



## Board Meeting Minutes

**Meeting:** Special Board Meeting      **Location:** Saracen House / Microsoft Teams  
**Date:** 26 October 2021      **Time:** 4.30pm

**Attendees:** J Thorburn JT (Chair), C Rossine CR, I Cross IC, M Thomson MT,  
J Berrington JB, G Satti GS, P Nelson, A Gow AG, M Grimley MG,  
F Malcolm FM, J Kennedy JK

**Apologies:** M Lam  
J Macleod

**In Attendance:** J Devine (CEO), B Hartness (DCEO FIN) BH,  
T Sweeney (DCS) TS, L Cooper (DHS) LC

██████████ (Mulholland Housing Consultancy) – left after item 3(a)

**Minute Taker:** C Murray CM (PA)

	Agenda	Action	Date
1.	Apologies		
	As above		
2.	Declaration of Interest and Attendance		
	As above.		
3.	Governance Self-Assessment Process 2021		
a.	External Validation of Self-Assessment Process		
	For the benefit of new Board Members present the Chair advised of the purpose of the annual self-assessment as a requirement of the Regulator and provided some background on work that has been done since it was implemented two years ago.  TS echoed what the Chair said and introduced ██████████ as the external consultant who carried out an audit on ng homes compliance		

against the seven regulatory standards and invited [REDACTED] to present his report and answer any questions the Board might have.

[REDACTED] reminded Members that in recent years he has worked with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] referred to his report which outlined the background of the process which ng homes started prior to the Annual Assurance Statement coming into effect. [REDACTED] drew Members attention to point 3.3 of his report which shows that ng homes fully comply with all of the standards.

[REDACTED] commented that although ng homes are fully compliant on all areas against the regulatory standards [REDACTED] highlighted eight areas for ng homes to focus on and went through each of them as detailed in his report - Board and Governance; Landlord Health and Safety; Subsidiaries relationship with the Association; Tenant Interest and participation and consultation; Financial Management and Risk; Viability; Equalities and Diversity and Cyber Security. [REDACTED] commented that although he is providing Members the assurance that ng homes are compliant, he stressed the importance of not resting on your laurels and continuing to build on the work being done.

[REDACTED] invited Members to ask questions.

CEO thanked [REDACTED] for his report and comments and said that it showed succinctly the work that has been done by the Board and Senior Managers and thanked all staff who had contributed to it. TS echoed that and advised Members that the Directorate are already developing an action plan for the year ahead.

[REDACTED] invited the Board to:

- Consider and subject to any amendments, approve the self-assessment outcome for up to 26 October 2021.
- Agree that self-assessment against the SHR's Regulatory Standards is conducted annually going forward.
- Approve the revised topic-based discussion on Governance at each Board Meeting as shown above in paragraph 3.4 and the twice-yearly report on the Governance Assurance Plan at Board meetings going forward.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agree that the Board has had sufficient assurance to give it confidence to sign the Annual Assurance Statement confirming full compliance on the date of this meeting and authorise the Chair to sign the letter to SHR confirming this decision.</li> </ul> <p>Members AGREED and APPROVED [REDACTED] recommendations.</p> <p>Proposed J Berrington                      Seconded C Rossine</p> <p>Chair thanked [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] left the meeting.</p>		
b.	Agree and Sign off Annual Assurance Statement		
	<p>Following [REDACTED] review and given that Members approved [REDACTED] recommendations in item 3(a) Chair proposed that the same wording from the 2020 Assurance Statement be used again this year. Members AGREED.</p> <p>Proposed C Rossine                      Seconded I Cross</p>		
<b>4.</b>	<b>For Approval</b>		
a.	Independent Board Members		
	<p>Chair welcomed new Board Members who were attending their first ng homes Board Meeting:</p> <p>Mairead Grimley Frank Malcolm Jim Kennedy</p> <p>Chair clarified for the Board that in their Independent Board member roles Mairead, Frank and Jim are filling casual vacancies on the Board.</p> <p>Chair thanked all three for joining the Board and commented that Members look forward to working with them during this Board session.</p> <p>Chair invited everyone present to introduce themselves.</p> <p>Chair went on to say as Members will be aware, the Association's new Rules have now been registered with the FCA, quicker than anticipated</p>		



