

## YHN Limited

Tuesday 23 January 2018 at 5.00 pm

YHN House, Benton Park Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE7 7LX

Contact Officer: Jill Davison – Tel: 0191 278 8624 Email: [jill.davison@yhn.org.uk](mailto:jill.davison@yhn.org.uk)

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## AGENDA

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YHN Vision and Purpose	
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To exclude the press and public during discussion of remaining agenda items because of the likely disclosure of confidential information. The definitions of what is considered confidential are contained within Section 16 of the Company's Standing Orders.

**Protect - not for publication**

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	20 March 2018	



## **Board 28 November 2017 (5pm to 6.25pm)**

### **Present:**

J Boaden (Chair), R Clark, L Doherty, V Dunn, D Huddart, K Lowry, J McCarty, M Page, P Scope, E Snaith, H Simpson

### **In attendance:**

A Baker	Governance Support Officer
J Davison	Company Secretary and Group Governance Manager
T Drury	Managing Director
M Foreman	Customer Services Director
D Langhorne	Assets and Development Director
J Ritchie	Finance and Commercial Director
A Senior	Head of Fairer Housing, NCC

### **593 Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from M Talbot.

### **594 Declarations of Interests**

Those councillors present declared an interest in all matters pertaining to Newcastle City Council. P Scope declared an interest regarding the recent legal advice obtained from Wardhadaway in reviewing the Articles of Association.

### **595 Chair's Items**

#### Fire Safety

D Langhorne notified members that the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS) have concluded that the fire at Cruddas Park House on 20<sup>th</sup> November was caused by hot ash or a lit cigarette being thrown down the bin chute, which had been blocked by disposal of items unsuitable for the chute. The smoke spread from the 17<sup>th</sup> floor upwards, reaching parts of the 20<sup>th</sup> floor. Four units from the TWFRS attended and evacuated sixty people from the block. Four residents were examined by paramedics for smoke inhalation but required no treatment. Both YHN and TWFRS are continuing their investigations.

### Joint Consultative Committee

The Chair notified members of a vacancy on the quarterly Joint Consultative Committee, asking for nominations.

### **RESOLVED - the Board agreed:**

- To appoint Kevin Lowry as member of JCC

### Board member induction

Having received induction, tours and briefings as part of their new membership, the Chair sought feedback from the Board on what they had received so far and asked if there are any other areas needed to be covered. Suggestions included presentations covering devolution, NCC housing strategy, and a regular bus tour.

### Board members attending conferences

As part of new arrangements, the Chair encouraged members to discuss relevant information from conferences or events they have attended recently. H Simpson and R Clark attended a Northern Housing Consortium event on innovation that was felt to be a forward looking, positive day.

The Chair, K Lowry, J Davison and H Horan attended the National Federation of ALMOs Chair and Board Members event on 22<sup>nd</sup> November, which hosted some beneficial presentations on policy, though interactivity was lacking, it was felt that more Q&A time should have been allocated. H Horan and the Chair gave a presentation on the recent governance structure arrangements for the YHN Group and the move to a skills based membership as opposed to a council/independent/tenant composition, which sparked debate amongst delegates, some of whom felt the tenant voice was being diminished, however it is thought that they were perceiving the term 'independent' member to exclude tenants. J Davison had explained that seven vacancies on the YHN Board could be filled with tenant members, who would be classed as independent members. In addition, the creation of the Customer Services Committee would increase tenant involvement specifically in looking at areas of YHN that relate to them the most as customers, such as customer insight, the engagement strategy and complaints. K Lowry confirmed he is writing a follow up report and will circulate to members along with the presentations from the day, he commented that there was an interesting one regarding risk.

Finally, the Chair reminded members of the upcoming strategic away day on 19<sup>th</sup> December, noting that an information pack will be distributed at the end of the meeting.

### **596 Minutes of 19<sup>th</sup> September/Notes of Shadow Board 8<sup>th</sup> September 2017**

The minutes were agreed to be a correct record and were signed accordingly. The notes of the Shadow Board on 8<sup>th</sup> September were received for information.

## **597 Assurance from Finance & Performance Committee 7<sup>th</sup> November**

M Page commented that the Committee engaged in a productive discussion on the pressure points and hot spots of finance and performance, and gave thanks for the open approach of J Ritchie and his team. Deep dives into specific areas such as levels of satisfaction should help identify rapid improvements.

### **Questions/Comments**

Following a query on peer group sources and comparative data, J Ritchie commented that Housemark data is used as a peer group in addition to our own peer group.

K Lowry noted that there are four areas of high cost but low performance, and one area of low cost but high performance, suggesting that resources could be realigned. T Drury confirmed that realigning resources is indeed part of the transformational programme of reviewing structures.

### **RESOLVED - the Board agreed:**

- To receive the report for information

## **598 Assurances from Subsidiaries**

M Foreman noted that the outgoing Asfaleia Ltd. Board considered two main items on 27<sup>th</sup> July; addressing the recommendations and approved actions following the independent review of the Ostara service, and governance updates on the new structure, which is now in place.

More recently at the 9<sup>th</sup> November meeting, members were given introductory presentations into governance and the services of Asfaleia and an overview of the Ostara action plan. There was a lengthy debate around the finance and performance reporting arrangements, and an agreement was made to continue with the new process and evaluate in twelve months as part of a wider governance review.

D Huddart added an update following her comments at that meeting regarding the eight falls per day recorded by the enquiry centre compared to the unknown, unrecorded number of falls across the city; a collective meeting to look into the prevention of falls is being coordinated with Eugene Milne (Director of Public Health) and Wendy Taylor (Chair of Health Scrutiny).

## **599 Repairs and Maintenance Review**

Members received a report and presentation from D Langhorne which gave an update on the joint YHN/NCC repairs and maintenance review and the proposed outcomes presented to NCC Cabinet on 20<sup>th</sup> November. Cabinet approved the recommendation to move to a 'single point of leadership' for the R&M, Stores and Construction elements of BCE. This role will be provided by YHN and the transformation of the repairs service is expected to dovetail with the wider YHN transformation programme. The overarching objective of making this change is to

improve the customer experience by having a joined up service with joined up staff. A Transition Board will meet monthly to manage the process.

The following issues/comments/queries were raised during debate:

E Snaith asked for the split between responsive/planned maintenance and if any comparative data exists on the cost of the service. D Langhorne noted that the maintenance split is around 50/50 though the aim is to achieve a higher proportion of planned maintenance against responsive. It was reported that BCE costs are around the median mark compared to other competitors.

