

Homes in Sedgemoor Board Meeting

The primary purpose of the board meeting is to provide oversight and strategic guidance to the business, to address important matters, to assess emerging risks and trends, and make decisions.

APPROVED Minutes of the Non-Confidential Board Meeting held via Teams and in the Sedgemoor Room at Bridgwater House on Tuesday 30 January 2024 at 1pm

Board Members:	Chris Fisher Cllr Kathy Pearce Cllr Lance Duddridge Cllr Pauline Ham Jen Vernon Marie Hide Olly Keates Paul Hackett Paul Stephenson (Chair)	Chris F Kathy Lance Pauline H Jen Marie Olly Paul H Paul S
In Attendance:	Ben Lane, Director of Finance and Performance Claire Tough, Director of Communities & Customer Service Naomi Macey, Director of Asset Management and Safety Pauline Kelly, Executive Assistant (<i>minutes</i>) Peter Hatch, Chief Executive	Ben Claire Naomi Pauline K Peter
Guests in person:	Chris Brown, Service Director - Housing Chris Hall, Executive Director – Community Services, SC Craig Green, STAC member Julia Paling, Head of People & Communications (<i>joined for the IIP Results Presentation slot</i>) Ros Griffiths, STAC member Sarah O’Neill, STAC Chair	Chris B Chris H Craig Julia Ros Sarah
NO.	ITEM	
1a.	Presentation Slot (<i>Julia Paling</i>) Customer Driven: Inspiring Colleagues – IIP Results	
	Julia gave an update on the IIP results. A copy of the presentation to be uploaded on the portal.	
1b.	Presentation Slot (<i>Chris Brown</i>) HRA Budget Setting 2024/25 Report	
	Chris gave an update on the HRA budget setting for 2024/25. A copy of the presentation to be uploaded onto the portal.	
2.	Welcome Guests	
	Paul welcomed Board members, attendees, and guests to the meeting.	
	Apologies	
	No apologies to record.	
3.	Declarations of Interest	
	There were no further declarations other than those previously recorded on Board Members’ Declaration of Interests Forms.	

Chair Initials: 

4.	Minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2023
	<p>All members agreed that the minutes recorded are a true record subject to the following addition.</p> <p>Item 15: Governance Framework Review: Board, Committee and Chair Effectiveness Questionnaire – Jen requested that the minutes include her action that Board also looks at areas of the survey where external stakeholders marked the Board lower than the Board did. Board will examine these areas.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board NOTED and APPROVED the minutes.
5.	Matters Arising from the meeting held on 28 November 2023
	<p>Members noted the matters arising.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board NOTED and APPROVED the matters arising.
6.	Chair’s Update
	<p>No questions were raised regarding the report.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board NOTED the contents of the report.
7.	Chief Executive’s Update
	<p>No questions were raised. Peter thanked Board and STAC members who would be joining ET at the Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) visit on Wednesday 31 January.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board NOTED the contents of the report.
8.	Chair of Audit & Risk Update
	<p>No questions were raised regarding the report.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board NOTED the contents of the report.
9.	STAC Update (verbal)
	<p>Sarah confirmed Martin Heard had resigned following a change in job role. Claire to thank Martin for all his work. Next meeting planned for 1 February.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board NOTED the verbal update
10.	Health & Safety Policy Review and Corporate Framework 2024 (Annual)
	<p>Jen raised the question on how we are funding the new external Health & Safety Advisor. Peter confirmed this is an existing line in the budget and will be carried over.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board APPROVED the 2024 H&S Policy and Statement of Intent, and ENDORSED the 2024 Health and Safety Framework

