



Meeting Minutes

Board/Committee:	The Riverside Group Ltd Board (the "Board")		
Date and time:	10:00am 14 January 2021		
Location:	Via video-conference		
Present:	• Terrie Alafat	(TA)	Chair
	• Pauline Davis	(PD)	Vice Chair
	• Ingrid Fife	(IF)	Board Member
	• Sandy Murray	(SM)	Board Member
	• Lisa Tennant	(LT)	Board Member
	• Sally Trueman	(ST)	Board Member
	• Peter White	(PW)	Board Member
	• Goi Ashmore	(GA)	Board Member
	• Erfana Mahmood	(EM)	Co-opted Board Member
	• Carol Matthews	(CMM)	Co-opted Board Member
	• Clarine Stenfert	(CS)	Co-opted Board Member
In attendance:	• Cameron Dougherty	(CD)	Tenant Observer
	• John Glenton	(JG)	Executive Director of Care and Support
	• Ian Gregg	(IG)	Executive Director of Asset Services
	• Jo Lucy	(JL)	Executive Director Business Support
	• Cris McGuinness	(CAM)	Chief Financial Officer
	• Patrick New	(PN)	Executive Director Customer Service
	• Sara Shanab	(SS)	Director of Governance and General Counsel
	• Anne-Marie Owens	(AMO)	Governance Manager (Secretary)
Apologies:	• None		

Min Ref:	Agenda Item	Action
01/21	<u>Apologies for Absence (Item 1.1) VERBAL</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were no apologies for absence. 	
02/21	<u>Declarations of Interest (Item 1.2) VERBAL</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were no declarations of interest. 	
03/21	<u>Chair's Matters (Item 1.3) VERBAL</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chair noted that due to the ongoing COVID 19 restrictions virtual meetings would continue, however stressed the importance of maintaining strong communications and invited suggestions from Board Members on how colleagues could support each other at this challenging time. It was further noted that the impact of the pandemic on staff wellbeing and corporate objectives needed to be acknowledged and reflected in a realistic and open manner on forthcoming priorities. The Board were invited to contact SS if they were interested in attending the National Housing Federation's (NHF) Board Member conference in January 2021. SS noted that there were a number of CIH events being held in the year which may be of interest and Board Members would receive notification as part of their CIH membership. The Chair noted the recent failings reported in the press on the handling of a racial discrimination case by L&Q and advised that Riverside would consider the case to identify if there were any lessons learned which could be applied to the ongoing review of Riverside's racial harassment policy and procedures. The Chair asked if they had not already done so, that Members provide their availability for the additional Board meeting in February to consider the Group Budget 2021/22. It was noted that the budget would inform the Business Plan to be considered in March and it was agreed that to allow the necessary work to be completed, the Board meeting in March be moved to later in the month. The Board noted the key items on business on the agenda. 	AMO
04/21	<u>Minutes of Previous Meetings (Item 1.4) CONF</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2020 were approved. 	
05/21	<u>Matters Arising from Previous Meetings (Item 1.5) CONF.</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The matters arising from the previous meetings were noted. Mock In Depth Assessment - It was noted that feedback from Campbell Tickell's document review and observations from December's Group Board and Group Audit Committee meetings had been received. This was under review by the Executive Team and, following consultation with the relevant Chairs, the actions in response to the feedback would be shared with Group Board. 	SS

