



Meeting: BOARD MEETING

Date & Time: Tuesday 27th May 2025 at 5:30pm

Venue: 51 North Bridge Street, Hawick/via Microsoft Teams

Present: Ronnie Dumma (Chair)
Ian Davidson (V Chair) (ID)
Alan Brown (Board Member) (AB)
Kate Christie (Board Member) (KC)
Wendy Davidson (Board Member) (WD)
David Gordon (Board Member) (DG)
Laura Ryan (Dr) (Board Member (LR) - by Microsoft Teams
Christine Stewart (Board Member) (CS)

In Attendance: Paul Scott (Chief Executive) (CEO)
Carole Yallop (Operations Director) (OD)
Lorna Notman (Corporate Services Director/Co Secretary) (CSD/CoS)
June Wilson (Executive Support Officer) (ESO)
Graeme Dobson (Observer)

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Prior to the Board meeting there was a training session carried out on **The Role of the Board in Delivering Good Governance** – presented by Angela Spence, through Share.

Part 1 Standing Items

1.1 Apologies for Absence

No apologies were received prior to the meeting.

John Pietranek & Julie Watson did not attend.

1.2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest noted.

1.3 Minutes of Previous Board Meetings (25.03.25 & 08.04.25)

The Minutes of the meetings held on Tuesday 25th March 2025 and Tuesday 8th April 2025 were approved and will be signed by the Chair and the Company Secretary as being an accurate record of each of the meetings.

1.4 Matters Arising from previous Board Meeting Minutes (25.03.25 & 08.04.25)

At the 8th April 2025 Board meeting it was agreed that approval was given regarding the Procurement of Integrated Housing Management System (IHMS) paper subject to receiving assurances that due diligence had been carried out with regard to the takeover of Designer Software Ltd (DSL) by Aareon and to get assurance that the contract and provision of service will

remain the same as would have been with DSL.

The CSD confirmed there would be no material changes to the contract, which has been received and is currently under review by the Company's legal representatives. To assist with the implementation of the new system a procurement for an IT Consultant has been completed.

Further discussions took place on this topic which covered the reason Aareon sought to acquire DSL.

The CEO noted the legal process of the contract is anticipated to be completed in June 2025, the implementation of the project will take approximately 6 months which will see completion by December 2025.

The Board Members noted the paper.

The Chair welcomed Graeme Dobson, (Observer).

1.5 Future Meeting Dates

- Tuesday 10th June 2025 @ 5:30pm – **AICC Meeting**
- Tuesday 24th June 5:30pm - **Board Meeting.**

Part 2 Strategy

2.1 Five Year Financial Projections (2025)

The CSD spoke to the paper highlighting to the Board Members that this report on the 5 year Viability Plan is a snapshot of Waverley's long term viability plan of 30 years. Following the submission of the Annual Budget for 2025-26 with the 30year Viability Plan at the Board meeting in March 2025 this breakdown has been updated with the end of financial year results.

The plan comprises of 5 years plus the current year results therefore, Year 0 is the current year and Year 1 is the budget year 25/26.

The plan shows surpluses for each year, although the surplus in yr 2 reduces due to the development programme. This could change in future as actual results are known. Overall, the Company's financial position is strong with our development plans over the next five years clearly reflected in the plan.

Members noted the current position with regard to restricted reserves that it is reflected by the revaluation of stock in previous years.

A Board Member enquired about future staffing assumptions in the plans and was advised, that the staff uplift is built on current assumptions and a reduction in staff is not included. It was highlighted that this could change following the full Organisational Review which is scheduled to commence within 2025/26.

There were no assumptions included with regard to funds/grants from other sources towards development phases 2 & 3, this was seen as a prudent stance at this point.

The Board Members approved the annual review of the 5yr Viability Plan and submission to the Scottish Housing Regulator no later than 2 June 2025 by the Chief Executive or the Corporate Services Director in the absence of the CEO.

2.2 SHR Loan Portfolio

The Scottish Housing Regulator requires the Loan Portfolio to be uploaded to an online portal by 30 June 2025. As well as being an important financial tool, used by the Regulator it also assists Board Members in gaining assurance within the Scottish Housing Regulators Standards of Governance & Financial Management.

The CSD explained that at the present time it is only the Barclays Loan to report, but once the Unity Trust Bank (UTB) loan is in place, a yearly submission to the Regulator will need to be actioned.

As detailed in the paper everything is performing on target, and it was confirmed that following the securitisation of units for the UTB loan there will be 444 remaining units unencumbered.

The Board Members approved the content of the Annual Loan Portfolio and instructed the Chief Executive or in their absence the Corporate Services Director to submit the Loan Portfolio to the Scottish Housing Regulator no later than 30 June 2025.

2.3 Approval of Annual Return on the Charter 2024-25

The OD spoke to the paper noting that attachment 1 contained comparison data with 2023/24's return. Members were asked to note that the Tenant Satisfaction Survey results (2024) had been included in the return where appropriate.

The OD highlighted some of the key points within the paper:

- **Indicator 1** – Overall Satisfaction –similar return to the previous survey carried out in 2021.
- **Indicator C1** – staff sickness has seen an improvement from the previous year.
- **Indicator 22** - Terminations have reduced but turnaround timescales has increased, which is due to the challenges being met with the condition of the properties when tenants have left the property.
- **Indicator 11** – Gas Safety is sitting at 100%.
- **Indicator 12** – Satisfaction of Repairs – the latest TSS survey results were used for the ARC whereas the returns used for Board Reports during the year were based on a different methodology. The method of carrying out internal satisfaction surveys is under review ahead of the introduction of a new Integrated Housing Management System..
- **Indicators 3&4** - Complaints – although a slight increase in number of complaints in 2024-25, 100% achieved for response times.
- **Indicator C4** – Abandoned Tenancies, have increased and back in line with the level in 2022-23.
- **Indicator 27** – Rent Arrears – a decrease from 2023/24.

As detailed in the paper there are 3 areas with significant variances:

- **Indicator C8** – Stock Condition Survey
Completions lower than projected, efforts will be made to increase surveys in 2025-26
- **Indicator 12** – Tenants Satisfaction on Repairs

As noted above, alternative methods will be used to collate data to get an accurate return.

- **Indicator 6 – Rent Paid Direct**

On gathering information for 2024-25 it was identified that we had been under-reporting in previous years due to the automated report not including all benefit sources.

Following the Chair opening the floor for any questions, various queries were raised:

- For Indicators 3&4 – Complaints - is the word 'trend' the best way to describe this. The OD will consider alternative wording for future reports.
- Regarding the voids, there are approx. 12/13 families requiring housing from the blocks scheduled to be demolished at Upper Langlee. This is reviewed whenever stock becomes available and offered to the tenants in these blocks, some tenants are content to wait for a newbuild.
- The stock condition survey is carried out every 5 years, with the previous one being carried out in 2019, we are behind schedule, sitting at 38%, how is this going to be caught up? The OD reported with the additional staff recruitment of a Senior Property Officer it is anticipated that a further 35% of stock condition surveys will be carried out by the end of this financial year.
- When planned maintenance is carried out the housing computing system automatically updates the next replacement cycle date. The new IHMS will also have the ability to do this.
- When abandonments take place which can be tenants leaving the property or not moving in following acceptance of the property, if the rent is being paid through benefits this will be clawed back by the DWP.
- There were 5 evictions in 2024-25. Two due to anti-social behaviour.
- It has been noted that the poor condition of some of the properties when handed back from tenants is taking a lot more time to turn around to re-let. This creates expense and an increase in time for the dedicated voids team to carry out the repairs which results in rent loss.

The Board Members noted the paper and approved the submission of the Annual Return against the Charter (ARC) by the Chief Executive, or Operations Director in their absence to the Scottish Housing Regulator no later than 1 June 2025.

Part 3 | Governance & Assurance

3.1 | Policies Review

The CEO reported that there has been no movement on the annual review of the Employee Handbook as this will take place during the full Organisational Review scheduled to begin in 2025/26.

The outstanding Business Recovery & Continuity Plan review is due to be carried out in June 2025.

The Board Members approved the Risk Management Policy and the Fraud Policy.

3.2 | Continuous Self Assurance – Governance Report

This paper submitted to the Board Members is to evidence continuous self-assessment, compliance with the Regulatory Framework and the assurance that in the opinion of senior staff

there are no material changes since the last meeting in March 2025.

The CEO briefly spoke to the paper highlighting the changes to the Governance related policies, as there is work being carried out on the Policy Framework, it was noted that there is a change of 2 review dates. The Annual Assurance Evidence Bank has been updated with relevant documents from the March and April 2025 board meetings.

The Board Members:

- a) Agreed there are no material changes required to the AAS since its submission.
- b) Noted there were no new notifiable events since the previous meeting.
- c) Noted the list of Governance related Policies and updates to relevant policy review dates.
- d) Noted the additions to the Evidence Bank in relation to the Regulatory Requirements and Standards per Section 5 and 6.

3.3 SHR Engagement Plan 2025-26

The CEO informed the Board Members that an annual Engagement Plan is issued to each RSL in Scotland from the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR). The Engagement Plan for the following year is based on the previous year's returns.

There are key strategic risks that RSL's are expected to be aware of. The following set of risks, some of which have been evident for a while, and others that have arisen more recently are:

- Development of New Affordable Homes
- Mould & Damp
- Data Accuracy
- Governance

The 2025-26 Engagement Plan shows that WH has retained its status as compliant, however there is additional information required from the SHR as detailed in the paper and attachment 1.

Board Members will recall that last year SHR asked WH for additional information as detailed at [Waverley-Housing-Engagement-Plan-2024-25.pdf](#). This information was submitted to the SHR and a meeting took place with the SHR to review the documents. This has resulted in the Engagement Plan for 2025-26 which asks for less additional information.

It was the understanding of one of the Board Members that SHR only got involved with RSL's if they were having difficulties. The CEO explained that the SHR will become involved in those circumstances but, as highlighted in the paper, do frequently ask RSL's for additional information particularly those that relate to their key strategic risks such as Development.

The CEO informed the Board Members that information on all RSLs is available at [Scottish Housing Regulator](#) including whether an RSL is compliant or not.

The Board Members noted the paper.

Part 4 Performance

4.1 Business Plan & Risk Management Annual Report

The CEO spoke to the paper which is based on the outcomes of the Operation Business Plan for 2024-25.

In 2024-25, there were 12 deliverables within the Operational Plan of which 5 were completed, 6 are underway and 1 has not yet started.

At the March 2025 Board meeting (paper BM/25/39) the Board Members approved the Operational Business Plan for 2025-26 which includes the 6 incomplete deliverables from 2024-25. It was noted that the 2024-25 Operational Plan did not commence until July 2024 following the approval at the May 2024 Strategy Day.

KPI reporting for 2024-25 showed we were on target, with 15 KPI's and some of which had outperformed.

It was highlighted by the CEO that the KPI on No of Households receiving Direct Housing Costs & Value of Direct Housing Costs had been mis-reported throughout the year. Members were asked to note that 46% of rental income was derived from direct welfare payments rather than the previously believed 22%.

Attachment 4 Risk Register 2024-25

Summarises the actions and changes from the original risk register approved in March 2024. There were 2 risk scoring changes as detailed in the paper. 2025-26 Risk Register will use the new matrix as recommended in the Risk Management Internal Audit carried out in December 2025 and presented to the AICC in February 2025 (AICC/25/7).

The OD reported on the Quarterly Reports highlighting some of the outcomes:

- Rent arrears & Rent collected – remained steady throughout the year.
- Stock Turnover – remained in line with previous year.
- Voids – average time of 20 days to relet.
- 84 relets - this figure does not include mutual exchanges. There were 8 mutual exchanges which increases the figure to 92.
- Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) – a new interim system on reporting has been introduced by the Head of Housing.

It was noted that the Repairs Performance (RFT) – the Peer Group figure was incorrect – OD will check this out.

The OD brought to the attention of the Board Members that there has been misreporting during the year in terms of reactive repairs data as the gas repairs were not included with the overall repair completions. The annual report shows the correct figure. The collective repair numbers will be presented to the Board quarterly going forward.

The OD was asked if the tenant refuses access how do you get assurance that the property is meeting the KPIs? The OD explained that forced access can be obtained more so for gas and electrical inspections and then the property can be checked whilst inside doing these inspections.

A further query was raised on the timeline for measuring tenant satisfaction on repairs. The OD explained that RFT repairs are not measured on satisfaction but fail if a return visit is required for the same repair within 12 months.

The Chair commented that the annual reports were a good set of results. The Chair congratulated staff on the annual results.

The Board Members noted the paper.

4.2 Financial Management Accounts – Q4

The CSD spoke to the paper on the Financial Management Accounts for 2024-2025.

In attachment 1 - Quarter 4 performance showed a surplus of £1.3M against the budgeted

£641K. This variance has arisen due to increased income through the commercial contract with SBC for the Trinity House repairs and with the additional grant for Net Zero.

Variances on Expenditure are due to underspends on staff costs, lease costs and insurances. The direct property costs show an overspend in subcontractor costs and an underspend on planned maintenance costs. IT costs were also noted to be underspent. Overall, there has been a cash movement of £1.4M and there are Net Assets of £29M.

It was noted that some of the variance came from an underspend in the planned maintenance not being completed. This was due to window replacements at Grieve Avenue being put on hold as insulation works are required to be carried out and both repairs will be carried out at the same time in 2025/26. It was also noted that there was an increase in subcontractors costs – this was due to staff sickness in the trades team whereby subcontractors were used.

It was noted that the tree works in Howdenburn is ongoing as it is proving problematic getting agreement from Owners in the area for the works to be carried out and them to pay their share of the costs.

The Chair noted that WH are doing well.

The Board Members noted the paper.

4.3 Community Engagement Report

The OD gave an overview of the community engagement report through commitment to engage with tenants and the wider community in which we operate. The paper submitted to the Board gives a breakdown of some of the activities completed during 2024-25 and the proposed action plan for 2025-26.

In the paper at section 2.2 it highlights some of the achievements during 2024-25.

Attachment 1 – Plan for 2025-26

Sets out the proposed activities including 3 areas to be focused on during the year:

1. Howdenburn Court and Grieve Avenue, Jedburgh
2. Burnfoot, Hawick
3. Stonefield, Hawick

The OD highlighted how the Langlee Residents Association (LRA) have been useful in ensuring adequate communication with residents about the development programme. The Clerk of Works (CoW) is also working closely with the tenants at Upper Langlee whilst the development is ongoing.

A Board Member commented on how Community Engagement has seen massive, positive improvements. They were very impressed with the Fresh & Free initiative put in place by the Tenant & Community Engagement Assistant (TCEA) on securing funding.

The OD remarked that the TCEA has worked well in the last year to increase the number of panel members.

A query was raised if there were joint ventures with other RSL's, the OD confirmed there are some joint ventures taking place including resident groups.

The Board Members noted the paper and approved the 2025-26 Community Engagement Plan.

4.4 Tenant Safety Annual Report

This annual report is brought to the Board to give them assurance that the Company fully complies with its obligations regarding Tenant Safety.

