

**WHEATLEY HOMES SOUTH LIMITED
MINUTE OF BOARD MEETING
held on Wednesday 11 February 2026
Brasswell Dumfries**

Members Present: Jo Boaden (Chair), John Henderson, Michael Greaves Mackintosh, Joan Pollard, Gary Legg, Karen Hunter, Donald Carruthers, Helen Campbell and Jane Clark Hutchison.

In Attendance: Pauline Turnock (Group Director of Finance), Alex Lamb (Managing Director), Eilidh Mowat (Governance Business Partner), Helen Berry (Director of Governance) and Louise Morrison (Finance Manager).

In Part: Lorna McCubbin, Director of Asset Strategy (Item 8 only), Lindsay Lauder, Director of Development and Regeneration (Item 8 only) and Kirsty Connelly –Head of Assurance (Item 13 only – via Teams).

1. Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence were received.

The Chair confirmed the meeting was quorate.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Board noted the standing declaration of interest. No new declarations were made.

3. a) Minute of 26 November 2025 and matters arising

Decided: The Board approved the minutes of the meeting of 26 November 2025.

b) Action list

Decided: The Board noted the action list and the updates.

4. Chair and Managing Director update

The Chair provided a briefing to the Board on the key matters considered by the Group Board at its last meeting, which included:

- A meeting with the Cabinet Secretary, who reiterated that we are a key partner;
- Agreement of the draft Group Strategy;

- Consideration of the findings from the Strategic Governance Review and the agreed approach to implementation;
- Agreement to proceed with the rent options; and
- Agreement to add responsibilities arising from Awaab's Law as a specific risk on the Group Strategic Risk Register.

The Managing Director provided an update on accidental fires which had occurred in our properties caused by small domestic appliances and in one instance, a deliberate fire-raising. The Board was assured of the mitigating actions which had taken place and noted that Electrical Inspection Condition Reports (“EICRs”) were in place for the properties.

5. Awaab's law

The Board received an update on the Scottish Government's introduction of the Scottish equivalent of Awaab's Law through The Investigation and Commencement of Repair (Scotland) Regulations 2026.

The Board discussed the upcoming Regulations and the progress of implementation actions. The Board queried whether the rural nature of our region would impact achievement of the statutory timescales and noted that we are already delivering emergency repairs across the region and are meeting our targets; therefore we have a framework in place. It was agreed that continued collaboration and performance monitoring across the organisation will assist us in meeting the timescales.

The Board sought confirmation regarding public liability insurance coverage for any resulting claims and noted that the level of cover is sufficient. An outline was provided of how these types of claims will be handled internally.

The Board discussed the definition of 'substantially free' and noted that, at present, the requirement is for properties to be completely free of mould and damp. The Board was advised that we are recording every instance and case of damp and mould until further guidance on the definition is published.

The Board agreed that the presence of damp and mould can often indicate vulnerability. The Board was assured that this would be identified as part of the annual tenancy visit carried out by the Housing Officer and further discussed a multi-agency approach for such cases.

The Board requested that photographs be provided of the categories of cases to support understanding of the application of the Regulation.

Decided: The Board:

- 1) Noted the contents of the report and the implications of the Regulations; and**
- 2) Provided feedback on the proposed approach to preparing for implementation and updating the Group Managing Dampness, Mould and Condensation Policy.**

6. Strategy update 2026 – 31

The Board was presented with the final draft of the 2026–2031 Strategy: Making Homes and Lives Better, following the Board’s previous consideration.

The Board expressed its support for the most recent draft.

The Board discussed the proposed Wheatley Standard and emphasised the importance of clear communication with tenants regarding investment in their area. The Board noted the work carried out to date to improve the tenant experience, including the development of area-specific micro-sites.

The Board also discussed the region’s particular sensitivities, including its low wage economy and depopulation, and how these factors should inform the Wheatley Standard.

Decided: The Board approved the 2026–2031 strategy, *Making homes and lives better*, and provided feedback on the proposed approach to launch and implementation.

7. Rent setting and service charges 2026/27

The Board received an update on the consultation on the proposed rent, service, and other charges increases for 2026/27.

The Board requested regional comparisons with agreed rent increases across the sector; it was agreed that this information would be provided at the next meeting.

The Board emphasised that given the current climate and the region’s low wage economy, monitoring changes to rent arrears and applications to the Helping Hand Fund is essential. The Board noted the previously available funding for tenants not in receipt of benefits and requested data on the number of customers supported and the value of that support to be provided at the next meeting.

Decided: The Board:

- 1) Considered the feedback received through the consultation process with tenants on our 2026/27 rent, service and other charges increase; and**
- 2) Approved a 6.9% rent, service charges and other charges (including garages and lock ups) for 2026/27 for all tenants effective from the first Monday in April.**

8. Financial projections 2026/27

The Board received an update on the financial projections for investment in assets and services to 2031, including an overview of the five-year Capital Investment Plan and the five-year new-build Development Programme.

The Board scrutinised the projections, discussed risk mitigations, and noted examples of how risks would be managed.

The Board acknowledged the ambition of the five-year Capital Investment Plan and sought assurance regarding contractor capacity and internal resources. The Board noted that the procurement process ensures transparency of expectations with contractors and that City Building remains a contingency option.

The Board noted that the garages and lock-ups appraisal is nearing conclusion.

The Board noted the ambition of the development programme, delivering 794 homes over five years - 95% for social rent. The Board discussed key projects, including the focus on Lochside regeneration, and alignment with the anticipated RPA for DGC.

The Board discussed survey return rates and the move to “pulse surveys,” which it was anticipated would increase return rates.

The Board sought clarification on the strategy for accommodating older people, given the region’s ageing population. The Board was advised that Livingwell sites are included in several developments and noted continued partnership working with Dumfries and Galloway Council and the Health and Social Care Partnership.

The Board emphasised the importance of ensuring all areas of the region are represented within the development programme. It was noted that some sites are identified for longer term delivery, with opportunities to accelerate development if funding or capacity allows.

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Decided: The Board:

- 1) Approved the updated projections for investment in assets and services over the five-year period to 2031;**
- 2) Approved the five-year Capital Investment Plan summarised in Appendix 2;**
- 3) Approved the five-year Development Programme summarised in Appendix 3;**
- 4) Noted that the financial projections, five-year Capital Investment Plan and five-year Development Programme will form the Group Plan and Programme and be presented in February 2026 to the Group Board; and**
- 5) Agreed that the projected 2026/27 figures form the basis of next year’s annual budget which will be presented to this Board for approval in March 2026.**

9. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

10. Strategic Governance Review

The Board was provided with an update on the findings of the independent strategic governance review and progress in implementing its recommendations and considered the proposed Board Annual Planner for 2026.

Decided: The Board:

- 1) Noted the agreed approach to implementing the Campbell Tickell recommendations as set out in Appendix 2;**
- 2) Noted the status of the transition to a Strategic Partnership with Wheatley Care; and**
- 3) Approved the Board Planner for 2026.**

11. Finance report

The Board was provided with an overview of the Finance Report for the period to 31 December 2025 and the Q3 forecast financial outturn.

Decided: The Board noted the Finance Report for the period to 31 December 2025 and Q3 forecast at Appendix 1

12. Performance report

The Board received an update on performance against targets and strategic projects for 2025/26 to the end of quarter three.

The Board noted strong performance in several key areas.

The Board discussed the slight decrease in repair timescales, attributed to diagnostic issues, and noted ongoing monitoring.

The Board sought assurance on actions arising from Fire Risk Assessments and noted there were no outstanding actions.

The Board discussed the good performance results and asked how we would avoid complacency. The Board discussed the culture and organisational framework of continual monitoring which would continue to drive performance.

Decided: The Board noted the contents of this report.

13. Group assurance update

The Board received an update on internal audit work reported to the August and November Group Audit Committee meetings.

The Board noted that no material issues had been raised.

Decided: The Board noted the contents of this report.

14. AOCB

No other items of business were raised.

Signed: (Chair)

Date: