

**WHEATLEY HOMES EAST
MINUTE OF BOARD MEETING
held on Thursday 25 May 2023
New Mart Road, Edinburgh**

Members Present: Helen Howden (Vice Chair), Mark Keane, Jane Menzies, Judith MacGlashan, Anne McGovern, Heather Macnaughton

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), Lynsey Fotheringham (Head of Housing), Alex Lamb (Head of Housing), Lynne Mitchell, (Director of Wheatley Foundation)(item 6), Jennifer Anderson (Wheatley 360 Lead)(item 10), Lynsey Murray (Fire Safety Manager)(item 11)

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Alastair Murray, Jack Cadell and Ruth Kynoch. The Vice Chair assumed the role of chair and confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Board noted the standing declarations. No new declarations were made.

3. Minute of previous meeting held on 23 March 2023 and action list

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

4. Chair's update

It was noted that this would be circulated to the Board.

5. Managing Director updates

Managing Director updates were provided under the respective items.

6. Supporting our customers and communities

The Board received a report providing an update on the work of the Wheatley Foundation in 2022-23 and the additional support on offer to customers throughout the cost-of-living crisis. The Board also received an outline of the impact of the support and Foundation programmes on Wheatley Homes East customers.

The Board considered the report and the work of the Foundation in Wheatley Homes East including over 700 Here for You fund service requests since October 2022 including supermarket vouchers, rent payment support and fuel vouchers. In addition, it was noted that over £2.1m of financial gain had been secured as a result of interventions by the Foundation, including through the provision of welfare and fuel advice.

The Board welcomed the report and the reach of the Foundation, noting that it had supported approximately 36% of our customers. The Board asked that we continue to raise awareness of the services and support that customers can access, particularly amongst the most vulnerable.

Decided: The Board noted the activity undertaken throughout 2022-23 to support customers and communities

7. Partnership agreements

i. Edinburgh Affordable Housing Partnership Commitments

The Board received an update on a proposed agreement with City of Edinburgh Council and other members of the Edinburgh Affordable Housing Partnership Commitments (EAHP)

The Board considered the report and agreement, including how the commitments align with our own strategic commitments to address homelessness, continue to deliver affordable rents and new build properties that help to deliver on our shared commitments to net zero alongside our investment programme. It was noted that CEC and other EAHP members will be progressing through their respective governance arrangements prior to sharing the document with Scottish Government later in the summer. Until then, some modifications may be requested, although this version has been agreed by senior officials within each organisation.

Decided: The Board:

- 1) Considered and commented on the Edinburgh Affordable Housing Partnership commitments; and**
- 2) Agreed that we sign up to the commitments.**

ii. Homes for West Lothian

The Board received a report on our continued participation in the Homes for West Lothian Partnership. It was noted that the aim of the Council in establishing HfWLP had been to create a forum through which efficiency, best practice and innovation in the delivery of affordable housing can be coordinated and improved. It was also noted that our involvement in the partnership, and that of West Lothian Housing Partnership before it transferred to us, had provided a number of benefits, including our involvement in the Deans South development project.

The Board was informed about the operation and governance of the partnership. It was also explained that our contribution was through the delivery of our development programme in the West Lothian area, in line with our business plan rather than through payment of any monetary sums.

Decided: The Board

- 1) Approved our continued participation in the Homes for West Lothian Partnership; and**
- 2) Authorised any Group Executive Team member, our Managing Director, Director of Development and Regeneration, or the Company Secretary to sign the Homes for West Lothian Partnership Agreement.**

8. a) 2022/23 Annual return on Charter and year end performance

The Board received an update on our year-end performance for 2022/23 including:

- Draft Annual Return on Charter results for 2022/23, with approval sought for submission to the Scottish Housing Regulator
- Non-Charter strategic results and performance measures; and
- Delivery Plan strategic projects

The Board scrutinised the report and our performance across. The Board discussed in particular the continued high demand for repairs and discussed the performance measures. It was noted that the new “Book it, Track it, Rate it” application would help to improve customer experience. The Board discussed the role of repairs planners in helping to schedule repairs and noted that the new application would help improve our planning as it should reduce the number of no-access visits.

The Board was informed that through customer feedback we understood that there was a balance to be struck between (i) ensuring the quality of each repair and getting this right the first time versus (ii) the speed of initial response. As a consequence, the Board discussed and agreed to set target for repairs completion to 7 days.

The Board discussed performance in relation to rent arrears and sought assurance about the support we provided to customers, through our own teams as well as through the Wheatley Foundation. The Board emphasised the importance of ensuring that we support those who may be working but experiencing poverty as a consequence of the cost of living crisis.

