



Minutes of the Board Meeting held on Tuesday 16 November 2021 at 11:00 am via **Microsoft Teams**

---

Present:	Mr R Martin (Chair) Mr D Bittleston Mr J Flaherty Mr D Mackie Ms J Pritchard Mr C Allan Mr P Kerr Ms P Biberbach Mr A Smith Ms S Blackhall	In attendance:	Mr J Turner Mrs H Bayne Mr N Hall Mr C Culross Ms S Smith  Miss Megan Paton (minutes)
----------	---	----------------	---

**1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

None.

**2. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Ms Cuthbertson and Mr Dickson.

**3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES HELD ON 21 SEPTEMBER 2021**

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 21 September were approved.

Moved: Mr Mackie  
Seconded: Mr Flaherty

**4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 September 2021**

None.

**5. CHAIR UPDATE**

The Board considered and discussed the previously circulated report.

**6. CHIEF EXECUTIVE UPDATE**

The Board considered and discussed the previously circulated report.

*Mr Murray joined the meeting.*

Mr Turner advised the Board after the November Board meeting where the annual rent consultation was discussed in detail the documents have now been finalised and the process launched with two options at 3.0% and 3.5%.

Mr Turner provided the Board with an update on Unite. Mr Murray agreed due to technical difficulties a separate session would be held with Board Members on Unite.

*Mr Murray left the meeting.*

Mr Turner presented a PowerPoint to the Board on progress against the Business Plan objectives for the year.

## **GROUP UPDATES**

### **7. COMMUNITIES**

#### **7.1 Communities Update**

The Board discussed and noted the previously circulated report.

Ms Smith advised the Board Link has been shortlisted in two categories at the Chartered Institute of Housing Scotland Housing Awards. The first category, *housing provider of the year and the second category, excellence in tenant scrutiny.*

Ms Smith further advised the Board of the success of Link Housing first online tenant conference - 'LinkFest', Ms Smith noted work is taking place around how to better improve tenant engagement after useful feedback from tenants at the conference.

The Board noted Link's internal advice team had passed the peer review stage of the Scottish National Standards accreditation in October 2021.

Ms Smith advised the Board LinkLiving's new fundraising campaign – Sponsor The Sparkle where businesses have been invited to help bring the sparkle back into the lives of people affected by trauma and disadvantage by sponsoring a LinkLiving Christmas star on West Bridge Mill, Kirkcaldy. Ms Smith noted all the stars have now been sold.

#### **7.2 Link Housing Association Write Off's -Q2**

The Board considered and discussed the previously circulated report.

The Board queried the Write Off Recharge value as detailed in the report as £16,16.19, correct figure £ £1616.19

***The Board approved the proposed write offs of £ 26,595.60 and credit balance of -£10,845.15. The Board further approved the proposed write off recharges totalling £32,473.50.***

### **7.3 Employability Strategy 2021-2024**

The Board considered and discussed the previously circulated report.

Ms Smith advised the Board the Employability Strategy provides the rationale and details of the employability activities to be undertaken towards meeting the aim of building sustainable communities for the period 2021/24. Ms Smith further advised a People Strategy will be developed to capture the employment opportunities undertaken by Link in its capacity as an employer, as opposed to a service provider. The Strategy will be the subject of consultation and future involvement of the Board.

***The Board approved the Employability Strategy 2021-24 and noted the contribution of the Employability Implementation Group activity to Link organisational objectives and the added value this brings to Link, our customers, stakeholders and communities.***

## **8. COMMERCIAL SERVICES**

### **8.1 Commercial Services Update**

The Board discussed and noted the previously circulated report.

The Board noted the impact Covid has had on planned and reactive maintenance. Mr Culross confirmed a reliable supply of bathrooms and kitchens have been sourced and works are taking place in terms of the investment programme.

### **8.2 Development Sub Committee**

The Board noted that the Development Sub Committee had approved the following 2 project's:

#### **PRE ACQUISITION & PRE TENDER RISK ASSESSMENT - COMMISSIONER STREET, BO'NESS**

- The Committee approved the request to acquire the site at Commissioner Street from GMC Ventures Ltd for £245,000 then, enter into a Development Agreement with them to deliver 30 units for social rent for the sum of £4,920,000.

#### **TENDER REPORT – BUTTERBIGGINS, PHASE 2, GLASGOW**

- The Committee approved the request to enter a Design and Build contract with Ashleigh (Scotland) Ltd for the

delivery of a new build development of 121 flatted units at Butterbiggins Road, Glasgow, in the sum of £20,626,752, with a subsequent revised total development cost of £24,046,970

## **9. CORPORATE SERVICES**

### **9.1 Corporate Services Update**

The Board considered and noted the previously circulated report.



### **9.2 Finance Report**

The Board considered and noted the previously circulated report.

Mr Hall advised the Board the current position is ahead of projection however delays in projects will have an impact on rent towards the end of the year. Mr Hall noted an error under Rental Income which states: *Rental income is £23.96 million (0.5%) lower than budget*, Mr Hall confirmed this should state around £117k.