Min Ref:	Agenda Item	Action
06/21	<p><u>Customer Story (Item 1.6)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board received a presentation, the subject of which was a Care and Support customer with drug and alcohol abuse issues who had been supported into accommodation and an abstinence project. CD reported that a Housing Officer had recently been advised that a customer had not answered a call to deliver a food bank parcel. In response the Housing Officer made enquiries and ascertained that the customer had been hospitalised. The Board noted both stories as excellent examples of Riverside staff making a difference to customers' lives. In response to query, PN explained the staff reward programme at Riverside. The Board asked that its thanks be extended to the members of staff involved in both customer stories shared. 	PN
07/21	<p><u>COVID-19 Update (Item 2.1)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board NOTED the update report on Riverside's ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It was noted that the impact of COVID-19 had been greater in those areas where tier 2 restrictions had continued and, due to staff shortages, a decision had been taken the previous day to continue to carry out emergency repairs but not to accept any more routine repairs at this time. It was noted that this was in line with the sector response and appropriate customer communications had been sent. IG confirmed that all existing repairs would be completed, however the pause on new routine repairs would have an inevitable impact on customer satisfaction with responsive repairs, as seen in November's performance data. The Board noted the work carried out to ensure that Riverside was included in vaccination programmes and to monitor and respond to those colleagues who refused the vaccine. The Board queried the potential impact on an individual's ability to continue in their role if they refused to be vaccinated. JG explained that in these circumstances a risk assessment would be carried out and, based on the outcome, if required an alternative role would be sought and if this was not feasible, legal advice would be taken to assess Riverside's options. It was noted that work was being carried out to 'myth-bust' vaccinations. Following discussion, the Board agreed that Riverside's approach should be formalised in a policy and procedures and communicated to all staff as a priority and should be sensitive to people's concerns. It was further agreed that consideration should be given to how Riverside's position should be communicated to staff, customers and families. The Board was reassured that the five deaths recorded at the Hull PFI schemes did not reflect a viral outbreak and robust infection control measures were in place. The Board requested that future reports provide additional information to clarify relevant factors impacting on death figures. 	JG IG/JG

Min Ref:	Agenda Item	Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board noted that Riverside was now requesting customers to wear face masks when Riverside staff were in their homes and these would be provided free of charge to Care & Support customers. 	
08/21	<p><u>Group Risk Register (Item 2.2) CONF.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board NOTED the updated Strategic Risk Register. The Board noted and discussed the risks arising from the interplay of Brexit and COVID-19 impacts which were being closely monitored and mitigated as far as possible. It was noted that the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions and emergence of new viral strains would impact on productivity as staff absence increased and morale reduced. The scale of impact would be seen in the forthcoming update report on delivery of the Corporate Plan objectives. The Board discussed the ongoing support for staff well-being and noted that in addition to the substantial wellbeing programme in place, further adjustments were being made to protect staff, such as discouraging meetings between 12 noon and 2pm to allow appropriate work breaks. The Board discussed the continued red rating for procurement risk. IG advised that the Procurement Policy had been approved in December 2020 and contract management training was scheduled for March 2021. These activities would see this risk move away from red. In response to a query, JG confirmed that the new safeguarding system had successfully launched in December and its impact was being closely monitored. It was noted that there had been an increase in safeguarding reports since the awareness raising campaign had been launched in 2020. The Board queried how changes to the entitlement to benefits arising from Brexit was being managed. It was noted that the business was responding in line with the legislative calendar, as the Government repatriated law from the EU back to the UK. People Services had commenced work to respond to the first tranche of changes. The Board expressed its concern with customer satisfaction and complaints handling, which was shared by the Executive Team. CMM advised that initial outputs from work done to improve culture, process, procedures and communications were beginning to be seen however there was substantial work still to be done. It was noted that the Regulator would scrutinise performance in this area as part of the In Depth Assessment and would be unlikely to make allowances for COVID-19 impacts. The Board was assured that customer satisfaction and safety remained Riverside's key priority and the risk and impact of mitigating actions was being closely tracked. The Board asked for further detail on customer satisfaction and actions being taken both as part of the ongoing improvement plan and in response to the pandemic. In response to a query regarding reporting to Board where material issues arise, CAM advised that there was a robust risk management and escalation framework in place aligned to clear levels of delegation. Should an issue 	<p style="text-align: center;">PN</p>

