



Minutes of the Board Meeting held on Tuesday 8 April 2014 at 4pm at Link House, 2c New Mart Road, Edinburgh.

Present:	Mr P Foreman (Chair)	In attendance:	Mr C Sanderson
	Mr R Stirrat		Mr N Hall
	Mr C Macneill		Mr C Culross
	Mr A Colston		Ms J Fitzpatrick
	Mr D Esslemont		Ms M Middleton
	Ms A Currie		Mrs H Bayne
	Mr J O'Neill		Mr J McDowall
	Mr I Dickson		Mr P Rae
	Ms A Johnstone		
	Mr J Hinton		Mrs J Ferri (Minutes)
Observer:	Ms J Pritchard		

BUSINESS

Action

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mr Robertson, Cllr Wilson, Mrs Donaldson, Mr Smith and Mr Banks.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18TH MARCH 2014

The minutes of the meeting held on 18th March 2014 were approved subject to the following amendments:

2.0 Apologies

To add that Mr Hinton had tendered his apologies.

5.3 Budgets

To replace the word "featured" with "factored" in the second line of the second paragraph so that the sentence read "Mr Hall advised thathad been **factored** into the projections."

Moved: Mr Colston
Seconded: Mr Stirrat

4. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18TH MARCH 2014**

4.1 **West Highland Housing Association (WHHA)**

The Board noted that matters were continuing to progress with WHHA and a meeting was due to take place over the course of the next few weeks to agree the finalised Service Level Agreements.

It was further noted that the wording of the Independence Agreement was close to conclusion and approval of Link's lenders that WHHA can join the group as a subsidiary is awaited. The most up to date business case is with the Scottish Housing Regulator and comments/suggestions should be received shortly.

Ms Middleton advised that applications had been received from a WHHA staff member and a staff member's niece with regard to the Dunbeg Phase 1 project. In addition one application from a PSL staff member for an intermediate rent property. Ms Middleton confirmed that all the applicants satisfied Link's criteria for housing and that there had been no internal influence or advantage gained.

The Board approved the allocation of properties to the WHHA and PSL employees and also to the relative of an employee of WHHA .

4.2 **Inflation Related Pay Award**

The Board noted that UNITE representatives confirmed their members' acceptance of a 2% increase on salaries for Link Group and Link Housing employees. The UNITE representatives conveyed thanks to the Link Group Board for Members continued support during the negotiation process.

4.3 **Private Placement**

The Board noted that the Private Placement had concluded as planned on Thursday March 27th 2014. Link had repaid its revolving credit facilities with RBS and Lloyds and this left a balance of £8.75M which has been placed on short term deposit.

4.4 **Calico Way**

The Board noted that any owner within the area covered by the deed of conditions has the potential to seek enforcement rights but that Link had taken out appropriate Title Insurance to protect against any challenge.

It was further noted that the issue of contamination and remedial works will be addressed within the technical appraisal process which will be considered by the Board at Pre Tender Risk Assessment stage.

4.6 **LL Care and Support Service**

It was noted that the Board and Officials of LinkLiving and the Chairman and Chief Executive of Link Group had co-operated to appoint an 'external consultant' to assist LinkLiving to recover good grades from the Care Inspectorate (CI) for its Care and Support Service and to facilitate re-

introduction of referrals to its services from The City of Edinburgh Council(CEC). The CI has appointed one inspector to visit both services in the first quarter of the financial year.

It was noted that the LinkLiving Board had agreed to appoint another Director to succeed Ms Johnston but that in the meantime the service would be managed directly by the Chief Executive.

It was further noted that Ms Fitzpatrick would manage the Volunteer Service in the interim.

4.7 Complaints Q3

The Board noted the updated table.

4.8 Arnotts Building

The Board considered the previously circulated report.

Due to the cost of obtaining a replacement Performance Bond, the Contractor, West Point Construction had asked Link to consider the continuation of retaining 20% retention until the amount of the bond had been reached. It had been proposed that this money would be held in an account subject to security (controlled by Burness) and a legal agreement would be put in place whereby should Westpoint cease to trade, the monies held would not become part of an administrator's portfolio but would revert to Link.

The Board approved the proposal.

4.9 Any other Matters Arising

None.

4.9.1 Letham Moss

The Board considered and discussed the previously circulated report.

The Board noted that the Board of ABO Wind AG had instructed ABO Wind UK to cease work on the project with immediate effect.

The Board agreed with ABO Wind's action and gave its approval to end the project.

It was noted that a meeting with ABO would be held soon to agree how costs to date would be shared.

MR RAE LEFT THE MEETING AT THIS POINT.

5.0 ASSET MANAGEMENT DIRECTORS REPORT

MS JOHNSTONE JOINED THE MEETING AT THIS POINT.

Development Housing for Sale Project Balmwell, Edinburgh

Mr Culross advised the Board that an offer of grant had been received from

City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) to convert the 11 properties originally earmarked for housing for sale to Intermediate Rent.

The Board approved the recommendation that the contract with Crudens be finalised on the basis of this position.

Completion Progress

Mr Culross advised the Board that due to circumstances out with Link's control it was unlikely that the target of more than 200 completions would be achieved in 2013 /14.

