



West Lothian Housing Partnership (SC188968)

MEETING OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

held by videoconference

on Wednesday 27 May 2020 at 14.00

Directors Present: John Hill (Chair), Lesley Bloomer, Gregor Dunlay, Judith MacGlashan and Mairi Martin.

In Attendance: Anthony Allison (Director of Governance), Olga Clayton (Group Director of Housing and Care), Lynsey Fotheringham (Head of Housing) and Morgan Kingston (Finance Manager), Stephen Devine (Director of Business Growth, item 7 only) and David Fletcher (Director of Development, Programme, item 8 only).

1. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence. It was noted that non-attending members had all received the papers and given the opportunity to provide feedback on the papers

2. Declarations of Interest

The Board noted the standing declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of Board Meeting held on 5 February 2020 and matters arising

Decided: The Board approved the minute of the meeting held on 5 February 2020.

The Board noted the likely impact of the current pandemic on our 5-year strategy and the investment programme for the year.

4. Business Update

The Board received an update on the range of activities we are undertaking in response to the pandemic, particularly to support and engage with our tenants. A further update was provided on the current repairs service and funding the Foundation have secured via the Scottish Government to support our Eatwell programme.

The Board were updated with specific examples of how we have supported our tenants, particularly households with children.

The Board discussed the increase in the number of tenants claiming Universal Credit and instances of anti-social behaviour. It was explained that the anti-social behaviour has been primarily low level noise complaints reflecting the large increase in households being home simultaneously owing to lockdown.

The Board were advised that we have experienced an 18% increase in the number of tenants claiming Universal Credit and that we have also seen a relatively small impact in related arrears. The Board discussed further the increase in tenants in receipt of Universal Credit and the overall level relative to the wider Group. It was explained that the demographic of our tenant base is such that more are of working age and therefore impacted by the adverse impact of the pandemic on the labour market.

The Board discussed the restrictions on our environmental service delivery and the expected impact on tenant satisfaction.

The Board welcomed the proactive nature of our response and the support we are extending to our tenants.

Decided: The Board noted the contents of the report.

5. Framework for start-up and renewal of activity

The Board received an update on the framework for the start-up and renewal of activity in a managed, phased way across our key business areas. It was explained that we are undertaking a full mapping of our remobilisation plans against the national framework.

The Board discussed the planned start-up of the environmental service and recognised this remained subject to government restrictions.

The Board sought an update on the implications for our future new build tendering. It was explained that this is an area currently under review as the construction industry responds to the operating context.

Decided: The Board noted the proposals set out in the paper in principle, subject to the timing of their implementation and any adjustments necessary to ensure ongoing compliance with Scottish Government legislation and guidance.

6. Annual Return on the Charter and year end results 2019/20

The Board received an update on performance over the year, how it benchmarks within the wider Group and confirmation we achieved 19 of the 20 upper quartile benchmarks. It was explained that the nature of the stock received from Barony, namely supported accommodation, would introduce challenges for our performance in future.

The Board recognised the outstanding performance achieved over the year.

Decided: The Board:

- 1) Approved the draft 2019/20 Charter results;**
- 2) Delegated authority to the Group Director of Housing and Care to sign off any non-material changes to the results which may be required prior to submission; and**
- 3) Delegated authority to the Group Director of Housing and Care to sign off the Charter and EESSH submissions on behalf of WLHP.**

7. Update on proposed transfer of housing stock from Barony

The Board received an update on the integration of the 215 units transferred from Barony, including how we are managing the change in customer profile, addition of supported accommodation and the operational changes implemented.

The Board welcomed the work undertaken to date and agreed a welcome communication be issued to the new tenants on behalf of the Board.

Decided: The Board noted the completion of the transfer of housing stock from Barony in West Lothian and Bo'ness to WLHP.

8. [redacted]

9. Finance Report and 2020/21 Budget

The Board received a summary of performance for the year to date, year-end performance for 2019/20 and the budget translation of the agreed business plan. It was explained that the Barony stock transfer was assumed for 1 April and had therefore given rise to a variation along with the impact on the Dixon Terrace development.

The Board noted that whilst the budget was likely to change, it provided a reference point until the impact of Covid 19 was fully understood. It was confirmed a business plan update would be presented to the next meeting.

The Board discussed the impact of the delayed development programme and associated grant income. It was explained the grant income was primarily a timing issue of recognition and that in terms of cashflow we can continue to claim the funds as we reach project stage points.

The Board discussed the potential financial impact of arrears increasing and void losses and it was agreed this would be subject to ongoing close monitoring.

Decided: The Board

- 1) noted the management accounts for the period to 30 April 2020 and the full year to 31 March 2020; and**
- 2) approved the 2020/21 Budget.**

10. Governance update

The Board received an update on a range of governance matters and confirmation that we have and will continue to engage external legal advisors in relation to constitutional changes and FCA regulated activity.

Decided: The Board:

- 1) Approved the proposed changes to our Articles and delegate authority to the Secretary to call a Special General Meeting;**
- 2) Noted the use of the urgent actions provisions in the Group Standing Orders on 20 March 2020 and 23 March 2020;**
- 3) Noted the amendments to the Group Standing Orders;**
- 4) Approved our application for a consumer credit licence; and**
- 5) Agreed the additional meeting on Wednesday 8th July at 14.00.**

11. AOCB

There was no other competent business