

**West of Scotland Housing Association
Minutes of the Board Meeting
Held by Video Conference
Wednesday 25th November 2020**

<p>Present: Kelly Adams (Chair), Ruth Simpson, Clare Newton, Nick Farrell, , Ann Reid, Ryan Docherty, John Muir, Derek McGowan, Christine Musasa, Irene Campbell</p> <p>In Attendance: Brian Gannon, Chief Executive Officer: Jennifer Cairns, Director of Corporate Services; Robert Campbell, Director of Housing and Community Services; Andrew Kubski, Director of Development & Asset Management; Colin MacCallum, Director of Finance</p> <p>Apologies: Elaine Davidson, George Kpodo, John Shearer</p> <p>The Director of Corporate Services advised the Board that Paul McCandlish has now resigned from the Board. Paul had expressed that he was looking to resign due to work commitments previously but stayed on the Board until the pension grievance process was completed.</p>	
<p>Disclosure of Interests No conflicts of interest were declared.</p>	
<p>1. Approval of the minutes of the 30th September 2020 The minutes from the meeting held on 28th October 2020 were approved.</p>	Approved
<p>2. Matters Arising The Board received an update on actions arising from the previous Board meeting on the 28th October 2020.</p>	Noted
<p>3. Review of Board Terms of Reference The Director of Corporate Services presented the review of the Board Terms of Reference. She highlighted that there were no proposed changes to the Terms of Reference and the key purpose of the paper is to ensure that Board reporting and activity is in line with the Board Terms of Reference. She advised that on the whole there were no significant gaps but outlined the proposal to introduce an Annual Stakeholder Report and Annual Policy Report. The Board noted the contents of the report and approved the proposed reporting.</p>	Approved
<p>4. Agenda Planner and Meeting Dates The Director of Corporate Services explained that the agenda planner follows on from the review of the terms of reference and outlines the planned agendas for next year. She outlined the proposal to introduce a quarterly action plan report and an annual strategy report to streamline some of the reporting. She also advised that there would be further work done in relation to KPI reporting which would be brought back to the Boar</p>	

<p>in the New Year. John Muir queried the meeting structure in relation to the other meetings on the planner. The Director of Corporate Services outlined the meeting structure and the Chief Executive advised John and Christine that he would cover this in more detail in their induction session.</p> <p>Derek McGowan said he would like to pass on this thanks to management for pulling this together as it is really helpful.</p> <p>The Chief Executive advised that this makes us better as an organisation as organisations too often develop strategies and then don't progress them. This structure ensures that we keep track of our commitments and achieve what we have said we will achieve.</p> <p>The Board approved the agenda planner for 2021.</p>	<p>Approved</p>
<p>5. Review of Board Member Role Description</p> <p>The Director of Corporate Services outlined the proposed changes to the Board Member role description following the recent review. Kelly Adams raised the point in relation to communication between Board meetings and asked if this was an issue. The Director of Corporate Services advised that she appreciated that there has been more communication between Board meetings by email recently and she does try to limit this but at times struggles to get a response sometimes where a response is required. It was agreed that future communication that requires a response will be flagged to Board members so that they are aware they need to respond promptly.</p> <p>Kelly Adams also queried about the mentor system in place and that this does not seem to happen. The Director of Corporate Services advised that in the past she has struggled to get volunteers but that she has volunteers to mentor John and Christine so will put this in place. The Chief Executive emphasised how important this process is and really helpful for new Board members.</p> <p>Irene Campbell advised that she was really looking forward to working with John or Christine.</p> <p>The Board approved the revised role description.</p>	<p>Action</p> <p>Approved</p>
<p>6. Rent Review Consultation</p> <p>The Chief Executive presented a paper on the proposed rent increase consultation. He advised that CMT were proposing that the Board present 2 options to tenants in respect of the rent increase – CPI only this year (with CPI +1% added back into the business plan in 2027/28) or CPI plus 1%. He advised the Board that while this was a CMT proposal, it was the Board's decision and he went on to outline all 4 options detailed in the paper and the impact of each option on the Business Plan. He explained that he is not proposing that we consult with all 4 options with tenants as this may be too confusing and it is important that the rent consultation is clear and straightforward.</p>	

Nick Farrell asked for clarification re option 1. The Chief Executive confirmed that option 1 was the current business plan.

