

Board Meeting Minutes

Minutes of a meeting held at 3.30pm on **Thursday 26 October 2023** at our North Area Office in Elgin and via Microsoft Teams.

Present (Elgin) Gary Devlin (Chair), Ashley Campbell, Rob Rowe, Donald Taylor, Bryony Willet
 Angela Currie (Chief Executive), Wendy Russell (Director of Business Support & Transformation)

Present (MS Teams) Kathleen McAdams, Fraser Mitchell, Alan Stewart
 Donna Henderson (Director of Strategic Finance), Chris Milburn (Director of Customer Services), Maurissa Fergusson (Director of Asset Management)

Apologies Adele Erwin, Christa Reekie, James Rowney, Margaret Whoriskey

1. **Introduction & Apologies**
 The Chair welcomed Board Members to the meeting and also welcomed new Board Member Bryony Willett and new Director of Asset Management Maurissa Fergusson. All Members were happy for the meeting to be recorded.

 Apologies were accepted from Adele Erwin, Christa Reekie, James Rowney and Margaret Whoriskey.

 WR advised that Margaret Whoriskey has given feedback/approval on most items noted on the agenda and that these would be considered alongside each item on the agenda.
2. **Declarations of Interest**
 None.
3. **Minutes**
 - 3.1 **Board Minutes (BRD16 Aug 23 & BRD17 Sep 23)**
Discussion There were no issues with the minutes.

Decision The Minutes (BRD16 Aug 23 & BRD17 Sep 23) were agreed and **approved** as a correct record and signed by the Chair following the meeting.
 - 3.2 **People Committee Minutes (PPL6 Sep 23)**
Discussion AS provided an update from the People Committee meeting highlighting:
 - People & Engagement Strategy will be brought to Board on the Board Strategy Day (23 November 2023)
 - Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) now in transitional stage. The serving of notice for the derecognition of the GMB union has taken place and communication has been sent to all employees welcoming any interested employee for the JCC to step forward.

The Board queried if there was any negative reaction since the pay review had concluded from employees regarding the JCC. WR advised that since employees had

received payments in September there has been positive feedback, and she was not aware of any negative feedback. WR noted that some employees previously involved with SCARF have noted interest in being involved in a JCC.

Decision The Board **noted** the update.

4 **Matters Arising**

There were no matters to be discussed.

4.1 **It's Good to Know**

Report Summary This provided Board with an update on key issues happening in Hanover that are not included in Board papers through the formal Board or Committee meeting cycle.

Discussion Board commented that they were happy with this piece of info and going forward would like the style of the report to continue.

Decision The Board acknowledged the update.

4.2 **Update on outstanding Board Actions**

Report Summary All outstanding Board Actions were completed.

Discussion No discussion took place.

Decision N/A

5. **Strategy Spotlight**

5.1 **Procurement Annual Report & Action Plan**

Report Summary The Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 requires RSLs with a qualifying annual spend of £5 million to review their procurement strategy (now called Corporate Procurement Plan) on an annual basis and publish an Annual Procurement report.

Discussion DH gave a brief update on procurement activities 2022-23 and an update on the action plan progress. The Board noted that Community Benefits were going to be reviewed and queried how this will be approached. DH advised that although there has been nothing significant to generate a requirement to date, she is currently working with the Procurement Manager to embed community benefits within all procurement activities. DH explained that they are producing a framework that will allow the involvement of all levels of the business and will include in our procurement documentation going forward.

The Board discussed the processing times for payment of invoices (66.5% within 30 days) and queried if this was due to system issues. DH advised that invoices were digitised but have a legacy system that is unable to modernise or adapt. DH explained that there is a combination of reasons why there has been a decline in processing times noting that the P2P system does not allow notifications such as reminders to users to approve invoices. Now an automated weekly email reminder is issued to all users to remind them to process any outstanding orders. DH also explained that there has been a turnover of staff so the importance of training and supporting new employees has been vital to ensure all are fully cited on the importance of the process.

AC added for context that there are more than 200 contractors in Asset Management alone, many who are new, submit regular invoices with various payment terms and noted that it would be good to measure this as a monthly Key Performance Indicator (KPI) to allow processing times to be tracked. DH agreed that this could be added and noted that once the core systems are changed this will also support improvements to processing times noting that we are planning to go out to procurement for this in 2024.

DH

Discussions regarding the Procurement Hub took place and asked when this is going to be reviewed for effectiveness. DH advised that there is no timeline agreed yet, but this will be reviewed in the new calendar year. Training is ongoing and there will be a bitesize video on the procurement journey available, especially useful for those employees that do not use on a regular basis.

