

**WHEATLEY HOMES SOUTH LIMITED  
MINUTE OF BOARD MEETING  
held on Wednesday 22 November 2023  
Brasswell Office, Dumfries**

**Members Present:** Jo Boaden (Chair), John Henderson, John McCraw, Michael Greaves-Mackintosh (via MS teams), Hugh Martin, Garry Legg, Karen Hunter and Fiona Burden (via MS teams)

**In Attendance:** Pauline Turnock (Group Director of Finance), Alan Glasgow (Managing Director), Eilidh Mowat (Governance Business Partner), Lindsey Dryden (Financial Controller)

**In Part:** James Ward (Managing Director of Lowther Homes)-  
Item 6  
Stephen Wright (Director of Governance) – Item 10  
Helen Berry (Head of Internal Audit) – Item 15

**1. Apologies for Absence**

No apologies were received. The meeting was confirmed as quorate.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

No new declarations were made.

**3. a) Minute of 20 September 2023 and matters arising**

**Decided: The Board approved the minutes of the above meeting.**

**b) Draft AGM minute**

**Decided: The Board approved the minutes of the above meeting.**

**c) Action list**

**Decided: The Board noted the action list.**

**4. Chair and Managing Director updates**

The Board noted and welcomed John McCraw's appointment to the Wheatley Group Board.

The Board was also updated on the conclusion of the strategic agreement with Dumfries and Galloway Council.

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

## **5. Customer Insight (presentation)**

The Board received an update on the annual customer survey; outcome of the CSE assessment and ongoing insight in respect of engagement, complaints and real-time feedback.

The Board discussed and scrutinised the results of the annual customer survey, noting the positive results and feedback. The Board queried the comparison with the 2019 figures. It was explained that the 2023 figures are lower than those from 2019 (although this was prior to WHS joining the Wheatley Group) and the Board asked for further clarity on those comparisons.

The Board was pleased to note the outcome of the CSE Assessment, which was very positive. The Board in particular also noted the areas of outstanding achievement.

The Board discussed the ongoing insight in detail in respect of the following areas: exceptional customer experience, making the most of our homes and assets and changing lives and communities. The Board discussed the ongoing insight in detail and the Anti-social behaviour feedback; specifically, the lack of clarity about noise issues in relation to anti-social behaviour. The Board noted that an ASB policy is being updated together with a revised approach to noise and improved communication. The Board requested that further detail is brought back to the Board on those next steps.

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

## **6. 2024/25 rent setting and service charges**

The Board were provided with a report which sought approval for the 2024/25 rent and general service charge increases from the initial focus group discussion and set out proposals for engagement and consultation with WH South tenants on rent increase options.

The Board considered the balance between the economic climate; our future obligations in relation to building compliance and continuing to meet the increased tenant demand for reactive repairs.

The Board discussed the proposal and that we agree on a range for the rent increase with the ability to finalise where within this range we will consult in December.

The Board were assured that our average rents are currently well within the range of affordability and the expectation is that the National Minimum Living Wage and pensions will be increased at a level greater than our rent increase range.

**Decided: The Board**

- 1) Approved the rent and service charges increase range of 6.9%-7.9% for initial consultation with focus groups, with additional options of +0.5% and +1% to be discussed as part of this, on the basis of funding additional investment in tenants' homes;**

- 2) **Noted that, following the Group Board meeting in December, the Board will be updated on the final options for the all-tenant consultation (i.e. where in the 6.9%-7.9% range) on 20 December 2023; and**
- 3) **Noted that the final decision on the rent and service charge increase will be made by this Board in February, following feedback from the tenant consultation process.**

7. [redacted]

8. **Q2 Performance and Delivery Plan**

The Board were presented with a paper which provided an update on performance delivery against targets and strategic projects for 2023/24 as of the end of quarter two. It also provides sector comparisons for Annual Return on the Charter indicators following the publication of 2022/23 sector wide data by the Scottish Housing Regulator.

The Board were assured that our results compare very favourably to the confirmed Scottish average for several key Charter indicators such as days to let, arrears and tenancy sustainment.

The Board discussed our strong performance in several key areas including days to let, lets to homeless, tenancy sustainment, new build handovers, emergency repairs and adaptation completion timescales. In respect of repairs, the Board queried whether we have made any allowances in our targets to reflect the rural nature of Dumfries and Galloway and noted that it is reflected in the scheduling of our repairs. The Board discussed the tenancy sustainment and noted the figures are currently below target. The Board further scrutinised the arrears position as it has not improved since the last quarter. The Board asked that future trends of deteriorating performance are highlighted. The Board emphasised the need for continuous improvement in respect of both indicators. The Board noted good progress on strategic projects.

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

9. **Governance update**

The Board received an update on our recruitment and succession planning. The Board also received an update on the Scottish Housing Regulator's ("SHR") consultation on its Regulatory Framework together with the Group's proposed response.

The Board were assured that the succession plan would continue to function within the composition requirements of the Board as outlined in our Articles.

The Board considered the proposed changes to the SHR's framework and how these would enhance the Regulatory Framework for the benefit of the sector.

**Decided: The Board noted the report**

## **10. Group EDI and Human Rights Action Plan - Implementation update**

The Board received a report on the first Group Annual Equalities report and proposed areas of focus for the reviewed Group Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (“EDI”) Action Plan, *One Group, Many Voices*.

The Board noted the strong commitment to EDI demonstrated throughout the Action Plan and emphasised the strong focus on continuous improvement and ensuring this is reflected in the organisational culture.

The Board considered the progress made during the last year and noted there has been significant development in several areas, in particular: data collection, data monitoring and analysis, and using data and analysis within some of our decision-making. The Board noted that progress is captured in the first Annual Equalities Report which will be published to highlight the work and provide a platform to compare progress against on a yearly basis.

**Decided: The Board**

- 1) Noted the Group Annual Equalities Report**
- 2) Provided feedback on the proposed areas of focus for next year’s Action Plan; and**
- 3) Noted the progress in the implementation of our Group EDI Action Plan**

## **11. [redacted]**

## **12. Group Social Media Policy**

The Board received a report on the updated Group Social Media Policy, approved by the Group Board on 27 September 2023.

The Group discussed the policy, which was updated to reflect our new channels, larger social media presence, increase in followers, higher levels of customer engagement and reflect the importance placed on digital communications in the current five-year strategy.

**Decided: The Board noted the updated Social Media Policy Report**

## **13. Finance Report (inc. covenant amendment)**

The Board received a report on the financial position of the Company for the period to 30 September 2023. The Board scrutinised the report and was satisfied with our financial position and Q2 forecast.

The Board considered proposed amendments to our borrowing arrangements as explained in detail in the report. The Board also received assurance that the legal agreements had been subject to review by our legal advisors.

**Decided: The Board;**

- 1) **Noted the Finance Report for the period ended 30 September 2023 and Q2 forecast at Appendix 1:**
- 2) **Approved the amendments to the borrowing arrangements through the approval of the formal legal minute appended to this report: and**
- 3) **Approved delegation of authority to any WFL1 director to make non-material changes and to agree the final form of the lender documentation on behalf of Wheatley Homes South.**

**14. Risk register**

The Board reviewed our corporate risk register and considered in particular the areas identified that were outwith the risk appetite.

**Decided: The Board**

- 1) **Approved the updates in the Risk Register Report; and**
- 2) **Identified any further changes required to the Corporate Risk Register.**

**15. [redacted]**

**16. AOCB**

No other items of business were raised.

**Signed:.....(Chair)**