



Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 11 November 2008 at 4.00 pm at 2c New Mart Road, Edinburgh.

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Present:	Mr R Robertson (Chairman)	Mrs H Bayne
	Mr E Banks	Mr C Culross
	Mr T Clark	Mr N Hall
	Mr A Colston	Mrs B Higgins
	Mr P Foreman	Ms E Johnston
	Mr J Hinton	Ms M Middleton
	Mr C Macneill	Mr J Pollock
	Mr D McMillan	Mr C Sanderson
	Mr J O'Neill	Mrs N Mitchell (Minutes)
	Mr B Reidford	

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## BUSINESS

### Action

#### 1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

#### 2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Ms. W Hayhurst and Mr Esslemont (Leave of absence)

Mr Robertson reported that Mr. Leask had tendered his resignation from the Board on account of his continuing ill health. The Board accepted the resignation and extended its very best wishes to Mr Leask.

#### 3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2008

The Minutes of the last meeting were approved subject to the following amendment:

##### 7. Pre-Acquisition Risk Assessment Report from Linkwide Board

The spelling would be corrected from Cadzow Avenue, **Bowness** to Cadzow Avenue, **Bo'ness**.

Moved: Mr. Robertson  
Seconded: Mr. Banks

**4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2008**

**4.1 Millarston Drive, Paisley**

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**4.2 LinkLiving Voluntary Severance**

The Board noted that eleven staff had applied for voluntary severance and although it was likely that all would be accepted a decision would be made following the closing date of 28<sup>th</sup> November.

**4.3 Older Persons Advice Project (OPAP)**

Mr Sanderson advised that Link had been awarded a finalist commendation from the Chartered Institute of Housing for the project.

**5. LINSTONE RULES AND INDEPENDENCE AGREEMENT**

**5.1 Independence Agreement**

*The Board considered and approved the Independence Agreement.*

Mr Culross reported that in the course of the due diligence work he had carried out an extensive site inspection of Linstone's properties. The result of which was that he had produced a report highlighting the under investment in the housing stock and further highlighting areas where there were probable gaps in the long term maintenance cost projections, which would be sent to Linstone for clarification. A further update would be provided to the December meeting, although it was acknowledged that Linstone may not have had time to evaluate the report and it was doubtful if the result of the multi-storey surveys would be available.

CC

**5.2 Rules**

The proposed changes to Linstone's Rules to allow them to join the group were noted.

**5.3 Draft Business Case**

The Board noted the Draft Business Case and that initial feedback from The Housing Regulator had been positive.

**6. POLICY REVIEW**

*The Board considered and approved the Voids Policy.*

**7. LINKLIVING TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

*The Board approved the recommendation that all staff who accepted redeployment at a post with a lower salary would have their salary protected for a year from the date of redeployment.*

8. **DIARY DATES 2009 AND MEETINGS ATTENDANCE**

*The Board approved the proposal that Group Board meetings would continue to be held on the second Tuesday of each month in 2009 and commence at 4.00pm and that only exceptional circumstances would prevent business of the meeting being concluded on the evening.*

*The Board also approved a rota system for attendance at Larkfield Board Meetings in 2009.*

JNH

Mr Hall agreed to circulate Larkfield's 2009 meeting dates and asked Board Members to confirm which meeting they could attend so that a rota could be established.

9. **RBS LOAN FACILITY – INTEREST RATES**

*The Board approved that Mr. Hall would roll over the floating rate loans for a further month on LIBOR and then place the loans at a fixed rate for one year, provided that such fixed rate was likely to be more beneficial than remaining on one month LIBOR.*

JNH

10. **GLASGOW STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT AND FUNDING PLAN (SDFP)**

The SDFP had been submitted to Glasgow City Council and a response was pending. It was hoped that the submission of the plan would demonstrate to the council Link's commitment to the city and act as a catalyst for future involvement.

Noted that Strategic Objective 2 (Ensure our Properties are Fit for Purpose) referred to Link stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standards but this would be qualified to the extent that it was within grant funding and constraints.

