

ABERTAY HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

Minutes of the Board Meeting

Wednesday 24 May 2023 17:00

Present: Ron Neave (Chair), Kath Mands (Vice-Chair), Denis Brown, Paul Crichton, Darren Keddie and Alan Fraser.

The following joined via Video Conferencing: Kevin Braidwood.

In Attendance: Barry Moore (CE), Marjorie Sloan (CSD and Secretary) and Roz Clark (CSO).

23/05/01 Apologies

Vicki Cutler and Ian Byers.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

23/05/02 Declarations of Conflicting Interests

No Member declared a conflicting interest.

Asset Management & Development Committee Reports (AM&DC)

23/05/03 AM&DC Meeting 26 April 2023

The Chair of the AM&DC provided a comprehensive update on the meeting which took place on 26 April 2023. She talked through the Planned Maintenance Programme, Asset Management Strategy and Developments.

Board **noted** the AM&DC Report.

Audit, Finance & Risk Management Committee Reports (AF&RMC)

23/05/04 AF&RMC Meeting 10 May 2023

The Chair of the AM&DC provided a comprehensive update on the meeting which took place on 10 May 2023. He provided an update on the Audits which had been carried out since the last meeting.

The items recommended to the Board for approval were:

- Bribery Policy
- Fraud Policy
- Bribery and Fraud Investigation Policy

Board **noted** the AF&RMC report.

Board **noted** the Treasury and Investment Management Activity as set out in the Management Accounts to 31 March 2023.

Board **noted** the Treasury Management Annual Report for 2022/23.

Board **noted** the AF&RMC Annual Report to the Board.

Board **approved** the Bribery Policy.

Board **approved** the Fraud Policy.

Board **approved** the Bribery and Fraud Investigation Policy.

Board Reports

23/05/05 Minute of Board Meeting 22 February 2023 and Tracker

The Chair asked for comments relating to the minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2023. There were no amendments.

Approved. Proposed Kath Mands, Seconded Darren Keddie.

The CSD talked through the tracker and reported that the item relating to the rent review would be removed from the tracker. It had been agreed that a report on this subject would be presented to the AF&RMC in February 2024, for potential appointment of consultants to carry out the work in 2024/25

and implementation in 2025/26. The Chair of AF&RMC highlighted that the rent review had been discussed at length with Internal Audit and they confirmed that, in light of the current financial climate, the same decision to delay was being taken across the Sector.

The CSD reported that the items reported as complete on the tracker would be removed.

23/05/06 Matters Arising

Board Meeting 22 February 2023

The CE provided an update on 23/02B/08 in relation to the Housing Officers Review confirming that there were no redundancies and that the changes would take effect from 1 July 2023.

The CE provided an update on 23/02B/09 in relation to the Retirement Housing Review highlighting that the changes had taken place and that there was a period of bedding in required and that it was being monitored carefully.

The CSD gave an update on 23/02B/04 in relation to the extension to the loan agreement of Facility D highlighting that whilst the Association had still not received the formal paperwork it was anticipated to arrive in the coming weeks. The CE reported that following a meeting with the RBS Relationship Manager he had given assurances that there were no concerns with providing the extension and indeed suggested that RBS were open to assist with covenant flexibility around the Association's future plans.

23/05/07 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 22 February 2023; the Chair confirmed this to be the case.

Board **noted** the report.

23/05/08 Internal Management Plan: Quarter 4

The CE presented the report and talked through the appendix in detail. He highlighted the actions which would be carried over to 2023/24 and explained the reasons as to why they had not been achieved in 2022/23. The CE talked through Appendix 2 which detailed the Objectives which would be removed for 2023/24.

A Board member asked for clarification on how the Plan was achieved by staff as it appeared to contain a considerable amount of time-consuming work. The CE highlighted that whilst it was an ambitious plan and target driven it was achievable through the hard work of staff and a 'well-oiled' system being in place.

