



## DUNEDIN CANMORE HOUSING LIMITED

### MEETING OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

8 New Mart Road

At 14.00 on 26 May 2022

Present: Mary Mulligan (Chair), Mark Keane, Helen Howden, Bryan Pitbladdo, Jack Cadell, Jane Menzies, Ruth Kynoch and Alastair Murray.

In Attendance: Hazel Young (Group Director of Housing and Property Management), Laura Henderson (Managing Director), Stephen Wright (Deputy Group Company Secretary), Alex Lamb (Head of Housing), Lyndsay Brown (Financial Controller -RSLs), Morgan English (Assistant Company Secretary), Lynne Mitchell (Wheatley Foundation Manager- item 4 only), Professor Paddy Gray (Wheatley Foundation Chair- item 4 only) and John Crooks (Director of Health and Safety- item 11 only)

#### 1. Apologies of absence

Apologies for absence were received from Jill Cronin and Anne McGovern. The Chair declared that a quorum was present.

#### 2. Declarations of Interest

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

#### 3. Minute of Meeting held on 26 March 2022 and Matters Arising

Bryan Pitbladdo requested his objection to a proposed change of company name be inserted at item 4 of the minute.

**Decided: The Board approved the minute of 26 March 2022 subject to the above amendment.**

#### 4. Wheatley Foundation – making a difference in our communities (presentation)

The Board received a presentation detailing the efforts that had been made by the Wheatley Foundation to support our customers, especially given the continuing impact of the pandemic.

The Wheatley Foundation achieved or succeeded in all their targets for the last year and supported our customers through initiatives such as Home Comforts, Wheatley Works and employability programmes, of which some were delivered in partnership with the City of Edinburgh Council. It was also noted that the EatWell model had adapted as demand increased and as a result had helped more customers than ever.

The Board discussed the achievements of the Foundation, and in particular welcomed the commitment to expanding services in the areas we serve, such as through partnering with local colleges to deliver digital inclusion programmes.

The Board was pleased with the ongoing support the Foundation had provided and was satisfied that our charitable body is constantly monitoring which funds are available in order to help our customers facing hardships.

**Decided: The Board noted presentation.**

## **5. East of Scotland partnership**

The Board received an update on the results of the WLHP tenant consultation on transferring to Dunedin Canmore Housing and the outcome of the due diligence exercise.

The Board discussed the positive results of the consultation and noted that of those who formally responded, 360 (98%) were in favour with 8 (2%) not being supportive. In particular, it was noted that WLHP tenants supported the rent offer and that the rent offer would also benefit our current customers too. It was confirmed the next stage of tenant consultation was to hold a ballot of WLHP customers.

The Board considered the highlights from the due diligence report, of which there were no concerns and was satisfied with the draft Business Transfer agreement. The Board also discussed the timing of the new build completions at WLHP's Almondvale development and that these would be leased to us as they are handed over by the developer in the period between the conclusion of the ballot and transfer (assuming the positive ballot response). The Board considered and approved the arrangement.

**Decided: The Board**

- 1) Noted the positive outcome of the WLHP tenant consultation and proposals to proceed to a tenant ballot;**
- 2) Noted the findings from the due diligence exercise and that the actions identified therein will be progressed;**
- 3) Provided feedback on the draft Business Transfer Agreement; and**
- 4) Agreed the proposed timescale and steps, as set out in 4.18 for progressing in the event of a positive ballot result.**
- 5) Agreed to lease the completed units at Almondvale from WLHP**

## 6. Allocations policy review

The Board received an update on the findings of the independent review by North Star consulting of our Group allocations process and policy. The Board noted that the Group was fully compliant with legislation and considered the ten functional / operational recommendations, such as reviewing our approach to communications with customers through Edindex.

The Board was informed of proposals to consult with tenants and applicants on the recommendations in order to identify priorities important to our customers.

The Board discussed the positive feedback received from the review regarding our customers' experience of using Edindex and the recommendations to improve this further. This included ensuring our customers know their housing options; ensuring our customers know the probability of them being allocated a home; and ongoing communications with customers, for example if they are unsuccessful.

The Board highlighted that online application is not suitable in all cases such as homelessness and was satisfied that in these cases, we were planning on expanding the property matching process that is used elsewhere in Group to improve the customer experience.

### **Decided: The Board**

- 1) Noted the findings and recommendation from the North Star Review;**
- 2) Noted the update on the DGHP and Homes4D&G review; and**
- 3) Agreed to consult with customers and stakeholders on the Group Housing Information Advice and Letting Policy and Framework**

## 7. 2021/22 year end performance and Annual Return on the Charter

The Board considered a report which provided our year end performance for 2021/22 including; our draft Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) results; our non-Charter strategic results and performance measures; Wheatley Solutions Business Excellence Framework (BEF) measures; and Delivery Plan strategic projects.

The Board scrutinised the report and was pleased with our overall performance especially with our rent arrears, average days to let, Customer First Centre and lets to homeless. The Board thanked staff for their efforts during the year despite the challenging environment. The Board also commended the wraparound services and emphasised the ongoing need to ensure we promote these to as wide an audience as we can.

The Board considered our repairs performance, noting that backlogs and difficulty in sourcing materials had impacted this and that we were reviewing our repairs approach.