Ruth Simpson stated that she thought the Board should consult on Option 1 and 2 only.

John Muir asked if WSHA had ever done a rent freeze. The Director of Finance confirmed that this has never happened during his time. The standard is CPI plus 1% as per the business plan. John Muir said that he agreed that if WSHA was going to increase rents less than this this was the year to do it. He said that he understood that tenants would be very happy but what would be the impact on the business as there needs to be a balance. Kelly Adams agreed with this and from the paper it would seem that Option 1 and 2 are the options that would strike this balance.

Irene Campbell said that she agreed that Options 1 and 2 are the only viable options but that she preferred option 1 and communicating to tenants how this income could be invested in stock and developing more services for our tenants to support them during this time. She said that here preference would be to stick to the business plan. She said that 3 & 4 are not viable options. She said that she doesn't like the idea of saying to tenants that they will still need to pay the 1% in the future which is the key part of option 2.

Nick Farrell felt it was a really balanced report and noted that we don't know what the situation will be in 5 years time and the gap between the private sector rents and social rents will increase over the next 2-3 years which will give more flexibility in relation to rent levels . He said that he would prefer option 2 but potentially offering both Options 1 and 2 to tenants.

Derek McGowan stated that it would be good to outline investment in stock and additional services as part of the consultation in relation to option 1 but he feels that option 2 gives the right message of support to tenants.

Ann Reid stated that she thought the Board should consult on options 1 and 2 as a rent freeze had too much of an impact on the Business Plan. Clare Newton agreed with this.

The Chief Executive highlighted that the Board need to be comfortable with whatever option that tenants choose if they offer options.

Derek McGowan said that he did not have a concern in respect of adding the 1% back in later years as efficiencies could be made to avoid this over that time period.

The Director of Finance agreed with this and advised that the disposal of Netherlee House and the rebate from Nationwide deals with a third of the deficit.

<p>Clare Newton asked how many tenants are in receipt of housing benefit. It was confirmed that approximately 60% are on full housing benefit. John Muir highlighted that potentially those in receipt of full housing benefit would not have such a concern. Irene Campbell pointed out that for many tenants receipt of housing benefit is a temporary situation and they would be paying full rent once in employment in the future.</p> <p>The Chief Executive advised the Board that from the GWSF information on rent increases, the average is 1% - therefore option 2 would bring us in below this. Kelly Adams agreed that this was a good message to tenants and is happy to support this as the business can cope with the impact of this option.</p> <p>The Chief Executive outlined the proposed consultation process. Derek McGowan asked how many tenants had signed up to the tenant portal. The Director of Corporate Services advised that only 10% of tenants had signed up to the portal so far but that letters were being sent this week to all tenants with their activation codes so we would hope to see an increase. She advised the Board that there was a target in place of 33% of tenants signed up by March 2021 and that there was a plan in place to achieve this target. It was agreed that the board would be provided with regular updates in relation to this in the Board Brief.</p> <p>The Chief Executive advised that if we find that not enough tenants sign up to the portal, we may need to look at developing an app which is part of the Digital Strategy.</p> <p>The Board approved the rent consultation and agreed to consult with tenants on options 1 and 2.</p>	<p>Action</p> <p>Approved</p>
<p>7. Draft Budget 2021/22</p> <p>The Director of Finance outlined the draft budget for 2021/22/. He outlined the assumptions that formed the basis of the budget and explained that it had been difficult to base the budget on the first 6 months of this year as result of Covid.</p> <p>Ruth Simpson asked for clarification in relation to overhead savings. The Director of Finance advised that work had been done to make efficiencies in relation to overheads and this is reflected in the budget. The Chief Executive highlighted that this budget demonstrates the work that has been done in relation to the current Key Business Objective of reducing costs and making efficiencies. He advised these savings would allow the Board to continue having discussions in relation to inflation only rent increases.</p>	<p>Approved</p>

