



West Lothian Housing Partnership (SC188968)

MEETING OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

held by videoconference

on Wednesday 26 May 2021 at 14.00

Directors present: John Hill (Chair), Lesley Bloomer, Judith MacGlashan, Bryan Sheriff, Gregor Dunlay, Alan McCloskey (up to item 8), and Gordon Smith (from item 6)

In attendance: Olga Clayton (Group Director of Housing and Care), Stephen Wright (Deputy Group Company Secretary), Lynsey Fotheringham (Head of Housing), Morgan Kingston (Finance Manager) and Melissa Campbell (Group LivingWell Lead) (item 9), Lewis McGregor (Director of IT and Digital Services) (item 11)

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mairi Martin and Lesley-Anne Williams.

2. Declarations of Interest

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

3. Minutes of Board Meeting held on 31 March 2021 and matters arising

Decided: The Board approved the minute of the meeting held on 31 March 2021.

4. Business and remobilisation update

The Board received an update on our response to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on our services, customers and communities. The Board considered the report and the key issues including the updated timeline for remobilising services. The Board considered service delivery during the pandemic and the support provided by housing officers to customers, primarily through the use of telephone and digital means. The Board welcomed the proposal for housing officers to undertake walk-about reviews in their areas and increase visibility in our neighbourhoods. The Board also scrutinised performance in relation to income collection, noting that gross rent arrears for 2020/21 was 2.62% which was 0.48% ahead of target.

The Board also noted the progress of our development projects, Jarvey Street and Almondvale, and received an update on the reinstatement works at Pyothall Court following the flooding last year.

The Board was provided with information about the range of health and well-being engagement activity which we support and promote, including through our website and social media platforms.

Decided: The Board noted the plan for remobilising services.

5. WLHP Five Year Asset Investment Plan 2021-2026

The Board received a report setting out the five-year investment plan, which would underpin the strategic asset management in line with the 2021-26 strategy.

The Board considered the report and welcomed the enhanced level of customer engagement which would help to influence the type and timing of investment. The Board welcomed in particular the 'Customer Voice' budget which would help deliver £179k of customer driven investment work over the life of plan, in addition to £2.6m already allocated to deliver current customer priorities for windows, heating, kitchens and environmental improvements. It was noted that this sum was also in addition to the provision that had been made for the capital investment programme and compliance activity. It was agreed that information would be provided about geography and location of our stock for management purposes.

The Board noted that we were fully compliant with the Scottish Housing Quality Standard and considered the impact of the Energy Efficiency Standards for Social Housing (EESH 2) on our homes and business plan. The Board noted that currently in excess 99% of our stock has an EPC of 'D' or higher but that we would require to improve on this to meet EESH 2. The Board considered the level of investment that would be required to support the improvement and was informed about the Scottish Government consultation that would take place over the summer. The Board also considered how we would manage the phasing out of gas from 2025. It was explained that we are ambitious to trial new alternatives but that cost-effective and proven alternative provision was not yet available.

The Board considered the impact of the coronavirus pandemic and Brexit on materials costs in the pandemic, which required to be monitored closely.

Decided: The Board approved our 5-Year Asset Investment Programme 2021-2026.

6. Annual Charter Return and Delivery Plan Year-End update

The Board received a report on our year-end performance results which were due to be submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

The Board welcomed the high level of performance for the year, particularly taking into account the challenging circumstances of the pandemic. The Board considered the performance of the Customer Service Centre and noted that there had not been much change in usage of web self-service during the year. It was explained that it had been challenging to develop web self-service during the pandemic given that a number of services had been restricted due to the pandemic. The Board was informed about the proposals to develop the Customer Service Centre and that proposals would be shared with the Board once developed.

The Board scrutinised performance in relation to the '*percentage of tenants satisfied with repairs or maintenance in the last month*'. It was explained that performance had reduced from 94.23% in 2019/20 to 84.21% in 2020/21. The Board was informed that we continued to seek feedback from customers in relation to repairs satisfaction, however it was likely that the move to emergency repairs only during the pandemic had had an impact on this.

