Poplar Board

Summary of a meeting held on 9 June 2020

Board Members present:

Paul Brickell (Chair)	John Norman	Simon Turek
Alex Woolmore	Tanya Martin	Momtaz Ajid

Consent agenda

The Board approved all items including Annual Safeguarding Children Policy Review and Value for Money.

Financial Performance Review

Reasonable optimism about interest cover and operating margin despite COIVD-19 impact. Backward looking trend analysis will be presented to F&GP to inform of trends, drill-in on timing of income, service costs etc to evolve substantial assurance awarded by internal audit.

Annual Business Plan – Financial commentary and stress testing

The Board approved the June 2020 Business Plan and noted the stress testing and internal control framework and delegated back to Finance & General Purposes Committee to oversee any changes to this Business Plan prior to final submission to the Regulator in September.

Bond tap investor opportunity

The Board agreed that raising new debt finance through a bond tap directly with an investor in a Forward Purchase Agreement is in the best interest of Poplar HARCA.

Capital Monitoring Report

The Board noted the scheme forecast costs and revenue under construction and in the pipeline.

A number of ongoing significant issues on site has required the contractor, Telford Homes, to revisit and undertake remedial works on Balfron.

Chrisp Street start on site is scheduled for March 2021.

The new External Wall Fire Review will require a fire safety assessment to be conducted of buildings above 18 metres (six storeys) regardless of construction. This is being prioritised on a risk analysis basis.

Health & Safety Annual Report 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 Health & Safety Plan

The Board approved the report and plan in line with its terms of reference.

Resourcing the Vision

The Board:

- Considered the strategic decision timetable
- Noted the re-revised timetable for Nairn Street and expanded Aberfeldy ballot

- Noted Aberfeldy regeneration next steps and next stage strategic decision making in regard to Teviot regeneration will take place at September Board
- Agreed that the Fire Safety Action Plan Review and Decarbonisation Strategy next steps are considered at September Board
- Noted that the further Fire Safety Review and Decarbonisation Strategic Review will still be included in Working Paper 6 to be considered by November Board and BSD
- Noted the previously circulated April and May Coronavirus update reports and that the June Board update will be issued following the next significant round of government announcements

Aberfeldy Phases 4, 5 & 6, and Nairn Street

The Board noted that:

Poplar HARCA continues to work in partnership with EcoWorld on the expansion of Aberfeldy New Village LLP to include the Nairn Street area;

That Poplar HARCA continues to support the creation of a new masterplan for Aberfeldy Phases 4, 5 and 6, and the land to the north encompassing Abbotts Road and Nairn Street;

Leaseholder Charging Policy

The Board approved the proposed Leasehold Charging Policy

Governance Health Check 2019

The Board reviewed proposed follow-up actions and agreed next steps

Coronavirus update

CMT provided verbal updates on Poplar HARCA's response:

Housing: have made over 1,000 support calls keeping in contact with 300-400 residents. There has been a big increase in MASH enquiries, approx. one each day.

Parkguard still patrolling and doing welfare checks and serving injunctions.

Income has been significantly impacted by the increase in Universal Credit claims. Overall, however, arrears are roughly 0.5% from where we were at the start of this period exception being be:here 3% higher.

Staff survey results are really positive, but there are concerns about coming back to the office.

CaN: has moved online and are doing a lot of digital inclusion work.

Spotlight is conducting socially distant face-to-face work with young people. Working with Youth Defending team and Police.

Supporting three food projects. Running volunteer programmes, supporting delivering groceries, working with Neighbours in Poplar, and a bicycle delivery project.

Kitchens in Spotlight are providing school meals. Nurseries have opened.

GP service started from Spotlight, a compliant clinical space for young people is now a virtual GP service.

Finance: Working from home with year-end slightly ahead of where we were last year.

Poplar Works is partially open. There is an on-going dialogue with business tenants who are struggling to pay rent.

Technical: Asset management has been focused on emergency repairs and compliance works only. Considerable drop in demand from our residents in terms of repairs within dwellings and communal repairs. Saving approx. £30k per week.

Estate services is providing skeleton service focused on health and safety, removal of bulk waste, spot cleaning and grass cutting.

Health and safety has been a huge challenge, but the Team has risen to it. Balancing operational necessity with personal safety

Development: Sites all open and will be operating at 50% capacity for quite a while. Safety systems in place to maintain social distancing. Some material shortages.

Shared ownership teams have managed to keep working with video visits, and have sold quite a few.

Corporate Services: Relationships working well with LBTH external partners and stakeholders who can see what we are able to deliver because of our model.

Other reports noted at the meeting:

- Corporate Strategic Review
- Services Committee Performance Report