The Board noted an error in Appendix 1 (7.6) as it referred to a campaign starting in 2022. DH advised that the campaign did start in 2022 by the Finance Team to ensure that electronic invoices were being submitted which allowed for a quicker process time but over the year this has slipped, and paper invoices are being sent, not necessary to the correct business area and the Finance Team has had to revisit this campaign in 2023.

DH advised that the wording will be updated.

Post Meeting Notes:

Wording has been updated accordingly.

DH

Decision

The Board:

- **Considered** and **discussed** the Annual Procurement Report for 2022/23 prior to its submission to the Scottish Government.
- **Considered** and **discussed** the progress of the Procurement Action Plan now incorporated into section 3 of the Annual Procurement Report.

5.2

Budget & Business Plan Assumptions 2024-25

Report Summary

This report outlines the assumptions and principles to be applied during the preparation of the Hanover budget for 2024/25.

Discussion

DH gave a brief overview of the budget & Business Plan Assumptions 2024-25.

The Board discussed the proposed cost of living pay increase for employees and were happy with the assumptions made based on the Inbucon report.

AC noted that a Pay Review Survey had gone out to all employees, and we will use what comes back to make a wise decision to make the biggest impact next year. The Board queried the Scottish Living Wage (SLW) and how that would impact on figures, DH noted that Hanover is currently working towards being a Scottish Living Wage employer and advised that we are probably already there due to the wage top up scenario for sleepovers and dealing with the inequalities during the pay review.

DH advised that as part of the budget pack in January the cost for becoming an SLW employer will be modelled and considered.

The Board discussed the Factoring Management Charge. DH advised that we have recently engaged with Arneil Johnston (Business Management Consultants) and over the next few months will be doing a cost allocation review to look at our management charges. This will not be completed before the Budget Review, but we will get an insight and cost allocation information, so Board has some evidence to support our current position.

Discussions took place on whether Factoring should be more of a commercial service and AC noted that there is an agenda item on Factoring Strategic Review in the forthcoming Board Strategy Day on 23rd November and Board agreed to pause their thoughts until after this event.

The Board queried if the overhead savings (£250k) was still deliverable each year or if it should be more. DH advised that it potentially could be more but that we were still on

the strategic trajectory where we need to put in lots of investment to get to where we want to be. DH confirmed that we have made significant savings in digital (discussed in item 5.3) and also asset management in terms of the repairs and open space contract framework that we have just put in place

Decision

The Board:

- **Approved** the initial assumptions in this report, which will be used as guidance in the preparation of the annual budget for 2024/25.

5.3

Digital Plan Update

Report Summary

This paper provided Board with an update on how the implementation of the Digital Plan has progressed against the year one outcomes and provided an update on year two activity.

Discussion

DH gave a brief overview of the Digital Plan progress.

The Board noted it was good to see progress and queried if progress is on track against strategy. DH explained we are on track and we had to focus on stabilisation and security in the first stages so we could then approach the project that will impact our customers. DH advised that for example, we are about to put in TV screens into developments to improve communications.

The Board noted that they would like to have seen what the next steps would be and this was noted for future updates.

The Board queried the comments in item 5.2 (most difficult and challenging aspect of the journey). DH explained that the core system replacement will be the most difficult part of the journey, making sure that the specifications are robust as we have not necessarily previously gained an understanding of what the needs are of a wider Hanover.

DH added that interviews will be held next week for our new Head of Digital who will oversee the implementation of the Digital Plan.

The Board appreciated the feedback and noted that there is expertise within Board members available if support was required.

Decision

The Board:

- **Reviewed and commented** on the Digital Plan progress.

6.

Happy Customers

6.1

Telecare Service Progress

Report Summary

This slide presentation provided and update on the Telecare Service progress.

Discussion

CM gave a brief overview of the update on the Telecare Service progress and noted that Margaret Whoriskey had suggested that in future versions of the report, the positive work within Telecare should be included - CM agreed that this will be included in future updates.

The Board noted that they were happy to see that sickness levels had reduced significantly, and CM advised that in the October period this has risen slightly - whilst we approach the winter period this is to be expected but it will continue to be closely monitored.

CM

The Board queried if we had the capacity why calls were not answered within the desired timelines. CM explained that capacity is a complicated picture and advised that demand can fluctuate from day to day. However, we now have a greater understanding of the data, and we are being supported by a consultant from TSA who is assisting us with our data analysis to help inform our rota arrangements for the team and make sure they are working at the most appropriate time of the day. We have recently moved to a five day on/ five day off rota system which has shown positive results.

