

ALBYN HOUSING SOCIETY LIMITED

REPORT OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 15 MARCH 2016 AT 10:30 AM AT ALBYN'S OFFICES, INVERGORDON

Present

Mr D Russell (Chair)
Ms M Smith
Mr G Sinclair

Ms E Grant
Mr J Convery

Ms K Williams
Mrs I McLaughlan

In Attendance

Mr C Macaulay: Chief Executive

Mr R Nairn: Chief Operating
Officer

Mr J Banks: Customer Services
Manager North (Item 5.2)

Ms S Watson: Finance & Corporate
Services Manager (Items 4 and 5.1)

Miss C Lawrie: Corporate
Officer (Minutes)

1. APOLOGIES

- 1.1 Apologies had been received from Mrs Dingwall, Mr Solle and Mr McMaster for this meeting.
- 1.2 The Chair reported that Miss Linden had decided to step down from the Board. The Board members noted their regret at Miss Linden's departure.

2. DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 Ms Smith noted any potential conflicts of interest in relation to her role as a Highland Councillor. Mrs McLaughlan noted a potential conflict of interest regarding elements of the budget.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

3.1 Board Meeting: 26 January 2016

The minutes were agreed as a true record.

3.1.1 **Action Items**

A written update on the action items had been provided.

3.1.2 **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

4. BUSINESS PLAN AND BUDGET

Ms Watson, Finance & Corporate Services Manager, joined the meeting in relation to the budget discussion.

- 4.1 Mr Macaulay introduced the Business Plan and outlined the changes made to it since last year's plan. In particular, there was more detailed information regarding Albyn's operational targets.

- 4.2 Whilst discussing the energy performance of Albyn's properties it was noted that current building regulations can create a conflict between airtightness and how most people are used to living in their homes, with consequential condensation / mould problems. Mr Macaulay agreed with the concerns raised and suggested ensuring that Albyn's processes for new builds include methods to mitigate these issues. Mr Nairn noted that complaints from tenants about mould and condensation had increased in recent years, although these remain relatively small numbers. Homes had to be built to take into account how people actually lived. This discussion will be taken into account internally and when updating the Business Plan.
- 4.3 Ms Watson took the Board through the budget for the next five years, which forms an appendix to the Business Plan.
- 4.4 The Board approved the Business Plan and appendices, subject to the amendments and requirements noted during the discussion.

5. **DECISION MAKING PAPERS**

5.1 ICT Strategy Review

Ms Watson remained in the meeting for this item.

- 5.1.1 A fundamental review of Albyn's ICT requirements had been undertaken by Albyn's IT consultant. As a result a revised ICT Strategy had been prepared, which provided a number of recommendations for consideration. Approval was sought from the Board for the proposed ICT Strategy.
- 5.1.2 Mr Nairn took the Board members through the strategy. The document and recommendations were discussed in detail.
- 5.1.3 Ms Watson was thanked for attending. At this point Ms Watson left the meeting.
- 5.1.4 The Board approved:
- The general strategy
 - Consideration of a replacement for the internal database
 - Moving to cloud-based storage
 - To further consider mobile applications; and
 - To retain the ICT consultancy to allow the project to proceed.

5.2 Eviction Approval: Chair's Endorsement

Mr Banks, Customer Services Manager (North), joined the meeting for this item.

- 5.2.1 The paper sought the Board's endorsement of the Chair's approval to enforce one court decree for eviction. A further paper had been circulated separately requesting the Board's approval to enforce a court decree obtained for one eviction.
- 5.2.2 The Board members discussed this and the additional case which had been circulated separately.
- 5.2.3 The Board approved the request to enforce a court decree. The Board also approved the request to enforce a court decree for the second case.

5.2.4 Mr Banks was thanked for attending. At this point he left the meeting.

5.3 Pool Vehicles

5.3.1 Mr Nairn's paper sought Board approval to discontinue the use of pool vehicles. Four former company vehicles had been used as a pilot for pool vehicles. In 10 months, only 30,000 business miles of the 130,000 recorded were made using the pool vehicles. There was also an ongoing issue of ensuring that the cars were monitored for basic health and safety requirements. Instead, staff could use a hire vehicle for trips in excess of 100 miles, with agreement from their manager.

5.3.2 The Staff Consultative Forum meeting, which was taking place after the Board meeting, was due to discuss the Transport Policy. This policy included reference to pool cars. If the Board approved the proposal to remove them then the policy would be amended accordingly.