## **Decided: The Board**

- 1) Approved the draft Annual Return on the Charter results for submission to the Scottish Housing Regulator;**
- 2) Delegated authority to the Group Director of Housing and Property to make any non-material updates to finalise the results prior to submission; and**
- 3) Noted the outturn year end performance against non-Charter measures and strategic projects.**

## **8. 2022/23 Delivery Plan and performance measures**

The Board received an overview of the strategic projects contained within our Delivery Plan for 2022/23 and the proposed measures and targets for approval. The Board considered the report and areas covered such as:

- Repairs: reducing complaints, the number of emergency repairs by 10% and enhancing customer convenience and control
- Customer First Centre: continuing to review and improve performance, evolving the technology platform and strategically developing our wider digital services offer
- Engagement: recruiting more customer voices and tenants involved in engagement and scrutiny
- Assets & Sustainability: introducing new measures for sustainability and energy efficiency as we work towards ESSH2

In particular, the Board look forward to the implementation of our repairs programme stream which will see us migrate to the Group Servitor system. This will enable us to progress with the development of an app to allow our customers to track their repairs journey and have more ownership of the process.

The Board also discussed our Universal Credit (UC) process and importance of our strategic partnership with the DWP as we expect to see an impact from an increase in UC claimants. As a result of the current challenging economic climate, the Group Board has agreed to reprofile our Group target to reduce gross rent arrears to 4.5% (previously 4%).

Overall, the Board felt the measures proposed were sensible, with pertinent indicators and focused projects that were relevant to the current economic climate.

## **Decided: The Board**

- 1) Noted and provided feedback on the 2022/23 strategic projects and associated milestones; and**
- 2) Approved the proposed measures and corresponding targets for 2022/23.**

## 9. Update on engagement framework

The Board received an update on the implementation of our Engagement Framework, *Stronger Voices*, *Stronger Communities* and our future planned engagement activities.

The Board was encouraged that we had already recruited 60% of our Customer Voices against our target of 250 by March 2023. The Board discussed the positive impact engagement events can have, such as Walkabouts and Customer Voices influencing community investment and priorities for their local areas. The Board was keen for our recruitment of Customer Voices to continue to be pushed to ensure we achieve our target.

### **Decided: The Board**

- 1) Noted the content of this report, engagement plan and provided any comment; and**
- 2) Approved that from the beginning of the new governance year Customer Voices will be invited to attend at the start of one in three Board meetings.**

## 10. A Customer First Centre update and initial review

The Board considered the update on the establishment of our Customer First Centre (“CFC”) since its internal launch on 1 December 2021 and details on the initial stages of its first independent review by Ennovate Consulting.

The Board reviewed the performance since launch and was impressed with the improvements already evidenced, for example:

- 90.29% of calls from our customers were answered within 30 seconds against a target of 80%;
- Call abandonment levels for our customers was 2.13% against a target of 7%;
- Our first contact resolution exceeded 92% against a target of 90%.

The Board discussed demand analysis and staffing, as well as customer communications for instance of planned outages through our social media channels. The Board welcomed further updates regarding the development and implementation of an Action Plan following the initial review.

### **Decided: The Board noted progress to date on our new CFC model.**

## 11. Fire prevention and mitigation update

The Board was provided with an update on the implementation and performance of our Fire Prevention and Mitigation Framework (“FPMF”) in 2021/22 including; the current rate of Accidental Dwelling Fires; the current rate of Home Fire Safety Visits; and progress with the Fire Risk Assessment programme,

The Board was pleased with the high standards achieved including a proactive increase in the number of home safety visits and reduction in accidental dwelling fires, which we have a strategic target of reducing by 10% over the life of the Group strategy. In the last year, we saw a reduction to 8 accidental dwelling fires from 9; 7 of these were minor kitchen fires associated with cooking.

The Board discussed the categorisation of minor and significant fires, which is determined by Scottish Fire and Rescue based on national guidelines. The Board also considered the differences in fire safety systems used in our different stock types which is determined at building design stage due to technical and fire regulations.

The Board also discussed the occurrence of false alarms, and it was confirmed that we would be recording these going forward to analyse possible recurring cases.

**Decided: The Board noted the contents of this report and the progress with our Fire Prevention and Mitigation Framework.**

## **12. Finance report**

The Board scrutinised the management accounts for the year to 31 March 2022 and the period to 30 April 2022, as well as the Five Year Financial Projections and Loan Portfolio returns for the Scottish Housing Regulator.

The Board discussed the accounts and projections in detail, and overall was satisfied. The Board acknowledged the increased spend in repairs and commented that this reprofiling of budget seemed to be having a positive impact. It was confirmed that we expect to see a return to a business as usual repairs spend within the 22/23 financial year. The Board was content that the projections took account of inflation rates and increased energy costs.

The Board was assured that the accounts would be continued to be monitored closely.

**Decided: The Board**

- 1) noted the management accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022 and the period to 30 April 2022 at Appendix 1;**
- 2) approved the loan portfolio submission in Appendix 2 and authorised this to be submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator and delegated to the Group Director of Finance authority to approve any factual data updates required to the data in advance of the submission; and**
- 3) approved the summary sheet and accompanying financial data and projections at Appendix 3 and authorised these to be submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator and delegated authority to the Group Director of Finance to undertake any factual data updates required to the data in advance of the submission.**

**13. AOCB**

The Board discussed the process for Chair recruitment and appointment. It was confirmed more information would be brought to the Board prior to the retiral of the Chair at the upcoming Annual General Meeting in September.

**I certify that the above minute has been approved as a true and accurate reflection of the proceedings.**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair

**Actions**

<b>No</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Status / due</b>