



**LORETTO HOUSING ASSOCIATION
MINUTE OF BOARD MEETING**

**Held on Monday 20 November 2023 at 2pm
at Wheatley House, Glasgow**

Directors Present: Eric Gibson (Chair), Lesley Bloomer, Jackie Brock, Gregor Dunlay, Alex McKay, Pauline Gilmore.

In Attendance: Laura Pluck, Group Director of Communities; Laura Henderson, Managing Director; Jonny Green, Head of Housing; Sarah Stocks, Finance Manager; Pauline Donald, Governance Business Partner.

and in part: Stephen Wright, Director of Governance (item 9)
Stuart Darroch - Director of Communications (item 10)
Kirsty Connolly - Senior Assurance Advisor (item 13)

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received for Archie Morrison and Suzanne Lavelle.

The meeting was confirmed as quorate.

2. Declarations of Interest

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

3. a) Minute of previous meeting held on 19 September 2023, matters arising and action list.

The Board reviewed the minute of the previous meeting and action list. No other matters arising were noted.

Decided: The Board approved the minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 September 2023.

b) Minute of AGM, 19 September 2023

The Board reviewed the minute of the AGM meeting.

Decided: The Board approved the minutes of the AGM meeting held on 19 September 2023.

4. Chair and Managing Director update

The Chair provided an overview of key items of business including:

- updates from recent Wheatley Group Board meeting and AGM
- current Group finance position and challenges
- completion status of Loretto Board Member appraisals
- completion of the Chair's appraisal by the Wheatley Group Board Chair
- attendance at the Wheatley Group 'Think Yes Together' Awards.

The Managing Director confirmed that an update on damp and mould as per the rolling action list will be provided at the February 2024 meeting.

5. Customer insight update

The Board received a presentation which provided an overview of the outcomes from the recent CSE Assessment and our ongoing insight from customer engagement, complaints and compliments and real-time feedback.

The Board commended the achievements reported and noted the exceptionally positive feedback received from the Assessor. The Board also noted the review of lessons learned, the positive improvement actions taken as a result as well as the proposed next steps.

The Board was advised that an update on the new build defect process will be provided at the next Board meeting as part of the development report. The Board also noted the planned improvements in our digital systems which will continue to consider that non-digital alternatives remain available to those customers who may require different options.

Decided: The Board noted the report.

6. 2024-25 rent setting and service charges

The Board was provided with a report on the 2024/25 rent and general service charge increases for initial focus group discussion and which also set out proposals for engagement and consultation with Loretto tenants on rent increase options.

The Board recognised that proposals must be cognisant of the economic climate, our future obligations in relation to building compliance and the need to meet the increased tenant demand for reactive repairs.

The Board discussed the range for the rent increase and where within this range we will consult on in December; which will take account of the most up-to-date information available at that time. Confirmation was provided to the Board that every tenant will be consulted on the 2024-25 rent and service charge proposals.

On review of the rent consultation booklet, the Board recommended that the key messages to tenants clearly articulated that our rent increases have remained low due to operational efficiencies across our Group structure and focussed investments in tenant's homes. The Board also suggested that options under the rent proposals reflect examples of direct benefits to tenants and that

management costs are noted as 'average' costs per home. It was agreed also that the Board will receive further detail (mid-year) on affordability in terms of the percentage of tenants whose rent is higher than 40% of net income, how many and how we have supported these tenants.

The Board:

- 1) Approved the rent and service charges increase range of 6.9%-7.9% for initial consultation with focus groups, with additional options of +0.5% and +1% to be discussed as part of this, on the basis of funding additional investment in tenants' homes;**
- 2) Noted that, following the Group Board meeting in December, the Board will be updated on the final options for the all-tenant consultation (i.e. where in the 6.9%-7.9% range) on 20 December 2023; and**
- 3) Noted that the final decision on the rent and service charge increase will be made by this Board in February, following feedback from the tenant consultation process.**

7. [redacted]

8. Performance report

The Board received an update on performance delivery against targets and strategic projects for 2023/24 as of the end of Q2 and sector comparisons for the Annual Return on the Charter indicators following the publication of 2022/23 sector wide data by the Scottish Housing Regulator.

The Board noted that performance results, and the position to Q2, compare very favourably to the confirmed Scottish averages for a number of key charter indicators such as days to let, arrears and time to complete emergency repairs.

The Board also noted strong performance for 2023/24 in several key areas, namely: arrears, days to let, lets to homeless, tenancy sustainment, new build, emergency repairs, adaptation completion timescales and sickness absence.

The Board considered the update on complaints handling and requested that future reports detail the number of complaints at Stage 1 and Stage 2.

The Board noted the reported position in relation to non-emergency repairs and received assurance that regular monthly review meetings take place with City Building to continuously monitor and improve timescales.

Decided: The Board noted the Performance report.

9. Governance update

The Board received an update on the status of recruitment and succession planning as well as the Scottish Housing Regulator (“SHR”) consultation on its Regulatory Framework.

The Board noted the vacancy position and the immediate requirement to recruit a new Board Member as well as the requirement to fill an existing vacancy. The Board was advised that Board Member interviews are now taking place.

The Board also noted the update on the status of our tenant board member pathway programme which will support us to appoint new tenant board members by September 2024; ensuring greater tenant representation on our Board.

The Board received and noted their support to the SHR’s proposed changes to its regulatory framework and considered that these will enhance the framework for the benefit of the sector.

Decided: The Board noted the report.

10. Group Social Media Policy

The Board received a report on the updated Group Social Media Policy, approved by the Group Board on 27 September 2023. The Board was advised that the policy applies to Board Members; Board Members should therefore ensure they are familiar with the guidance set out in the policy.

The Board noted that the policy had been updated to reflect new channels, larger social media presence, increase in followers, higher levels of customer engagement and reflected the importance placed on digital communications in the current five-year strategy.

Decided: The Board noted the updated Social Media Policy.

11. Finance report

The Board received an overview of the management accounts for the period to 30 September 2023 and Q2 forecast for 2023/24 and noted the amendments to WF1 Loan arrangements.

Decided: The Board:

- 1) Noted the Finance Report for the period ended 30 September 2023 and Q2 forecast at Appendix 1:**
- 2) Approved the amendments to the borrowing arrangements through the approval of the formal legal minute appended to this report: and**
- 3) Approved delegation of authority to any WFL1 director to make non-material changes and to agree the final form of the lender documentation on behalf of Loretto Housing.**

12. Risk register

The Board received a report on the proposed changes to the Risk Register.

The Board noted that five risks are outwith risk appetite, there are no risks with high inherent or residual risk scores that have not been reviewed by management; and a further five risks were highlighted for Board consideration.

Decided: The Board approved the updates in the report.

13. [redacted]

14. AOCB

No other business was raised.

Signed:.....

(Chair)