**Part A Minutes of a hybrid meeting of the Board of Avenue Services (NW) Limited held on Thursday 5 September 2024.**

Attendance record since AGM November 2023

**Present**

William Hogg, Chairman 4/4

Sarah Orme, Board Director 4/4

Rob Watkins, Board Director 2/2

Alan Smith, Board Director 4/4

Sheila Little, Board Director 4/4

Nigel Pell-Ilderton, Board Director 4/4

Gus Cairns, Board Director 4/4

Margaret Parker, Board Director 2/4

**In attendance**

Paul Knight, Head of Avenue Services

Chris Leicester, Avenue Services, Neighbourhood Partnerships Manager

James Rone, Sanctuary Group, Head of Finance - Housing

Helen Kelly, Avenue Services, Senior Administrator

Claire Matthews, Cheshire West and Chester Council, Senior Service Business Manager - Shareholder and Traded Services

1. **APOLOGIES**The Board noted there were no apologies.

The Chairman reported that the meeting had been duly convened and that a quorum was present for the purposes of business to be considered and if thought fit, resolutions to be passed at the meeting.

1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**The Chairman reminded the Directors of the need, as a subsidiary of Sanctuary Housing Association, in accordance with the provisions of Sanctuary Group’s (the Group) Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, to disclose any personal interests in relation to matters under consideration at the meeting.

It was noted that such disclosures would be recorded under the relevant agenda items for ease of reference when producing ‘extract minutes’.

1. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 JUNE 2024**Part A of the minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2024 were agreed as a true record and arrangements were made for the Chairman to sign them via DocuSign.
2. **ACTION POINTS AND MATTERS ARISING**The schedule of action points was considered and updates provided as follows:
3. **Blacon Health Hub (19/09/20)**

Paul Knight provided an update from Danielle Wrigley, Senior Development Manager, regarding the Blacon Health Hub. The Board noted that the prospective tenant had instructed the District Valuer to sign off the proposed annual rent charges, and following this approval a report would be sent to their Board for sign off. The provision of a variety of community services was still being explored (27/06/24). *A further update would be provided at the next meeting and any interim progress would be circulated to the Board.*

1. **Avenue Services Performance (52/09/21)**

Claire Matthews advised there was no further update on the proposal submitted to Cheshire West and Chester Council (the Council) for the Blacon Cemetery contract and any opportunities for Avenue Services to undertake further grounds maintenance work on behalf of the Council. Whilst the Council considered the future commissioning requirements for wider cemetery grounds maintenance, Claire Matthews agreed to inform Paul Knight if any ad hoc contracted works were available to Avenue Services (27/06/24). *A further update would be provided at the next meeting.*

1. **CHAIRMAN’S REPORT**

The Chairman advised that he had no items to raise under this agenda item.

1. **AVENUE SERVICES PERFORMANCE**

Paul Knight provided an update on Avenue Services performance for the first quarter of 2024/2025 and confirmed that there was one operational indicator outside of the target tolerance set, with five press releases issued for the quarter against a target of eight.

The Board noted that the quarter had been impacted by the general election and a pre-election period that restricted the press releases that could be published. However, regular updates had been posted on social media channels with 13 articles posted on the My Blacon Facebook page and 28 posts on the Blacon Adventure Playground (Adventure Playground) page. Also, in July 2024, Chester Standard published two Avenue Services articles.

Discussions were continuing with the Group’s Strategic Communications Manager regarding a formal service level agreement between Avenue Services and the Group to capture the requirements and resource allocation to ensure PR targets were consistently met.

*Rob Watkins confirmed the option of replacing Avenue Services’ X account with an Instagram account was being explored (27/06/24). A further update would be provided at the next meeting.*

The Board noted that an additional KPI had been added to the performance dashboard to measure the apprenticeships in place at Avenue Services (27/06/24).

1. **BUSINESS INITIATIVES UPDATE**

Paul Knight provided an update on the following business initiatives.

**BBC Make a Difference Awards**

On Friday 6 July 2024 BBC Radio Merseyside announced that the Adventure Playground was a finalist in the region’s Make a Difference Awards 2024, nominated for the Green Award category for individuals or groups of people that help to make the community more environmentally friendly and better for nature. The winner would be announced at an awards evening on 5 September 2024. *Chris Leicester agreed to formally notify the Board of the result and arrange a press release through the Group and the Council.*

**Blacon Festival**

A musically themed Blacon Festival was held on Saturday 6 July 2024.

There were performances from local entertainers including Blacon’s Got Talent competition winner, Evelyn Windrich, Ava Smith, X Factor stars MAVMAC Band, Elvis impersonator John Butler, Dee Sign Choir and Silhouette Dance Group.

In addition, there were more than 20 stalls from local businesses and community organisations for visitors to browse, including Blacon WI, Blacon Boxing Club, Here and Now, Chester FC, Liberty Bake, Rage Fitness and many more.

**Summer Programme**

Blacon’s summer programme of activities and events commenced on Saturday 27 July 2024. A number of locations across Blacon hosted over 80 sessions including the Adventure Playground, King George V Sports Hub, United Reform Church, Holy Trinity Church, Delta Centre at Cairns Crescent, Treborth Road and The Parade play areas, Blacon Library, Blacon Children’s Centre and the Parade Enterprise Centre.

Food provision had been included in the majority of sessions during the summer school holidays and thanks to the Department for Education’s Holiday Activities and Food programme, distributed through community interest company Edsential, for contributing to the programme.

**Bread and Butter Thing**

Following the success of the Bread and Butter Thing at the Adventure Playground, the option of a second Hub was under discussion at an additional venue which would serve residents on the other side of Blacon. Once performance data for the project had been received a press release would be issued.

*The Board requested that press releases be issued via the Group and the Council to showcase the events and activities delivered through the Summer Programme and the enormous contribution made by volunteers to Avenue Services community initiatives.*

1. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Board noted that one additional item had been added under this agenda item.

**Fairer Future Ambassadors**

Sheila Little advised the Board that a new project, coordinated by the Poverty Truth Commission, would be launched with 26 young people from the Blacon cluster of schools, who would become Fairer Future Ambassadors. The ambassadors would work together over six weeks, looking at what a fairer future means to them, their aspirations and what they hoped to change to make things better locally and beyond.

At the end of the project, young people, schools, and local stakeholders would come together to start a community conversation. An event would be held on Wednesday 23 October 2024 at The Arches Community Primary School where the ambassadors would present their ideas and potential solutions to issues they face, working on the Poverty Truth ethos: “Nothing about us, without us, is for us”. It was hoped that schools, local councillors, youth service, third sector and other representation from the local area would also attend. *An update would be provided at the next meeting.*

*A copy of the Public Health report on Child and Family Poverty in Cheshire and Merseyside would be emailed to the Board.*

There being no other business the Chairman confirmed the meeting closed.

**Date of next meeting: Thursday 21 November 2024**