<p>The Director of Finance advised that through benchmarking with other RSLs it has been identified that our overheads are higher and that we are starting to reduce this.</p> <p>There was a discussion in relation to the underspend for planned maintenance and how this would impact the RBS covenant. The Director of Finance advised that he had had initial discussions with RBS in relation to carrying forward the underspend into next year and has indications that they will work with us as many organisations are in the same situation. He advised that the opening position would be improved and that this would be a sector wide issue.</p> <p>Irene Campbell queried the bulk uplift cost as she imagined that this would be higher based on the work she has done for her own organisation. The Director of Housing & Community Services advised that this was based on 1,600 units. Irene Campbell offered to share her work on this with WSHA.</p> <p>The Board noted the draft budget and agreed that the final budget would come back in February next year for approval.</p>	<p>Noted</p>
<p>8. Equalities Action Plan Update</p> <p>The Director of Housing & Community Services provided the Board with an update in relation to the Equalities action plan. He highlighted that good progress had been made and that the focus of the group had been on the action plan over the past few months. He advised the Board that he wanted to move the focus of the group onto development of good practice and improving service delivery. He advised the Board that two members of TAG were now on the group which has been really beneficial. He also advised that BDO were carrying out an equalities audit in January.</p> <p>Ruth Simpson queried the number of adaptations and raised concerns about the funding remaining the same, particularly from Glasgow City Council. The Director of Housing & Community Services confirmed that positive partnership working remains with Glasgow City Council and they continue to provide grant funding for aids/adaptations.</p> <p>John Muir advised that he is in a wheelchair living in one of our homes and would be happy input into the group and become involved. The Director of Housing & Community Services thanked John for this and confirmed he would be in touch to involve John in this.</p>	<p>Action</p>
<p>9. Board Briefing</p> <p>The Chief Executive presented the Board Brief to the Board. He advised that the data breach was now closed as a notifiable event as the ICO have advised that there are not taking any further action.</p> <p>He also advised that there had been an update in relation to service delivery now that the majority of our stock is now in Tier 4. We are only now delivering emergency repairs and repairs where there is a H&S implication. We are also no longer offering face to face appointments for</p>	

<p>financial support. We will review this once the three week period has ended.</p> <p>The Director of Development and Asset Management advised the Board that the closing date for the Void and Reactive Repairs Contract tenders had been last Friday and 6 tenders had been received. These are currently being evaluated. Kelly Adams asked about the quality/price balance and was advised that this was 60/40 as per our Procurement Policy.</p> <p>The Chief Executive provided an update on the Green Strategy. He then went on to outline the opportunity to run the Legacy Hub at Dalmarnock. He advised the Board that Willowacre Trust would put in a note of interest but would come back to the Board with any further proposal.</p>	
<p>10. Procurement Update</p> <p>The Director of Corporate Services provided the Board with an update on progress made on the Procurement Strategy this year so far. She highlighted the impact of covid on the implementation of the strategy and outlined which procurement exercises would be postponed to next year.</p>	<p>Noted</p>
<p>13.Q2 Performance Results and Business Plan Progress</p> <p>The Chief Executive outlined the performance results for Q2 and progress that had been made on the business plan. The Board noted a dip in customer satisfaction and the actions that were being put in place to address this.</p> <p>Kelly Adams commented that she liked the lay out of the new report and it is really focuses on the areas that requirement improvement which is really helpful to Board members.</p> <p>Irene Campbell commented that the Leadership Team had made the right decision not to furlough staff as significant progress had been made during Covid. She said she would like to congratulate staff and the Leadership Team.</p> <p>It was agreed that a message would be sent to staff from the Board in relation to this.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Action</p>
<p>14.Management Accounts Q2</p> <p>The Director of Finance presented the management accounts for the 2nd quarter of the financial year. Kelly Adams commented that she could see the variances but there were no surprises.</p>	<p>Noted</p>
<p>15. H&S Update</p> <p>The Director of Corporate Services presented the H&S Update and highlighted the positive results from the recent ACS Office and the activity that was ongoing in relation to lone working and risk assessments.</p>	<p>Noted</p>

B/21/001 – 1b. Minutes from Previous Meeting

16. Group Information The Board noted the following minutes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• TAG Minutes, add in date• Audit Committee Minutes, 27th August 2020• DISC Minutes, 27th August 2020• Staffing Sub Committee, 9th November 2020	Noted
17. Resolutions There were no resolutions to note. .	Noted
18. Notifiable Events The Board noted the update in relation to Notifiable Events.	Noted
21. Review of Meeting Board Members discussed the meeting and felt that it had gone well and that there had been good discussions and focus where required. Derek McGowan thanked management for the quality of reports.	
Date of Next Meeting – 27th January 2021	