**Part A Minutes of a hybrid meeting of the Board of Avenue Services (NW) Limited held on Thursday 7 March 2024.**

Attendance record since AGM November 2023

**Present**

William Hogg, Chairman 2/2

Sarah Orme, Board Director 2/2

Colleen Eccles, Board Director 2/2

Alan Smith, Board Director 2/2

Sheila Little, Board Director 2/2

Nigel Pell-Ilderton, Board Director 2/2

Gus Cairns, Board Director 2/2

**Apologies**

Margaret Parker, Board Director 1/2

**In attendance**

Paul Knight, Head of Avenue Services

Chris Leicester, Neighbourhood Partnerships Manager

James Rone, Sanctuary Group, Head of Finance - Housing

Helen Kelly, Avenue Services, Team Secretary

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

1. **APOLOGIES**The Board noted there were apologies from Margaret Parker.

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 23 NOVEMBER 2023**Part A of the minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2023 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)**

Colleen Eccles provided an update on the Blacon Health Hub. The Board noted that the Group’s Development team were actively pursuing service health leads and making positive progress.

A further update would be provided at the next meeting.

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 opportunities for Avenue Services to undertake further grounds maintenance work on behalf of the Council. The Council were currently considering the future commissioning requirements for wider cemetery grounds maintenance, and this would be shared when available.

A further update would be provided at the next meeting.

1. **CHAIRMAN’S REPORT**

The Chairman advised that he had three items to raise under this agenda item.

1. **Blacon Community Networking Event**

A successful community networking event was held at the Parade Enterprise Centre (the Enterprise Centre) on 26 February 2024. Around 30 local community groups and organisations took part with the collective aim of improving partnership working for the benefit of the Blacon community. A follow up event had been arranged for 20 May 2024. The Chairman thanked Sheila Little and the team for all their hard work.

1. **Council Companies MD Meeting**

The Council Companies MD meeting was hosted by Avenue Services at the Enterprise Centre on 4 March 2024. The Council’s Borough Plan was presented and discussed. Positive collaborative working would continue between all Council Companies and a follow up meeting in April would be arranged.

1. **Annual Board Director Appraisals**

The Chairman thanked the Board for completing their individual annual appraisals. Any highlighted actions and training requirements would be discussed at the collective board appraisal in June 2024.

1. **AVENUE SERVICES PERFORMANCE**

Paul Knight provided an update on Avenue Services performance for the third quarter of 2023/2024 and confirmed that there was one operational indicator outside of the target tolerance set with four press releases issued for the quarter against a target of eight. Over fifty social media articles were posted during the period and work will continue to ensure communications reflected positive and proactive work taking place across the organisation.

*Paul Knight and Sarah Orme agreed to progress discussions with*

*the Group’s PR team in relation to strategies to increase and diversify output.*

*Paul Knight agreed to review the key performance indicators in the reporting dashboard and update these to ensure they aligned with the Business Plan.*

*The Board requested that a review took place in relation to the process of letting and supporting business growth in the incubation units at the Enterprise Centre.*

1. **BUSINESS INITIATIVES UPDATE**

Paul Knight provided an update on the following business initiatives.

**Winter Programme 2023**

A number of winter activities and events took place during the quarter including a children’s Halloween Party, Christmas Fair, Christmas Lights Switch On, a Santa’s Grotto and children’s Christmas parties, which included a gift box for every child attending.

A new monthly coffee and craft morning has started at Blacon Adventure Playground (the Adventure Playground) aimed at parents, carers or guardians with young children that may like to meet up whilst their children do a variety of activities including pumpkin painting, making Christmas cards and cake baking.

**The Arches Primary School - Community Engagement Room**

In December 2022 a surplus funding bid from The Arches Primary School was approved by the Board. The funding supported the school to create a new community engagement room which had helped the teaching staff, pupils and local families in a multitude of ways and provided a comfortable space for engagement with parents and the local community. The new room was completed and opened in 2023. Paul Knight and Nigel Pell-Ilderton visited the site on behalf of the Board in January 2024 and the Board were delighted to note the transformation of the space that had been achieved.

**Cinema Sessions**

The first cinema session was held at the Enterprise Centre on 13 January 2024. The film “The Super Mario Bros” was a great success and enjoyed by around 36 adults and children. The next session would be held on Saturday 16 March 2024 with a film showing of “Wonka”. Funding had been received from Vintage Blacon to deliver the community cinema sessions.

**The Bread and Butter Thing**

The Bread and Butter Thing was an initiative providing weekly groceries at a fraction of high street prices. A Blacon Hub, opened in February 2024, had been established at the Adventure Playground Activity Centre and was fully subscribed every week. There were a number of volunteers helping out every week with families able to collect at least £35 worth of food for £8.50. Food packages included fresh fruit and vegetables, chilled food for the fridge and cupboard food such as pasta and cereal. Due to the success of the project Avenue Services were working closely with local Councillors and Cheshire West Voluntary Action to look at the potential of creating a second Blacon hub.

1. **COMMUNITY SUPPORT FUND 2024/2025**

Chris Leicester presented Avenue Services eleventh Community Support Fund and provided an overview of how local issues and ideas would be translated into projects during 2024/2025.

**Sheila Little declared an interest as a Trustee of Blacon Beacon.**

**Alan Smith declared an interest as the spouse of a Director of Here and Now.**

The Board noted that despite extensive advertising of the Community Support Fund a lower number of applications than expected had been received. *The Board requested that the Community Support Fund was re-advertised for an extended period to ensure that as many groups and organisations had the opportunity to apply for funding.*

*The Board requested that the updated Community Support Fund be sent to the Board by 15 April 2024 for review and decision making.*

The Board agreed to approve the Easter Programme and Blacon Festival projects to allow sufficient time for event planning.

The finances and forecasts would be reviewed at each board meeting to ensure project objectives were delivered to plan and to budget and that any additional surplus was identified and committed as soon as possible.

1. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

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

**Date of next meeting: Thursday 20 June 2024**