

**West of Scotland Housing Association
Minutes of the Board Meeting
Held by Video Conference
Wednesday 30th September 2020, 5.30pm**

<p>Present: Ruth Simpson (Chair), Clare Newton, Nick Farrell, Kelly Adams, Ann Reid, Derek McGowan, Irene Campbell, Elaine Davidson, George Kpodo, Christine Musasa</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; Alistair Reid, Customer Engagement Officer (In Part); Lynne Clark and Margaret Storrie, Scrutiny Panel (In Part); Brendan McGeever, Housing Manager (In Part); Maisie O'Brien, Community & Support Services Manager (In Part)</p> <p>Apologies: Paul McNeil, Paul McCandlish, Ryan Docherty and John Shearer, John Muir</p>	
<p>Appointment of Office Bearers. The Director of Corporate Services opened the meeting and advised that after the AGM the Board required to elect our Office Bearers. As agreed previously as part of a Board Succession Plan report, Kelly Adams accepted the position of Chairperson, following on from Ruth Simpson after 5 years. The Board are delighted that Ruth is remaining a Board member. Clare Newton and Irene Campbell accepted the positions of Vice Chairperson. The Director of Corporate Services remain as the Association's Secretary.</p>	
<p>Disclosure of Interests None.</p>	
<p>1. Approval of the minutes of the 24th June 2020 The minutes from the meeting held on 26th August 2020 were approved.</p>	Approved
<p>2. Matters Arising The Board received an update on actions arising from the previous Board meeting on the 26th August 2020. The Director of Development & Asset Management gave an update on progress with procurement of a new Reactive & Voids Repair Contract. He advised that a 7-day notice would have to be issued for the Board to approve the appointment of the new service provider to meet tender process requirements. All other updates were noted.</p>	Noted Action
<p>3. Scrutiny Annual Report The Customer Engagement Officer and Lynne Clark and Margaret Storrie attended the Board meeting to present the Scrutiny Annual Report to the</p>	

Board. They advised the Board that the annual report had been a recommendation from the internal audit on Scrutiny. They outlined the work that they had done over the past year, highlighting that some of the areas that they had been looking at had been impacted by the Coronavirus situation. They outlined the plans for the next year including the recruitment of new members and communicating to the wider tenant group. The Chair thanked them for the report and explained to the Board that while it is up to the scrutiny group what areas they review; the Board can also suggest to them areas that they would like reviewed. She explained that it would be good for the panel to look into Repairs Right First time at a future date but acknowledged that we would be starting a new contract next year so this would be not the right time.

Ann Reid raised that something needed to be done about Grounds Maintenance as we are still receiving a very poor service from our contractor. It was acknowledged that the scrutiny group had looked at this previously and had been involved in the procurement but that the service provider have not delivered what they had committed to as part of the procurement process.

The Director of Housing & Community Services advised that they are in discussions with the Service Provider re the termination of the contract and therefore it is likely that they will be re-procuring the contract. It was agreed that it would be beneficial to involve tenants in this procurement and also the current clerk of works.

Nick Farrell raised that we may need to pay more for this service to get a better service. Kelly Adams raised that it might be better to have a higher quality ratio for the procurement. The Director of Corporate Services advised that the quality/price ratio had been 60/40 but that we needed to be mindful of increasing the cost significantly as the cost of this service is charged back to tenants as a service charge.

The Chair thanked the scrutiny panel for attending and the work that they have done over the past year. She reminded the Board that they should feedback if there are any areas that they feel would be beneficial for the scrutiny group to look at over the year.

