

LEEDS FEDERATED HOUSING ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT MEETING held on 1 October 2024,
Weetwood Hall, Leeds

Present: Kim Brear (KB) Board Member (Chair)
Dedra Otchere-Darko (DO) Board Member
Innocent Moyo (IM) Board Member
Steve Dungworth (SD) Board Member
Naseer Ahmed (NA) Board Member
Chris Simpson (CSi) Board Member
Charlotte Green (CG) Board Member
David Royston (DR) Board Member
Kirsty Spark (KS) Board Member

In attendance: Matthew Walker (MW) Chief Executive
Jason Ridley (JR) Director of Finance and IT
Michelle Collins (MC) Director of Customer Service
Mark Donnachie (MD) Director of Assets and Development
Rebecca Cook (RC) Head of Finance and Procurement
Megan Henderson (MH) Head of Corporate Services (minutes)

Item A Post AGM Business

24.149 MH presented the paper which concludes matters following the AGM held on 5th September 2024.

24.150 Board were reminded of roles and the reason for clarity in membership. Board were also asked to confirm they were able to access their emails and Sharepoint.

24.151 Board:

- **Elected a Chair of the Board**
- **Elected Chairs of the Customer Experience, Audit and Risk and Governance and Remuneration Committees**
- **Approved the Audit and Risk Committee membership**
- **Approved the Customer Experience Committee membership**
- **Approved the Governance and Remuneration Committee membership**
- **Noted the membership and Chair of the Pension Sub group**
- **Noted the correspondence arrangements for the Board.**

1 Conflicts of Interest

24. 152 There were no additional conflicts of interest. KS highlighted the Accent partnership re grant funding and in relation to the Partnership Working Policy.

2 Apologies

24. 153 Apologies were received from Steve Hepworth.

3

Risk Review of Board Pack

24.154 JR presented the report and referenced the prior strategic discussion in relation to the rent settlement and how Board may want to approach this.

24.155 JR asked Board to note the risk workshop on 19 November and encouraged all members to attend to help bring the strategic discussions to life as this forms an important part of the Corporate Planning process.

24.156 KB referenced the budget announcements and the continued political discussions around winter fuel which may impact on cost of living for tenants and residents as a result of where this is targeted. KB said it was important to have an awareness of our tenant profile so support can be offered, the totality of cost for tenants is concern. MDo added that the team are staffing up for this and in response to the seasonal damp and mould increase.

24.157 DR outlined that Risk 10 may come back in appetite when we hear the budget which is expected to outline more grant rate and a longer rent settlement.

24.158 KB asked members to reflect on whether the approach to risk works prior to the risk workshop.

24.159 Board confirmed that the two strategic risks current exceed the Boards stated risk appetite for the relevant activities as detailed in section 2 and noted the change to the 'current' score for Risk 12 as detailed in the paper.

4

Items for Decision

4.1

Tenancy Policy

24.160 MC introduced the report and policy which was due for review and has been updated in line with consumer regulations. It has also been given a Tone of Voice review. MC outlined that the process has involved consultation with customers through time to talk and on customer voice platform. The policy has also been reviewed by Leadership Team and Customer Experience Committee.

24.161 DR said the policy and language was clear and queried the approach to communicating and promoting. MC outlined the time to talk sessions that had taken place in August with customers and the use of the Your Voice platform.

24.162 NA said the policy was well written and suggested the consequences of tenancy fraud be clearer. MC confirmed that tenancy fraud is included in the neighbourhood management policy and that she would review how these are linked prior to publishing.

24.163 KS asked if there was a confidence that all tenancy types had been captured. MC confirmed they had consulted with the wider teams and benefitted from longer standing colleagues knowledge. MC acknowledged some anomalies within supported agency schemes but was not aware of any other tenure types listed. KB highlighted the need

to training in this area, so colleagues are clear that one size does not fit all.

24.164 Board noted the changes and approved the Tenancy Policy.

4.2 Partnership Working Policy

24.165 MH presented the report and policy which had been implemented in 2021 as part of the compliance work with the Code of Governance. MH confirmed that only one live partnership existed at this time, the Accent Development Partnership. MH advised the policy had been moved into the new template, but the content remained mostly unchanged.

