

ALBYN HOUSING SOCIETY LIMITED

REPORT OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 28 JUNE 2016 AT 10:30 AM AT ALBYN'S OFFICES, INVERGORDON

Present

Mr D Russell (Chair)
Mr J Convery

Ms E Grant
Mrs I McLaughlan (to Item 4.2.6)

Mr A McMaster
Ms M Smith (to Item 4.2.6)

In Attendance

Mr C Macaulay: Chief Executive
Mr J Banks: Customer Services
Manager North (Item 4.7)

Mr R Nairn: Chief Operating
Officer
Miss C Lawrie: Corporate
Officer (Minutes)

Ms S Watson: Finance & Corporate
Services Manager (Items 4.1, 4.2, 4.4)
Mr E Fraser, Dunedin Canmore (Item
4.1)

1. APOLOGIES

1.1 Apologies had been received from Ms Williams and Mr Sinclair for this meeting.

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.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

3.1 Board Meeting: 24 May 2016

The minutes were agreed as a true record.

3.1.1 Action Items

A written update on the action items had been provided.

4. DECISION MAKING PAPERS

4.1 Presentation by Mr Ewan Fraser, Chief Executive of Dunedin Canmore (Wheatley Group)

4.1.1 Mr Fraser was welcomed to the meeting. He discussed with the Board members the reasoning and consideration of the Board of Dunedin Canmore regarding how it became part of the Wheatley Group.

4.1.2 The Board members asked Mr Fraser numerous questions about the process and what had been the easiest and hardest parts of it.

4.1.3 Mr Fraser was thanked for attending the meeting and for his helpful discussion. At this point he left the meeting.

4.2 Report of the Board and Financial Statements: 2016

Ms Shannon Watson, Finance & Corporate Services Manager, joined the meeting for this item.

- 4.2.1 Ms Watson's paper sought approval for the Report of the Board and Financial Statements for Albyn for the year ended 31 March 2016. All the documentation had been considered at the 7 June Audit Committee meeting and had been approved for submission to the Board.
- 4.2.2 As Chair of the Audit Committee Mr Convery commented that the Committee members had considered the documentation in some detail at their 7 June meeting. They had been quite comfortable with the changes that had been made and the reasons for this. The Committee members had fed back comments on the Board report and some amendments had been made to it as a result. Ms Watson took the Board through the documentation in some detail.
- 4.2.3 The Board also considered and discussed the standard Letter of Representation; the online submission of the Annual Accounts to the Regulator; and the final audit findings report.
- 4.2.4 Ms Watson and her team were thanked for the positive final audit findings report. The Chair also thanked the Audit Committee members for their work on this matter.
- 4.2.5 The Report of the Board and Financial Statements for Albyn for the year ended 31 March 2016 were approved by the Board.

4.3 Loan Portfolio: 2016

Ms Shannon Watson, Finance & Corporate Services Manager, remained in the meeting for this item.

- 4.3.1 Ms Watson's paper sought approval from the Board for the Loan Portfolio Return for 2016 to be submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator.
- 4.3.2 Ms Watson took the Board through the documentation and highlighted the changes from last year's report.
- 4.3.3 The current position was approved by the Board, as well as the strategy for interest rates. In addition, the Loan Portfolio Return for 2016 was approved by the Board for submission to the Regulator.

4.4 Five Year Financial Projections for Scottish Housing Regulator: 2016

Ms Shannon Watson, Finance & Corporate Services Manager, remained in the meeting for this item.

- 4.4.1 Ms Watson's paper sought approval for the final amendments to the Society's Budget for the five years ending 31 March 2021. The paper also sought approval to submit the five year financial projections to the Scottish Housing Regulator.
- 4.4.2 There was discussion about the rent process. It was agreed that the Society's review of service charges for tenants during August should include a review of the rent.

- 4.4.3 There was some discussion about whether the recent referendum outcome to leave the European Union would impact on Albyn's tenants, by way of emigration of EU citizens currently residing in the Highlands. It was noted that the housing list was so large that any reduction in tenants would quickly be replaced. Mr Macaulay commented that there was more likely to be an impact on shared equity properties.
- 4.4.4 The Budget for the five years ending 31 March 2021 was approved by the Board. The Board also approved the submission of the five year financial projections to the Regulator.

4.5 Audit Committee: Remit Review and Annual Report 2016

Ms Shannon Watson, Finance & Corporate Services Manager, remained in the meeting for this item.

- 4.5.1 The Board was asked to consider the Audit Committee's proposal to change its name to "Audit and Risk Management Committee". The Board was also asked to note the Committee's annual report for 2015/16. The Committee also sought Board approval for its amended remit.
- 4.5.2 Mr Convery, as Chair of the Audit Committee, commented that these matters had been discussed at the 7 June Committee meeting. Mr Convery highlighted the main issues contained within the Committee's annual report.
- 4.5.3 The Chair commented that the annual report was very helpful and underlined all the work of the Audit Committee. He agreed that adding "risk management" to the name of the Committee recognised the work of the Committee. The Chair thanked the Committee for their work.
- 4.5.4 The Board approved the Audit Committee's proposed name change. It also approved the Committee's amended remit.

Ms Watson was thanked for attending. At this point she left the meeting.

4.6 Board Standing Orders: Review

- 4.6.1 The Board was asked to consider and review its Standing Orders, which had been approved in 2010. Some minor amendments had been proposed, primarily to reflect changes to the internal staffing structure.
- 4.6.2 The Board approved its revised Standing Orders.

