achievements and challenges during the second half of 2022/23 including.

### A right first-time repairs service

- Project Refresh Phase 1. 20 of our maintenance technicians have received additional training to enable them to multi skill. This should result in improved productivity, better job satisfaction and better customer satisfaction.
- We have reduced work in progress (WIP) by 40%. This means that customers are not waiting as long for us to complete their repairs.
- Improved leadership across repairs and environmental service teams, leading to reduced absence, increased colleague morale and greater colleague engagement.

### Improved customer experience

- Extensive customer and stakeholder communications including dedicated webpage and new damp, mould and condensation leaflet.
- We have supported 853 households securing over £2m of additional income.
- You said, we did – ensuring the customer voice is heard and acted upon
- Listen, Learn, Act Framework has been launched with associated "You Said We Did" communications on website and included in customer REACH magazine.
- We have completed a trial of the regulator's Tenant Satisfaction Measures and completed our preparations for their introduction from April 2023.
- Delivering against the Government's decarbonisation targets
- Successful delivery of our first on site retro fit project on time to budget which has improved the EPC rating of the homes to A.

### Investing in our current homes

- Customer safety and compliance with landlord health and safety requirements is good (including compliance with new alarm regulations from October 2022).
- Our response to damp and mould issues has been strong including a business wide call to action, a new policy, organisational wide awareness training, established a project group to oversee response, revised processes and procedures, satisfied regulatory requirements. We are also piloting property condition checks as part of the gas servicing process.
- Delivery of planned investment improvement programmes
- Continuing the roll out of neighbourhood plans
- Cost of living action plan delivered to target fuel and food poverty.
- Customer insight model developed to target "keep warm, keep well" welfare packs to customers that needed them the most.
- Hardship fund has delivered over £30k of crisis funds targeting food and fuel poverty as well as temporary income shocks.
- Supported customers to downsize to more affordable homes, reducing arrears and freeing up under occupied properties for those more in need.

- Grangeway community garden.
- "Spruce up your streets" initiative launched.
- Events held at independent living schemes to target loneliness (Yoga, quiz, knit & knatter and crafts).

### **Tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB)**

- Customer Scrutiny Panel review of ASB
- Working with Cheshire Police, the neighbourhood safety team has played a fundamental role in the granting of a Property Closure Order for one of our highly problematic customers.

### **Other significant achievements include:**

- Successfully developed and delivered a significant element of the plan to mitigate the adverse financial impact of the rent cap and high inflation. The number of colleague redundancies was kept relatively low.
- Completed our single largest development scheme – the independent living scheme (Hazlehurst) in Runcorn.
- Good start on CRM project. Excellent engagement from business users who are supporting the project and motivated to bring in the changes to working practices that the solution will offer.
- Achieved IIP Investing in People Gold and Investing in Wellbeing Silver.
- Achieved Carbon Literacy Gold which means that over 50% of colleagues have received carbon literacy training.
- Recruited six new apprentices and one of our apprentices has been nominated for apprentice of the year at the forthcoming Halton Business Awards.
- New EDI strategy developed and approved.
- Preparation is underway for our third regulatory IDA.

### **Our main challenges include:**

- Increasing number of customer complaints
- Increased media spotlight and general negative sentiment around the sector
- Changing consumer regulatory framework
- Continued budget pressures across repairs and maintenance, asset management and customer safety.
- Increased focus on property condition and understanding our homes.
- Systems and processes being fit for purpose to support colleagues.
- Impact of the cost of living and the increasing demand for crisis support.
- Low levels of customer engagement with community initiatives.
- Increased need for partnership working to develop a more joined up approach to tackling neighbourhood issues.
- Identifying a solid pipeline of development schemes at an affordable cost
- Construction market and contractor solvency
- Talent retention in competitive markets both inside and outside of sector
- Continuing data quality focus across all areas of the business to increase data confidence.

### **Board also received performance reports in respect of quarter four (2022/23).**

- Of the 11 'Lifeblood' Performance Measures, six are green, three are amber and two are red.

- Overall surplus for the year to date is £2,368k compared to a budgeted surplus of £2,514k, an unfavourable variance of £147k.
- There have been no RIDDOR events within HH.
- We continue to demonstrate strong control across all health and safety compliance areas.
- We have delivered 214 new homes (22% of our programme) with 17% of homes on site and 9% of homes in our active development pipeline.
- There are 77 unsold homes within the HH Group (HH and OSUK) amounting to £6,120k. This is an increase of 23 homes (£1,948k) from the previous quarter.
- Overall customer satisfaction was 85.7% compared to a target of 80.5%.
- HH achieved a return of 5.2% from its investment in OSUK compared to a budget of 4.3%.

## **Corporate Objectives 2023/24**

Our Corporate Plan outlines our commitment to our customers and the wider borough.

Our purpose is to improve people's lives. We want to provide customers with a safe place to call home, and the opportunity to lead happier, healthier and more fulfilled lives.

The plan sets out where we want our focus to be – on providing and maintaining quality homes and investing in thriving neighbourhoods, with strong values that underpin our ambition.

Our agreed objectives for 2023/24 include:

- We want to improve our customers' experience by building on our strengths and tackling recurring and consistent themes driving dissatisfaction e.g., repairs, communication, ASB.
- We want to improve the level of customer engagement to set the foundations for a more impactful, representative and diverse approach. Our aim is to be able to measure and evidence the difference that our engagement activity is making to the decisions we make and the services we deliver. A move towards a more contemporary customer engagement model is proposed.
- We want to improve the standard of our homes. To do this we will adopt a fresh approach to asset investment and planning and create additional financial capacity to enable us to invest more.
- We want to improve the standard of our existing neighbourhoods as places to live. To do this we will develop a prioritised Regeneration and Placemaking Plan to deliver physical improvements across our neighbourhoods and schemes.
- It is essential that we maintain our G1/V2 status, remains financially strong and complies with all legal and regulatory standards. We will strive to achieve our lifeblood measure targets whilst continuing to effectively deliver business as usual activity.
- The delivery of a number/most of these objectives will require additional investment of some kind. We need to create additional financial capacity to meet this requirement and review our headroom/golden rules to increase our financial resilience in the event of future economic shocks.

- We cannot deliver on its objectives alone and will need rely on the support of key partners. Likewise key partners will need to rely on HH to deliver their objectives. We need to be clear on what our strategic partnerships are, their purpose, expected outcomes and who is taking the lead role in developing each relationship.
- We want to increase our profile, reputation and influence in our unique and core areas of activity and expertise. Re-positioning Halton's profile will help secure existing partnerships and attract new ones by developing an authentic reputation around our core purpose activities.
- We want to strive to be an exemplary employer by developing a competitive employee offer and engendering a positive and proactive workplace culture.
- We want to develop (or confirm) a longer-term ambition for Halton Housing

### **Other items**

Board received updates on our compliance with the NHF code of governance, board member and Chair appraisal outcomes, and our preparedness for the introduction of new consumer standards.

Board also approved the re-appointments of Ian Hayhoe and Kevin Williams to the HH Board and Geoff Linnell to the OSUK Board.