

WESTMINSTER COMMUNITY HOMES LTD BOARD MINUTES

Monday 22nd February 2021 1pm-3pm

Via Microsoft Teams Meeting

Present -

James Green (JG) (Chair & Westminster City Council Nominated Board Member)

Dermot Moloney (DM) (Westminster City Council Nominated Board Member)

Thomas Harding (TH) (Westminster City Council Nominated Board Member)

Apologies –

Olivia Harris (OH) (Westminster City Council Nominated Board Member)

In Attendance-

Steve Moore (SM) (Westminster Community Homes)

Hannah Callender (HC) (Westminster Community Homes)

Sophie Sheekey (SS) (Westminster Community Homes)

Gary Allen (GA) (CityWest Homes) (Items 3 & 4 only)

Minutes- Sophie Sheekey

No.	Item	Action
1.	Introductions, Apologies and Declarations of Interest	
	<p><u>Declarations</u></p> <p>James Green (JG) is WCC Senior Development Manager and Westminster Builds Board Member.</p> <p>Tom Harding (TH) is WCC Head of Westminster Employment Service.</p> <p>Dermot Moloney (DM) is Programme Director for Infills at Westminster Council.</p> <p><u>Apologies from:</u></p> <p>Olivia Harris (OH) Director of Dolphin Living Ltd, DSF Developments Ltd, Westminster Property Association, Hoxton Regeneration Ltd.</p> <p>Resignation of Cllr Jim Glen, who is thanked for his contribution to WCH Board in 2020. Cllr. Susie Burbridge will be joining the Board from 1st March, and an induction will follow.</p>	SM

2.	Minutes and Action List of November Board Meeting	
	<p>Minutes were noted and no questions.</p> <p>Copies of these and the past years minutes will be sent to the Chair for signing in line with the recommendations from the Internal Audit report (item 7)</p>	SS
3.	P7 Financial Report	
	<p><i>GA Enters</i></p> <p>Executive Summary £16k deficit at P10 £255k adverse to budget variance.</p> <p>Principally due to lower than forecast rental income which it is felt has been overstated.</p> <p>The pandemic has also had a large impact on the turnaround of voids resulting in further adverse pressure on rental income.</p> <p>SM has had meeting with SS and HC to ensure that void turnaround processes are reviewed in order to reduce the time it takes once working practices allow.</p> <p>The calculation for rental income has been reviewed in the 2021/22 budget and the projection on rent is £3147k compared to £3349k for next year.</p> <p>Currently the account balance is at £6.6m but we will soon be deducting loan repayments from that totalling £1.4m.</p> <p>WCH will also soon be invoicing the City Council for the management of commercial properties, which will increase the income line before the year end.</p>	<p>HC/SS</p> <p>GA</p> <p>HC</p>
4.	Budget	
	<p><i>GA Continues</i></p> <p>WCH have reviewed current expenditure and looked at the key areas of variance in setting this budget. This results in a projected £61k deficit for 2021/22.</p> <p>Contributing factors include the works required by the changes to Fire Safety and items in the Green and White Papers (£534k has been</p>	

	<p>allocated each year for the next 4 years). The Auditors have advised that these items cannot be capitalised and therefore have an impact on the P & L.</p> <p>We still have the option of refinancing our existing loan in 2021/22 but will only do so once we have a better indication of the level of expenditure likely to be required to fund these works. A further report will be made to the Board once the likely level of expenditure is known.</p> <p>WCH are looking to increase the community grants provision from £25k to £40k for the next year subject to consideration of Item 8 of this Agenda.</p>	
5.	Chief Executive Update	
	<p><i>SM presents</i></p> <p><u>1. Regeneration areas</u> WCH are continuing to make good progress.</p> <p>Board noted this item.</p> <p><u>2. Development programme</u> Victoria Wharf Phase 2</p> <p>Quinn London have requested more funding for works following a programme review. The works costs have increased because of changes to the original scope of works to principally reflect changes in regulations resulting in additional works. The contract figure will increase by £140k from £4190k to £4330k.</p> <p>Board Approved this change.</p> <p>MOT yard - Following conversation with the church opposite they have endorsed the proposed plans as it benefits their own scheme, this will be used to put in planning application for the works for development.</p> <p>Board noted this item.</p> <p><u>3. Fire Risk Assessments</u> Fire risks have been assessed. Most blocks sit within blocks under the control of WCC. WCH stand-alone blocks are not, hence the need for</p>	

	<p>Our non- Horizon intermediate rent scheme: Arrears at 17% produced by only two tenants with arrears. A payment plan has been put in place with one tenant and the other has had notice served.</p> <p>Assured arrears: true arrears have improved since November's report, by over 5%. Housing management are following processes and door knocking when safe to do so. Following the additional Housing management staff joining the team more contact has been made with tenants who have arrears.</p> <p>Acquisitions: 3 Properties purchased this year, 4 expected to have completed by the end of the year.</p> <p>Victoria Wharf 2 development has been delayed but works are beginning next month.</p> <p>JG has noticed that the amber KPI items are largely related to the pandemic. We agree and believe that we should be in a stronger position by the end of this year.</p>	
7.	WCC Internal Audit Report	
	<p>Audit started before lockdown and document has now finally received. Recommendations were mainly around Governance- the five specific items were highlighted by this Audit and these have all been accepted by WCH. WCH will implement this and Auditors will be asked for templates other subsidiaries are using.</p> <p>One area is concerning Board Member Appraisals and it was agreed that JG/SM would meet to agree a way to take this forward.</p>	<p>SM</p> <p>JG/SM</p>
8.	Community Schemes	
	<p><i>SM presents</i></p> <p>SM/TH have had separate discussion on whether WCH could be doing more to provide community funding including a service to support tenants who are unemployed.</p> <p>Homework and breakfast clubs as well as farm trips have always received great feedback.</p> <p>It was suggested by DM that we could make an impact with a COVID response or laptops for tenants who have free school meals. TH</p>	

	<p>explained the work his team were doing to distribute 2,000 laptops across Westminster to children who receive free school meals.</p> <p>DM also raised the point that we should better promote the work that we do in the community, to raise WCH profile and increase the trust of our tenants.</p> <p>TH happy to set out ideas on employment initiatives and what we can fund as well as services which WCC already have this service set-up.</p> <p>JG suggest that it could be useful to create more of a legacy with our initiatives by investing money into services on a longer term and incorporate match funding from other sources.</p> <p>SM to work with TH and provide a further report in May.</p>	<p>TH</p> <p>SM/TH</p>
9.	Review of Complaints Procedures	
	<p><i>HC presents</i></p> <p>Landlords are expected to deal with complaints in line with new Housing Ombudsman code. The theme of new code is that complaints and enquiries would be dealt with in the same way. By doing this the tenants would be kept updated on their enquiry through regular follow-ups.</p> <p>The website has been updated to include the new complaints procedure which includes downloadable forms. HC has had discussions with Housing management to discuss how to monitor complaints going forward.</p> <p>WCH believe that the new routine shouldn't be too dissimilar from what we had in place previously, and hopefully won't require additional resources.</p>	
10.	Forward Meeting Plan	
	<p>The next meeting will have the usual standard agenda items as well as: Business plan approval, End of year Financial report, End of Year position on KPI's. HC to add updated Community Schemes to the agenda next meeting.</p>	<p>HC</p>

	Next Meeting Date:	
	Thursday 27 th May 2021 2pm Via Microsoft Teams	

Minutes signed off:

WCH Chair

Date: