

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 in the Sedgemoor Room at Bridgwater House on Tuesday 24 September 2024 at 1pm

Board Members:	Chris Fisher Cllr Kathy Pearce Cllr Lance Duddridge Marie Hide Oliver Keates Paul Hackett Paul Stephenson (Chair) Cllr Pauline Ham	Chris F Kathy Lance Marie Olly Paul H Paul S Pauline H
In Attendance:	Ben Lane, Director of Finance & Performance Claire Tough, Director of Communities & Customer Service Naomi Macey, Director of Asset Management and Safety Pauline Kelly, Executive Assistant (<i>minutes</i>)	Ben Claire Naomi Pauline K
Guests:	Ann Hooper, Involved Tenant Group Chris Hall, Executive Director Community, Place & Economy, Somerset Council Craig Green, Sedgemoor Tenants Assurance Committee (STAC) Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts, Lead member for Communities, Housing Revenue Accounts, Culture and Equalities & Diversity, Somerset Council Ian Cook, Involved Tenant Group Kim Handsford, STAC Ros Griffiths, STAC	Ann Chris H Craig Federica Ian Kim Ros
NO.	ITEM	
1.	Welcome Guest	
	Paul S welcomed all to the meeting. Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts joined the meeting at 1.45pm.	
	Apologies	
	Apologies received from Jen Vernon (Board Member), Peter Hatch (Chief Executive Officer) and Sarah O'Neill (Chair of the STAC).	
2.	Declarations of Interest	
	There were no further declarations from Board members other than those previously recorded on Board Members' Declaration of Interests Forms.	
3.	Minutes of the meeting held on 30 July 2024	
	Members agreed that the minutes recorded are a true record of the meeting.	
	RESOLVED	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board NOTED and APPROVED the minutes. 	

4.	Matters Arising from meeting held on 30 July 2024
	Members noted the matters arising.
	RESOLVED
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board NOTED the Matters Arising.
5.	Elections of Roles, Confirmation of Committee Membership and Board Champion Roles
	Nominations were received for roles, proposals for Committee membership and allocation of Board champions to topics.
	All proposals covered the period 24 September 2024 to the next Annual General Meeting in September 2025 unless otherwise stated, except for Councillor nominations to the Board. Councillor nominations are confirmed by Somerset Council (SC) in May each year and run until the following May. Discussions will commence with SC colleagues well in advance of May 2025 to identify the next years' nominations and in doing so avoid any potential quoracy issue.
	Members approved elections to roles, confirmation of committee memberships and Board champion roles.
	RESOLVED
	The Board:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Considered and APPROVED the re-appointment of Paul Stephenson as Chair of the Board. b) Considered and APPROVED the re-appointment of Jenny Vernon as Vice Chair of the Board until the end of her nine-year term on 21st July 2025. c) Considered and APPROVED the following re-appointments and appointments to the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Cllr Lance Duddridge (Council Board Member) - reappointment ii. Paul Hackett (Ordinary Board Member) - reappointment iii. Marie Hide (Tenant Board Member) - reappointment iv. Jenny Vernon (Ordinary Board Member) – reappointment - <i>until 21st July 2025</i> v. Oliver Keates (Ordinary Board Member) – appointment d) Considered and APPROVED the appointment of Marie Hide as Chair of the ARC. e) Considered and APPROVED the appointment of Paul Hackett as Vice Chair of the ARC. f) Considered and APPROVED the reappointment of James Menhenitt as Co-optee to the ARC. g) Considered and APPROVED the following re-appointments and appointments to the STAC. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Mrs Karen Wilce - reappointment ii. Mr Craig Green - reappointment iii. Mrs Rosalind Griffiths - reappointment iv. Mrs Sarah O'Neill - reappointment v. Mr Scott Macfarlane – reappointment vi. Ms Samantha Moore – appointment vii. Ms Kim Handsford – appointment

