



**MINUTE OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
HELD ON 31 MARCH 2021 AT 14.00 VIA  
VIDEOCONFERENCE**

Members present: Maureen Dowden (Chair), Heather Macnaughton, John McCraw and George Thorley

In attendance: Matthew Foreman (Managing Director, DGHP), Tom Barclay (Group Director of Property and Development, Wheatley Group), Anthony Allison (Director of Governance, Wheatley Group), Pauline Turnock (Director of Financial Reporting, Wheatley Group), Heather Voisey (Managing Director, Lowther Homes, item 5 only) and Alex Adrain (Managing Director, Wheatley 360, items 6-8 only).

**1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from John Henderson. It was noted that non-attending members had met with the Chair and relevant officers to give feedback on all papers. The Chair explained that she would relay the key elements of the feedback during the meeting as appropriate.

**2. Declarations of interest**

The Board noted the standing declarations of interest.

**3. Minutes of appointment meeting of 17 February 2021**

It was agreed that in relation to item 10 the individual Board member referred to be named in the minute.

**Decided: The Board, subject to the amendment above, approved the minute of appointment meeting of 17 February 2021.**

**4. Business update**

The Board received an update on the current service levels and key business activity since the previous meeting.

The Board discussed the level of homes provided for homelessness households, the impact on homes available for other households and the implications for the waiting list more widely.

The Board sought an update on the transition to the in house gas service. An update was provided on how we have communicated the change to customers and it was explained we are undertaking a 'soft launch' to allow the service to bed in.

The Board welcomed the focus on delivering SHQS compliance and revised timescale.

The Board discussed the Nursery Avenue project and the planned contribution to a local community wildflower meadow adjacent to the site. It was explained that this was consistent with our focus on supporting biodiversity.

The Board received feedback on the detailed discussion at the earlier meeting on anti-social behaviour and the need to maintain a strong focus in this area.

**Decided: The Board noted the update.**

**5. [redacted]**

**6. Housing First update (Presentation)**

The Board received a presentation setting out: the national policy context; the Dumfries and Galloway context; the impact of Housing First to date in the pathfinder areas; and the next steps for DGHP.

The Board discussed the current stage of Housing First in Dumfries and Galloway and sought clarification on the key difference between a Housing First case and a Section 5 referral. It was explained that the main difference is the reduction of temporary accommodation use and the intensity of wraparound support provided to increase the likelihood of a sustainable tenancy.

It was explained that the very high tenancy sustainment rates being achieved by Housing First are higher than mainstream tenancies.

The Board recognised the criticality of appropriate support services being in place and also noted that the reduction in the use of temporary accommodation was potentially an efficiency in the process.

**Decided: The Board noted the contents of the presentation.**

**7. Group protection update (Presentation)**

The Board received an update on each of the key workstreams within our overarching group protection approach, the outcomes we are delivering and future priorities for our Group protection.

The Board welcomed the strong focus on protecting our tenants and the future priorities.

**Decided: The Board noted the contents of the presentation.**

**8. Model Complaint Handling Procedure**

The Board received an update on the new Model Complaint Handling Procedure published by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman on 31 January 2020 and a highlight of the key changes. An update on the complaints handling review and the way we proposed to consolidate this learning into a refined approach to complaints handling was also provided.

The Board reiterated the importance of complaints resolution and reiterated the importance of ensuring customers are clear on the process.

**Decided: The Board**

- 1) **Noted the new SPSO guidance is mandatory from April 2021 and the plans in place to implement the guidance in DGHP; and**
- 2) **Noted we plan to adopt all 6 of the SPSO performance measures.**

9. [redacted]

10. **2021/22 UK and Scottish Government Budget update**

The Board received an update on the 2021/22 UK and Scottish Government Budget announcements and the implications for DGHP.

The Board discussed the potential to access wider UK funding streams, in particular the UK levelling up fund.

