

Board Meeting

Held: Board Room, Viewpoint Offices

Minutes of the meeting of the Board
at 4.00pm on **20 March 2024**

Paper 0
Meeting No:24/02
Date of Meeting: 20 March 2024

Board Members

Mr I Thompson (Chair)	Mr L Parry (LP) (virtual)	Ms J Brown (JB)
Mr T Roehricht (TR) (Vice Chair)	Mr S Robertson (SR) (virtual)	
Ms P Russell (PR)		
Mr D McIntosh (DM)	Ms L Anderson (LA)	

Attending

Jean Gray, Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	Howard Vaughan, Director of Finance and Business Support (DFBS)
Esther Wilson, Director of Housing and Care (DHC)	Tom Hailey, Director of Assets (DA)

Claire Beckley, RGDP LLB, Viewpoint's
DPO (CB)

Apologies received

Mr J Clyne (JC)

Minutes

Item	Subject	Action	Due Date
1	Welcome to Board Meeting		
1.a.	Apologies		
	There being a quorum present, the Chair welcomed all and opened the meeting. Apologies had been received from JC.		
1.b.	Declarations/Conflicts of Interest		
	There were no declarations and no conflicts of interest declared. The meeting was recorded via Teams. There were no objections to this.		

Item	Subject	Action	Due Date
2	Minutes of previous meetings and matters arising		
2.a.	Minutes of previous meeting held on 21 February 2024		
	The minutes of the meeting of 21 February 2024 were reviewed and the Board unanimously approved them as an accurate record.		
2.b.	Outstanding actions		
	There were the following outstanding actions;		
	Action 211: Chair to circulate slides from recent [REDACTED] Brewin Dolphin event. Completed.		
	Action 212: Provide Operations Committee with further analysis on repairs overspends. Some analysis was provided to March 2024 meeting but further to follow.	DA	
	Action 213: Discuss training with Wylie & Bisset. Suggested that this take place at Board Away Day event later in the year.	DFBS	
	Action 214: Reconnect with interested development partners. CEO confirmed that these discussions were at a very early stage.	CEO	
	Action 215: Provide Operations Committee with further analysis on reasons for leaving. Some information was provided to March 2024 meeting but agreed that more detail would be provided from the start of the new financial year.		
	Action 216: Address issue of contractor no shows. DA confirmed that this was an ongoing process.	DFBS	
		DA	
	Action 217: Explore reintroduction of monetary incentives to encourage tenants to respond to surveys. DA to pursue this.	DA	
	Co-option of two new Board Members		
	LA and JB left the meeting at this point while Board considered their applications to formally join the Board.		
	Following discussion the Board unanimously approved the applications for both LA and JB to be co-opted onto the Board.		
	LA and JB re-joined the meeting and the Chair confirmed their appointment and welcomed them both formally to the Board.		
	Data Protection Training		
	CB presented update on GDPR and on her work on the Action Plan to the Board. (slideshow will be uploaded to Convene after meeting)	DFBS	asap
	[REDACTED] asked whether data included paper and electronic and CB confirmed that the legislation relates to all data.		
	LP asked if we had carried out data assessments for all our contractors. CB explained that this would be a particular focus over the remainder of 2024.		
	DM enquired as to what impact the anticipated changes in legislation would have on Viewpoint. CB gave potential examples including Government being able to access individuals' bank statements or DWP		

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	<p>investigating disability claims explaining that such requests would need sufficient justification.</p> <p>CB explained that the draft Bill is currently being considered by the House of Lords but that is unlikely to make the statute book before the end of the current Parliament, which she suggests that it is not priority for this Government.</p> <p>She confirmed however that RGDP LLB have updated policies and templates ready for implementation for their clients when the legislation is passed.</p> <p>TR asked in response to CB's summary that our compliance is "good" whether the Board should be reassured or concerned by that assertion. CB stated that since RGDP were appointed in May 2023 that progress has been positive and that the plan is on track.</p> <p>She stated that we have a high volume of SARs and FOIs and acknowledged the significant time demand this place on internal staff in dealing with these.</p> <p>The Board had no further questions and the Chair thanked CB for her work to date and for presenting to the Board. CB left the meeting.</p>		
2c.	Verbal update from Operations Committee of 5 March 2024		
	<p>PR updated the Board on the key areas highlighting that there had been a big agenda and that the quality of the papers and presentations had been excellent.</p> <p>There had been a number of policies presented for approval. Eight out of the ten were approved with the two assets/repairs policies scrutinised for recommendation to the Board at this meeting.</p> <p>While the update on the over spend on responsive repairs had been helpful it was acknowledged that more in-depth analysis on this area would continue.</p> <p>Works order variations would also continue to be monitored as a Key Performance Indicator.</p> <p>There had been an update from HR on the reasons for leaving from exiting staff following a question at the February 2024 Board meeting. More detailed questions will be included for future exit interviews and this data would be presented to the Operations Committee from Q1 in the new financial year.</p> <p>Early discussions have taken place regarding moving Health and Safety matters from the Operations Committee back to the Finance, Risk and Audit Committee (FRAC) due to the current substantial Operations Committee remit. It was acknowledged that H&S previously was within the FRAC remit. This will be considered further at the next FRAC meeting on 30 April 2024.</p>	<p>DFBS</p> <p>DFBS</p>	<p>Sept 24 Ops Committee</p> <p>April 24 FRAC</p>