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11.	Revenue Budget Position, Draft Capital Budget Proposal and Management Fee 2024/25
	<p>Final budget will come to March Board for approval. Business plan has been refreshed and will go to Full Council in February. Management Agreement fee is being uplifted by 4.2% (not in line with September inflation which would have been 6.7%), in addition to an unchanged 8% for managing the capital works programme. Capital Programme is scheduled to be lower than this year. Impact of this is that we have a year-on-year income reduction of £60k.</p> <p>Pay rise was higher this year than budgeted and will need to be funded for next year. Main area to note is we will see potentially higher compliance budgets next year as we go into our cycle of works.</p> <p>The plan between now and March Board is for ET to look at opportunities to get a more balanced budget without going against the priorities from Board.</p> <p>Paul S noted that next year looks like a particularly difficult year and potentially not achieving a balanced budget as we wanted to. He asked if ET think this is a one-year pressure and could we get back on track in 25/26, as Board need the reassurance we can get to the balanced budget. Members clearly understand the reasons why we have not reached our target for 2024/25 at this early stage in the budget process.</p> <p>Ben confirmed progress will be discussed in the February Audit & Risk Committee meeting to enable ET to give Board assurance that this is a one off or if any changes are required.</p> <p>Jen asked what we are not doing that we planned to do because of this drop. Ben reiterated there are some years when higher spend is needed due to the programme of works.</p> <p>Olly raised the issue around staff agency fees and why these have increased. Ben confirmed that during the current year we have experienced some difficulties in recruiting to establishment roles, however, we have filled the roles that are paramount. Establishment savings on permanent roles have been made but these are offset by much higher agency costs.</p> <p>Paul H noted that the compliance works uplift should be in the Asset Management Plan and therefore not come as a surprise. He also noted fluctuations in Q4 spend for the capital budget over the last couple of years and that Board need assurance this will be brought under control in future years so that the full capital budget is utilised.</p> <p>In relation to the income diversity programme, members asked ET if there are any opportunities available to increase our income streams which do not pull us away from our core function. Is the potential additional income worth the upheaval for colleagues and the cost of this? Ben responded that ET will be reviewing this area in the coming weeks and revisiting previous options under consideration.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NOTED the current Revenue Budget position for 2024/25 and the next steps outlined in the report. • APPROVED subject to final Somerset Council (SC) approval, the Management Agreement Fee for 2024/25. • APPROVED subject to the next steps outlined in the report, and subject to final Somerset Council (SC) approval, the Capital Budget proposal for 2024/25.

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12.	Key Performance Indicator Proposals and Targets 2024/25
	<p>KPI and Targets proposals were put forward for the organisation to monitor during 2024/25 with no significant changes. Headlines to mention are 22 TSMs feature in the wider Board pack and these 22 TSMs also feature in the Management Agreement suite which also go to Board, ARC and ET.</p> <p>Further consultation work to be done, with Ben attending the STAC meeting on 1 February to discuss their thoughts on this paper. Ben noted that on the schedule shared, there is one KPI that would be seen by ET but not Board (Customer satisfaction that service charges provide VFM). This was an oversight and will be corrected in the final schedule to ensure that Board see all 61 KPIs that ET see.</p> <p>Management Agreement KPIs for Somerset Council are shared with Chris B and Dave Baxter. Chris B is keen to explore how these targets fit with the in-house targets and Ben is looking at alignment options.</p> <p>Marie raised the question on Void KPIs and if they were within the new 2% Somerset Council target. Ben confirmed they are currently operating at 1.58%.</p> <p>Paul S queried the reason behind reducing the Complaints Handling to 65%. Claire confirmed we are asking customers the direct question <i>is the issue a complaint or a service requirement?</i> From the response we then manage the issue in the correct way and, where possible, looking to resolve at the first point of call. This has all be taken from the scrutiny. It is noted that we are looking to exceed the target of 65% but even 65% is a significant increase on our current position (c40%).</p>
	ACTION
	Ben to incorporate all 61 KPIs into the Board KPI schedule.
	<p>RESOLVED</p> <p>Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • REVIEWED and RECOMMENDED any changes to the proposed KPIs, targets and audiences for 2024/25. • APPROVED the proposed KPIs, targets and audiences for 2024/25, subject to acceptance by STAC and the Clienting Officer at Somerset Council (SC).
13.	Key Partnerships Position Statement (following October BAD)
	<p>Claire gave a brief update and thanked Jen for her very useful questions. Defining how we measure development of partnerships is a key task going forward and Claire is looking at a starting point of drafting a matrix and questionnaire to help assess current position, build innovation, efficiency, and address any challenges.</p>
	<p>RESOLVED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board NOTED the contents of the report.
14.	Corporate Strategy (Six Monthly Review)
	<p>Jen noted the Engagement and Influence Strategy and asked if Board could have sight (for information only) of an update on progress. as this would be useful for members to see. Claire agreed to include a briefing note in the March Board pack.</p> <p>'Customer First' Refresher Training is largely embedded with existing colleagues and training given to new starters to bring them up to our standard and ways of working. Volume of issues around customer service is minimum. Rachel has also rolled this training out to contractors, and</p>

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we are starting to see this being embedded. It is obvious to see we are a very customer focused organisation.

Fit for the Future – Stock Condition Survey Pilot: This will begin in April and ET will keep Board updated on progress.

LA Housing Fund for Displaced Persons: This national fund is providing homes for Ukrainians and Afghans. SC are leading and the homes purchased are being managed but HiS or SC in-house team depending on their location. We have already taken on some properties under this scheme.

Mock Inspection: Following a request from Marie for an update, Claire confirmed the team are gathering all the evidence and uploading into a file. Looking at carrying out a desktop exercise between HiS and SC. HiS to draft a template to be used by both organisations. Claire will draft the overview for a mock inspection, and this will start our evidence gathering. Board will receive regular updates and a full report on the findings of the mock inspection will come to May Board.

