

MEETING of the GOVERNING BODY OF SCOTTISH VETERANS' RESIDENCES SVR Boardroom and MS Teams on Monday 10th October 2022

Record of Decisions

Present: George Lowder MBE Chairman – Present

Sue Bomphray (SB) – Online Richard Edlmann (RE) – Online

Rev Neil N Gardner (NG) Troy Johnson (TRJ) – Online Tony Jones KC (TJ) – Online

Clive Masson (CM) – Online Rosendael Sqn Ldr Derek Morrison (DM) – Online Isla Tabberer (IMT) – Online Rosendael

Jonathan Tweedie, Vice-Chairman (VC) - Online

In attendance: Jeremy Chittleburgh Treasurer (JC) – Present

George Corbett Depute CEO (DCEO) - Online

Graeme Watson (GW) Rosendael Manager – Online Rosendael Martin Nadin OBE Chief Executive (CEO) – Present (Minutes)

Apologies: Lt Ray Gidney RN (RG)

Maj Christian Taylor (CT)

Sandy Telfer (ST)

Gayle Templeton, HR Consultant, (GT)

	Subject	Raised by	Additional Documents	Decision
1	Chairman's Introduction	Chairman		
1.1	The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, noting that it had been planned to base the meeting at Rosendael, but due to the train strike, several the Governing Body had been unable to travel.			
1.2	Body and Senior Man pandemic. He noted t make hardship payme to the cost-of-living cr given the current circu event had been paus	nagement Team (shat during the meants to some members. He and the Cumstances, it was sed until a morents and support of	SMT), for all their hard seting there would be seens or staff, and some chief Exec had discuss judged inappropriate suitable and appropriate	thank you to the Governing d work during the Covid-19 a discussion on whether to of the tenants, in response sed the planned event, and to proceed with it now. The oriate time. The Chairman and SMT was genuinely and

2	Apologies	CEO		Noted	
	Chief Exec confirmed				
	Gidney, Maj Christian Taylor, and Gayle Templeton; and that the meeting was quorate.				
	Dunai ana Minata	01 :	Dueft Minutes 44	A	
3	Previous Minutes	Chairman	Draft Minutes 11 Mar 22	Approved	
	Minutes of the Governing Body Meeting of SVR held on 23 rd May 2022 were reviewed and accepted as an accurate record of the meeting. Minutes accepted: Proposed by: Tony Jones Seconded by: Richard Edlmann				
4	Review Action Log	Chairman	Action Log	Noted	
4.1				e Governing Body's Action	
	Ser 71 . Chief Exec confirmed that the Head of External Relations (HER) had been recruited and the individual would be in post wef 5 Dec 22. Two animations remained available for broadcast at a suitable time. He sought views of whether to use the animations prior to the arrival of the HER, or to wait until their arrival and provide the animations as their project. In response to JT's question regarding the benefit and utility of the animations, it was confirmed that previous releases had had a positive influence and raised awareness. It was felt that using the animations over the Remembrance period would be helpful. The Chief Exec undertook to post the animations on social media.				
	Ser 75. Employee Support Service/Assistance Programme – Chief Exec confirmed that the LifeWorks EAP was in place and available for all employees. Close Issue. Ser 76. Rosendael 90 th Anniversary Event. Chief Exec confirmed that Kensington Palace's (KP) preferred month for event was September 2023. This was compatible with the intention to conduct the handover between the Chairman and Vice Chairman. It was agreed to ask KP to confirm a date in September 2023.				
	Ser 77. Covered earlier in the Chairman's Introduction.				
	Ser 78. Would be covered as a discrete agenda item.				
	Ser 79 . Following a meeting of the SMT it had been decided that banning smoking and drinking alcohol with the Residences was impracticable and unenforceable. The SMT considered that education and smoking cessation therapy were the best options, and both were recommended to the Governing Body for consideration. Both options were supported, and the recommendations agreed.				
4.2	Bellrock Close Revieus open serials within the			ewed progress against the	
	and that they had sou meeting clients with a supportive and althou considered this was i Level Agreement cou	ught the use of a addiction problems gh recognising the manageable. Chill ld be developed, o With You on a 3	Bellrock Close office s. Both he and the Be ere would be a slight cef Exec recommended and insurance cover month trial. The benefits	ed by the charity With You to be a community hub for Ilrock Close Manager were everall increase in risk, both d that if a suitable Service was in place, SVR should fit for SVR would be training ents.	

The Chairman asked if there were any questions or comments. SB responded that she felt this was appropriate and it was beneficial for others to use the premises to avoid it, and the Residents becoming isolated from the community. Clearly, the associated risks, as highlighted by the Chief Exec, had to be considered. Overall, she felt it would be good to see people using the building, as it was intended to be a community hub when it was being designed. IMT asked if the Residents' views regarding external users had been sought, to which the Chief Exec replied that he understood the Manager had discussed it with Residents and no adverse comments had been noted. After asking for any further comment or dissent, the Chairman confirmed that the Chief Exec's recommendation had been accepted.

Ser 3 **Staff Dynamics** - No collective or bespoke training needs identified other than Mental Health First Aid training, which can be provided.

Ser 5 Inconsistencies across SVR – Retain oversight of cross-Residence collaboration for one year post staff restructuring (February 2023).

Sers 6 & 9 Maintenance Costs and Benchmarking Group – C/F.

Sers 7 and 8 Arrears and Voids processes – Legal review requested from TC Young; awaiting response. C/F.

Ser 10 Employment Transition – Meeting to discuss Service Level Agreement between SVR and WWTW still to be arranged. C/F.

Ser 11 Lack of Awareness of Bellrock Close. Chief Exec noting that void levels had achieved or exceeded target for the year, proposed this was indicative of good visibility by potential referral agencies of the service, and proposed this serial was complete. This was agreed by the Governing Body.

Ser 12 Extended Support – C/F.

Ser 13 Outcome Targets – C/F.

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5	Sub-Committee	Chairman		Noted
	Reports			
5.1	the previous Governir audit service tenders	ng Body meeting i had closed, and	n May. It was noted th 2 tenders had been	mmittee had not met since nat the window for external received. These would be ecommendation made.
5.2	Investment Remuneration and Finance Committee (IRFC) – The Chairman commented that since the last meeting there had been significant economic changes.			
	investment portfol (long-term) remain rather than catast downturn, forecast experienced was to the strength of to other currencies. Remuneration – v	lio. Noting marked appropriate. To rophic, and it was start for early — midexpected. He added he dollar relative to was aware of the	t analysis and outlool he VC confirmed that to expected that as the 2023, the reverse of ed that a lot of the curro Sterling. The pound later in the agenda but	taken place regarding the k, our investment strategy the market was unpleasant e markets came out of the what was currently being rent problems were related had not fallen against most at the Chairman confirmed tions and would be able to

- Finance the rent freeze legislation had been somewhat unexpected and although SVR had been able to inform the debate through discussions with MSPs, the bill had passed through the Scottish Parliament largely unaltered. We were aware that the rent freeze was applicable to SVR's tenants as their tenancies were contracted through Scottish Secure Tenancy agreements. It was likely however, that the freeze did not apply to residents, whose occupancy agreements were based on common law. The initial legal advice supported this view and formal legal advice had been requested.
- 5.3 **Quality Committee (QC)** CM noted that the QC had met twice since the previous Governing Body meeting. He made 4 points:
 - Mark Doig, the Chairman of the Whitefoord House Residents' Association had joined the Quality Committee and had attended the last Committee meeting.
 - ➤ The Committee had had dialogue regarding advocacy for residents and it had been confirmed that SVR would signpost residents to independent advocacy providers to help them make informed decisions, but it would not recommend any to make sure there was a clear distinction between the advocate and SVR.
 - Complaint reporting rate remained low with most cases resolved to a mutually agreed solution. Following advice from the residents it was confirmed that it was not necessary to publish the outcome of complaint process and procedure, if the residents could see that the procedure was being adhered to and was effective.
 - ➤ The Tenant Participation Strategy had been discussed at the Committee and would be covered later in the agenda.

6 Service Report DM Information

- 6.1 DM noted that the RAF remained engaged on 20 different missions in 30 countries.
 - Operations ranged from aircraft fulfilling the Quick Reaction Alert role to a recent humanitarian relief role in Pakistan following the recent flooding.
 - Preparation was underway at RAF Lossiemouth for the arrival of the E7 Wedgetail fleet, which was due to arrive in 2023. This would result in an additional 500 personnel being based at Lossiemouth.
 - The RAFA's Connection for Life initiative was proving to be very successful and enjoyed by volunteers and beneficiaries. The initiative provided and additional lifeline to combat loneliness across the RAF community. Residence Managers were able to access this through RAFA if they thought it would be of value to any of their ex-RAF residents.