Mr. Sanderson reported that Link had joined a consortium that would be bidding to provide social housing as part of the commonwealth games. Link was the only RSL in any of the consortiums.

11. **RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

Mr Foreman reported that following e-mail consideration by the Risk Management Committee, it was recommended that due diligence work should progress with regard to a site at Torwoodlea in Larbert and a site at Neilston in East Renfrewshire

*The Board approved the recommendation to progress due diligence on the sites at Larbert and Neilston.*

It was noted that as these sites were subject to "back to back" deals Link would require to ensure that the financial performance of the developers was assessed and Performance Bonds would likely be necessary, although the risk profile of the issuer of the Bond would also require to be assessed. The nature of past business on the sites would also be considered as part of the due diligence process. The missives would be constructed to align with funding availability.

## 12 PENSIONS

*The Board agreed that the paper from Burness had addressed the matters raised at the September Board meeting. It was further agreed that when an organisation was considering joining the group it was important to manage the expectations of those organisations so as to avoid any assumption that Link intended to guarantee liabilities for pensions.*

## 13. GROUP STRUCTURE

*The Board agreed that, although the proposal to create a new non-asset owning parent company to head the group may be the best route to accommodate many RSL subsidiaries, in the current uncertain economic climate it would not be prudent to undertake a restructuring exercise and the review of the group structure would be held in abeyance. It was agreed however that further consideration to reporting lines was required, as was resolving the reporting position of Larkfield.*

Mr Hall agreed to present a further paper to the December meeting.

JNH

## 14. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

*The Board approved the recommendation that terms and conditions of employment for Linkwide and Link Homes did not require to be reviewed or altered.*

## 15. ACHIEVEMENT OF BUSINESS PLAN OBJECTIVES

### 15.1 Strategic Action Plan

The Board considered the progress with regard to the Strategic Action Plan. It was noted that some items had been deferred pending the Lead Developer review by the Scottish Government.

Ms. Middleton agreed to update the Plan to reflect progress with the project to review the operation of the Customer Service Centre.

MBM

Mrs. Higgins reported that all properties being acquired for shared equity in Cumbernauld would now be for social rent, under objective SO1.

Mr Hall advised that Larkfield had submitted its Business Plan in accordance with the requirements of the Independence Agreement. It was noted that the Plan would be considered in conjunction with the Link group business planning process and further noted that the Larkfield business planning process would be aligned with line with the Link group process.

### 15.2 Key Performance Indicators

The Board considered and noted the report.

Mr Culross agreed to investigate the cumulative totals for staff turnover as it was unclear if the figures represented percentages or numbers of staff.

CC

### **15.3 Subsidiary Reports**

The Board considered and noted the reports.

### **15.4 Consolidated Accounts for the period 1<sup>st</sup> July 2008 to 30th September 2008**

The Board considered and noted the report.

### **16. SITE EVALUATION CRITERIA**

The Board considered and noted the report.

### **17. LINKLIVING PARTNERING**

Ms Johnston advised that discussions with the Action Group with regard to partnering opportunities were progressing positively. Link and the Action Group had both issued briefs to their staff advising of the possible partnerships/merger options.

### **18. FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

The Board considered and noted the report.

### **19. EXECUTION OF LEGAL DOCUMENTS**

The Board considered and noted the report.

### **20. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **20.1 Extranet**

The Chairman reminded Board members of the value of the Extranet, particularly for pressing cuttings and other documents.

#### **20.2 Repossessions – Mortgage Rescue Scheme**

Mr. Banks advised of the introduction of the Mortgage Rescue Scheme in England and Wales which was tasked with preventing 3000 repossessions per year. The scheme was similar to the Mortgage to Rent scheme that operates in Scotland. It was anticipated that the Mortgage Rescue Scheme would be applied in Scotland.

The Board noted that the Senior Management Group was currently investigating how Link could assist the Scottish Government with such schemes.

#### **20.3 Former Board Members**

***Board members agreed that a reception would be held to mark the service of former Board Members.***

Mr Sanderson agreed to consider how this could be best achieved.

**CS**