



**MINUTE OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
HELD ON 10 NOVEMBER 2021 AT 10.30AM AT
EASTERBROOK HALL, THE CRICHTON,
DUMFRIES**

Members present: Maureen Dowden (Chair), John Henderson, Michael Greaves Mackintosh, Heather Macnaughton and Caryl Hamilton.

In attendance: Tom Barclay (Group Director of Property and Development, Wheatley Group), Pauline Turnock (Director of Financial Reporting, Wheatley Group), Alan Glasgow (Interim Managing Director, DGHP) and In Part Kirsty Ward (Group Universal Credit Lead – Item 6b only), Vicky Rowlands (Locality Housing Director – Item 8 only), Stuart Johnstone (Development Manager, DGHP - Item 9 only), Samantha Bett (Director of Treasury, Wheatley Group – Item 10 only), and Ranald Brown (Director of Assurance, Wheatley Group – Item 14 only)

1. Apologies for absence

John McCraw and Fiona Burden.

2. Declarations of interest

The Board noted the standing declarations of interest.

3. a) Minutes of meeting on 22 September 2021 and matters arising

Decided: The Board approved the minutes of the meeting on 22 September 2021.

b) Action Tracker

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

4. Tenant Consultation Update

The Board received an update on the outcome of the Tenant Consultation and noted the excellent response to the consultation from tenants.

The Board discussed and considered the response to the consultation agreeing that similar to the other Group RSL partners, DGHP has had a very strong and positive response. The Board considered the consultation booklet and made suggestions to improve the graphics on future booklets, to reflect our investment and new build.

Decided: The Board

- 1) **Noted the outcome of the consultation on our new operating and engagement models; and**
 - 2) **In light of the views expressed by tenants, agreed that we should proceed with implementation of the proposals including:**
 - **implementing the new Customer First Centre from December 2021;**
 - **commence the recruitment for Customer Voices;**
 - **incorporate £3.7m into the business plan for customer priorities; and**
- our new hub – Centres of Excellence**

5. DGHP partnership promises update

The Board received an update on the progress of the DGHP partnership promises since joining the Wheatley Group.

The Board noted the number of new jobs across DGHP and noted that terms and conditions for staff had now been aligned.

The Board noted and discussed the excellent progress and number of achievements since joining Group. The Board noted the strong partnership working and strength of relationships with our stakeholders.

Decided: The Board noted the progress made to deliver the Partnership Promises

6. a) 2022 rent setting

The Board received a detailed outline of the proposals for DGHP 2022 rent setting which are in line with the partnership proposals.

The Board noted the focus groups that had taken place with a good cross section of customers attending. The Board discussed the proposed increase and noted that it fits within the business plan and has been tested using the SFHA toolkit.

The Board considered the consultation booklet and made suggestions to improve the graphics on future booklets.

Decided: The Board

- 1) **Agreed that the proposed rent and service charge increase of 2% in line with the partnership promise to customers as the basis for tenant consultation; and**
- 2) **Approved the approach to rent consultation set out in this report and noted that the results of the consultation will be presented to the Board in February 2022 to enable final rent decisions to be made.**

6. b) Benefit uptake campaign

The Board received a presentation on the benefit uptake campaign, noting the key principles of awareness, promotion and proactivity together with the messaging via wider campaign groups and customer segments for focus groups.

The Board noted that the platform which currently hosts Homes 4 D&G is reaching end of life and the Board agreed that this presented the ideal time and opportunity to review the end to end process for applicants.

The Board were appraised of the Wheatley Works customer journey. The Board discussed and were keen to ensure that there is a joined up approach to service referral and noted that the relationship between the Housing officer, as the key liaison between the tenant and the welfare benefit advisor will ensure a joined up approach throughout the customer journey.

Decided: The Board noted the contents of the presentation.

7. Repairs update

The Board received an update on the position of the in-house repairs.

The Board noted that there are increased numbers of repairs and capacity to deliver has been impacted by the availability of supplies and materials, which the Board noted was a national problem.

