

## Board meeting

Minutes of the meeting of the Board  
at 3:00pm on **22nd September 2020**

Held at:  
Edinburgh Training & Conference Venue  
16 St Mary's Street,  
Edinburgh EH1 1SU  
And  
WebEx video conference

### Board Members

Mr I Thompson	Ms K Kennedy	Ms P Russell
Mr T Roehricht	Mrs C Lumsden (via WebEx)	Mrs J Simpson
Mrs C Jardine (via WebEx)	Mr D McIntosh (via WebEx)	

### Attending

Jean Gray, Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	Esther Wilson, Director of Housing and Support (DHS)
Howard Vaughan, Director of Finance and Assets (DFA)	Tom Mitchell, CGPM Consulting LLP
Helen McMorran, Director of Business Support (DBS)	John Rankin, Head of Business Support (Minute)

### Apologies received

Mr J Muir, Ann Wood, Director of Care (DC)

### Minutes

Item	Subject	Action	Due Date
00	Welcome		
a	There being a quorum present, and given that at today's meeting it would be necessary to elect the Chair and Vice Chair for the year, the CEO welcomed all and opened the meeting.		
b	No declarations of interest were made, or conflicts of interest noted.		
01	Election of Chair/Vice Chair		
a	The CEO asked for nominations to Chair of the Board for the forthcoming year. Mrs J Simpson nominated Mr I Thompson and the nomination was seconded by Ms K Kennedy. There being no other nominations for Chair, Mr I Thompson was therefore elected as Chair, until the next Annual General meeting. The Chair assumed the Chair for today's meeting.		
b	The Chair asked for nominations to Vice Chair of the Board for the forthcoming year. Ms P Russell nominated Mr T Roehricht and the nomination was seconded by Ms K Kennedy. There being no other nominations for Vice Chair, Mr T Roehricht was therefore elected as Vice Chair until the next Annual General meeting.		
02a	Minute of previous meeting		
a	The minutes of the meeting of 11 August 2020 were reviewed, and one amendment was proposed in relation to agenda item 4 section c: the words	DBS	30 Sept 2020

Item	Subject	Action	Due Date
	'following the Board Meeting' should be deleted and replaced with the words 'prior to the AGM'. Subject to the inclusion of this amendment, the minutes were approved.		
02b	Matters arising and outstanding actions		
a	In relation to action 26 it was noted that this would now be dealt with at the Operations Committee and that the owner would be the DBS. Actions 67, 68 and 69 were considered to be closed.		
b	There were no matters arising not on the agenda or not included in the outstanding actions log.		
03	Chief Executive Update (verbal)		
a	At today's Resilience and Remobilisation Meeting it was noted that there are currently 18 vacant beds in the Care Homes, 10 in St Raphael's, 2 in Marian House and 6 in Lennox House. Noted also that there has been some interest in the vacancies at Lennox House. Testing of Care Home staff is ongoing and more results are now coming back although this is not consistent. Weekly testing has both a positive and negative impact for staff, positive in providing assurance that staff have not contracted the virus but it means that all staff, even those off duty have to come in to be tested. There are 2 ongoing investigations in the Care Homes which also impact on resources available. Indoor and outdoor meetings are continuing, and consideration is being given to using gazebos for outdoor meetings, as well as purchasing outdoor heaters. The craft café is to start again, although only at St Raphael's at present.		
b	An interim Head of Support, Pamela Paton, has been appointed, to provide cover for Anne McCarry who is on sick leave at present. Ms Paton is currently focussed on visits to Viewpoint complexes, completing risk assessments and meeting all the housing support staff.		
c	All areas of the business are currently looking at lessons learned in relation to the first wave of the pandemic, and the plan is to discuss the outputs from this exercise at the Performance Meeting on 15 <sup>th</sup> October.		
d	More communications will go to tenants after today, and the feeling is that at complexes tenants should be encouraged to wear masks in communal areas of buildings.		
e	Work on voids is progressing well, although noted that only 11 properties had been let since April. There are currently 53 voids, 6 of these shared ownership.		
f	In terms of Assets, remobilisation is progressing. Noted that to complete the LD1s we will need to procure a new contractor. Fire Risk Assessments have been completed for all locations, with work now ongoing to review reports and prioritise actions. Noted also that Civica was progressing, with workshops and testing ongoing.		
g	The DFA would update separately in relation to the work of the Short Life Working Group.		
h	The Business Support team is also considering remobilisation, and the possibility of shifts for relevant team members outside the 'typical' 9 to 5 slots, and indeed the possible benefits of shift work across the organisation could be considered. At present 4 staff are on furlough.		