A Board member asked about Objective 30 Action 38 and whether there were any problems with the procurement of a lift maintenance contractor. The CE reassured the Board that the lifts were working well and were well maintained and serviced regularly by the contractor as detailed in the Health and Safety Report. There followed discussion on the process should lifts need replacing.

Board **noted** the Internal Management Plan: Quarter 4.

23/05/09 Operational Performance Report KPIs: Quarter 4

The CE talked through the report and appendix in detail. As previously reported, he reiterated that the IMP and KPIs combined provided Board with a comprehensive understanding of how the Association was progressing and performing.

The CE highlighted the Income Management arrears performance which was in the top quartile of the sector. He gave an overview of Health and Safety and provided a detailed explanation on the two gas safety checks which had not been completed within the 12 month anniversary period.

Board asked whether the gas safety checks had to be reported, and the CE confirmed that they were reported in the ARC Return.

Board **noted** the Operational Performance Report KPIs: Quarter 4.

23/05/10 Annual Return on the Charter to SHR

The CSD presented the report and talked through the appendixes.

The CSD talked through the ARC Desktop Validation that had been carried out by Scotland's Housing Network in which they had raised seven queries. The CSD talked through the responses to each query highlighting that six would remain unchanged as the Association was confident with the data provided. The ARC response for Overall Satisfaction would be amended as per the SHN query. The CSD confirmed that the Association had ensured consistency between EEESH and SHQS in relation to the voluntary data.

The CE gave an update on specific items including gas safety and electrical safety checks.

Board asked what action the Association was taking in respect of reducing the number of dissatisfied or very dissatisfied tenants. The CE reported that every tenant who provided a dissatisfied or very dissatisfied return received an individual response which was tailored to their issue. He highlighted that there was no theme running through the issues; however, he stressed that had a theme been identified, it would be addressed as required. The CE highlighted that the delivery of a successful planned maintenance programme was the key to driving up satisfaction. He also stressed that tenants assumed and, quite rightly, expected that reactive repairs would be carried out and therefore it did not have the same impact on satisfaction levels. There followed discussion on tenant satisfaction levels.

The Board thanked the Management Team and staff for their hard work.

Board **approved** the submission of the ARC return to the SHR by the CSD.

23/05/11 Internal Management Plan 2023/24

The CE presented the report. He talked through para 2.2 and 2.3 which highlighted a significant increase in the number of Objectives and Actions for the 2023/24 plan. He reiterated that as reported at 23/05/09 the IMP is an ambitious plan but is embedded into the Associations way of working. He stressed that staff understood the importance of the IMP and how it formed part of a suite of documents. The CE talked through Appendix 2 which detailed the Objectives and Actions which had been added for 2023/24.

The CE requested Board's decision on Objective 1 Action 3 as to whether Board Membership should be maintained at 10 or 12 individuals. To achieve a target membership of 10 the Association would be required to recruit one more Board Member. There followed detailed and comprehensive discussion on the membership, and it was unanimously agreed that the target membership should be changed to 10. The CE agreed to amend the IMP to reflect the change. The CE confirmed that this in no way would preclude recruitment beyond 10 as the Rules, which could not be changed by Board alone, contained an overall maximum of 15 governing body members.

Board **approved** the amendment of Objective 1 Action 3 to Maintain Board Membership at 10 Members.

Board **approved** the Internal Management Plan 2023/24.

23/05/12 Operational Performance Report KPIs: 2023/24

The CE presented the report highlighting the purpose of the report was to seek Board Members' approval to adopt the Key Performance Indicators for the Financial Year 2023/24. He highlighted the intention was for the Association to improve year on year and as a consequence each year more KPIs had been introduced. He talked through the new KPIs which had been included for this year referring in particular to PS12 Sprinkler System Testing and PS13 Number of condensation, damp and mould cases reported by tenants.