	<p>h) Considered and APPROVED the re-appointment of Sarah O'Neill as Chair of the STAC.</p> <p>i) Considered and APPROVED the appointment of Craig Green as Vice Chair of the STAC.</p> <p>j) Considered and APPROVED the re-appointment of Cllr Lance Duddridge to the position of Councillor Board Member on the STAC.</p> <p>k) Considered and APPROVED the re-appointment of Chris Fisher to the position of Board Member on the STAC.</p> <p>l) Considered and APPROVED the allocation of Board Members to Board Champion roles for various topics as shown in Appendix A.</p>
6.	<p>Chair's Update</p> <p>No questions or queries raised.</p> <p>Paul S thanked Aimee Payne and Pauline Hayes for their commitment to STAC following their resignations.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board NOTED the contents of the report.
7.	<p>Chief Executive's Update</p> <p>No questions or queries raised.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board NOTED the contents of the report.
8.	<p>Chair of Audit & Risk Update</p> <p>No questions or queries raised.</p> <p>The Board were reminded that the remit of the ARC has been reviewed following the Board Effectiveness review meaning that items such as the Management Accounts and the Key Performance Indicators will be presented to the Board in the future without having been reviewed by the ARC beforehand.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board NOTED the contents of the report.
9.	<p>STAC Update</p> <p>No questions or queries raised.</p> <p>Paul S welcomed new members Kim Handsford and Sam Moore, following the positive recruitment drive and warmly welcomed Craig Green's appointment as Vice Chair to the STAC.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board NOTED the contents of the report.
10.	<p>STAC Terms of Reference (TOR)</p> <p>Changes to the TOR were identified in the STAC update with committee members in agreement that increasing the number of members would improve attendance challenges. The refreshed TOR reflect the requirements of the new consumer standards and STAC's role in monitoring performance against those standards.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board NOTED and APPROVED the proposed TOR for the STAC.

11.	Contract Standing Orders (CSOs) Review and Implementation Strategy to respond to the Procurement Act 2023
	<p>The refreshed CSOs and associated procurement decision tree is scheduled to come into effect in February 2025, in preparation for the introduction of the Procurement Act 2023. Procurement support provided by SC through a Service Level Agreement (SLA) has ended with no options available to continue the support historically received. Additional support is essential to ensure full compliance with the requirements of the act.</p> <p>The CSOs are complex, and as such Paul S appreciated the decision tree. Ollly enquired about the confidence in securing resourcing with Ben. Ben confirmed the position of a procurement specialist has been secured for a six-month period to help prepare for the new Act.</p> <p>Administrative support, if the bid from reserves is approved by members, will address the capacity requirement which will be needed to respond to the requirements of new Act .</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>The Board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NOTED the Summary Implications of the Procurement Act 2023 and preparations that are underway to respond to it. • APPROVED the CSOs which will come into effect on 24 February 2025. • NOTED the updated Procurement Decision Tree which will come into effect on 24 February 2025.
12.	Review of Reserves and Request for Funding
	<p>Approval was sought for the allocation of funds from reserves for additional funding for the Digital and ICT Strategy; due diligence work associated with Project 24, resource for the development feasibility studies and additional resource for Procurement. Ben confirmed balances will remain well above the minimum reserves limit should the Board approve these requests. A summary overview of the reserve position at the end of 2023/24 was presented, alongside a forecast of reserve balances over the next five years.</p> <p>Additional resource would be required in the future as we look to develop as an organisation and deliver the ambitions contained in the Corporate Strategy. A positive response to these requests has been received from our SC partners. Members reiterated that reserves should be used in accordance with the Reserves Policy. The Board Champion for Finance confirmed that the requests are in line with the requirements of the Policy and that it is for the Board to consider whether they wish to support the requests.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NOTED the updated reserve position. • APPROVED the allocation of £125k from reserves to increase the level of funding previously allocated to deliver the Digital and ICT Strategy. • APPROVED the allocation of £60k to support the due diligence work associated with Project 24.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APPROVED the allocation of £105k to provide resource for Development Feasibility Studies. • APPROVED the allocation of £46k to provide resource to respond to the Procurement Act 2023. • NOTED the update provided on the previously approved £100k Enriching Partnership allocation.
13.	Accounting Policies Annual Review – 2024/25
	<p>The proposed Accounting Policies for 2024/25 have been reviewed by the External Auditors. No changes since the 2023/24 version are proposed. No questions or queries were raised and members were happy to approve the accounting policies for 2024/25.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board APPROVED the Accounting Policies for use by Homes in Sedgemoor when preparing the 2024/25 financial statements.
14.	Anti-Theft, Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy
	<p>The policy had been presented to the September ARC meeting for review and is recommended to the Board for approval. Auditor input has been received and their role in supporting HiS with the management of theft, fraud, bribery and corruption is referenced in the policy and other supporting documents. ARC approved a refreshed theft, fraud, bribery and corruption response plan and a proposed fraud risk register.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board APPROVED the Anti-Theft, Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy.
15.	Chair of Audit and Risk – Annual Performance Review 2023/24
	<p>The annual performance review provided the Board with a summary overview of the activities of the ARC during 2023/24. Paul S thanked the committee members for their commitment in giving assurance to Board members throughout the year.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board NOTED the contents of the report.
16.	Risk Management – Corporate Risk Register – September 2024 and Proposed Risks Going Forward
	<p>The ARC was content with the register and is therefore able to provide assurance to the Board accordingly. The register is reviewed at each ARC and by the Executive Team (ET) in advance of each committee meeting.</p> <p>Paul S asked non-ARC members if they were satisfied with the coverage of the proposed risks going forward. Members felt, following comments by Paul S, that the proposed strategic corporate risks might need to be revisited after the Government’s budget announcements in the Autumn.</p> <p>Marie advised that the informal ARC meeting, held before each Board meeting to discuss the risk register, is open for Board members to join as an observer if they wish. The committee’s emphasis is to keep the risk register active and relevant with regular updates provided to the Board.</p> <p>Chris H proposed adding risk register alignment to the quarterly clienting meetings for transparency, if not already on the agenda. Ben confirmed DTP recommend that the Board should have access to the detailed risk register in addition to the summary provided.</p>

