

TRGL BOARD MEETING

ITEM: 3.1

The Board is asked to **NOTE** the update on Committee and Subsidiary Board Activity for the period January 2024 to date. Minutes of all meetings in the period can be found on Convene or are available upon request.

Governance & Remuneration Committee 11/1/24 Attendance: 100% Length: 1 hour Mode: VC

Assurance and Risk

Items to note

Recruitment of new CEO – offer and process.

The Committee received the paper setting out the process that had been followed in the recruitment of a new Riverside Group CEO. The Committee noted that interviews had taken place on 3 & 4 January and the main interview panel, made up of 4 Board members had been supported by two additional panels, one made up of Executive Team and the second made up of Customers. All panels agreed that Paul Dolan was the preferred candidate and the Committee noted the decision and that the recommendation was going to Group Board

Recruitment of CEO – remuneration package.

The Committee noted its role in recommending the remuneration package of the CEO up to the Board. The Committee received the paper and approved the remuneration package to be recommended to Board, they also approved the revised contract of employment to be offered to Paul Dolan

Riverside Foundation Trustees 23/1/2024 Attendance 100%, Length 4 hours, Mode: In person

Assurance and Risk

Items to note

The Board noted that a charity had recently been registered under the name of “Riverside Foundation Limited” and it was agreed to challenge the registration with the Charity Commission owing to the similarity of the name and potential for confusion.

The Board noted that the Foundation’s Annual Return had been submitted to the Charity Commission on time.

Management and Operational Update

The Board received an overview of funded projects' performance during quarter 3 of 2023/24 and an update on the development of recently funded projects. It was noted that legacy projects were delivering well with many on track to achieve or exceed their KPIs. Delivery teams have taken learning and established plans where there had been challenges. It was further noted that the Helping Hand Fund had seen an expected increase in demand over the winter months.

Riverside Foundation Finance Report

The Board received a report setting out the financial activity for the Riverside Foundation. [REDACTED]

The Board approved a Community Fund application for [REDACTED] from The Rock Community Centre in Carlisle.

The Board approved Strategic Project Applications totalling circa [REDACTED] over three years for Street Games in Stoke and Workington; The Pennine Centre in Hull; and extensions to six Scale Up Projects.

The Board received an Investment Update and approved a Reserves Policy.

The Board reviewed the Foundation Risk Register in detail and considered their risk appetite to inform a revised Register at the next meeting.

The Board considered its composition, Trustee skills and retirement dates.

The Board undertook a tour of the Arlington House homelessness scheme.

Group Development Committee 24/1/24 Attendance 100%, Length 1.5 hrs, Mode: Via VC

Assurance and Risk

Development Risk Register - The Committee reviewed the new version of the development risk register following an annual refresh. In relation to second staircases in buildings >18m, a transitional period of 30 months was announced on 25 October. This will impact on a number of JVs across our regeneration portfolio. We need to be careful about blight with any building over 18m with one staircase as customers may be reluctant to live in such properties. Additional grant funding may be difficult to obtain. Recent market

Items to note

Headroom Statement - The format of the report had been revised and members were satisfied with the improvements. The Committee was provided with updates regarding the financial buffer, funds and repayments. Operating cash flow fluctuated throughout the year and was managed appropriately, with Group Treasury Committee reviewing on a

comments that the interest rate has peaked together with recent reductions in mortgage rates by some lenders might have a positive impact.

Prospect Overview - Overview of Prospect Homes including a five-year pipeline, current open market developments and land updates

[REDACTED]

Stanton Cross Land Purchase - The Committee considered a paper that proposed the acquisition of land at Stanton Cross, Wellingborough by Stanton Cross Developments LLP (of which Riverside is a 50% member) from the British Steel Pension Fund Trustee Limited (BSPF) and sets out the rationale, justification and financial implications thereof.

[REDACTED]

The Committee approved and recommended to The Board to approve the proposed acquisition of land by Stanton Cross Developments LLP

[REDACTED]

regular basis. It was noted that there was a good appetite for private funding and investment in Riverside.