	<p>and have now been adopted by the Association. The new Rules allow for up to five Independent Board members.</p> <p>Chair advised members that the fourth successful applicant from the recent Board recruitment process, Jacqueline Fernie, could now be proposed to join the Board as an independent member taking up a Co-optee position on the Board.</p> <p>Members APPROVED Jacqueline Fernie as an Independent Board member taking up a Co-optee position on the Board.</p> <p>Proposed J Berrington                                  Seconded P Nelson</p> <p>Jacqueline will join the Board and will be invited to the next Board meeting scheduled for November.</p>		
b.	Planning for the Safe Return to the Workplace and Re-opening of our Offices		
	<p>TS commented that Senior Officers and Members have been talking about the safe return to the workplace and the re-opening of offices for some time and that it is important that a plan is agreed. TS went on to say the Scottish Government advise that businesses should continue to support staff to work from home but also to consider moving towards a hybrid model of working which is what is being proposed. TS stressed that whilst offices remain closed to the public homes are still delivering all services, however the vaccination programme has given some hope for the future and we recognise that our customers prefer to interact in a range of ways including some who customers whose preference is for face-to-face meetings, so it is important that there is a plan to re-open the offices.</p> <p>TS drew Members attention to the proposal on page 14 of the papers and commented that a lot of work has been done over the last 18-months to protect staff, customers and contractors and is important that is maintained. TS pointed out that some colleagues have never been back in the office since March 2020 and have been able to carry out 100% of their roles from home, others who have constantly been on site and others who have operated a hybrid role depending on their duties. Assuming there is no change to Government guidance and this proposal is approved Senior Officers will hold a safe return to work</p>		

	<p>meeting tomorrow to start the staff consultation process and ensure sufficient notice is given to staff.</p> <p>TS pointed out two caveats to the proposal;</p> <p>1 - Housing Services staff will trial the 3/2 hybrid model from December 2020 with all staff returning after the Christmas break. Offices will remain closed to the public in December 2021 and will re-open on an appointment only basis from January.</p> <p>2 - While maintaining the two cohorts to minimise cross contamination should there be an outbreak, it is recognised that there may be times, despite great intentions, where staff may need to deviate from this plan to meet the needs of the business, or in emergency situations. TS invited comments or questions.</p> <p>Members agreed that the Association must plan to re-open to the public as long as risks are considered and safety measures are in place.</p> <p>Member asked if there are any service areas that are particularly struggling that could be opened up sooner. LC commented that all service areas are running effectively and staff are making themselves available in every capacity to ensure customers can contact them, including in person in certain instances.</p> <p>CEO commented that work that involves being in people's homes for any length of time has been put on hold with the exception of emergency repairs however all repairs work is beginning to come back into line however the bigger investment programmes will likely not restart this financial year. The priority has always been to minimise contact with tenants unless it is a major contract such as the LCITP work or for health and safety issues.</p> <p>Member asked if there would be support for staff who will struggle with return psychologically. TS said that the return to the workplace meeting scheduled for tomorrow will kickstart staff consultation and all concerns raised will be discussed. TS reminded Members that the company health plan is still available and open to all staff and there are other appropriate groups that staff can be signposted to if they are required. TS said it is important to hear any staff issues or</p>		
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	<p>concerns and health and wellbeing including mental health has been a key area of focus throughout the pandemic and lockdowns with information in the staff newsletters, a staff survey, regular team meetings, and a new check-in process which includes a health and wellbeing element for all staff. TS hoped this showed Members the range of avenues for staff to share their concerns.</p> <p>Members APPROVED the proposal for a return to the workplace and re-opening of the offices as detailed in the report.</p> <p>Proposed C Rossine                      Seconded P Nelson</p>		
c.	Dealing with Covid-19 Related Absence		
	<p>Members considered the proposal on dealing with Covid-19 related absence. Member asked what the Association are doing to give people confidence that staff have had both vaccinations. TS said that had also been brought up at the Return-to-Work meetings with managers but after seeking legal advice it is not something the Association can insist upon. Staff have been allowed the time to go for vaccinations and have promoted and paid for staff flu vaccinations also.</p> <p>Member asked what would happen if a customer refused to let a staff member into their home unless staff can prove they have received both vaccinations. TS commented that it is not something staff have come up against to date but has noted it and will monitor it going forward and will continue to monitor the guidance on staff vaccinations.</p> <p>Chair asked what proof is requested when a staff member is asked to stay at home to self-isolate or shield.</p> <p>TS said the staff member normally receive a text message from NHS or some other form of communication and are asked to provide it. TS went on to say there are also situations where people feel unwell but haven't yet had the test or are awaiting a result, so managers need to work within those timeframes with an element of trust.</p> <p>Members APPROVED the proposal for dealing with a Covid-19 related absence as detailed in the report.</p>		