	<p>Ben proposed that the detailed register could be uploaded to the Board Member portal for viewing. All members agreed with this proposal.</p> <p>Kathy asked if non-ARC members would be kept informed of any issues emerging against the risks for which they are assigned in their capacity as Board Champion. Ben confirmed that the Executive Team lead would reach out to the relevant Board champion accordingly.</p> <p>ACTION</p> <p>Pauline to ensure Risk Register Alignment is an item on future Quarterly HiS/SC Partnership meeting agendas.</p> <p>Ben to arrange for the full corporate risk register to be uploaded to the portal and replaced when updates have been made.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NOTED this summary report following a full review of the refreshed risk register at the ARC in September. • NOTED the proposed reduced risks discussed and accepted at the ARC meeting. • AGREED that the detailed risk register should be uploaded onto the Board Member portal given their overall responsibility for managing risk.
17.	<p>Sustainability By Design Update</p>
	<p>Naomi noted that under Project Matrix, teams are focused on working together in registering property information such as the potential impact on properties (ie damp, mould & condensation (DMC)), age profiles and vulnerable customer profiles. Substantial work is being carried out regarding DMC - we are implementing DMC sensors to pinpoint issues more accurately and enable teams to be more proactive. Although now considered to be business as usual, Paul S asked that we keep this at the top of the list now that the winter season is approaching.</p> <p>Wave 3 of the Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund (formerly known as the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund) has been delayed. The new Government has indicated it will still proceed, but no new date yet. Naomi confirmed we need to bid for as much funding as we can deliver, with teams drafting a plan to show what funds we could utilise and to ensure we have the capacity to execute this level of work within the organisation. We need to balance our activities to ensure our investment requirements for the projects are as efficient as possible.</p> <p>Marie asked if we were aware of any changes in Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) regulations. Naomi confirmed we are developing our standards accordingly and working with Savills on an asset management strategy to ensure we are fit for the future. The joint strategy between HiS and SC is progressing, and we aim to have it ready for Board approval soon. We are collaborating with Savills and SC to refine the proposal. Savills will finalise the project plan shortly and we expect to complete the stock evaluation by the end of Q4.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board NOTED the update on Sustainability By Design.