7 Residence Reports | SB, IT & NG | Information

- 7.1 **Bellrock Close** SB noted that Residence meetings were now being held monthly with the last taking place the previous week. Some adjustments to the day of the week and its timing had helped improve attendance. The Manager was making sure there were plenty of activities and progress was being made with residents taking the lead on organising them rather than relying on the staff and WWTW. The Chief Exec added that members of the Whitefoord House Residents' Association had visited Bellrock Close the previous week to inform its residents of what the Association did and how it represented the residents.
- 7.2 **Rosendael** IMT confirmed that Residence meetings were taking place monthly. Attendance by the Catering Manager was proving to be beneficial. There was good discussion from the residents regarding the activities programme and a good discussion on how they wished to develop the gardens. A Residents' Champion had been appointed and their role was being developed to ensure that all understood what the role was for.

	Following a recent questionnaire regarding housing support provision, several unfounded rumours had arisen, which had taken a degree of staff effort to reassure residents there was no intention to move anyone on to alternative accommodation before they were ready to do so. GW noted that the Afghan family remained very quiet, the children were attending school and getting on well. The father was seeking employment, and it was the mother who was facing the biggest challenge to settle.				
7.3	Whitefoord House – NG confirmed that the Residence meetings had restarted, and that the Residents' Association was up and running. It was noted that it would be helpful if NG and the Manager had additional support from additional volunteers. The Chairman encouraged all to consider if they knew anyone who might be willing to support Whitefoord House and to seek their commitment.				
	Object Francis	050	Dutat	Into an atton	
8	Chief Exec's Report	CEO	Brief	Information	
8.1	The Chief Exec provi		, summarising from hi he key challenges we	s written report which had re:	
	 Whitefoord House, despite strong efforts by the staff was still finding it difficult to achieve its void target. Bellrock Close and Rosendael continued to do so consistently. The rent freeze alluded to earlier by the Chairman. Net Zero Carbon. Inflation, particularly that having an impact on energy and food. Service delivery changes at Whitefoord House, which in response to residents' feedback had strengthened the availability of weekend support. This had required more frequent weekend working by the support team (from 1 in 8 to 1 in 5 weekends) 				
	worked) and desp	ite good consulta		nad resigned. All had been	
8.2	The Chief Exec noted that Susie Hamilton, the Head of External Relations (HER), had left to take up the role of Scottish Veterans Commissioner, and that after 14 years at SVR she would be difficult to replace. He had however, completed the interviews for Susie's replacement and from an original 31 applicants, Colin Leslie, the current Comms & Marketing Director at Leuchie House had been selected. The Chief Exec gave a short resume of his background and experience and confirmed he had submitted his notice and would commence at SVR on 5 Dec 22.				
8.3	Sustainability – 3 x electric site cars had been delivered and all were running. The Whitefoord House electric van was due delivery in the New Year.				
8.4	DCEO provided and update on capital works and maintenance projects, noting that the proposed refurbishment of the Whitefoord House tenants' kitchens and bathrooms had been deferred.				
8.5	He provided an update on utility contracts noting that the current Bellrock Close and Whitefoord House electricity contracts expired on 31 March 2023. This was presenting a challenge in estimating the service charges for both Residences because of our inability to confirm the utility costs. It was likely to be a best estimate based on advice from our energy broker and market analysis. Although SVR was eligible to join the Scottish Government's Utilities Framework, it wouldn't publish its electricity price until March 2023.				
8.6	regarding its homeless SVR would require a s	s services with sup hort extension to	pport commissioning a the current contract wit	(CEC) had been in touch nd contract. It was possible th CEC, which expires June w contract arrangements.	

8.7 Chief Exec briefed on the HER area of responsibility and confirmed: There had been 2 Freedom of Information and 1 Subject Access requests since the previous Governing Body meeting. All had been dealt with and there had been no subsequent appeals. The Scottish Veterans Fund (SVF) was open for applications. Current suggestion was that SVR might wish to apply to fund an Employment Advisor/Mentor, which if successful would address several objectives. Such an application would be within the scope of the fund, which included projects providing access to employment. Remembrance Events - the Chief Exec passed on his thanks to those members of the Governing Body who had volunteered to represent SVR at the opening of the Gardens of Remembrance in Edinburgh and Glasgow, and that SVR would also be represented at the National Event at the Stone of Remembrance on 13 Nov 22. > The Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Veterans would be visiting Residents at Whitefoord House on 13 Oct 22. 8.8 The Chairman noted that SVR had previously considered and confirmed the importance of getting Veterans back into employment. Organisationally, it had also been recognised that for a significant number of SVR residents this was quite difficult, and for some extremely unlikely. He cautioned against providing a compelling case for something that we recognised was difficult to achieve. The Chief Exec agreed that it was difficult, but this was partly due to a lack of capacity and resource. Afternote: Following further consideration and review of potential benefits it was decided to apply for funding from the SVF to employ an Occupational Therapist in preference to an Employment Advisor/Mentor. 9 Treasurer's Report JC **Q2 Management** Noted Report September Cashflow 9.1 The Treasurer referred to the 6-month Management Accounts, and the September Cashflow reports, both of which had been circulated with the document pack. 9.2 He commented that overall, SVR was in reasonable financial shape, voids being the key area of stress on income. The void level at Whitefoord House remained challenging, although it had improved relative to the previous year. Rosendael and Bellrock Close were both doing well and achieving their targets. There was increasing inflationary pressure, particularly in catering, and there had been useful discussion regarding delaying some of the capital/maintenance projects, although those that related to Health & Safety issues were retained in the programme. The organisation continued to undertake the projects that were key to the safe running of SVR. On the plus side, SVR continued to receive grants and donations, and at the end of September, all 3 Residences were making surpluses. SVR continued to receive a good return on its investments, although there was quite a significant unrealised loss on the overall value of the portfolio due to market forces. 9.3 Cashflow – as at the end of September, cash continued to be strong. The projection indicated that a low point of c £750k would be reached in January 2023. Overall, in the context of the current financial climate, SVR was in reasonable shape and in a position to be able to make decisions about the range of issues to be considered shortly by the

