

Homes in Sedgemoor Board

The purpose of Board meetings is to make decisions, to set and evaluate strategy, to review the company's performance and to direct its affairs.

**Board minutes of the in-person Board Meeting
held at the Ibis Hotel Bridgwater, Woodlands Court Business Park, Bristol Road,
Bridgwater, TA6 4FJ on Tuesday 28 March 2023 at 1.15pm**

Present:	Cllr Janet Keen Cllr Lance Duddridge Cllr Kathy Pearce Jenny Vernon Marie Hide Paul Stephenson (Chair)	JK LD KP JV MH PS
In Attendance:	Ben Lane, Director of Finance and Performance Claire Tough, Director of Communities and Customer Services Naomi Macey, Director of Asset Management and Safety Pauline Kelly, Executive Assistant (minutes) Peter Hatch, Chief Executive	BL CT NM PK PMH
Guests:	Bob Brown, Chief Executive, SDC Chris Hall, Executive Director – Community Services, Somerset Council Cllr Pauline Ham Nick Draper, Housing Development Officer, HiS Pauline Hayes, STAC Teresa Harvey, Assistant Director, SDC Sarah Mees, Team Leader (Enabler Lead), HiS Sarah O'Neill, STAC Chair	BB CH PHa ND PPH TH SM SO
NO.	ITEM	
1.	Welcome Guests	
	PS welcomed Board members, attendees, and guests to the meeting. PS opened the meeting by giving his thanks, on behalf of the Board and HiS officers, to Bob Brown, Doug Bamsey and their teams for the support given to HiS over the years. PS wished Bob and Doug the best of wishes for the future.	
2.	Apologies	
	Apologies received from Karen Wilce and Paul Hackett.	
3.	Presentation Slot: The Annual Review of Customer Engagement	
	The presentation gave an oversight of the work carried out over the last year. Members noted the dedicated work carried out by colleagues. PS thanked both CT and SM for their and the team's contribution.	
4.	Declarations of Interest	
	There were no further declarations other than those previously recorded on Board Members' Declaration of Interests Forms.	
5.	Minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2023	
	It was agreed that minutes recorded are a true record.	
	MH raised the question about fire doors and if they passed the safety test. NM confirm they had.	
	RESOLVED	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board NOTED and APPROVED the minutes of the meeting recorded on 31 January 2023. 	

6.	Matters Arising of the meeting held on 31 January 2023
	Members noted the matters arising from the Board meeting held on 31 January 2023.
	RESOLVED <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board NOTED and APPROVED the minutes of the meeting recorded on 31 January 2023.
7.	Chair's Update Report
	<p>No questions were raised. PS also informed members that he had been part of the new Somerset Council Service Directors interviewing panel, which took place at County Hall in Taunton, on 20 and 21 March.</p> <p>CH confirmed the following four roles had now been recruited.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service Director Housing – Chris Brown Service Director Customers – Jan Stafford Service Director Culture – Liz Dawson Service Director Regulatory & Operational – Sarah Dowden
	RESOLVED <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board NOTED the contents of the report.
8.	Chief Executive's Update Report
	No questions were raised.
	RESOLVED <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board NOTED the contents of the report.
9.	Chair of Audit and Risk update (verbal)
	<p>JV gave a brief update and the following highlights were noted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SWAP had offered two recommendations on our performance management audit. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Performance Management Framework is required. Smart actions for any KPIs. Internal audits for 2023/24 were discussed, and the committee decided on the following. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance (Property). Health & Safety. Development. Tenant Satisfaction Measures. <p>Discussions to be held regarding order the audits will take place, where we are now, and moving forward with Somerset Council.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bishop Fleming were approved as our external auditor. Risk Register was discussed as the document is becoming too big to clearly see the amount of information being held. Committee agreed to meet today prior to the Board meeting and carry out a deep dive of the register. As this subject was an agenda item, JV will give a further update at that point. Management Accounts noted.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk Management Framework: SWAP to send examples to enable committee colleagues to look at a framework. PS thanked ARC for their contribution and noted Risk Appetite is on the April Board Away Day agenda.
	RESOLVED <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board NOTED the verbal update.
10.	STAC Update
	<p>CT gave a brief update and the following highlights were noted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SO chaired her first meeting as the new Chair of STAC. CT noted that, due to sickness, meetings were slightly out of line with Board, however, future meetings are in line. STAC colleagues were involved in the Damp, Mould, and Condensation deep dive, as well as the joint meetings with SWT tenants. PS stated that he recognised the thoroughness and depth of work covered by STAC colleagues was immense as usual. Excellent work undertaken since the start of the committee. JV raised the question if HACT could be used to measure the value STAC is bringing to Board. <p>JV also asked why the HiS/SWT tenants' joint meeting had been paused.</p> <p>CH advised that they were reviewing current arrangements and felt the two organisations were very different. It was agreed to pause these meetings for now.</p> <p>MH noted there had been some conflict during the recent meeting, however felt the two tenant groups were not that different and it would be beneficial to get the two groups back together, when SWT tenants feel ready.</p> <p>PS noted the interesting observation on challenges of joining different cultures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CT confirmed tenants are looking forward to working collaboratively with the new Somerset Council.
	RESOLVED <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board NOTED the contents of the report.
11a.	Damp, Mould, and Condensation: Final Report following Deep Dive
	Damp, Mould and Condensation: Policy
	<p>NM gave a brief update and the following highlights were noted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Representatives from ARC and STAC considered the strategic and operational delivery of our damp, mould, and condensation service in quite some depth and following the deep dive, felt able to provide assurance to Board that overall, HiS is well-positioned to meet current and emerging legislative and regulatory requirements. Critically, the deep dive team considered the implications of the developing standards being set by both the Regulator for Social Housing and the Housing Ombudsman and looked at where we will need to be to meet a fully compliant, proactive, customer focussed service.