24.166 DR confirmed the policy was well written and easy to follow and asked how this would apply if there were an active merger discussion. MW confirmed that we have an agreed approach to merger in line with the merger code. MW would speak to the Chair initially with a view to a working group being agreed that would bring things to Board. It was acknowledged that the infrequency of these discussions had resulted in a decision to agree a Board Subgroup at the time as required.

24.167 NA asked about whether the policy applied to individuals. It was confirmed that the policy was meant to be high level and organisation based.

24.168 CSi queried the need for a partnership register as per the Governance and Viability Standard. It was confirmed that any formal agreement would have some sort of contract and would be on the contracts register.

24.169 SD asked how Board would have assurance the partnership(s) were working. JR referenced the return made to Accent each month under the development partnership agreement which could be added to the various returns included within CE report. It was noted that regular Development updates should give assurance on the progress of schemes, Board noted that they should give consideration to this question when reading the reports. It was also noted there were prescribed methods and arrangements for strategic partnerships which were picked up through Homes England Audits.

24.170 Board noted the changes and approved the Partnership Working Policy.

4.3 Transparency and Accountability Policy

24.171 MH introduced the report and policy confirming that it has been updated to reflect the consumer standards. It was highlighted that the new template had been used and language considered where possible but with this not being a customer facing policy a full tone of voice review was not undertaken.

24.172 NA asked for the wording to be reviewed so that there was clarity that the policy applied to all Board, Committee and working groups.

24.173 SD suggested that the policy refer to a schedule of regulation and areas where there are policy links for example the new STAIRS, Housing Ombudsman and TSM requirements, this schedule can then be updated rather than requiring a policy refresh.

24.174 Board noted the changes and approved the Transparency and Accountability Policy.

5 Performance

5.1 Performance Update

24.175 MC and MD reported a positive picture in general highlighting both strong performance and areas for improvement across the sustain, engage and grow areas. It was noted that some performance measures had been impacted by the summer holidays.

24.176 KB asked for assurance around the gas servicing delivery. MDO assured that we follow the legal advice given to progress non access and the numbers of non-compliance are low. Tracking of remedial actions from statutory testing taking place and is additionally now being measured as a BSC KPI.

24.177 CSi commented that 0 overdue fire risk actions is a great position and further asked about electrical testing and whether a certificate is given if remedial works are identified. MDO confirmed that electrical testing and remedial works this had been brought into APS. LFHA then have trust that they do not list unnecessary work, carry out work as soon as possible and certificate once completed.

24.178 SD asked why the positive repairs performance doesn't reflect in satisfaction. CSi noted this was a common sector issue. MDO confirmed that the transactional survey does reflect the good performance, but the perception survey is lower. DOK commented that the timescale of reporting to repair completion could impact on perception.

24.179 ACTION AGREED – MC - Moving forward, all satisfaction data will now be compiled through the Data Team. This will allow more in-depth insight into links between perception scores and actual performance. The CEC meeting on 5th November focuses on Building Safety and this will be explored in depth in that meeting.

MC

24.180 MC highlighted the new I&E tool which has improved performance. MC also confirmed the work undertaken by the financial inclusion team when homes are refused to understand if our rents are not affordable.

24.181 MC outlined the changed approach to complaints in line with the code of conduct which has resulted in higher numbers of complaints and therefore an increase in number progressing to stage 2. This is being monitored. KB referenced the discussion at Customer Experience Committee and the deep dive in complaint reasons and learning. Timescales to resolve were highlighted and a need to make compensation more equitable.

24.182 Board discussed and agreed the approach to cybercrime should be progressed more formally with staff members where there continues to be a failure to complete courses or failed phishing tests. It was confirmed that Leadership Team would consider the steer of the Board, how and when this will be communicated.

24.183 NA referenced that the commentary information is mixed and should focus on what the Board need to know, what has not been achieved and what is being done. Board asked officers to be as transparent as possible and also celebrate / recognise good performance. **Agreed Action Agreed: MC and MD to follow up with PI owners to ensure reflect causes and actions being taken.**

MC MD

24.184 MD outlined an improved picture in sales. Tockwith properties have been responsible for some of the difficulties in performance. MD confirmed that a lot of work is going on to build neighbourhoods and relationships and resolve ASB issues.

24.185 CG people and culture stat around 90% for values and behaviours and whether this was realistic as it was only based on the number that had published conversations. MH confirmed that this was the measure that had been agreed and is a focus of the wider culture shift.

