

West Lothian Housing Partnership (SC188968)

MINUTE OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Date: 2 October 2019
Time: 2pm
Venue: 64 North Bridge Street, Bathgate, EH48 4PP

Present: John Hill (Chairperson)
Mairi Martin
Judith MacGlashan
Lesley-Anne Williams

In attendance: Olga Clayton, Group Director of Housing and Care
Alex Lamb, Head of Housing
Moray Nichol, Governance and Secretariat Manager
Stephen Wright, Deputy Group Company Secretary
Pauline Crawford, Financial Controller - RSLs
Morgan Kingston, Finance Manager
David Fletcher, Director of Development (in part)
Stephen Devine, Director of Lowther and Business Growth (in part)

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Bill Yeoman, Lesley Bloomer and Fiona Burden.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Board noted the standing declarations of interest.

3. Minute of Board Meeting held on 26 August 2019, action points and matters arising

Decided: The Board approved the minute of the meeting held on 26 August 2019.

4. Chair's Update (Verbal)

The Chair updated the Board on funding arrangements, in particular our loan from the European Investment Bank, the proposed constitutional partnership between Wheatley Group and Dumfries and Galloway Housing Partnership and progress with the consultation on proposals for Barony tenants to join WLHP.

The Chair thanked staff involved in arranging the Annual General Meeting, the event was well received by members and tenants.

5. Jarvey Street update

The Board received an update on key issues associated with the new build development at Jarvey Street, our current position and risks.

The Board discussed the current contractual status of the project and action taken to mitigate the risks. It was confirmed that the Scottish Housing Regulator had been informed about the position and it will be treated as a notifiable event.

6. 2020/21 Rent Setting

The Board received a report on the proposed approach for the 2020/21 rent increase and how we intend to consult with tenants on the proposals. It was confirmed that the rent increase assumptions in our financial projections are subject to annual review and that the annual review takes into account financial viability, affordability and comparability.

The Board discussed the revised rent options for 2020/21 and the average level of rent compared with other RSLs across the Group and other social housing providers in West Lothian. The Board discussed the affordability of rents and in particular the findings from having applied the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA) affordability assessment tool to WLHP rents. The Board discussed our approach to consulting with tenants on the proposals including the composition of the focus groups and the content of the draft rent setting consultation booklet to be sent to each WLHP tenant.

Decided: The Board agreed to progress to consultation on a base level of rent and service charge increase for 2020/21 of 3.4%.

7. Update on proposed Barony stock transfer

The Board received an update on the proposed transfer of Barony's housing stock to WLHP and considered the consultation proposal that Barony will send to its tenants.

Decided: The Board:

- 1) Approved the consultation proposals to be issued to Barony tenants;
and**
- 2) Noted the key milestones.**

8. Annual Assurance Statement

The Board received the report on the findings from the self-assessment against the Scottish Housing Regulator's new Regulatory Framework, including the Internal Audit opinion and the Group's Annual Assurance Statement. It was confirmed that the Group Board considered evidence at its meeting on 30 August and the Group Board have appropriate assurance that all Registered Social Landlords which are part of Wheatley Housing Group Limited comply

with all relevant regulatory requirements set out in Chapter 3 of the Regulatory Framework; all relevant standards in the Scottish Social Housing Charter; and all relevant legislative duties.

Decided: The Board:

- 1) Noted the findings from the self-assessment against the Scottish Housing Regulator's new Regulatory Framework, included in the Internal Audit Opinion; and**
- 2) Noted the Group's Annual Assurance Statement and related letter of comfort from the Group CEO.**

9. Finance Report for the period to 31 August 2019

The Board received a report providing an overview of the financial performance for the period to 31 August 2019 and discussed in particular operating surplus and net capital expenditure.

Decided: The Board:

- 1) Noted the management accounts for the period to 31 August 2019; and**
- 2) Noted the funding update which was considered and approved at a separate confidential meeting.**

10. Governance Update

The Board received an update on the 2019 Board appraisal process and the review of the Register of Members.

Decided: The Board:

- 1) Noted the approach for 2019 Board appraisal; and**
- 2) Approved the cancellation of the share of 5 members under Article 11 and that the Register of Members be updated accordingly.**

11. AOCB

There was no other competent business.