- Whilst the deep dive recognised areas of existing good practice, it also importantly identified some areas where the service could be improved or strengthened which included the following:
 1. Additional regular surveys to monitor customer feedback.
 2. Equalities impact assessments to be included on the current DMC forms.
 3. DMC cases need to be mapped and profiled so that we can proactively follow check similar property types/archetypes etc.
 4. We should make every visit count so that whoever visits somebody's home should ask/check for DMC.
 5. We should keep residents better informed by providing a plan of action/work following an inspection or repair log.
 6. We should understand our stock better and ensure that our capital works programme focusses on DCM issues.
 - These improvement areas have been pulled together into an action plan - for delivery by our Senior Leadership Team. We have recruited a new Team Leader within the Repairs & Voids Team who will head up the responsive surveyors and ensure that they have the required skills, resource, and focus to meet the challenges ahead. We will ensure that Board will be updated on DM&C and on the progress of the action plan at regular six-month intervals unless there are any issues or changes of note in the interim.
 - KP asked if we were liaising with partners such as the Sustainability Centre. TH advised that Chris Trevelyan's team is doing this, however, agrees communications with tenants needs to be improved.
 - PS expressed his gratitude for an excellent deep dive and great joint working. This was a valuable piece of work and the right thing to do.
 - MH confirmed that she had trust in our colleagues to give us the information and it was great to see the depth of the process.
- JV reiterated it was also about giving Board and STAC assurance that processes are working, how they are working, the delivery, tenant views receiving the service and then, as a Board, to have a strategic overview. The session was worthwhile.

Paul thanked those involved and ask SO to pass on thanks to STAC for their involvement.

RESOLVED

- Board **APPROVED** the actions from the 'deep dive' undertaken by ARC and STAC in February.

Action

Board to receive six monthly updates.

Commented [PH1]: Have these been inserted in the forward plan?

12.	Gas and Heating Safety Policy (Annual)
	<p>Overall, the policy is the same as the Gas Policy previously signed off by Board, which now included Solid Fuel, Oil and Ground Source Heat Pumps. Name changes have been amended to align with vesting day, references made to the new Somerset Council and changes to structures. The policy has been viewed by Alan Turner, Health & Safety Forum, and Executive Team. It has also been reviewed by Savills.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board APPROVED the updated Gas & Heating Safety Policy 2023-2024.
13.	Governance Framework Review
	<p>BL gave a brief update and the following highlights were noted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Articles: have been updated, presented to SDC Executive on 20 March and approved. These will be adopted and uploaded onto Companies House. STAC Terms of Reference: refreshed (SDC to Somerset Council) and noting the Chair can be an independent member rather than limited to a tenant. <p>JV raised a query around STAC positions being appointed by Board at the AGM. PMH reiterated this is correct and on par with ARC positions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councillor Nominations: now in place. For September AGM, Somerset Council will put forward nominations for the remainder of 2023/24 and we will be back in the correct cycle. Board Member Remuneration Policy: now in place. Proposal to form a Remuneration Committee to review the remuneration every three years. This committee would also have input for Executive Team remuneration. <p>PS commented that looking at the breadth of the role of the Remuneration Committee, they could also look at recruitment of Board members. BL confirmed as part of succession planning, this committee could do more than a three yearly review.</p> <p>JV noted there was no reference to double payments not being paid where a member may have dual roles (as she currently does).</p> <p>MH suggested the committee could also look at the recruitment of the Chief Executive.</p> <p>ACTION</p> <p>BL to amend the Governance box to show 2025 (to link with the review). From 2025 the review will then take place every three years.</p> <p>BL to clearly define dual roles and confirm no double payments in the policy.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Board APPROVED the refreshed Terms of Reference for STAC Board NOTED and APPROVED the nominations received from Somerset Council (SC) of the following Councillors as Councillor Board Members for the period 1 April 2023 until the AGM in September 2023 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cllr Kathy Pearce Cllr Lance Duddridge Cllr Pauline Ham The Board APPROVED for adoption the Board Member Remuneration Policy