H Simpson asked if incremental costs to YHN would be incurred by taking on the service and what resources would be available to implement the changes. D Langhorne commented that any costs to YHN would be reflected in the management agreement and fee, existing resources will be supporting the transformation. Should additional posts be required as the process progresses, this would be funded through the HRA in agreement with NCC.

K Lowry emphasised the need to be mindful of managing changing cultures and practices, and that the Board should be conscious that this is an activity members don't have absolute authority over.

L Doherty noted that BCE have trading targets outside of housing, and asked how any financial benefits would link to YHN. D Langhorne confirmed that the review is mindful of this, that joint working aims to improve efficiency and value for money but to also increase the profitability of the organisation. T Drury added that these factors would also form part of management fee negotiations.

D Huddart asked if the current repairs contact number would remain the same. D Langhorne commented that the number won't change initially, though the resource is part of a wider digital transformation of customer access. M Foreman added that YHN are leading a review of contact and enquiry centres, and work with NCC on digital solutions will streamline access for the benefit of customers with the aim of one number, one place, one team for all enquiries.

The Board acknowledged the purpose of the review and aim to improve the customer experience, but expressed concerns over members not having seen the details at an earlier stage, or the opportunity to consider and approve the activity as part of their remit and fiduciary responsibilities to YHN. T Drury noted that the repairs and maintenance work would be carried out anyway as part of the client/contractor association with NCC; the review focuses on delivering the service in a different way to the current approach for the benefit of both parties. J McCarty added that expenditure of the service comes from the HRA of NCC, not from YHN budgets. No staff are transferring to YHN, and the risk element would be monitored by the Group Audit and Risk Committee.

Summarising, the Chair noted that whilst the report does not ask Board for approval there is however a broad agreement to the direction of travel as part of the wider Transformation Programme. Changes to the management agreement and fee would be brought to future meetings for endorsement. D Langhorne

added that Board can be provided with regular updates on the review as part of feedback from the Transition Board.

**RESOLVED - the Board agreed:**

- To receive the report, presentation and information presented
- that Group Audit and Risk Committee will monitor progress via the Risk Register
- To receive updates on the review as it progresses

**600 Officer Delegated Decisions**

Members expressed concern regarding the number of overspends listed on the report, and whilst there is always a margin of contingency planned in a contract, some expenditure appears higher than anticipated. D Langhorne gave assurance to the Board, noting that a recent internal audit of the Delegated Decisions procedure had received substantial assurance, adding that in some cases of overspend in main capital investment activities there are often unexpected elements, for example, discovery and safe disposal of asbestos waste from the Treetop Village site during excavation. Many of the budgets marked as overspend are in reality controlled and approved increases in the scope of works that are added and delivered as part of the existing contract.

**RESOLVED - the Board agreed:**

- That future delegated decisions reports would contain additional detail to give insight into overspends

**601 Board Forward Plan**

The forward plan was received and noted for information.

**602 Exclusion of Press and Public**

**RESOLVED** – that in accordance with the organisation’s Access to Information provisions, the press and public were excluded from the meeting during the consideration of all further agenda items.

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J Boaden  
Chair  
23 January 2018

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## YHN Board Meeting, 23 January 2018 Action Log (Public)

Minute ref.	Action required	By whom	Target date for completion	Current status
595	Board members to receive a briefing on NCC wider housing strategy	Executive Team	Early 2018	Scheduled 31 <sup>st</sup> January
600	Delegated Decisions report to contain more detail on overspends	David Langhorne	Subsequent Board meetings where Delegated Decisions reports contain overspends	Implemented

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## Group Audit and Risk Committee

16 November 2017

(5.00 pm- 6.40 pm)

### Present:

R Clark (In the Chair)  
K Lowry  
S Bramwell

### IN ATTENDANCE

T Drury	Managing Director
J Ritchie	Finance and Commercial Director
L Forrest	Assistant Director Finance, Risk Management and Resources
R Burns	Business Strategy Manager
I Gallagher	Assistant Director Operational Property Services
I Pattison	Principal Auditor
J Miller	Democratic Services

### 1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked those present to introduce themselves.

### 2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from V Dunn and P Scope.

### 3 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

### 4 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

**RESOLVED** – that :-

- i. V Dunn be appointed as Vice Chair.
- ii. J Ritchie to ask P Scope if he would take on the role as the committee member with Directorial responsibility for health and safety, to gain assurances for the committee and the main board that Health and Safety issues were given appropriate priority.

## 5 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 13 JULY 2017**

The minutes of the final meeting of the Audit Committee held on 13 July 2017 were noted.

## 6 **ACTION LIST REVIEW**

The committee reviewed the action list with the following information being shared:-

**Palatine Update** – L Forrest (Assistant Director Finance, Risk Management and Resources) provided background to the issue which had resulted in a member of staff being dismissed for gross misconduct and the subsequent police investigation, which was still ongoing. She confirmed that changes had been made to processes as a result. I Pattison (Internal Audit) confirmed that the new controls had been tested by Internal Audit and found to be satisfactory. A further update on lessons learned would be provided to committee at the conclusion of the police investigation.

**RESOLVED** – that the action list be noted.

## 7 **COMMITTEE WORK PLAN**

Submitted: Report by Finance and Commercial Director (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes)

J Ritchie (Finance and Commercial Director) introduced the report which proposed a schedule of business covering meetings in 2018.

The Chair advised it was intended to run two meeting cycles of the committee before members considered the style/formatting of committee reports and whether they felt any changes were required to meet their needs.

**RESOLVED** – that the forward plan be approved.

## 8 **AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT**

Submitted: Report by Head of Internal Audit (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes)

I Pattison introduced the report which provided details of internal audit activity undertaken as part of the 2017/18 audit plan.

**Business Continuity** – whilst no significant underlying issues had been found in the audit, there had been some realigning of policies and procedures to reflect changes in the organisation and clarification of some of the terminology in the risk register.

S Bramwell commented upon the wording of the management response around ICT given the audit findings. R Burns responded that YHN were satisfied that they had an escalation route and arrangements in place for ICT disaster recovery.

It was noted that the NCC (Newcastle City Council) resilience team were providing training materials and sessions for staff, in addition YHN Directors were part of the

NCC process for dealing with major incidents which included training for senior managers in responding to such incidents.

S Bramwell referred to the management responses to other recommendations in the Business Continuity audit which did not seem to be a fulsome acceptance of the audit recommendations. R Burns commented that the findings were accepted by YHN however, they had pushed back on some of the findings on the basis that the organisation was changing and the Business Continuity Assessment and Plan would be revised. The review of the policy would come back to committee for approval.

