

South Essex Homes Limited

Report of Director – Finance & Corporate

To

Shareholder Board

On

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SEH Business Plan 2021-2026 Update

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report gives an overview of the SEH Business Plan and updates progress currently made.

2 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To provide the Committee with the SEH Business Plan and update progress against the plan.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 The Shareholder Board are recommended to;
- 3.2 Note the SEH Business Plan and note the progress made.

4 Background

- 4.1 The Business Plan 2021-2026 of South Essex Homes (**Appendix 1**) has 4 themes, as reported and agreed by the Shareholder Board in 2021. The Business Plan itself had not changed but this report gives and update on the activities that are being undertaken against the four main themes.

4.2 Improve our Organisation

- 4.3 The objectives for this theme are set out in our 'Organisational Development Plan'. This plan forms the basis of our Strategic Objectives and Direction over the next few years, building an improved and sustainable organisation.

- 4.4 It is essential that to succeed we have a workforce that has the competencies and capabilities to help us achieve our objectives, that workforce is satisfied and motivated to achieve their goals, we listen to our staff, ensuring any innovative ideas are understood and if appropriate implemented and that change is managed well, with staff adapting and innovating to ensure continued success.

- 4.5 The Values and Behaviours for the South Essex Homes group have now been agreed and these will begin to form the basis of any continuing development work as well as being embedded throughout our organisation's communication. We are currently working through a methodology for ensuring that our staff bulletin's news articles, and our social media communications to tenants, are badged with relevant values in order to ensure these become an integral part of what South Essex Homes stands for. The agreed Values and Behaviours are attached at **Appendix 2**.
- 4.6 As we work through the Organisational Development Action Plan we will ensure that these Values form the bedrock of actions we take and initiatives we implement. This is vital to building a culture in the organisation where these Values are enacted on a daily basis and not just a set of espoused values.
- 4.7 Feedback from our Manager's Group (CMG) highlighted the need to push forward with training and skills development for our managers and team leaders. We have gone through a period of change within the organisation and this has resulted in a number of new managers and team leaders, it is essential we begin to give these managers the skills they will require to become great leaders and move our organisation forward. A series of Manager Training sessions have been organised, beginning in September. These will focus on some key core areas that will give our managers the tools to begin to shape their management practice. The 4 sessions will focus on Task, Team and Individual and will work progressively through building skills.
- 4.8 The next stage will see multiple areas being worked through at the same time, where appropriate using staff groups to develop ideas and shape our plan. We are now starting to push forward with using our existing staff communications group to discuss and generate ideas around reward and recognition. Our Manager training will continue to push forward with the Managers Training Group being given the role of overseeing the development of a HR policy and procedure training programme as well as having a part to play in developing a Managers Training pack for new managers into the organisation.
- 4.9 Ensuring we have the right people in the organisation, and that they feel part of the organisation quickly in order to make an active contribution to our success, is essential to having a sustainable organisation. We will work to develop both a recruitment framework (along with a competency framework) to ensure we attract and recruit the right people, but we will also develop an improved induction process, giving both corporate and team messages clearly and quickly.
- 4.10 Further, as we head into next year and beyond we will fully review our pay structure to ensure it is both meeting the market expectations and is financially viable.
- 4.11 **Caring for our Environment**

- 4.12 There have been several initiatives that have been developed and progressed in this theme of the Business Plan.
- 4.13 There is an Environmental and Sustainability staff group to discuss and take ideas forward for sustainability. This group will become an important player in the arena of how we can reduce our staff and tenant's carbon footprint, both while at work and at home.
- 4.14 A joint Southend Council and South Essex Homes group has been formed which is a subgroup of the Strategic Partnership Board. This group involves senior officers and directors from both SEH and SCC so that energy initiatives can be moved forward. SCC has dedicated resources for sustainability, and it makes sense for SEH to tie in with this resource where synergies exist.
- 4.15 It has now become standard practice to fit additional loft insulation and LED lighting into void properties where it is necessary. This additional cost is currently being funded directly by SCC through an energy efficiency fund they have established.
- 4.16 In order to fully understand the requirements to move all of our properties towards carbon zero we need to fully understand the current position of our stock, where our properties have not had an EPC undertaken or where that EPC is of a level lower than C (e.g. D or E) then we are currently going through a process to update this information. This will give us a base to move forward with and develop a plan to ensure that we obtain EPC level C for all our properties by 2030. We are currently working with SCC on the implementation of the Parity platform for ensuring our data is up to date, several areas are currently being updated for the go live of this system.
- 4.17 Retrofit of properties is an important element to ensure we can move towards this and the establishment of funding opportunities is paramount to the success of meeting the carbon reduction targets. There are currently several funding opportunities being pursued to assist with retrofit including ECO-3 funding to proceed with full retrofit of 18 properties and the Social housing decarbonisation fund, due to launch in August 22.
- 4.18 **Improving our Service Delivery**
- 4.19 This theme of the business plan has been progressed on several fronts.
- 4.20 The front line services recently underwent a reorganisation to ensure that the teams are in a position to ensure compliance with any new and upcoming Social housing regulation. The Tenancy, Support Services, Sheltered, Hostels and Careline teams were reorganised to ensure collaboration was maximised between the different functions and South Essex Homes was best placed to ensure resident engagement and community development.
- 4.21 A major constraint on the ability of our staff to deliver effective and efficient services is often cited as the inability of our software. We have recently undertaken a health check on our Housing Management System which has highlighted a number of areas where the system could be used more effectively

to increase productivity. An action plan for each area has been produced and this is currently with ICT so that their input can be obtained on timescales and resource implications for implantation.

4.22 As the hybrid working arrangements of many staff becomes embedded and becomes the new norm we recognise this brings added difficulties in ensuring connectivity and collaboration of teams. We aim to continue to explore the functionality and advantages brought about by Office 365 and give our staff the skills and tools to exploit this fully.

4.23 **Innovating Commercial and Social Activities**

4.24 As our commercial subsidiary continues to grow we have explored options around how the business should best be structured to move us forward into the future. Proposals are currently being worked through which would see the group structure increased to incorporate 2 new subsidiaries to grow our commercial ambitions further.

5 Diversity and Equality Opportunities

5.1 There are no direct Equality and Diversity implications arising from this report.

6. Stakeholder Engagement

6.1 All staff were actively encouraged to participate in the Values and Behaviours workshops. These were well attended and those that attended enjoyed the experience and chance to have their say.

7 Background Papers

7.1 N/A

8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix 1 – SEH Business Plan 2021-2026

8.2 Appendix 2 – Values and Behaviours