

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

SHAREHOLDER COMMITTEE

**Minutes from the Meeting of the Shareholder Committee held on
Thursday, 15th October, 2026 at 3.00 pm in Meeting Room 1-3,
First Floor, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn PE30 1EX**

PRESENT: Councillors Beales (Chair), Morley and Ring

OFFICERS:

Charlotte Marriott – Corporate Governance Manager

Karl Patterson – Housing Development Manager

Duncan Hall – Assistant Director for Regeneration, Housing and Place

Michelle Drewery – Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer)

Carl Holland – Assistant Director for Finance (Deputy Section 151 Officer)

Graham Philpot – Housing Strategy Delivery Officer

12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

13 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: The minutes from the previous meeting held on 23rd July 2026 were agreed as a correct record.

Arising from the minutes, the Chair referred to the Government's £39 billion Social and Affordable Homes Programme and asked whether a further update could be provided. Officers advised that discussions had taken place with Homes England and that schemes were being developed to support future grant applications. The Committee requested a concise, high-level update on the available funding routes, including the National Housing Bank, and how these could affect the companies' future housing pipeline.

14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

15 CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE

There was none.

16 MEMBERS PRESENT UNDER STANDING ORDER 34

There was none.

17 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was none.

18 **ANNUAL UPDATE ON THE ACTIVITY OF THE SHAREHOLDER COMMITTEE**

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The Corporate Governance Manager presented the annual update, which was to be submitted to the Audit Committee. As this was the first report of its kind, it covered the period from September 2024 and summarised the Shareholder Committee's oversight of West Norfolk Housing Company, West Norfolk Property Limited and the winding up of Alive West Norfolk. It also outlined the Committee's work on performance monitoring, business planning, financial and investment matters, governance, accountability and annual assurance.

Councillor Morley welcomed the report but expressed disappointment that, despite concerns previously raised at the Audit Committee about governance and oversight, Audit Committee Members had not used the opportunity available under Standing Order 34 to attend the Shareholder Committee. Councillor Morley considered that a closer connection between the two committees would assist Members' understanding.

The Chair commented that Audit Committee Members remained welcome to attend, and the Corporate Governance Manager advised that this invitation could be reiterated when the report was presented.

The Chair asked where compliance and regulatory risk sat in relation to properties operated by West Norfolk Property Limited where the Council retained the freehold. The Housing Development Manager explained that, as the company was the landlord under the tenancy agreement, the principal landlord obligations rested with the company, although the Council remained the superior landlord. The Assistant Director for Regeneration, Housing and Place added that the regulatory burden in both the social and private rented sectors had increased significantly and would continue to affect the costs of operating the companies.

Councillor Ring commented that the Council's housing companies were well placed to meet the new regulatory requirements when compared with parts of the wider private rented sector.

RESOLVED: The Shareholder Committee endorsed the report and recommended the following to Audit Committee.

Recommendation to Audit Committee:

1. Note the work undertaken by the Shareholder Committee since September 2024.
2. Note the strengthening of shareholder oversight arrangements through the development of company KPI frameworks.

REASON FOR DECISION: To fulfil the Terms of Reference of the Shareholder Committee reporting annually to the Audit Committee.

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WEST NORFOLK HOUSING COMPANY BOARD MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

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The Housing Development Manager presented the report and provided an update on the composition of the West Norfolk Housing Company Board. The Board comprised seven members, consisting of five independent members recruited for their skills and experience and two Council officers. Following the resignation of Councillor Ware, there were no elected Members on the Board. Officers explained that this reflected legal advice received in 2023 regarding the potential conflicts of interest arising from elected Members serving as company directors, while the Shareholder Committee now provided the necessary Member oversight.

The Committee was advised that non-executive Board members were normally appointed for two consecutive three-year terms, with the possibility of a further three-year term where this was considered to be in the company's interests. The Board kept its skills and succession requirements under review, and no current skills gap had been identified.

In response to questions from the Chair, the Housing Development Manager confirmed that the Board made appointments, subject to approval by the Shareholder Committee. The next terms were expected to end towards the end of the following year, and individual discussions and appraisals would be undertaken before then to understand members' intentions and support succession planning.

The Chair asked how the tenure provisions applied to executive directors who were Council officers. The Housing Development Manager and Assistant Director for Regeneration, Housing and Place explained that the company's code of governance distinguished between executive and non-executive directors and did not impose the same tenure limit on executive directors.

The Chair also asked how potential conflicts between officers' Council responsibilities and their duties as company directors were managed. The Assistant Director for Regeneration, Housing and Place gave the example of property pricing negotiations, where another officer

represented the Council's interests so that the same individual did not both propose and approve the arrangement.

Councillor Morley supported the Board's view that a further appointment was not currently required. The Committee agreed that the existing membership provided the necessary skills and experience.

RESOLVED: The Shareholder Committee noted the contents of the report and the make up of the board and considered the appointment of an additional Director to the board.

REASON FOR DECISION: To note and agree changes to the Membership of the Board.

20 **COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee agreed that an update on the Social and Affordable Homes Programme should be added to the meeting scheduled for 10th December 2026.

RESOLVED: The Committee Forward Plan was noted.

21 **DATE OF FUTURE MEETING**

The next meeting was scheduled for 10th December 2026.

22 **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED: That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

23 **EXEMPT - WEST NORFOLK HOUSING COMPANY BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE FOR 2026/2027**

The Housing Development Manager presented the report as included in the agenda and responded to questions and comments from the Committee.

RESOLVED: The Shareholder Committee:

1. Considered delivery and performance by WNHC during 2025/2026 against the Business Plan Update 2024/2025 at Appendix 1 (exempt) and agree on any comments and recommendations back to the Board of WNHC.

2. Approved the WNHC Company Business Plan Update for 2026/2027 as set out in Appendix 2 (exempt).

REASON FOR DECISION: In accordance with the Terms of Reference for the Shareholder Committee:

4.4 Approval of the Business Plan for each of the Council Companies on an annual basis.

4.5 Holding each of the Council Companies to account for their performance against the respective Business Plan.

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EXEMPT - WEST NORFOLK PROPERTY LIMITED BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE FOR 2026/2027

The Housing Development Manager presented the report as included in the agenda and responded to questions and comments from the Committee.

RESOLVED: The Shareholder Committee:

1. Considered delivery and performance by WNPL during 2025/2026 against the Business Plan 2024/2025 at Appendix 1 (exempt) and agree on any comments and recommendations back to the Board of WNPL.
2. Approved the Business Plan Delivery Update 2026/2027 at Appendix 2 (exempt).

REASON FOR DECISION: In accordance with the Terms of Reference for the Shareholder Committee:

4.4 Approval of the Business Plan for each of the Council Companies on an annual basis.

4.5 Holding each of the Council Companies to account for their performance against the respective Business Plan.

The meeting closed at 4.28 pm