confirmation of the Whitefoord House void level, which was confirmed as 20%.

agree to the recommendations.

9.4

Governing Body. He was confident that they could be afforded should the Governing Body

The Chairman asked if anyone had any questions for the Treasurer and asked for

10	Cost of Living and Impact of Inflation	Chief Exec	Paper	Paper to be revised and recirculated out of committee.	
10.1	The Chairman introduced the Chief Exec's paper on the cost-of-living and whether SVR should make hardship payments. He confirmed that he had had conversations with the Chief Exec regarding the proposal. He also noted that this issue was under review in the other businesses and charities with which he was involved. The principal difference was that the Chief Exec had evidence that some SVR employees were using food banks and taking additional employment to make ends meet. He was unaware of this happening in the other organisations. Before giving his view, he invited comments from the Governing Body.				
10.2	RE commented that he thought the recommendation was very clear and that he supported it. IMT thought that logically it was the right thing to do and received her endorsement.				
10.3	The Chairman said that having considered this in 2 other businesses and another charity, he thought that the recommendation was quite generous and a little early. It was a 'broad brush' recommendation including everyone except for the Chief Exec. If, as expected, things became worse throughout the winter, making payments now, might be too early. He noted that the Government's fuel payments had to started to be paid, and the reversal on the increase in NIC was imminent. He wondered whether the payment could be better targeted, and whether there was any way in which it would be able to ensure the payment was used for the purpose it was intended.				
10.4	The VC said it was important to separate staff from tenants in how SVR thought about the issue. He thought it would be much easier to adopt a targeted approach with Tenants on how they might spend a hardship payment, or how they might be given a payment that was targeted specifically. He said that for staff, the meeting might not be the appropriate forum in which to have the discussion, and it might be necessary for the IRFC to consider it without having a public debate where there were potential conflicts of interest.				
10.5	The Chief Exec explained that consideration had been given to making direct payments into Tenants' rent accounts but that as that nearly all were in direct receipt of Universal Credit/Housing Benefit payments to their rent accounts, they would have no way of accessing the SVR payments, which would sit in the rent accounts. Provision of energy vouchers also seemed not to be possible unless provided by a Local Authority.				
10.6	•	dged that was no	t possible. The Chief E	hoped we would be able to exec said that consideration	
10.7	SVR would be setting	a precedent in w	hat could be a lengthy	but she was concerned that cost-of-living environment, uesting/expecting a further	
10.8	detract from the gest restrictions on its cost-	ture of the paym of-living payment	ent itself. The Govern to those on low incom	e proportionate so as not to nment had not placed any les or in receipt of pensions. ble that a single 'windfall'.	
10.9	it was the right thing	to do, if it could b	e done at the right tin	he Governing Body thought me, and in a more targeted a and a paper circulated out	

