



WHEATLEY HOUSING GROUP LIMITED

SC426094

MEETING OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

BY VIDEOCONFERENCE

on Wednesday 16 December 2020 at 10.00am

Directors Present: Alastair MacNish (Chair), Jo Armstrong, Martin Armstrong, Jo Boaden Sheila Gunn, Bernadette Hewitt and Martin Kelso.

In Attendance: Anthony Allison (Director of Governance), Steven Henderson (Group Director of Finance), Stephen Device (Interim Group Director of Repair and Assets, items 5 and 6a only), Lesley Wilkinson (Director of Employee Relations, Item 6b only), Hazel Young (Managing Director, Dunedin Canmore, item 7 only), Olga Clayton (Group Director of Housing and /Care, items 8, 9 and only), Laura Henderson (Managing /Director, Cube and Loretto Housing, item 11 only) and Tom Barclay (Group Director of Property and Development, item 12 only).

1. Directors not in attendance

The Chair declared that a quorum was present. It was noted that consistent with the interim proposals for our governance Bryan Duncan, Professor Paddy Gray, John Hill, Angela Mitchell, James Muir, Mary Mulligan and Maureen Dowden were not in attendance but their feedback on the reports had been circulated to attendees in advance.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Board noted the standing declarations of interest. No new declarations were made.

3. Minutes of meeting held on 28 October 2020

Decided: The Board approved the minute of 28 October 2020.

An update was provided on progress with the office hub acquisitions for Dumfries and Galloway. It was explained that we were seeking to conclude the contracts in the coming weeks.

4. Group CEO update

The Board received an update on a range of matters including: Wyndford regeneration; a commercial opportunity; vaccinations; City Building (Glasgow) senior staffing; and the annual SHR risk assessment.

The Board noted the updates and that a fuller report on the commercial opportunity would be brought back to the Board in due course, potentially necessitating an additional, short notice meeting.

5. **Cube Strategic review update**

The Board received feedback from the engagement to date with tenants, the planned approach to due diligence and the proposed next steps in the process.

The Board discussed the feedback from Cube tenants during the engagement to date, which has been very positive.

The Board discussed the pensions position within Cube and implications for transferring staff. An update was provided on the existing schemes within Cube, existing secondment arrangements and that our advice indicated that the LHA/Cube combination would strengthen the overall pension position in relation to past service deficit and cessation risk for the SHAPS scheme.

It was agreed that based on the feedback from Cube tenants, we should progress to the next stage.

Decided: The Board agreed:

- 1) the process for the proposed transfer of Cube properties to GHA and the Transfer of Engagements to Loretto should continue;**
- 2) stage 2 notices should be issued to Cube tenants setting out the basis for transfer and promises, and that ballots of tenants should begin on 7 January 2021.**

6(a). **Operating Model update - Our approach to service delivery**

The Board received a presentation setting out our approach to service delivery as part of our wider evolution of our operating model and way of working.

The Board sought an update on our engagement with trade union partners on our new operating model. An update was provided on discussion to date, which have been constructive and positive. It was confirmed all staff will be formally consulted, including through our trade union partners.

The Board discussed the implications of our new model for how we identify and nurture talent as well as maintain the behaviours associated with our culture. It was explained that we are engaging the wider senior leadership structure on these matters, as well as having clear processes in place. It was reiterated that our approach in these areas will evolve with the model.

The Board discussed how we ensure our flexibility always maintains a core service level and how we understand the impact of the operating model on all groups of staff. It was explained that we have a well-established resource planning model, which will robustly allow us to ensure resource availability. It was further confirmed that we have put a range of support in place for staff homeworking, within the context of the vast majority of our staff being out in communities.

It was reiterated that the proposals reflected the acceleration of our existing plans.

Decided: The Board

- 1) agreed the approach to service delivery set out here for the 2021-2026 strategy period; and**
- 2) noted that this approach to service delivery will form part of our operating model along with more flexible working by staff and**

development of corporate hubs that the Board considered at its previous two meetings.

6(b). Supporting the wellbeing of our staff

The Board received an update on the range of wellbeing activities we have delivered over the pandemic, the key learning and how that learning has informed our programme for 2021.

The Board welcomed the continued focus on our staff's wellbeing and the range within the programme.

Decided: The Board noted the update on staff wellbeing support

7. Stronger Voices, Stronger Communities – our new engagement framework

The Board received a presentation on the proposed approach to transforming our engagement approach, a key part of our Group Strategy.