Quarterly Development Report - The Committee noted the Quarterly Development Report for quarter ended 31st December 2023.

The Goodison Legacy Project - In July 2023, it was confirmed that The Riverside Group and Onward Homes had been selected, by Everton FC, as preferred bidder for the housing element of this project which would regenerate the current home of Everton FC when they moved to a new stadium, currently planned for the summer of 2025. They had asked that Riverside and Onward provide a high-level summary of our proposals for the project. All members were supportive of regeneration within this area and key stakeholders had expressed their support to progress this project.

One Housing Group Board 30/1/24 Attendance 100%, Length: 3 hr, Mode: In person

Assurance and Risk

Group Chief Executive's Report

The Board noted DLUHC had launched its Awaab's Law consultation and there was support for the stronger consumer rights proposed, although real concern as to the ability to deliver the proposed timescales associated with the proposals and the impact on resourcing and costs. The law would introduce new legal requirements for social landlords to address hazards in their homes, including damp and mould within a specified timeframe and contained 29 health and safety risks.

Managing Director's Report

The Board noted the Managing Director's update providing an operational overview on the quarter preceding the meeting. The Board was pleased to note that the Regulator had concluded there had been no breach of the Home Standard following the self-referral on OHG's Gas Servicing performance and that currently compliance was at 98.88%, with all outstanding cases in the legal process and focus on the remaining properties.

Items to note

The Board received and approved the minutes from the previous meeting along with matters arising.

The Chair reported that three of the six Baycroft Care Homes had now transferred to County Court Care with the rest due to be transferred the end of February 2024

The Board reviewed the Empty Homes/Void management report and noted the positive progress with the Allocations and Onboarding Service Improvement Plan.

The Board received an update on the London Development Team's activities, achievements, emerging risks and market activity. The report also covered the latest position on disposals. The Board noted the significant dependency on sales, good

Concerns had been raised by residents living within the Kidwells Close estate in Maidenhead in relation to the cladding remediation programme having not commenced. The Board noted that work would commence under phase 2 of the programme, between April 2024 and April 2026.

The Board highlighted the decline in complaint handling performance over the last 2 months, which was linked to challenges in Property Services, however, this area continued to be a priority for the remaining part of the financial year. The Board requested an update on the Property Services/Repairs Improvement Plan be submitted to the March Board meeting.

2024/25 OHG Budget

The Board noted the current challenges in producing a deliverable budget and that an additional Group Board meeting was being arranged to consider a revised version. The Board was assured as to progress with Baycroft negotiations and that a Contracts Manager had been appointed to ensure rigorous management. The Board requested an update on the Group net surplus position to be included in the report to March Board and further assurance to be provided in relation to the contingency in the Budget for Baycroft in 2024/25.

Financial Performance Report

The Board considered the report that provided commentary on the financial performance for the year to date to December 2023 (Period 9, 2023/24). The Board noted the following main points:

- Year to date Operating Deficit was £8.41m which was £0.63m favourable to Q2F and Operating Margin was -5.6% YTD compared to a Q2F margin of -5.9%.
- The adverse variance in cladding and fire related income and that key learning in relation to the reduction in grant income would be implemented for future claims.

demand for the shared ownership market and reservations at Canning Town were progressing well.

The Board received a report from the Company Secretary noting the updates on the Subsidiary Group, Legal Entity Restructure, Committee Integration and the approach to the closure of OHG Board.

The Board reviewed a report on Corporate Compliance & Assurance and requested a final assurance report be submitted to the March Board meeting.

The Board received minutes from the Customer Services Committee, the Board Training Plan and Forward Agenda.

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- Concern in relation to the YTD deficit against the forecast for year-end surplus, however, noted significant transactions such as service charge income and disposals surplus were expected at year end.

Strategic Risk update

The Board reviewed the strategic Risk Register, discussing the changes to the register since the last meeting and noting the key points and emerging risks set out in the paper which included an increased risk of not meeting customer expectations, increased inherent risk in recruitment and retention and poor budgetary control.

