

Board Meeting Minutes

Minutes of a meeting held at 3.30pm on **Thursday 25 January 2024** via Microsoft Teams

Present Gary Devlin (Chair), Ashley Campbell, Kathleen McAdams (left at 17:36), Fraser Mitchell, Christa Reekie, Rob Rowe, James Rowney (left at 17:26), Alan Stewart, Donald Taylor, Margaret Whoriskey (left at 17:36), Bryony Willett (left at 17:30)

In attendance Angela Currie (Chief Executive), Donna Henderson (Director of Strategic Finance), Chris Milburn (Director of Customer Services), Wendy Russell (Director of Business Support & Transformation), Maurissa Fergusson (Director of Asset Management)

Apologies Adele Erwin

1.	<p>Introduction & Apologies</p> <p>The Chair welcomed Board Members to the meeting. All Members were happy for the meeting to be recorded. Apologies were accepted from Adele Erwin.</p> <p>The Chair noted the sad passing of former Board Member, Julia Fitzpatrick and noted how important her contribution was to Hanover, through her work on the Arklet transfer, on the Board and on the Audit Performance & Risk Committee. He added that we are all going to miss her sage advice, critical thinking and bubbly personality. Her passing is a great loss to both Hanover and the housing sector more widely. The Chair noted that we have passed our condolences on to the family.</p> <p>AC proposed that we might want to do our own Hanover Tribute to Julia Fitzpatrick on our own media channels. Board agreed that would be a good thing to do, WR will organise.</p>	WR
2.	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>Rob Rowe declared his interest (as a tenant) in Agenda item 6.1 Annual Rent Increases 2024-25. The Chair confirmed that he was happy for Rob to remain in the meeting for the discussion.</p>	
3.	<p>Minutes</p>	
3.1	<p>Board Minutes (BRD18 Oct 23)</p>	
Discussion	<p>The Board queried the following items from the Board Minutes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Item 5.1 – processing of invoice payments update. DH advised that there will be an operational key performance indicator (KPI) from 1st April 2024, and that we have made good strides in improving the process around payment of invoices. • Item 5.2 - Budget Assumptions Update – DH confirmed that the approval of budget has been postponed due to a number of factors and that the paper alongside the business plan will come to the March 2024 Board. • Item 5.3 – Digital Plan update on next steps - it was agreed that this would be sent to Board out with the meeting. 	DH DH

WR highlighted that item 7.1 - visit planned to Sunnyside Court is being reconsidered. We are looking at whether Sunnyside Court would be the most appropriate site for Board members to visit, due to the issues with the procurement of the remodelling as outlined in the Development Paper. Susan Owens (Executive Business Officer) will work with MF to identify a remodelling site in spring to visit.

SO

Decision The Minutes were agreed and **approved** as a correct record and signed by the Chair following the meeting.

3.2 Audit, Performance & Risk Committee (AUD12 May 23)

Discussion The Vice Chair of the APR Committee provided a summary of the matters discussed at the November 2023 meeting, noting:

Q2 Performance

- Available Homes - Committee agreed that in terms of improvement we are doing all we can to improve this indicator in relation to relet times and void loss.
- Financial – we were looking at higher planned surplus than budget. Telecare costs were underspent, but this position is likely to flatten out on budget due to all the vacancies being filled. The telecare staffing is in an improving position. Q3 performance will be reported to the APR committee in February.

Internal Audit Report – Medication

- There were some concerns in terms of mandatory training being completed that were flagged – post meeting note is that this has improved significantly.
- We are planning to tighten up on procedural controls, particularly around agency staff and ensuring their ability to manage medication is improved. A medication focus group has been established to support with ongoing improvements in all things related to medication management across care.

Risk Management

- One Strategic risk with a score out with appetite relating to failing to adhere to legislative and or compliance frameworks. This was in relation to Telecare. We can see from the Telecare Update provided on today’s agenda that this situation has improved significantly.
- The Board will receive their annual update on Strategic Risks at the March 2024 Board Meeting – aligned to the Business Plan and Budget.