Min Ref:	Agenda Item	Action
	<p>within the scope of Group Board arise this would be reported in a timely manner and, where required, a Board meeting convened.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board noted that the risk register would be subject to a comprehensive review following year end and would be presented for approval to Group Board. 	
09/21	<p><u>Committee and Subsidiary Board Update (Item 2.3)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board NOTED the update on Committee and Subsidiary Board activity. SM noted that Riverside were undertaking an external audit tender for the first time in a number of years overseen by the Group Audit Committee (GAC) and updates would be provided in due course. PW noted that the Neighbourhood Services Committee (NSC) had requested a paper on potential cost savings identified by the business relating specifically to those areas within the Committee's scope in order to understand the impact on services and customer experience. There was a substantial discussion on service charges and the Committee asked for further assurance on the work underway in this area. It was noted that while there were some performance challenges within the Customer Service Centre, there was also significant progress being made with the improvement plan. It was noted that the Committee had received a presentation on delivery of the Equality and Diversity plan in the South & Central region and had challenged the anti-racism content of the plan and asked that this be reviewed. 	
10/21	<p><u>Chief Executives Report (Item 3.1)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board NOTED the Chief Executive's update report. The Board welcomed the news that Riverside had been successful in lobbying alongside others in securing £9-10m in external funding to allocate to homelessness intervention across the sector. <div data-bbox="279 1444 1316 1915" style="background-color: black; width: 100%; height: 100%; margin: 10px 0;"> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following due and careful consideration, the Board APPROVED the proposed change to joint venture governance arrangements as endorsed by the Governance and Remuneration Committee and GAC. 	

Min Ref:	Agenda Item	Action
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	
	[REDACTED]	

Min Ref:	Agenda Item	Action
		
12/21	<p><u>Neighbourhoods Matter- Runcorn Regeneration (Item 3.3)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board NOTED an update on the delivery of the Hallwood Park and Palacefields Area Renewal Plan and steps required to produce fully costed proposals. • The Board welcomed the progress being made and acknowledged the significant time required to achieve neighbourhood regeneration. The plans with respect to sustainability and the zero carbon agenda were queried. CAM advised that the project was not yet at a point where costed proposals had been developed, however were assured that the sustainability agenda would be a priority consideration as the project progressed and would be considered in the context of Riverside's wider sustainability strategy. CAM noted all relevant business areas would be involved in exploring and testing sustainability options against grant opportunities and the Business Plan to support informed and balanced decision making on sustainability actions to be taken. • The adequacy of in house experience to obtain information from other stakeholders required to inform the project was queried. CAM gave assurance that there was sufficient in house experience to understand what was required and ensure appropriate engagement with the Local Borough Council and Commissioners. It was noted that the level of engagement with the Local Authority was satisfactory and the Council were supportive of Riverside's current proposals. Riverside was aware of the increasing challenges on Local Authorities and was remaining in close contact to mitigate this risk. It was further noted that it was likely that the Care & Support units were not reliant on sale and would be retained as affordable accommodation. • The Board was invited to submit any further questions on the project to CAM in advance of the follow up report due for presentation in July 2021. 	
13/21	<p><u>Neighbourhoods Matter- Carlisle Strategic Investment Framework (Item 3.4)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board received and noted the update provided on progress made in delivering the neighbourhood renewal programme in Carlisle. • It was noted that two further opportunities in Carlisle were being explored and actions were being taken to establish Riverside as Carlisle Borough Council's partner of choice and to establish a long term relationship. • The Board queried if the Council's target of 20% affordable units in Garden Village was a policy or aspiration. CAM advised that she believed it to be an aspiration but would confirm. CAM acknowledged that this was a risk with the potential to impact on void levels and sustainability in the area however the Council was aware of these concerns and options to mitigate were being 	CAM

