



Minutes of the Board Meeting held on Tuesday 10th November 2009 at 4pm at Link House, 2c New Mart Road, Edinburgh.

Present:	Mr R Robertson (Chairman)	In attendance:	Mr C Sanderson
	Mr A Colston		Mr N Hall
	Mr D McMillan		Mr C Culross
	Mr B Reidford		Ms E Johnston
	Mr J O'Neill		Mrs B Higgins
	Mr C Macneil		Mrs H Bayne
	Mr E Banks		Mrs M Middleton
	Mr T Clark		
	Mr P Foreman		Ms P Boniface (Minutes)
	Mr R Shorter		
	Mr R Stirrat		

BUSINESS

- | | Action |
|--|---------------|
| 1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST | |
| None | |
| 2. APOLOGIES | |
| Apologies were received from Mr J Hinton. | |
| 3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13th OCTOBER 2009 | |
| The minutes of the meeting held on October 13 th 2009 were approved subject to the following change: | |
| Page 4 Risk Management Committee Item 9, Kirkwood Street, Rutherglen – should read “This proposal is to approve”. | |
| Moved: Mr Banks | |
| Seconded: Mr Colston | |
| 4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13th OCTOBER 2009 | |
| 4.1 Millarston Drive Paisley | |

4.2 LinkLiving/The Action Group

Mr Sanderson reported that no further update was available. Mr Shorter advised the Board that the matter was discussed at the LinkLiving Away Day and it had been agreed that LinkLiving may seek to work with partners who were in a position to offer more specialist skills.

4.3 Horizon

Mr Robertson informed the Board that the signing ceremony between Link Group and Horizon held on November 6th 2009 had been a very successful event. Mr Robertson also commented on an outstanding speech made by Horizon's chairman.

4.4 Any other Matters Arising

None

5. RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

5.1 Risk Management Committee Report

Mr Culross updated the Board on the meeting of the Risk Management Committee which had taken place on 27th October 2009. It was also noted that Board members from Linkwide had attended and participated in the debate regarding proposed site acquisitions and that revised Minutes had been provided for the Link Group Board.

The Board accepted that the risk of financial loss to Link would likely be low with regard to the site acquisitions proposed but noted that interest rates could rise even if there was no economic recovery.

The Board approved the recommendation from the Risk Management Committee to acquire the sites listed in the accompanying report in the sum of £6,116,000. BH

The Board thanked the officials for the high standard of the Risk Management Committee reports.

5.2 Link Group & Subsidiary Risk Registers

The Board considered the previously circulated report.

It was noted that when the risk registers were next reviewed consideration would be given to expanding the scoring rating and more clarity would be provided to demonstrate how residual risk was determined in relation to the risk rating itself. CC

The Board discussed the risk of Registered Social Landlords being deemed "public bodies" (and Link failing to meet legislative requirement]) and noted that recent case law in England (the 'Weaver' case) was likely to mean that the same decisions could be soon reached in Scotland. It was acknowledged that provided Link could demonstrate that it took account of tenants' human rights when carrying out public functions as an RSL, then the risk would be

managed.

The Board accepted the recommendation from the Risk Management Committee and approved the Risk Registers.

6. ENERGY AND UTILITIES CONSULTANCY

The Board considered the previously circulated report and approved the advancement of negotiations with Inenco from the Procurement for Housing Energy Consultant Framework, leading to the appointment of Inenco as Link's Energy and Utilities consultant. CC

7. POLICY REVIEW

7.1 Policy for Monitoring and Reporting Operational Performance

The Board approved the policy for Monitoring and Reporting Operational Performance.

8. GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

The Board approved the revised policy on Gifts and Hospitality subject to the following changes: CC

To amend the fifth bullet point in Section 3 to make the giving of gifts and hospitality to employees and Board Members a general principle and not only limited to the circumstances specified in the draft policy.

To amend Section 5.2.2 so that the Chairman required to approve the acceptance in advance by the Chief Executive of hospitality greater than £100 and should same arise with regard to the Chairman such approval to be by any Board Member.

9. APPOINTMENT OF BOARD MEMBER TO LINK HOUSING

The Board approved the appointment of Ms Cathy Fancy to the Board of Link Housing Association Limited.

10. REMUNERATION COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Board noted the previously circulated report.

11. EDINBURGH CARE AND SUPPORT TENDER

The Board discussed the previously circulated report.

It was noted that although some parties had questioned the integrity of the process undertaken by City of Edinburgh Council officials in assessing the tenders it was considered unlikely that the Council would not accept the recommendations when considered at the full Council meeting on 19th November. The Board noted its disappointment therefore that despite an excellent service provided by LinkLiving over many years it was expected that the mental service contract would be awarded to other providers. An appeal had been lodged by the consortium (of which LinkLiving was a member) on October 26th 2009 but no response had been received.

It was noted that a further report would be made next month on the outcome of the process and the impact on the mental health service staff **EJ**

12. SHAPING UP FOR IMPROVEMENT

The Board discussed the previously circulated report. It was noted that the report had been considered by Link's Senior Management Group (SMG) and the Board concurred with the acceptance by the SMG of the report's recommendations.

