



WHEATLEY HOUSING GROUP LIMITED

SC426094

MEETING OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Held at Wheatley House, 25 Cochrane Street, Glasgow

on Wednesday 29 September 2021 at 10.30am

Directors Present: Jo Armstrong (Chair), Martin Armstrong, Jo Boaden, Lindsey Cartwright, Maureen Dowden, Bryan Duncan, Caroline Gardner, Eric Gibson, Professor Paddy Gray, Bernadette Hewitt, Martin Kelso, Mairi Martin, Angela Mitchell and Mary Mulligan.

In Attendance: Anthony Allison (Director of Governance), Steven Henderson (Group Director of Finance), Steven Gray (Wheatley 360 NETS Lead – item 7 only), and Tom Barclay (Group Director of Property and Development – item 9 only).

1. Board and office bearer appointments

Decided: The Board

- 1) Confirmed the appointment of Jo Armstrong as Group Chair with immediate effect;**
- 2) Confirmed the appointment of Martin Kelso as Group Vice-Chair until the 2022 Annual General Meeting with immediate effect; and**
- 3) Noted that Lindsey Cartwright, Eric Gibson and Mairi Martin meet the criteria of Subsidiary Chair Board Members and approved their appointments as Subsidiary Chair Board Members with immediate effect; and**
- 4) Noted all appointments are under the terms of the governing body remuneration policy.**

[Jo Armstrong assumed the Chair]

2. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence. The Chair declared that a quorum was present.

3. Declarations of interest

The Board noted the standing declarations of interest now included those declared by Lindsey Cartwright, Caroline Gardner, Eric Gibson and Mairi Martin. No further new declarations were made.

3. Minutes of meeting held on 25 August 2021

Decided: The Board approved the minute of the meeting on 25 August 2021.

4. **Group CEO update**

The Board received an update on a range of matters including: the ongoing tenant consultation; our sustainable investment plan and plans for COP 26; and the key themes from the Scottish Housing Regulator's - annual National Report on landlords' performance.

Decided: The Board noted the update.

5. **2022 RSL rent setting and updated financial projections**

The Board received a detailed update on: our rent setting analysis of comparability, affordability and financial viability; and our proposed approach to tenant consultation.

The Board discussed the affordability analysis and sought an update on the potential impact of the Universal Credit ("UC") changes. The approach to calculating the housing element of UC was explained. It was further confirmed that we do not have many instances across the Group where individuals are close to the benefit cap threshold.

It was confirmed that a further update on the support we offer to tenants is scheduled for a future meeting this calendar year.

The Board discussed the wider economic challenges, with inflation rising and expected to continue to do so, national insurance employer contribution increases and supply chain pressures. The Board reviewed the future development assumptions and agreed it was prudent to amend the assumptions at this stage.

The Board discussed comparability, both against other RSLs within specific geographic boundaries and across the Group as a whole. The Board further discussed affordability and noted that all our properties were within the SFHA parameters and upper limit. It was re-affirmed that affordability has been and will remain a key focus, including the potential for more bespoke approaches where necessary.

The Board considered the proposed uplift and agreed that, even with inflation continuing to rise, the proposed below inflation increase was appropriate and remained financially viable.

It was confirmed the consultation booklet remained subject to review by each individual Board and would also take into account the feedback from our Scrutiny panel and focus groups.

Decided: The Board

- 1) Agreed that the proposed range of rent and service charge increases for 2022/23 as set out in paragraph 6.25 be presented to partner RSL Boards as the basis for tenant consultation; and**
- 2) Approved the approach to rent consultation set out in this report and note that the results of the consultation will be presented to the Board in February 2022 to enable final rent decisions to be made.**

6. Independent review of our pandemic response

The Board received a summary of the review, further to the direct feedback already received at the strategy workshop. The key lessons learned and changes we have already made to date and are in the process of implementing were set out.

The Board acknowledged the strong recognition throughout the report of the role our staff played during the pandemic. The Board agreed the changes we have, or plan to, implement are appropriate and reflect our learning and experience of the pandemic to date.

Decided: The Board noted the report.

7. NETs mobile working (presentation)

The Board received an update on the proposals to transform our Neighbourhood Environmental Services through the deployment of mobile technology.

The Board considered the assumed benefits, in particular how they will enhance service for customers. It was reiterated that usability of the technology will be a key factor when we transition to the implementation phase.

It was confirmed that allowing us to capture the breadth of activity undertaken was the principal focus and that areas such as productivity management will remain subject to engagement with our Trade Union partners.

The Board discussed how we integrate the additional information captured with our wider asset management intelligence as well as capture contributions to sustainability. It was confirmed the information would be linked to data we hold in our asset management system.

Decided: The Board noted the update on NETs mobile working.

8. Group performance update

The Board was updated on performance for the year to date and in particular the current repairs performance and associated actions in place.

The Board considered progress to date with My Savings, in particular the proportion of usage relative to registrations. It was explained this is an area under review to consider how we can retain the benefits of My Savings but have a more flexible delivery mechanism.

The underlying calculation of the electrical compliance performance figures was clarified.

The Board discussed our overall performance trend as we adjust to the next phase of the pandemic. It was explained that as we transition to our new operating model we expect to see an adjustment period for staff. In terms of performance more widely, it was agreed that the impact for next year was not yet fully clear.

Decided: The Board noted the report.

9. Group new build performance report

The Board received an update on progress to date with our in-year programme and the wider operating context within which we are delivering the programme.

The Board discussed the potential implications of the grant review, including the impact it could have on the breadth of RSLs and Local Authorities undertaking development activity.

The Board discussed the current contractor exposure position, the ongoing engagement we have with key contractors and the pressures on supplies more widely. It was noted that this was subject to a detailed review by the Group Development Committee and that a more detailed update on the operating landscape was due to the next meeting.

Decided: The Board noted the report.

10. DGHP repairs subcontractors

It was explained that the proposals sought to provide us with additional capacity and specialist capability, but without any contractual commitment on volumes.

The Board considered the proposals and agreed that they allowed us to reduce the risk of capacity challenges.

Decided: The Board approved the primary and secondary subcontractors as set out in paragraph 12.1 of the report.

11. AOCB

The Board discussed the impact of COP 26 on the operation of Wheatley House. It was confirmed we were awaiting guidance, but are developing our own plans, including the use of Lipton House.

It was noted the 2022 Census was commencing early in 2022 and it was confirmed we, whilst adopting a neutral position, would remind tenants where appropriate.

Signed _____

Chair