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	The volume and detail of the policies being presented to the Operations Committee was also discussed. PR outlined that other organisations have a more simplified and streamlined policy approval process.		
	CEO suggested that Executive Team would review the Policy Tracker to establish whether the approval process for the more operational policies could be delegated to the Executive Team.	Exec	May 24 Board
	The Executive would also review the respective remits of the Committees further to the FRAC discussion and present a proposal on both these matters at the May 2024 Board meeting.	Exec	May 24 Board
	The Chair asked why the Operations Committee had asked the Board to approve the Asset Management and Repairs and Maintenance Policies. PR explained that it was due the scale and importance of the documents with the CEO adding that given the impact on tenants it was important for the full Board to have sight of these and to formally approve them.		

3 Finance Papers

3.a. Management Accounts to 31 January 2024

Management Accounts to 31 January 2024 were presented by DFBS.

He highlighted the following areas;

The continuing improvement in housing void loss for the month of January 2024 was at 1.59% (versus the budget of 2.43%). Having had early sight of the February 2024 draft management accounts he was able to confirm that the rate had actually dropped below 1.5% which was the lowest rate for a considerable number of year.

TR asked what the pre Covid target was. From recollection Executive team members believed it to have been c2% and the targets included in the FYFP submitted to SHR in May 2023 were higher so we have achieved this below target rate way ahead of expectations.

DFBS referred back to the Operations Committee update on repairs expenditure. While overall we remain confident that the total repairs will be within the reforecast he acknowledged that there were likely to be offsetting variances within the three constituent lines; routine, voids and planned maintenance.

On the telecare charge, the Board's attention was drawn to the update included in the CEO report.

On the care homes the overall performance continues to be positive.

Gross fees in St Raphael's are 5.8% ahead of budget due to both better occupancy and a more favourable Private to local authority funding split.

Item	Subject	Action	Due Date
	<p>While gross fees for Marian House are 3.6% down on budget due to lower occupancy and slightly better funding mix, work has continued on upgrading rooms to "premium" rooms which will result in higher fee levels once filled.</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>		
	<p>Lennox House</p> <p>DFBS was able to confirm receipt today of the Disposition for Lennox which the CEO has now signed (and DFBS witnessed). This suggests that we are still on track for a completion of the sale on 28 March 2024.</p> <p>DFBS/DA suggested that we maintain the current building security measures in place for a further month in case the sale fails to complete on time. The Board agreed with this suggestion.</p> <p>There were no further questions on the Management Accounts to 31 January 2024 and these were approved by the Board.</p>		

4	CEO Update Report
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CEO highlighted the following points from the report;

SHR

The CEO has received our draft Engagement Plan which indicates we will be "Compliant". There are a couple of caveats; Mention of an outstanding recommendation from last year's external audit which we are currently reviewing with intention to respond and also the identification of RAAC in some of our stock.

We will respond to the Regulator in early course but the final Engagement Plan will take effect from 1 April 2024.

CEO April/May

Net Zero Agenda

DM asked whether we would have to take properties off the market for social housing should we be unable to meet future net zero requirements. DA confirmed that first deadline is not until 2028 so we have time to address issues, also highlighting that we have very few properties at EPC Band D which would be the properties at risk.