The Board discussed the deeper dives into higher risk areas of the organisation that the Audit Performance and Committee have performed and discussed Care and how associated risks in this area are managed.

AC explained that risks are managed on an ongoing basis through the operational risk register and the quality control frameworks we have in place and suggested an overview of care services session could be set up for interested Board members.

AC

Post Meeting Note:

Email has been sent out to all Board Members from SO to ascertain who would like to attend the overview of care service session.

Decision The Board **noted** the update.

4 Matters Arising

4.1	<p>It's Good to Know</p>	
<p>Report Summary</p>	<p>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.</p>	
<p>Discussion</p>	<p>FM suggested that DH could share the Care presentation she gave at the SFHA Finance Conference. DH agreed to share with all Board members.</p> <p>Post Meeting Note: Susan Owens has emailed presentation to all Board members.</p>	<p>DH</p>
<p>Decision</p>	<p>The Board acknowledged the update.</p>	
4.2	<p>Board Actions</p>	
<p>Report Summary</p>	<p>This provided Board with an update on outstanding Board Actions.</p>	
<p>Discussion</p>	<p>WR noted that the two outstanding Board Action would be covered in later papers (item 6.2 & 7.1) but had already commented on the proposed visit to Sunnyside Court and also apologised that the status had not been updated on one of the outstanding actions.</p>	
<p>Decision</p>	<p>N/A</p>	
5.	<p>Strategy Spotlight</p>	
5.1	<p>Strategic Factoring Review</p>	
<p>Report Summary</p>	<p><i>Confidential</i></p>	
<p>Discussion</p>	<p><i>Confidential</i></p>	
<p>Decision</p>	<p><i>Confidential</i></p>	
5.2	<p>People & Engagement Strategy</p>	
<p>Report Summary</p>	<p>This report set out our People and Engagement Strategy for approval, following a major project to develop it which included a key session at the last Board Strategy Day in November.</p>	
<p>Discussion</p>	<p>WR gave a brief overview following on from the last Board Strategy Day in November 2023 and advised that a paper will be brought to the People Committee in March 2024 which will provide an update on the action plan for the strategy.</p>	
	<p>Board discussed the monitoring of KPIs and WR advised that there will be a piece for the Board Strategy Day in June 2024 which will propose our strategic KPIs to monitor progress of the People & Engagement Strategy as well as our other core strategies.</p>	<p>WR</p>
	<p>AC advised that there is a people dashboard of indicators that are taken to the People Committee twice a year and we can make that data available to everyone if required.</p>	
	<p>Board noted that the document was very comprehensive based on the current HR trends, noting that the Year 1 priorities look like they are in the correct order and although leadership is important to also ensure communicating all other training that is going out to all.</p>	
	<p>WR advised that she will take this on board and noted our Learning and Development Budget is the biggest that it has ever been.</p>	<p>WR</p>
<p>Decision</p>	<p>The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved the People & Engagement Strategy • Considered and Commented on the Year 1 priorities for 24-25 	

6. Happy Customers

6.1 Annual Rent Increase 2024-25

Report Summary

This report set out the proposal for rent increases for 2024/25 in accordance with Hanover's Rent Policy, taking into consideration the key objectives of viability, affordability, and the results of the consultation with customers.

Discussion

CM gave a brief overview of the proposal for rent increases for 2024/25, noting that Board had agreed that we could consult with tenants in the range of 5-7.7% at the Board Meeting in October 2023. Our Executive Leadership Team (ELT) settled on 6.7% or 7.7% rent increase to propose to tenants to reflect CPI. The consultation process took place in November 2023, with a 26% response from our tenants of which 77% voted for the 6.7% increase.