**Palatine** – there had been no significant underlying issues and there had been a significant improvement in relation to the issues that had been raised in the previous audit

The following general issues/ queries/comments were raised during debate:-

- I Pattison advised that the implementation of audit recommendations would be monitored by this committee which would receive detail on the management responses to the audit recommendations. Outstanding audit recommendations would only come out of the report when the issue had been resolved.
- Members discussed the need to distinguish between those areas where audits should be put on hold awaiting the outcome of the organisational changes and those areas where audits could go ahead. I Pattison outlined the process for developing the Audit Plan
- The members commented that YHN was an organisation in flux and felt that the next audit Plan should concentrate on areas where change might be needed and those areas where there had been change to review how this had worked in practice, rather than those areas that had not and did not need to change. In times of change it was important to focus audits on areas of risk rather than other things which whilst important were not a risk. Officers commented that as the organisational change would be further developed the following year's Audit Plan should be more stable and clear.
- There should be a clear link between the Risk Register and the Audit plan.
- J Ritchie updated on the current position on the audits where the target dates for implementation had been revised indicating that he was confident that the revised timescales could be met.
- The committee requested that officers provide realistic target dates for implementing recommendations rather than setting targets that were too tight and then having to revise them.
- In response to a member's query, J Ritchie stated that he was confident that the remaining audits to be undertaken to complete the current Plan would not cause a managerial problem. The committee asked that the YHN Management Team and Internal Audit discuss how the remainder of the current Audit Plan was undertaken to ensure it was a manageable process for all parties involved and did not debilitate management of the organisation.

**Fraud update** – I Pattison provided an update on fraud explaining that following fraud awareness training with front line staff there had been a significant increase in the numbers cases of illegal subletting and fraudulent Right to Buy applications

being reported for investigation, a number of which had led to successful prosecutions.

**RESOLVED** – that:-

- i. Progress against the Internal Audit plan and performance indicators be noted.
- ii. Progress on implementation of audit recommendations be noted.
- iii. The fraud update be noted.
- iv. Officers to discuss how the remainder of the current Audit Plan was undertaken to ensure it was a manageable process for all parties involved.

**9 QUARTER ONE UPDATE ON STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER**

Submitted: Report by Finance and Commercial Director (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes)

J Ritchie and R Burns introduced the report which provided an update on the YHN Group 2017-18 Strategic Risk Register, including changes to risk scores along with an update on the improvement actions against all the risks on the register. J Ritchie commented that consideration was being given to new ways of presenting and managing risk to ensure it was embedded across the organisation. R Burns undertook to circulate a copy of the Risk Management Framework and policy to members

The following issues/queries/ comments were raised in debate:-

- GR4 – ‘Government welfare change’ - in response to a member’s query it was explained that this risk related to the commercial impact on Abri of welfare changes on the affordability of furniture packs, whilst G9 related to the day to day impact on the organisation of broader welfare reforms.
- GR8 – ‘Failure to follow safeguarding policies’ - It was confirmed that this risk was currently a red risk because of the issues in the Safeguarding Review Update report later on the agenda.
- GR12 – ‘Failure to deliver effective governance of the Group’ - members queried whether this risk should be higher than amber given that the transitional period the new Board was in its early stages. It was noted that this risk had previously been higher but now the recruitment and appointment process had been completed it had been rated a lower level.
- The Chair referred to the fact that there were not any risks in the High/Showstopper/critical column in table 1 i.e. those issues which were very unlikely to happen but which if they did would have a major impact on the organisation, he suggested that GR 13 Failure to realise the outcomes of the gap year programme and GR 15 relating to fire safety may be unlikely to happen but if they did they would have a significant impact. He asked officers to give consideration to how extreme risks were dealt with on the risk register with a view to revisiting this issue in the Spring.

**RESOLVED** – that:-

- i. The 2017-18 Strategic risk Register be noted.
- ii. A copy of the Risk Management Framework and policy be circulated to members.
- iii. Officers to give consideration to the Chair's observation that there were no risks in the high/showstopper/critical column in Table 1.

## 10 **OVERVIEW OF BUSINESS CONTINUITY ARRANGEMENTS PRESENTATION**

R Burns gave a presentation on Business Continuity (copy of presentation material attached to Official Minutes)

In response to a member's query as to whether the IT systems could survive a cyber-attack, officers advised that the recent cyberattacks which had affected the NHS and a number of other organisations had not had any impact on either YHN or Newcastle City Council (NCC) as the IT security had been up to date. Whilst it was never possible to say any IT was completely secure from attack, NCC worked to Public Compliance ratings. J Ritchie commented on the need to achieve the balance of systems being secure but still being able to operate the systems at a practical level.

**RESOLVED** – that the presentation be noted.

## 11 **HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE**

Submitted: Report by Assets and Development Director (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes)

I Gallagher (Assistant Director Operational Property Services) introduced the report which provided a summary of YHN Health and Safety performance during 2017 Quarter one and Quarter two. He circulated an updated copy of table 2.2 accidents (copy attached to Official Minutes)

The following issues/queries/comments were raised in debate:-

- I Gallagher confirmed that external validation of the statutory checks was undertaken to provide assurance.
- Approximately 6 properties had solid fuel heating with were serviced as part of the gas service plan.
- Permission had not been granted for any wood burning stoves.

**RESOLVED** – that the report be received.

## 12 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED** – That in accordance with the organisation's Access to Information provisions, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of agenda items:

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## Customer Service Committee

6 December 2017

(5.30 pm - 7.45 pm)

### Present:

L Doherty (In the Chair)  
L Burnarde  
Z St Clair  
M Cygan  
A Fullwood  
J Greenwood  
T Moore  
L Popoviciu

### IN ATTENDANCE

T Drury	Managing Director
M Foreman	Customer Services Director
L Grogan	Customer Involvement Officer
H Horan	Business Strategy Manger
J Davison	Group Governance Manager
J Miller	Democratic Services

### 1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Everyone was welcomed to the meeting and introduced themselves.

### 2 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

As this was the first meeting of the Committee L Doherty had agreed to Chair the meeting, as a Board member, however, she would not be able to stand as Chair of the Committee.

L Grogan, Customer Involvement Officer, circulated a paper with details on the role of the Chair. She asked Members to read the paper and if they wished to be considered for the role of Chair or Vice Chair to inform her by email before the end of January 2018. She would then organise a vote by email for the appointment of Chair and Vice Chair who would be in place for the next meeting in March.

**RESOLVED** – that Members advise L Grogan if they wished to be considered for the position of Chair or Vice Chair.

### 3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from F Lisassi and G Spoor.

If any member was unable to attend a meeting they could email L Grogan if they had comments on any of the items on the agenda that they wished to be raised at the meeting.

#### 4 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

#### 5 **BACKGROUND - TINA DRURY MANAGING DIRECTOR**

T Drury, Managing Director, thanked the Committee Members for taking an interest and getting involved with the work of YHN. She outlined the background to the Governance Review and the establishment of the Customer Service Committee which would be an important part of the YHN Governance process ensuring that the organisation was customer focussed. The Board wanted YHN to be known as an organisation that it was easy to do business with. The Board were keen that this Committee held them to account for strategic decisions and helped them understand things from a customer's point of view to ensure YHN better served and improved services to customers. Members of the Committee would have the opportunity to meet Board Members at the Board Strategic Away-day.

She referred to the new complaints policy, on which the Committee would be having a presentation later in the meeting, explaining the reasons for the changes to the policy. Front line staff were able to apologise to customers and ask them what they wanted to happen in relation to an issue and to put it right.

#### 6 **RELATIONSHIP WITH YHN BOARD**

L Grogan commented that the work of this Committee would have an influence on the decisions of Board so it was important to ensure there were good links with Board. J Davison, Company Secretary and Group Governance Manager who worked with closely with Board and L Grogan would work together to make sure that the customer voice was heard by Board via this Committee. M Foreman, Customer Services Director stated he would not take to Board any significant decisions or issues that would have a big impact on customers without seeking the views of the Committee.

J Davison advised that if the Committee saw something which they thought needed addressing by Board or by one of the other YHN committees that she and L Grogan would support the committee in referring these issues on to the relevant meeting for consideration. As the Committee evolves they may have ideas on how the relationship between the Committee and Board could work.

L Grogan agreed to email a copy of the terms of reference to all committee members. She asked members to contact her if they wanted her to send them any other information they felt might be useful in their role.

## 7 CUSTOMER INSIGHT AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

H Horan gave a presentation on Customer Insight and Engagement Strategy (copy of presentation material attached to Official Minutes) which aimed to achieve a better understanding of YHN's customers by improving the use of the data held and by also identifying the information the organisation did not have about customers and how they could engage with customers to obtain that information. The presentation covered the following:

- The data that YHN had about customers using the 18 -21 age group as an example.
- How Insight was used to identify priorities.
- Customer commitments
- Priorities for Customer Insight and Engagement Strategy
- Responses for customers
- What Board said about customer insight and engagement
- Community Investment
- What YHN will want the strategy to achieve and whether the targets were challenging enough or there was anything else the Committee would like to see included in the strategy.
- What the Committee were being asked to do
- It was suggested that the targets should remain in place until 2020 to allow time to assess the impact of the new ways of working.

The Committee took part in an exercise to think about and make suggestions on post it notes in on how the Customer Insight and Engagement Strategy priorities could be achieved. H Horan and L Grogan would draw this work together for the next meeting.

The following issues/comments/queries were raised during debate:

- There was a need to tailor the approach to engagement to make sure it was relevant to the particular group being targeted in order to ensure the best feedback from customers.
- The Committee had a role looking at the return on community investment to assess the impact of the investment.
- The Committee discussed whether allocation of the community investment funding should be by area or by theme. It was agreed that officers should work out, based on the information that was available, in which areas the funding would have the biggest impact and then hold discussions with those communities about the themes which were the most important to them. The Community Investment funding could be used for projects focused on the themes identified by these communities.
- The Community Investment funding would be used as match funding for projects, the idea was that there would be a consortium of funding on projects in an area from a number of different sources;
- A report would be brought to the March meeting on the Community Investment funding before it went live in April 2018.

- It was noted that there was a scientific method to measure the social return on investment which would be used to measure the return on the Community Investment Fund.
- The committee may wish to review the strategy in a year's time.

**RESOLVED** – that:

- i. The presentation be noted
- ii. The measures of success for the strategy be agreed, subject to the first measure being amended to read 'Overall customer satisfaction will have risen to at least 85%'
- iii. Progress made on Customer Commitments and Community Investment approach be noted.
- iv. The Customer Insight and Engagement Strategy be endorsed.
- v. Officers to feedback to Board on the work undertaken at Committee and bring a report back to the March meeting on this work.

## 8 COMPLAINTS

L Grogan gave a presentation to the Committee on Complaints (copy of presentation material attached to Official Minutes) which covered the following issues:

- Why complaints are useful
- How YHN deals with complaints
- Changes to complaints
- Remedies
- Learning and improvements
- STAR and Complaints
- The Committee's role in reviewing complaints trends and deciding how as a business we learn from this.

The following issues/comments/queries were raised in debate:

- What constitutes a complaint? And the need to be aware of the language used when publishing information in relation to complaints as some customers would rather refer to something they had raised as an issue rather than a complaint.
- The need to monitor the use of remedies to ensure there was not misuse.
- It would be useful to have a comparison of the cost of the new system using remedies compared to the cost of the old complaints system, including the cost of officer time.
- It was suggested that the Committee may wish to look at complaints in relation to repairs at a future meeting.

**RESOLVED** – that the presentation be noted.

## 9 LINKS WITH NEWCASTLE INDEPENDENT TENANTS VOICE (NITV), SCRUTINY

L Grogan spoke about the importance of establishing links between the Customer Service Committee, Scrutiny and Newcastle Independent Tenant Voice (NiTV). She suggested that this could be done by having a short verbal update from the Scrutiny

and NiTV members at each meeting. In addition the Committee could consider if it had any issues it wished to pass onto either Scrutiny or NiTV for them to consider.

## 10 **FUTURE MEETINGS, PAPERS ETC**

Members were asked to let L Grogan know whether they would prefer to receive their agendas by email or post.

L Grogan asked the Members to think of ways of how the Committee could feedback to wider customers to let them know about the strategic work the Committee was involved in. The following suggestions were made:

- Regular updates on social media Facebook, twitter etc
- The YHN website
- A twice yearly e newsletter.
- The screens in the Customer Service Centres.
- A pilot with a Customer Service Committee email address which customers could use for suggestions of issues Committee may wish to consider.

L Grogan agreed to circulate the Committee membership list to Committee Members.

## 11 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would be held at 5.30pm on Thursday 15 March 2017.

It had been agreed that after this first meeting the meetings would be held out in the local areas. L Grogan would organise a venue for the next meeting.

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**Your Homes  
Newcastle**

Delivering great services, enabling people to live in great communities, supporting a great city

## Your Homes Newcastle Board 23 January 2018

TITLE	<b>Customer Insight and Engagement Strategy</b>
AUTHOR	Jill Davison - Strategic Business Manager
COMPANY	<b>Your Homes Newcastle</b>
ACTION REQUIRED	For Approval
SUMMARY	This summary report will support a presentation to YHN Board on our new Customer Insight and Engagement Strategy 2018 – 2021.