Care and Support Update

The Board reviewed the update on Care and Support, noting the completion of the integration of central teams and progress with recruitment and onboarding. The key risks and challenges, in particular, integration and loss of corporate memory, were noted.

Governing Body lead report on complaints

The Board reviewed the complaints report and noted preparations for the launch of the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code and the impact of Property Services vacancies on the quality of service delivery, with 80% of complaints were driven by services delivered by Property Services. Efforts were being made to ensure resources were in the right areas.

Riverside Scotland 1/2/24 Attendance: 82% Length: 1.45 hours Mode: In person and via MS Teams

Assurance and Risk

Budget 2024/25

The Board noted the impact the additional week's rent charge would have on those customers on universal credit and those paying rent on a monthly

Items to note

Dumfries IWI Project Update

The Board noted the results of the successful IWI installation works and Switchee devices to the

basis and the planned provision of early advice to support those customers affected.

The Board discussed the proposed rent increase, compared with local peers and the Scottish sector. It was noted that to improve customer satisfaction levels and provide good quality homes, the importance of striking a balance between keeping rent levels as low as possible, whilst generating the required income to deliver the capital investment programme was key.

The Board thereafter approved the rent increase of 6.7%, the 2024/25 budget and the suspension of the rent harmonisation for 2024/25.

Corporate Plan Delivery Plan Update

The Board noted the update on progress against the Association's Corporate Plan Delivery Plan.

Repairs & Maintenance Position

The Board noted the current position regarding the repairs and maintenance service and the key areas to be worked on in order to improve performance and customer satisfaction levels.



Association's Stakeford, Dumfries properties and the difference these improvements would make to the heating of customers' homes and their fuel costs.

Quarterly Performance Report

The Board noted a dip in performance levels in Quarter 3 and the plans in place to improve the repairs and maintenance service and promotion / communication. Overall satisfaction levels for January had, however, increased to 67.8% and a continued increase was hoped for the last quarter.

99.1% EICR performance was noted, with full compliance predicted by year end. It was also noted that a review of all building safety processes was in progress to ensure tight alignment with the policies.

Financial Performance Report

The Board noted a strong financial performance to the end of December. The Association performed well in the Quarter 3 forecast, with a comfortable margin predicted at year end.

MD Report

The Board was pleased to note further funding from the Riverside Foundation for the Affordability Officer role, plans for further Board Member recruitment.

and the positive top line results from the recent Hive survey.

Customer Experience Committee Introductory Meeting 8/2/2024 Attendance 71%, Length 4 hours, Mode: In person

The integrated Customer Experience Committee held an introductory meeting to consider the following items:

- Opportunities and concerns/challenges for the CEC this year, including, the opportunity to increase engagement with a diverse range of customers, harnessing the digital offer and support successful integration with positive outcomes for customers. Key challenges included repairs and cladding, prioritisation of work, the changing environment and external scrutiny, including the enhanced role of the Ombudsman.
- Governance Update, including Consumer Regulations, and the Committees' Role in the Governance Structure, highlighting the current challenges for the Group Board and the need for the CEC to be focused on matters within their remit, including regulatory and compliance and service delivery.
- Update on Integration Plans, noting that customers had been consulted in relation to outcomes to be achieved, including increased visibility of housing officers and presence in communities.
- Review of the CEC Workplan for 2024/25
- A tour of a local neighbourhood – Juniper Crescent, Camden.

The Committee highlighted the following key points from the meeting:

- Returning to the Corporate Plan and key strategies as the starting point for what we are trying to achieve as a business is important.
- Striking a balance between operational and strategic assurance, between challenge and support and being conscious that Officers have a lot to deliver.
- Focussing on key priorities - for customers and for the business.
- Ensuring that the Committee builds in sufficient time for conversation and discussion.

The discussion on the day demonstrated the diversity of thought and lived experience around the table.

RCVE 08/2/24 Attendance: 80% Length: 5 hours Mode: Via Microsoft Teams

Assurance and Risk

The Chair of the RCVE welcomed everybody and the minutes of the previous Meeting on 12.10.23 were agreed as a true record.

