

**West of Scotland Housing Association
Minutes of the Board Meeting
Hybrid Meeting via Microsoft Teams and Camlachie Boardroom
Wednesday 27th March 2024**

<p>Present (In Person): Alison Calder (Chair), Elaine Davidson Ann Reid, Jim Williamson, Karen Merz, Kenneth Fee, Michael Sozansky, Nick Farrell (from 17.55 pm)</p> <p>Present (Online): Paul MacNeil (until 18.39 pm), Graeme Middleton, George Kpodo (from 18.04 pm)</p> <p>In Attendance (In person): Brian Gannon (CEO), Jennifer Cairns (Director of Corporate Services), Valerie Wilson (Director of Finance), Susan Speirs (Senior Corporate Service Assistant)</p> <p>In Attendance (Online): Robert Campbell (Director of Housing & Community Services)</p> <p>Apologies: Nicola Wason, Kelly Adams</p>	
<p>Disclosure of Interests Staff will leave the meeting for item 16.</p>	
<p>1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting The minutes of the previous meeting of 28th February 2024 were approved as a true and accurate record. They were approved by Karen Merz and seconded by Michael Sozansky</p>	Approved
<p>2. Matters Arising The Board noted that the review of the Staff KBO was included in the board brief for this meeting.</p>	Noted
<p>3. Digital & IT Strategy The Director of Corporate Services gave a presentation on the Digital & IT Strategy. She advised that the strategy was first developed in 2020 and was reviewed again in 2022 and outlined the progress that has been made so far. The Director of Corporate Services advised that this is a two year strategy and that the board will be provided with an annual report on the progress of this. In addition a quarterly report will be given to the Audit Sub-Committee.</p> <p>Nick Farrell joined the meeting at this point.</p> <p>Elaine Davidson advised that this was a good report but that there was a lot to take in.</p> <p>The Director of Corporate Services advised that the strategy captures the key areas that we need to work on.</p>	

<p>Jim Williamson asked how we keep up to date with technology. The Director of Corporate Services advised that the SFHA have a networking group which holds quarterly meetings and that the IT Manager attends these.</p> <p>Michael Sozansky asked if we had an integrated IT phone system. The Director of Corporate Services confirmed that we do.</p> <p>George Kpodo joined the meeting at this point.</p> <p>Nick Farrell asked if we need more resources going forward. The Director of Corporate Services advised that we are currently carrying out a resource review at the moment. We have gaps around data analysis, but we have applied for funding for a data analysis student over the summer. We are currently waiting on the outcome of this application.</p> <p>The Board approved the new Digital & IT Strategy for 2024-2026.</p>	<p>Action</p> <p>Approved</p>
<p>4. Preparation for Assurance Statement</p> <p>The Director of Corporate Services provided the Board with the background to the assurance statement. She advised that the SHR has recently reviewed the Regulatory Framework and she outlined the key changes to this framework.</p> <p>The Governance Improvement Plan was approved by the Board in September 2023 and 59% of the actions in this plan have been completed.</p> <p>The Director of Corporate Services advised that we are trying to get tenants more involved in this process. The Customer Service & Engagement Team Leader will discuss this at the TAG meeting on 28th March and the Director of Corporate Services will report back to the board on this.</p> <p>As in previous years, a SLWG has been set up to look at the process and our compliance in more detail. If any board member is interested in joining this group then they should let the Director of Corporate Services or Senior Corporate Services Assistant know. The Director of Corporate Services also outlined the timetable for the assurance statement process.</p> <p>Jim Williamson advised that he would be interested in joining this group.</p> <p>The Board approved the proposed process to prepare the Annual Assurance Statement.</p>	<p>Action</p> <p>Approved</p>
<p>5. KPI Target Setting 2024/25</p>	

The CEO advised the Board that the Association has to collect and report on our performance to the Regulator. He advised that this paper sets out the work that has been undertaken to finalise our targets for the year. He also advised that these targets were discussed at the Team Performance Review sessions and approved by the CMT before being presented to the Board. The CEO also advised that the Association is a member of two benchmarking groups.

Jim Williamson asked how many new tenancies we have a year. The Director of Housing & Community Services advised that we have on average about 250 new tenancies a year.

Karen Merz asked why we have a target of 28 days for ASB cases. The Director of Housing & Community Services explained that this was a locally agreed target.

The Board approved the Key Performance Indicator Targets for 2024/25.

Approved

6. Write Offs – Q3 & Q4

The Director of Housing & Community Services presented this report and advised that these write offs are for the last two quarters of the year.

He explained that we have a process in place for chasing debt and also refunding money to tenants when they are in credit. Any debt over £2,000 has to be approved by the Board and under £2,000 approved by the CMT, in line with the Write Off Policy. A summary of the five cases over £2,000 is also provided.

Michel Sozansky asked how some of the cases has reached such a high level of debt and how does the process result in such different outcomes.

The Director of Housing & Community Services advised that cases are taking a lot longer to go through court and therefore the debt is increasing. He also advised that there have been government restrictions on the level of arrear you can pursue in court and that tenants appear to be struggling with their income/debts, even more than before.