DELIVERY PLAN OBJECTIVE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Keep the housing stock decent and neighbourhoods clean and safe.</li> <li>2. Collect the rent and let properties efficiently</li> <li>3. Promote health and well-being and support vulnerable people to enjoy independence.</li> </ol>	
STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER	Customer insight and engagement activity is important in informing all areas of the business and as such considers all group risks.	
FINANCIAL / VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS	<p>To deliver the Community Investment Fund a budget of £100K has been identified. This will be resourced through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £50K from NE procurement savings</li> <li>• £50K that was previously used by NCC to deliver Positive People Positive Places</li> </ul>	
CUSTOMER IMPACT / VIEWS	This strategy aims to understand the customer experience and offer more opportunities for customers to give their views to improve and shape service delivery.	

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS	As part of our equality analysis we have carried out data analysis on customers we previously engaged with during 2016/17 and have identified gaps that will support the work of the strategy going forward. This will increase representation but more importantly shape services based on customer need.
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# Your Homes Newcastle

## Customer Insight and Engagement Strategy 2018 to 2021

### 1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 This report seeks Board approval of the Customer Insight and Engagement Strategy 2018-2021.

### 2. Background information

- 2.1 Understanding the customer experience needs to improve. It was identified that our current engagement methods no longer meet the needs of all our customers and it does not give us the full picture of how customers use our services to understand their experience.

Our new Customer Insight and Engagement Strategy 2018 to 2021 will be a key driver in understanding how we use customer information to shape and redesign service delivery, improve the customer experience and invest in local communities.

Board received a presentation at the away day back in June 2017 on our ideas on developing the strategy, and their feedback has been incorporated into the document.

Board agreed the Terms of Reference for Customer Service Committee on 19 September 2017. The purpose of this committee is to strengthen the tenant voice and as part of their delegations their role is to develop and monitor the YHN Customer Insight and Engagement Strategy and action plan.

### 3. Developing the strategy

- 3.1 Our STAR survey from 2016/17 showed that 67% of customers feel like we listen to and act upon their views and that overall satisfaction with service had dropped by 2% to 83%. Core benchmarking data through Housemark puts us in third and bottom quartile for performance in these areas.

Customer feedback from the STAR survey was used initially to develop the priority areas for the Strategy with a key focus on improving the customer experience and overall satisfaction. To do this we needed a new approach to customer engagement using new techniques and approaches that increase our understanding of our customers but also to give more opportunity for customer feedback.

The strategy covers three priority areas

1. **Understanding our customers and reshaping services** – using the information that we already hold on customers on how they currently engage with us to help us make better decisions and shape service delivery
2. **Engaging customers** – using new techniques to engage a wider audience
3. **Investing in local communities** – our approach to community investment.

### 3.2 Consultation

To develop the strategy we have consulted with the following stakeholders:

- YHN Board – June 2017
- Customers - September 2017
- YHN Customer and Service Delivery Committee – December 2017

### 3.3 Feedback

Feedback from YHN Board was used to develop the strategy in advance of it going out to customer consultation.

To understand if our priorities 'hit the mark' we went out to customer consultation for feedback. We did this through social media and through an e newsletter to our customers. Feedback was extremely positive and customers welcomed the new approach to engagement.

1. Understanding customers – 98% agreed
2. Engaging customers – 96% agreed
3. Community Investment 100% agreed.

Customer Service Committee received and endorsed the strategy and will monitor the progress against the action plan at each meeting. The recommendations are included within the strategy.

## 4. Recommendations

- 4.1 Board are recommended to approve the strategy and the new direction for understanding and engaging with our customers.

### Background Papers

- Terms of reference for Customer Service Committee
- Customer Insight and Engagement Strategy 2018 – 2021.

### Contact Officer:

If you have any questions about this report that you would like to clarify before the meeting, you can contact Heather Horan by telephone on 0191 278 8736 or email [heather.horan@yhn.org.uk](mailto:heather.horan@yhn.org.uk)



**Understanding, engaging &  
investing in a brighter  
future.**

Customer Insight and Engagement Strategy

2018-2021



## Document control

<b>Version control table</b>	
<b>Document reference/version number</b>	Version – 7 December 2017
<b>Author</b>	Heather Horan, Business Support Team  E: <a href="mailto:heather.horan@yhn.org.uk">heather.horan@yhn.org.uk</a> T: 0191 2788736
<b>Directorate</b>	Business Support
<b>Date published</b>	01/01/18
<b>Date for review</b>	31/10/20
<b>Responsible Director</b>	Tina Drury - Managing Director  E: <a href="mailto:tina.drury@yhn.org.uk">tina.drury@yhn.org.uk</a> T: 0191 2788700
<b>Approved by</b>	YHN Board
<b>Monitored by</b>	Customer Service Committee



## Introduction

The way that we engage with our customers is changing. The traditional engagement methods we have used in the past no longer meet the needs of all our customers or our changing organisation and we need to maximise the impact for our investment. We plan to take a 3D approach to be 'Dramatically, Demonstrably Different' and to put customers back in the spotlight!

This strategy will reflect how engagement and insight need to work together so that we better understand behaviours and customer views. We are using customer insight more and more to target engagement activity to give us more of an understanding of our existing and potential customers. Using the information gathered we will deliver services efficiently and expertly and make informed, sustainable investment in the communities where we work.

Our Customer Insight and Engagement Strategy is our commitment to really listening to customers and putting them at the heart of what we do. Rather than assuming that customers want to be part of our lives we will get out there and be part of their lives.

The strategy will be a key driver in understanding how we use customer information to shape and redesign service delivery, improve the customer experience and invest in local communities. Our journey ahead marks a very different way of working for us, however, we are up for the challenge and we are confident that our new approach will have a positive impact for customers and the business.

### Our customer insight and engagement priorities:

Our STAR (Survey of Tenants and Residents) from 2016 showed that the city and communities we work in are facing considerable challenge; many households have seen their incomes cut as a result of welfare reform and local authority budget cuts have resulted in the loss of many valuable services. We used feedback from the survey to ensure customer's views shaped our priorities. YHN Board was initially consulted in June 2017 and further consultation was carried out with customers in September 2017. Feedback from both Board and customers is reflected with this strategy.

Our priorities within this strategy will support our strategic objectives and our action plan will clearly outline how our work supports the delivery plan targets.