Board discussed affordability for our tenants especially for our single tenants, CM advised that we use the SFHA's rent-setting toolkit which provides an insight into the affordability of the proposed rent increase but also noted that the increase in state pension was not factored into the figures.

DH noted that there would also be a decrease in service charges due to the reduction in our energy costs that will positively impact a majority of our customers.

CM highlighted that we have an active Welfare Rights service, and our Welfare Rights Officer is providing funds for tenants who are suffering hardships. We are also in the middle of a pilot project with Changeworks to signpost our tenants to energy advocacy, guidance, and advice.

Board discussed the estimated figure of our tenants that are in receipt of Housing Benefit and AC advised that previously this knowledge had allowed us to make informed decisions, but benefit changes happened a few years ago which resulted in tenants being able to choose how the payment is made.

Board noted the response rate was commendable as it had increased from previous years and queried if the consultation noted tangible scenarios for where the proposed increases would be directed. CM advised that there is a brochure that goes out with the ballot paper explaining what the impact of the different increases means and background information and how it is linked to the consumer price indexes (CPIs).

Board discussed if rejecting the 7.7% increase option was justified.

DH advised that we do not have the required information at present to justify the 7.7% increase, but the Investment Plan within the Business Plan will allow this to be explored once in place.

The Chair noted that he would like Hanover to move to a 3-year budget cycle. DH noted that she had agreed last year to implement a 2-year budget this year (24/25) but would not be able to achieve due to various reasons but once the Investment Plan is in place then we would be able to provide to Board.

DH agreed to come back to Board later in the year with a proposed timescale to produce a 2-year budget plan.

DH

Decision

The Board:

- **Considered and discussed** the content of the report, considering the current market conditions and the economic outlook for 2024/25
- **Noted** the results from the 2024/25 rent consultation exercise.
- **Approved** the proposal to increase rents in 2024/25 by 6.7%

6.2

**Report
Summary
Discussion**

Telecare Improvement Plan

The presentation provided an update on the Telecare Improvement Plan.

CM gave a brief overview of the presentation and presented an up-to-date graph for January to Board which contained the most recent information detailing Telecare response within 60 seconds is now 92.6%, noting that TSA requires us to obtain 94%.

Board noted that they were happy to hear the progress made thus far but queried if it was too early to look for TEC-Quality accreditation in March 2024. AC advised that the accreditation is a voluntary accreditation and TEC-Quality are working with us to advise us about our readiness for assessment in March 2024.

Board discussed the Telecare Admin Team Leader post and staffing costs and CM advised that there we have been taking on a review of the administration team and noted that we are looking at a new digital alarm receiving centre software platform and think that there will be efficiency savings to be gained.

CM noted that if Hanover Telecare regain TEC-Quality accreditation in March 2024 it is proposed that Board reporting ends and that the performance of the service returns to being reported to the Audit Performance and Risk Committee through the Quarterly Performance Report.

Decision

The Board **acknowledged** the update.

6.3

**Report
Summary
Discussion**

Removal of Sleepovers

The presentation provided an update on the Removal of Sleepovers.

DH gave a brief overview of the presentation, highlighting the following:

- Removal of sleepovers on developments where developments have 60-minute fire compartmentation, which means, in line with regulation there is no need for Hanover to have a sleepover service.
- A consultation would take place for employees and tenants.
- The removal of sleepovers would mean that service charges would be reduced for our tenants.
- As part of our recent pay review Hanover made a commitment that they would become a Scottish Living Wage (SLW) or Real Living Wage employer by 2026.

Board queried who makes the decision regarding legal requirement for sleepovers. WR advised that there is legislation around the type of buildings that we have and what is required in terms of Fire Evacuation and whether a sleepover is required to aid that evacuation. We have gone through this guidance with our legal advisors.

Board queried the other benefits of sleepovers and other contributions that they may provide.