4.7 Eviction Approval

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

- 4.7.1 Board approval was sought to enforce a court decree for one eviction. Mr Banks confirmed that this case was the first to have gone through the new fast track process, before arrears can accumulate to a significant amount. He anticipated that there would be more of these in the future.
- 4.7.2 The Board considered and discussed this case in detail.

- 4.7.3 Mr Banks referred to the information item which had been provided regarding the Society's arrears policy, particularly in relation to one of the cases the Board had considered at its last meeting. Mr Banks confirmed that the review of the arrears process had now been concluded and a more streamlined system is in place.
- 4.7.4 The Board members approved the request to enforce the court decree for the case before them.
- 4.7.5 Mr Banks was thanked for attending. At this point he left the meeting.

4.8 Diversification Strategy: Update Report

- 4.8.1 This was an update to the report which had been submitted to the previous meeting. Since then the first meeting of the cluster housing project working group had taken place.
- 4.8.2 Mr Macaulay proposed that reports on the cluster housing project be provided at regular stages throughout the current financial year. This was agreed.
- 4.8.3 The Board noted the Diversification Strategy report.

4.9 Staff Consultative Forum: Items for Approval

- 4.9.1 The Staff Consultative Forum meeting due to take place on 14 June had had to be cancelled. Two consultations had taken place in advance of that meeting. The Board was asked to consider the two items which should have been discussed by the Forum. These were in relation to the Flexi-time Policy and the Smoke-Free Policy.
- 4.9.2 After discussion, the Board approved both the Flexi-time Policy and the Smoke-Free Policy.

5. **MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

5.1 **Staff Consultative Forum: 15 March 2016**

The minutes of this meeting were noted. In Ms Williams' absence, Mrs Grant commented on the items discussed at the meeting. It remained a concern to the Forum that there were no staff members on it, although efforts had been made to address this. Mr Macaulay will consider this further.

5.2 **Audit Committee Meeting: 22 March 2016**

The minutes of this meeting were noted. As Chair of the Committee, Mr Convery noted that the main items from this meeting had been contained in the Committee's annual report to the Board.

5.3 **Albyn Enterprises Ltd Meeting: 14 April 2016**

The minutes of this meeting were noted. As Chair of the AEL Board, Mr Convery noted that the main item had been to agree the provision of a two year budget in future, rather than just one year. There had also been discussion about needing new members for the Board.

5.4 **Performance Committee Meeting (Draft): 17 May 2016**

The minutes of this meeting were noted. As temporary Chair of the meeting, Mr Convery commented on the discussions held at the meeting.

5.5 **Audit Committee Meeting: 7 June 2016**

The minutes of this meeting were noted.

6. HEALTH AND SAFETY

6.1 External Health and Safety Audit Report: 2016

This item had been deferred from the last meeting due to lack of time. The Chair commented that this was a very good report, which reflected the work that had taken place internally. It highlighted that the internal processes were working well. He congratulated all those involved in the health and safety work. Mr Nairn noted that there had been no legal non-compliances and only relatively minor operational non-compliances had been identified.

6.2 An action plan to address the non-compliances and recommended improvements had been provided with the report.

7. LEAVE OF ABSENCE

7.1 There were no requests for a leave of absence for the 21 July Extraordinary Board meeting.

8. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

8.1 There was no other competent business.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

9.1 The next meeting is due to take place on 16 August 2016 at Invergordon. An Extraordinary Board meeting is also taking place on 21 July 2016.

10. POLICY PROPOSALS AND REVIEW

10.1 Transport Policy

10.1.1 This item had been deferred from the last meeting due to lack of time. This item had been taken in conjunction with the two policies under Item 4.9.

10.1.2 Mr Nairn confirmed that a review of all documentation staff hold regarding driving for the Society, such as driving licences, car insurance and so on, is about to take place to ensure that staff's paperwork is in order.

10.1.3 The Board approved the Transport Policy.

11. INFORMATION PAPERS

11.1 Value for Money Operational Target

This item had been deferred from the last meeting due to lack of time. The contents were noted.

11.2 Board Self-Appraisal Survey 2016: Outcomes

This item had been deferred from the last meeting due to lack of time. The paper provided information on the outcomes from the recent self-appraisal survey conducted with the Board members.

- 11.3 **Staff Survey 2016: Outcomes**
This item had been deferred from the last meeting due to lack of time. The paper provided information on the outcomes of the recent annual staff survey. It was noted that the results had generally improved when compared to the previous year.
- 11.4 **Complaints Annual Report: 2015-16**
This item had been deferred from the last meeting due to lack of time. The report is available on the website under the Get Involved and Feedback section at this [LINK](#).
- 11.5 **Board Recruitment**
This item had been deferred from the last meeting due to lack of time. Mr Macaulay updated that a number of applications for Board membership had been received. It was anticipated that interviews would be held on 18 July so that the outcomes can be reported to the 21 July meeting.
- 11.6 **Aviemore Biomass Update**
This item had been deferred from the last meeting due to lack of time. The paper provided an update on progress with the new providers of the biomass in Aviemore.
- 11.7 **Universal Credit: Update**
This item had been deferred from the last meeting due to lack of time. The paper provided an update to Board members on the Universal Credit issue.
- 11.8 **Key Actions and Future Activity: Chief Executive**
This paper provided Board members with an update on work carried out by the Chief Executive since the last meeting.
- 11.9 **Early Intervention Process**
This paper provided information to Board members on Albyn's early intervention process.
- 11.10 **Scottish Housing Network: Key Performance Indicators**
A note of SHN's review of Albyn's key performance indicators from the Annual Return on the Charter had been provided for information.