14.	Proposed KPI Targets 2023/24
	<p>BL gave a brief update and the following highlights were noted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target proposals now established for KPIs following the January Board report. • STAC agreed to receive the 22 TSMs and they were then invited to consider the other KPIs (to monitor and review), with a recommendation not to overload themselves. STAC identified a further 14. • A timetable will be drafted to show who will receive what KPIs and when. • Targets have come from a combination of benchmarking in the sector, continued desire to hit targets, due consideration on past performance and aspirations going forward. • SDC colleagues looked at the proposals and were happy to take forward. They will be reviewed in April 2024. <p>PHa left the meeting.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board APPROVED the proposed KPI targets and audiences for 2023/24. • Board APPROVED the proposed timetable for the distribution of performance information during 2023/24.
15.	Final Budget 2023/24
	<p>BL gave a brief update and the following highlights were noted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Somerset Executive approved the budget in December 2022, which was then taken to Full Executive with no changes noted. • Sheltered Housing Stock Condition Review: carried forward and will be a broader review including the services supporting tenants in those properties. • ICT Review: carried forward (300k for the strategy), update as given in a Spotlight Session. • Warm Hub Fund: ET looking to extend the programme of community settings for another six months to support this role, which is giving excellent service and measure what legacy will be left behind i.e. self-organising events to continue through the winter of 2023. • Project Management capacity. • JV noted that ARC had looked at this and had a degree of comfort that the budget is now shaped around reality, with BL giving this assurance via SLT and ET. • MH asked BL to confirm the reserves situation. BL confirmed that our minimum level is £1.5m and at year end we would have around £2m reserves in the pot. BL reiterated that we have our reserves policy in place to ensure we do not exceed our limits.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> JV raised the question around the proposed Project Management resource and what other projects ET thought would be incorporated. JV agreed that Aspen House would need some of this capacity. <p>PMH noted the possible projects.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Westfield House: high risk building, huge amount of work technically as well as engaging with tenants and preparing the building safety case. LGR: planning and keeping processes in line. New Corporate Strategy New HR system New Repairs system Aspen House Any new opportunities which will be brought to Board as and when they arise. <p>Looking at a two-year commitment.</p> <p>JV asked how close we were to stop using funds from reserves. BL confirmed the limit had been increased to £1.5m limit and we do not go below this. The PM role will be more than covered by resources already made up to 2023. BL explained he would be bringing the refreshed Medium Term Financial Plan to May Board.</p> <p>MH asked, if Board agreed with the PM role, that ET come back to Board in 12/18 months' time with a plan on how we will fund this role rather than taking from reserves if it is required past the commitment timeline.</p>
	ACTION
	BL to note the timeline for the PM role to update Board.
	BL to bring the refreshed Medium Term Financial Plan to the May Board meeting.
	RESOLVED <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board NOTED the content of the report. Board APPROVED the Revenue and Capital Budget proposal for 2023/24 (and the 2023/24 Management Fee contained within the budget). Board APPROVED the carry forward requests for unspent reserves allocations from 2022/23 to 2023/24. Board APPROVED the request to allocate resources from the reserves to support the appointment of a Project Manager role for two years.
16.	Compliance Dashboard – February 2023
	<p>NM gave a brief update and the following highlights noted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lift Servicing: in the process of serving notice on our lift servicing contractor. Continued poor performance as previously reported to Board. New provider to be put in place, who have previously serviced nine lifts offering good service and working well with tenants. New provider to be commissioned to start the servicing and repairs contract ASAP. ASHP: we have 26 showing overdue. LH has held a meeting with Liberty to discuss our concerns regarding receiving certificates from their sub-contractors (in this case LCX) and we are continuing to push for all certificates to be sent asap. Liberty are now employing their own ASHP engineers which should reduce the need for sub-contractors going forward.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short Term Sickness: there are no specific trends with short term sickness. The last few months have been impacted by Covid, but not in any great numbers. Although March will be different with one full time colleague being off for a month with covid. Short term absence is mainly made up of winter illnesses, with some colleagues being off with known symptoms such as migraines. They have been under GP care for these migraines and adjustments within the work environment discussed. <p>In terms of wellbeing, we have one of our Strive winners coming in to deliver hand/neck massages to colleagues along with sharing stress tips/awareness and highlighting the important role Care First can play in supporting colleagues. Details on this will be shared with colleagues over the coming week when a date for the massages has been confirmed.</p>
	<p>RESOLVED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board NOTED the contents of the report.
17.	<p>Review of RSH Consumer Standards, including Social Housing White Paper (6 monthly review)</p>
	<p>No questions raised. Action Plan requested from PS, JV and MH.</p>
	<p>ACTION</p>
	<p>CT to circulate the action plan to members.</p>
	<p>RESOLVED</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board NOTED the contents of the report.
18.	<p>Statutory Registers Update (six monthly report)</p>
	<p>No questions raised.</p>
	<p>RESOLVED</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board NOTED the contents of the report.
19.	<p>Sustainability Strategy Update</p>
	<p>Question raised on how we got the carbon footprint baseline. NM confirmed we used a consultant for the carbon footprint detail, and she will ask Katy to circulate the detail.</p>
	<p>No update yet on funding.</p>
	<p>ACTION</p>
	<p>NM to ask Katy Barry to circulate the carbon footprint information when available.</p>
	<p>RESOLVED</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board NOTED the contents of the report.
20.	<p>Review of Safeguarding Effectiveness (Annual)</p>
	<p>CT gave a brief update and the following highlights noted.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy and approach have been reviewed. Alan Turner (Strategic H&S Adviser) has provided recommendations; these will be incorporated, and the policy will come back to Board in November.
	<p>PS asked if we have the right processes in place to support our colleagues who deal with trauma. CT confirmed that as an organisation, we are very aware of supporting our colleagues and following the introduction of Project Matrix, Team Leaders are more hands on and go out to support colleagues. We also have Care First in place.</p>
	<p>RESOLVED</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board NOTED the contents of the report

