

Board Meeting

Held: Board Room, Viewpoint Offices

Minutes of the meeting of the Board
at 4.00pm on **21 August 2024**

Paper 0
Meeting No:4

Date of Meeting: 21 August 2024

Board Members

Mr I Thompson (Chair)

Mr T Roehricht (TR) (Vice Chair)

Ms P Russell (PR)

Mr S Robertson (SR)

Mr J Clyne (JC)

Ms J Brown (JB)

Mr D McIntosh (DM)

Ms L Anderson (LA) (via Teams)

Mr L Parry (LP) (via Teams)

Attending

Jean Gray, Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

John Turnbull, Head of Housing (HH)

Megan Macdonald, Governance and Compliance
Officer (GCO) (minute taker)

Esther Wilson, Director of Housing and Care (DHC)

Tom Hainey, Director of Assets (DA)

Howard Vaughan, Director of Finance and Business
Support (DFBS)

Apologies received

David Aitken, Head of Finance (HF)

Minutes

Item	Subject	Action	Due Date
1	Welcome to Board Meeting		
1.a.	Apologies		
	<p>There being a quorum present, the Chair welcomed all and opened the meeting. He introduced the new HH for those who had not met him previously.</p> <p>Apologies had been received from the HF.</p>		
1.b.	Declarations/Conflicts of Interest		
	<p>There were no declarations and no conflicts of interest declared.</p>		
2	Minutes of previous meetings and matters arising		
2.a.	Minutes of previous meeting held on 19 June 2024		
	<p>There were no matters arising from the minutes of the meeting of 19 June 2024 and the Board unanimously approved them as an accurate record.</p>		

2.b. Outstanding actions

There were the following outstanding actions

Action 214: Reconnect with interested development partners. CEO confirmed that these discussions are ongoing	CEO	Ongoing
Action 221: Review policy approval process. The CEO noted that this is in progress.	Exec	Nov Board meeting

2c. Verbal update from FRAC Committee of 30 July 2024

TR informed the Board that the FRAC meeting began with a presentation from RBC Brewin Dolphin showing growth of the investment portfolio. Full details will be added to Convene.	GCO	ASAP
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The internal audit updated plan was discussed and TR informed the Board that it had been decided that the replacement works orders audit will be moved to December 2024.

Other updates from the FRAC committee will be discussed later during this meeting including the finance reports, grant for Lennox House and risk register report. The FRAC committee were given an update on Health and Safety reports which they found positive and detailed and there was no whistleblowing reported. It was noted the Annual Assurance Statement is due at the end of October and this will be discussed at a meeting on the same day as the October Board Meeting.

There were no questions and the Board noted the update.

3 Finance Papers

3. a. Draft Statutory Accounts to 31 March 2024

The DFBS informed the Board that Allison Devine, Senior Partner from Alexander Sloan had attended the FRAC meeting and presented Items 3. a, b and c. He drew the Board's attention to the treatment of £757k grant income received back in 1992 in relation to Lennox House care home. This has been moved from the Gain on Sale of Property to Other Creditors in the draft statutory accounts to 31 March 2024 pending confirmation that the grant is not repayable. There was discussion around this and the efforts which the CEO had made to contact the Government to locate any corresponding records and to discussions and advice received from our lawyers, TC Young. The CEO noted that this was included in her CEO Report to be discussed later in agenda item 4. Formal agreement would be needed to confirm that all options had been exhausted, meaning the grant was not repayable and could be reinstated as part of the gain on disposal. The Board voiced some thoughts on this but it was to be discussed further later in the meeting.

There were no further questions on the Draft Statutory Accounts to 31 March 2024 and the Board approved them subject to agreeing the treatment of the grant at agenda item 4 later in the meeting.

3.b. Draft Audit Summary Report

The DFBS drew the Board's attention to the auditor's comments in the Report on component accounting. The Board thanked Alexander Sloan for their work in the area of Component Accounting and were pleased that significant progress has been made by the Finance team in this area. They acknowledged that further	HF	ASAP
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improvements in the accuracy of the Fixed Assets Register would continue as we move from recording at "Scheme level" to "individual properties". It was pleased that written methodology is in place when assessing whether additions should trigger an associated disposal".

There were no further questions on the Draft Audit Summary Report and this was approved by the Board.

3c. Draft Letter of Representation.

The DFBS drew the Board's attention to the addition of clauses on component accounting and RAAC.

HF

ASAP

There were no questions and the Board approved the Draft Letter of Representation.