Item	Subject	Action	Due Date
5	Governance Report		
	<p>████ expressed an interest in the SFHA Annual Conference in September. DFBS will ask █████ to book a place. █████.</p> <p>Board approved the change of date of the AGM and accompanying Board Meeting to Wednesday 9th October 2024.</p> <p>The Board had no further questions and noted the report.</p>		
6	Q3 Internal Management Plan		
	<p>DFBS explained that this was the Plan as at the end of Q3 (to 31 December 2023).</p> <p>Further progress has been made on the Plan and we will be able to provide the Q4 update shortly after the financial year end.</p> <p>There were no further questions and the Board noted the Plan.</p> <p>DA presented our Net Zero Roadmap (PowerPoint presentation) which takes us through to 2045 when all stock will be carbon free. It was noted that in relation to our tenants we have ensured affordability is a priority. The Board noted and acknowledged the challenges ahead and in particular the potential cost implications. DA explained that we would seek funding where necessary. He also highlighted the behavioural changes for tenants in how they control their heating particularly given that many are currently only paying a service charge, which has been protected by longer term fixing of utility pricing.</p>		
7	Risk Register		
	<p>The Risk Register as at 19 January 2024 was presented.</p> <p>CEO explained that this had been reviewed by the FRAC at their meeting on 30 January 2024.</p> <p>The table within the report highlights the key changes in risks in the quarter;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • █████ █████ █████ • The new Telecare Contract risk had been added in the quarter but further subsequent progress has been made in this area since the report was presented back in January. <p>The CEO proposed that the Risk Appetite would be discussed at the Board Away Day (June 2024) in light of the proposed strategic decisions that will require to be considered to inform the next Business Plan.</p>		
		CEO	June 24

The Board noted the Risk Register and agreed to move the Risk Appetite discussion to the Board Away Day.

8 Write Off Report

DHC presented the report.

TR questioned why the figures were so high. DHC explained that once repayment arrangements are put in place with a tenant we have to allow these to run their course. The requested former tenant arrears unfortunately all relate to tenants who have died.

PR commented that in relation to our overall rent levels the scale of the requested write off amount appeared relatively low.

[REDACTED]

The Board approved the write-off figure of £6,955.97, the current tenant arrear of £82.88 and noted the write-off cases approved by the DHC.

9 Policies

The following policies were presented for approval;

- Complaints Handling Policy
- Data Retention Policy
- Standing Orders
- Infection Prevention and Control Policy
- Future Care Planning Policy
- Palliative Care and End of Life Care Policy
- Asset Management Policy
- Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy

There was discussion around when a full wholesale review of a policy is required it is often easier to present as a new policy.

TR raised the issue that an Equality Impact Assessment had not been included in the Assets/Repairs Policies, it was agreed to review this going forward.

LP in particular referencing the care policies asked if changes in legislation necessitated a further re-approval.

DHC said in many case the policies would require to be re-approved but that we would address that particular issue as part of the upcoming Executive Team review of the Policy Approval Process.

DA explained that the purpose of the new Asset Management Policy was that it provided an overarching framework for the underlying asset policies and was in line with the Institute of Asset Management template.

DA also explained that the new Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy had been extensively consulted upon with tenants and incorporated most of what had been requested.

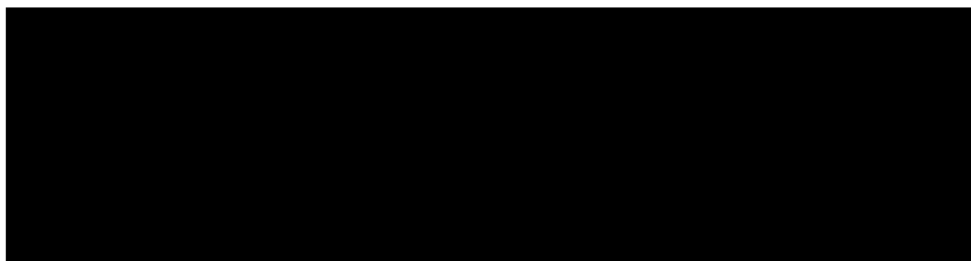
Item	Subject	Action	Due Date
	<p>Two new repairs categories had been included; batched maintenance and specialist and major works and he was confident that this would help control budgetary expenditure.</p> <p>There had also been a change to routine repair targets which in future would be increased from 8 working days to 15 working days. This will allow more time for the contractor to efficiently deploy their labour and materials. Tenants would be more likely to have their repair carried out right first time. A new "average working days to complete" KPI will be devised.</p> <p>The Board approved all policies.</p>	DA	May 24

10. AOCB and Date of Next Meeting

Chair acknowledged that there had been a technical issue with the circulation of the Board member self-assessment questionnaire and accordingly he will resend. He would encourage members to complete and return as soon as possible.

Chair

asap



The next meeting is scheduled for 29 May 2024 at 4pm

Due to the later start of the meeting, the formal meeting closed at 6.10pm.

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