Pet Policy

Updated Pet Guidance was shared. This had previously been shared with the RCVE in May 2023. Comments from that meeting have now been incorporated in this new draft. There was an in-depth discussion and various concerns were raised such as:

- Is there a limitation on size of dogs? Member felt that further guidance on this may need to be taken into account.
- Pets being brought into a property without Riverside's knowledge. It was felt that neighbours would report this if there were any issues.
- Moving away from asking permission to setting guidelines for dog owners. If pets do not cause a nuisance, then no action would be required.
- Enforcement for owners who do not act responsibly.
- Limit to number of pets.
- Noise concerns

Whilst clearly it was an emotive subject among members, the guidelines were approved by an RCVE majority.

ASB Scrutiny Update

ASB update was shared on the action plan to show where they are on track for actions listed. The Chair thanked everyone for their hard work and observed that it was good to see that Scrutiny had made a meaningful impact. It was confirmed that action had been taken as a result of RCVE feedback and this is now on the website.

Confirmation was given that training for new staff is now incorporated into the New Starter Package for employees to complete in their initial training.

A point was raised that the app used for recording noise was not efficient enough and members were assured that there will be a focus with staff in the coming months, on noise issues. It was also confirmed that another resource is available to frontline workers to monitor noise levels.

Damp Mould & Condensation Communication

The Chair of the Scrutiny panel reported on progress so far and outlined what plans were in place for further meetings. The RCVE Chair asked the panel to bear in mind that another scrutiny had been completed about customer journey through planned maintenance suggested that this was looked at to cross reference some good ideas to support the present scrutiny topic. He also asked the panel to be mindful to send the final report to the RCVE to approve.

There was a discussion on the value of reaching out to find a small group of tenants/customers to form a communication group tasked with reading documents etc. It was agreed this was a very good idea to help get away from jargons and abbreviations.

CI&E Update

Involvement Strategy and updates since October were shared.

- Customer complaints – panel is now established, and two meetings have been held so far.
- Changes to constitution now ready for RCVE to sign off.
- Recommendation of letter writing now being fed into training and this is now on the website.
- Regional Hubs – LCR held first meeting last week, North meeting due in next week or two and S&C to be held in March.
- Website is now live. New listening web page.
- Training for PS on Facebook now completed.
- New ED&I panel meeting monthly.

The Chair of the RCVE enquired if Hub meetings were being minuted. The CI&E manager explained that notes of actions were being made rather than full minutes.

Finance Update

The committee was presented with an up-to-date record of account.

Tenanted Sales Policy Review

Changes to the policy were shared and it was explained that this was a light touch review.

The different types of schemes were explained including Right to Buy, Right to Acquire, Right to Shared Ownership & London Live in Rent.

There was a discussion around the 'tenants agreement' and an explanation was given regarding this type of contract. – it is referred to as a 'model lease'. There was also clarification given on the improvements Riverside have made to support customers in their choices:

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- Panel of solicitors and advisors in place to signpost customers to other people with specific knowledge of these products.
 - Work on website to make it easier to navigate.
 - Product guides to offer information in a consistent way.

Complaints and Customer Satisfaction

A presentation was shared providing information on what to expect in the reports and looked at how these will be set out. Two members shared personal experiences of ongoing complaints, and both felt that complaint resolution was not working.

A second report was then also shared showing the key headlines to support performance management. Moving forward, slides will be provided to the RCVE at bi-monthly meetings as part of the meeting pack. The RCVE Chair felt that members would need to look at these fully to understand how to interpret them. He felt this would be an ongoing process that might need reviewing when reports start being received.

Diversity Panel Feedback

Upcoming plans were reported back to the group as follows:

- Riverside to undertake a consultation on accessibility of services – what are barriers experienced by customers with protected characteristics?
- Quality Assurance exercise to look at barriers.
- An online survey will be shared soon.
- A session with the ED&I panel and an RCVE session.
- Projects that look at a particular service – calls, letters etc.
- Training needs to be completed on GDPR before calls are listened to – this will hopefully take place in March.