Decided: The Board

- 1) approved the draft 2020/21 Charter results;**
- 2) noted the detail of activity involved in the performance results achieved;**
- 3) 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**
- 4) delegated authority to the Group Director of Housing and Care to sign off the Charter and ESSH submissions on behalf of the Governing Body.**

7. Performance Framework and Strategic Projects 2021/22

The Board received a report on the proposed performance management framework for the 2021-26 strategy, key performance indicators for 2021/22 and draft strategic projects for 2021/22.

The Board considered the report and discussed the key targets which included Percentage of relevant lets to homeless applicants; tenancy sustainment, gross arrears; average days to let; compliance and repairs. The Board also considered the planned strategic projects and requested regular updates on progress towards achieving these.

Decided: The Board

- 1) noted the new Group-wide performance management framework;**
- 2) approved our proposed KPIs and targets for 2021/22; and**
- 3) noted the planned strategic projects across the Group for 2021/22.**

8. Fire Prevention and Mitigation update

The Board received an update on performance in relation to fire prevention and considered: the on-going approach to the prevention and mitigation of fire during the Covid-19 pandemic; performance in relation to accidental dwelling fires (there having been only 1 during the year 2020/21); progress with the continued development and implementation of the Fire Prevention and Mitigation Framework; progress with the LivingWell Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) programme; and the new reporting arrangements being introduced via the Group Audit Committee.

Decided: The Board noted

- 1) our on-going approach to the prevention and mitigation of fire during the Covid-19 pandemic;**
- 2) our end of year performance in relation to the reduction of accidental dwelling fires;**
- 3) progress with the continued development and implementation of our Fire Prevention and Mitigation Framework;**
- 4) progress with LivingWell Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) programme; and**
- 5) the new reporting arrangements via the Group Audit Committee.**

9. LivingWell (presentation)

The Board received a presentation on the LivingWell housing model, including the background and strategic context. The Board was provided with an update on the LivingWell model at the Almondvale new build development, including the customer-driven working group that was helping influence the design of the shared spaces. The Board welcomed the LivingWell model and the Alertacall – OKToday welfare facility available to customers.

10. Finance report

The Board received a report and scrutinised financial performance for the period to 31 March 2021 including the reported statutory deficit of £14k in the year. It was explained that the deficit was £10,568k adverse to budget and that the main driver was lower than expected grant recognition caused by delays at the Jarvey Street new build project. The Board considered the impact of grant funding on the balance sheet, noting that this was held as deferred income until completion at which time it was then released.

Decided: The Board

- 1) noted the management accounts for the year ended 31 March 2021 and the month to 30 April 2021 at Appendix 1;**
- 2) approved the loan portfolio submission in Appendix 2 and authorised this to be submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator and delegated to the Group Director of Finance authority to approve any factual data updates required to the data in advance of the submission; and**
- 3) approved the summary sheet and accompanying financial data and projections at Appendix 3 and authorised these to be submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator and delegated authority to the Group Director of Finance to undertake any factual data updates required to the data in advance of the submission.**

11. Cyber Security update

The Board received an update report on: the key cyber security threats we face; a summary of how we seek to mitigate these threats; and the proposed next steps to strengthen our cyber security approach in the context of the new operating model and 2021-26 strategy.

The Board considered the impact of homeworking in relation to cyber security risk and also sought assurance about the cyber security insurance arrangements we have in place. It was explained that the risk arising from homeworking remained low due to our ability to manage access arrangements coupled with our mature security arrangements. The Board was also informed about our insurance arrangements.

Decided: The Board noted the contents of the report.

12. Corporate Risk Register

The Board received a report which sought approval of a revised corporate risk register. The Board considered the report and the proposed changes to the risk register.

Decided: The Board reviewed and approved the revised Corporate Risk Register.

13. Strategic Governance Review

The Board received a report which provided an update on the planned Group-wide strategic governance review and noted the areas for review. The Board also considered the significant changes in our governance since the last strategic review, including the transfer of Barony properties to West Lothian Housing Partnership.

Decided: The Board noted the Strategic Governance Review Terms of Reference.

14. 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)