

**Harbour Homes Scotland Limited
Minutes of Harbour Homes Board Meeting held on
Thursday 6 March 2025 at 5pm via teams**

Present:

Kevin Anderson	Jim Sherval
Leigh Eardley	Chris Stone
Anthony Gillespie	David Welsh (Chair)
Iain MacPhail	Campbell Whyte (Vice Chair)
Liz McLean	

In attendance:

Heather Kiteley, Group Chief Executive
Gordon Cameron, Director of Group Operations
Ngeme Ntuli, Director of Group Finance and Business Support
Chris Thomson, HMT Managing Director (part of meeting)
Tina Bell, Group Business Support Manager

Action**1. Apologies and Welcome**

1.1 Apologies received from Caitlin McCorry

2. Declarations of Interest

2.1 None

3. Approval of Minutes - Board Meeting Thursday 21 November 2024

3.1 Proposed by Ms Eardley and seconded by Mr Stone

3.2 Matters Arising and Outstanding Actions

3.2.1 Item 9.2 - It was suggested that the wording relating to representing the diversity of the community may be ambiguous and the wording could be considered by the Harbour Connections Board at their next meeting.

**Discuss at HC Board
on 13/5/25**

4. Matters Approved or Papers Issues Between Meetings - CEO

4.1 The Board **noted** the following papers issued between meetings:

- Boards Bulletin issued on 29/11/24 and 7/2/25

Group Matters**5. Review – Group 5-Year Strategic Plan 2020-2025 Completion Report – Group CEO**

[Kevin and Jim joined the meeting at 5.10pm]

Action

5.1 An update was given on the 2020-2025 plan and highlights were given on targets not met.

- Due to COVID and price increases we did not hit our target of 608s home being built. However, we did build a significant 502 homes.
- No new types of homes were built and we were unable to explore open market rent.
- Unable to carry out 150 wall insulation upgrades and social rented properties to have an EPC of D or above. 60% achieved compared to a target of 70%
- Investor in People Platinum – this has been carried over into the 2025-2028 strategy for achievement by 2028.

ARC and Housemark reports demonstrate high performance to our peers in many areas.

5.2 In response to a question “referencing the numbers for internal wall insulation”?

5.3 The programme is behind on our pre 1919 properties, and we are awaiting guidance for the next level of compliance.

5.4 In response to a question “do we have any lessons learnt from what was a very unusual time”?

5.5 We have ambitions for continuous improvement when it comes to performance, KPIs set out in the business plans and focusing on our customers and customer service.

5.6 In response to a question “who sets benchmarks for the organisations targets”?

5.7 Targets are set internally, and we benchmark the organisation against our peers.

5.8 The Board **reviewed and noted** the paper

6. **Approve – Group Strategic Plan and People Plan 2025-2028**

6.1 The last five years have been difficult for the organisation, but we have come through in a good position and lots of potential.

6.2 With the pause in Development the business will be focusing on our existing customers.

6.3 In the next three years we are looking to

- Year 1 finish what we started
- Year 2 enhance our digital services
- Year 3 get better at what we do

Action

All the input and suggestions from Board has been gathered to make the four strategic themes as below:

Customer

- 21st century customer interface
- customer to trust us and ensure we meet our statutory safety obligations
- ensure customers feel connected with the organisation

Communities

- understand the needs of our communities and support them.

Colleagues

- Pride in our new digital system,
- working lives easier for colleagues with up-to-date systems

Company

- recognised Harbour as an adaptable, flexible and a great place to work
- colleagues can further their career, with a robust strong organisation well positioned to take up opportunities.

- 6.4 Culture was a priority for the group in 2024 and with the data gathered from working groups and Board away days, we have the four new values, see below:

One Harbour

- Work together as a group

Think Customer

- Our customers and communities are at the heart of what we do

Make it Count

- We deliver the best outcome for our customers and the community

Conversation Matters

- We engage in open and honest conversations which lead to better decision and outcomes

[Iain joined at 5.30pm]

- 6.5 In response to a question “communication was not mentioned as a theme and I am concerned how easy it is to speak to a person in Harbour”?
- 6.6 Customers are still able to speak to an advisor in Harbour. We have good satisfaction levels on our calls, and we try where possible to help at the first point of contact.

Action

- 6.7 We want to retain the ability for our customer to be able to choose how they contact Harbour, digitally, in person or by visiting the office. It is important we provide options for our customers to engage with us. Our aim is to meet the demands of the customer.
- 6.8 The Board **approved** the 2025-28 Strategic plan and supporting people plan.

Parent Matters

7. **Review – Reports from Finance & Risk Committee and Subsidiary Boards – Appropriate Chair**

7.1 **Finance and Risk Committee**

Two Internal Audit Reports were discussed and ratings given.

- Performance Management - strong rating
- Environmental Social and Governance - weak rating (actions in place for improvements)

Budget was reviewed and discussion took place on what the surplus income would be used for.

Harbour Connections final loan payment will be made to Harbour Homes in March 2025.

Harbour Multi-Trades cash flow issues.

Pay & Benefits Package.

7.2 **Harbour Multi-Trades**

Harbour Multi-Trades are experiencing cash flow issues due to invoicing issues. With the hard work of our colleagues invoices have been issued and we have been able to eliminate some of the cash flow issues. We are confident we will break even for year end.

The issue is having invoices sitting in both the new and old system. Approval has been given for four additional staff for a period of two weeks to help with the invoicing backlog.

The outlook for Harbour Multi-Trades is moving into more capital work programmes and are awaiting a response on some contracts we have tendered for.

7.3 **Harbour Connections**

Harbour Connections focus is on the community and overseeing the work carried out by our placemaking team who work with our tenants in the community.

Action

Delighted to say the startup loan given to Harbour Connections has been repaid to Harbour Homes. Harbour Connections objective is to become financially independent and maintain the core activities.

[Chris Thomson left the meeting at 5.57pm]

7.4 Harbour Lettings

The team has been trying to discuss with City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) the definition of affordability for Mid-Market rent. The bandwidth was increased to £58,331 for the first time since 2019. We are aware of a provider that pursues work for the council, that has a higher income scale than the one set by CEC and we are asking why this is the case.

As there is no developing of new homes, the team will be focusing on commercial revenue and working to ensure our stock is maintained.

7.5 The Board **noted** the subsidiary updates.

RSL Matters

8. Approve Harbour Homes Business Plan 2025-2028 – Group CEO

8.1 The Harbour Homes Business Plan goes into a bit more detail and is consistent with the Strategic Plan and meets the requirements of the Scottish Housing Regulator.

8.2 Each subsidiary company have prepared their own Business Plans which the Boards have approved.

8.3 The Board **approved** the Business Plan

9. Review – Assurance Report on Compliance and Matters Delegated to Managers – Group Business Support Manager

9.1 The Assurance report was present to 31 January 2025. This is being reported by exception.

- **Policies** – Those due for review are expected to reduce within the next few months
- **SLA & Lease Tracker** – These will be in place by 1 April 2025
- **Leonard Cheshire Lease** – on-going discussions between Leonard Cheshire and City of Edinburgh Council are taking place. We hope this will be completed by summer 2025.
- **AAB People Health & Safety Report (Jamieson Place Sheltered Housing development)** – The Asset Manager has received the report from AAB a full update, and recommendations will be available at the May meeting. A copy of the report will be shared with the Board.

DOGO

Action

- **RSL Performance** – Group Leadership Team had advised the RSL managers that the top priority was MRI implementation. We also had the completion of our largest development which took up a lot of manpower. This meant there was a dip in performance, hence items highlighted in red. Our focus is now on recovering the position.
- The Annual Charter results will be available for the May meeting.
- 9.2 We need to manage expectations; it will take some time for our RSL performance to recover.
- 9.3 In response to a question “has resourcing been an issue”?
- 9.4 Resourcing has been a short-term issue and approval for additional staff is being granted when requested.
- 9.5 In response to a question “is the policy review cycle on a date line or risk basis”?
- 9.6 Policies are on a date-line basis. Policies are reviewed earlier if required. The Group Leadership Team get a monthly report on all outstanding policies.
- 9.7 The Board **noted** the report.
- 10. Review – Annual Performance Summary – Group Director of Operations**
- 10.1 Our performance against our peers was very good. The summary shows we are sitting in the 1st/2nd quartile for everything.
- 10.2 In response to a question “could we offer an insurance policy or something similar that we could then use to pay to restore the property when it becomes void?”
- 10.3 The Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA) used to have an insurance scheme; they have recently issued a communication demonstrating the value of our membership so this can be investigated as to whether it is still offered.
- 10.4 The Board **noted** the summary.
- Any Other Business**
- 11.1 In response to a question on “how is the housing emergency impacting and if Harbour have been asked by City of Edinburgh Council to accommodate refugees”?
- 11.2 We are regularly approached by City of Edinburgh Council about the housing emergency but not asked recently about refugees. It is

CEO

Action

mostly about homelessness and if we can increase our allocation. Currently we exceed over 60% to homeless applications which is the percentage asked by the council.

11. Date of Next Meetings

- 11.1
- Joint Board Away Day – Friday 25 April 2025
 - Board Meeting - Thursday 22 May 2025

The meeting closed at 6.50 pm

Outstanding Actions		
Item	Action	Management Response
3.2.1	Item 9.2 - It was suggested that the wording relating to representing the diversity of the community may be ambiguous and the wording could be considered by the Harbour Connections Board at their next meeting.	
9.1	AAB People Health & Safety Report (Jamieson Place Sheltered Housing development) to be circulated to Board members by DOGO.	
10.3	The Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA) used to have an insurance scheme. CEO to investigate whether this is still on offer.	