CM explained that our new bank pool team, which is made up from Hanover employees who work in different areas of the business, will be trained over the coming weeks to be able to handle low-level calls to work when needed. This will provide greater flexibility to the service at peak times.

CM explained how incoming calls were identified, explaining a fire call is identified from the unit that it comes from such as a fire alarm, potential life-threatening calls come from either the pull cord, pendant or Telecare unit, adding that this data is looked at on a weekly basis.

The Board queried if there was data available which provided a breakdown on the categories on all the calls received. The Board agreed that this could be shared at the Strategy Day event in November and DT advised that he would be interested to see this data.

CM

The Board discussed KPI targets and CM advised that by early December we are on target to hit 94% target for 'Telecare response within 60 seconds' set by TEC Quality. We have provisionally booked our audit to take place in January but TSA want to see two clear months of core performance achievement. We will continue to monitor this very closely and will assess the timing of the audit in December.

**Decision
7.**

The Board acknowledged the update.
Desirable Homes

7.1

Development & Assets Update

**Report
Summary**

This report provided the Board with an update on current new build and remodelling activity and risks. It also provides information on the key work underway within the Assets service.

Discussion

MF provided an update on Leonchoil project, advising that she met with the Leonchoil Trust on Tuesday 24th October, and we have received the Pre-Construction Services Agreement (PCSA) which our lawyers are presently looking over.

MF advised that the PCSA outlines what Robertson Construction would do for us, which effectively means we will now start to incur costs. MF advised that if there is anything that is flagged up during the groundworks stage that indicates the project does not feel viable then we can exit the agreement at this point. MF noted that the community village concept is a very exciting project, and it is very important that we are all aligned to make sure that we future proof the design and will keep the Board regularly updated.

MF

The Board queried costs and MF advised that costs at end of Stage 2 (March 2024) are £150k, noting that we have a cost plan phased out over a period of time. Currently we are at the early stages and costs have been based on similar schemes that Robertson construction has done. After stage 2 we will have a better understanding of what the cost will be, and more detail will be provided to Board in due course.

MF

The Board discussed Sunnyside Court cost plan (£520k) as the lowest tender received is circa £730k. MF advised that she will be looking into the tender report to make sure

it captures everything that we were trying to achieve with turning the bedsits into one or two-bedroom flats.

AC suggested that Board could visit Sunnyside Court in the new year, to have a better understanding of build issues, when looking at our future developments. The Board agreed that this was a good idea.

MF

Post Meeting Note:

Susan Owens (Executive Business Officer) will liaise with Board for suitable dates - early 2024.

SO

Discussions regarding development designs took place and the best use of communal space. MF advised that, going forward, there will be opportunities to look at spaces in our existing developments in our investment plans with our customers and confirmed that this was discussed during a recent Asset Service meeting.

AC noted that customer participation has reduced since Covid, so we are really looking to stimulate this again though our new Customer Engagement Plan and the use of communal spaces can be discussed so we use again to their full potential.

MF noted that the damp and mould cases had increased and advised that it is important that there is clearer definition between damp and mould and water penetration, and also the need to communicate with our customers more on how to avoid damp and mould.

The Board discussed the unresolved damp and mould cases and MF advised that there are clear processes and guidelines and staff have recently attended training and seminars to ensure the best management. AC advised that an operational internal audit was completed recently by the Performance & Transformation Manager to ensure the reporting process is robust.

Decision

The Board **reviewed** and **commented** on the:

- Current new build & remodelling activity
- Update on progress within customer safety service
- Update on damp and mould cases
- Update on RAAC
- Strategic Projects
- **Approved** homologation on disposal of 2 former scatter flats

7.2

**Report
Summary**

Capital Investment Quarter 2

This report provided an update on progress of the 2023/24 Capital Investment Programme at the end of Quarter 2. Any changes to the programme have been identified and the implications set out for Board.

Discussion

MF gave a brief update on the progress of the 2023/24 Capital Investment Programme. Discussions took place regarding the original funding of Barrland Court, which was funded by Housing Association Grant (HAG) and from Arklet's private finance.

The Board queried how the Scottish Government would clawback the HAG. MF advised that she is currently trying to ascertain the original terms agreed in 1997. DH advised that, from experience, Scottish Government would ringfence costs on their balance sheet and drawdown from that on future projects, in effect reducing future funding.

MF queried if the Board would like to continue to see this style of paper and the Board advised that they would be guided by what she felt was appropriate level of presentation.