The CI&E manager also outlined various projects and events that are taking place.

It was agreed that further discussion was needed regarding inviting an ED&I officer to group meetings.

AGM Proposals

RCVE members were reminded of the proposals that were raised at the AGM in December.

The Chair confirmed that proposals were agreed at the AGM and RCVE now once again seek to work collaboratively with Riverside on this.

It was felt that there needed to be some thought put into clustering some of these together, e.g., triannual elections and induction and it was agreed that the review of the expenses policy could be looked at immediately.

The Chair agreed that the overall review of the constitution would take care of those other constitutional matters, including the election/selection and the expenses policy.

Any Other Business

Bankline – to be looked into as it was felt the process was too slow

Prospect 21/2/2024 Attendance 100%, Length 2 hours, Mode: In person

Assurance and Risk

Managing Directors Commercial Update

The Board received a verbal update on commercial matters including staffing issues and plans to drive improvements over the coming months, including around procurement processes. The Board noted the assistance being provided on a part-time basis by a consultant. The Board also had an update on the various ongoing schemes.

Management Accounts

The Board received the Management Accounts update [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. The Board also received updates in relation to overall performance to forecast, sales performance and cash flow. A scheme-by-scheme summary was also provided.

Managing Directors Report

The MD provided an update to the Board noting that enquiries were up 71% and gave an update on active sites, sales and reservations. The Board noted the focus was on converting all reservations to exchanges by 29 February.

Items to note

Minutes of the meeting on 13 December 2023, Matters Arising, Decisions taken since the last meeting on 13 December 2023

The Board also noted the Risk Register, received a market update and had a discussion on Land Strategy

The Board received an update on current build position on all sites noting that in the current financial year all were well advanced and posed minimal risk to forecast. Michael Orgill confirmed that no health, safety or environmental incidents had occurred in the reporting period. Updates were also provided on customer care, technical and commercial issues and on legal issues.

Governance

The Board received two reports the first noting changes to Persons of Significant Control and the second, the Board Annual Plan of Work.

Evolve 26/2/2024 Attendance 100%, Length 1 hours, Mode: Remote

Assurance and Risk

Evolve Performance Report

A 20-point increase was seen in colleague eNPS scores were seen in the Our Riverside Voice Survey. An action plan had been developed for areas which had scored lower.

Responsive repair volumes had remained high in January, the expected decrease had not materialised.

Customer satisfaction levels had increased slightly to 86.2% and colleagues continue to work through improvement plans. Complaints satisfaction had decreased to 22.2%, this was being worked through and a new resolutions handler had been appointed to help increase this figure.

A new damp and mould business model to meet additional demand in this area and a recruitment campaign was active.

Evolve Finance Update

[REDACTED]

Items to note

The Board noted an update on changes to Evolve's PSC register.

The Board approved its programme of work for 2024.

Evolve Budget 2024/25

The Board approved the budget for 2024/25.

Customer Experience Committee 29/2/2024 Attendance 83%, Length 3hr 20 hours, Mode: In person

Assurance and Risk

The Committee welcomed the Executive Director of Customer Service' report focused on progress made against all current issues affecting customer service across the business and their RAG status. The Committee noted that Home Ownership service outlook remained red due to ongoing issues with national contracts and OHG homeowner satisfaction and repairs were rated red, with considerable work required to drive improvements in customer satisfaction. The Committee also raised concern in relation to vulnerable customers and reputational risks associated with the Helpline transition.

The Committee was assured on the current position in relation to performance and service delivery at the Customer Service Centre (CSC), with good progress having been made with first contact resolution and continued focus on further reducing average handling time and resource planning. The Committee noted the impact of storms and cold weather on January's performance.

The Committee welcomed the updates on RCVE and OHG scrutiny plans, in particular, the focus on damp, mould and condensation and requested that consideration be given to widening the scope to include observations in relation to the process and whole customer experience.

