

MINUTES OF WESLO BOARD MEETING NO. 170

29 April 2009

Present:	Peter Robson	Chair
	Mike Bruce	Chief Executive
	Douglas Drummond	Finance Director
	Mike Crozier	Operations Director
	John Spraggon	Community Director
	Margaret McIntyre	Community Director
	Andrew Sneddon	Tenant Director
	Janette Wallace	Tenant Director
	Eileen Stirling	Tenant Director
	Alex Bow	Tenant Director
	Cllr. Frank Anderson	West Lothian Council Nominee
In attendance:	Dorothy Snedden	Clerical Officer
	Kate Hedges	Executive Assistant

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and introducing Dorothy Snedden as the staff observer for this meeting.

	ITEM	ACTION
1	<u>APOLOGIES</u>	
	No apologies were received from Cllr. Gerry Goldie.	
2	<u>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING</u>	
	The minutes of Board Meeting No. 169 were approved.	
3	<u>SERVICE DELIVERY ANALYSIS AT TERMINATION</u>	
	The Operations Director introduced this paper, which had been issued in advance of the meeting.	
	It was agreed at the Board meeting on 3 May 2006 to bring this information to the Board on an annual basis. This year's figures show a slight improvement on last year, from 94% to 96%, with the majority of tenants being happy with the service provided by Weslo.	
	The Board noted the contents of the paper.	
4	<u>DUNFERMLINE BUILDING SOCIETY – POSITION STATEMENT</u>	
	The Chief Executive advised the Board that despite the recent news concerning the Dunfermline Building Society, Weslo's current facilities are secure and that the Head of Social Housing, Gordon Campbell, has been working under direction of the Bank of England	

ITEM**ACTION**

to prepare the Dunfermline Building Society Social Housing Loan Book, for sale.

He advised that he is in frequent contact with Mr Campbell and had been given specific reassurances with regard to both Weslo's current facilities and future drawdown facility. He undertook to keep the Board informed of the situation.

CE

The Board noted the Chief Executive's verbal report.

5 APPRENTICE ELECTRICIAN

The Operations Director introduced this paper which had been issued in advance of the meeting.

Gary Mitchell, who is currently gaining work experience through the "Get Ready for Work" programme on placement with Weslo, has expressed a keen interest in becoming an apprentice electrician and has already passed the pre-employment assessment with Scottish Electrical Training Trust (SECTT). The Operations Director stated that Gary has performed well and his efforts, though supervised, have made a contribution to Weslo. Weslo has always been committed to the principle of employing apprentices for apprenticeships for young local people. As there is grant funding available and the SECTT would be willing to nominate Gary, the Operations Director invited the Board to approve employing Gary Mitchell as an apprentice electrician for three years.

The motion was proposed by Eileen Stirling and seconded by Janette Wallace.

6 DIRECTORS REPORTS

6a) The Chief Executive issued his report and the following was noted:

- 1) The current figures indicate that there may be a shortfall as a consequence of the current economic climate and both the Chief Executive and the Finance Director will review the budget figure at the end of the first quarter.
- 2) Four tenders for the 2009/10 Programme will have been issued by close of play today.
- 3) The Chief Executive congratulated Harry Mulholland, one of Weslo's Gas Service Technicians, who completed the London Marathon on Sunday 26 April. Both the Community Budget Committee and Weslo staff have supported him in raising funds for the Sick Kids Foundation.
- 4) There have been three meetings of the West Lothian Strategic Alliance since the last Board meeting and the Chief Executive reported that the development programme is progressing diligently.
- 5) In terms of future development Weslo is working with Falkirk Council and our development agent, Almond Housing Association, to bring the current projects to fruition within the next three to five years.

CE/FD

ITEM**ACTION**

6) The Staff Away Day venue had been booked and the speakers and schedule have been confirmed.

CE

7) The Chief Executive undertook to discuss the Subsidiary Company under AOB.

6b) The Finance Director issued his report and the following was noted:

1) Budgetary Control Report

No Budgetary Control Report was issued as it was too early in the financial year.