Decision	Board reviewed and commented on the report which included the delay to the Kirkintilloch roof project and the plans to progress with Phase 2 at Barrlands Court.
8.	Resilient Organisation
8.1	Annual Assurance Statement 2023
Report Summary	This paper sets out the process by which Hanover has assessed its compliance and assurance against the SHR Regulatory Framework. The paper confirms our proposal for the Annual Assurance Statement (AAS) – which outlines that we comply with all of the Regulatory Framework.
Discussion	WR thanked the Board Members (Ashley Campbell, James Rowney & Alan Stewart) who participated in the fuller review. AS and AC noted that it was a well-run process and they gained assurance that all the evidence was there, and both acknowledged the great deal of work that has been carried out. The Board thanked WR and the team for providing that assurance.
Decision	The Board: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed and discussed the progress made to date on the Assurance Framework. • Agreed that, based on the completed toolkit and supporting evidence, our assessment for all areas of the Framework is that we are compliant. • Approved the Annual Assurance Statement for 2023
8.2	Health, Safety & Wellbeing Q2 2023-24
Report Summary	This report provided an update to the Board on all Health Safety and Wellbeing (HSW) reporting for Quarter 2 and an update on the progress of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Plan. It also brings forward the Health & Safety Management Framework for approval.
Discussion	<p>WR gave a brief overview of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing (HSW) Q2 update which includes statistics for the period and an update on the progress of the HSW Plan.</p> <p>WR explained that as we now have good data and monitoring, and we are looking at how investigate further into slips, trips and falls noting that these incidents mostly happen in people’s homes and older people are more vulnerable and likely to fall. The Board discussed the Incidents causes statistics and commented that bullying and harassment towards staff is not acceptable. AC explained, sadly there are incidents from people who display unacceptable behaviour, and our Unacceptable Actions Policy, which is in line with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) model policy, would be invoked as required. However, it is important to note that many of these incidents are from customers that have dementia and staff are trained on how to deal with such scenarios.</p> <p>The Board discussed medication errors and explained that once a medication error has occurred there is a process and reporting mechanism for both the Care Inspectorate and Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). For the recent errors recorded, the incidents were due to not recording the medication in the correct manner, it is not that the wrong medication was issued. WR confirmed that the care team review this KPI on an ongoing basis. There was a spike in incidents in June in one area and a full investigation was done and concluded that there is mechanism in place to flag up if there is a particular issue. An internal audit on Medication Management will be coming to APR Committee in November.</p> <p>AC noted that Margaret Whoriskey had commented that the Slips, Trips and Falls campaign which was launched as a result of receiving our first round of data on slips, trips and falls, was not mentioned in the report. WR agreed that this type of detail will be included going forward.</p>

	<p>The Board queried if the definition of an incident could be included in the definition area (Appendix 1). WR agreed that this could be added.</p> <p>Post Meeting Note:</p> <p>Definition of incident has been added.</p> <p>The Board discussed the importance of 'near misses' being reported and were happy to see that this was continued to still be reported.</p>	WR
Decision	<p>The Board considered and commented on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current data and performance levels around Health Safety and Wellbeing (HSW) • The progress on the deliverables contained within the Health, Safety and Wellbeing plan. <p>Approved the Health & Safety Management Framework.</p>	
8.3	Governance Matters	
Report Summary	The Governance Matters paper sets out updates and decisions required on various governance topics now and for the year ahead.	
Discussion	The Board queried if there was a press release prepared in response to the notifiable event. WR advised that there has been an initial discussion with the solicitor who is handling the case and was advised that as we have refuted the allegations there will be time for various draft press releases to be agreed.	
Decision	<p>The Board considered each of the relevant sections, and:</p> <p>Commented on the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notifiable Event Update • Board Appraisal Summary & Action Plan 2023 • Board Learning and Development Plan for 2023-24 • Decisions made out with Board Meetings since May 2023 <p>Approved the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule of Meetings 2024-25 • Board Learning & Development Policy • Membership Application for Mary Thomson 	
9.	AOCB	
Discussion	<p>AC informed the Board that representatives from the Scottish Housing Regulator are meeting with Hanover for their annual Business Plan meeting on Tuesday 2nd November 2023. WR will provide an update to all Board members after the meeting.</p> <p>The Board commented on the current Israel - Gaza war and acknowledged that our Jewish and Palestinian community may need support. WR advised that a communication signposting advice and support for any of our employees and customers that may be affected during this difficult time had recently been sent to all employees.</p> <p>Chairperson: Gary Devlin Date: 26th October 2023</p>	WR