



## DUNEDIN CANMORE HOUSING LIMITED

### MEETING OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Via Videoconference

on 11 February 2021

Present: Mary Mulligan, Jill Cronin, Ruth Kynoch, Anne McGovern and Bryan Pitbladdo

In Attendance: Steven Henderson (Group Director of Finance), Hazel Young (Managing Director, Dunedin Canmore), Morgan Kingston (Finance Manager), Alex Lamb (Head of Housing) and Stephen Wright (Deputy Group Company Secretary)

#### 1. Apologies of absence

There were no apologies for absence. It was noted that we were now operating with a dual approach to Board meetings due to the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic, with non-attending Board members having attended a non-minuted meeting earlier in the day.

#### 2. Declarations of Interest

The Board noted the standing declarations of interest. There were no new declarations of interest.

#### 3. Minute of Meeting held on 12 November 2020 and Matters Arising

**Decided: The Board approved the minute of 12 November 2020.**

#### 4. Business Update

The Board received an update report on our response to the impact of the current Coronavirus crisis on our services, customers and communities. The Board discussed the update including the approach to medical adaptations and close cleaning during the pandemic. It was noted in particular that essential medical adaptations were continuing to be carried out provided tenants were comfortable with allowing us into their home.

**Decided: The Board noted the report.**

## **5. Rent and other charges 2021/22**

The Board received a report on feedback received from customers in relation to the consultation on the 2021/22 RSL rent and charges increase.

The Board scrutinised the information provided, including the segmentation of responses. The Board was informed that although the number of responses received was lower this year, it remained relatively high compared to other housing associations. The Board considered the impact of the pandemic and lockdown on the consultation and on customer engagement. It was noted that we were proposing to enhance our approach to engagement and that this would be considered under a separate agenda item.

### **Decided: The Board**

- 1) Considered the feedback received through the extensive consultation process with tenants on our 2021/22 RSL rent and service charge increase;**
- 2) Approved a 1.7% rent and service charge increase for 2021/22, with the exception of heating/lighting, community alarms, laundry or lift services which are negotiated separately with the relevant contractor;**
- 3) Approved a 1.7% occupancy and service charge increase for shared owners for 2021/22;**
- 4) Approved a 2% increase for ex-Barony tenants in line with the 3-year commitment at ballot; and**
- 5) Agreed that we formally write to tenants and shared owners to confirm this subject to Group Board approval.**

## **6. Stronger Voices, Stronger Communities- our new engagement framework**

The Board received a report detailing the objectives of the new Wheatley Engagement Framework which sets an ambition that *“customers will have increased control over their services, their communities, and their lives, with new opportunities for building skills and resilience”*. It was noted that through the deployment of the framework, we would seek to ensure that our customers and communities felt more in control of their personal and collective wellbeing, were inspired to raise their aspiration and were able to realise their potential.

The Board welcomed the proposed approach and the ambition to reach more customers so that we could hear their views and empower them to influence decision making. The Board was provided with information about a recent ‘You Choose’ pilot carried out by a partner housing association in West Lothian and the positive response from tenants.

### **Decided: The Board**

- 1) Noted the new Group engagement framework set out at Appendix 2; and**
- 2) Noted the draft Dunedin Canmore draft engagement programme set out at Appendix 1.**

## **7. Operating model update: approach to service delivery**

The Board considered a report explaining the new approach to service delivery, including a report detailing how digital service delivery will become the new normal; how we will prioritise the introduction of new service models in the first year of the strategy based on our experience of working during the pandemic and blending digital and face to face service whilst maintaining a strongly personalised approach. The Board considered the proposed use of instant messaging and the need to ensure this is adequately resourced to ensure that customer expectations around response times was met.

**Decided: The Board**

- 1) Noted the approach to service delivery set out in the report for the 2021-2026 strategy period; and**
- 2) Noted that this approach to service delivery will form part of our operating model along with more flexible working by staff and development of corporate hubs that the Board has considered at its previous two meetings.**

## **8. Group Homelessness Policy 2021-2026**

The Board considered the report which detailed an ambition in the Group strategy, *Your Home, Your Community, Your Future* to lead in the national agenda around rapid rehousing and Housing First. This would involve supporting the Scottish Government and local authorities in the delivery of their five year plans. The Board discussed the proposed allocation of 50% of stock to homeless applicants and the need to balance this with the requirements and aspirations of other persons in housing need.

**Decided: The Board noted the Group Homelessness Policy and its designation as a Group Policy.**

## **9. Five-year development programme**

The Board received and considered a report on our 5-year development programme. The Board discussed the report and our approach to development. The Board also discussed the impact of the pandemic and the proposed 'green recovery'. In particular, the Board noted the importance of ensuring that our new developments include the provision of adequate green space as well as energy measures such as electric charging points.