	of committee in 2 weeks' time for consideration that sought to address the targeting and control of the payments.				
	Decision: Chief Exec to undertake further refinement and re-circulate the paper OOC within 2 weeks.				
			I		
11	Sustainability and Net Zero Carbon	Chief Exec	Verbal Brief	Noted	
11.1	The Chief Exec summarised the 2 specialist briefings he and the Chairman had attended with Buro Happold and Graham Hill, which had provided further information on the availability and appropriateness of carbon zero related technology, and the programme management of sustainability measures. He confirmed that a detailed conservation survey of the Whitefoord campus had been completed. This had been required as a component of the Conservation Report required to underpin an application for a conservation grant from Edinburgh World Heritage.				
11.2	More challengingly, the impact of rent freeze and inflationary pressure should make us question whether it was appropriate now to commit resources for sustainability measures. The Chairman added that having attended the briefings it would be appropriate for SVR to take the view that it couldn't do everything in terms of sustainability and to do only those things that were affordable. We couldn't risk bankrupting the organisation in pursuit of achieving net zero carbon. We should continue to educate the organisation and take affordable measures, of which the conversion of the car fleet to EVs was a good example. He judged that establishing and resourcing a large programme to take SVR to net zero carbon was not affordable at the moment. This was supported by the VC who thought it crucial that we didn't rush to do everything we could do; it was too dangerous a strategy in the current environment.				
11.3	stop the establishn	nent of a discr sation's knowle	ete Sustainability F dge of sustainabilit	g Body it was resolved to Programme, continue to ty and net zero carbon	
12	Service Delivery and Accessibility for Female Veterans	Chief Exec	Verbal Brief	Noted	
12.1		•	, ,	research potential avenues emale veterans.	
12.2	He had made an approach to 2 academic institutions; Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) and Edinburgh Napier University (ENU) both of which had relevant military social research departments. The best offer of support had been offered by ENU, which had offered to establish a formal PhD research project, but this came with significant cost. Given the current climate the Chief Exec felt it would not be justifiable to commission such research.				
12.3	,				

13	Ratification of Policies	Chief Exec	Papers	Endorsed	
13.1	The Chief Exec had circulated 3 policy documents within the document pack for consideration, and for which he asked for the Governing Body's endorsement.				
13.2	Tenant Participation Strategy . Chief Exec set out the governance requirement for the strategy, the consultative process that had been undertaken, and reminded the Governing Body that the lack of this document had precluded achievement of full compliance with the SHR's governance standards. The strategy was endorsed .				
13.3	Financial Regulations Policy . The lack of a capstone document covering financial affairs had ben identified during the Core Financial Controls internal audit. This document addressed that lack. The policy was endorsed .				
13.4	Schemes of Delegation . The Chief Exec reminded the Governing Body that the schemes had been produced in 2018. Given the inflation that had occurred over that period it was judged appropriate to increase the level of financial delegation by 30% to prevent the need to escalate relatively low-level expenditure to an inappropriately high level. The amendment was endorsed .				
14	Annual Assurance Statement to SHR	Chief Exec	Draft Statement	Approved	
14.1	The Chief Executive confirmed that the Governing Body's Annual Assurance Statement (AAS) was required to be submitted to the SHR no later than 31 Oct 22. He had circulated the draft statement within the meeting pack. The draft referred to the previous (2021) statement and acknowledged that work had been completed on the areas of governance that had previously prevented the Governing Body being assured that the organisation was fully compliant with the SHR's governance standards. The draft confirmed that the Governing Body was now assured that SVR was fully compliant. The Chief Exec requested comments on the draft and the process. The Governing Body confirmed it was content with the statement and authorised the				
	Chairman to sign the				
15	Strategic Risk Register	Chief Exec	Register	Noted	
15.1	CEO went through the Strategic Risk Register and made observations. > Risk 001/22 - Finance - Impact of conservation and renovation of the Whitefoord House (WH) Campus on Reserves. The Chief Exec had previously referred to the completion of the conservation survey and the report was awaited. > Risk 003/22 - Finance - Energy price inflation. The Chief Exec described a new draft risk which related to energy cost inflation. He thought that it merited inclusion on the Register until such time as the new contract options became clear. The risk was accepted on to the Register. > Risk 002/22 - Health Safety & Environment - Fire. It was agreed to transfer this risk to the Operational Risk Register for SMT management. > Risk 002/20 - Infectious Disease. It was agreed to transfer this risk to the Operational Risk Register for SMT management.				

17	DONM – Friday, 9 th December, 12.00 – 14.00, at Bellrock Close.				
	everyone for their time and support, and the meeting was closed.				
16.1	The Chairman asked if anyone had any other business, there being none, he thanked				
16	AOB	Chairman			
15.2	The Chief Exec referred to the Governing Body's endorsement of increasing finar delegation by 30% within the Schemes of Delegation and recommended the sepercentage increase in respect of the financial consequence risk profile. A consideration this was agreed.			d recommended the same	
	Risk 001/18 – Policy and Procedures. With the Tenant Participation Strategendorsed, the policy documents required for good governance were now in plate the Chief Exec recommended that the risk was archived, which was agreed.				
	Risk 002/19 – Business Continuity Plan. There was discussion regarding values aspects of the plan and revised completion date of end of Q1 2023 was set.				