

Minutes of a board meeting of Castle Rock Edinvar Housing Association Limited t/as Places for People Scotland ('PfPS' / 'CRE') held at 4pm on Tuesday 20 August 2024 at 1-2 St Andrew Square, Edinburgh, EH2 2BD and via Microsoft Teams

**Present:** Pamela Scott (PS - Chair)  
Bryan Sherriff (BS)  
Euan Campbell (EC)  
Kenny Fraser (KF)  
Janet Hamblin (JH)  
Moira Sibbald (MS)  
Katie Smart (KS - Managing Director PfPS)  
Andrew Winstanley (AW - CFO Places for People Group (PfP))

**In Attendance:** Kate Alsop (KA – Group Company Secretary)  
Abbie Robinson (AR – Assistant Company Secretary)  
Jon Durham (JD – Head of Finance Business Partnering)  
Laura Hay-Heddle (LHH - Regulation Business Partner)  
John Greaves (JG – Chief Impact Officer) (*item 7*)  
Kara Stickland (KSt – Director of Business Transformation)  
Steve Ashton (SA – Chief Partnerships Officer) (*from item 7.2*)  
Stephen McHugh (SM – Head of Financial Accounting) (*item 6.6*)  
Jamie Stanton (JS – Senior Brand Manager) (*item 7*)  
Ciara Toland (CT – Head of Communities PfPS)  
Graham Waddell (GW – Non-executive Director PfP)

## **Actions**

### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies had been received from Heather Claridge.

### **2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

There were no new disclosures or updates to existing disclosures of interests.

### **3. CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION**

It was noted that a quorum was present, so the meeting was declared constituted and open. The Chair welcomed all those present to the meeting.

#### 4. MINUTES AND ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

4.1 The minutes from the meeting held on 8 May 2024 were **APPROVED**, subject to the following amendments: (i) MS's name to be amended to "Moira" at minute 4.1; and (ii) the first sentence of the last paragraph on page 2 to be amended to read "PS commented that, whilst the D&M metrics for Scotland were good, actual performance was not where it needed to be ..."

4.2 The redacted minutes from the meeting held on 8 May 2024 to be published on the public domain were **APPROVED**, although a challenge was raised as to whether minute 12.4.1 should be kept in the minutes. **KA undertook to confirm with the Director of Regulation whether minute 12.4.1 should remain in the minutes.** KA

4.3 The actions list outlining updates on actions from previous meetings was reviewed. It was agreed that all completed actions could be removed from the list.

#### 4.4 Ratification of decisions taken between meetings

4.4.1 The approval by email on 20 June 2024 to buyback a shared ownership property (Flat 4, 15 Bellfield Avenue) was **RATIFIED**.

4.4.2 The approval by email on 20 June 2024 of the loan portfolio annual return was **RATIFIED**.

#### 5 FEEDBACK FROM ANY GROUP BOARD, SUBSIDIARIES AND COMMITTEES HELD SINCE PREVIOUS MEETING

##### 5.1 Places For People Group ("Group") Board Meetings held on 22 May and 25 July 2024

AW/GW provided a verbal update on the previous Group board meetings which included receiving updates on the results from the tenant satisfaction measures survey, condition of our homes and 'finding the silence', temporary rehousing (decants) cases, damp and mould cases, developing an asset strategy across all tenures, and the board's deep dive sessions on repairs in June and the UK Housing Challenge in July.

In response to a query from PS, it was noted that the Group was monitoring developments in the Government's housebuilding agenda. It was further noted that a joint board meeting between the Group and CRE was scheduled to take place on 11 March 2025.

##### 5.2 PfPS Audit & Risk Committee meeting held on 7 August 2024

EC provided a verbal update on the previous PfPS Audit & Risk Committee meeting which had reviewed the financial statements and provided updates

following recent internal audits on damp and mould cases and factoring, both of which had received outcomes of 'requires improvement'. A further update had been received on safeguarding processes (focussing on processes to help mitigate domestic violence).