Decided: The Board

- 1) Approved the draft Annual Return of the Charter results for submission to the Scottish Housing Regulator**
- 2) Noted the outturn year end performance against non-Charter measures and strategic project.**

b) 2023/24 Delivery Plan

The Board received a report which gave:

- An overview of the strategic projects contained within the Delivery Plan 2023/24 for Wheatley Homes East; and
- The proposed Wheatley Homes East specific key performance and targets 2022/23 for consideration and approval

It was noted that during 2022/23 there has been a focus on developing the infrastructure to enhance the amount of customer insight we can collect. It

was also explained that a new Customer Satisfaction tool was currently being piloted and that this would allow us to introduce a new measure for 2023/24 – Customer Satisfaction – which will become the principal performance measure for the Customer First Centre.

Decided: The Board

- 1) Noted the 2023/24 strategic projects and associated milestones**
- 2) Approved the proposed measure and corresponding targets for 2023/24.**

9. Complaint handling and performance

The Board received an update on our performance in dealing with and responding to complaints over the last year and the highlighted actions taken to learn from these complaints to improve our service to customers.

It was noted that through our new operating model and increased training we were ensuring complaints were being captured at all points in a customer journey which was giving us increased customer insight. The Board was informed about our approach to improving communications and our commitment to ensuring staff take ownership of resolving any customer issues early, to reduce the likelihood of them escalating to a complaint.

Decided: The Board noted the Complaint handling performance 2022/23 and the service improvement actions being taken.

10. Suicide Prevention Framework

The Board was provided an overview of the Group Suicide Prevention Framework.

The report and the support we have made available to customers was welcomed by the Board. The Board also recognised the importance of supporting our staff, particularly those who work in this area as it can be very challenging and traumatic. The Board was reassured by the support we provide to our teams. In addition, the Board also discussed the balance we require to strike between supporting customers and involving other specialist agencies where required.

Decided: The Board noted the Framework and its designation as a Group wide framework.

11. Fire Prevention and Mitigation

The Board received an update on the implementation of and performance of our Fire Prevention and Mitigation Framework (FPMF) in 2022/23 and more specifically:

- The current rate of Home Fire Safety Visits (PCRAs)
- The current rate of Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADFs)
- Progress with Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) Programmes
- Update on Fire Safety Legislation and Best Practice

The Board noted the slight increase in accidental dwelling fires from 8 to 9 but recognised that this remained a low number. The Board was informed about the particular incidents and the steps we had taken to support customers.

The Board was informed about the Scottish Government Technical Advice Note in relation to multistorey buildings. It was noted that we were initially looking at any properties over 18m but that we would then review our portfolio of 11-18m properties and then all others.

Decided: The Board

- 1) Noted the content of the report and progress with our Fire Prevention and Mitigation Framework, and**
- 2) Noted the revised Group FPMG (2023)**

12. Finance Report

The Board were provided with an overview of the management accounts for the year to 31 March 2023 and approval sought to submit the Loan Portfolio and FiveYear Financial Projections returns to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

It was noted operating expenditure was unfavourable to budget, driven by higher repairs and maintenance costs, mainly due to the higher level of customer demand for reactive repairs where there has been a 32% ytd increase in job numbers vs ytd 2019/20.

The Board recognised there was still a high demand for repairs and noted that we were taking steps to gain better intelligence and therefore better manage these.

Decided: The Board

- 1) Noted the management accounts for the year to 31 March 2023**
- 2) Approved the Loan Portfolio Submission and authorised these to be submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator, and**
- 3) Approved the Five Year Financial Projection and authorised the to be submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator**

13. Governance update

The Board were provided with an update on our membership policy, disposals and acquisitions for the year, and annual Board Member appraisal process.

The Board reviewed the disposals and acquisitions register and noted the proposed changes to the policy framework. In relation to a discussion on our properties more generally, the Board discussed our approach to investment in tenement stock where we are a minority owner in a block. It was agreed that we would review our approach for consideration at a future meeting.

Decided: The Board

- 1) Agreed that our pre-1919 strategy would be presented at future meeting and that a clean copy of our membership policy would be prepared and circulated.**
- 2) Noted the annual disposals and acquisitions register and agreed the changes on the disposals and acquisitions policy framework should be reflected in Wheatley Homes East policy (subject to Group Board approval)**
- 3) Noted the process to commence the annual Board Member appraisal process.**

14. Assurance update

The Board was provided with an update on the internal assurance work reported to the February and May Group Audit Committee meetings and the rolling Internal Audit Plan.

The Board welcomed the assurance report and confirmation that there were no matters of concern that required to be highlighted to the Board.

Decided: The Board noted the report.

15. AOCB

The Board was informed that the Group had maintained its A+ credit rating.

Signed:.....(Chair)