**Decided: The Board**

- 1) Approved the Dunedin Canmore five-year development programme; and**
- 2) Noted that the five-year development programme will be reviewed annually and presented for approval to the Board, in conjunction with the presentation of the DCH Business Plan.**

## **10. 2021/22 Financial projections**

The Board considered a report setting out our updated projections for investment in assets and services over the period to 2026, in support of the new strategy. The Board scrutinised the report and welcomed the reduction in the long term rent increase which was down from 3.5% to 2.9%. The Board also noted the prudent assumptions around inflation and interest rates and considered the projections for new build development, capital expenditure and operating costs.

### **Decided: The Board**

- 1) Approved the updated projections for the investment in assets and services in over the five-year period to 2026; and**
- 2) Agreed that the projected 2021/22 figures form the basis of the next year's annual budget which will be presented to the Board for the final approval in March.**

## **11. Transforming our rent payment methods**

The Board considered a report setting out how we intended to modernise our approach to rent payment methods as we fully harness the opportunities presented by technology for the benefit of both customers and our business, as part of our vision for 2026.

The Board noted the proposals and the importance of retaining the option of Post Office payments for those customers who do not have access to a bank account.

### **Decided: The Board**

- 1) Approved the modernising of our Group approach to rent payment methods as we fully harness the opportunities presented by technology for the benefit of both customers and our business, including the exploration and introduction of recurring card payments;**
- 2) Noted the wider review of the Group's approach to rent and income collection, with a progress report to be provided in 2021; and**
- 3) Noted that our current Web Self Service offering requires to be reviewed in the longer term and in the context of delivering a customer App to facilitate easier access to services, deliver exceptional customer convenience and capture just in time feedback. Our new approach to customer engagement will need to gauge how easy it is for customers to make a payment and their satisfaction with available services. Improvements will include customer alerts and push notifications regarding forthcoming payments.**

## 12. Finance report

The Board received the management accounts for the period to 31 December 2020 and noted the statutory surplus of £6,954k for the period to 31 December 2020, which was £6,008k favourable to budget.

The Board considered the report and key highlights including:

- £5,383k of grant income recognised on completion of recent new build units;
- Net rental income which reported a £634k adverse variance
- Net capital expenditure of £4,481k for the period to 31 December 2020, which was £4,229k lower than budget; and
- Gross rent which was £508k adverse to budget.

**Decided: The Board noted the management accounts for the period to 31 December 2020, and the full year forecast outturn to 31 March 2021.**

## 13. Delivery plan 2020/21 and quarter 3 performance

The Board received a report on our performance for quarter 3. The Board discussed the report in detail and welcomed the strong results, particularly in relation to rent arrears and our commitment to tackling homelessness. The Board considered in particular the number of anti-social behaviour cases (423) recorded during the year to date and recognised the efforts of all staff in managing these.

**Decided: The Board noted this update and the operational activities carried out in achieving and exceeding the targets and delivery plan for 2020/21.**

## 14. Scottish Child Payment

The Board received a report on launch of the Scottish Government's new Scottish Child Payment, which was a key commitment of their Tackling Child Poverty Plan 2018 – 2022. The Board noted our approach to supporting customers to take up the new benefit.

**Decided: The Board noted our take up campaign for the new Scottish Child Payment, launching 15 February 2021 and administered on behalf of the Scottish Government by Social Security Scotland.**

## 15. Governance update

The Board received the report which provided an update on Board recruitment and succession planning and on the Board reporting template.

**Decided: The Board**

- 1) Noted the proposed plan and timeframe to fill the existing vacancy; and
- 2) Noted the revised Board reporting template and that it will take effect from April 2021.

**16. Disposal of property at 435 Julian Court, Glenrothes, Fife**

The Board considered a report which sought approval to dispose of a property at 435 Julian Court, Glenrothes, Fife. The Board discussed the options appraisal and was satisfied to proceed with the disposal.

**Decided: The Board**

- 1) Approved the disposal of 435 Julian Court, Glenrothes, Fife;**
- 2) Agreed that any capital receipts that materialise from properties at 435 Julian Court are used to reinvest on the capital investment programme to improve our existing stock; and**
- 3) Delegated authority to the Chair or the Managing Director to approve the final sale price for the property and execute the disposition or such documents as are required.**

**17. Gender pay gap (presentation)**

The Board received a presentation and statistics on the gender pay gap, details of which would be published on our website.

**Decided: The Board noted the presentation.**

**18. AOCB**

There was no other competent business.

**I certify that the above minute has been approved as a true and accurate reflection of the proceedings.**

**Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Mary Mulligan  
Chair**