It was noted that one of the outcomes of the work undertaken to date was to establish that Link did not require to make any fundamental changes to the business plan content and format.

13. MEETINGS DIARY

Mr Hall advised that the meetings diary for 2010 required to be published soon.

The Board discussed the current meetings cycle and timings and confirmed that the 2010 diary should be structured on the same basis as for 2009 meetings. **NH**

14. ACHIEVEMENT OF BUSINESS PLAN OBJECTIVES

The Board discussed the previously circulated reports.

14.1 Achievement of Strategic Objectives – Action Plan Progress

The Board considered and discussed the progress made with regard to the achievement of the business plan objectives in the six months to September 30th 2009.

14.2 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

The Board considered the performance indicators and noted that although the average Link's re-let time was higher than the equivalent quarter in the previous year, there were some indications of improvement.

The Board noted that repairs performance was unsatisfactory and customer satisfaction levels with the repairs service were still too low. Mrs Middleton confirmed that regular meetings with senior staff in Connaught are taking place to try to and improve the service

The Board agreed that Connaught should be given one month to make significant improvements in both repairs quality and response times. In preparation that such improvement may not take place Link would consider and develop an exit strategy which would include how Link could determine the contract. It was agreed that although this action would be undesirable the contractor needed to be made aware of how seriously the Board regarded both the quality and value for money aspects of the contract. **MBM**

Mr McMillan asked the Board to note a change in legislation on housing benefits and that pension capital had increased. Mrs Middleton confirmed that information on the matter would be included in the next newsletter issued to tenants in December. **MBM**

Mrs Higgins tabled an updated sheet on Linkwide/Link Homes KPIs which compared the performance against Business Plan targets of property completions. It was noted that Link should achieve 106 completions against a target of 80. It was also noted that the purchase of acres of land target did not match the progress statement (stating only the number of opportunities identified) and proposed land purchases would be included in future reports.

BH

14.3 Subsidiary Reports

The Board noted the reports from the subsidiaries.

14.4 Consolidated Accounts for the period 1st April 2009 to 30th September 2009.

The Board considered and noted the financial position of the group for the six months to September 30th 2009.

15. SCOTTISH HOUSING QUALITY STANDARD – STANDARD DELIVERY PLAN REVIEW

The Board discussed the previously circulated report.

Mr Culross confirmed that there were a small number of properties where the cost of meeting the standard could be prohibitive due to the nature of their original construction, and minority within multi tenure blocks. A re-provisioning strategy was currently being developed.

Mr Culross pointed out that there were two numerical errors in the main report which he would update and would also include the relevant stock numbers in 2005 and the stock numbers at present, where the percentage of failing stock was based on the total stock numbers.

CC

Mr Culross confirmed the exercise also identified as updated planned maintenance figure for the 30-year financial plan which was £40 million less than assumed from previous studies. The Board confirmed it was satisfied with the outcomes and the quality of the report.

16. THE GLASGOW THEMATIC HOMELESS INSPECTION

The Board considered the previously circulated report. It was noted that overall the inspection (as it related to Link) was very positive with a few areas identified for improvement. Mr Sanderson observed that Link had fared well in comparison with the Council which had received a 'C' grading.

17. CORPORATE GOVERNANCE SELF ASSESSMENT

The Board noted the progress on the Action Plan points arising from the review of Corporate Governance conducted in 2008.

With regard to publishing the work of the Board on Link's website on a quarterly basis Mr Hall suggested that as Board minutes were largely following a decision-based format it could be appropriate to publish the minutes rather than create a separate publication.

The Board considered the proposal and agreed that the minutes would be published on the website, provided that any confidential items were removed.

NH

18. CARE COMMISSION REVIEW – SHELTERED HOUSING

The Board considered the previously circulated report and agreed that the review was very positive with some action points to follow up.

It was agreed that it would be appropriate to consider a report from EJ LinkLiving outlining recent inspections carried out by the Care Commission.

19. FINANCE DEPARTMENT REPORT

The Board noted the previously circulated report.

20. EXECUTIVE OF LEGAL DOCUMENTS

The Board noted the previously circulated report.

21. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

21.1 Kirkshaws Opening Ceremony

Mr Sanderson reminded Board Members of the invitation to attend the Kirkshaws event on Friday 13 November 2009. It was confirmed that MSP Elaine Smith would be the main speaker.

21.2 Open Market Shared Equity Pilot Programme

Mr Sanderson reported that he had received feedback from a Scottish Government senior civil servant that the Scottish Government was very impressed with the way Link had implemented the scheme in very tight timescales and with the high standard of the service provided.

21.3 December Board Meeting

It was suggested that the December Board meeting may be held at the Tunnock's factory and Mr Reidford agreed to confirm availability. **BR**

21.4 Older Persons Advice Scheme (OPAS)

Mr Robertson reported that the OPAS launch event on 3rd November 2009 had been a great success and congratulated the staff in organising the event.

All staff except Mrs Bayne left the meeting at this point.

21.5 Confidential Staff Matter

CONFIDENTIAL

22. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 8th December 2009 at 4:00pm – venue to be confirmed.
The Meeting closed at 18:10 p.m.