

**WHEATLEY HOMES SOUTH LIMITED  
MINUTE OF BOARD MEETING  
held on Wednesday 29 March 2023  
Brasswell Office, Dumfries**

**Members Present:** Maureen Dowden, John Henderson, John McCraw, Fiona Burden (by MS Teams) and Karen Hunter (from item 4)

**In Attendance:** Pauline Turnock (Group Director of Finance), Alan Glasgow (Managing Director), Louise Morrison, (Finance Manager), Stephen Wright (Director of Governance), Lorna McCubbin (Head of Asset Investment and Compliance - items 6 and 7), Lewis McGregor (Director of IT and Digital Services - item 10), Euan Smith (HR Business Partner - item 11), Laurie Carberry (Director of Procurement, Fleet and Utilities - item 13)

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Michael Greaves-Mackintosh, Heather Macnaughton, Jo Boaden and Hugh Martin.

The meeting was confirmed as quorate.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

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

**3. Appointment of Director: Karen Hunter**

The Board considered and approved the appointment of Karen Hunter as a non-executive director of Wheatley Homes South.

The Board welcomed Karen to her first meeting and noted her declarations of interest.

**4. Minute of previous meeting held on 15 February 2023, matters arising and action list**

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

## **5. Chair and Managing Director updates**

The Chair provided an update on recent Wheatley Group Board strategy workshop, including the discussion in relation sustainability and Scottish Passivhaus and the impact of this on our development programme.

The Managing Director informed the Board about the elected member event at our new build site in Stranraer, our discussions with Dumfries and Galloway College in relation to supporting training opportunities for our customers, and our proposed Customer Voices conference being arranged for June.

The Board welcomed the updates and involvement with local partners, including Dumfries and Galloway College and the local authority community planning partnerships.

## **6. Repairs, damp and mould update**

The Board received an update on how we are continuing to improve our repairs service and how we are further enhancing our processes for responding to reports of mould and damp in our customers' homes.

The Board received customer insight and feedback in relation to repairs and the ongoing developments and improvements being made in the two key areas of (i) communication around repairs appointments and (ii) the management of complex repairs.

The Board welcomed the report and the introduction of book it, track it, rate it which will be rolled out in Wheatley Homes South. The Board also reiterated the importance of ensuring that no customer is left behind and was reassured to note that customers without access to mobile technology would be able to call a dedicated phone number and receive automated updates in relation to estimated time of their repair.

The Board was updated on the programme of property surveys that would be carried out to include approximately 600 units and the information and insight this would provide in relation to property condition. The Board discussed the assurance around the number of live mould and damp cases including the proactive approach to managing these. The Board was informed of the situations when we would seek to force access following a report of mould and damp and repeated attempts to arrange access with the tenant. The Board was assured about the way in which no-access is managed and that forced access was only used as a last resort.

The Board discussed the importance of staff training in relation to mould and damp and the cost associated with this. It was explained that the training is rolled out as part of our regular programme of training and there was no material financial impact associated with this.

**Decided: The Board**

- 1) **Noted the contents of this report, and**
- 2) **Noted the updated Group Managing Dampness, Mould and Condensation Policy attached as Appendix 1 which was approved by the Group Board on 15 March 2023.**

## **7. Home Safe Building Compliance update**

The Board received an update on our Home Safety building compliance work streams during 2022/23. The Board considered the compliance work programmes and discussed the current compliance status. The Board was reassured by our performance in relation to our building compliance workstreams.

Similar to recent discussion in relation to forced access to repair mould and damp, the Board noted the additional, limited but necessary circumstances in which we would force access to a property, including in relation to gas servicing. It was explained that we contact customers and carry out at least three visits prior to forcing access. It was further explained that a housing officer attends each forced access appointment but that we have relatively few such visits each year.

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

## **8. Strategic Agreement with Dumfries and Galloway Council**

The Board received a draft Strategic Agreement with Dumfries and Galloway Council (DGC) which had also been considered and approved at the Wheatley Group Board on 15 March 2023. It was explained that the draft Strategic Agreement was part of our continued approach to ensuring a productive relationship with one of our most important partners and aligns with key strategic priorities. In particular, the Board note that our relationship with DGC was built on collaboration in key areas including housing, regeneration and the increasing our contribution in local communities across Dumfries and Galloway.

The Board was advised that DGC was also currently progressing the draft Strategic Agreement through its governance arrangements and was expected to seek approval at its full council Committee on 30 March 2023.

**Decided: The Board**

- 1) **Considered the draft strategic agreement with DGC, and**
- 2) **Noted that any changes to the agreement will be notified to the Board prior to signature**

## **9. A) 2023/24 budget**

The Board received the 2023/24 budget, which had been prepared following approval of our five year financial projections in February. The Board received and considered the budget.

**Decided: The Board approved the 2023/24 budget**

## **B) Finance Report**

The Board received and scrutinised the management accounts for the period to 28 February 2023. The Board received an update on the statutory surplus of £8949k which was favourable to budget and the key drivers for this: reduced void rent loss and unbudgeted adaptation and capital project grant income (which was partly offset by increased repair costs).

**Decided: The Board noted the management accounts for the period to 28 February 2023.**

### **10. [redacted]**

### **11. Gender pay gap (presentation)**

The Board received an update on our Gender Pay Reporting, which is mandatory for organisations that employ 250 or more staff which Wheatley Homes South does not.

The Board welcomed the report, our good performance in this area and the strong staff retention rates.

**Decided: The Board noted the presentation**

### **12. Governance update**

This report received an update on Board recruitment, including the proposals for a new independent Board member. The Board also welcomed the introduction of a tenant Board member pathway programme and the skills, experience and opportunity this would provide.

**Decided: The Board:**

**1) Approved the appointment and membership of Karen Hunter [this recommendation was considered and approved under item 3]; and  
2) Approved the introduction of our tenant Board member pathway programme.**

### **13. Procurement strategy and policy updates**

The Board received the annual updates to the Procurement Strategy, Procurement Policy, Group Sustainable Procurement Policy and Group Community Benefits Statement as approved by the Wheatley Solutions Board.

The Board welcomed the report and acknowledged the role that we play in supporting the local economy through our contracting arrangements. The Board also considered our future contracting pipeline, particularly in relation to new build development, regeneration, ongoing capital investment and the employment opportunities these would also provide.

**Decided: The Board noted**

- 1) Wheatley Group Procurement Strategy 2023 – 2025**
- 2) Wheatley Group Procurement Policy 2023**
- 3) Wheatley Group Sustainability Procurement Policy 2023**
- 4) Wheatley Group Community Benefits Statement 2023**

**14. AOCB**

The Board noted that Heather Macnaughton would be retiring from the Board to take on another Board position and thanked her for her contribution over the years.

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