



South Essex Homes Limited

Minutes of Board Meeting

Date: 27 July 2021

Time: 3:00pm Ended: 5.20pm

Via MS Teams

Present: Roger Eastwood (RE) - Chair of the Board; Meg Davidson (MD) - Vice-Chair of the Board; Michael Oxley (MO); Chris March (CM); David Joyce (DJ), Peter Wexham (PWe); Chris Silvey (CS); Martin Berry (MB), Phyllis Ward (PWa).

In Attendance: Mike Gatrell (MG) - Chief Executive; Mario Ambrose (MA) – Executive Director; Simon Putt (SP) – Company Secretary; Sarah Lander (SL) – Assistant Director Operations (Housing); Beverley Gallacher (BG) – Assistant Director Commercial; Daniel Lyons (DL) – Assistant Director Finance & Corporate Services, Kevin Hazlewood (KH) – Assistant Director Operations (Property); Glyn Halksworth (GH), Director of Housing, SBC; Tim Holland (TH), Head of Housing Support, SBC – George Sutherland (GS) – Chair SEPS’ Board (Confidential Agenda Items); Carol Cooper (CC) – Board Support Officer, Anita McGinley (AM) – Community Safety Manager; Paul Reader (PR) – Morgan Sindall

Tenant Observers: Keith Ducker, Bob Ayriss, Mike Smith (public meeting only)

Minutes of Board Meeting

Action

	PUBLIC AGENDA	
1.	Welcome and Introductions	
1.1	RE welcomed everyone to the Meeting.	

<p>2.</p> <p>2.1</p>	<p>Apologies for absence</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Sacha Jevans and Carly Volke.</p>	
<p>3.</p> <p>3.1</p>	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>There were no new declarations of interest.</p>	
<p>4.</p> <p>4.1</p> <p>4.2</p> <p>4.3</p> <p>4.4</p> <p>4.5</p> <p>4.6</p> <p>4.7</p>	<p>Morgan Sindall – The Second Year, Presentation and Responsive Repairs Report</p> <p>SL gave an overview of the report.</p> <p>SL confirmed that voids was a particular area that required development and a process mapping meeting had been undertaken that had identified bottles necks in the process and improvement had been made to ensure turnaround times were as succinct as possible. There had been a marked improvement over the last couple of months following the identification of changes to the process.</p> <p>SL noted that she is very pleased with the social value aspect of the partnership. Morgan Sindall (MS) and SEH are working jointly on resident engagement. MS are the first contractor of their type to undertake Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation.</p> <p>PR confirmed that it has been very challenging year and he believed the MS & SEH partnership has shown a good relationship that works to resolve issues together. PR stated that MS see the area of social value as part of the service they deliver and have a dedicated individual whose role is to carry out their social value projects.</p> <p>RE stated that he is impressed with social value side and had noted that MS' financial results had been positive which meant SEH were in partnership with a stable company.</p> <p>MD stated that she felt this is a very encouraging report and that big improvements have been made which is very encouraging. MD was pleased that MS and SEH work together to solve problems and this has clearly worked. MD requested further information regarding MS' social value work particularly if there was information as to how many SEH tenants had been helped by MS work. PR to provide figures.</p> <p>SL mentioned that there may be some issues on the horizon that may be of concern regarding cost of material and cost of labour, however this is a national concern.</p>	<p>PR</p>