2) Lothian Pension Fund presented a seminar to Weslo staff on 26 March to inform them of the changes to the scheme and to answer any questions. The seminar was well received and LPF commended Weslo for the speed with which our staff were notified of the changes.

3) Maureen Vidler took up the post of Part Time Finance Assistant on 20 April.

4) Office Refurbishment

Final timescales and plan are being compiled. It has been agreed that the most efficient way to manage the alterations to the front office is to close the rent counter. Tenants will be advised, in advance and in writing, of the timescales and alternative means available for paying their rent. We aim to minimise disruption as much as possible.

5) The Finance Director met with John Mills of the Anglo-Irish Bank. They offer good rates and are backed by the Irish Government until 2010 so Weslo will continue to keep funds on deposit with them for the time being.

6) The upgrade to Sage Line 200 is ongoing and complex but proposals are due mid-June and the Finance Director will advise the Board of the final budget figure once it is confirmed.

FD

6c) The Operations Director issued his report and the following was noted:

1) We currently have nine Mortgage to Rent applications in progress.

2) At the meeting in March Frank Anderson asked if the Board could be provided with a breakdown of the accumulated benefits achieved by the Older Persons Advice Project to date. A summary of the total benefits accumulated by Weslo tenants from 1 July 2008 to 31 March 2009 was issued at the meeting and the Operations Director drew the Boards attention to the total figure of £52,897, for 49 tenants, noting that OPAP is clearly very successful.

ITEM

ACTION

Arrears

Arrears have been reduced from £135,000 in March to £121,000 in April. The Estates Team are dedicating a lot of their time to arrears at the moment and their hard work in this area is acknowledged by the Board.

Rent Loss

Only the March figure is available, which does not provide sufficient information for analysis.

Reactive Maintenance

Is showing a small under-spend but there will be accruals for 2008/09.

Job Completion

All jobs responded to in time during March.

Tenant Satisfaction Cards

14% of cards received. All but two were positive and both negative comments have been followed up and resolved to the tenants satisfaction.

The Operations Director invited questions.

Cllr. Frank Anderson observed the difficulty in letting a property in Alexander Drive, Dedridge, and asked if there was a reason for this.

The Operations Director advised that there were problems in Dedridge due to the relatively high number of Section 5 referrals received from the Council for tenancies in that area.

7 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

i) Subsidiary Company

The Finance Director advised the Board that he, the Chief Executive and the Operations Director had attended further meetings with Baker Tilly and HBJ Gateley Wareing to progress the setting up of a subsidiary company to manage Weslo's market rented properties under the terms of an occupancy agreement.

The proposed course of action is to establish "Weslo Initiatives" as a subsidiary of Weslo Housing Management by 1 September 2009. It will be wholly owned by Weslo Housing Management. Its core business will be to manage the 16 market rented flats, though the Company Objectives and Articles of Association will be broad enough to allow for other initiatives in the future. The subsidiary company will have a

ITEM**ACTION**

Board of five, the exact composition of which is still to be established.

The Finance Director advised that there will be a considerable amount of standard documentation to be completed and passed by the Scottish Housing Regulator and/or the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator.

These will include:

- Articles of Association
- Memorandum of Association
- Service Level Agreement
- Occupancy Agreement
- Business Plan

In view of the target date of September 2009, the Finance Director asked the Board to grant the Executive Directors delegated authority in order that they can progress this work promptly.

FD

The Board approved the request and an update on the position will be provided at the next meeting.

ii) Housing (Scotland) Bill

The Chief Executive advised the Board that the consultation process on the draft housing bill had begun. It contains measures regarding Right to Buy and the role of the Scottish Housing Regulator, amongst other measures. A Summary of its content will be tabled at the next Board meeting in June. The deadline for responses is 14 August 2009 and the aim is to have a draft response at least for Board on 22 July.

iii) Scottish Housing Regulator Inspection

The Chief Executive advised the Board that further to receiving our notice of inspection last year, the Scottish Housing Regulator has been in touch to begin the process. The inspection will take place within this Financial Year.

iv) The Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on 10 June 2009.

The meeting closed at 11.00