The Board noted and discussed the proposals for oversight of repairs, including; maximising our in-house resources, strengthening of relationships with our suppliers of materials and the work we have done to connect with SaintGobain. The Board noted that as a result of the strengthened relationships, it has been agreed that the teams are able to use Jewsons for supplies, which the Board agreed was an encouraging step forward.

The Board noted the proposal to co-locate the planners and trade team leaders which will facilitate the close relationships required between those two roles.

The Board discussed the increased demand on repairs, agreeing that this is in part driven by the increased visibility of housing officers in communities. The Board agreed that it is imperative that we must listen to and understand our customer behaviour around repairs, to ensure we have a better understanding.

Decided: The Board noted the update.

8. Homes 4 D &G Review

The Board received a presentation on the review of allocations within Homes 4 D &G.

The Board received an overview of the actions undertaken to date; review of systems and policy; analysis of waiting list; customer and staff survey; focus groups and customer journey mapping. The Board noted the response to consultation had been excellent.

The Board discussed the key themes arising out of the engagement and noted the high percentage of customers who use online services, would continue to engage online and the high number of applications now online.

The Board discussed the national approach to housing options and agreed that it would be positive for there to be a national approach – this may be driven in the future by digitisation of services.

Decided: The Board noted the contents of the presentation.

9. Development programme update

The Board received the 6 monthly update on the progress of the DGHP development programme, noting that 37 units will complete this financial year.

The Board received specific updates on the following:

- Herries Avenue litigation;
- Lochside TRA – Dumfries and Galloway Council are due to consider Heads of Terms; and
- Springholm – this is at pre-application enquiry stage.

The Board discussed the planning department resource and that we require to work strategically with Dumfries and Galloway Council.

The Board discussed the MySavings fibre offer to tenants in new build properties. The Board asked that further information be brought back in the next development update on fibre offers and where that offer sits in context to other fibre offerings.

Decided: The Board noted the contents of the report.

10. Funding update (redacted)

11 a) Finance Report

The Board received a summary of the financial performance for the year to date. The Board reviewed performance for the year to date and discussed the key variances, which were broadly in line with expectations. The Board noted the full covenant compliance.

Decided: The Board

- 1) Noted the management accounts for the period to 30 September 2021 at Appendix 1; and**
- 2) Noted the covenant measures to the second quarter of 2021/22.**

b) Pensions Update (redacted)

12. Quarter 2 Performance Report and Delivery plan update

The Board received an update on the Quarter 2 performance measures and projects in the performance framework and strategy.

The Board discussed strong performance, despite challenging conditions.

Decided: The Board noted the contents of the report.

13. Risk register

The Board received a revised Corporate Risk Register.

The Board reviewed the revised risk register, noting the increased risks and changes and agreeing that the amendments are appropriate in the circumstances.

Decided: The Board approved the revised Corporate Risk register.

14. Assurance update

The Board received an update on the programme of Internal Audit work for Q1 and Q2 2021/22, noting that there are no areas of concern arising out of the audits.

The Board welcomed the audit recommendations and actions as being very detailed.

Decided: The Board noted the contents of the report.

15. Independent review of Pandemic response

The Board received a report on the Independent review of Pandemic response.

The Board agreed that the report reflected many success stories from the pandemic and captured the organisational journey throughout the pandemic. The Board agreed that we would sense check the DGHP detail.

Decided: The Board noted the contents of the report.

16. 2021 Group Annual Assurance Statement

The Board received an outline of the Group Annual Assurance Statement for 2021 and noted that there were no material areas of non-compliance, an audit having also been undertaken by the internal audit team to verify the position and sources of evidence.

Decided: The Board noted the 2021 Group Annual Assurance Statement

AOCB

The Chair advised the Board that, as an action arising out of the Strategic Governance Review, subsidiary Chairs will be providing regular verbal updates to the Wheatley Group Board at their meeting.

The Board discussed our representation on the Community Planning Partnership and agreed that the interim Managing Director would attend on behalf of DGHP.

SIGNED: