



Minutes of the Board Meeting held on Tuesday 15 March 2022 at 10:00 am via **Microsoft Teams**

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

1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

It was noted that Ms Pritchard was a Horizon Board Member and that Mr Bittleston and Mr Mackie were both Board Members of West Highland Housing Association.

It was agreed that this declaration did not need made at future Board meetings.

2. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES HELD ON 24 FEBRUARY 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 24 February 2022 were approved subject to Mr Kerr being added to the attendance list.

Moved: Mr Mackie

Seconded: Mr Smith

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 FEBRUARY 2022

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 Turner provided the Board with an update on Unite. Mr Turner agreed to provide the Board with a further update after the meeting with ACAS and Unite on Thursday 17th March 2022.

The Board noted the next meeting scheduled in May would take place in New Mart Road in person. Mr Turner agreed to enquire whether Board Member IT devices could connect automatically to the Link network. JT

7. Link Group Business Plan Cover Report

The Board considered and discussed the previously circulated report.

7.1 Link Group Business Plan 2022

Mr Turner advised the Board the only material structural change to the Link Group Business plan for this year is that, with the new Sustainability Team in place, this area has become 'business as usual' within the Corporate Wellbeing directorate.

As a result of this, the stand-alone Sustainability section has become established in the overall objectives of that directorate and benefits also from a stand-alone Sustainability Strategy which is the subject of a separate board paper, agenda item 8.

The Board agreed to update the name of the plan from the: ' Link Group Sustainability Plan' to 'Link Group Business Plan.

Mr Turner confirmed that the Link Group Business Plan will be presented to each Partner Board. A video message summarising the Plan would also be created and made available to staff.

The Board approved the Link Group Business Plan 2022 to 2025.

7.2 Budgets 2022/23

The Board considered and discussed the previously circulated report.

Mr Pollard advised the Board the Link Group's overall operating performance in terms of rents, management costs per unit, voids and bad debts demonstrated that Link was performing well.

The Board noted the report detailed the forecast covenant levels and explained levels remain well within the thresholds set and the headroom in the financial plans with a £6.18M surplus being achieved. Mr Pollard advised that with wider economic concerns, including rising inflation and expected high levels of investment required to achieve net zero, future surpluses could be much lower.

The Board noted the rise in repair costs for C~urb is a result of a rise in material costs due to inflation.

Mr Turner confirmed the staff posts detailed within the Sustainability team are not new posts, they were re-allocated from the Asset Planning team with the exceptions to that being the posts of Head of Sustainability and the Sustainability Manager.

Mr Turner advised Board Members that the charging of costs across the group would be reviewed this year.

The Board approved the 2022/23 budgets.

8. 8 Sustainability Strategy

The Board considered and discussed the previously circulated report.

Mr Turner advised the Board Link is committed to embedding sustainability as part of its operating practices. The Strategy had been created to ensure tangible, measurable progress would be made.

The Board approved the Sustainability Strategy.

GROUP UPDATES

8. COMMUNITIES

9.1 Communities Update

The Board discussed and noted the previously circulated report.

9.2 Link Housing Association Write Offs

The Board considered and discussed the previously circulated report.

The Board approved the recommended Q3 write-off off's totalling £127,371.47

9.3 Asset Management Health and Safety Update

The Board discussed and noted the previously circulated report.

9. COMMERCIAL SERVICES

10.1 Commercial Services Update

The Board discussed and noted the previously circulated report.

10.2 C~urb Business Plan

The Board considered and discussed the previously circulated report.

The Board noted the C~urb Business Plan has been reviewed and approved by the C~urb Board. Mr Kerr advised the business plan had been well received by the Board.

The Board noted C~urb will launch formally on April 04 2022 following an extensive period of internal staff information events and consultation with other stakeholders.

Mr Kerr advised the Board that C~urb is primarily built environment led; building homes, managing homes and maintaining homes but its focus on service excellence and creating sustainable communities underpins its overarching objectives.

The Board approved the C~urb Business Plan.

10.3 Affordable Housing Development Governance Review

The Board considered and discussed the previously circulated report.