Min Ref:	Agenda Item	Action
	<p>actively explored. Discussion on this point would be concluded in advance of the next report to Board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board discussed the external funding sources to supplement Riverside's £74m investment budget which were required to fully deliver the project and noted that all possible external funding options were being explored. The Board asked if a partner of choice had been identified. CAM advised that there was currently no preferred partner however a natural leader might emerge in due course which would be of benefit to the project management process. The Board discussed how assurance could be provided that the renewal schemes in Runcorn and Carlisle were delivering against the original vision and objectives. It was agreed that the background to the neighbourhood renewal schemes and the agreed vision and objectives would be included in the next report on these matters. CAM agreed to circulate the report from 2018 in which Board approval for the schemes was sought. As with the previous report, the Board was invited to submit any further questions on the project to CAM in advance of the follow up report due for presentation in July 2021. 	CAM
14/21	<p><u>Homes England Affordable Homes Programme AHP0 2021-2026 (Item 3.5)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board received and noted the report detailing the Homes England's Affordable Housing Programme 2021–26 and the known details of the Greater London Authority Affordable Homes Programme 2021 – 2026. It was noted that the key decision for Riverside was whether to submit a bid to become a strategic partner or to adopt a continuous market engagement approach. It was further noted that London and the rest of the country would be the subject of two separate decisions however both would be taken following approval of the Business Plan in March 2021. A summary of the changes to the programme, key risks identified and next steps was received. The Board noted that there were a number of crucial questions which required clarification from Homes England and the Greater London Authority before an informed decision could be taken and there was continuous dialogue ongoing to gain the required clarity. CAM assured the Board that deadlines for applications allowed decisions to be taken following approval of the Business Plan and emphasised the importance of completing this work and gaining an understanding of the forecast for recovery from the impact of COVID-19 and Brexit before taking a decision. It was noted that the current thinking suggested Riverside's London presence was not yet mature enough to support a strategic partnership however it would be the preferred option outside of London and was the preference of Homes England for Riverside. In response to a query, CAM confirmed that it was not possible to bid for a combination of strategic partner and continuous market engagement, however different bids could be submitted for London and the rest of the Country. 	

Min Ref:	Agenda Item	Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board noted that there would be numerous factors to consider, not least ensuring that Riverside had a programme which would provide resilience during challenging times and agreed to receive a further report for decision at an appropriate point following approval of the Business Plan. 	
15/21	<p><u>Operational Performance Report (Item 4.1)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board NOTED the Executive Key Performance Indicator report for the period ending 30 November 2020. It was noted that while progress had been made, voids in Care & Support remained a challenge, particularly in retirement living, due to an increase in deaths of older people during winter and a reluctance to move during the COVID-19 crisis. It was further noted that Care & Support were working closely with asset management colleagues to complete work on 300 units in Supported Housing identified as for sale or requiring repair. The Board welcomed the increase in digital participation while acknowledging there remained substantial work to be done. The Board noted and endorsed the changes in report content and the greater focus on narrative. The improvement in compliance performance under challenging circumstances was noted, and while voids performance required improvement, the Board accepted that the position had been improving over a number of years and was impacted by numerous factors including the age and condition of significant levels of stock. 	
16/21	<p><u>Financial Performance Report (Item 4.2)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board NOTED the Financial Performance Report (FPR) Summary for November (Period 8), compared to Quarter Two Forecast (Q2F). The Board further noted the two red and one amber early warning signs and the risks and opportunities detailed in the report. It was noted that while Riverside was operating marginally below the operating margin and net surplus targets although this was expected to be resolved before year end. It was further noted that due to adverse sales performance in Prospect, total expenditure was slightly down. The Board noted that the Q3 forecast would be made in the coming weeks and achieving all targets before year end would be challenging. It was acknowledged that the impact of the pandemic needed to be factored into expectations of year end performance. The Board asked for further detail on the red early warning indicators. CAM explained that these reflected the closing of the site at Stanton Cross during the first COVID-19 lockdown and the position was being closely monitored by the Investment Appraisal Committee. 	
17/21	<p><u>Annual Building Safety Report (Item 5.1)</u></p>	