The OD summarised the paper contents covering annual reporting on:

- **Gas Safety Compliance**
 - 100% compliant, over 1,300 properties with gas, with a 10mth cycle in place, 1,500 checks carried out in 2025-25. Void property checks are carried out by Dalex.
- **Electrical Safety Compliance**
 - Introduced in 2022. Every property receives an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) on a five-year cycle. 100% compliant with the void properties ear-marked for demolition exempt.
- **Legionella Testing**
 - Risk Assessments are carried out bi-annually and if needed remedial work is carried out.
- **Fire Safety Compliance**
 - By law, all properties require inter-connected smoke, heat and carbon monoxide alarms to be fitted. These have a life span of 10 years. 100% compliant with the void properties ear-marked for demolition exempt.
- **Asbestos**
 - Paper states 77 unknown. Although we have records of all asbestos cases including type and risk this is not contained within our integrated housing management system (IHMS). This data will be added as part of the data cleansing exercise and imported in to the new IHMS system. These cases are safe and won't be disturbed.
- **Damp & Mould**
 - This is now a new ARC indicator from April 2025. WH have a database in place to record instances of damp/mould. This will be reported alongside the quarterly reports to the Board.

The paper shows the overall conclusion of the above breakdown.

There was a query raised by a Board Member on what responsibilities WH have with regard to smart meter installations for the teleswitch due to take place in June 2025.

The OD reported that WH are in contact with the tenants that this effects, we have been advised that the switch may be pushed back until September 2025. It is the responsibility of the tenant to contact their electricity provider as the meter contract is between the utility company and resident, not landlord. Utility companies are not keeping up with demand so the deadline may be pushed back further.

OD explained following a query in regard to the Damp & Mould figures, that 51 Work orders raised and completed, that these tenants may have just been given advice and no works were required. It is likely the issue was related to condensation and not damp.

The Chair noted that the paper shows that WH are taking tenant safety seriously and complying with regulatory requirements.

The Board Members noted the annual report on tenant safety.

4.5 Contractors & Consultants Annual Review

At present there are 44 contractors on the list covering various trades. Following the annual review whereby WH scrutinises all contractors on the list before it is presented to the Board there are 2 contractors to be removed as detailed in appendix 1.

The OD brought to the attention of the Board Members that within 3.1 of the paper on Reactive Repairs previously there has been misreporting during the year as the gas repairs were not included with the overall repair completions. The annual report shows the correct figure. The collective repair numbers will be presented to the Board quarterly going forward.

Emergency Repairs are on average completed well within the target of 4 hours.

Non-Emergency Repairs is tabled in the paper at section 3.3 showing details of timescales as set out in WH's Reactive Repairs Policy. Attachment 2 gives a breakdown of the service.

When complaints are reported WH look for learning outcomes to improve the service as appropriate. There were 25 compliments received in the year for the Property Services team and a further 3 compliments received for sub-contractors.

Post inspections are carried out on 15% of repairs to ensure that the work is completed to the expected specification and quality.

The OD gave an overview of the report on Planned & Cyclical Programme for 2024-25 and shows how this ties in with the underspend reported in the Financial Management Report at 4.2. Works at Howdenburn have been carried over to 2025/26.

The Board Members approved the additions and deletions to the Approved Contractor List.

4.6 Complaints & Compliments 2024-25 Annual Report

Complaints

The paper shows an increase in the number of complaints received; this is mainly due to a more effective way of staff recording complaints. Despite this the response timescale has remained within target.

A breakdown of the number of complaints made, response times, and service areas of complaints are contained within the paper.

Compliments

There was an increase in compliments in 2024-25 from the previous year, a breakdown of the most common service areas that receive compliments is shown in the paper.

FOI, Data Subject Access Requests and Data Breaches

There are limited requests received, breakdown in the paper.

Once the new IHMS is in place it will make the collation of information for requests more easily accessible.

The Board Members noted the paper.

4.7 Development Report

Extension on Time (EoT)

Staff met with Clarks to discuss the amount originally sought through the original EOT. Following constructive discussions a mutually agreeable figure was reached for Board Members to discuss and agree.,

Utilities

Board Members heard how recent challenges with Scottish Water approvals have resulted in an additional 14 week delay to the project. They were also provided with information on additional costs this has incurred, which are separate from the EoT discussed earlier. Subsequently, they engaged on a thorough discussion on the SW issue. The discussion centered on the reasons for SW's change of decision and the impact on the project of not approving the additional expenditure.

The Chair raised that this latest SW issue and resulting delay will undoubtedly lead to a further claim for damages from Clarks. OD advise that this has not been raised by Clarks presently, but it would be prudent to expect this.

Finally, Members heard from staff about the options being pursued for additional funding and potential recompense. After discussion Members indicated their support for staff to pursue these options.

More Homes Scotland (MHS)

For 2025-26 costs over-runs are on their agenda which potentially could assist WH with Phase 2 project costs.

Financial Implications

Members were asked to note.

- Full Scottish Government and Scottish Borders Council Grant Funding has been drawn down, in financial year 2024/25.
- The additional costs of the EoT and SW are included.

Following a full discussion on the Scottish Water delay it was agreed that to allow Phase 1 to progress the additional £80K will be paid. WH Legal Representatives are aware of the situation and with information being compiled by Langmuir & Hay they will be making representations to Scottish Water.

The OD informed the Board that the progression of Phase 2 will be brought to the Board soon.

The Board Members approved the Extension of Time Claim to be paid.

The Board Members approved to incur the additional costs as outlined in section 2.2 of the paper and for Officers to instruct Langmuir & Hay to liaise with Clarks Contracts and Scottish Water to progress the diversion works.

Part 5 Items for Discussion

5.1 TPAS National Good Practice Awards 2025

Each year Tenant Participation Advisory Service Scotland (TPAS) hosts an annual awards ceremony for tenant engagement at its annual conference. These awards seek to recognise the creativity, passion and innovation towards tenant engagement across the sector in Scotland

We put an application forward for 3 categories based on our Tenant Scrutiny Panel and our Making Memories programme:

- Tenant group of the year: TRT Scrutiny Panel
- Good Practice in Widening Participation: Making Memories
- Tenant of the year – The Alan Ferguson Award: Tanya Thomson (Active member of the Stonefield RTO, and TRT Team member)

We have been shortlisted for the 3 categories.

There will be an awards ceremony on the 20th June at the Golden Jubilee Hotel, Clydebank as part of the programme for TPAS Scotland's 3 day annual conference. There are 2 tenant members from our scrutiny panel attending the awards dinner and one staff member who will be attending the full conference.

This is a great opportunity for recognition for WH and the services it provides to the Tenants and Communities.

Should any Board Member wish to attend please let the ESO know.

In line with the Entitlement, Payments and Benefits Policy the Board Members approved the attendance at the TPAS Good Practice Awards within the limits set out in the paper.

5.2 Chair's Items

The Chair reminded the Board Members that the Annual Reviews are due starting end June/July. ESO will send out email looking for availability for dates and times.

The Borders Housing Network (BHN) Chairs are due to meet in the next short while. It is WH's time to host and he will set this up in due course, holding it in the Boardroom.

5.3 Chief Executive's Items

The CEO provided Members with a breakdown of the engagements he has had since the previous meeting.

- Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA): Two CEO meetings, one for new CEOs in the sector and another regular CEO gathering to discuss key challenges in the sector.
- Meetings with the CEO's of Eildon and Scottish Borders Housing Association.
- Scottish Borders Council Elected Members Briefing on Domestic Abuse.
- Borders Housing Network, Quarterly CEO Meeting

Furthermore, he advised that on 2 June 2025 he will be attending the launch of the Housing Prospectus for the South of Scotland.

5.4 Minute of Committee Meetings

None

Part 6 Items for Information

From the previous meeting to date the following items have been circulated round the Board Members:

April

Share - Sharing Matters – news & updates.

Committee/Board training courses, Courses & qualifications and Webinars coming up, Governance Conference; Webinars May – Oct 2025.

SFHA News & Events in April – June 2025

May

Share – Committee/Board Webinars and training courses

Notification of [Estate Walkabouts](#)

The Chair asked Board Members to contact the ESO if wanting to attend any training, conferences or Estate Walkabouts etc.

Any Other Competent Business

None

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and for their input into the meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.00pm