3.d. Management Accounts to 30 June 2024

The DFBS presented the Management Accounts and provided further explanation on the reason for the void repairs and redecoration being over budget, noting that this is being monitored. He commented that having had early sight of the July management accounts the void costs have decreased but it is too early for that to be considered a pattern but he was hopeful that, for example that the introduction of decorating vouchers will make a difference.

HF

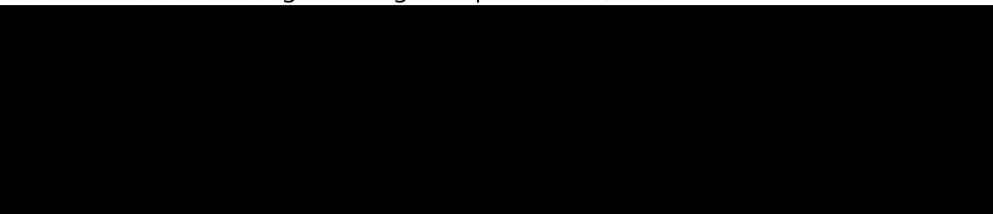
ASAP

The staff costs looks favourable, turnover has been good and this is being monitored. The aim is for central overheads to be maintained at around 15%. He also highlighted that a section on the Balance Sheet position has now been included in the report..

There were no further questions on the Management Accounts to 30 June 2024 and the Board approved these.

3.e. Q1 Reforecast 2024/25

The DFBS informed the Board that the FRAC Committee had considered the June 2024 Management Accounts at their meeting on 30 July but that the Finance paper for today's meeting now also included the Q1 reforecast for the remainder of the financial year. The reforecast surplus was £10,433 with Table 3 showing the movement from the original budget surplus of £31,561.

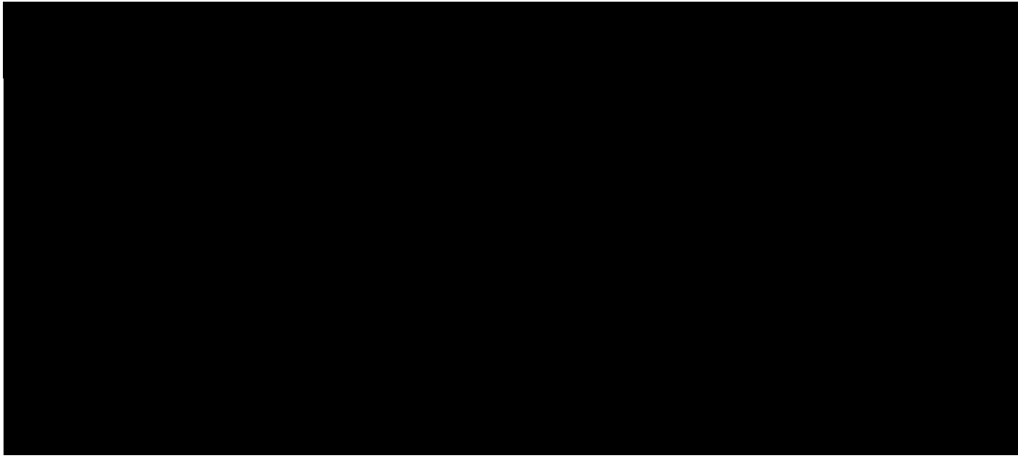


TR queried if telecare charges would change in the current year but it was confirmed that we have budgeted the costs for the current contract and that the contract would require to be retendered in the coming year.

There were no further questions and the Board approved the Q1 Reforecast 2024/25.

4 CEO Update Report





CEO ASAP

The Board were happy for this course of action to continue to be progressed..

Regarding the Board Away Day, Item 5 on the report, The CEO noted she will spend some time with the Board members who were unable to attend to brief them on what was covered. The day was thought to be very beneficial with discussions around the new business plan, with particular work to be done around stock condition and energy efficiency. It was noted that current high standards need to be maintained within the current care homes as work is done on the new building.

CEO ASAP

Strategic objectives will remain much the same as they were previously but with a focus on new ways of delivering these to a high standard.

There were discussions around the transfer of assets from the Viewpoint Trust, Item 7 of the report, along with the practicalities of transferring the RBC Brewin Dolphin portfolio over to Viewpoint. It was noted that this money would be used to improve the lives of our tenants and residents in line with our objectives.

JC asked how many trustees there currently were on Viewpoint Trust and was informed that there are six trustees, some of whom are previous Viewpoint Board members.

There was further discussions around the historic grant discovered during the sale of Lennox House. TC Young were of the view that it was highly unlikely that after 30 years there would be any repayment required regardless of the granting party. The Board were asked to approve the decision that the grant is not repayable and as such should be moved back into the gain on sale from other creditors. The accounts need to be changed and officially signed.

CEO/
DFBS/
Chair ASAP

PR requested an update on the recent tender for auditors and was informed by the DFBS that only two responses were returned. The tender is still ongoing but it was noted that there was a large gap in the scoring and Alexander Sloan scored the highest again due to them having experience with many similar Housing Associations and their knowledge of the sector. This appointment will be formally approved through a vote at the upcoming AGM.

There was a brief discussion around the RAAC and TR asked whether any was found within St Raphael's - it was confirmed there was not.

The Board approved the decision that the grant was not repayable and as such should be moved back into the gain on sale from other creditors.

They delegated the signing of these accounts to the Chair, one other Board member, the CEO and DFBS (as Company Secretary).

There were no further questions and the Board noted the CEO Update Report.

5 Internal Management Plan 2024-25 Q1


The CEO explained that as this plan was for the Q1 many of the items are showing amber as they were to be brought to the 2 August Board away day or the target dates were later on in the financial year. Work has been done on these and will be reflected in the next report.

There were no questions and the Board noted the Internal Management Plan 2024-25 Q1.

6 Risk Appetite Presentation

The DFBS gave a background to Risk Appetite, what the risks are in each category, how they are scored, what the current risk appetite is and what changes to the appetite Viewpoint want to see. He informed the Board that there has been several changes since this was first implemented around five years ago and there was discussion around how the Board need to play a part in identifying risks and drawing attention to any that might have been missed other ideas that need to be discussed.

The CEO mentioned that as Viewpoint moves in to a new era and there is movement towards building new premises new risks may be encountered, for example higher risks to our reputation. She noted that there needs to be discussion with the Board on this before the new Business Plan and budget are drafted.



PR queried that as these changes would not be occurring until around 2030 and beyond it is possible that we are not far enough down the line to identify all of the risks. The CEO responded to confirm that the Regulator would require greater scrutiny if we were planning new build developments.

The DFBS added that costs would need to be tightened up for inclusion in the financial plan.

DM mentioned that the last risk profile was done following the regulatory reviews and that significant progress has been made on these. He identified that more debt will cause more risks, along with issues around the Executive succession plan.

The DFBS confirmed that a first draft of the budget will be prepared in line with updated costings and this can be discussed further at the next FRAC meeting. He also noted that the spider diagram only shows the category risk with the highest score so there may be more risks in that category but they will be less visible due to scoring lower.

The DFBS informed the Board that our current Convene licence expires on the 21st September and a new software, One Advanced Governance and Risk which has come recommended as it is being used by 27 other RSLs. The Meetings module is similar to Convene but the package comes also with Risks and Goals modules. These would replace our risk register and Internal Management Plan, both of which are held on Excel spreadsheets with the resultant possibility of user error.

The modules are integrated and should result in staff efficiencies while also providing a digital imprint of user changes thus promoting ownership and accountability throughout the staff teams.

The CEO highlighted the issues of Executive Team succession with the DHC leaving and the DFBS due to retire next year, we need to ensure that all members of the leadership team and new members coming in have a transparent system to use.

The DFBS informed the Board that implementing the new software would involve a considerable increase in costs. Convene currently costs around [REDACTED] per annum as it only has meeting functionality. The new system would be around [REDACTED] but has better reporting functionality. The CEO added for clarity that if we implement the new system from September we wouldn't be paying for the full year so the difference in pricing would amount to around [REDACTED] for 2024/25.

One Advanced will work with Viewpoint to ensure that the Risk Register was built the way we needed it to be and work with us to ensure a smooth transition. Full training would be given and help would be available online if needed. The Board would also benefit from easier to use functions for Board meetings such as being able to add apologies, questions and notes ahead of meetings online. PR noted that the current system is not very user friendly so this sounded a vast improvement.

There was discussion around what would happen to the documents currently stored on convene but confirmation was given that hold original copies of all the documents internally so we will not lose any important information. The Chair noted that the current system of using spreadsheets to manage the Risk Register has had drawbacks and that the new system sounds like a huge improvement and will be much easier to understand. TR also noted that having a higher level of accountability was a major positive and spreadsheets are currently overused and have a high risk of errors.