Marie noted that ARC have asked Ben to align key risks within the Risk Register to Board champions to ensure that champions are fully informed.

Following completion of the inspection, key documents, risks, and action plans will be available to educate the reader on which documents sit under each topic. Following the investigations, we will end up with a fact sheet and champions can then dive deeper into this information. Claire confirmed this exercise is to find gaps and not to fill them.

ACTION

Claire to include a briefing note on progress against the Engagement and Influence Strategy in the March Board pack.

RESOLVED

- Board **NOTED** the contents of the report.

15. Compliance Update

Compliance Report – December 2023

Highlights noted were RAAC surveys started again in January, Damp Mould and Condensation cases stand at 41 in the month of December and lift servicing is improving.

Damp, Mould, and Condensation (Six Monthly Review)

Positive customer feedback received on the action plan. Jen noted the results were a reflection of great teamwork and asked Naomi to send congratulations to all the team.

Accident Investigation Learning Update

Following the incident at Walter Barnett House, Naomi confirmed the customer was recovering well and we have additional support from the ILS team in place. Following updates to the Executive Team and Health & Safety Forum meetings, the company have been suspended and risk potential removal from our list of contractors. RIDDOR paperwork has been completed however the company are not fully cooperating with us regarding historic recorded information. We are seeking legal advice and confirming our position

Peter confirmed we have work to do on Procurement and Management of Contractors. Alan Turner (H&S Advisor) is working with the team and Jo Hutchins. This will include an audit of existing contracts. Audit & Risk Committee had already picked up on contractor management and these risks are on the register. Paul S asked if funding for Alan Turner’s services is provided for in next year’s budget. Peter confirmed that it was.

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	<p>Westfield House Fire Evacuation Simulation</p> <p>Naomi advised Board that the Fire and Rescue Service held a simulation event on Thursday 25 January. The exercise was well organised and resident engagement excellent. HiS team will draft a debrief and lessons learned report, with the written record to be circulated. The Fire and Rescue Service would like to conduct this exercise once a year and we will use these simulations to ensure our Business Continuity Plan is fit for purpose. Our thanks have been sent to all participating parties and colleagues.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board NOTED the contents of the report.
16.	<p>Health & Safety Performance Review (Six Monthly Update)</p> <p>No questions raised.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board NOTED the contents of the report.
17.	<p>Sustainability by Design Update</p> <p>No questions raised.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board NOTED the contents of the report.
18.	<p>ICT & Digital Strategy (Six Monthly Review)</p> <p>Jen asked if the new technologies introduced under the strategy have made a difference? Ben confirmed that they had.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board NOTED the progress on the ICT and Digital Strategy and Action Plan during the last six months.
19.	<p>Management Accounts – December 2023 (including Capital Investment Programme Update)</p> <p>Audit & Risk Committee were updated on the overspend in the capital programme during their December meeting. Following a meeting with Somerset Council, Naomi advised members that a new plan for works had been drafted to bring the spend back in line with budget.</p> <p>Paul S requested an update on the latest position of the capital programme. Naomi confirmed that the budget is now back on track but that the postponement of works to Westfield House (due to the Building Safety Regulator) had necessitated bringing forward works from next year.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board NOTED the management accounts to month nine of 2023/24 (Apr to Dec).
20.	<p>Key Performance Indicators – December 2023</p> <p>Relet times have increased to 55.1 days. Members requested that an additional column be added to show the HiS TSM results for direct comparison against both sector and ALMOs. Members noted the very rewarding and positive results which show HiS are outranking both areas.</p> <p>Jen noted Complaints results are struggling nationally and asked what plans are in place for moving forward. Jen also raised her concern for colleagues and their wellbeing. Claire confirmed</p>

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	<p>colleagues can take something personally regardless of vindication following an investigation process.</p> <p>On a positive note, and as a result of the scrutiny, the team are asking customers at the first point of call if the issue is a service request or formal complaint. In practice this should help deal with issues more quickly. Rachel is joining up complaints with service for improvements.</p>
	<p>ACTION</p>
	<p>Ben to add an additional column to the TSM results to show comparisons with both the sector and ALMOs.</p>
	<p>RESOLVED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board NOTED the key performance indicator results for the first nine months (Apr-Dec 2023) of 2023/24.
21.	AOB
	<p>Paul S brought members’ attention to Briefing notes 4 and 8. Note 4 is a recent piece of research on comparative ALMO and local authorities’ VFM performance. Pleasingly, the results demonstrate the ALMO advantage. Note 8 is the latest Sector Risk Profile from the Regulator of Social Housing and Paul recommended that all members read it.</p>

Confirmed as a true record of the meeting

Signed: 

Name (Chair): Paul Stephenson

Date: 26 March 2024

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