A Board member asked for clarification on how the planned maintenance programme would be reported to Board to provide the assurances that it was going to plan. The CE highlighted that a report would be provided to the AM&DC on a quarterly basis which would include a detailed spreadsheet

charting out the progress of each item within the programme. In addition, the AF&RMC will monitor the budget spend by way of the quarterly Management Accounts. Both the AM&DC and the AF&RMC reports are provided to Board by way of the governance structure.

Board **approved** the Operational Performance Report KPIs: 2023/24.

23/05/13 Five Year Financial Projections Return to the SHR

The CSD talked through the report and appendix.

Board **approved** the 2022/23 Five Year Financial Projections Return and asked the CSD to submit the information to the SHR.

23/05/14 Loan Portfolio Return to SHR

The CSD talked through the report and appendix. She highlighted that the Loan Portfolio Return reflects the Association's borrowing position at 31 March 2023.

Board **approved** the Loan Portfolio Return to be signed by the Chair and for the CSD to submit it to the SHR.

23/05/15 SHR Communication and Correspondence

The CE reported that he was delighted to have received, on 17 March 2023, the SHRs correspondence with a Compliant Engagement Plan for the year 2023/24. He stressed the importance of this document.

Board **noted** the SHR Communication and Correspondence.

23/05/16 Risk Management Tables: Quarter 4

The CE talked through the report and provided an update on the Ten Most Serious and Significant Risks. He reported that updates to the Risk Management Tables were highlighted in blue and talked through the changes including the addition of Condensation, Damp and Mould which he stressed would also be reflected in the KPI's and Internal Audit plans.

Board asked for clarification on who carried out the analysis of risk management and whether it was discussed at Manager level. The CE reported that Managers were responsible for managing risks in their individual areas of responsibility and they involved their teams to ensure that risk management was embedded within the Association. He reported that an Away Day was carried out annually with Managers to focus on risk management generally and the Risk Management Tables specifically.

Board **approved** the Ten Most Serious and Significant Risks.

23/05/17 Health and Safety Quarterly Report: Quarter 4

The CE talked through the report highlighting the five areas covered: Asbestos, Electrical, Gas, Legionella and Lifts.

He talked through the Asbestos Management process which allows all Contractors, to have access to the Association's Asbestos Register.

The CE provided an update on the Five Year Electrical Safety Checks highlighting that the 185 for 2021/22 had been complete and 250 of the 251 for 2022/23 had also been complete. He reported that this was reflected in the ARC Return. He gave an overview of how the testing would be monitored moving forward.

Board asked for clarification on the number of Electrical Tests to be carried out annually. The CE confirmed that the number of properties to be tested is approximately 350 per annum.

The CE gave a comprehensive update on the Lift testing and maintenance programme. Board asked for clarification on who was responsible for the maintenance of individual lifts fitted in properties. The CE confirmed that any lifts fitted by the Association were the responsibility of the Association.

Board asked for clarification on how legionella risk assessments were carried out and the CE gave a comprehensive brief on the Association's procedures.

Board **noted** the Health and Safety Quarterly Report: Quarter 4.

23/05/18 Condensation, Damp and Mould Report

The CE presented the report highlighting that it had been produced following a request by Board for an update on the Association's policy on Condensation, Damp and Mould. The CE talked through the Appendices which provided the Procedure for Investigating reports of Condensation, Damp and Mould and the Maintenance Officer's Checklist. He talked through the process and gave an overview of the equipment which Maintenance Officers can fit in properties to monitor air flow and temperatures.

Board asked when the Appendices were implemented by the Association. The CE confirmed that both had been in place for many years, managed by the Maintenance Manager, and that Condensation, Damp and Mould cases, when reported, were treated as a priority. He stressed that the very sad case which resulted in the death of a child had highlighted significant failures in a number of areas by the Housing Association involved. He reassured Board that the policies and procedures in place would prevent such an incident occurring.

Board **noted** the Report and Procedures associated with Condensation, Damp and Mould.

23/05/19 Rent Arrears Report: Quarter 4

The CE presented the report highlighting that the following four reports all linked to Income Management. He talked through the report explaining that, as previously reported, the figures for rent arrears were continuing to move in the right direction which was due to the excellent progress being made by the Income Team.