4. Place Standard Action Plan Update

The Community & Support Services Manager attended the meeting to provide the Board with an update in relation to the Place Standard Action Plan. She outlined the consultation that had been carried out in the Cowlairs/Springburn area and the results of this. She then explained to the Board how the priorities were identified and what the next steps would be in relation to implementing the action plan to address the priority areas. She also advised the Board that the Development Team are also involved in the plans for the regeneration of Cowlairs Park which will link with these priorities; in particular an opportunity to deliver a community facility which as a key priority in the report. She emphasised the importance of working

<p>with partners as some of the issues arising from the consultation are out with our control so there is a requirement to take a partnership approach.</p> <p>She went on to explain that there are many opportunities to build on employment opportunities for people in the area and explained how the Cowlares Development Trust would be used as a vehicle for funding.</p> <p>Ruth Simpson asked if the three local councillors were involved. The Community Support Services Manager advised that this would happen in the next stage.</p> <p>Ann Reid stated that she thought it was an excellent report and raised how much of an issue dog fouling is in areas.</p> <p>The Board noted the report and approved the priorities outlined in the report.</p> <p>The Community Support Manager also updated the Board on successful funding bids totalling £325k to cover Barrowfield Community Centre staff costs, overheads and the provision of our much need youth services and debt advice services. The Board congratulated Maisie and her team.</p>	<p>Approved</p>
<p>5. Fielden Street Lettings Plan</p> <p>The Housing Services Manager attended the meeting to advise the Board of proposed changes to the Lettings Plan for the new build development in Fielden Street. He explained that plan had been previously agreed by the Board but that it had recently been revised and required Board approval for the changes. He outlined the changes; the key changes being changing the wording to allow all our tenants to be considered for a transfer to the new build, not just those staying in Camlachie, and to increase lets to homeless families in line with the Scottish Government and local authority priorities.</p> <p>George Kpodo asked if there is any inclusion in the plans in relation to immigrants. The Housing Services Manager advised that there are a number of people from different ethnic groups on our waiting list but that there is no category in plan in respect of this. George asked what percentage of our waiting list are immigrants. The Housing Services Manager advised that he does not have this information to hand but will feed this back to the Board.</p> <p>The Board approved the changes to the Local Lettings Plan for Fielden Street.</p>	<p>Action</p> <p>Approved</p>
<p>6. Review of Housing Services Policies – Abandonment and Decant Policies</p> <p>The Director of Housing & Community Services outlined the changes that were being made to the Abandonment and Decant Policies following a recent policy review.</p>	

Kelly Adams asked why the amount had been increased for a decant allowance. The Director of Housing & Community Services explained that an decant allowance would usually be lower than this but that it would be beneficial to increase the maximum amount to allow more flexibility around decant costs as there have been occasions where the costs have exceeded £400. He advised that there would be an authorisation process put in place in relation to decant costs.

The Board approved the policy changes to the Abandonment and Decant Policies.

Approved

7. Homelessness Referrals and Under Occupancy

The Director of Housing & Community Services advised the Board of recent correspondence that had been received from Glasgow City Council in respect of homelessness referrals whereby they are asking for 90% of offers, net of transfers, to be made to homeless referrals. He presented a report which outlined the request from the council and the issues that arise from this request. However, he also highlighted the importance of working with the council as a partner. He advised the Board that he had spoken to TAG in relation to this and the tenants had raised concerns about the request. He advised the Board that the City Council are only asking for this until the end of March 2021 but that is likely in his experience that the arrangement could exceed this timescale.

Derek McGowan highlighted that there was a national focus on homelessness, and it was a highly political issue and there is a need to do the right thing. However, he also explained that there are financial implications and that often people who have been homelessness require additional support to sustain their tenancy which is often not available. He said that he thought it was a difficult decision for the Board to make.

Irene Campbell stated that the report was well written and that she has strong beliefs about the importance of mixed communities and that there is an issue of housing large numbers of people who have been homeless in areas where there is a high turnover of voids. She advised that in principle we should support working with the council to help house homeless people with out a doubt but it can put a strain on housing management and there can be a financial impact if there is not the right support in place. She highlighted that there needed to be a more strategic approach to homelessness referrals.

The Chair summarised that the Board are fine with principal but have concerns about committing to 90%.

Irene Campbell stated that 90% is not achievable and that she felt that we would need to consult with our waiting list applicants in order comply with legislation.

Post meeting note: As we are not making a permanent change to the rules of our Allocation Policy there is no requirement for further consultation.