4.8	PR confirmed that MS are monitoring the situation closely, it is difficult to know whether this issues are caused by the pandemic or Brexit. There has been additional domestic construction taking place and this has accounted for some issues with materials. PR believes that issues with materials will settle down once manufacturer disruption has settled. PR was more concerned about issues with labour as companies are losing staff and operatives due to them being offered higher salaries elsewhere. MS approach is to monitor to see if there is a sustained issue.	
4.9	DJ sought assurance as to how MS could reassure the Board that the supply chain issue would not be a problem. PR confirmed that presently there are delays in supplies and not that materials are unavailable. MS partner which large supply contractors, such as Travis Perkins, where they meet at a strategic level to discuss any supply chain issues. There are varying elements impacting the situation ie price of raw materials has increased, demand in the domestic housing market has also been a factor. PR said that it is difficult to predict but that MS are currently doing all they can and they are keeping SEH up to date with the situation.	
4.10	MB stated that whilst the information provided showed that satisfaction with MS is good he is aware of many tenants who have not had a good experience of MS and some delays in repairs are unacceptable. He sited one particular incident with a fire door and MA confirmed that the contractor concerned was not MS and that he would update MB outside of the meeting regarding this issue	
4.11	RE stated that there are times when tenants go directly to Cllrs before contacting SEH. MB stated that tenants felt that things were taking too long and Covid is being used as an excuse. RE suggested that MB meet with Officers outside of the meeting to discuss further.	
4.12	CM wondered that if a resident went directly to a Cllr/MP, should the Cllr's first response be to ask the resident if they have followed the SEH procedure?	
4.13	MD stated that she will go and look at the area of concern prior to making contact with SEH so that she has the facts. On occasions when MD does contact she stated that CC and the team always respond quickly and action the issue and provide feedback.	
4.14	CM sought clarity as to whether SEH have access to the MS' rant and rave feedback. SL confirmed that we do have access to the data. PR explained that the rant and rave data is monitored to ensure that the contractors are working effectively, any negative feedback is investigated and actioned.	
4.15	PR went on to explain that MS carry out 1000s of repairs and that there are lots of elements to a repair and inevitably there will be some that go wrong and MS do their best try to correct as quickly as possible.	

4.16	Paul Reader left the meeting in order for the Board to discuss the recommendation.	
4.18	It was noted that MB did not agree with awarding MS the additional year.	
4.19	CM stated he is happy to agree the recommendation as Officers are closer to the issues than the Board.	
4.20	Recommendations:	
i)	The Board noted the performance by Morgan Sindall in delivering a responsive repairs and voids service to our tenants during 2020/21	
ii)	With one exception the Board agreed to recommend to Southend Council that Morgan Sindall be awarded an additional year extension to the original five year term of the contract	
5.	Public Minutes & Matters Arising from the meeting held on 18 March 2021	
5.1	The Minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.	
5.2	Item 5.2 in Matters Arising was updated to confirm that Keith Ducker is the representative on the NFA Tenants' Advisory Panel.	
6.	Chair's Remarks	
6.1	RE noted that the minutes of the SBC/SEH Strategic Board meeting will be circulated separately.	
6.2	RE noted that Alison Griffin has moved on as Chief Executive of SBC and that Andy Lewis is currently interim CEO.	
6.3	RE made the Board aware of a recent incident where the fire service had attended a block where a tenant had use a bug bomb.	
6.4	RE updated that the ToR for the H&S Champion had been updated and would be circulated following the meeting so that Members could consider taking on the role.	SP
7.	Residents' Voice Your View	
7.1	SP advised that there were no Residents' Voice Your View comments received.	
8.	Governance and Stewardship	
8.1	SP gave an overview of the report.	
8.2	CS declared an interest in item 2.1.3 for the record.	