Board recognised the difficult financial climate that tenants were facing which made the progress made by staff and in particular the Income Team even more commendable. The CE presented the report highlighting the excellent progress being made by the Income Team.

Board **noted** the Rent Arrears Report: Quarter 4 Report.

23/05/20 Former Tenant Arrears Write-Offs: Quarter 4

The CE presented the report. He gave an overview of the two cases reported in Q4, highlighting that the write-offs were relatively low and with the work being carried out by the Income Team the figures were reducing year on year.

With regard to former tenant rechargeable repairs, Board asked whether staff members carried out checks of properties prior to tenants leaving. The CE confirmed that checks were carried out and as previously reported the standards of properties in some instances were extremely poor.

Board **approved** the Former Tenant Arrears Write-Offs: Quarter 4 Report.

23/05/21 Voids Reasons for Termination of Tenancies: Quarter 4

The CE presented the report highlighting that this was a further report linked to Income Management. He highlighted para 2.1.1 and the Appendix which provided further detail on terminations. He reported that there was no specific theme running through the reasons for termination and highlighted that only one tenancy had ended due to the rent being too high. He highlighted that this would be monitored carefully over the coming year to gauge whether the rent increase had an impact.

Board **noted** the Voids Reasons for Termination of Tenancies: Quarter 4 Report.

23/05/22 Void Rent Loss Report: Quarter 4

The CE presented the report highlighting that this was the final report linked to Income Management. The CE talked through the paragraphs which all confirmed the continued progress and good performance figures. He stressed that the Associations Void Rent Loss figures were extremely low.

He highlighted the correlation between the figures in respect of the ending of tenancies and the reletting of tenancies.

Board asked why it appeared that Voids were taking longer to relet. The CE explained that during Q3 there is generally a rise in the number of tenancies ending, as highlighted in the Reasons for Terminations Report, and that a combination of volume of properties, standard of properties and availability of staff and contractors all had an impact on the void turnaround days.

Following a query by Board he gave an overview of para 2.2.1.1 which provided the explanation for the difference between the figure in the accounts and the figure adjusted for ARC.

Board **noted** the Void Rent Loss Report: Quarter 4.

23/05/23 Tenant Allowances Report: Quarter 4

The CE presented the report on behalf of the Housing Manager highlighting that there had been eight tenant allowances approved in Quarter 4. He gave a comprehensive update on one case in particular explaining that the payment to the tenant equated to a 3 month rent payment.

Board **noted** the Tenant Allowances Report: Quarter 4.

23/05/24 Procurement Quarterly Report: Quarter 4

The CSD presented the report confirming that there had been no tenders over £50k awarded since the last quarterly report.

Board **noted** the Procurement Quarterly Report: Quarter 4.

23/05/25 Procurement Strategy Annual Report

The CSD presented the report explaining that in accordance with the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 Section 18 the Association had produced its annual procurement report. The CSD talked through the regulated procurements carried out during 2022/23 and the proposed regulated procurement scheduled for 2023/24. She highlighted that the annual procurement report would be published on the Association's website.

The CE highlighted that Appendix 2 included proposed procurement for 2024/25 and 2025/26; however, he stressed that they were only an indication, and the final decision would lie with the Board.

Board **approved** the Procurement Strategy Annual Report.

23/05/26 Complaints Annual Report

The CSD presented the report explaining that as a Registered Social Landlord, the Association was required to comply with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Model Complaints Handling Procedure and as such were to produce an Annual Report on complaints. She highlighted that the annual complaints report would be published on the Association's website.

Board **noted** the Complaints Annual Report.

23/05/27 GDPR and FOI Annual Report

The CSD presented the report and gave details of data protection breaches, Subject Access Requests and Freedom of Information Requests received or dealt with during 2022/23.

Board **noted** the GDPR and FOI Annual Report.