<p>Kelly Adams queried the timescales that this would be until the end of March 2021. Robert Campbell clarified this but said that it could be longer than this.</p> <p>Ruth Simpson felt that “flipping” flats (where temporary furnished flats be made a permanent let) should be included in the overall percentage.</p> <p>Derek McGowan said that whatever we commit now in principle could well be extended as Glasgow City Council have a significant homelessness problem. He said he does have a concern around the 90% target.</p> <p>Ann Reid said she has no issue with WSHA housing homeless people as this is what we should be doing but she feels that 90% is too high.</p> <p>Elaine Davidson referred back to the session that some Board Members had attended at Thenu HA and this had been discussed but it was a lower percentage.</p> <p>Kelly Adams said that she agreed that we should be doing this but not at this percentage.</p> <p>Irene Campbell said that we should not commit to a percentage when we write back to the council and if we did we would need to consult with our waiting list. She proposed the letter should say that we commit to this in principle rather than agree to a percentage.</p> <p>The CEO noted that when the target for homeless lets was 50% GCC struggled to meet this so he had some doubt about their capacity to deliver their objective.</p> <p>It was agreed that a letter would be drafted stating that the Board agreed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support in principal the request to aim for 90% of offers net of transfers • Allocate two-bedroom properties to single homeless referrals where supported supported by Discretionary Housing payments and • Agree to “flip” temporary furnished flats leased to GCC to permanent tenancies. <p>The letter will be circulated round the Board for feedback before it is sent.</p>	<p>Approved</p> <p>Action</p>
<p>8. Preparation for Assurance Statement – Areas of Improvement</p> <p>The Director of Corporate Services presented a paper on the areas of improvement have been identified through the work to prepare for the assurance statement.</p> <p>The Board considered each of the high priority areas of improvement that had been identified and considered whether they were of material noncompliance based on the criteria set by the SHR.</p>	

Irene Campbell queried that the Group Scheme of Delegation was not included on the agenda for this Board Meeting. The Director of Corporate Services apologized for this and advised that it will be on the agenda for the October Board meeting therefore the Board will be able to review this before submitting their assurance statement.

The Board concluded that none of the areas identified were of material noncompliance and that there were areas of improvement only.

Irene Campbell queried whether the pension review should be considered as an area of noncompliance. The Board considered this and agreed that it wasn't as we had followed the correct notifiable event procedure in respect of the grievance process and are keeping the SHR up to date with this process.

The Board approved the areas of improvement identified and agreed that they were not materially non-compliant. They agreed that pending the approval of the Group Scheme of Delegation.

Irene Campbell asked if the recent guidance from the SHR in relation to Covid 19 and the assurance statement had been considered by management.

The Director of Corporate Services advised that she was not aware of this guidance and it was agreed that Irene Campbell would send this after the meeting.

Post Meeting Note: The Director of Corporate Services reviewed the guidance and emailed the Board to advise that the impact of Covid on compliance had been considered as part of the review of compliance with the regulatory standards and requirements and there was no impact on compliance, this has been included in previous Board reports but she will summarise this in the October Board paper. The other aspect to consider was the impact of Covid on the assurance statement process and there has been no impact on the process and we will confirm this in our assurance statement that is to be submitted to the SHR.

**Approved
Action**

**Action
Action**

9. RSL Acquisition Framework

The Chief Executive gave an overview of the history of the development of the RSL Acquisition Framework and highlighted that this was an action from our Corporate Business Plan. He advised that this report would put WSHA in a stronger position should an opportunity to acquire another RSL present itself that met our strict criteria for growth.

He outlined the framework and asked the Board for approval for CMT to register an interest in an acquisition opportunity based on the scoring matrix that has been developed. He confirmed that the decision to submit a bid would remain at Board level. The purpose of the scoring matrix is to allow CMT to register interest as this often needs to be done within a quick

<p>timescale. He advised that the next stage for us is to develop a bid document which we can turnaround quickly if we are in a position where we are going to submit a bid if approved by the Board.</p> <p>Irene Campbell queried whether WSHA were able to invest in another RSL.</p> <p>Irene Campbell highlighted that this might not be the best point in time for WSHA to be acquiring another RSL and also that they are not necessarily in a position to invest in another RSL.</p> <p>The Chief Executive agreed that where significant investment was required as part of a bid document, WSHA could not compete with some of the larger national RSLs but for smaller RSLs we are in a much stronger position in respect of our tenant engagement and other areas where we have higher levels of tenant satisfaction.</p> <p>The Board approved the our RSL acquisition framework and matrix and give authority to the CMT to submit expressions of interest where they meet our Criteria for Growth.</p>	<p>Approved</p>
<p>10. Willowacre Trust Articles</p> <p>The Director of Corporate Services presented the revised Articles of Association for Willowacre Trust. She advised the Board that the Willowacre Trust Board had recently reviewed and updated their articles to ensure that they were in line with the most up to date Companies House Model. She outlined changes to the articles which were minor and not material and also advised the Board that our legal advisors have reviewed the articles to ensure that they meet the SHR constitutional requirements.</p> <p>The Board approved the revised Articles.</p>	<p>Approved</p>
<p>11. Nationwide Amendment Agreement</p> <p>See enclosed extract Minute as agreed with Nationwide.</p> <p>Nick Farrell queried why WSHA were having to pay for our solicitor's fees to process what was a request by Nationwide. The Director of Corporate Services noted that due to original agreements being made under the former Dunfermline Building Society it was difficult to make a strong case to challenge this.</p> <p>Kelly Adams queried whether this had any impact on lender covenants. The Director of Corporate Services noted that was an administrative tidy up in paperwork only.</p>	<p>Noted and approved.</p>
<p>12. Board Briefing</p> <p>The Chief Executive presented the Board Briefing. He highlighted to the Board that the sale of Netherlee House has been concluded. He outlined the Healthy Working Lives Activities which had taken place and those planned for the next few months. He highlighted the positive customer satisfaction results in respect of how WSHA has responded to the Covid situation.</p>	

<p>He advised the Board that a factored owners forum was being established following a customer satisfaction survey and that their first meeting was early October. The purpose of the forum is to develop a Customer Engagement Strategy for factored owners.</p> <p>The Chief Executive outlined a proposal to give staff a half day annual leave for Christmas shopping this year to recognise how difficult this year has been and as there will not be a Christmas lunch. The Board approved this.</p>	Approved
<p>13. Staff Engagement Plan Update The Director of Corporate Services provided the Board with an update on progress made on the Staff Engagement Plan. She advised the Board that 63% of actions had been completed and that all actions bar the 3 which had been postponed due to Covid will be completed before the next Staff Engagement Survey in February 2021.</p>	Noted
<p>14. TAG Minutes, 25th August 2020 The Board noted the minutes from the TAG meeting on the 25th August 2020.</p>	Noted
<p>15. Resolutions The Board noted the documents signed and the use of 7 Day Rule as detailed in the report.</p>	Noted
<p>16. Notifiable Events The Board noted the update in relation to Notifiable Events.</p>	Noted
<p>17. A.O.C.B Nick Farrell raised the importance of organic growth and how we can acquire other stock not just through new build. He raised that he feels it is important to be reviewing the assets of the Association. The Chief Executive advised the Board that staff are working on a range of documents to fully develop our plans for growth and consolidation. He noted that there is a working group currently in place developing a Disposal Strategy which will come to the Board. He also reminded the Board that this will be a Key Business Objective of next year's Corporate Business Plan. He also advised the Board that CMT will be reviewing the draft Development Strategy at a forthcoming Board meeting and this will come to DISC in the first instance.</p>	Noted
<p>18. Review of Meeting Board Members discussed the meeting and felt that it had gone well. Derek McGowan commented that the quality of the papers was high and passed on thanks to the relevant officers.</p>	
<p>Date of Next Meeting – 28th October 2020</p>	