**Decided: The Board noted the contents of the paper.**

11a. **2021/22 Budget**

The Board received a summary of the proposed budget, in particular the increased funding allocated to repairs and maintenance.

The Board reviewed the budget and discussed the assumptions in relation to the new office. It was agreed an update on the new office more widely be brought back to a future meeting.

**Decided: The Board approved the 2021/22 budget.**

11b. **Finance Report for the period to 28 February 2021**

The Board received a summary of financial performance for the year to date, in particular the key variances.

The Board reviewed financial performance for the year to date, recognising the impact of the pandemic in terms of variances.

**Decided: The Board noted the Finance Report for the period to 28 February 2021.**

12. **2021/22 Property Insurance renewal**

The Board considered the insurance renewal approval and sought confirmation we have the necessary level of data to undertake the change. It was confirmed a full review process has been undertaken including the identification of the relevant data.

**Decided: The Board approved the placement of the DGHP property damage insurance with Ocaso and increased the excess to £10,000 in line with the approach for other Group RSLs (with the exception of GHA).**

### **13. Disposal of Lockerbie Lodge**

The Board received an update on the proposed disposal of Lockerbie Lodge following a further detailed review given the time elapsed since the previous Board discussion in January 2020.

The Board reviewed the proposed caveats to safeguard our own interests and how they reflect our charitable interests. The Board noted the context of the property being isolated and in poor condition and agreed the proposal represented a positive solution.

#### **Decided: The Board**

- 1) Agreed the disposal of Lockerbie Lodge House to LOS for use as an affordable letting in future to generate some income to support the local charitable organisation for a purchase price of £1 with the following caveats attached to the sale agreement:**
  - **DGHP would sell the property to LOS but retain ownership of the land surrounding the building and grant the necessary rights of access over the retained land;**
  - **If the property was sold in future DGHP would have first refusal to purchase the property and the purchase price would be based on an independent valuation, minus the current valuation of the property which stands at £55,000;**
  - **If DGHP decline to buy back the property and the Trust sell the property to a third party in future the Trust must reimburse DGHP the current asset value at the point of transfer which stands at £55,000; and**
  - **If the Community Asset Trust demolish the property in future DGHP will trigger the deferred clawback of £55,000.**
- 2) Recommendation 1 is subject to approval by the Dumfries and Galloway Finance, Procurement and Transformation Committee approving the deferred clawback as set out in paragraph 5.13 and approval by the Council from Scottish Ministers to dispose of the property under the terms of the original transfer agreement.**

### **14. Tenant satisfaction survey approach**

The Board considered the proposed approach and agreed that it was appropriate under the current operating context.

**Decided: The Board agreed the proposed approach to our customer survey for 2021/22.**

### **15. Governance update**

The Board received an update on succession plan and plan for future recruitment.

**Decided: The Board**

- 1) Agreed the Board 3-year succession plan;
- 2) Agreed the proposed Board skills, knowledge and experience matrix;
- 3) Noted that plans for future recruitment will be brought back to the next meeting;
- 4) Approved the revised delegations set out in paragraph 5.11; and
- 5) Delegated authority to the Chair to agree any other disposals up to a value of £10,000 with the Managing Director and Company Secretary authorised to execute the documentation associated with any such disposals.

[Heather Macnaughton left the meeting – the meeting no longer being quorate, the remaining Board members agreed to still receive the remaining items on the basis they were not for decision.]

**16a. Assurance update**

The Board received a summary of assurance activity undertaken during the year to date, including the findings of the six reviews.

**Decided: The Board noted the contents of the report.**

**16b. Internal Audit Approach and Plan**

The Board received an update on the Internal Audit approach within the Group's new operating model, and the approved internal audit plan for period to May 2021.

**Decided: The Board noted the contents of the report.**

**17. AOCB**

On behalf of the whole Board, the Chair recognised the significant contribution of retiring member George Thorley.

SIGNED:

DATE: