



**WHEATLEY HOMES SOUTH LIMITED  
MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING  
held on Wednesday 5 February 2025  
Brasswell, Dumfries**

- Members Present: Jo Boaden (Chair), John Henderson, Garry Legg, Martin Dorby, Michael Greaves Mackintosh, John McCraw and Karen Hunter
- In Attendance: Pauline Turnock (Group Director of Finance), Alex Lamb (Wheatley Homes South Managing Director) Eilidh Mowat (Governance Business Partner), Lindsey Dryden (Financial Controller)
- In Part: Lorna McCubbin, Director of Assets (Items 8 & 15)  
Lindsey Lauder, Director of Property and Development (Items 9 & 10)  
Eugene Mullan, Architect, Smith Scott Mullan (Item 10)  
Samantha Bett (Via Teams), Director of Treasury (Item 11)  
Helen Berry (Via Teams), Head of Assurance (Item 14)

**1. Apologies for Absence**

The Chair confirmed that 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 20 November 2024 and matters arising**

**Decided: The Board approved the minutes of the meeting of 20 November 2024.**

**b) Action list**

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

**4. Chair and Managing Director updates**

The Chair gave an update on the matters arising from the Group Board meeting and specifically updated the Board on the reinstatement of the capital housing budget for 1 year only and the ongoing close partnership working.

The Chair also provided an update on the ongoing recruitment of an Independent Board member.

The Managing Director gave an update on 2 sudden deaths which had occurred within our care premises. The Board noted that an update on our Care premises is scheduled to be provided at the May Board meeting.

The Board were provided with an update on our response to Storm Eoin. The Board noted that major jobs had all been made safe post-storm, and no injuries had been reported. The Board commended our personalised approach to customer contact during the storm.

**Decided: The Board noted the updates**

## **5. Strategy 2026-31 pathway**

The Board were provided with an update on the pathway and timings for developing the 2026-2031 strategy, noting that the strategy workshop in May will provide an opportunity to consider the strategy in detail.

The Board discussed the strategy, emphasising that it must reflect the priorities and aspirations of customers and staff and put our customers at the heart of the strategy. A number of workshops have been held with staff and there will be sessions arranged for customers to provide input. The Board asked that the timing of the strategy renewal be considered in the national context and allow room for flexibility within those timelines.

The Board discussed the approach to monitoring the targets/aims set out in the strategy and noted that the strategy is refreshed annually. The Board also requested that we draw out within the strategy any issues/targets that are outstanding and Health and Safety.

**Decided: The Board noted the proposed approach to developing the 2026-2031 strategy.**

## **6. Rent setting and service charges 2025/26**

The Board were provided with feedback on the 2025/26 rent, service and other charges consultation.

The Board noted that the consultation attracted nearly 1850 responses, with 456 respondents also giving qualitative feedback. The proportion of respondents, at just over 25%, indicating a preference for the higher rate of 7.9% based on additional investment is consistent with the qualitative feedback. The Board commended an excellent response rate to the consultation.

The Board emphasised the need to ensure we communicate with tenants on an ongoing basis how the investment and services resulting from the rent setting will be delivered. The Board urged caution when comparing our rents in Dumfries and Galloway with other RSLs in the Group as our rural, dispersed geography is not comparable to the other RSLs.

### **Decided: The Board**

- 1) Considered the feedback received through the consultation process with tenants on our 2025/26 rent, service and other charges increase; and**
- 2) Approved a 6.9% rent, service charges and other charges (including garages and lock ups) for 2024/25 for all tenants effective from the first of April.**

## **7. Financial projections 2025/26**

The Board were provided with updated financial projections for investment in assets and services over the period to 2030 and approved updated financial projections forming the budget for 2025/26.

The Board discussed the interest debt peak and interest cover position and how this applies in the overall context of the RSL Borrower Group.

The Board discussed our risk mitigation and our planning to manage a perfect storm noting an example in September 2022 when we engaged our mitigation plans.

This Board noted the business plan for the five-year period to 31 March 2030.

### **Decided: The Board**

- 1) Approved the updated financial projections for investment in assets and services over the five-year period to 2030; and**
- 2) Agreed that the projected 2025/26 figures form the basis of next year's annual budget which will be presented to the Board for final approval in March.**

## **8. Five-year investment plan**

The Board were provided with an update on the five-year capital investment in our existing homes for the period 2025/26-2029/30.

The core investment programme will deliver £53.3m of planned improvements within our properties. The continuing focus of our programme is on delivering improvements that contribute the greatest value to our tenants and neighbourhoods.

The Board discussed how the customers' voice has been integral to the investment planning process, with the feedback from customer voice panels informing the prioritisation and approaches in the Strategic Asset and Investment Plan and reflected in the capital investment plan.

**Decided: The Board approved the five-year capital investment plan 2025-2030.**



## Decided: The Board;

- 1) Approved the submission of the Masterplan to Dumfries & Galloway Council to be adopted as Planning Guidance;**
- 2) Approved the reallocation of the £1.123m demolition budget within the 25/26 Business Plan to the Investment budget to carry out necessary repairs at Osbourne Drive (removing the requirement for demolition); and**
- 3) Noted the phasing of all Lochside sites are now included in WHS 5 Year Business Plan (approval for this plan is sought in a separate Board Paper).**

**11.**

## 12. Finance report

The Board were provided an overview of the Finance Report for the period for to 31 December 2024 and the Q3 forecast.

The Board noted the financial performance for the period to 31 December 2024.

**Decided: The Board noted the Finance Report for the period to 31 December 2024 and Q3.**

### 13. Performance report

This Board were provided with an update on performance against targets and strategic projects for 2024/25 to the end of quarter three.

The Board noted strong performance against our targets for 2024/25 in several key areas including gross rent arrears, tenancy sustainment, CFC, Allocations and NETs CSATs, reducing emergency repair numbers, emergency repair timescales, repairs completed right first time and new build completions. The Board asked that we continue to highlight health and safety near misses and asbestos within this paper.

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

**14. Group Assurance update**

The Board were provided with an update on the Internal audit work reported to the August and November 2024 Group Audit Committee meetings.

The Internal Audit team has completed the listed reviews. No significant matters were noted to bring to the attention of the Board members and management have agreed actions to address the improvement actions identified during each review. The Internal Audit team will monitor the completion of these actions and report progress to future meetings of the Group Audit Committee and this Board.

The Group Audit Committee has approved the Internal Audit team’s current programme of work and will continue to oversee and approve the work programme on a quarterly basis.

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

**15. Radio Teleswitch (RTS) switch off update**

The Board were provided with an update on the implications of the planned switch off of the Radio Teleswitch system for our customers.

The Board noted that 492 customers are affected by the proposals.

The Board expressed concern at the timelines proposed for switch off.

The Board asked that we ensure a strategic approach to supporting customers and track the progress of replacement options for those customers affected to conclusion. The Board noted further updates would be provided to each Board meeting until June.

**Decided: The Board noted the Radio Teleswitch (RTS) switch off update**

**16. AOCB**

No other items of business were raised.

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