

## ABERTAY HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

### Minutes of the Board Meeting

Wednesday 26 October 2022 17:00

**Present:** Ron Neave (Chair), Kath Mands (Vice-Chair), Denis Brown and Alan Fraser.

The following joined via Video Conferencing: Ian Byers, Teresa Robertson, Darren Keddie and Kevin Braidwood (joined during item 22/10/06).

**In Attendance:** Barry Moore (CE), Marjorie Sloan (CSD and Secretary) and Roz Clark (CSO). Linda Ewart attended via Video Conferencing up to agenda item 22/10/06.

#### **22/10/01 Apologies**

Vicki Cutler and Paul Crichton.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### **22/10/02 Declarations of Conflicting Interests**

No Member declared a conflicting interest.

#### **22/10/03 Minute of Committee Meeting 31 August 2022 and 21 September 2022 and Tracker**

The Chair asked for comments relating to the minutes of the meeting held on 31 August 2022. It was noted that there was a typo within agenda item 22/08/02 Declarations of Conflicting Interests, which would be amended accordingly.

There were no further amendments.

Approved. Proposed Kath Mands, Seconded Denis Brown.

The Chair asked for comments relating to the minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2022. There were no amendments.

Approved. Proposed Denis Brown, Seconded Kath Mands.

The CSD talked through the tracker and reported that item relating to the Charleston Development Satisfaction Survey would be removed.

#### **22/08/06 Matters Arising**

Board Meeting 31 August 2022

The CE provided an update relating to the five year electrical safety inspections, reporting that as of today, 63 electrical checks were outstanding. He assured the Board that these would be complete by 31 March 2023.

Board Meeting 21 September 2022

There were no matters arising.

#### **22/10/05 Chair's Actions / Decisions between meetings**

The CE presented the report and confirmed there had been no Chair's Actions since the previous Board Meeting on 31 August 2022; the Chair confirmed this to be the case.

Board **noted** the report.

#### **22/10/06 Confidential Board Appraisals: Board Feedback Report 2022 by Linda Ewart**

The Chair welcomed Linda to the meeting.

Linda provided a very comprehensive review of the Board Members Appraisal findings, highlighting that the overwhelming assessment was very positive. Linda explained that the feedback received from new Board Members was also positive and chimed with the views of the longer standing Members. Linda reported that the Board could reflect on a very good year with positive features including the recruitment of Board Members and the way in which the Association had emerged from the Engagement Plan and pandemic.

Linda highlighted that the calibre of the Board reflected on the ability to recruit excellent candidates, and this also reflected on how highly the Association was regarded in the sector. Linda encouraged the Board to continue to recruit a variety of skills to keep a range of perspectives as this would be invaluable looking ahead. Linda noted that the strength of the Board came from their willingness to ask questions in areas where they were not experienced, as well as the areas they were, as it ensured that the probing questions were being asked. Linda suggested that it would be useful to plan ahead for any big decisions and, where possible, to continue to have pre-meetings or events in which discussions could take place in a more relaxed environment.

Linda noted that the Board had reported that the quality of support from the Management Team was outstanding. Linda commented on how important it was for the Health and Safety Steering Group to continue the good work in this respect. Linda highlighted the need for effective succession planning and suggested that the Board continue to recruit Board Members with a view to co-opting one or two Members in the coming year.

The Board asked whether Linda took the recommendations forward or whether this would be done internally. Linda highlighted that the recommendations were for the Board to take forward as they saw fit. The CE noted all of Linda's comments and confirmed that the Governance Training Plan would reflect her comments and they would be taken forward by the Association.

The CE thanked Linda for her report and highlighted that it was most helpful and useful to have an independent assessment of the Board. The Chair also thanked Linda for her report and time, as did all Board Members.

Board **noted** the report.

Linda left the meeting.

## **22/10/07 2022 Annual Assurance Statement**

The CE presented the report. The CE highlighted that the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2022 and the Management Letter are not qualified and clean respectively.

The CE gave an overview of the Internal Audits carried out in the previous year, which gave additional reassurance and evidence to support the Annual Assurance Statement.

The Board were given a detailed overview of the Annual Assurance Statement Evidence and Action Plan Framework. The Board asked to review a number of documents. Board asked whether external organisations had access to the Framework. The CE confirmed that it was restricted to internal use within the Association. The CE confirmed that it was maintained by the CSD who updated it after each Board Meeting. The Board thanked the CE and agreed it was an excellent document which gave them the reassurances and evidence necessary.

The CE talked through Appendix 1 which highlighted all of the Board reports presented throughout the year.

The CE referred Board to para 2.3.2 of the report which related to the collection of Equality and Human Rights data and confirmed that the Association was compliant, however this would always be a work in progress.

