



**WHEATLEY HOUSING GROUP LIMITED**

**SC426094**

**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Wheatley House, Glasgow**

**on Wednesday 18 December 2024 at 10.30 am**

Directors Present: Jo Armstrong (Chair), Lindsey Cartwright, Maureen Dowden, Bryan Duncan, Caroline Gardner, Bernadette Hewitt, Manish Joshi, Iain Macaulay, John McCraw, Alison McLaughlin and Alastair Murray.

In Attendance: Steven Henderson (Group Chief Executive), Anthony Allison (Group Director of Governance and Business Solutions), Pauline Turnock (Group Director of Finance) and Lindsay Lauder (Development and Regeneration – item 8 only).

**1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Jo Boaden.

**2. Declarations of interest**

The Board noted the standing declarations of interest.

**3. a) Minutes of meeting held on 13 November 2024 and matters arising.**

**Decided: The Board approved the minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2024.**

**b) Action List**

**Decided: The Board noted the action list.**

**4. Group CEO update**

The Board were provided with an update on a range of matters including: our engagement with the Scottish Housing Regulator regarding a non-compliant Registered Social Landlord; amendments to the Building (Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations to enable the implementation of the Scottish equivalent to the Passivhaus standard; and our success at achieving two awards at the UK Housing Awards.

The Board were also updated on the Radio Teleswitch Service switch-off planned for June and the planned engagement with stakeholders on the lack of progress to date from energy companies. It was explained that we are raising our concerns regarding the lack of progress and the implications for our tenants.

## **5. Chair updates – Audit, RAAG and WSDL**

The Board received updates from the Chairs of the Group Audit Committee, the Group Remuneration, Appointments, Appraisals and Governance Committee and Wheatley Developments Scotland Limited on activity since the last meeting.

[REDACTED]

The Group RAAG Chair confirmed that the Committee continues to monitor the application of our ER/VR use and policy adherence.

## **6. Scottish Government budget (presentation)**

The Board were provided with an update on the outcome from the Scottish Government budget announcement, in particular in relation to: the Affordable Housing Supply Programme; adaptations; employer National Insurance increases; homelessness prevention; and the overall energy efficiency and decarbonisation budget and continued uncertainty on the transition to net zero for social housing and the ongoing size of the Social Housing Net Zero Fund.

The Board discussed the implications of the restoration of funding for the Affordable Housing Supply Programme for our future programme and the wider challenges of the building costs for new homes. The Board discussed the attractiveness of acquisitions within the context of higher build costs noting the challenge was the availability of suitable properties for acquisition.

The Board discussed the elevated risk associated with the employer National Insurance increases for care providers, including Wheatley Care. It was confirmed this was under close, ongoing review.

**Decided: The Board noted the update.**

## **7. 2024/25 rent and service charge uplift**

The Board were provided with a report on feedback received from tenant focus group discussions on the draft 2025/26 rent and service charge setting proposals.

The Board were advised that the feedback indicated that, overall, tenants understand our proposals and recognised the need for an increase to maintain services and investment. It was noted that affordability and the support we can provide also remained a focus for tenants.

The Board considered the implications of an increase lower than the proposed options and the impact on investment in homes and neighbourhoods on the proposed consultation range. The Board also noted we would be implementing recommendations from tenants to enhance the clarity of the messaging within the brochure.

The Board discussed the expected implications in terms of our rent comparability across the Group and our longer term business plan assumptions for future rent increases.

The Board discussed the need for the investment in homes, neighbourhoods and services to be visible for tenants as well as well communicated where they are part of multi-year investment plans. It was confirmed this would be an area of strong focus within our tenant communication and engagement.

The Board reiterated the need to ensure tenants are aware of the support we can offer.

**Decided: The Board approved the options for consultation on the 2025/26 rent and service charge increase by each RSL.**

## **8. Regeneration update (presentation)**

The Board were provided with an update on the Kelvin Wynd regeneration project, the new build masterplan development and associated timelines.

The Board discussed the expected build-out period and the need for continued engagement with the local community.

**Decided: The Board noted the update.**

## **9. Complaints, performance and customer insight**

The Board were provided with an update on the complaints handling performance, how we are learning from complaints and wider customer insight and proposed amendments to our Group Complaints Policy.

The Board considered the outcome of our review of our complaints handling approach relative to the English Housing Ombudsman's complaints self-assessment, where there were no material areas we did not meet the standards.

The Board noted our continued focus on how we use feedback and learn lessons from complaints and examples of changes we have made based on such feedback and lessons.

**Decided: The Board:**

**1) delegated authority to the Group Chief Executive to update the Group Complaints Policy to:**

**a) confirm that the word complaint does not need to be used for an issue to be raised as a complaint; and**

**b) confirmed that a service request is not a complaint**

**2) otherwise noted the contents of the report and the improvements being driven by customer complaint feedback and lessons learned as well as wider customer insight.**

## **10. Finance Report**

The Board were provided with an update on the financial results to 31 October 2024.

[REDACTED]

The Board discussed expenditure relating to legal fees and were updated on the expenditure related to an ongoing legal case.

The Board noted that repairs expenditure continued to be within budget and forecast assumptions.

**Decided: The Board noted the Group management accounts for the period ended 31 October 2024.**

#### **11. Risk Management update**

The Board were provided with an update on the proposed changes to the Strategic Risk Register.

The Board reviewed and discussed the most recent review of the risk register including those that are outwith our risk appetite, noting this related primarily to the limitations of the mitigations available or rapidly evolving nature of the risk.

**Decided: The Board approved the changes to the Strategic Risk Register.**

#### **12. Contract Award – Wheatley Homes South and Wheatley Homes East Subcontractors**

The Board were provided with a summary of the proposed contract awards for the provision of trade subcontractors on behalf of Wheatley Homes South and Wheatley Homes East.

**Decided: The Board approved the award of the contracts for the provision of subcontractor works for the period of 3 years with an option to extend for a further 12 months starting December 2024:**

- 1) on behalf of Wheatley Homes South to 21 trade contractors across 10 different trades; and**
- 2) on behalf of Wheatley Homes East to 20 trade contractors across 10 different trades.**

#### **13. Contract Hire of Laundry and Kitchen equipment**

The Board were provided with a summary of the proposed contract award for the supply of industrial laundry and kitchen equipment and servicing during the contract hire period.

**Decided: The Board approved the award of the contract group-wide contract worth £2m (inclusive of VAT) to JLA Limited for the supply of industrial laundry and kitchen equipment and servicing during the maximum eight-year contract hire period.**

#### **14. AOCB**

There was no other competent business raised.

**Signed:** ..... (Chair)

**Date:** .....