<p>8.3</p> <p>8.4</p> <p>8.5</p> <p>8.6</p> <p>i)</p> <p>ii)</p> <p>iii)</p> <p>iv)</p> <p>v)</p>	<p>MB sought clarity as to whether the window restrictors on high rise properties is policy that means we can enforce this. MA confirmed that this is part of the H&S Policy. MB stated that cllrs would be happy to support SEH in explaining the importance of this work to tenants. BG confirmed that residents will be receiving letters outlining the work and the reasons behind the restrictors being installed.</p> <p>PWa pointed out that where windows were not able to be open fully that heat could also be a danger to tenants.</p> <p>Chair's Action 3.3.2 – DJ sought clarity as to whether the cost quoted included the installation of a new door entry system. MA confirmed that the current system had been installed by Tunstall but due to the age of the system it could no longer be repaired so needs replacing. The work is currently being tendered for a new contractor and once the cost is known MA will update the Board accordingly.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <p>The Board agreed to the re-appointment of Meg Davidson and Peter Wexham and the appointment of Martin Berry as the Council nominees for a period of one year in accordance with the Articles of Association</p> <p>The Board considered appointment to the position of Health & Safety Scrutineer.</p> <p>The Board agreed the appointment of Chris Silvey to the role of Safeguarding Champion.</p> <p>The Board agreed the Audit and Risk Committee's Annual Report 2020/2021 including the Annual Governance Statement 2020/2021 and Action plan for 2021/2022 as recommended by the Audit and Risk Committee (contained in Appendices 1, 2 and 3)</p> <p>The Board noted the Chair's Action agreed by the Chair and Vice Chair in accordance with the Code of Governance for approval of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sheltered Scheme Door attendant costs 	<p>MA</p>
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iv)	<p>The Board agreed the following Policies & Framework as recommended by the Personnel and Remuneration (P&R) Committee at their meeting on the 18th June 2021.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave Policy • Absence Management Policy • Health & Safety Policy • Health and Safety Framework 	
<p>9</p> <p>9.1</p> <p>9.2</p> <p>9.3</p> <p>9.4</p> <p>9.5</p> <p>9.6</p> <p>9.7</p> <p>9.8</p> <p>i)</p>	<p>Business Plan 2021-2026 Update</p> <p>DL gave an overview of the report.</p> <p>DJ requested that the business plan include more stress/scenario testing information. DJ felt that the Board need to be aware that if certain risks occur what effect this has on the business plan.</p> <p>An example would be that if there were a reduction in the management fee what would the consequences to SEH. DJ queried how strong the current plan is and would it be able to cope with unexpected extreme scenarios.</p> <p>RE stated that this is included in the separate risk management process. DJ accepted this but felt it still needed to be included in the business plan for larger risks.</p> <p>It was agreed that if it is possible then DL will incorporate some examples into the business plan.</p> <p>MO sought clarity as to what the next steps were when the Board agreed the updated business plan. DL confirmed that the business plan will need to be signed off at SBC's Shareholder Board meeting in October.</p> <p>It was agreed that DL would make amendments as above and circulate to Board for electronic sign off in time for SBC's Shareholder Board meeting.</p> <p>Recommendation:</p> <p>The Board agreed the South Essex Homes' Business Plan for 2021-2026.</p>	<p>DL</p> <p>DL</p>
<p>10.</p> <p>10.1</p> <p>10.2</p>	<p>Company Assurance Report as at 30 June 2021</p> <p>DL gave an overview of the report.</p> <p>DL updated that the repairs budget has seen more expenditure than expected in Q1 and analysis of the data is ongoing.</p>	

10.3	GH confirmed that NSAP is the abbreviation for Next Steps Accommodation Programme but this has now been amended to RSAP, Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme.	
10.4	DJ sought clarity regarding point 3.5.2 and whether full analysis had been completed. DL confirmed that analysis was still underway and would be circulated to the Board once available.	DL
10.5	DJ sought clarity regarding point 3.6.1 capital programme in respect of whether SBC gave an annual budget for the capital programme and would it be better if the planning was for more than 1 year. MA confirmed that a 4 year programme has been agreed following this year's expenditure. Regular meetings take place between SBC/SEH to discuss the programme.	
10.6	MD sought clarity regarding point 3.6.2 noting that the work to annunciation and sprinkler systems has been put on hold whilst a decision is made as to whether to charge leaseholders for this work. MA confirmed that this had been discussed at the SBC/SEH Strategic Board meeting and officers are looking at the legal ramifications of charging leaseholders for these works as they are not strictly repairs but could be deemed as improvements. GH confirmed that the situation will be viewed from different perspectives as the building safety bill goes through the process. Officers are also in discussion with MHCLG and other national groups and as soon as the position is decided the works will proceed accordingly.	
10.7	DJ asked if this required a S20 notice to Leaseholders and GH confirmed that this is the case.	
10.8	DJ sought clarity regarding staff turnover information in the KPIs as to why the narrative said this had not been measured for months. DL confirmed that this was not the case and the figure was not received from HR in time for this meeting. Going forward the figure will be reported quarterly. DJ requested that the narrative be altered in reflect this.	DL
10.9	DJ asked what % of housing stock have EPC ratings of less than C or D. DJ requested that this information be included in future Board reports.	DL
10.10	CM sought clarity as to whether all housing stock should have EPC certificates. MA confirmed that EPCs are only carried out for void properties as it is only a legal requirement for when someone moves into a property. GH and MA confirmed that the stock condition survey is a KPI within the Partnership Agreement and that the plan is for 25% of stock to have a survey carried out each year.	
10.11	Recommendation:	
i)	The Board noted the update on the financial information as at June 2021.	

ii)	The Board noted the Key Performance Indicators position as at June 2021.	
11.	<p>Health & Safety Compliance Report (incorporating Fire Safety)</p> <p>11.1 KH gave an overview of the report.</p> <p>11.2 RE wanted to know whether there is any way where SEH can enforce leaseholders to allow access for gas safety testing. KH said that this is not currently something that can be enforced but by raising the awareness around gas safety certificates in relation to the Building Safety Act it is hoped that this will encourage more leaseholders to allow access to their properties.</p> <p>11.3 Recommendations:</p> <p>i) The Board agreed the new format of the Corporate Compliance Statement.</p> <p>ii) The Board noted the metrics as Corporate Compliance Statement and statements in sections 4 to 10 of this report.</p> <p>iii) The Board noted the actions being taken to regularise positions where required.</p>	
12.	<p>Empty Properties Report</p> <p>12.1 SL gave an overview of the report.</p> <p>12.2 MO stated that it is a very helpful report with a lot of background information, he particularly agreed with the statement in 5.1 regarding reputational risk. MO found it useful that the number of empty properties was broken down into categories and the reasons why they are empty. MO requested that the Board be updated regularly.</p> <p>12.3 MB requested a monthly update on the empty properties and it was agreed that MB would discuss this with SL outside of the Board meeting.</p> <p>12.4 The Board agreed an Empty Properties Update Report be made available to the Board annually. Report to be added to forward plan.</p> <p>12.5 Recommendation:</p> <p>i) The Board noted the information provided.</p>	<p>SL</p> <p>SP</p>
13.	<p>Community Safety Partnership Update Report</p> <p>13.1 SL gave an overview of the report. SL agreed that this will be an annual verbal update on the activities of the role of community safety within the borough. Report to be added to forward plan.</p>	SP

13.2	AM gave a brief presentation updating on the 4 key themes: vulnerability & safeguarding; encouraging engagement & pride; prevention & intervention; proactive partnerships.	
13.3	AM stated that the real focus during the last 12 months has been on vulnerability and safeguarding. A key help has been having a seconded social worker within sheltered as this has made a significant difference to staff and residents alike. Collaborative working is ongoing with various agencies including the police, probation, youth offending and the adolescent intervention team.	
13.4	Work is ongoing in the community with safety patrols with an emphasis on last week's national ASB week where joint patrols were carried out with police.	
13.5	Mediation is being used at an earliest stage as possible. Using ABC and attending relevant meetings with joint agencies, this has led to improving relationships with all agencies which allows us to engage and support tenants in a more joined up way.	
13.6	Daily attendance at policy briefing enables keys attendees to liaise effectively.	
13.7	The use of mandatory grounds for possession under ASB Act has been embraced and recently adopted where serious crime related to a property has been identified. Working closely with the police enables us to obtain police statements and support each other's actions.	
13.8	Sharing training around all elements of safeguarding has resulted in us seeing an increase in reports from staff at an early stage.	
13.9	Recommendations:	
i)	The Board noted the Annual Report presentation provided by the Housing Community Safety Manager.	
i)	The Board endorsed the Community Safety Strategy 2021-2024.	
14.	Draft Unaudited Accounts 2020/2021	
14.1	DL gave an overview of the report	
14.2	DL confirmed that the accounts have now been audited by Scrutton Bland and will be available at the October Board meeting.	
14.3	DJ confirmed that he was happy to see that the original investment in SEPS has now been recovered but expressed concern about the situation regarding Corporation Tax. DL confirmed that Scrutton Bland had applied to HMRC for an exemption but the outcome is still awaited.	

14.4	MD stated it was good to see how SEPS has transformed but pointed out that there were some typographical errors in the document and agreed to send this to DL for amendment.	DL
14.5	Recommendation:	
i)	The Board noted the Unaudited Draft Financial Statements for 2020/2021/	
15.	Draft Minutes of the Audit & Risk Committee meeting held on 17 June 2021	CC
15.1	DJ gave an overview of the Minutes and updated that the Treasury Management Strategy had been discussed and further advice is awaited from the advisors.	
15.2	MO stated that he had not attended the meeting but had submitted some questions that had subsequently been answered by Andrew Barnes of Internal Audit. It was agreed that these will be added to the Minutes for completeness.	

Roger Eastwood
Chair of Board

Date