

**WHEATLEY HOMES EAST
MINUTE OF BOARD MEETING
held on Thursday 21 September 2023
New Mart Road, Edinburgh**

Members Present: Alastair Murray (Chair), Mark Keane, Jane Menzies, Judith MacGlashan, Anne McGovern, Heather Macnaughton, Jack Cadell.

In Attendance: Hazel Young (Group Director of Housing and Property), Laura Henderson (Managing Director), Stephen Wright (Director of Governance), Lyndsay Brown (Director of Financial Reporting), Alex Lamb (Head of Housing), Danny Lowe (Director of Group Repairs, Investment and Joint Venture – item 5, 7 and 11), Stephen Devine (Director of Assets and Sustainability – items 5 and 11), Elsepth Lang (Head of Development – item 8) and Jennifer Anderson (Wheatley 360 Lead – item 10)

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Ruth Kynoch and Helen Howden. The Chair confirmed the meeting as quorate.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Board noted the standing declarations. Jack Cadell informed the Board about a development project he was involved in that may require a decision at a future meeting. It was noted that Jack would not participate in decision-making in relation to that project.

3. Minute of previous meeting held on 17 August 2023 and action list

Decided: The Board approved the minutes of the above meeting.

4. Chair and Managing Director update

The Chair provided an overview of the activities of the Wheatley Group during the last month, including a site visit from Paul McLennan, Minister of Housing for Scotland. The Chair also provided an overview of the business considered by the Wheatley Group Board at its meeting in August.

5. Stock condition: reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) (verbal)

The Board received an update on RAAC. The Board was assured to note that following a comprehensive review of our asset records we were confident that RAAC was not used in our homes. It was further explained that the outcome of our analysis was consistent with the findings of other organisations in our sector.

Decided: The Board approved the Wheatley Homes East Strategy to 2026.

6. Winter resilience planning

The Board received an update on the approach to winter resilience planning for our business operations and customers experiencing hardship. The Board welcomed our proactive approach that would focus on supporting customers through the cost of living crisis, helping customers to pay their rent, managing and preparing for repairs demand, winter home checks, and infection prevention and control. The Board also discussed the importance of our enhanced focus on mould and dampness and our “see it, report it” campaign.

Decided: The Board noted the contents of the report.

7. Repairs and maintenance policy

The Board received an update on the updated Wheatley Homes East Repairs and Maintenance Policy and an update on progress with repairs service enhancements.

The Board noted the progress towards improving the repairs service, in particular through the introduction of ‘Book it, Track it, Rate it’. The Board further discussed areas for refinement in relation to repairs communication and noted that this was the subject of a thematic review by members of the Group Scrutiny Panel.

The board noted that repairs demand remains higher post-pandemic, which is consistent with the wider sector across the UK. Following the changes to the repairs service the Board considered that the strategy workshop in May 2024 would be a good time to carry out further analysis to determine whether the improvements had had the desired effect

Decided: The Board:

**1) noted the progress with repairs service enhancements; and
2) approved the updated Repairs and Maintenance Policy which remains within the wider Group framework.**

8. Development programme: mid-year update

The Board received an overview of our new build programme performance, including programme highlights.

The Board noted that there are continuing challenges in the sector in relation to cost to build, the review of housing for varying needs and the move to the Scottish passive house standard. The Board also noted that market conditions have improved to a degree with more stable labour availability.

The Board discussed progress with Wallyford phase 5 including financial performance for this re-programme project. The Board was pleased to note our commitment to the project and to the pipeline of development projects, each of which would provide a positive contribution to providing homes for those in housing need.

Decided: The Board noted the contents of the report.

9. Annual SHR assurance report

The Board received an update on the group-wide Annual Assurance Statement (“AAS”) which had been received and considered by the Group Board at its meeting on 30 August 2023.

The Board noted that following the self-assessment process and external review by Campbell Tickell, there were no areas of material non-compliance. It was noted that this reflected our strong focus on governance and compliance.

Decided: The Board noted the submission of the 2023 Annual Assurance Statement to the Scottish Housing regulator.

10. Hate Crime Policy

The Board received an overview of the newly designed Group Hate Crime Policy for discussion and comment prior to this being presented to the Group Board for approval.

The Board was provided with an update on the Scottish Government’s hate crime strategy for Scotland which had launched in March 2023 with a vision for *for a Scotland where everyone lives free from hatred and prejudice*.

The Board welcomed our focus on helping to manage Hate Crime in our communities, while also noting that the police will remain responsible for investigating and dealing with any instances of illegal behaviour. The Board noted that the policy is designed to support victims to be more confident in reporting instances of hate crime to us.

The Board also noted and welcomed the extensive engagement that had taken place with staff, customers, and external partners to ensure the policy was accurate, relevant, and fit for purpose.

The Board discussed the impact of hate crime on staff and was informed that any such behaviour targeted at staff would be dealt with under our Unacceptable Actions Policy.

Decided: The Board noted and commented on the Group Hate Crime Policy prior to it being presented to the Wheatley Group Board for approval.

11. Sustainability update

The Board received an update on progress toward our sustainability objectives agreed through our Group Sustainability Framework and the supporting Action Plan. The Board noted that the Framework was helping to shape delivery across our group in areas ranging from our investment in existing homes to the skills we are developing among our staff.

The Board discussed the challenges faced in relation to older tenemental properties including the associated cost to improve these. It was noted that while there were often technical solutions available for these properties, these solutions were currently cost-prohibitive. However, as technology is further developed then we expect to see costs reduce which would make deep retrofit more affordable to us.

Decided: The Board noted the progress update.

12. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion update

The Board received an update on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (“EDI”) activity across the group and progress with our Group EDI action plan, ‘*One Group, Many Voices*’, supporting the implementation of our Group EDI and Human Rights policy.

The Board noted that since the EDI action plan was agreed in November last year, Significant progress has been made with most actions now being complete or ongoing as business as usual.

The Board noted that the Group is in the development phase of the next iteration of the EDI action which will build on success to date and factor in the result of the TIDE assessment and information for the national census as it emerges.

Decided: The board noted the progress of Equality, Diversity and inclusion activity across the Group.

13. Governance update

The Board received an update on Board recruitment, including the proposed appointment of a new Board member. The Board also considered the group-wide modern slavery statement, that is also being made on our behalf, as well as an update on new charities legislation, Charities (regulation and Administration) (Scotland) Act; and

The Board discussed the proposed appointment of Martin Dorby, having regard to his skills and experience as well as our Board skills matrix.

Decided: The Board;

- 1) Approved Martin Dorby as a member of Wheatley Homes East;**
- 2) Approved the appointment of Martin Dorby as a Board member;**
- 3) Approved the schedule of meetings for 2024;**
- 4) Noted the Modern Slavery Statement, approved by the Group Board; and**
- 5) Noted the update on the new Charities (Regulation and Administration) (Scotland) Act 2023.**

14. AOCB

No other competent business

Signed:..... (Chair)