The Board noted the changes proposed would require Link's Standing Orders to be updated. The updated Standing Orders will be presented to the May Link Group Board for approval. The Board further noted the Development Procedures will also be updated.

The Board approved the principle to delegate authority from the Development Sub Committee effectively removing it from the governance process in lieu of the C~urb Board, subject to the criteria for approvals outlined within the report being established and implemented.

10.4 Disposals Report

The Board considered and discussed the previously circulated report.

The Board noted the land had been valued by an independent valuer at Nil value and the Council will meet Link's incurred costs of £4,686 + VAT.

The Board approved the recommendation to dispose of a small section of land adjacent to Auchinairn Primary School in Bishopbriggs to East Dunbartonshire Council (EDC).

10.5 Control of Variations Annual Update

The Board considered and discussed the previously circulated report.

10.6 Business Case: PSL 200 Property Acquisitions Extension 2022

The Board discussed and considered the previously circulated report.

The Board noted the original acquisition proposal was approved in March 2020. The initial approval was for 200 properties to be acquired through a range of market purchases contributing to Link's Private Sector Leasing (PSL) 2020 contract offer. The extension would allow for the purchase of an additional 100 properties. This would offset the anticipated spike in

PSL property hand-backs to private landlords due in 2023/24 and 2024/25 as a result of a natural end of lease.

The proposal would continue to contribute to stabilising the optimum PSL scheme numbers, with end-to-end management control, delivering both an internal rate of return (IRR) for Link Group and a management fee for PSL.

The Board approved the recommendation to purchase an additional 100 properties and secure the investment of £15million to fund the acquisitions.

10. CORPORATE SERVICES

11.1 Corporate Services Update

The Board considered and noted the previously circulated report.

11.2 Pay Award Accrual and IRPA

The Board considered and discussed the previously circulated report.

The Board approved the recommendation that Link Group Limited provides for the Tribunal claim of £125,889 apportioned across each affected entity and the pay award settlement of £517,200 in the 2021-22 accounts for Link Group Limited.

11.3 Finance Report

The Board discussed and noted the previously circulated report.

11.4 Quarterly Loan Covenant Compliance

The Board discussed and noted the previously circulated report.

The Board noted that Link had not breached any of its loan covenants in the period to 31st December 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.

11.5 Audit and Risk Update

The Board discussed and noted the previously circulated report.

11.6 Key Performance Indicators

The Board considered and discussed the previously circulated report.

Mr Hall advised the Board the Annual Return on the Charter will be presented to the Link Group Board in May and a report setting out Link's

performance compared to others for the 2021 ARC will be produced also.

11.7 Gift Aid

The Board considered and discussed the previously circulated report.

The Board approved the recommendation to donate £60,000 to the LinkGiving Trust.

The Board further approved the recommendation to resolve that the Gift Aid for the year ending 31 March 2022 is to be distributed as follows:

- ***Link Living Ltd - £268,000***
- ***Link Group Ltd – the balance of Gift Aid for the year ending 31 March 2022 after the above payment.***

11.8 Board Membership

The Board considered and discussed the previously circulated report.

The Board approved the appointment of Ms Paula Pyke as Chair of Link Housing Association.

The Board noted the appointment of Mr Ian Harrington to the Horizon Housing Association Board.

11.9 Scottish Widows Loan Funding Officers Certificates

The Board considered and discussed the previously circulated report.

The Board approved the recommendation for Link Group Limited, as borrower, to execute the Officers Certificate confirming matters as set out in that certificate, as attached to the circulated report. The Board further approved to delegate authority to the Group Chief Executive, the Group Director of Corporate Services, and the Group Director of Finance to execute the legal documents on behalf of the Board and the company.

11. Any other Business

Mr Turner advised the Board that Aspen, after obtaining further feedback, have updated the Chair job description. It was noted the advert would be live on Friday 18th March 2022 for 3-4 weeks.

Mr Hall agreed to circulate proposals to Board Members on how to progress the next steps of recruitment.

Ms Cuthbertson provided apologies for May Board.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 17 May 2022 at 10:00

Meeting Closed at 12:02