The Board discussed how the framework will enhance the level of direct input from customers in the Board's decision making as well as for the Boards to hear feedback directly.

The Board considered how we develop the technology platform, such as an integrated app, to support our digital engagement ambitions. It was confirmed that we will engage external support as required, with a focus on a single integrated new app to prevent overloading customers with multiple apps.

It was recognised the framework can, and will, be flexibly deployed across the Group to reflect the diversity across our communities and maturity levels of existing structures. The opportunity for cross partner learning and collaboration was identified as an important consideration in implementing the framework.

The Board recognised the framework will also be applied to wider stakeholder voices, in particularly elected members.

Decided: The Board agreed the new engagement framework and its designation as a Group framework.

8. Housing first update

The Board received an update on the deployment of Housing First, including: the national policy context; pathfinder data; the Group contribution; and the critical nature of wraparound services.

The Board welcomed the progress to date, the strong tenancy sustainment rates being achieved and the integrated approach drawing in funding and expertise from Wheatley Care and the Foundation.

Decided: The Board noted the update on Housing First.

9. **Group Homelessness Policy 2021-2026**

The Board received a summary of the proposed policy approach for homelessness, recognising the significant commitment in our Group strategy.

The Board discussed our overall target to house 10,000 homeless households, the potential to exceed this target and the link to the proposed letting ratios. It was explained that we will seek to retain a focus on prevention and achieving balanced and sustainable communities.

Decided: The Board approved the Group Homelessness Policy and its designation as a Group Policy.

10. **Christmas response for customers**

The Board received an update on plans to support our customers over the Christmas period and how we have adapted our approach to reflect the current circumstances and restrictions.

Decided: The Board noted the update.

11. **2020 Group Rent Campaign**

The Board received a presentation setting out our 2020 rent campaign, as well as an update on the Scottish Child Payment and plans to issue family vouchers.

The Board discussed the potential to alert customers when they become entitled to the Scottish Child Payment. It was explained that we planned to do this where we hold the relevant data, within the boundaries of GDPR.

The Board discussed the proposed messaging of our rent campaign, the target audience and the link to our wider 'talk to us' messaging throughout the pandemic. It was explained that previous rent campaigns have shown that the majority of tenants do not consider the rent campaign messaging in isolation as there will often be in tandem with previous and ongoing Housing Officer engagement.

Decided: The Board noted the proposals for our 2020 Group-wide Rent Campaign.

12. **Green Investment Plan**

The Board received a summary of our draft Wheatley Green Investment Plan partnership offer, which builds on our strategic focus on environmental, climate change and sustainability within our Group strategy.

The Board discussed the breadth of the plan and the resources required to implement the plan if we successfully agree a partnership with the Scottish Government. It was explained that a full implementation plan, including the identification of resource requirements, internal and external, will be developed if successful.

The Board agreed that we progress with the offer, with the more detailed implementation approach to be considered should we agree a partnership.

Decided: The Board approved the submission of our Wheatley Green Investment Plan to Scottish Government in response to the national objectives set out within the Draft Infrastructure Investment Plan 2021-26 and the Programme for Government 2021-2022.

13. Finance report

The Board received an update on the Group's financial performance for the year to date, including the key variances relative to the, pre pandemic, budget.

The Board scrutinised financial performance and considered the ER/VR budget variance, noting it reflected the additional costs assumed as part of implementing our new operating model

Decided: The Board noted the financial performance for the Group to 31 October 2020.

14. Governance remobilisation

The Board considered the proposed approach to further remobilising our governance arrangements, taking into account our experience to date and the feedback received from partner Boards and Chairs.

Decided: The Board approve the updated approach to governance remobilisation as set out in the report.

15. Governance update

The Board received an update on a range of governance related matters.

The Board were updated on the review of the Board reporting template and Group Chair and Vice-Chair succession planning proposals by the Group RAAG Committee and the corporate risk register by the Group Audit Committee.

The Board reviewed the proposed role profile and recruitment process. The Board considered the rationale for maintaining our previously assumed internal approach and agreed it remained valid.

Decided: The Board

- 1) Approved the Group Chair Role Profile;**
- 2) Approved the proposed recruitment processes for the Group Chair and Vice-Chair;**
- 3) Noted the Group Chair use of the Urgent Action provision;**
- 4) Approved the revised Board reporting template, for implementation from May 2021; and**
- 5) Approved the updates to the corporate risk register**

16. AOCB

The Chair thanked the Board for their contribution over the year and commended the outstanding performance of the Group CEO and wider Executive under challenging and unprecedented circumstances.