



## **West Lothian Housing Partnership (SC188968)**

### **MEETING OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS 8 New Mart Road, Edinburgh, EH14 1RL on Wednesday 18 August 2021 at 14.00**

Directors present: John Hill (Chair), Mairi Martin, Alan McCloskey, Lesley Bloomer, Judith MacGlashan, Bryan Sheriff, Gregor Dunlay, and Gordon Smith.

In attendance: Olga Clayton (Group Director of Housing and Care), Stephen Wright (Deputy Group Company Secretary), Lynsey Fotheringham (Head of Housing) and Morgan Kingston (Finance Manager).

#### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Lesley-Anne Williams. Bryan Sheriff joined the call but was unable to participate in discussions.

#### **2. Declarations of Interest**

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

#### **3. Minutes of Board Meeting held on 26 May 2021 and matters arising**

**Decided: The Board approved the minute of the meeting held on 26 May 2021.**

#### **4. Business and remobilisation update**

The Board received a report on our current remobilisation and considered consultation with our customers for proposed changes to the new operating model. The Board considered the report and noted that our plan was still to fully remobilise by September but that we would remain flexible given that the current situation was more fragile than anticipated with rising numbers across the country.

The Board discussed performance in relation to homelessness and noted that our ability to allocate 50% of our re-lets to homeless households was below target due to the way in which nominations are made by the local authority.

The Board discussed the consultation on our new operating model and proposed community facilities which would be available for customers. The Board asked that we consider how this can be more tailored to the local area, such as removing reference to New Mart Road as the local Centre of Excellence. The Board also considered and noted the use of “tenant” and “customer” in the consultation document.

**Decided: The Board**

- 1) Noted the progress made towards fully remobilising services across the business; and**
- 2) Approved consultation with our customers for the new blended operating model.**

**5. Anti-Social Behaviour Framework 2021-2026**

The Board received a report seeking adoption of the new Group Anti-Social Behaviour Framework, which supports our ambition in ***Your Home, Your Community, Your Future*** to create calm and peaceful communities where people are proud to live.

The Board was informed that the instances of anti-social behaviour in our areas of operation were relatively low, but that we did have a small number of cases and were able to draw on the support from the Community Improvement Partnership to tackle this. The Board noted that online and cyber bullying may start to become more prevalent therefore we should consider how we might respond to this and support customers where appropriate.

**Decided: The Board noted the adoption of the Group Anti-Social Behaviour Framework.**

**6. Stronger Voices, Stronger Communities - an update on our engagement activity**

The Board received a report on the implementation of our engagement framework ***Your Home, Your Community, Your Future*** which will help us to transform our engagement approach and shift the balance of power towards customers.

The Board welcomed the report and our approach to engagement with customers which centres on four pillars: we listen; we consult and co-create; we give power; and we support. The Board welcomed in particular the neighbourhood walkabouts during which customers joined staff to walk around their neighbourhoods and identify areas of good practice and issues which they would like resolved.

The Board asked that future iterations of the engagement plan include a column highlighting the number of participants in each activity and the outcome. The Board also considered the need to ensure we budget for any ongoing costs associated with customer requests.

**Decided: The Board noted the programme of planned and completed engagement activity to date in 2021/22.**

## **7. a) Financial statements for the year to 31 March 2021**

The Board were provided with an overview of the WLHP Board 2020/21 audited financial statements. The Board scrutinised the financial statements and noted that these had also been reviewed by the Group Audit Committee and that our external auditors had provided an unqualified audit opinion. It was noted that there were no specific recommendations arising for us, but that a copy of the external audit report would be available for Board members should they wish to review this.

In approving the financial statements, the Board considered: property valuation movements; gain on business combination following the transfer from Barony; pension valuation adjustments; depreciation and disposal adjustments; and the change in allocation of the senior management re-charge. The Board also requested that the Group Director of Finance or Director of Financial Reporting attend for this item in future years.

### **Decided: The Board**

- 1) Approved the 2020/21 financial statements;**
- 2) Confirmed the preparation of the financial statements using the going concern basis;**
- 3) Delegated authority to the Chair and Group Director of Finance to approve any non-material changes to the accounts; and**
- 4) Approved the letter of representation from the auditors, and noted the related letter of comfort from the Chief Executive.**

### **b) Internal Audit Annual Report and Opinion 2020/21**

The Board received a report detailing the Internal Audit Annual Report and Opinion for the year, together with the results of the assurance work completed in quarter 4 and the rolling 3-month internal audit plan.

The Board considered the report and was assured that there were no material or significant concerns for WLHP. The Board welcomed the substantial level of assurance that there was a sound system of internal control, designed to support achievement of relevant organisational objectives. The Board noted that there had been some weaknesses in the design and or consistent application of the controls but that management had agreed to the improvements and the progress of implementing these additional controls would be reported to the Group Audit Committee.

### **Decided: The Board noted the report.**

## **8. Finance report**

The Board received an update on the financial results for the period to 30 June 2021, including the full year forecast outturn for 2021/22. The Board also received an update on the SHAPS pension valuation at 30 September 2020.

The Board reviewed the management accounts for the period and considered performance against budget.

**Decided: The Board noted the management accounts for the year ended 30 June 2021 and the quarter 1 full year forecast outturn to 31 March 2022.**

**9. Quarter 1 Performance report and Delivery Plan update**

The Board received an update on our performance and projects for quarter 1. The Board considered the report and welcomed the strong performance.

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

**10. Governance report**

The Board received a report on various governance matters, including the Annual General Meeting, Board appraisals and succession planning.

**Decided: The Board**

- 1) Instructed the Secretary to call the Annual General Meeting for 22 September 2021 at 18.30pm;
- 2) Agreed to reschedule the November meeting to Wednesday 10th November;
- 3) Noted the Secretary's report under Article 68;
- 4) Noted the Board's appraisal feedback;
- 5) Approved the updated Board 3-year succession plan;
- 6) Noted the succession plan and recommended the re-appointment of Lesley-Anne Williams, Lesley Bloomer and Judith MacGlashan subject to Group RAAG review and approval; and
- 7) Approved the schedule of meetings for 2022.

**11. AOCB**

There was no other competent business.

**I certify that the above minute has been approved as a true and accurate reflection of the proceedings.**

**Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Chair)**