18.	People Plan (Six Monthly Review)
	<p>Reference to the Psychologically Informed Environment (PIE) model was noted in the report, with Paul S in agreement that it is the right approach to consider within our business. The progress in other areas is impressive.</p> <p>Resilience training is being considered, with Claire noting that the cases being encountered are increasingly complex. It is essential to ensure that our officers can manage and collaborate with multiple agencies, using this as a tool to enhance their capabilities. Moreover, it is important for officers to understand the concept of letting go, providing support without becoming overly involved, managing their time efficiently, and taking care of their own well-being. Claire reiterated the team are young, and it is crucial for line managers to support them effectively.</p> <p>Paul S thanked Julia for the comprehensive report.</p>
	<p>RESOLVED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board NOTED the contents of the report.
19.	Management Accounts – August 2024
	<p>Board members were reminded that the Management Accounts report is no longer reviewed by the ARC prior to presentation to the Board.</p> <p>Reserves are steady. The 2024/25 pay Award for staff groups remains uncertain. Small favourable year end variance currently being forecast.</p> <p>The capital programme allocates 8% of each pound delivered to support management fees, with a small amount of slippage against the capital programme allowed for in the current management fee forecast. Current capital spending is on track with expectations. There is commendable progress being made by the Assets & Safety team.</p>
	<p>RESOLVED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board NOTED the management account for the first five months 2024/25 (April - August 2024).
20.	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) – August 2024
	<p>Board members were reminded that the KPI report is no longer reviewed by the ARC prior to presentation to the Board.</p> <p>Outstanding results for both Overall Satisfaction and Arrears, with KPIs being in a very good place.</p> <p>Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB): we now have an ASB lead and supporting officer in place, however it is crucial that the team manage expectations, working in collaboration with agencies and the police. Injunctions are used to support tenants to continue living in their homes rather than opting for enforcement. The team handle high-level cases as they arise.</p> <p>Paul S asked Claire if a report on ASB, including potential issues, could be drafted in time for November Board for discussion, debate and to enable members to understand the issues.</p> <p>Property-related: repairs have been completed, however there has been a decline in meeting target times. Naomi confirmed there is a lot of old data that is currently being cleansed. The main issue is the additional workload created by TSMs, which caused us to fall behind on administrative tasks. A resource has been brought in to help us get up to date and implement new procedures moving forward.</p>

	<p>ACTION</p> <p>Claire to draft an ASB report (including potential issues) and bring back to November Board for discussion and debate.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board NOTED the KPI results for the first five months of 2024/25.
21.	<p>Compliance Summary & Dashboard – August 2024</p> <p>There were two important updates to note.</p> <p>(1) Work has begun on window restrictors in response to recent high-profile cases in the sector. A comprehensive programme has commenced to ensure all necessary measures are in place and ongoing checks are conducted. There will be a resource requirement to put in place window restrictors in the properties managed by HiS which may require a growth bid.</p> <p>(2) A compliance issue was identified relating to two new Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) properties resulting in them being let without a gas service being undertaken. Our processes detected this prior to any issues occurring, and arrangements are in place now to prevent a reoccurrence. Members noted the issue and were satisfied that our processes are robust enough to prevent a reoccurrence cover all areas.</p> <p>Alan Turner is planning to retire; however, he will be staying in place until a replacement is found. Paul S reiterated that the report is viewed and discussed at the Health & Safety Forum meetings.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board NOTED the contents of the report.
22.	<p>AOB: Briefing Note 4 – Value for Money (VFM) Quadrant: Rent Arrears and Collection</p> <p>The briefing note explained the approach, classification and comparisons which resulted in the performance recorded in the 2022/23 VFM quadrant. Ben noted that the Executive Team will be reviewing the performance measures used across all areas identified on the quadrant, to ensure that the performance measure used is the most appropriate in respect of its alignment to Corporate Strategy priorities. A follow up briefing note for Board information will be provided.</p>

Confirmed as a true record of the meeting

Signed: 

Name (Chair): Paul Stephenson

Date: 26 November 2024