#### Our priorities are:

- Understanding customers and reshaping services
- Engaging customers
- Investing in local communities

#### What this strategy will achieve:

- Overall customer satisfaction will have risen to at least 85% by 2020
- At least 70% of customers will feel like we listen and act upon their views by 2020
- Our new Community Investment Fund will ensure that for every £1 invested we will receive £5 return on investment from our activities by 2020
- We will have an informed approach to community investment and communities will be empowered to strengthen their own community by March 2018.





## Understanding our customers and reshaping services

Customer insight is essential if we are to successfully navigate our way through the ever-changing dynamic landscape and continue to meet the needs of our broad spectrum of customers. Our aim is to be an insight-rich organisation, recognised for taking appropriate and timely action in response to the knowledge we have gathered. Doing so will result in an improved customer experience and increased satisfaction.

### What we want:

To understand our customers through rich data, which will help us make better decisions and re-shape service delivery.

### What we will do:

- Get to know our customers further including who they are, how they interact with us, what they do as customers of YHN and why they have chosen and continue to choose to take services from us to help us predict service delivery
- Develop our approach to customer profiling so we have a deeper understanding of current and future customers' needs, aspirations, expectations and opinions, to ensure we provide the best possible services
- Define and deliver our 'customer offer' across different customer types and journeys, and translate this into a set of customer service standards in conjunction with our service delivery teams
- Communicate with customers in a way that suits their identified preference, tailoring the information we provide according to anticipated need
- Ensure we provide the right training to support our staff to develop against this priority
- Identify projects that will support our delivery plan and our strategic objectives to improve services
- Strengthen our position by targeting the right markets, with the right products and services, in the right way and at the right time. We will become experts at tailoring our service offer according to customer needs, providing us with a competitive advantage.





## Engaging our customers

There is now a much greater emphasis on opportunities for more accessible and inclusive interactions with a particular focus on engaging a wider audience. However, despite these changes, we know that customers still don't always feel like their views are listened to or their opinions acted upon. We are determined to

change this and acknowledge we need to do more.

### What we want:

- Engaged customers who share information and ideas, and who are empowered to enable continuous improvement of the services we offer. Engagement levels across the city will increase so that customer influence is at the heart of decision making.

### What we will do:

- Continue to provide a range of accessible and exciting opportunities for people to engage and influence service delivery
- Collaborate with service delivery teams to create and implement customer experience improvement plans and projects, focusing on known customer pain-points
- Help raise the profile of the customer within the organisation and ensure that customer needs sit firmly at the heart of YHN's thinking and decision making
- Ensure that customers have the opportunity to influence strategy and policy development
- Develop our approach to real time feedback to truly understand customer satisfaction
- Understand what customers want to engage with and target communication effectively to increase response rate and reduce engagement fatigue
- Encourage customers to engage with the wider opportunities across the city through NiTV and the scrutiny panel
- Develop our approach in working with local schools and young people
- Explore new digital platforms to encourage engagement online with wider audiences, which is quicker, will increase opportunities and representation and the strength of the customer voice
- Understand trends of who is engaging with us through social media
- Explore opportunities for gamification to increase engagement levels in a creative way
- Be able to report on the return on investment that engagement activities bring to the organisation where appropriate
- Understand satisfaction levels with engagement through regular digital surveys





## Investing in our communities

Community investment focuses on the strengths, or assets, within communities, working with them and community partners to identify, build on and sustain strengths, in order to support and encourage communities to become stronger and more self-reliant. It starts from the premise that communities are built from the inside out (rather than the outside in), capitalising on the skills, capacities, intelligence, wisdom and experience of local people and groups. Strengths are identified and connected to each other

to multiply their power and effectiveness.

### What we want:

A community investment approach that places customers right at the heart. We will invest in the quality of life of our customers in the areas in which we work to create more cohesive and sustainable communities. Residents will feel proud of the places in which they live and be motivated to contribute to their success.

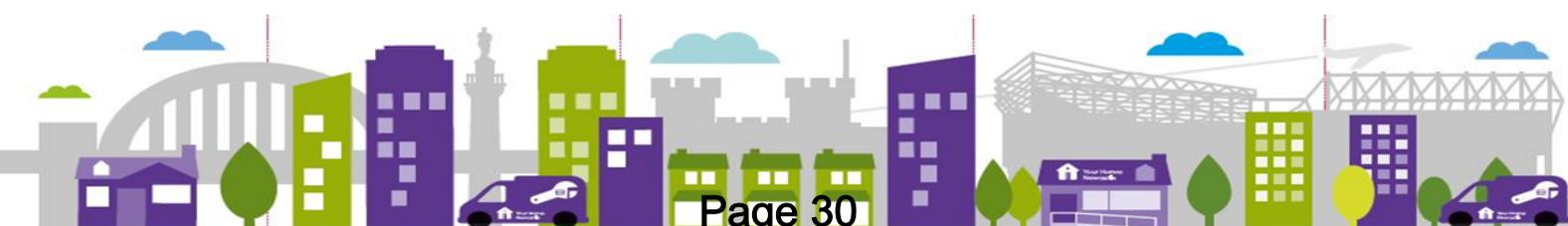
### What we will do:

- Develop a co-ordinated and strategic approach to our investment by strengthening our knowledge and skills. To do this, we will engage with expert partners to develop our understanding
- Identify the priority areas for community investment using customer insight through our community profiles
- Embed community investment across the organisation
- Use both customer and community insight to develop themes for our community investment fund
- Understand the staff resources required to deliver a community investment fund
- Measure our performance in order to identify the value of what we do
- We will work with external funding providers to support and attract funding to strengthen the projects delivered
- Measure the social impact and the return on investment for the business and provide an evaluation report for Customer Service Committee which we will publish annually.

### Delivering the strategy- *Working together* to create a **brighter future**.

The future of this strategy is exciting! We will **understand** our customers to shape service delivery. We will **engage** with larger audiences to create more opportunities for customer to give their feedback, and we will **invest** in communities to build on community capacity and sustainability.

Our Managing Director will have overall responsibility for overseeing our Customer Insight and Engagement Strategy, to ensure we achieve our goals. Our Customer Services Committee will have a role in monitoring our progress against our actions through quarterly reports.