The CE referred Board to para 2.3.3 of the report which related to five year electrical safety certification and in particular the pertinent date of 31 March 2022. To that end, the Association had to report in the Assurance Statement that it was not compliant as 3.4% of the stock did not currently have the appropriate certificate.

Board discussed the Draft 2022 Annual Assurance Statement.

Board **approved** the Association's 2022 Annual Assurance Statement and authorised the Chair to sign the Statement on behalf of the Board and the Association.

### **22/10/08 Tenant Satisfaction Survey: Covid-19**

The CE presented the report. He highlighted that the overall response rate was 12% which meant 223 tenants responded. The overall feedback was positive. As the survey was anonymous the Association could not respond to tenants individually. However, where the Association picked up themes, these have been addressed. Board noted that elements of the responses were to be redacted.

Board noted that the response rate was low. The CE highlighted that the questionnaire only covered the Association's response during Covid. He noted that from the responses received a significant number of tenants had moved on from the pandemic, particularly as a lot of the responses referred to post-pandemic issues. The CE highlighted that even with incentives of a prize draw a significant number of tenants did not wish to complete questionnaires. He highlighted that the main Tenant Satisfaction and Owner Satisfaction Surveys would be carried out this year and hence it was important that we did not overload tenants and owners to the extent that they suffer from 'consultation fatigue'.

Board **noted** the Tenant Satisfaction Survey: Covid-19.

### **22/10/09 New Development Tenant Satisfaction Survey: Charleston Gardens**

The CE presented the report. He highlighted that 65% of tenants, 28 of 43, responded to the survey. An incentive of a raffle had been used to encourage responses. The overall feedback was very positive. All tenants who raised queries or submitted questions received a personal response. The CE reported that new development value for money surveys will form part of future funding bids.

Board asked whether it would be necessary to receive a satisfactory survey in order to receive future grant funding. The CE confirmed that it was likely to be case but that the mechanics were still to be addressed. The CSD highlighted that the recommendation was that surveys would not be carried out until twelve months after properties were occupied. The results of any surveys completed were likely to be considered when grant funding was approved. Board commented that it was good that queries and questions were being addressed, as this would assist in increasing satisfaction on future developments.

Board **noted** the New Development Tenant Satisfaction Survey for Charleston Gardens.

### **22/10/10 Corporate Governance Policy Review: Acquisitions and Disposals**

The CE presented the report and policy highlighting that the policy had been comprehensively reviewed. He gave an overview of the main changes.

The first would allow the Association to consider acquiring properties in blocks where the Association owns the majority of properties within the block. Previously this could only be done where there was only one property in a block which the Association did not own.

The second change allows the Association to dispose of vacant properties when there are one or two properties within the block that the Association owns. Previously this was only allowed where there was only one property in the block which the Association owned.

Board **approved** the Acquisitions and Disposals Policy.

### **22/10/11 Purchase of Property at 2/L, 2 Fintry Mains**

The CE presented the report. The purchase of this property was approved at the Board Meeting on 21 September 2022, with a commitment to providing a detailed report to this meeting. He highlighted that the purchase of the property fell within the criteria as set out in the Acquisitions and Disposals Policy as agreed at 22/10/10.

There followed discussion on the benefits of purchasing properties in comparison to development costs. Board asked whether the Association would target potential properties for purchase. The CE confirmed that a proactive approach would be taken, in accordance with the policy, to acquire properties on a targeted basis subject to available finance.

Board **noted** the purchase of 2/L, 2 Fintry Mains.

#### **22/10/12 Human Resources Policy Review: Equality and Diversity**

The CE presented the report and policy highlighting that it was due for review. He confirmed that the policy had been reviewed and updated. He reported that a separate policy for Board Members would be prepared and presented.

Board noted the quality of the Policy in particular the reference to the importance of training.

Board **approved** the Equality and Diversity Policy.

#### **22/10/13 Human Resources Policy Review: Shared Parental Leave**

The CSD presented the report and policy highlighting that it was due for review. The CSD confirmed that the policy had been comprehensively reviewed and updated.

There followed discussion as to whether a link to the ACAS website was necessary. It was agreed that the link would be removed.

Board **approved** the Shared Parental Leave Policy subject to the amendment.

#### **22/10/14 Human Resources Policy Review: Smoke Free Policy**

The CSD presented the report and policy highlighting that it was due for review. The CSD confirmed that the policy had been comprehensively reviewed and updated.

Board noted that the Policy appeared very lengthy. The CE reported that the previous version had been considerably lengthier and that the current policy was a scaled down version. He confirmed that any further amendments would be undertaken when the policy was next reviewed.

Board **approved** the Smoke Free Policy.

#### **22/10/15 Human Resources Policy Review: Stress Management**

The CSD presented the report and policy highlighting that it was due for review. The CSD confirmed that the policy had been comprehensively reviewed and updated. There followed comprehensive discussion by Board and it was suggested that a Health and Wellbeing Policy would be preferable. The CE agreed to redraft the policy.

Board **requested** the Stress Management Policy be redrafted as a Health and Wellbeing Policy.

#### **22/10/16 Human Resources Policy Review: Remote Working**

The CE presented the report and policy highlighting that the policy's origin was based on the Employers in Voluntary Housing (EVH) Model Policy, which had been updated and renamed the Remote Working Policy in December 2021. Following further consideration and review, the policy had been comprehensively reviewed to reflect the Association's specific requirements.

There followed comprehensive and detailed discussion on the policy. In particular there was discussion relating to the correlation between this policy and Flexible Working Policy. The CE gave an update on the current situation in relation to Association staff. He highlighted the importance of having staff attend the office to support the needs of the tenants, service users and the business in general. A Board Member noted that some businesses were struggling to retain or recruit staff due to inflexible work policies. The CE highlighted that this was not the case with the Association and again stressed the importance of having all staff working from the office in order maintain progress and performance.

All Board members were asked for their views in relation to the updated Remote Working Policy and the majority were supportive of the Policy.

Board **approved** the Remote Working Policy.

**22/10/17 Housing Services Policy Review: Estate Management Policy**

The CE presented the report on behalf of the Housing Manager highlighting that it was due for review. He confirmed that the policy had been comprehensively reviewed and updated.

Board **approved** the Estate Management Policy.

**22/10/18 Housing Services Policy Review: Mutual Exchanges Policy**

The CE presented the report on behalf of the Housing Manager highlighting that it was due for review. He confirmed that the policy had been comprehensively reviewed and updated.

Board **approved** the Mutual Exchanges Policy.

**22/10/19 Housing Services Policy Review: Racial Harassment Policy**

The CE presented the report on behalf of the Housing Manager highlighting that it was due for review. He confirmed that the policy had been comprehensively reviewed and updated.

There followed comprehensive discussion with Board suggesting that the policy should be expanded to include all protected characteristics. The CE confirmed that the policy would be expanded to reflect all protected characteristics.

Board **requested** the Racial Harassment Policy be amended to cover all protected characteristics.

**22/10/20 Housing Services Policy Review: Surveillance Policy**

The CE presented the report on behalf of the Housing Manager highlighting that it was due for review. He confirmed that the policy had been comprehensively reviewed and updated.

There followed discussion. It was agreed that a small amendment would be made to the policy to make it clear that office CCTV footage is only kept for one month.

Board **approved** the Surveillance Policy subject to the agreed amendment.

**22/10/21 Share Update**

The CSO presented the report.

Board **approved** the updates to the Share Membership Register.

**22/10/22 Board Meeting and Sub-Committee Meeting Dates 2023/24**

The CE talked through the report.

Board **noted** the Board Meeting and Sub-Committee Meeting Dates for 2023/24.

**22/10/23 AOB**

The CE highlighted the intervention by the Scottish Government relating to a rent freeze / cap. The CE reported that the proposed date for the announcement in respect of any freeze / cap was 14 January 2023, and the current position was that they may impose a six or twelve month rent freeze or cap.

The CE highlighted that this would obviously cause significant issues with budget planning and therefore it was proposed to amend the November 2022 Board Meeting Agenda to allow for the most up-to-date information to be presented.

The Draft Annual Budget 2023/24 will not be presented to the November 2022 Board Meeting. An Annual Rent Review Report and an Annual Staff Salary Review Report would be presented to the November 2022 Board Meeting. The intention was to hold a Board Meeting on 1 February 2023; at which the Draft Annual Budget 2023/24 would be presented along with a further Annual Rent Review Report and Annual Staff Salary Review Report.

It was also noted that the Audit Finance and Risk Management Committee Meeting would be rescheduled by a week and would now take place on 15 February 2023.

The CE highlighted the difficult times which lay ahead and the difficult decisions which the Board would have to make.

ABERTAY HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

Minutes of the Board Meeting

Wednesday 26 October 2022 17:00

The CE asked Board Members whether they would like to hold the next Board Evening Event in December 2022 or January 2023. He suggested that in light of the issues we have discussed throughout this agenda, and particularly under AOB, that it may be beneficial to wait until January 2023. All Board Members present agreed. It was noted that the CSO would liaise with Board Members for a date and venue to suit.

Meeting closed at 18.55hrs.