DM queried the cost and how many users were allowed and was informed the pricing was for unlimited users and 50 meetings which would meet Viewpoint's needs. PR asked if it was an annual fee and the DFBS confirmed that it is a subscription but with some additional initial implementation consultancy costs.

LP noted that the benefits of the system allowing information and responsibility to flow up and down the chain of command virtually notifying the relevant users as risks were identified and analysed.

TR asked how many risk registers could be included and the DFBS confirmed up to three which would meet Viewpoint's needs.

As the deadline for providing notice on the current Convene contract is 22nd August the DFBS noted the need for the formal proposal and approval from Board members today.

TR proposed the move away from Convene and to the new One Advanced system. PR seconded this proposal. The Board unanimously approved the decision to give notice to Convene on 22nd August and proceed with the new One Advanced Governance & Risk package.

7 Performance Report 2024-25 Q1

The DFBS briefly outlined the contents of the report, highlighting the response time for complaints and the need to change the way this is reported as currently stage one response times are all measured against the original 5 working days, and there is no way to measure the time given for allowable extensions. It was explained that extensions are allowed to be granted for reasons like complexity or staff absence, and informed the Board that generally we are achieving the 5 day target and the extended deadlines without issues.

TR asked if there was a reoccurring trend in self-funding residents becoming local authority funded. It was noted that there was no set pattern but that more detail on this is provided in the regular finance papers.

The DFBS confirmed that the employment turnover indicators have been made easier to compare and as they were previously held against figures from the last quarter but have changed to be compared to those of the same quarter the previous year.

TR asked for an update on the issues around the staff training requirements. The DFBS explained that HR are still experiencing problems with the new Access LMS systems and that there will be a push for all staff to do the training once these are resolved. The HRM is in discussions with the provider over whether we will continue using the system due to the current issues and the time being taken to reach a resolution.

The Chair asked how many DPA requests we have received recently and was informed around 8 or 9 although a lot of the recent requests have come from the one individual.

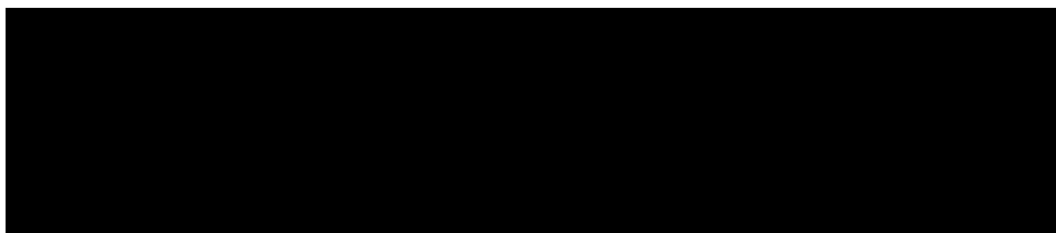
There was some discussion around how excessive noise is addressed, whether these constitute antisocial behaviour and what is done to investigate and resolve these issues.

There were no further questions and the Board noted the Performance Report for Q1.

8 Governance Report

The CEO briefly detailed the information in the Governance Report and confirmed that the Fraud Register was available for the Chair to check and sign.

PR queried if the number of FOI requests is the norm and was informed that recently that was the case, but many of them are down to one individual and this is currently being monitored closely.



There were no questions and the Board noted the contents of the Governance Report.

9 Write-off Report

The DHC informed the Board that this is the standard report they are used to. The proposal details 11 cases with a total value of £13,551.46 to be written off. She notes that the reason for the current tenant's write-off is due to bankruptcy.

It was also noted there was one former tenant with a credit of £1,186.29. This is due to them being deceased with no executor for the estate.

TR queried whether the tenant in question would continue not to pay if declared bankrupt and was informed by the DHC that although she had not looked at the individual case the tenant would have been given advice on access to support and benefits etc.

There were no further questions and the Board unanimously approved the write off figure of £13,551.46.

The Board unanimously approved the former tenant credit write on of £1,186.29

The Board note the write-off cases approved by the DHC.

10 AOCB

The Chair confirmed that the Viewpoint Board Assessment and Summary were now available on Convene.

This was the DHC's last Board meeting as she is leaving Viewpoint at the end of the week. The Board thanked her for all her hard work over the past few years and congratulated her on her new role and wished her the best for the future.

The formal meeting closed at 5.59pm.

Approval of the minutes

Signed as a true record of the meeting, following the approval of the draft minutes by a meeting of the Board.

Signed:

Date: