

**WHEATLEY HOMES SOUTH LIMITED  
MINUTE OF BOARD MEETING  
held on Tuesday 20 September 2023  
Brasswell Office, Dumfries**

**Members Present:** Jo Boaden (Chair), John Henderson, John McCraw, Michael Greaves-Mackintosh and Hugh Martin

**In Attendance:** Pauline Turnock (Group Director of Finance), Alan Glasgow (Managing Director), Stephen Wright (Director of Governance), Eilidh Mowat (Governance Business Partner), Lorna McCubbin (Head of Repairs, Compliance and Investment), Stephen Devine (Director of Asset Strategy), Jennifer Anderson (Wheatley 360 Lead) and Lindsay Lauder (Director of Regeneration and Development)

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Fiona Burden and Karen Hunter.

The Chair confirmed the meeting was quorate.

**2. Appointment of the Chair**

The Board formally approved the appointment of Jo Boaden as the new Chair. The Board recorded its thanks to Maureen Dowden for the progress made during her tenure.

**3. Declarations of Interest**

No new declarations were made.

**4. Minute of meeting held on 16 August, action list and matters arising**

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

**5. Chair and Managing Director updates**

The Board received an update from the Chair on matters considered by Group Board: strategy update; revised new build targets and repairs.

The Board received an update on the progress of the corporate office disposal and noted that a detailed report would be brought to the next meeting.

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

## **6. Stock condition: reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (verbal) - presentation**

The Board received an update on RAAC. The Board was assured that following a comprehensive review of our asset records we were confident that RAAC was not used in our homes. It was further explained that the outcome of our analysis was consistent with the findings of other organisations in our sector.

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

## **7. Sustainability Framework**

The Board was provided with a report on the progress towards our sustainability objectives agreed through our Group Sustainability Framework and its supporting action plan.

The Board recognised that the Sustainability Framework was helping to shape delivery of our objectives in areas ranging from our investment in existing homes to the skills we are developing among our staff.

The board discussed the good progress made with our deep retrofit projects in Dumfries and Galloway. The Board requested that we analyse and include the savings for customers as a result of the projects which were to be included in future sustainability updates.

The Board discussed the importance of sustainability for our business and for our customers.

**Decided: The Board noted the report**

## **8. Repairs and Maintenance Policy update**

The Board received a report on the updated Wheatley Homes South Repairs and Maintenance Policy, following approval of the revised Group Repairs and Maintenance Policy Framework by the Group Board on 30 August 2023.

The Board noted the progress made in improving our repairs service in the focus areas identified. 'Book it, Track it, Rate it' will be fully implemented by October 2023. The new Repairs, Investment and Compliance structure is now fully operational and voids have been bought back in house.

The Board discussed the increased volume of repairs; noting this is a sector issue but we are well placed to manage these.

**Decided: The Board:**

- 1) noted the progress with repairs service enhancements; and**
- 2) approved the updated Repairs and Maintenance Policy which remains within the wider Group framework.**

## **9. New Build development programme: mid-year update**

The Board received a mid-year review of our new build programme performance.

The Board discussed the continuing challenge in the sector in relation to construction costs and considered the review of housing for varying needs and the move to the Scottish passive housing standards. The Board welcomed the scope of the due diligence and regular monitoring we undertake on our contractors to mitigate the risk of any financial loss arising from potential contractor insolvency.

The Board acknowledged the current achievements with delivery of 37 units completed in 2022/23 as programmed; 31 unit due for completion in 2023/24; 47 units started on site and a further 165 units across 3 projects programmed for approval during 2023/24; and a healthy pipeline of units coming forward resulting in 587 units over the strategy period to 2026.

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

## **10. Annual SHR assurance report**

The Board received an update on the group-wide Annual Assurance Statement (“AAS”) which was received and approved by the Group Board at its meeting on 30 August 2023.

The Board noted following the self-assessment process and external review by Campbell Tickell, we have confirmed there are no areas of material non-compliance. This reflects our strong ongoing focus on strong governance and compliance.

**Decided: The Board noted the submission of the 2023 Annual Assurance Statement to the Scottish Housing Regulator.**

## **11. Winter resilience planning**

The Board was provided with an update on our approach to winter resilience planning for our business operations and customers experiencing hardship during the coming year. The Board recognised that we have well-established approaches that have been deployed in previous years to address the operational business risks of the winter period across all business areas.

The Board noted that these plans had been reviewed and refined to take account of the wider actions and approaches developed across a range of services to mitigate against business impact linked to the winter challenges our customers and services face. The Board also noted that planning this year reflected the ongoing challenges to our business and customers arising from the cost-of-living crisis.

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

## 12. Equality, Diversity and inclusion update

The Board received an update on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (“EDI”) activity across the group and progress with our Group EDI action plan, *One Group, Many Voices*, supporting the implementation of our Group EDI and Human Rights policy. The Board re-emphasised our strong commitment to EDI with a focus on ensuring this is reflected in our organisational culture.

The Board considered the significant progress we have made with our action plan and noted that most actions are now complete or ongoing as business as usual. Significant areas of progress were noted, including in relation to data collection, data monitoring and analysis; which the Board noted would help to positively inform our decision-making.

The Board noted the next stage of the action plan will build on our success to date and factor in the result of our Talent Inclusion and Diversity Evaluation (TIDE) assessment to the Employer’s Network for Equality and Inclusion (enei) and information from the Scottish census, as it emerges.

**Decided: The Board noted the progress of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion activity across the Group.**

## 13. Hate Crime Policy

The Board were provided with an overview and copy of the newly designed Group Hate Crime Policy including its purpose, content, and desired outcomes.

The Board recognised the importance of tackling hate crime and noted the incidences of hate crime recorded during 2022/23 while recognising that hate crime is known to be underreported.

The Board considered how the policy set out our approach towards tackling hate crime within our communities as well as the support we have in place to deal with this. The Board also noted the alignment with our strategy, which sets out our aims for our customers to feel safe and secure and live in thriving and peaceful neighbourhoods. The Board also welcomed that the policy had been developed with input from customers and other stakeholders.

**Decided: The Board noted and commented on the Group Hate Crime Policy prior to it being presented to the Wheatley Group Board for approval.**

#### **14. Governance update**

The Board was updated on governance related matters including the proposed 2024 meeting dates, modern slavery statement; and Charities (Regulation and Administration) (Scotland) Act. The Board also considered the proposed appointment of Garry Legg, following his interview with the Chair and Vice-Chair.

The Board noted the requirement to prepare a modern slavery statement made at Group level. The Board considered the statement and approach we have to assuring ourselves about the risk of modern slavery in our supply chain. It was also noted that we will require to continue to keep our approach under review to ensure we are able to identify any new or emerging risks of modern slavery.

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

- 1) Approved the appointment of Garry Legg as a Director;**
- 2) Approved the schedule of meetings for 2024;**
- 3) Noted the Modern Slavery Statement, approved by the Group Board on our behalf; and**
- 4) Noted the update on the new Charities (Regulation and Administration) (Scotland) Act 2023.**

#### **15. AOCB**

No other items of business were raised.

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