23/05/28 Gifts and Hospitality Annual Report

The CE talked through the report highlighting that the Board were to be presented with an Annual Report each May providing details on the value of gifts and hospitality given and received during the year.

He provided details highlighting that all relevant information had been noted on the Register.

Board **noted** the Gifts and Hospitality Annual Report.

23/05/29 Entitlements, Payments and Benefits Report

The CE talked through the report and confirmed that all names and relevant information had been noted on the Register.

Board **noted** the Entitlements, Payments and Benefits Report.

23/05/30 Confidential HR Annual Report

The CE talked through the report highlighting that this was the first of what would be an Annual Report to Board. He explained that as it had been suggested by a previous Board Member that an Independent Audit of the HR function should be carried out, he asked the Board to consider in the context of this report whether that was necessary.

He provided a comprehensive update on the appendix highlighting in particular staff turnover which was extremely low. He also highlighted that there had been no disciplinary or grievance cases in the previous year which he reported was a further indication that staff were being well managed, and that the HR function of the Association was working well.

Following discussion, Board unanimously agreed that there was no requirement for an Independent Audit of the HR function.

Board **noted** the HR Annual Report and agreed that there was no requirement for an Independent Audit.

23/05/31 Acquisitions and Disposals

The CSD talked through the report. She confirmed that since the last report the Association had purchased 3 properties with two receiving grant funding. The CE provided an explanation in relation to the property for which grant funding had not been approved. He highlighted that this property was the only property not owned by the Association in the block and purchasing the property made the external fabric works scheduled to be carried out less problematic.

Board **noted** the Acquisitions and Disposals Report.

23/05/32 Cyclical Redecoration Programme

The CE presented the report. He highlighted that, as discussed at the Board Away Day on 15 April 2023, it had been recommended not to accept either of the tenders associated with the Cyclical Redecoration Programme.

Board **approved** the decision not to accept either of the tenders associated with the Cyclical Redecoration Programme.

23/05/33 CGPR: Health and Safety Policy Statement

The CE talked through the report highlighting that it covered the Policy Statement only. He sought approval from Board Members for the Chair and him to sign and date the Statement on behalf of the Board.

Board **approved** the Health and Safety Policy Statement and consented to the Chair and CE signing and dating the Statement on behalf of the Board.

23/05/34 CGPR: Senior Officers Remuneration Policy

The Chair presented the report.

The CE highlighted that his remuneration was subject to the Review of Terms and Conditions which took effect in 2020/21 and was reviewed annually by Board in line with all other staff members and therefore it was not necessary to have a separate policy.

Board **approved** to the removal of the Senior Officers Remuneration Policy

23/05/35 HSPR: Housing Allocation Policy (approved by DCC 20/02/23)

The CSD talked through the report on behalf of the Housing Manager. The CSD explained that as the Association was a member of the Dundee City Council Common Housing Register it had to adopt its Housing Allocation Policy. The CSD highlighted that although agreed in February 2023 it had not yet been implemented due to IT issues within DCC. She talked through the changes which had been made to the Policy since it was last agreed. She confirmed that the Association would adopt the Policy once the IT issues were rectified and that staff training was being provided by DCC.

Board **approved** the Housing Allocation Policy

23/05/36 HRPR: Whistleblowing Policy

The CSD talked through the report. She explained that the policy was last approved in May 2020 and was therefore due for review. She confirmed that the policy had been updated for revised regulation and terminology.

Board **approved** the Whistleblowing Policy

23/05/37 Board Training Updates

The CSO presented the report.

Board **noted** the Board Training update.

23/05/38 AOB

The CE talked through the plans for a Board Away Day which was scheduled to take place on either Saturday 15 July 2023 or Saturday 22 July 2023.

The CE talked about the plans for a Board Evening Event which was to take place prior to the Board Away Day.

The CE gave Board an update on the Staff Away Day which was taking place on Wednesday 7 June 2023.

The Chair wished to convey his thanks, and those of the Board, to all staff for their efforts and work over the previous year.

Meeting closed at 19.15hrs.