Item	Subject	Action	Due Date
i	Noted that in recent times a significant number of FOI requests had been received, which officers were working on responding to.		
j	Noted that internal auditors were conducting an investigation into an alleged fraud incident. Auditors would be working on this for at least another 2 weeks. In that context it was proposed by the CEO that the date for the upcoming Risk and Audit Committee meeting should be moved to 03.11.20 to be able to consider the outcome of the investigation and the date for the next Board meeting should be moved to 10.11.20 to better align with relevant reporting. This proposal was approved by the Board, and agreed that the Director of Business Support should send out amended meeting invites.	DBS	30 Sept 2020
k	A query was raised in relation to shared ownership properties and whether these required to be let as such or whether these could be brought into normal housing stock. Following discussion, noted that in the event that relevant shares couldn't be sold then this could be considered in a longer term proposal.		
04	Cover Report for Finance & Five Year Financial Plan		
a	The DFA provided an update on the last meeting of the Short Life Working Group. It was positive to note that the Scottish Government Sustainability Payment has been received, although there would be a need to follow-up re potential overpayment. The new claim form for August onwards is still awaited. Noted further that taper relief had been confirmed until the end of November, although the position in relation to this may change, depending on how events develop between now and November.		
b	In terms of the management accounts, noted at a high level that any reduction in turnover had been offset by reduction in costs, albeit the reduction in costs would be delayed until future years, as would be mentioned in the 5 year financial plan. Occupancy levels in the care homes were noted as being improved on the previous version of the forecast which was used, albeit again it was unknown what would happen in coming months. Noted further that the income sensitivity table shared with the Short Life Working Group had been well received as a helpful 'ready reckoner'.		
c	With regard to the 5 year financial Plan the DFA noted that this was due to be submitted by 30.09.20, and consequently it would be helpful if this could be considered for Board approval at today's meeting. Noted that predicting for a 5 year period was difficult at the best of times, but almost impossible to now, and no doubt many of Viewpoint's peer organisations would be experiencing similar challenges. Noted further that Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership income was due to end on 31.03.21. Within this context noted that the SLWG was satisfied that the assumptions used re income growth/ costs were reasonable, and it was also positive to note that there were surpluses identified at the end of each year, and high cash throughout.		
d	It was therefore proposed that the Management Accounts for July 2020 should be approved, and these were approved by the Board. It was further proposed that the 5 year plan should be approved, and this was approved by the Board.		
05	Redesign Housing Support Project		
a	Item 5 is a confidential matter subject to a private minute.		

## 06 Appointment of Gas Contractor

- a The DFA presented in relation to the paper which had been submitted for approval with regard to the appointment of a new gas contractor. Noted that the Assets Team had been working on this for the past months, and given the scale of the contract and the timing of today's Board meeting, the DFA was keen that this should be shared. Noted that the recommended supplier was reliable, with a robust, competent framework, and that the recommendation was to proceed with this contract award.
- b In relation to the benchmark figures which were given, noted that some of the figures given were statistically significant, and therefore a query was raised as to why these were chosen. That said it was noted that an increase of 4% on what is currently being paid seemed reasonable. A further query was raised in relation to whether, if the Consumer Prices Index were to become negative, costs would go down, and the DFA advised that this would be the case if written into the contract.
- c There was discussion in relation to the quality of the service currently offered by this contractor and the DFA advised that the quality was good and that officers were therefore keen to tie in reliable suppliers where possible, especially as there was a large amount of procurement upcoming for the team.
- d Further discussion in relation to whether there had been adequate time to thoroughly explore purchasing options, and noted by the DFA that this contract award had been worked on for some time by the team. Further, the DFA noted that a Procurement Strategy Away Day was planned for 23<sup>rd</sup> October, to review the main contracts, with a view to ensuring effective procurement, and an update on that would be provided at the next Board meeting.
- e General agreement that, subject to the benchmarking comments above, the costs seemed acceptable, although noted also that it would have been helpful in this case to have had more notice prior to contract expiry date in order to review, and that greater notice would be helpful in future cases.
- f The CEO noted that tenders would normally be submitted for review to the Operations Committee, but if timings were not in sync these would come to the Board.
- g The Board agreed that it was in support of the proposal and officers' recommendation was approved.