5.3.3 As Chair of the Staffing, Health & Safety and the Environment Committee, Ms Williams noted that the issue of pool vehicles and the difficulties maintaining them had been discussed at length at the Committee's last meeting. She therefore supported the proposal to remove them.

5.3.4 The Board approved the proposal to remove the four pool vehicles.

5.4 Board Members' Skills Audit

5.4.1 The paper sought the Board's consideration on how to carry out its self-appraisal process for the 2016/17 financial year.

5.4.2 This was discussed and some Board members commented that perhaps the results from the previous survey would not have changed so much in the period since it was carried out. In fact, knowledge gaps should have decreased as they have been addressed in the period since. It was noted that Board members have received training and have access to a series of relevant and helpful webinars through the year.

5.4.3 Mr Macaulay confirmed that if there is a process in place to ensure that gaps are identified and addressed, it would be appropriate to use a SurveyMonkey approach. Board members asked for something simple and cheap such as this to fulfil the self-assessment requirement.

5.4.4 A SurveyMonkey could ask Board members to identify their own weaknesses or gaps in knowledge.

5.4.5 The decision to use a SurveyMonkey style approach will be fed back to the Regulator in order to ensure that they are content with this.

5.4.6 The Board agreed to participate in a SurveyMonkey approach. The outcomes of this will feed into the appraisal process.

6. MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

6.1 SHSE Committee Meeting: 9 February 2016

The Board noted the minutes from the Staffing, Health & Safety and the Environment Committee meeting which took place on 9 February.

6.2 Performance Committee Meeting: 16 February 2016

The Board noted the minutes from the Performance Committee meeting which took place on 16 February. The Chair of the Committee commented that Albyn Housing Society is now known for following through on eviction notices. This is making life easier for staff. Debts have been written off and this is in line with feedback from the recent benchmarking exercise which indicated that Albyn should do more of this.

7. HEALTH AND SAFETY

7.1 Health and Safety Manual: Responsibilities

This paper requested that Board members adopt their health and safety responsibilities, as detailed in Albyn's Health and Safety Control Manual. These require to be adopted annually. It was noted that the Manual was supplied by EVH to all housing associations to assist in managing complex health and safety legislation. Albyn's Safety Policy Statement also requires to be signed by the Chair and Chief Executive on an annual basis. This latter document is displayed on health and safety notice boards at both of Albyn's offices. The Board members agreed to adopt their health and safety responsibilities. The form was circulated for signature.

8. LEAVE OF ABSENCE

8.1 There were no requests for a leave of absence for the 24 May Board meeting.

9. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

9.1 Diversification Strategy

The Chair asked for an update on progress with this document. Mr Macaulay confirmed that the draft strategy had been provided to the November 2015 Board meeting. At that meeting some amendments had been identified. A revised document will be provided to the 24 May meeting for approval. In the meantime, the draft strategy will be used to progress projects such as cluster housing. Project costs will not be approved without discussion with the Board first.

9.2 Cluster Housing Project

The Chair proposed that a working group be implemented to support this project. This would ensure that the staff involved have a small group of Board members they can provide updates to and ask for advice or feedback. It was agreed that Board members should advise by email if they are interested in joining this group.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

10.1 The next meeting is due to take place 24 May 2016 at Invergordon.

11. POLICY PROPOSALS AND REVIEW

11.1 Asbestos Management Policy

11.1.1 The paper sought the Board's approval for the Asbestos Management Policy. This had been discussed and approved for submission to the Board at the 22 September 2015 meeting of the Staffing, Health & Safety and the Environment Committee.

11.1.2 Mr Nairn commented that this policy will ensure that Albyn's contractors can access a system which shows all of Albyn's properties which contain asbestos. A register of these properties is also required.

11.1.3 The Board approved the Asbestos Management Policy, with the amendments noted above. This was proposed by Ms Smith and seconded by Ms Williams.

12. INFORMATION PAPERS

12.1 Key Actions and Future Activity

This paper provided Board members with an update on the Chief Executive's recent meetings and appointments.

12.2 Renewable Power Investment Opportunities

This paper provided an update on the subject which had been discussed at the November 2015 meeting.

12.3 What's New, What's Next Bulletin: Rechargeable Repairs Policy Consultation

This paper provided information on the consultation taking place with tenants, which is due to be completed and the outcomes provided to the October Board meeting.

12.4 Procurement Strategy

It was noted that this documentation was in addition to the previously approved strategy, and had been prepared following regulatory changes.

12.5 Aviemore Biomass System: Update

This paper provided an update on the successful handover of the system to Angus Biofuels.