

**MINUTE OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
HELD ON 21 SEPTEMBER 2022 11.15am AT
BRASSWELL OFFICE PARK, ANNAN ROAD,
DUMFRIES**

Members present: Maureen Dowden (Chair), Michael Greaves Mackintosh, Caryl Hamilton, John McCraw, Heather Macnaughton, John Henderson, Jo Boaden and (by video) Fiona Burden.

In attendance: Pauline Turnock (Group Director of Finance and Legal Services), Stephen Wright (Director of Governance), Alan Glasgow (Managing Director) and (in part) Vicky Rowlands (MyHousing Lead) and Stephen Devine (Director of Assets and Sustainability)

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Hugh Martin. The Chair confirmed that a quorum was present.

The Board noted the change in company name, following the Extraordinary General Meeting held at 11am on 21 September 2022.

2. Declarations of interest

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

3. Appointment of Board member: Jo Boaden

The Board resolved to appoint Jo Boaden as a director and instructed the Company Secretary to arrange the necessary Companies House filing.

4. a) Minutes of meeting on 17 August 2022 and matters arising

Decided: The Board approved the minutes of the meeting on 17 August 2022.

b) Action list

The Board noted the points in the action tracker and the items scheduled to be brought back.

The Board requested an update to the next meeting on proposals for the property at Dumfries High Street

5. Managing Director update

An update was provided on recent activity within Wheatley Homes South and the housing sector, including:

- Launch of the Here for you Fund
- Lincluden Stables nomination for a Herald property award
- Scottish government's programme for government
- Proposed rent cap

6. Here for You Fund – supporting our tenants with the cost of living crisis

The Board was provided with an outline of the expected impact the cost-of-living crisis will have on our tenants and communities and the current support in place to help our hardest hit tenants already impacted by issues including poverty, low income, effects of the pandemic and welfare benefit reforms. This included through access to a new £6million Group-wide Here For You Fund.

The Board considered the report in detail and welcomed the introduction of the fund. The Board discussed the importance of ensuring that customers are made aware of the fund, noting that some of the most vulnerable tenants may require additional support to access this and/or may not wish to voluntarily seek support. It was confirmed that we will adopt a pro-active approach to publicising the fund and that we have good knowledge of our tenants through our housing officers that will help us to identify and work with customers, even where they do not approach us to request assistance.

The Board considered the anticipated level of support that tenants may require and the need to ensure that our teams are well resourced to deliver this.

The Board also discussed the impact of fuel poverty and importance of efficient heating and affordable heating systems. It was noted that we take cognisance of this when developing our investment programme and that we would look to accelerate the installation of more efficient systems as appropriate.

Decided: The Board noted the revised approach to supporting tenants and households throughout the cost-of-living crisis including the £6m Here For You Fund.

7. Allocations review

The Board considered agenda items 7 and 8 together.

The Board received an update on the outcome of our Group Housing Information Advice and Letting Policy Framework consultation.

The Board welcomed the report and discussed the importance of maintaining strong working relationships with everyone involved in homelessness and allocations.

Decided: The Board

- 1) Noted the work undertaken during the formal consultation and levels of customer engagement;**
- 2) Noted the new Group Housing Information Advice and Letting Policy Framework and approve the DGHP Housing Information Advice and Letting Policy.**

8. MyHousing update (presentation)

The Board welcomed the presentation and demonstration of the housing allocation system, MyHousing.

The Board discussed the system and how this would help to improve the allocations experience for customers as well as ensuring we had access to up-to-date information. The Board noted that those registered would require to re-register each year as a means of helping to ensure that the system only contains details of those with a live interest in being allocated a home. The Board was however re-assured about the number of reminders that users will receive to re-register each year and the support given to those without internet access to ensure that they are not disadvantaged by the online service. The Board welcomed the inclusion of the financial planning tool within the MyHousing system.

Decided: The Board noted the presentation.

9. Development Programme Update

The Board received an overview of the new build programme performance, including the programme highlights and/or exceptions. This included 12 units completed in 20/21 and 37 units completed in 21/22; a further 24 units completed so far in 22/23; a further 13 units planned to complete in 22/23; and 2 projects on site at Nursery Avenue, Stranraer (19 units) and at Curries Yard, Heathhall (89 units).

The Board considered the current economic conditions and the pressures on materials, labour and the supply chain. The Board was satisfied with our approach to monitoring and managing financial risk through a range of credit checking, market intelligence and regular meetings with our key contractors.

The Board welcomed the progress of the Lochside regeneration and our approach to working in partnership with the local authority and local tenants. The Board also discussed the proposal for 112 units in Thornhill and received assurance about the demand analysis.

The Board considered the stock regeneration covering sites in the east of the region (Summerhill, Springbells, Newington, Troqueer) and scrutinised the outcome of the feasibility work.

Decided: The Board

- 1) [redacted];**
- 2) [redacted]**
- 3) Noted the contents of this report.**

10. Sustainability update (presentation)

The Board received a presentation on sustainability and our approach to achieving net zero by 2045. The Board considered the ambitious approach outlined in the strategy, noting the breadth this covered, from fleet, to biodiversity and housing construction. The Board provided feedback on the strategy including the importance of ensuring that the approach is reflected in our approach to new build housing; that we continue to explore the role of biodiversity having regard also to the needs of our tenants; and that we continue to work with other partners and enterprises networks to identify any additional funding opportunities.

Decided: The Board noted the presentation.

11. Governance update

The Board were updated on the following governance related matters: 2023 schedule of meetings; Membership Policy; and modern slavery statement.

Decided the Board

- 1) Approve the membership policy;**
- 2) Noted the Modern Slavery Statement, approved by the Group Board on our behalf; and**
- 3) Approved the schedule of meetings for 2023.**

12. AOCB

There was no other competent business.

SIGNED:

Action List

Action	Lead	Due
Update on proposals for the property at Dumfries High Street.	Alan Glasgow	November meeting
Update on approach to modern slavery	Stephen Wright	November meeting