The Committee reviewed the Customer Services Risk register, highlighting the increase in Helpline's inherent risk score to reflect the loss of a major contract, transition of colleagues to a new provider. Committee also noted the additional Helpline risks relating to system failure and loss of service, increased Telecare costs and mis-matched calls to Riverside's Alarm Receiving Centre.

Items to note

The Committee noted progress with Customer Service integration, including, next steps and the timeline for integrating Riverside and OHG customer service teams. The Committee requested further detail on systems integration and customer comms be included in the next update report.

The Committee received a customer story that highlighted the value of the proactive tenancy visit programme, with these visits having been rolled out across the Group as part of the Tenancy Visit Procedure. The Housing Officer visited the customer, discovering they were in hospital and gaining access the home to find the property in disrepair. Decisive action was taken to support the customer through clearing and cleaning her home, referring to money advice service, adult care assessment and arranging a move to a new property where the customer now receives carers visits.

The Committee noted progress with the implementation of the Customer Experience (CX) Improvement Plan 2023/24, with half the actions having been completed and the majority of the remaining actions on track to complete by the end of March. The Committee was pleased to note the correlation between completed actions and increased customer satisfaction. The three actions rated red,

The Committee reviewed update reports from both TRGL and OHG summarising progress against Empty Homes Improvement Plans for 2023/24. The Committee was assured as to the significant progress made in both TRGL and OHG performance, with empty homes rent loss at 0.84% against target of 1.1%, TRGL's Empty Homes Steering Group monitoring the improvement plan and holding accountable leads to account on its delivery and 85% of actions having been delivered. One Housing had also seen consistent improvements to overall rent loss and continued to remain within the target of 1%. With current improvements average relet times were expected to reduce to 32 days for 2024/25.

The Committee reviewed the overview of TRGL and OHG complaint performance trends, Ombudsman communications and lessons learned, along with proposed remedial actions for Q3 and was pleased to note the improvement in Riverside's complaint handling satisfaction to 33.2%, the highest score reported since August 2022. The Committee noted that 80% of OHG complaints related to repairs/property services and main themes identified were being fed into improvement plans. The Committee requested further detail enabling any correlation between complaints completed within resolution milestone and customer satisfaction to be identified.

The Committee noted TRGL and OHG had each received a severe maladministration determination and highlighted the importance of documenting key learnings. The Committee also highlighted the importance of preventing escalation of complaints to Stage 2 and the risks of inconsistencies in the current complaint handling structure, with the future integration of complaint handling teams providing a consistent approach across the whole Group.

The Committee welcomed the comprehensive report on the severe maladministration determination from the Housing Ombudsman Service in respect of repairs, record keeping and complaint handling. The Committee was assured as to the detailed senior management case review, lessons learnt, recommendations and that the Orders issued by the Ombudsman had been met. A follow up review would be submitted to the June CEC meeting to confirm all actions had been implemented.

including JMS, were progressing, however, required IT resources.

The Committee noted the work to prepare for Consumer Regulation, overseen by the steering groups, to ensure compliance with the Consumer Standards set out by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) and the improvements made to the compliance position over the last six months.

The Committee noted the 3Cs Dashboard report and highlighted the significant difference between Riverside and OHG's Net Easy Score and requested further detail be provided to the next meeting.

The Committee noted the update on the Langley Asset Strategy setting out actions to date and future work on Langley around damp and mould and planned investment, noting that the working group would develop an Asset Strategy to focus planned investment on where it was most needed, including moving beyond standard component replacement. New ways of working would also be explored that would be applicable to other areas of high demand, and more widely to the portfolio.

The Committee noted the performance benchmarking report and the impact of survey collection method on satisfaction scores.

The Committee received a comprehensive spotlight on the local service delivery offer and activity across the Liverpool City Region (LCR) that demonstrated the emerging local service delivery against three key strategies that underpinned Forward Together, as well as supporting the organisation's work towards meeting the

objectives within the Better Social Housing Review. The Committee was pleased to note the positive feedback received from customers and housing teams in relation to proactive tenancy visits, progress with increasing customer voice in the region, community fund projects and case studies demonstrating the local response to ASB challenges.
