



Minutes of the Board Meeting held on Tuesday 15 September 2020 at 10:00 am via **Microsoft Teams**

Present:	Mr R Martin (Chair) Mr C Allan Mr I Dickson Ms C Cuthbertson Ms C Donaldson Mr J Flaherty Mr D Mackie Mr A Smith Ms P Biberbach	In attendance:	Mrs H Bayne Mr J Turner Mr N Pollard Mr N Hall Mrs J Green Ms F Pask Miss Megan Paton (minutes)
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Mr Martin advised that the running order of the agenda has been revised.

Action

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mr McDougal.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 August 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 26th August where approved.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 August 2020

There were no matters arising.

5. Chairs Update

The Board considered and noted the previously circulated report.

6.0 Chief Executive Update

The Board considered and noted the previously circulated report.

Mr Turner advised the Board a Strategy Day would take place in November and would be held virtually; it was agreed this would be

Action

split into two sessions. Ms Donaldson agreed to liaise with Mr Turner to coordinate each session.

FOUNTAIN BRIDGE UPDATE

7.0 Fountain Bridge

This item was discussed under agenda item 15 Any other Business.

8.0 HOUSING SERVICES

8.1 LA Q1 Write Offs

The Board considered and discussed the previously circulated report.

The Board approved the proposed write offs of £32,577.89.

8.2 Rent Consultation

The Board considered and discussed the previously circulated report.

Mrs Green advised the Board that she was seeking approval on the rent consultation proposal and timescales as well as approving delegation to the Senior Management Group to decide the final rent increase all-in a range of 1.5% to 2.5%.

Mrs Green further advised the Board a paper would be submitted to the Board in January with the final recommendation.

The Board approved the consultation process, timescales, and delegates a decision on the final rent increase consultation figures to the Senior Management Group within an all-in range of 1.5% to 2.5%.

8.3 Gas Servicing Q1

The Board considered and noted the previously circulated report.

8.4 Water Management Q1

The Board considered and noted the previously circulated report.

14 Welfare Reform Strategy

The Board considered and noted the previously circulated report.

Mrs Green advised the Board that the completion of claims transitioning to Universal has been deferred until 2022/2023 however noted there had been an increase of Universal Credit Claims.

Mrs Green further advised the Board a section has been added to the Strategy to reflect the principles of how Link has and continues

to manage the impacts of the Covid 19 pandemic, which relate directly to the objectives and aims of the strategy.

Mr Martin enquired if there had been communication with the Department of Working Pensions in relation to furlough ending. Mrs Green advised there had been no direct contact regarding this.

9.0 COMMERCIAL SERVICES

9.1 Development Sub Committee

The Board considered and noted the previously circulated report.

Mr Martin noted how quickly teams have been able to get back onto site safely and efficiently, Ms Biberbach noted thanks to Mr Culross and his team.

Ms Cuthbertson queried where risk lies with Link Group and Dundas Building Company compared to other contracts. Mr Turner advised a summary of different types of contractual routes would be provided at November's Board meeting. Ms Biberbach noted a glossary would be beneficial for Board members. **Action**

Mr Martin advised a volunteer was required from the Link Group Board to join the Development Sub Committee. Ms Cuthbertson volunteered to join the Development Sub Committee on a trial basis.

9.2 Off the Shelf Property Acquisitions

The Board considered and noted the previously circulated report.

Mrs Bayne joined the meeting.

10 GROUP SERVICES

10.1 Overall Staff Pay Awards

The Board considered and noted the previously circulated report.

10.2 Financial Report

The Board considered and noted the previously circulated report.

10.3 Quarterly Loan Covenant Compliance

The Board considered and noted the previously circulated report.

The Board noted that Link had not breached any of its loan covenants in the period to 7 September 2020 and to the date of the meeting. It was further noted that it was not anticipated that Link would fail to meet any of its covenants in the period until the next review is due as there were no circumstances foreseen that would cause any covenant breaches.

10.4 Key Performance Indicators

The Board considered and noted the previously circulated report.

10.5 TPT Financial Assessment

The Board considered and noted the previously circulated report.

11 ANNUAL ASSURANCE STATEMENT

Board considered and discussed the previously circulated report.

The Board reviewed the work undertaken and by Link Group Limited, noting that the Senior Management Group had confirmed that there were no material issues which required disclosure in the Annual Assurance Statement.

Mr Allan queried whether a materiality comment in the Annual Assurance statement is required, Mr Turner advised he would contact Harper McLeod to query this and contact Mr Allan and Mr Martin once a response is received.

The Board approved the Annual Assurance Statement and agreed that the statement would confirm that we have considered appropriate systems, evidence, and channels of communication to ensure we comply with:

- ***all relevant regulatory requirements set out in chapter 3 of the regulatory framework***
- ***all relevant standards and outcomes in the Scottish Housing Charter***
- ***all relevant legislatives duties***
- ***the Standards of Governance and Financial Management***

Ms Biberbach left the meeting.

12 Sustainability Agenda

Mr Turner advised the Board the Sustainability Group is currently working on a framework to detail future next steps. Mr Turner further advised Ritterwald had completed their assessment on the organisation and Link was awaiting the final confirmation from Ritterwald regarding the accreditation.

13. POLICIES AND STRATEGIES Model Complaints Handling Procedure

Board considered and discussed the previously circulated report.

The Board approved the Model Complaints Handling Procedure

14 Welfare Reform Strategy

This item was discussed under item 8.4 Water Management Q1.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

15 Any Other Business

Mr Martin advised the Board Ms M Catterall had officially resigned for the Board.

Mr Flaherty enquired how progress with Weslo was going, Mr Turner advised the Board himself and Mr Hall would be attending the Weslo Board on Wednesday 23rd September and was currently setting up the Board Liaison Group between Weslo and Link Group Board.

Ms F Pask Joined the meeting

7 Fountain Bridge

The Board considered and noted the previously circulated report.

Mr Turner advised the Board a letter addressed to Link Housing Association Limited had been received from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) on 21 August and required a response by 2 October 2020. The letter had contained recommendations which had already been implemented soon after the incident took place so there was no further action required.

The HSE letter had been shared with the solicitors appointed by Link's insurers and the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR), given that although the incident had not involved Link Group Limited as the Registered Social Landlord, the SHR had been informed as the incident could generate negative publicity for Link.

The Board noted that although the solicitors acting for the insurers were also acting for Link, Harper MacLeod had been asked to provide further context for the Board around the HSE investigations and potential next steps.

Ms Pask explained to the Board that the matter mainly now rested with the Procurator Fiscal (PF) who may consider that criminal proceedings should be instigated but that would only happen if the PF is satisfied that sufficient evidence existed to prove beyond reasonable doubt that an offence had been committed and that it would be in the public interest to prosecute. In addition, the PF may order a Fatal Accident Enquiry.

Ms Pask advised that although the HSE had requested a response to the letter by 2 October 2020 the incident may not be concluded for some time.

The Board considered and discussed the position and agreed that the first course of action was to respond to the HSE letter and delegated authority to the Audit and Risk Committee to approve the response once the insurers had decided what they wished to be said.

Mrs Bayne explained that the Senior Management Group was carrying out a review of all processes, procedures and training involving customer safety to ensure that there were no gaps in any area across Link and the outcome would be reported to the Board.

The meeting closed at 12:28

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Date of Next Meeting **Tuesday 17 November 2020.**