

ALBYN HOUSING SOCIETY LIMITED

REPORT OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 16 AUGUST 2016 AT 10:30 AM AT ALBYN'S OFFICES, INVERGORDON

Present

Mr D Russell: Chair until departure Ms E Grant (by Skype) Mr A McMaster
Mr J Convery: Acting Chair Mr G Sinclair Ms M Smith

In Attendance

Mr R Nairn: Chief Operating Officer Ms S Watson: Finance & Corporate Services Manager (Items 4.2 to 4.4) Miss C Lawrie (Minutes)

1. APOLOGIES

- 1.1 Apologies had been received from Ms Williams, Mrs McLaughlan and Mr Macaulay for this meeting. The Chair noted that he had to leave the meeting at 11.00am. Ms Grant joined the meeting via Skype but could only participate until 11.30am.
- 1.2 It was agreed that when the Chair departs at 11.00am, Mr Jim Convery will take over as the Acting Chair.

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: 28 June 2016

The minutes were agreed as a true record.

3.1.1 **Action Items**

A written update on the action items had been provided.

3.2 Extraordinary Board Meeting: 21 July 2016

The minutes were agreed as a true record.

3.2.1 **Action Items**

A written update on the action items had been provided.

4. DECISION MAKING PAPERS

4.1 Society Membership Applications

4.1.1 The paper provided the Board with four applications for membership. The applications were from the Society's prospective Board members.

4.1.2 The four applications for Society membership were approved by the Board.

4.2 Rent and Service Charge Setting

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

4.2.1 The paper provided information on how the Society's rents are set. The paper sought approval for the Board members' agreement to the framework to be used to calculate service charges to tenants. The paper also outlined the proposed consultation exercise intended to be used for both the rent and service charges for implementation on 1 April 2017. Mr Nairn spoke to the paper.

4.2.2 Detailed discussion took place on this subject and in particular the possibility of including a category to recognise the age of the property and also the energy efficiency of the properties as these are so interlinked. Discussions took place on how these could be implemented and the fact that measurement of Energy Efficiency is not standardised. This therefore leads to difficulties basing the rent on easily available and accurate evidence. It was agreed that further thought needs to be given to this area and that a discussion will be organised at a future strategy day. It was agreed that this was an area of work to be developed over the next few years.

4.2.3 Mr Nairn confirmed that the policy required consultation with tenants.

4.2.4 The Board members discussed whether there should be a geographical element within the rent, as happens elsewhere. However, although it might be more expensive to maintain a property on the west coast, they might also have fewer amenities. It was agreed that the geographical element should not be included.

4.2.5 Discussion took place on the service charge element of the paper. Mr Nairn outlined the current situation and went through the proposals contained in the paper. Mr Nairn noted that there will be a review of these service charges, to ensure that they are commensurate with work required in each development. This will provide an evidence base to support the changes being made.

4.2.6 The discussions which have taken place at this Board meeting will be fed into the process. Further detail will be provided to the Board based on the basic principles as outlined for October.

4.3 Private Placement: Bankers / Brokers Update

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

4.3.1 Ms Watson spoke to the documents that she had circulated. Further information had been sought from the relevant parties to support the Board's decision to build 750 houses, and in another two or three years' time to potentially build another 250 properties.

4.3.2 The parties had now provided detail on the charges that would be made by them. Ms Watson took the Board through this information.

4.3.3 The Board approved the acceptance of the proposal from one of the agencies.

4.4 Sale of Property: Wick

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

4.4.1 Ms Watson's paper sought approval to sell a property in Wick. The property is the only one owned in the block. The current tenant has terminated their lease.

4.4.2 As the meeting was not quorate, this item will be raised as a Chair's Action if required before the next meeting.

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

4.5 Milton Controllers

4.5.1 The Board was asked to approve the proposed action in relation to the heating control units in Albyn's Milton properties. The heating system had been replaced in Milton during 2012-13. Since then a number of issues had arisen with the system. As a result the controllers for the heating systems needed to be replaced.

4.5.2 Mr Nairn took the Board members through the challenges that had been faced and the steps taken to address them.

4.5.3 The Board noted the paper.

4.6 Board Recruitment: Update

4.6.1 The Chief Executive's paper provided an update on the Board member recruitment process. It noted that five candidates had been interviewed. One candidate can only join the Albyn Enterprises Ltd Board due to their other Board memberships. That leaves four candidates for the Albyn Housing Society Board.

4.6.2 The interview panel comprised the Chair, Vice Chair and Chief Executive. The panel had agreed that each candidate could make a potentially valuable contribution to the Society or Albyn Enterprises. The paper asked that the Board support the panel's recommendations.

4.6.3 The Board members present approved the interview panel's recommendations.

4.7 Governance Self-Assessment Update

4.7.1 The Chief Executive's paper reported that the Scottish Housing Regulator had informed the Society that it would be part of a review project to look at governance self-assessments. The Chief Executive and Chief Operating Officer had met with the Regulator on 26 July. The Regulator had been provided with an update on work carried out by the Society to date regarding governance self-assessment. The Regulator will continue to monitor Albyn's progress before attending the January 2017 Board meeting. The Board was asked to agree to the exploration of identifying external support to develop the Society's approach to effective governance self-assessment.

4.7.2 Mr Nairn summarised that the Regulator wanted to see the trail of what the regulatory requirement is, how the Society addresses it, and how that is implemented. The Regulator thought that the Board's self-assessment process could be improved, perhaps by using an external consultant. Discussion took place on whether external consultancy support should be sought.

4.7.3 After discussion the Board agreed that this work will be carried out internally.

4.8 Eviction Approvals

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

4.8.1 Mr Banks spoke to the paper which sought approval to enforce court decrees for three evictions.

4.8.2 The Board members present discussed the cases.

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

4.8.4 Those Board members present recommended approval to enforce the court decrees for three evictions.

5. **MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

5.1 **Albyn Enterprises Ltd Board: 7 July 2016**
The minutes of this meeting were noted.

6. **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

6.1 There was nothing to note for this item.

7. **LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

7.1 There were no requests for a leave of absence for the 18 October 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 18 October 2016 at Invergordon. The Society's Annual General Meeting is taking place on 13 September 2016.

10. **POLICY PROPOSALS AND REVIEW**

10.1 There were no reports this cycle.

11. INFORMATION PAPERS

11.1 Key Actions and Future Activity: Chief Executive

This paper had been circulated separately by email to Board members. The contents were noted.

11.2 Annual General meeting: Information

This paper had been circulated separately by email to Board members. The contents were noted.

11.3 Scottish Water: Update

This paper had been circulated separately by email to Board members. The contents were noted.

11.4 Arrears Procedure

This paper had been circulated separately by email to Board members. The contents were noted.

11.5 Meeting Dates 2017-18

This paper had been circulated separately by email to Board members. A slightly revised version was circulated at the meeting, along with a proposed schedule for 2018-19.