DFA 10 Nov 2020

## 07 Void Policy &amp; Lettable Standard Review

- a The DHS noted that the report covered two areas:
- New Void Policy and Lettable Standard for review and approval; and
  - Interim findings of the tenant led scrutiny in relation to the draft lettable standard, with the proposed response set out at Appendix 3, which had also been submitted for review and approval by the Board.

Item	Subject	Action	Due Date
	The DHS noted that there was an error in the policy, at section 5.2: where '40 calendar days' are mentioned, this should read '38 calendar days'. The DHS also took the opportunity to acknowledge that the review group had been challenged by having to work remotely during lockdown, and expressed her thanks for their work.		
b	A query was raised as to whether the policy could be amended to state that the 38 day period mentioned above would be reviewed on an annual basis, to allow for flexibility. The DHS noted that this could perhaps be achieved by amending in line with the Key Performance Indicators which are submitted to the Board.	DHS	30 Oct 2020
c	A query was raised in relation to the financial impact of implementation, and the DHS advised that the standard as set out has become custom and practice, and work has been done in relation to financing that; the void budget has been increased and there is still some work that can be done in relation to the coding of some void work. The DHS advised that the average cost per void last year was £2,200 and the budget in this regard for the coming year was set at circa £250k, although the DHS noted also that it might be helpful for the Operations Committee to consider this area via a comprehensive paper at some point in the future, as well as monitoring it as a matter of course.		
d	The CEO noted that some peer organisations were paying in the region of £1,800 to £2,500 for a void, and noted that in some cases the figure is significantly higher where a property has been badly damaged by a previous tenant. The CEO noted further that Viewpoint usually spends on decoration whereas some peer organisations may not to the same standard, and this cost was reflected in the figures provided. Also noted, that costs which may not be recoverable from previous tenants were also included in the figures provided.		
e	The Board agreed that the report was excellent, and that thanks should be passed on to relevant officers and the review group. The Board approved the void policy and lettable standard, subject to the agreed amendments discussed above, with thanks delegated to relevant parties. The Board also approved the response and recommendations.		

## 08 Tenant Participation Strategy

- a The DHS spoke to the paper submitted to the meeting, noting that the finalised Tenant Participation Implementation Plan for 20-21 had been submitted for approval. The DHS noted that delivery was late, due to Covid-19, and in relation to the March report summarising progress and key milestones for this year, certain of them were unfortunately simply not achievable, such as holding a conference.
- b The DHS advised that the plan which was submitted to the Operations Committee in July had been included as an appendix to the report, and in the interim officers had also received the findings of the internal audit in relation to tenant participation, which made 2 recommendations, as set out in the report, in relation to aligning strategy to reflect changes in actions.
- c The DHS concluded by saying that the Board was being asked to approve the implementation plan, and the refreshing of the strategy to incorporate the implementation plan, cover the internal audit recommendations, and make any other ancillary minor changes required.

Item	Subject	Action	Due Date
d	The Board approved the Implementation Plan, and approved a refresh of the Participation Strategy, to incorporate the plan and allow the DHS to make any further minor additional amendments required.	DHS	30 Oct 2020
9	Any Other Competent Business		
a	The CEO noted in relation to the new Vision Statement for Viewpoint that 40 suggestions had been received and that it would now be helpful to bring together a group, to involve 2 Board Members, to review these and bring them down to 5, then 3, before offering the final 3 for a vote to staff and tenants. As well as the 2 Board Members, the proposed group would involve a Lothian Group representative, Fife forum, the CEO and Viewpoint's tenant Participation and Communications Officer. Mrs J Simpson and Ms K Kennedy volunteered to join the group on behalf of the Board.		
b	The CEO noted that today represented the last Board meeting which would be attended by Tom Mitchell, of CGPM Consulting LLP, who had been supporting Viewpoint in relation to its Governance systems and processes over the last 16 months. The CEO thanked Mr Mitchell for all of his input over that period and presented Mr Mitchell with a small gift on behalf of the Executive Team and the Board. Mr Mitchell thanked the Executive Team and Board for the gift, and noted that he was pleased to see what he described as an organisation transformed during this period in terms of a Board that was confident, and focussed on strategic matters, underpinned by the support provided by officers.		
10	Date of next meeting		
a	The next meeting will take place on 10 <sup>th</sup> November 2020 at 5.30pm at a venue to be confirmed.		

The meeting closed at 4:30pm.

### **Approval of the minutes**

Signed as a true record of the meeting, following the approval of the draft minutes by a meeting of the Board.

Signed:

Date:

Iain Thompson, Chair