



West Lothian Housing Partnership (SC188968)

MEETING OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

held by videoconference

on Wednesday 8 July 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), Lindsey Fotheringham (Head of Housing), Morgan Kingston (Finance Manager), Jackie McIntosh (Director of Property Development and Initiatives, Item 4 only) and Mark Nicol (Group Protection and Strategic Partnership Lead, item 5 only)

1. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence. It was noted that non-attending members had all received the papers and been 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 27 May 2020 and matters arising

Decided: The Board approved the minute of the meeting held on 27 May 2020.

4. Health and safety update

The Board received a summary of the wide range of Health and Safety activity being undertaken to protect and support our staff and customers as well as meet our compliance requirements.

The Board welcomed the significant work undertaken and in particular the strong management of the supply Personal Protective Equipment. The Board sought a further update on how we are supporting staff working from home. It was explained that we have been undertaking risk assessments as well as making a range of supporting training, guidance and equipment available.

Decided: The Board noted the contents of the report.

5. Fire safety update

The Board received an update on: the national picture and the how the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service have redesigned their services to reflect and take account of the Covid-19 pandemic; measures we have introduced to ensure fire safety and customer well-being continues to be of paramount importance during the post Covid 19 lock down period; and year end performance for fire safety remedial work. The Board were further updated on our plans for the resumption of services when it is permissible under government guidelines.

The Board discussed our approach to mitigating risk, our compliance approach and the need for continued focus in these areas. It was confirmed there have been no fire incidents in our properties during the reporting period.

Decided: The Board:

- 1) noted the information provided within the report that evidences the measures we have introduced to reflect national policy changes and ensure fire safety and customer well-being continues to be of paramount importance during the COVID-19 pandemic; and**
- 2) noted the update on our end of year performance for fire safety remedial work**

6. Business update

The Board received an update on current activity within the business and a summary of performance against key performance indicators, including: arrears; letting and gas safety. A further update was provided on the number of our tenants now receiving Universal Credit and how we are seeking to support those tenants.

The Board discussed arrears performance, particularly the impact of the increasing number of Universal Credit cases and the recently acquired Barony stock. The Board further considered the S & P projections for arrears across the UK and sought an update on how we are preparing for any potential spike. It was explained that we have undertaken stress testing on the business plan, in addition to having a very prudent bad debt assumption and an ongoing item on our corporate risk register.

The Board welcomed the performance of the Customer Service Centre and sought an update on how staff are continuing to respond. It was confirmed that we have undertaken a staff survey to seek feedback in a structured way and that we will use this feedback to further enhance and tailor our support for staff.

It was explained that we are seeking to link tenants with employment opportunities both within the group and via our employability programmes.

The Board discussed how, in future, we measure and take into account health and wellbeing.

Decided: The Board noted the contents of the report

7. Mobilisation of services

The Board received an update on our planned staged approach to the remobilisation of business operations over the coming months, including the methodology for transitioning between stages and the fit with phases of the Scottish Government's publication, 'Scotland's route map through and out of crisis'.

The Board discussed our equality and diversity approach and it was agreed we should further consider this in our strategy discussions.

The Board discussed our engagement approach more widely and reiterated the need for it to be segmented to reflect the specific preferences of, for example, different demographic groups.

Decided: The Board:

- 1) noted the approach set out in this report; and**
- 2) noted that a further update on our service models will be provided to the next meeting in August**

8. Strategy refresh

The Board received a summary of proposal for how we refine our approach to finalising our 5-year strategy, including taking into account the impact of Covid 19 and the timeline for implementation.

The Board reiterated that health and wellbeing should be considered as part of the strategy discussions.

Decided: The Board agreed the approach to strategy development set out in the report.

9a. Finance Report

The Board received a summary of performance for the year to date, a specific update on the variations and the SHR loan portfolio submission.

The Board discussed how we understand any material in month variations and the variance in total expenditure. It was confirmed a large element of the variance related to depreciation.

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) note the management accounts for the period to 31 May 2020; and**
- 2) approved the SHR loan portfolio submission at March 2020**

9b. Business Plan Financial Projections Reforecast

The Board received an update on the expected impact of COVID-19 on our financial projections and key financial ratios. The key areas of revisions, including the rent and the necessary re-profiling of repairs, development and capital investment were set out in further detail.

The Board discussed the reforecast and particularly welcomed the proposals in relation to our future rent assumptions. It was noted that the business plan will remain under review as our operating context continues to evolve.

Decided: The Board:

- 1) noted the update to our financial projections, including the reduction in the long term rent increase to 2.9%; and**
- 2) noted that a further revision to the projections will be brought back to the Board in August.**

10. AOCB

There was no other competent business