WR advised that the employees only respond in the event of a fire alarm, they are not onsite to do anything else. We are considering other measures that could be done as a reassurance piece – for example to discuss technology enabled support and working with Social Care Partnership on other support for specific care requirements.

AC advised that there are only a small number of developments (16) that are affected due to the building design. All of our developments have fire alarm systems linked up to Telecare to call the Fire Service in the event of an alarm.

WR advised that the Internal Audit Report regarding sleepovers will be going to the Audit, Performance and Risk Committee in February 2024.

Decision

The Board **acknowledged** the update.

7.

Desirable Homes

7.1

Development & Assets Update

Report Summary

This report provides the Board with an update all functions within Asset Management.

Discussion

MF provided a brief overview of the paper and an update on the following:

- Leonchoil, Forres - The Pre-Construction Services Agreement (PCSA) has just been returned to us earlier today and we have a meeting set up and hopefully progress this for signing.
- Sunnyside Court – The project was tendered in the Autumn of 2023 using the Scottish Procurement Alliance (SPA) Framework. 3 Contractors were invited to tender with only 2 deciding to return tenders. The lowest tender was 50% above the cost plan with the highest being 100% above cost plan. In light of this, a review is taking place to determine the best long-term solution for the project.
- Damp and Mould Case Management – A decrease in temperature has seen a rise in damp cases. We are continuing to monitor and action these in a timely manner. To ensure both our tenants and employees are fully aware of damp and mould we will be running a damp campaign from the middle of February 2024 to add to several articles that have previously been added to both Grapevine and Inside Hanover.

(JR left the meeting at 17:26)

Discussions regarding Sunnyside Court took place and MF noted that the costings were for internal works and would have to be looked at with a fabric first approach.

(BW left the meeting at 17:30)

AC gave a brief overview of Sunnyside Court to provide new Board members an insight of the Sunnyside Court journey explaining that there had been a process to look at inventive and cost-effective ways to resolve the issues that the development had, this included consultation with the tenants throughout the journey.

Confidential

(KM left meeting at 17:32)

The Board queried if there had anyone hospitalised due to damp and mould and AC confirmed that there have been no cases that we have been made aware of.

Decision

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

- Current development & remodelling activity
- Update on progress within the customer safety function.
- Update on damp and mould cases.
- Net zero/sustainability Plans.
- Update on the capital programme.

8.	The Board Homologated the disposal of 37 Aikman Place, East Kilbride (scatter flat disposal programme).
	Resilient Organisation
8.1	Health Safety & Wellbeing Report Q3 2023-24
Report Summary	This report provided the Board with an update to the Board on all Health Safety and Wellbeing (HSW) reporting for Quarter 3 and an update on the progress of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Plan.
Discussion	(MW left the meeting at 17:36)
	WR gave a brief overview of the Health Safety & Wellbeing Report Q3 2023-24 and discussed the increase of falls (on same level) within our customers own homes this reporting quarter. WR noted that we will be analysing these statistics to establish any trends/ root causes of the slips, trips and falls with a goal of reducing the number of this type of incidents. Another Slips Trips and Falls awareness campaign has been planned for 2024.
Decision	The Board considered and commented on: <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.
8.2	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	WR gave a brief overview of the paper. Discussions regarding the Duty of Candour Report took place and WR advised that there have been no incidents to be reported and will feed back to the Scottish Government who are undertaking a Review of the Duty of Candour Guidance.
Decision	The Board considered and commented on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notifiable Events update • Notes of the Board Strategy Day 24th November 2023 • Duty of Candour Report for 2023 • Minor amendment to the Schedule of Meetings 24-25 • Resignation of the Head of Care <p>The Board homologated the Chair's decision to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint James Rowney and Margaret Whoriskey as Directors for the dormant subsidiary Arklet Homes Limited <p>The Board approved the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership application for Duncan Duthie Harvey
9.	AOCB
Discussion	None
	Chairperson: Gary Devlin
	Date: 21 March 2024