Min Ref:	Agenda Item	Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board noted the update on delivery of Riverside’s Building Safety Framework. • It was noted that a significant majority of objectives set when the Framework and Plan were developed had been delivered and recruitment against the target operating model had improved. • It was noted that the key concern remained tall buildings. IG reported that cladding issues identified in two Manchester schemes would be addressed and funded through a grant from the Building Safety Fund without costs to leaseholders and an updated fire alarm system had been installed. It was noted that work continued to identify the highest risk buildings as these would be prioritised and while the intrusive surveys planned would inevitably uncover issues, these would be remediated. • The Board queried how Riverside measured its success. IG explained that performance was measured against established targets and in the longer term against how safe customers feel. He noted that both internal and external audit and checks provided additional assurance. It was noted that as regulatory changes came through there was a possibility of accreditation becoming available. The Board were advised that an independent compliance specialist from Savills who had been working with Riverside for a number of years had assessed compliance performance as moving from a 3 out of 10 to a 7/8 out of 10. • The Board asked how investment was structured between one off and ongoing spend. IG advised that investment in fire safety should decrease as greater compliance was achieved, however noted that surveys had identified a number of investment needs which would be built into the Business Plan. The Board was assured that customer safety was considered paramount and where investment was required it would be made whether it be a one off or ongoing cost. • Board Members were reminded that there would be a Board Masterclass on Compliance and Building Safety on 22 February 2021 and IG invited suggestions for further Masterclass topics. PW asked that the Masterclass cover the numerous factors impacting on outstanding actions to assist colleagues in fully understanding the data and underlying influences. 	
18/21	<p><u>Health, Safety and Environment Update (Item 5.2)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board noted the report on performance in the previous year in the Health, Safety & Environment business area and progress made since the previous report in July 2020. • SM requested that a meeting be arranged to discuss and clarify the role of GAC in overseeing HSE compliance matters. • It was noted that NSC and RC&SC required further assurance on the robustness of Business Continuity arrangements, particularly on the testing of plans. 	<p>SS</p> <p>IG/SS</p>

Min Ref:	Agenda Item	Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board noted that while the report would be provided on an annual cycle moving forward, it had been brought six months after the previous update to align the reporting schedule with the annual building safety report. 	
19/21	<p><u>Operational Committee Governance Update (Item 5.3)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board received proposals to reposition the NSC as a Customer Experience Committee and to approve a revised Terms of Reference (ToR). It was noted that in 2020, the role, agenda and reporting mechanisms of NSC were reviewed in consultation with stakeholders, to ensure that its time and efforts were correctly focused on the customer experience and that it had sufficient capacity to meet its responsibilities effectively. PW confirmed as NSC Chair, that the proposals had the support of the Committee. Following due and careful consideration, the Board AGREED that the NSC would be renamed the Customer Experience Committee and APPROVED the revised Terms of Reference. It was noted that work continued to develop an agenda and reporting schedule based on the new Terms of Reference and the RC&SC was undergoing a similar review to ensure alignment between the two customer-focussed committees. 	
20/21	<p><u>Execution of Deeds- Power of Attorney (Item 5.4)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board considered a proposal to extend the arrangements for the execution of deeds under Power of Attorney, introduced in April 2020 in response to the COVID-19 lockdown, until July 2021. Following due and careful consideration, RESOLVED THAT, with effect from the date of this meeting until 31 July 2021, a Power of Attorney is granted authorising the following categories of employees to execute deeds (in relation to matters within the delegated authority of the employee carrying out the execution, or for which the Board has delegated authority) on behalf of The Riverside Group Limited: <p>Category 1 Chief Executive Directors (Executive, Regional, Assistant, Service) Managing Director of Impact Managing Director of Compendium Living Heads of Service</p> <p>Category 2 Departmental and functional managers with the approval of the relevant Executive Director</p> <p>And</p>	

Min Ref:	Agenda Item	Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That all Deeds executed under Power of Attorney will be executed with one attorney signing in the presence of a witness with a further attorney providing approval of the execution via email. 	
21/21	<u>Any Other Business (Item 6)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board Masterclass on 21 January 2021 and the LGBTQIA awareness training session on 11 February 2021 were noted. 	
22/21	<u>Date of Next Meeting (Item 7)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be held on 4 February 2021 via videoconference. 	

Signed:

Terrie Alafat, TRGL Board (Chair)

Date