Mr Hall confirmed although gearing is currently over business target this is not a concern as gearing increases as debt is taken on but reduces as completed properties are put on the balance sheet.

### **9.3 Quarterly Loan Covenant Compliance Report**

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 30 September 2021 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.

### **9.4 Key Performance Indicators – Q2**

The Board discussed and noted the previously circulated report.

### **9.5 Asset Management Health and Safety Report -Q2**

The Board discussed and noted the previously circulated report.

## **9.6 Board Membership**

The Board considered and noted the previously circulated report.

The board noted the following changes:

### **Larkfield Housing Association Ltd**

***Mr John Scott, Ms Tracey Thompson, Ms Elizabeth McLean, Mr Jim Lennon and Ms Carol Crawford have all been elected to the Larkfield Housing Association Board following the AGM.***

***Ms Alison Akhtar and Mr Ashley Brown have both resigned from the Board of Larkfield Housing Association.***

### **Horizon Housing Association Ltd**

***Ms Gina Colley has been appointed to the Board of Horizon Housing Association Ltd. Ms Colley is an architect who has a particular interest in accessible housing.***

### **West Highland Housing Association Ltd**

***Cllr Elaine Robertson has been appointed to the West Highland Housing Association Board as the 2<sup>nd</sup> council nominee to replace Cllr Andrew Vennard who resigned in February.***

## **9.7 Treasury Management Mid-Year Review**

The Board discussed and noted the previously circulated report.

## **9.8 Audit and Risk Committee**

The Board discussed and noted the previously circulated report.

## **9.9 Authorised Signatories**

The Board discussed and considered the previously circulated report.

***It was agreed that Link Group Limited's method of execution of any legal and contractual documents would be by any one of the following three methods:***

- 1. Any Board Member plus a witness***
- 2. The Secretary plus a witness***
- 3. An Authorised Signatory plus a witness***

***It was further agreed that the Authorised Signatories per 3 above would be:***

- The Chief Executive, Jonathan Mark Turner***

- ***The Group Director of Corporate Services and Company Secretary, James Neil Hall***
- ***The Link Group Director of Finance and Business Services Director, Nicholas Pollard***
- ***The Group Commercial Director, Colin Culross***
- ***The Link Group Director of People and Governance, Helen Bayne***
- ***The Managing Director, Link Housing Association Ltd, David Leslie Mackenzie***
- ***The Head of Finance, Tom Mallatratt***
- ***The Corporate Governance and Assurance Manager, Craig Ian Archibald***

### **9.10 Chair Recruitment**

The Board considered and discussed the previously circulated report.

*This item was discussed in item 9.11 Chair and Vice Chair Remuneration.*

### **9.12 Value for Money (VfM) Strategy**

The Board considered and discussed the previously circulated report.

Mr Turner advised the Board the development of a stand-alone VfM strategy is currently an outstanding internal audit action. Mr Turner suggested due to the progress of the business structure and the clear focus on 'sustainability' a separate strategy was no longer relevant. This view was strengthened by VfM having a clear place in each directorate's objectives and since VfM reporting will be incorporated in the year end Sustainability reporting that we are putting in place. This will ensure that the subject remains front and centre of the organisation and there is also a transparent and robust reporting mechanism.

**The Board noted the progress made against the value for money objectives and approved the recommendation for Value for Money reporting be incorporated in the year end Sustainability reporting rather than develop a standalone VfM strategy.**

### **9.13 HR 6 Monthly Report**

The Board discussed and noted the previously circulated report.

## **10. Diary Dates**

The Board noted the 2022 Board dates.

*Mr Martin, Mr Kerr, Mr Smith, and Ms Biberbach left the meeting.*

### **9.11 Chair and Vice Chair Remuneration**

The Board discussed and considered the previously circulated report.

The Board agreed that in the recruitment process to source a Chair to replace Mr Martin, who was now in his final term of office, a clear role description for the Link Group Board Chair was required and that that should be set by the Board in terms of what the Board required of the role. Mr Hall and Mr Turner agreed to look into similar organisations' job descriptions for the role of Chair and produce a paper for the January 2022 Board meeting. The Board further agreed for recruitment to start in the early new year and Mr Hall agreed to provide quotes from recruitment agencies for the January 2022 Board meeting..

**The Board approved the following recommendations:**

- **To increase the Chair's remuneration by 1% to a total of £16,387 per annum, effective from September 21 2021.**
- **To increase the remuneration of the Vice Chair (Corporate), Vice Chair (Communities) and Chair of Audit and Risk by 1% to £5,408 per annum, effective September 21 2021.**
- **To remunerate the Vice Chair (Commercial) at £5,408 per annum, effective September 21 2021.**
- **The Board agreed to review the Vice-Chair Roles after the new Chair had been appointed and before the 2022 AGM**

**11. Any other Business**

None.

**12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**Tuesday 18 January 2022 at 10:00am**

**Meeting Closed at 12:23**