## Board 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2018

### Delegated Decisions – Schedule of non-confidential Delegated Decisions taken between 27<sup>th</sup> October 2017 and 08<sup>th</sup> January 2018

No.	Directorate/ Delegated Officer	Scheme	Cost/ Budget provision	Units	Contractor	Wards
1	David Langhorne - Assets & Development	Proctor Court - Communal Upgrade/Refurbishment	Funding of £718,649 from Communals	58	Kier Services Ltd	Walker
2	David Langhorne - Assets & Development	Queens Court - Communal Upgrade/Refurbishment	Funding of £1,048,682 from Communals	120	Kier Services Ltd	Westgate
3	David Langhorne - Assets & Development	Ferguson Lane Bungalows	Additional funding of £185,500 added to £4,852,295 from New Build and New Housing  Covers additional works for: Additional Highways works; traffic calming and dropped kerb access & additional 39 level access showers	42	Keepmoat Regeneration	Benwell & Scotswood
4	David Langhorne - Assets & Development	Environmental Programme - Procurement of Architects for Drawings/Specification	Funding of £23,876 from Environmentals	433	Colour Urban Design	Walkergate

5	David Langhorne - Assets & Development	Blakelaw 165 Estate - increased cost approval	<p>Additional funding of £1,209,787 added to £3,542,739 from Environmentals and Communals.</p> <p>Covers additional works for (in order of scale):</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Additional cost incurred from utilities companies</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Improved Highways works</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Improvements to roofing spec + additional roofing restraints</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Additional landscaping (Changes to planning requirements)</td> </tr> </table>	Additional cost incurred from utilities companies	Improved Highways works	Improvements to roofing spec + additional roofing restraints	Additional landscaping (Changes to planning requirements)	149	Keepmoat Regeneration	Blakelaw
Additional cost incurred from utilities companies										
Improved Highways works										
Improvements to roofing spec + additional roofing restraints										
Additional landscaping (Changes to planning requirements)										
6	David Langhorne - Assets & Development	Kenton Bar Environmental Feasibility Study - Procurement of Architects	Funding of £20,000 from HRA Revenue	0	Colour	Kenton				
7	David Langhorne - Assets & Development	WD0023 West Denton Fire Doors	<p>Additional funding of £117,970 added to £192,269 from Standard Housing Investment</p> <p>Fire stopping plaster repairs added to existing scheme to align with door replacements</p>	277	BCE	Denton				
8	David Langhorne - Assets & Development	New Build Programme (Ridgewood Gardens) - Procurement of Architects	Funding of £9,460 from New Build and New Housing	7	Blake Hopkinson	East Gosforth				
9	David Langhorne - Assets & Development	Multi-Storey Blocks - Fire stopping to communal areas (Demon Drillers Ltd)	Funding of £407,058 from Standard Housing Investment - Health & Safety	1496	Demon Drillers Ltd	Cross City				
10	David Langhorne - Assets & Development	Multi-Storey Blocks - Fire stopping to communal areas (Isoler)	Funding of £407,058 from Standard Housing Investment - Health & Safety	2088	Isoler	Cross City				

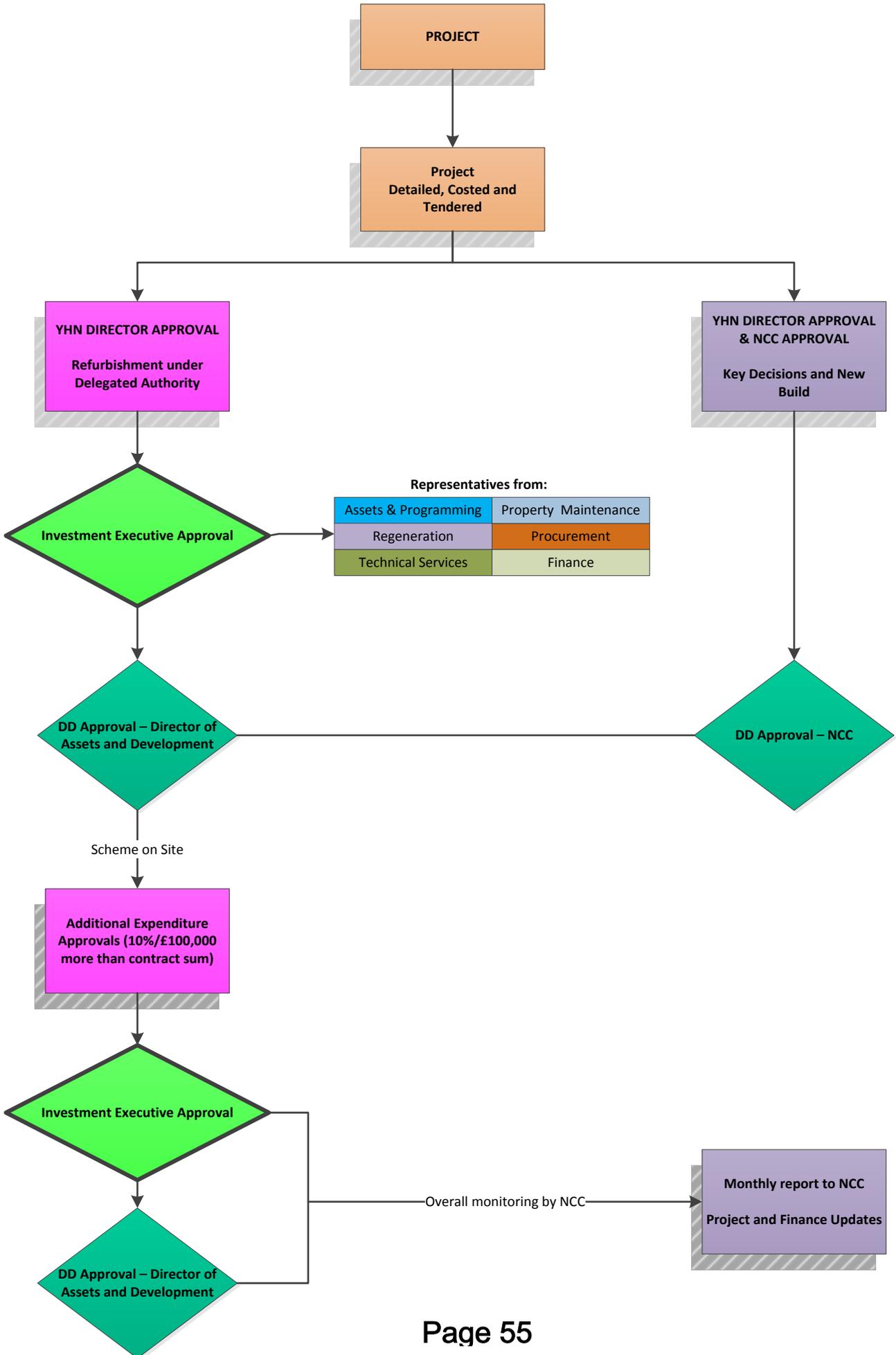
11	David Langhorne - Assets & Development	Hexham House and Titan House Demolition/Home Loss	Funding of £633,668 from Regeneration - General Needs	98	HRA	Walker
12	David Langhorne - Assets & Development	Wharrier Street bungalows	Funding of £92,400 from HRA Revenue	12	HRA	Walker
13	David Langhorne - Assets & Development	Sheltered Housing Refurbishment Programme (Belvedere/Conewood) - Procurement of Architects	Funding of £37,100 from Regeneration - Sheltered Housing	38	JDDK	Fawdon & South Heaton
14	David Langhorne - Assets & Development	WD0027 Citywide Fire Doors	Funding of £11,772,000 from Lifecycle - Other	4000	Straightline NE	Cross City
15	David Langhorne - Assets & Development	PB32 Elm Grove parking	Additional funding of £5,054 added to £16,679 from Participatory Budget	18	Highways and Localised Services	Fawdon
16	David Langhorne - Assets & Development	Vale House, Shieldfield House & Proctor Court Service Riser Works	Funding of £616,919 from Lifecycle - Other	254	Isoler	South Heaton
17	David Langhorne - Assets & Development	FS0009 Remedial works to Cruddas Park House external cladding	Funding of £21,200 from Lifecycle - Other	177	Wates Construction Ltd	Elswick