21.	Fraud Review (including Whistleblowing and Bribery Act) (Annual)
	No questions raised.
	RESOLVED
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board NOTED the contents of the report
22.	Corporate Risk Register – February 2023
	<p>JV stated that, going forward, ARC would meet prior to every Board meeting to look at the register. It was noted that it is currently out of date following the change to Somerset Council. There is also the risk of MD who hold many of our contracts.</p> <p>ARC felt the register was getting too cumbersome and the next draft will look different to the one we have in the pack today.</p>
	RESOLVED
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board NOTED the contents of the report
23.	Management of Aspen Court Housing Scheme
	<p>CT gave a brief update and the following highlights noted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HiS have been given an opportunity by SDC/new Somerset Council to manage 36 general needs flats for over 55s. Ian Richards will project manage this. MH asked how colleagues felt about managing this type of scheme. <p>CT confirmed, as with anything new, there is always some anticipation to ensure we bring the scheme up to our standards and support in the same way as we do our current stock. Once the systems are in place it will be business as usual, however will not form part of our HRA-funded activities.</p> <p>PMH noted this would be less onerous than our current stock with no asset transfers and no cost risks. All costs will be recharged, we are just the managing agent. Although the scheme sits outside of Decent Homes, we will be carrying out a stock condition survey to see what level of investment may be needed and standard for renting in the future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MH noted her concern around the possibility of having a two-tier system. <p>PMH reiterated this will be a commercially run property being managed by HiS. Following the stock condition survey, we will prepare a plan and take this to Somerset Council with a request for funds to carry out any improvements. PMH also noted that within the scheme there were a lot of leaseholders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An update report will be brought to Board. <p>Compliance will be brought up to the same as our current stock, with the fabric of the building being Somerset Council's responsibility. Support and housing management will be carried out by HiS colleagues.</p>
	RESOLVED
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board NOTED the proposals outlined in this report; to undertake the management of Aspen Court, Bridgwater.

24.	AOB
	<p>MH noted that both she and KW would not be available for the next June Spotlight session. As Spotlights do not need to be quorate, there was no issue to note.</p> <p>PMH informed Board that they would be receiving a link from consultant Debbie Denyer for members to complete their Clarity 4D personality profiling. Results will be given out during Thursday's afternoon session at the April Board Away Day.</p> <p>PS gave thanks to officers and visitors who left at the end of this meeting.</p>