

4th September 2020

MN/LB

Dear Member

AGM of Members – Broadland Housing Association, September 2020

It gives me great pleasure to invite you to join us online for our 2020 Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 30th September at 10am.

The meeting will take place at The Elms on Unthank Road and will be broadcast on Zoom. Sadly, due to Covid 19 restrictions, we cannot accommodate Members in the Hall, apart from board members and candidates for election to the board, as well as Directors, our Company Secretary and our Committee Manager.

The very fact that I am inviting Members to join us on a Zoom call for our AGM highlights what a very unusual year 2020 has been so far. I am really sorry that we are unable to invite everyone to a face to face meeting as in previous years, as we always appreciate the opportunity not just to complete formal business and answer any formal questions you might have, but also to chat before and after the meeting, renewing friendships and sharing news.

The Coronavirus pandemic has significantly impacted the way that Broadland Housing has been able to work since March and this has impacted our preparations for the Annual General Meeting.

One of our challenges has been that our External Auditors needed more time to review our financial accounts and to secure sign off, due to additional reviews being required to take account of the impact of the pandemic. As a result, the Group Audit and Risk Committee and the Board will only in a position to review and approve publication to Members at meetings being held on 15th September, which is two months later than normal.

Our ambition is to make the Financial Statements available on our website on Wednesday 16th September. You will be able to access them using the weblink and password provided in the AGM Notice.

I know that you will be interested in how the Association and Subsidiary Companies have been impacted by the pandemic restrictions introduced in March and how we have been able to deliver services to our tenants over the past six months.

The Financial Statements that are going to be published on 16th September will provide you with more detail, as will my presentation at the AGM, however a few advance headlines would include: -

- The suspension of our routine repairs service from 23rd March until 1st July.

- High prioritisation of emergency and urgent repairs, especially if they affected our tenants' ability to live in their home comfortably during lockdown
- A very significant daily cleaning and sanitisation programme for all sheltered housing and older persons accommodation communal areas, with well over 1,000 additional cleaning visits between March and July. In July we acquired several electrostatic machines, which made it much easier to keep schemes safe.
- No suspension of our estates service, as we recognised that not only could we undertake this work safely, but the appearance of schemes has a significant impact on mental health wellbeing, especially for tenants who might be shielding.
- A positive focus on how we could help respond to homelessness during the pandemic with successful partnership working with our local authority and neighbouring housing association partners.
- A successful transition to holding tenant engagement events using Zoom rather than face to face meetings
- Successfully moving the Boards and Committees within Broadland to meeting online using Teams Video Conferencing. For the first couple of months, the Board met weekly. In May this changed to fortnightly and now we have found our new, but perhaps temporary, normal, the board is meeting monthly.
- The swift adoption by the Board of an Interim Corporate Strategy and a revised 2020/21 Budget, reflecting the impact of the Pandemic on our strategic ambitions and what we can achieve whilst working under restrictions.
- Undertaking three recruitment campaigns, using Teams Video Conferencing, for new board members, namely two new tenant members, a new Chair of Group Audit and Risk and an Independent with considerable HR and organisational development experience. Encouragingly we had a fantastic response rate to each recruitment campaign.
- 130 staff moved to working from home on the Thursday before the Prime Minister announced lockdown. We were fortunate that we had introduced agile working for the many of the staff team in 2018 and therefore this transition was much easier than might have been expected.
- The closure of all our offices from March until August. They remain closed to visitors, but under Covid19 restrictions we can, across all offices and our maintenance store, accommodate just over 30 people each day. We do not currently have a timetable for normal reopening of offices and we do not currently expect the majority of staff to be working from our offices until sometime in 2021 at the earliest.
- The recent adaption of the main hall at The Elms to create a Covid secure meeting place for up to 20 people, to facilitate face to face board and committee meetings from September.

The AGM, of course, is primarily a review of the 2019/20 Financial Year. As we will explain in the Financial Statements, we did have a good year with considerable progress in delivering our strategy and services to our tenants. I will not repeat the full content of either document here, but again I will provide you with a few headlines:

- Over 20,000 repairs undertaken in tenants' homes
- 365 tenants worked with us to improve our services
- 82 homeless people provided with homes
- Letting 527 homes to new tenants
- Sustained focus on preventing homelessness by supporting tenants to sustain their tenancies. There were still sadly five evictions during year – three for anti-social behaviour and two for arrears, where the tenants were not willing to engage with us.
- Continuing emphasis on the energy efficiency of our tenants' homes, including the installation of solar photovoltaic panels on 55 properties
- Our Tenancy Support Team helped 348 tenants and secured an additional £277,529 in benefits for some of those experiencing financial hardship.
- The development of 288 new homes of all tenures
- The identification of two bespoke benchmarking peer groups against which we can compare our operational and financial performance and use to challenge the way we are working.

As mentioned above, the AGM will be invited to appoint four new board members.

Jon Barber and Kate Slack will both retire from the Board this month, having both served for the maximum term of nine years. Both Kate and Jon have made a tremendous contribution to Broadland HA since they joined in 2011 – helping determine our strategic ambitions; challenging and holding to account the executive team; acting as ambassadors for Broadland externally; and chairing Committees, including Jon's nine years as Chair of our Group Audit and Risk Committee.

Andy Hill, who joined the Board in 2019 as a tenant member, resigned from the Board in June, when his personal circumstances changed and he moved in with his partner and welcomed their son, Joshua, into the world! Sadly, as Andy is no longer a tenant, he automatically retired as a Board Member, under our Rules.

Board members play an extremely important role in the life of Broadland and they have some very significant responsibilities under the Regulator of Social Housing's standards. We have been very fortunate as an organisation in the quality of our non-executive board members across the Group and I would like to record my thanks to all of them for everything they do on our behalf. It is greatly appreciated by the whole executive team and, I hope, by all our Members.

As we welcome four new Non-Executive Directors formally at the AGM, I believe that the Broadland HA Board will continue to be extremely effective and conscientious about fulfilling their responsibilities. We recognise that this is substantial change in the Board's composition and, subject to complying with the Covid 19 restrictions, we will invest time not just in supporting new members to get up to speed, but also spend time building the new team.

I very much hope that you can join us on 30th September online. It would be fantastic to get a high turnout despite the fact that we cannot currently meet face to face.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Newey', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Michael Newey D.Sc. (Hon) FRICS FCIH FRSA
Group Chief Executive