Lanark Road West

The Board noted that the project overspend was in the process of being advanced with CEC to ascertain how much would qualify for additional grant. Mr Culross agreed to circulate the total overspend amount (expressed as a percentage) of the contract value, and the best estimate of what Link could reclaim through grant.

CC

6.0 FALKIRK ROAD PRE-TENDER ACCEPTANCE

The Board discussed and considered the previously circulated report.

Mr Culross agreed to consider whether the additional 7 units could be let at market rent, rather than intermediate rent, as there was no grant on these 7 properties. The Board noted with intermediate rent, Link required to contribute just under £40,000 to the project, which would not be the case if market rent tenure was adopted.

CC

The Board approved acceptance of the tender of £3,028,561 from Cruden Building & Renewals Ltd for the construction of 35 flats at 36-40 Falkirk Road, Bonnybridge.

7.0 BUCCLEUCH STREET PRE TENDER RISK ASSESSMENT

The Board discussed and considered the previously circulated report.

The Board approved acceptance of the tender of £1,812,400.16 from Keepmoat for the conversion and refurbishment of 15 multiple occupancy dwellings to 26 flats at 2 – 6 Buccleuch Street Glasgow subject to planning consent being granted.

8.0 APPOINTMENT OF SPECIALIST CONSULTING TEAM TO REVIEW ALVA OFF-SITE CONSTRUCTION METHODOLOGY

The Board discussed and considered the previously circulated report.

It was noted that in view of the innovative nature of the offsite construction method being used that it was recommended that Link appoint a specialist consultant costing £15,000 to undertake a detailed technical review and due diligence.

The Board approved the recommendation to suspend Link Group Standing Orders for the exclusive appointment of a specialist Consulting Team to provide the required due diligence and assurance

of design, technical considerations and construction subject to Tigh Grian meeting all of Link's prerequisite contracting requirements.

MR MCDOWALL LEFT THE MEETING AT THIS POINT.

9.0 BUSINESS PLAN 2014/15 TO 2018/19

The Board considered and discussed the previously circulated report and Plan.

The Board approved the Business Plan for 2014/15 to 2018/19 subject to a few minor amendments which Mrs Bayne would take forward.

10.0 BOARD EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW

The Board considered and discussed the previously circulated report

It was agreed that the various suggestions from Board Members on improving Board effectiveness were worthy of implementation and though therefore agreed in principle a separate meeting would be held to discuss the effectiveness of the Board in more depth. In the meantime the use of a separate Board pack to contain reports for Noting and also Business Assurance reports would be sent with the Board Papers as a trial.

Mrs Bayne agreed to arrange the meeting as soon as was practical.

HB

11.0 LINK GROUP ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The Board considered and noted the previously circulated report.

The Board noted that the Care Inspectorate's review of the Sheltered Housing service had resulted in an overall grade 5.

12.0 LINK PROPERTY BOARD

The Board considered the previously circulated report.

It was noted that the Link Property Board had held its first meeting prior to the Group Board meeting.

The Board agreed that the reporting of the Link Property Board to the Group Board would be through quarterly KPI reports and this would include the quarterly financial performance.

13.0 LINK HOUSING PERFORMANCE REPORTS

13.1 Commercial Services

The Board considered and noted the previously circulated report.

14.0 GAS SERVICING

The Board considered and noted the previously circulated report.

15.0 EXECUTION OF LEGAL DOCUMENTS

The Board considered and noted the previously circulated report.

16.0 FINANCE REPORT

The Board considered and discussed the previously circulated report.

17.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

17.1 Surplus Funds on Deposits

The Board considered and discussed the tabled report.

It was agreed that Link would ensure that surplus funds on short term deposits were placed with a number of banks so that Link's exposure to the risk of a bank collapse was minimised and this position would be followed even if it meant slightly lower deposit returns.

JNH

17.2 Annual Return on the Scottish Social Housing Charter (ARC)

Mrs Bayne tabled a report requesting that Board members approve the delegation of the approval of the ARC to the Chairman and one other Board member.

It was agreed that Mr Foreman and Mr Stirrat would be delegated authority to approve submission of the ARC to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

PF /
RS

17.3 Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) Regulation Plan

Mr Hall advised that the Regulation Plan for 2014/15 had been received and that the regulatory involvement continued to be that of Medium engagement. It was noted that there was no cause for concern.

17.4 Values

The Board agreed that the tabled paper would be deferred for consideration until the May meeting.

HB

17.5 Link Group Board Strategy Day

It was noted that the Link Group Board Strategy Day would be rescheduled to Saturday 20th September 2014.

17.6 Late Papers

It was acknowledged that the number of late and tabled papers that had been received for this meeting was unacceptable.

It was agreed that late papers would not be accepted in the future unless there was a paragraph at the beginning of the report explaining the reason as to why it was late.

ALL

17.7 June Board Meeting

It was agreed that the June meeting of the Link Group Board would be held in Watling House, Falkirk. Assistance with transport would be arranged.

JF

24.0 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 13th May 2014 in the Sievwright Suite, 2C New Mart Road, Edinburgh.

The Meeting closed at 5.50pm.