18	David Langhorne - Assets & Development	Communal Upgrade Programme	Funding of £3,892,200 from Communals Covers entire 12 months programme: 7 blocks. (Reports no 1 & 2 are first two blocks)	582	Kier	Cross City
19	David Langhorne - Assets & Development	WD0028 Fire Door Replacement Programme NEP	Funding of £1,602,720 from Lifecycle - Other	383	Straightline NE	Elswick
20	David Langhorne - Assets & Development	Shieldfield House Wet Riser Generator Replacement	Funding of £66,250 from Lifecycle - Other	1	Royston Ltd	Ouseburn
21	David Langhorne - Assets & Development	Shieldfield NHO Conversion	Funding of £180,200 from Regeneration - General Needs Conversion to two flats	2	BCE	Ouseburn
22	Jon Ritchie – Finance & Commercial	YHN risk management software	Funding of £25,000 from YHN Revenue	0	CammsRisk	Cross City
23	David Langhorne - Assets & Development	RF0017 2016/17 Roofing Programme	Additional funding of £300,000 added to £4,385,948 from Lifecycle - Lifecycle Programmes (Maintaining Decency) Covers additional required replacement roofing at: The Minorities and the neighbouring Leonard Cheshire Centre	1011	Springs Roofing Ltd.	Denton, Fawdon, Ouseburn, South Heaton
24	Matthew Foreman – Customer Services	UC Staffing	Funding of £58,854 from YHN Revenue	0	YHN	Cross City

25	Matthew Foreman – Customer Services	Repair & maintenance of warden call systems	Funding of £31,530 from YHN Revenue	0	Goldshield Electronic Security Ltd	Cross City
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# Scheme Approval Process



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## YHN Board Forward Plan 2018

### Meeting 20 March 2018

	Report Name	Purpose	Confidential?	Report Author
1	Group Budget/Delivery Plan/Risk Register 2018-19 Including Gift Aid Payment to Asfaleia	Approval	Yes	Finance & Commercial Director
2	Assurances from Committees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finance and Performance 13<sup>th</sup> February</li> <li>Group Audit and Risk 20<sup>th</sup> February</li> </ul>	Discussion	No	N/A
3	Assurances from subsidiaries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asfaleia Ltd. 6<sup>th</sup> February 2018</li> </ul>	Discussion	No	Director of Customer Service
4	Articles of Association and Governance documents	Approval	No	Strategic Business Manager
5	Appraisal process including Training and Development Plan and Directors re-appointments process	Approval	No	Strategic Business Manager
6	Equality and Diversity Strategy	Approval	No	Strategic Business Manager
7	Health and Safety Policy	Approval	No	Assets & Development Director
<b>ABRI TRADING</b>				
8	Abri Trading – Business Activity Update	Discussion	Yes	Finance & Commercial Director
9	Abri Trading - Budget			Finance & Commercial Director

### Meeting 29 May 2018 – Please note we need to find alternative date

	Report Name	Purpose	Confidential?	Report Author
1	Assurances from Committees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finance and Performance Committee 15<sup>th</sup> May</li> <li>Customer Services Committee 15<sup>th</sup> March</li> </ul>	Discussion	No	N/A
2	Assurances from subsidiaries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asfaleia Ltd. 26<sup>th</sup> April</li> </ul>	Discussion	No	N/A
3	Remuneration and Nominations Committee Report	Approval	Yes	Chair
4	Health and Safety 6 monthly Report	Discussion	No	Assets & Development Director
5	Task and Finish Group update Business Strategy (inc Growth)	Discussion	No	Finance & Commercial Director
6	Procurement Strategy	Approval	No	Assets & Development Director

## Meeting 31 July 2018

	Report Name	Purpose	Confidential?	Report Author
1	Annual Report and Financial Statements	Approval	No	Finance & Commercial Director
2	Year End Reserves	Information	No	Finance & Commercial Director
3	Assurances from Committees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group Audit and Risk 22<sup>nd</sup> May</li> <li>Customer Service 19<sup>th</sup> June</li> <li>Group Audit and Risk 10<sup>th</sup> July</li> </ul>	Discussion	No	N/A
4	Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement	Approval	No	Assets & Development Director
5	NHF Governance Code Compliance Statement	Approval	No	Strategic Business Manager
6	Value for Money Strategy	Approval	No	Finance & Commercial Director
<b>ABRI TRADING</b>				
7	Abri Trading – Business Activity Update	Discussion	Yes	Finance & Commercial Director

## AGM & Meeting 18 September 2018

Process of AGM to be confirmed in conjunction with the review of the Articles of Association

	Report Name	Purpose	Confidential?	Report Author
<b>AGM</b>				
1	Chairs Report	Information	No	Chair
2	Minutes of 19 September 2017	Decision	No	Company Secretary
3	Appointment of External Auditors	Decision	No	Company Secretary
4	Retirement & Appointment of Board Members	Decision	No	Company Secretary
5	Annual Accounts & Financial Statements	Decision	No	Company Secretary
<b>Board Meeting</b>				
6	Appointment of Vice Chair	Approval	No	Company Secretary
7	Committee Membership	Approval	No	Company Secretary
8	Strategic Risk Register	Discussion	No	Finance & Commercial Director
9	Assurances from Committees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finance and Performance 14<sup>th</sup> August</li> <li>Customer Service Committee</li> </ul>	Discussion	No	N/A
10	Assurances from subsidiaries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asfaleia Ltd. 26 July</li> </ul>	Discussion	No	Customer Services Director
11	Asset Management Strategy	Approval	No	Assets & Development Director