	Proposed G Satti Seconded J Berrington		
d.	Governance Policies for Review		
	Members considered and APPROVED the proposed changes to the following Governance policies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notifiable Events</li> <li>• Payments and Benefits</li> <li>• Gifts, Hospitality and Donations</li> <li>• Membership</li> </ul> Proposed P Nelson Seconded C Rossine		
e.	Bribery Policy		
	Members APPROVED the proposed changes to the Bribery Policy.  Proposed A Gow Seconded G Satti		
f.	Business Plan Priorities Progress		
	BH presented the report providing Members with an update on progress of the Business Plan Priorities in each quarter. Dots show that work took place in quarter 1 and 2.  Members APPROVED the contents of the report.  Proposed C Rossine Seconded M Thomson		
g.	Benchmarking		
	For the benefit of new Board Members present, LC advised that the Annual Report Charter (ARC) is submitted to the Regulator at the end of May each year. The Regulator make the information available to all Associations which allows them to use the Regulators tool to carry out a benchmarking exercise.  LC continued to present the report.  Member asked why ng homes benchmark against GHA when they are 8 times the size. LC said that after GHA ng homes are the biggest landlord in Glasgow and want to keep up with the biggest landlord but invited Members to discuss if they still wanted to benchmark against GHA. Members AGREED to continue to benchmark against GHA.		

	<p>LC focused on 3 areas where ng homes hope to improve performance:- rent increase, average rent for 3apt property and satisfaction with repairs service.</p> <p>LC referred to the work done with Vanguard and for the benefit of new Members explained that Vanguard reviewed the Association's repairs service and the customer journeys over 2018/19 and made a number of recommendations.</p> <p>Member thanked LC and commented that it was an interesting report but wondered if there was any information on sample sizes that responded to the customer satisfaction surveys. LC advised that RSLs have two options – one is to have a 3-year rolling programme (which is what ng homes do) and the other is do the survey once every 3 years which means some Associations may be submitting stats from a survey done before the pandemic. LC said she would investigate that further and will try to find out what others do.</p> <p>Members NOTED the comparisons with Queens Cross, Maryhill and Glasgow Housing Association and ng homes' performance in relation to these other Housing Associations.</p> <p>Based on an analysis of ng homes' current performance and the performance of others, Members APPROVED retaining the current targets approved by the Board on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2021.</p> <p>Proposed      C Rossine              Seconded      M Thomson</p>		
<b>5.</b>	<b>For Noting</b>		
a.	MSF No Access Update		
	Members NOTED the report.		
	Meeting concluded at 18:04		



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