Michael Sozansky asked how we try and trace individuals who have arrears. The Director of Housing & Community Services advised if we have a forwarding address then we can trace them this way but in other cases we do not have this information. If a former tenant was to reapply for housing then we may be able to pursue them for any outstanding money owed. He also advised that

<p>we had inherited some cases from CCHA with limited information to pursue.</p> <p>Alison Calder asked how we help tenants in arrears. The Director of Housing & Community Services noted that our Income Maximisation Officers will assist tenants and that we also have a Welfare Rights Team who help with benefits and debts advice.</p> <p>The Board approved the write off of 5 former tenant rent arrears where the arrears exceed £2,000 to the value of £20,584.38 and also noted the rest of the write-offs detailed in the report.</p>	<p>Approved & Noted</p>
<p>7. Board Brief</p> <p>The CEO advised that as Paul McCandlish has resigned from the Board we are looking to recruit a new general Board member who is also able to sit on the Audit Committee. We are looking to recruit a younger person who has an interest in audit, compliance, risk management and governance and also a willingness to join the Audit Committee.</p> <p>The Board approved the recruitment on the above basis.</p> <p>The Board approved the minor changes to the Board Member Role Description and Chair Role Description.</p> <p>The Regulator will issue the new Engagement Plan for the Association on the 2nd April. This will be distributed to the Board when we receive it.</p> <p>The KBO in respect of staff has been amended and the final version of the CBP will be emailed to all Board members after the meeting.</p>	<p>Approved</p> <p>Approved</p> <p>Action</p>
<p>8. Communications Strategy Update</p> <p>The Director of Corporate Services presented this report and advised that it gives an update on activities over the last year.</p> <p>The Board noted this report and thanked our PR & Communications Officer for an excellent report.</p>	<p>Noted</p>
<p>9. Annual Data Management Report</p> <p>The Director of Corporate Services presented this report.</p> <p>She advised that there have been four data breaches this year which is the same as last year. None of the breaches were reportable to the information commissioner.</p>	

<p>There have been seven subject access requests compared to four last year. There have been eight FOI requests which is up from three the previous year.</p> <p>All requests have been responded to within the appropriate timescales.</p> <p>The Director of Corporate Services advised that a personal data audit has been completed and the next steps will be to develop a Records Management Plan.</p> <p>Nick Farrell asked if we know who puts in a FOI request. The Director of Corporate Services advised that none of the FOI requests received were anonymous.</p> <p>The Board noted the contents of this report.</p>	<p>Noted</p>
<p>10. Annual Equalities & Human Rights Report</p> <p>The Director of Corporate Services presented this report. She advised that this is the first annual report and that it provides an update on where we are with each of the objectives.</p> <p>She advised that we have collected equalities data for 62% of our tenants. Alerts have also been put on the system so that if a staff member is speaking to a tenant they can ask for the equalities data if we don't have it.</p> <p>Michael Sozansky noted that on the cover report it should read for noting rather than for approval.</p> <p>George Kpodo queried the figure of 8.5% for BAME and asked if there was any strategy for increasing the % and if there are any plans to increase diversity.</p> <p>The Director of Corporate Services advised that this number could increase if we collect more data from tenants.</p> <p>The Director of Housing & Community Services advised that before the CCHA transfer the figure was 2% so we are now in a better position than previously. He provided an overview of the allocation process and advised further information on this would be provided in the Lettings Strategy which will come to the Board in May.</p> <p>The Board noted the contents of this report.</p>	<p>Noted</p>
<p>11. Annual Stakeholder Report</p> <p>The Director of Corporate Services presented this report. She advised that this report gives an update on the status of the relationships and activities with our key stakeholders.</p>	<p>Noted</p>

<p>Michael Sozansky pointed out that on the cover report it should read for noting and not for approval.</p> <p>The Board noted this report.</p>	
<p>12. Audit Committee Annual Report The Director of Corporate Services presented this report. She advised that this report outlines the activities of the Audit Committee over the last year.</p> <p>The Director of Corporate Services advised that a review of the effectiveness of the risk management process was carried out by the Audit Committee. It was not included in the annual report as it was only done in March. Assurance has been provided to the board of the effectiveness of the process. This will now be carried out in November each year and included in the annual report.</p> <p>The Board noted this report.</p>	Noted
<p>13. Resolutions The Board noted this report.</p>	Noted
<p>14. Notifiable Events The Board noted this report.</p>	Noted
<p>15. Group Information</p> <p>The Board noted the following information:-</p> <p>Willowacre Trust Board Minutes – 20.02.2024 Audit Sub-Committee Minutes – 04.03.2024</p>	Noted
<p>AOCB The Director of Corporate Services advised that an email had been sent out regarding renewal of the SHN Membership.</p> <p>The Board approved the renewal of the SHN Membership.</p> <p>Michael Sozansky asked when the repeat TSS will be carried out. The CEO advised that this will be done in the summer.</p>	Approved
<p>Review of Meeting</p> <p>The Chair advised that the meeting had gone well.</p> <p>The meeting ended at 7.15 pm.</p>	
<p>16. EVH Pay Award Ballot The staff left the meeting at this point.</p>	
<p>Date of next meeting – 24th April 2024</p>	

