



West Lothian Housing Partnership (SC188968)

**MEETING OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS
By Zoom videoconference
on Wednesday 9 February 2022 at 14.00**

Directors present: Mairi Martin (Chair), Gregor Dunlay, Bryan Sheriff, Judith MacGlashan and in part Gordon Smith.

In attendance: Olga Clayton (Group Director of Housing and Care), Stephen Wright (Deputy Group Company Secretary), Lynsey Fotheringham (Head of Housing), Chris Cameron (Interim Finance Manager), Steven Henderson (Group Director of Finance) and (in part) Lindsay Lauder (Director of Development and Regeneration), Sam Bett (Director of Treasury), John Crooks (Group Health and Safety Lead) and Brian Stewart (Director of Repairs, Investment and Compliance)

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Lesley-Anne Williams, Alan McCloskey and Lesley Bloomer

2. Declarations of Interest

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

3. Minutes of Board Meeting held on 10 November 2021 and matters arising

Decided: The Board approved the minute of the meeting held on 10 November 2021

4. a) East of Scotland partnership proposal

[redacted]

b) Governance update

The Board was provided with an update on the outcome of the strategic governance review, the areas relevant to us and the implementation plan. The Board welcomed that the review recognised the strength of our existing governance arrangements and also provided recommendations for how we can continue to refine them. The Board also noted that the Terms of Reference would acknowledge the role of the Board in decision making.

Decided: The Board provided feedback on the planned implementation approach of the strategic governance review.

5. a) New Group development vehicle

[redacted]

b) Five-year development programme

The Board discussed the current pressures facing the construction industry, particularly in relation to materials and labour costs. It was noted that we would continue to ensure that we only undertake development where this meets the agreed development criteria, including internal rate of return, and that we continue to engage with grant providers to ensure that our projects were supported appropriately.

In approving the programme, the Board acknowledged that this would transfer to Dunedin Canmore in the event of a successful consultation and tenant ballot. However, it was agreed that we would continue to operate on a 'business as usual' basis to ensure continuity in the interim and in the event that proposals were not sufficiently supported.

Decided: The Board approved the details of the WLHP five-year development programme as summarised in this report.

c) Jarvey Street

[redacted]

6. a) Five-year investment programme

The Board received and considered the 5-year asset investment plan which underpins our strategic asset management approach and ambition to continue investing in our existing homes and communities. The Board reviewed the robust programme. The Board also welcomed the inclusion of the £1.4m "Customer Voice" budget which would be used to support customer-driven investment over the next 5 years.

The Board discussed and welcomed the high rate of compliance (99.86%) with the Social Housing Quality Standard (SHQS).

Decided: The Board approved WLHP's five-year Asset Investment Programme 2022-2027.

b) Heat and smoke detector update (Presentation)

The Board was provided with an update on compliance with the new legal requirements regarding smoke and heat alarms. It was confirmed that we had achieved full compliance by 31 January 2022.

Decided: The Board noted the presentation.

7. a) Rent and other charges 2022/23

The Board considered a report on the outcome of the 2022/23 rent and service charge consultation. The Board was provided with an update clarifying how the views of the pre-consultation focus groups had informed our approach to this year's proposals. The Board reviewed and assessed the outcome of the consultation including the increase in response rates from previous years. The Board was also provided with analysis of the responses.

Having considered the consultation feedback and the current economic pressures facing us and our customers, the Board re-affirmed our commitment to keeping rents affordable and was satisfied that the proposal for 2022/23 would help to maintain this.

Decided: The Board

- 1) Considered the feedback received through the consultation process with tenants on our 2022/23 RSL rent and service charge increase;**
- 2) Approved a 2% increase for all ex-Barony tenants;**
- 3) Approved a 1.9% rent and service charge increase for 2022/23 for all other tenants; and**
- 4) Agreed that we formally write to tenants to confirm this subject to Group Board approval.**

b) Five-year financial projections

The Board received a report on the updated projections for investment in assets and services over the period to 2027.

The Board scrutinised the financial projections and noted the targeted reduction in management costs. The Board reviewed the reduction and was satisfied that this could be achieved without any adverse effect on service delivery. The Board noted the assumptions about future income and expenditure, including rent, and that these would be revisited at least annually.

Decided: The Board

- 1) Approved the updated projections for investment in assets and services over the five year period to 2027; and**
- 2) Agreed that the projected 2022/23 figures form the basis of next year's annual budget which will be presented to the Board for final approval in March, noting the context of a potential transfer of WLHP's business to Dunedin Canmore during the year, which will be subject to further Board approvals and the outcome of a tenant ballot.**

8. Group health and safety policy

The Board was provided with a report on the Group-wide health and safety policy which also required to be adopted by us. The Board considered the report and policy in detail and confirmed its commitment to the health and safety of staff, customers, contractors and other stakeholders. The Board welcomed the arrangements in place to monitor and maintain the validity and accuracy of our health and safety policy and the comprehensive health and safety management arrangements in place.

Decided: The Board noted the updated Health and Safety Policy at Appendix 1.

9. Group dampness, mould and condensation policy

The Board considered the Group-wide policy and procedure on managing dampness, mould and condensation. The Board reviewed the proposed policy approach and the analysis which helped to identify those properties and customers that may be at a higher risk for suffering from the issues linked to dampness, mould and condensation. The Board also welcomed the proposed experiment to monitor properties in the higher risk categories which would help us gain intelligence to understand and develop strategic investment priorities linked to risk.

Decided: The Board noted the content of this report including the group dampness policy and procedures at Appendix 2 and 3 respectively.

10. Customer First update

The Board was provided with an update on the Customer First Centre (“CFC”) since its internal launch on 1 December 2021.

The Board noted that this soft launch has given an opportunity to test the robustness and effectiveness of the new systems and practices before the more formal customer launch of the service.

The Board considered customer satisfaction in relation to repairs and the steps that would continue to be taken to ensure that customers were kept informed about the progress of these.

Decided: The Board noted the progress to date in establishing our Customer First Centre.

11. Performance report

The Board was provided with an update on performance towards delivering the targets in the performance framework and strategic projects for 2021/22.

The Board scrutinised the report and noted that we are still continuing to see the effects of the pandemic on our operational delivery and, in some instances, the expected impact has been greater than we anticipated. However, despite the continuing challenges posed for areas of our business, there are areas of emerging stronger performance and some areas of recovery since our last report. It was noted that rent arrears have increased, albeit less than projected.

The Board discussed the strategic projects noted that the following have been completed since the last report:

- Strategic governance review; and
- Wheatley Green Investment Plan.

Decided: The Board noted the report.

12. Finance report

The Board scrutinised the financial information for the period to 31 December 2021, including the latest 2021/22 forecast.

Decided: The Board noted the management accounts for the year period to 31 December 2021.

13. Funding update

[redacted]

14. Corporate risk register

The Board received and reviewed the revised corporate risk register. The Board was informed that we were also reviewing cyber security risk and that this would continue to feature prominently.

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

15. AOCB

No other business.

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

Signed _____ (Chair)