



Meeting Minutes

Board/Committee:	The Riverside Group Ltd Board (the "Board")		
Date and time:	2.00pm 4 th February 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
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:	• Clarine Stenfert	(CS)	Co-opted Board Member

Min Ref:	Agenda Item	Action
23/21	<p><u>Apologies for Absence (Item 1)</u> VERBAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apologies were received from Clarine Stenfert. 	
24/21	<p><u>Declarations of Interest (Item 2)</u> VERBAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no declarations of interest. 	
25/21	<p><u>Chair's Matters (Item 1.3)</u> VERBAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair advised that the outcome of Riverside's bid for the scheme at Poorhole Lane, Thanet was not yet known and therefore this would not be an agenda item for the meeting. • Following discussion, the Board agreed that in order to better support Board Member interaction while meeting virtually, with effect from March's Board meeting, officer attendees-only to switch off cameras when not talking. • The Board noted that Campbell Tickell had observed December's Group Board and Group Audit meetings and that discussions with Campbell Tickell were ongoing as to improvements that can be made. The Governance team has devised a draft action plan in response which will be provided at the March Board meeting. • It was noted that the key item of business on the agenda was the Group Budget 2021/22 which would form the basis for the Business Plan to be discussed in March. The Chair asked members to retain a strategic focus when discussing the Budget, and to consider the strategic principles informing the proposals rather than the detailed content. It was noted that advance questions received from SM and GA had been very useful and Members were invited to raise any questions on the detail of the budget with CAM following the meeting. 	
26/21	<p><u>Group Budget 2021/22 (Item 2.1)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board received and considered the the proposed Group Budget for 2021/22. • The Board received a presentation from CAM and noted the information provided with respect to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The strategic principles underpinning the proposal; ○ Proposed budget figures compared against Riverside's Golden Rules; ○ Cost saving proposals from the business rejected by the Executive Team; ○ Budgeting approach; ○ Savings approach and summary; ○ Social Housing Costs per unit (Riverside and other Large Providers); ○ Social Housing Costs per unit (Riverside and other Large Providers with a significant Care & Support business); and ○ Social Housing Costs per unit excluding service charges (Riverside and other Large Providers with a significant Care & Support business). 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="284 230 1321 360">• The Board noted the view of the Executive Team that the proposed budget was challenging but achievable and that while there had been a concerted effort across the business to drive savings, Riverside remained expensive and the improvement journey would continue. <li data-bbox="284 398 1321 528">• The Board concurred that the questions posed by a number of Board Members in advance of the meeting and the responses received had been very helpful and agreed that these should be captured as an appendix to the formal meeting minutes. <li data-bbox="284 566 1321 1070">• The business impact of the Transformation Programme was discussed and the Board noted that while many objectives had been achieved there remained an ongoing investment need for IT infrastructure as well as asset management and compliance. It was acknowledged that the target operating model had been agreed over three years previously and Riverside was now operating in a very different environment and needed to continue to evolve to meet its corporate objectives. While the Transformation Programme had been appropriate for its time, Riverside now needed to look forward and respond to existing circumstances as well as anticipate future challenges. The requirement to drive out savings was highlighted as an ongoing activity for any prudent business. The Board agreed that it would be useful in light of the significant changes in membership over the past year, to receive as part of the business planning discussion in March, a summary of the background to the Transformation Programme, how the programme progressed and what had been achieved. <li data-bbox="284 1108 1321 1339">• The Board discussed how leaders and colleagues in the business had come together to offer up cost saving solutions and how this demonstrated an improving culture of accountability and awareness of joint responsibility across the business. The Board were pleased to observe progress in this area however acknowledged that there was significant work to be done as achieving meaningful and long standing cultural change in an organisation was a long term commitment. <li data-bbox="284 1377 1321 1709">• Assurance was sought that cost savings would not have an adverse impact on the quality of customer services or customer safety. The Executive Team gave full assurance that customer impact was the lens through which all savings proposals were considered and customer satisfaction remained Riverside's priority. PN advised that any changes which would degrade services were rejected and noted that in the Customer Service area, some reduced costs had been achieved through the Transformation Programme with investment in Salesforce and improved first contact resolution identified as examples of this. It was noted that Impact integration costs in the coming financial year were distorting the figures in a number of business areas. <li data-bbox="284 1747 1321 1955">• SM noted that she had been satisfied with the comprehensive responses she had received to her questions raised in advance of the meeting however requested that risk be a focus in the forthcoming business planning discussion as well as cost per unit including consideration of what the optimum number of Care & Support units would be to achieve the Budget and Business Plan targets. <li data-bbox="284 1993 1321 2080">• GA noted that he had also received satisfactory responses to advance questions and identified carbon neutrality and the impact of the Stock Condition Survey as considerations for future discussion. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board agreed that the ongoing commitment to customers had come through strongly in the proposals and the direction of travel with respect to the culture at Riverside was welcome. The Board further agreed that they were satisfied that the budgeting approach taken was correct and balanced well between reducing costs while ensuring that investment continued in the right areas to support the customer satisfaction improvement agenda and achieve Riverside’s objectives and aspirations. • It was noted that Riverside was committed to its Care & Support business as a key part of its social purpose however the business implications of this commitment needed to be fully understood and would form part of the forthcoming business planning discussion. • Following due and careful consideration, the Board: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. NOTED the contents of this Report; ii. NOTED the cost savings included within the Budget; and iii. APPROVED the 2021/22 Group Budget. 	
27/21	<p><u>Planned Works Framework (item 2.2)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board received and considered the recommendation to award a 4 year Regional Framework for Kitchens, Bathrooms, Windows and Doors in line with the proposal set out in the report. • It was noted that the intention would be to use Evolve and Riverside Direct to provide these services where it was economically prudent to do so, however the proposed framework provided Riverside with flexibility to obtain services from the preferred suppliers where it was financially advantageous to do so. • The Board queried if the contract management arrangements proposed across each region were sufficient. IG confirmed that the arrangements were proportionate to stock held in each region and there was confidence that they were fit for purpose. • Following due and careful consideration, the Board APPROVED the awarding of a 4 year Regional Framework for Kitchens, Bathrooms, Windows and Doors as per the table at Appendix 2 of the report. 	
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29/21	<p><u>Any Other Business (Item 3)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board enquired on the wellbeing of the Executive Team who responded that they were doing well and ensuring that they offered each other mutual support and care. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CMM reported that there had been queries from staff, particularly those with child care responsibilities on the possibility of being furloughed. It was noted that CMM had addressed these queries through her weekly blog and had advised that while Riverside was furloughing those colleagues who were clinically extremely vulnerable it was not possible to furlough the significant number of staff who were home schooling. It had been reiterated that leaders and managers would continue to maximise the working flexibility offered and encouraged all staff to focus on priorities at this time. • The Chair noted that the meeting agenda for March's Board would be more structured with a comfort break built in at an appropriate point in the meeting. 	
30/21	<u>Date of Next Meeting (Item 4)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be held on 25 March 2021 at 1pm via videoconference. 	

Signed:

Terrie Alafat, TRGL Board (Chair)

Date