The committee meeting was not quorate as two members could not attend. JH highlighted that her availability for meetings would be limited for the foreseeable future; **KA agreed to reconsider the committee's membership and potentially recommend the appointment of an additional member.** KA

## 6 CURRENT PERFORMANCE ON THIS YEAR'S ACTIVITIES

### 6.1 Performance Reporting and Monitoring – Business Plan KPIs

KS presented the Business Plan KPIs paper at Item 6.1. The proposed performance metrics for 2024/25 were outlined in appendix 1 for the Board's approval. Some of the metrics had changed to drive improvements in performance, including the addition of new damp and mould metrics and total arrears added back in as it was a KPI reported to the Regulator. Management was also looking at introducing Places Impact targets and would report these to the next Board in the operational report. These metrics would be used to measure performance over the next financial year.

The Board queried how the metric for emergency and non-emergency repairs compared to the Group and its peers. KS confirmed that the PfPS metric was lower than the Group's metric for emergency repairs. The metric for peers for emergency repairs ranged between 12-24 hours, but it was difficult to compare PfPS to other smaller housing associations. It was agreed that it would be helpful to analyse customer benchmarking data at the strategy day.

Commenting on the content of the papers presented to the Board, PS highlighted that all papers presented at Board meetings should refer to the three pillars of the PfPS strategy.

### 6.2 Operational Performance Report Q1

KS presented the Operational Performance Report at Item 6.2. The complaint response time had increased due to an increase in the volume of complaints and the team being under resourced. However, this should improve in Q2 as improvements had been made to the monitoring and reporting of complaints and a centralised Complaints team was now in place. The Customer Effort Score had fallen below target (3.6 vs 3.9), partly driven by the increase in complaints and complaint response time.

The Housing team had closed 3,456 cases in Q1. Salesforce enhancements had improved the reporting of customer cases and further enhancements

would be rolled out in Q2, improving the visibility and monitoring of customer cases.

Following the move to Salesforce, a detailed review of KPIs related to repairs had revealed some inaccuracy with reporting against the metrics resulting in a proportion of the repairs data having to be restated. Management had prioritised the regulatory reporting and checked that all other figures reported to the Regulator were accurate. This error would be rectified for Q2 reporting and the Director of Field Services would attend November's Board meeting to update the Board.

PS queried why the average relet metric and void loss metric had worsened but the average cost of void had improved during Q1. KS explained that some properties received a void guarantee, and some empty properties had not been dealt with in a timely manner by the Housing Managers. However, management was looking to change the supervision/management of Housing Managers to ensure that empty houses were dealt with in a timely manner.

6.3 Directors' Report

KS presented the Directors' Update paper at Item 6.3. Priorities for management included reviewing the Rent & Service Charge Policy (which would be presented to the Board at a future meeting), embedding changes made to the operating model, including renaming the role of Housing Officer to Community Housing Manager.


6.4 Damp and Mould Report

KSt presented the Damp, Mould and Condition of Homes paper at Item 6.4. More damp and mould cases were being detected and reported through various initiatives aimed at improving the visibility of damp and mould issues in homes. For example, the Home MOT had identified 71 damp and mould issues. Additionally, the first Customer Condition Survey had been issued last quarter to 'silent customers' and, following this successful trial, more surveys would be issued in the next quarter. A dedicated manager for damp and mould had been appointed to support and improve the management of damp and mould cases. Furthermore, a new case management system would be introduced which would enable better visibility of cases from reporting to completion and allow triaging of cases based on customer vulnerability and the severity of the case. Prevention plans were also being produced to prevent damp and mould in homes.

PS suggested that the following metrics be included in future KPIs: the number of damp and mould cases raised and the number of cases ongoing.

6.5





*SM joined the meeting.*

6.5.1 Annual Report and Financial Statements FYE 31 March 2024

SM presented the Annual Report & Financial Statements at Item 6.6. Changes had been made to the financial statements since the papers were published following last minute feedback from the auditors. These changes were material and SM explained the changes as follows: (1) on page 3 in the 'principal activities' section, the number of properties should read 8,445; (2) on page 18 in the 'statement of changes in equity, the header in the table needed updating from 2023 to 2024; (3) on page 20 under Note 1, the net book value needed changing from £679.8m to £671.1m; (4) the previous change had a knock on effect on the residual value which needed changing from £44m to £52.7m; (5) on page 23 the last sentence should refer to "more than 1 year" rather than "within 1 year"; (6) on page under Note 24 the figures for 2023 were incorrect.

SM undertook to circulate the revised annual report and financial statements to the Board after the meeting for review and approval.

*SM left the meeting.*

6.6 Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) Annual Assurance Statement

LHH presented the SHR Annual Assurance Statement paper at Item 6.6. Feedback from the Audit & Risk Committee had been incorporated in the statement. The Board **APPROVED** the Annual Assurance Statement.

■ Standing Items Report

KA presented the Standing Items Report at Item 6.7. It was recommended that HC and BS be admitted as Community Members for the upcoming AGM to be held on 26 September 2024. It was also recommended that a resolution be passed at the AGM to adopt new Rules to bring them into line with the Scottish Federation of Housing Association's Charitable Model Rules (Scotland) 2020. **The Board requested to see the proposed new Rules before they were submitted for approval at the AGM.** KA

It was noted that Board members now attended the Regional Customer Group - meeting papers were available to view by the Board on Board Intelligence.

It was further noted that the Board had approved various projects earlier today at the board meeting of Places For People Scotland Ltd (see minute 7 in the minutes of the board meeting of Places For People Scotland Limited), and the Board confirmed their **APPROVAL** of the projects in their capacity as the CRE Board. The Board requested that approvals for projects be included in the Standing Items Report presented to the CRE Board going forwards.

*GW left the meeting.*

*JG and JS joined the meeting.*

## **7 SCOTLAND STRATEGY**

### **7.1 Places For People Brand Programme**

JG and JS presented the Places for People Brand Programme paper at Item 7.1. An update was provided on the phases of the project, the challenges involved and the timeframe for the brand programme. The Board highlighted that there was not consistent branding and terminology used for PfPS which created confusion amongst stakeholders. The Board sought more information on the rebrand specifically for PfPS. [REDACTED]

*JG and JS left the meeting.*

### **7.2**

[REDACTED]

## **8 GOVERNANCE**

### **8.1 Governance Handbook Update**

KA presented the Governance Handbook Update paper at Item 8.1. The Governance Handbook had been updated to include feedback from February's Board meeting and to incorporate the terms of reference of the board of Places for People Scotland Limited. The Board **APPROVED** the Governance Handbook.

8.2 Proposed Board Dates FY2025/26

The Board **APPROVED** the Proposed Board Dates FYE2025/26 as detailed in the paper at Item 8.2.

8.3 Authorised Signatories Review

The Board **APPROVED** the authorised signatories as detailed in the paper at Item 8.3.

**9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

9.1 Annual Return on the Charter

The Board noted the paper uploaded to the background materials on Board Intelligence which contained a summary of annual customer surveys and analysis of customer feedback.

9.2 Volunteers for Board representation at the National Customer Group meeting on 19 September 2024 at Gray's Inn Road

The Board was asked to consider whether any members wished to attend the National Customer Group meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> September.

9.3 Succession planning

PS, KA and KS were considering the Board's succession plan. PS reported that her term as non-executive director had been extended for one year and the Board should start planning for a successor to the chair.

**10 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS AND PLAN OF WORK**

10.1 *26 September 2024 (AGM)*

10.2 *13 November 2024*

10.3 *Plan of work for next meeting*

The Board noted the plan of work for the meeting on 13 November 2024 at Item 10.3. It was suggested that: (i) a site visit be organised to take place on 15<sup>th</sup> October; and (ii) an additional Board meeting be scheduled in December to consider the rent/service charges.

KA/KS