



West Lothian Housing Partnership (SC188968)

MEETING OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

held by videoconference

on Wednesday 18 November 2020 at 14.00

Directors Present: John Hill (Chair), Lesley Bloomer, Gregor Dunlay, Judith McGlashan

In Attendance: Olga Clayton (Group Director of Housing and Care), Stephen Wright (Deputy Group Company Secretary), Lynsey Fotheringham (Head of Housing), John Crooks (Group Health and Safety Manager), Brian Stewart (Director of Investment, Repairs and Compliance), and Helen Berry (Head of Assurance)

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Mairi Martin. It was noted that non-attending members had been issued with the Board papers and given the opportunity to provide feedback to the Chair.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Board noted the standing declarations of interest. Gregor Dunlay declared an interest in item 10 and left the meeting during the discussion.

3. Minutes of Board Meeting held on 12 August 2020 and matters arising

Decided: The Board approved the minute of the meeting held on 12 August 2020.

4. Coronavirus (COVID-19): Scotland's Strategic Framework (Presentation)

The Board received a presentation on the Scottish Government's Covid-19 strategic framework including: the four harms that the strategy sought to address; the five tier system being adopted by the Scottish Government; and the current level of each local authority area in the areas that we operate.

The Board also received an update on our approach to employee infection and exposure including the current mitigations we have in place: working safely guidelines; testing guidelines for managers; e-learning courses; and W.E. Protect helpline.

The Board welcomed our approach to ensuring the safety of our customers and staff.

Decided: The Board noted the presentation.

5. 2021/26 Strategy

The Board received a report on our updated strategy, following the recent strategy workshop.

The Board welcomed the revised strategy document and confirmed that it reflected the feedback from the Board workshop. The Board in particular welcomed the themes in relation to: affordability, wellbeing, green agenda, partnership working and new build.

Decided: The Board

- 1) noted the feedback from the Board strategy workshops;**
- 2) agreed to the updated Strategy; *Your Home, Your Community, Your Future*; and**
- 3) noted the proposed approach to staff, customer and stakeholder engagement**

6. Staff survey during lockdown, summer 2020

The Board received a report which provided the results of a survey held in July 2020 to assess staff morale during the first four months of lockdown, including how they felt they and customers had been supported, and how their experiences in the pandemic might influence and shape future ways of working.

The Board considered the outcome of the survey and reaffirmed the importance of continuing to support staff and customers during the pandemic.

Decided: The Board noted the contents of the report.

7. [redacted]

8. 2021 RSL rent setting

The Board received a report on the proposed approach to the 2021/22 rent setting and customer consultation. The Board considered the report and the proposed base increase of 1.7%, having regard to the challenging circumstances of the pandemic and the impact on our tenants.

The Board considered the comparison between our rents and those of other landlords, taking into account the matters affecting these such as location and house type.

The Board also considered and discussed the 2% rent increase that had been agreed by tenants who had transferred from Barony Housing Association earlier in the year.

Decided: The Board agreed that we consult tenants on a general rent and service charge increase of 1.7%, with the option given for 2.2.%

9a. Business and remobilisation update

The Board received a report on our response to the impact of the current pandemic on our services, partner organisations, tenants and communities.

The Board considered the report and welcomed in particular the support that we had provided to tenants, through housing officers and welfare benefits, to help ensure they receive the income they are entitled to.

Decided: The Board noted the update.

9b. Building compliance update

The Board received a report on our building compliance workstreams during the pandemic. The Board was also informed about our re-mobilisation plans for these services.

The Board considered the approach to building compliance and welcomed in particular the performance in relation to gas safety. It was noted that this had initially been impacted by customer nervousness around allowing tradespeople into their homes at this time, but that compliance had now returned to 100%.

Decided: The Board noted the contents of the report agreed the proposed approach to compliance related works.

[Gregor Dunlay left the meeting]

10. New Build approval: Winchburgh BB

The Board received a report on the proposal to add 85 units (51 social rent; 34 mid-market rent) to our five-year development programme. The Board considered the report, noting that the Group Development Committee had also scrutinised and pre-approved the project on 12 November 2020, subject to the WLHP Board agreeing to the recommendation.

The Board welcomed the size and scale of the project and the benefit it would have for the local area and those in housing need.

Decided: The Board

- 1) approved the addition of Winchburgh BB to the 5-year development programme; and**
- 2) noted that the project had been subject to approval by the Group Development Committee on 12 November 2020.**

[Gregor Dunlay re-joined the meeting]

11. Delivery Plan 2020/21 and quarterly performance

The Board received a report on the Delivery Plan approach for 2020/21, including the updated targets. The Board also considered the performance information to the end of Quarter 2.

The Board scrutinised our performance in detail and in particular, they key measures around income and arrears.

Decided: The Board noted the contents of the report.

12. Finance Report

The Board received and scrutinised the management accounts for the period to 30 September 2020. The Board discussed the impact of grant funding on the profit and loss account, including the rules around recognition and timing.

Decided: The Board noted the management accounts for the period to 30 September 2020 and the full year forecast out-turn to 31 March 2021

13. Governance update

The Board received a report on the Group-wide Annual Assurance Statement and the updated Internal Rates or Return (IRR) for development projects.

The Board considered the Annual Assurance Statement and welcomed the confirmation of material compliance. The Board also welcomed the new IRR for development projects noting that the update reflected changes in our borrowing costs.

Decided: The Board

- 1) Noted the Group Annual Assurance Statement;**
- 2) Noted that the development project approval criteria will be updated to reflect the new Group IRR rate**

14. Corporate risk register

Board considered the report and welcomed the ongoing review of corporate risks to ensure that we remain well placed to respond to emerging issues.

Decided: The Board agreed and approved the revised corporate risk register.

15. Assurance update

The Board was provided with a report on the delivery of the Group’s Internal Audit work 2020/21, and noted the approach to assurance during the pandemic. The Board considered the outcome of the cyber security review which had been externally facilitated and highlighted that the IT security was well established and reflected good practice. The Board considered current home working arrangements and susceptibility to cyber-attacks and was informed about the arrangements we have in place to mitigate cyber-crime, including IT systems and general staff training.

Decided: The Board noted the report.

16. AOCB

The Chair informed the Board about the strategic review of Cube Housing Association and the proposal to ballot tenants on a transfer to GHA (for tenants in Glasgow) and Loretto (for tenants out with Glasgow).

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

Signed _____ **(Chair)** **Date** _____