24.186 KS asked what time lag had been built in to manage the assumed link between first tranche and sticking properties. RC confirmed the current assumed delay 6 months having previously moved to 9 months but then returned to 6 months as was proving over cautious. RC confirmed that this assumption will be reviewed alongside other development assumptions as part of the 24/25 Budget and Business Plan.

24.187 Board:

- **Noted the overall assessment of performance.**
- **Noted the assessment of adverse performance results on the probability or impact relating to one or more strategic risks.**
- **Approved the conclusion that existing or proposed actions for improvement are adequate and that the score and control frameworks for highlighted risks do not require review at the present time, based on these performance results.**

5.2 Financial Performance Report

24.188 RC shared the new format report and highlighted results to the end of August including a net surplus of £890k and an operating margin of 17.6% margin. RC outlined that there had been no outright sales at this point but will catch up by end of year with 8 due to auction this month.

24.189 RC confirmed that this report includes additional information on overheads and direct costs as assurance of what is discussed at

Leadership Team but that it is not planned this detail will be included in the future for Board.

24.190 DR, SD and KB complimented the clearer format and narrative and inclusion of the covenant compliance information.

DR. p52 over estimate on first tranche sales
P56 commentary from development team which isn't there.
P61 cash flow like the waterfall but the table reference actions in June / July so better updated...

24.191 KS observed the forecast is rolling and queried the underspend on energy noting that we're going into winter. RC confirmed the report was an initial draft to show how the report will work and more accurate mid year information would be presented.

24.192 NA asked at what point Pepper Hills come out of voids. RC confirmed that as they become vacant now they come off the rent debit.

24.193 Board:

- **Noted the overall assessment on financial performance to period 5.**
- **Noted the Development and Treasury update for Q1.**

6 To Note

6.1 Chief Executive Report

24.194 MW highlighted the 6 monthly legal review and the work that is undertaken to respond by the Leadership Team. DR part of the assurance process would welcome reviewing this as per Hydrogen. **AGREED ACTION JR to agree timescale and process for review of legal responses using Hydrogen with DR.**

24.195 Triannual evaluation for SHPS has come through. Pension Sub Group will be meeting 31 October. Board Members welcome to attend, please contact MW.

24.196The Board noted the Chief Executive Report and that attached appendices.

7 Board Minutes

7.1 24.197 Minutes of the Board Meeting held on the 16 July 2024 were approved as an accurate record

8 Matters Arising

8.1 Matters Arising from 16 July 2024

24.198 These were noted.

8.2 Matters Arising Board Rolling Agenda 2024/25

24.199 These were noted. **Agreed action to merge matters arising into one table.**

JR

MH

9	Minutes for Information	
9.1	Draft Customer Experience Committee 3 September 2024 24.200 These were noted.	
9.2	Draft Audit and Risk Minutes 10 September 2024 24.201 These were noted. Agreed for Chair to review before brought to Board to ensure emphasis will be appropriate.	
9.3	Draft Health and Safety Committee 17 July 2024 24.202 These were noted.	
10	Any Other Business	
	24.203 Verbal update on Service Charge Project KB advised that she'd asked for this to be brought to Board for awareness as it will be a difficult area. MC gave a brief overview of the project and confirmed that consultation with customers is about to start. We are aware and concerned about the impact on customers and are looking to benchmark service charges with peers in the region. More detail will go to CEC 5 November.	
	24.204 MDo referenced the gardening costs and the work now being undertaken to look at how we can move to lower maintenance without removing green space.	
	24.205 KS queried the hardship fund and whether this is legally OK as not a rent. Charitable issue potentially that not able to do.	
	ACTION – MC To seek legal advice on this matter to ensure compliance with financial regulations. The details will be reported to the next CEC meeting.	MC
	24.206 MH confirmed the dates for the Staff Conference, 22 October should any Board member wish to attend and also that emails will have been sent today with a link to the new Cintra log on to access payslips which is genuine.	
11	Date of next meetings:	
	Risk Workshop: 19 November 2024, 2-4pm, Weetwood Hall	
	Board Meeting: 22 November 2024, 5pm, Weetwood Hall	
	Board Strategic Away Day 24/25 January 2025, Weetwood Hall	
	Board Meeting 25 March 2025, 5pm, Weetwood Hall	