

FINAL Albyn Housing Society Board Meeting |MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 16 August 2022
Time: 6:00pm
Location: Invergordon Office / Virtually via 'Teams'

Members Present

Lesley McInnes, Chair	Carl Patching, Vice Chair	Ian Fosbrooke, Secretary (remote)
Clea Warner, Member	David Cargill, Member	Fiona Mustarde Member (remote)
Angela Currie, Co-optee	Nile Istephan, Co-optee (remote)	

In Attendance

Kirsty Morrison, Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	Andrew Martin, Director of Finance & Corporate Services (DF&CS)	Laurie Macleod, Head of HR (HoHR)
Audrey Murphey, Interim Director of Governance & Business Improvement (DG&BI)	Maureen Knight, Director of Customer Services (DCS)	Laura Morgan, Corporate Officer (minutes)
Lucy Fraser, Head of Innovation	Chris Ellis, Change Manager	Brett Fletcher, Executive Assistant
Sylvia Ward, Scottish Housing Regulator (remote)	Stephen Lalley, Scottish Housing Regulator (remote)	

ACTION

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

- 1.1 The Board welcomed Sylvia Ward and Stephen Lalley from the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) to the meeting. Caroline Madden, Repairs & Maintenance Manager was also welcomed to the meeting.
- 1.2 Apologies were noted from Jim Convery.

2. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- 2.1 David Cargill noted that he was an employee of Cairn Housing Association and that partnership working with his employer was discussed within item 8.1.1.
- 2.2 The Chair noted that there was not a conflict arising from this interest.

3. STANDING ITEM

- 3.1 Board Remit
 - 3.1.1 The meeting met the quorum as set out within the Board Remit.

4. CONFIDENTIAL

5. OMT UPDATE

Lucy Fraser and Chris Ellis joined the meeting at this point.

5.1 Future of Housing

5.1.1 The Head of Innovation gave a presentation to the Board on the 'Future of Housing'.

5.1.2 The CEO reaffirmed to the Board the potential of this area of work for a wide range of initiatives. It was added that the Head of Innovation would be able to do a follow up Board briefing to cover more detail on the project if the Board wished.

5.1.3 The Board requested more information about the governance of the project to include fund management, project destination, and the target operating model. The CEO advised that the project currently sat under the governance of the Assisted Living Project Board and the City Region Deal (CRD) Programme Board. However, the project was expanding, and a strategy day would be held to develop a business plan and governance framework.

5.1.4 The Board enquired about the capacity of staff to support the expanding project. The CEO advised that currently there were two staff allocated to it, but resource would need to be considered at the aforementioned strategy day. The Chair agreed that a strategy day was required to consider the links between housing and health, and to establish governance and resource for any expansion of the project.

5.1.5 The Board enquired about the completion of the Society's commitments under the original CRD contract and suggested that this should be focussed upon first. The DF&CS advised that the Society's CRD contract came to an end at the end of 2023.

5.1.6 With regard to the project, the Board enquired who the responders to the data collected were. The Head of Innovation advised that the Society did not monitor any of the data collected, and that GPs only used the data for verification purposes rather than diagnoses.

5.1.7 The Board enquired what would happen if the Knowledge Transfer Partnership funding was not successful. The Head of Innovation advised that it was highly unlikely that this would be the case, but if this were to be the outcome funding was available until the end of November 2022. It was added that the Society had also been approached by Amazon and funding from this company might be another option that could be pursued.

5.1.8 The Board commented that there were already some big players in this area and that the technology was developing at a pace. It suggested that the Society needed to be very clear about what commercialisation would look like. The CEO agreed and advised that this would be included within the strategy day discussions.

5.1.9 The Board thanked the Head of Innovation for her presentation.

6. PREVIOUS MEETING

6.1 Minute and Confidential Minute of Board Meeting: 28 June 2022

6.1.1 The minute of the last Board meeting was agreed as accurate and proposed by Carl Patching and David Cargill.

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6.2 Matters Arising: 28 June May 2022

6.2.1 A written update on the action items had been provided and was reviewed.

7. DECISION PAPERS

7.1 Q1 Management Accounts & Financial Forecast

7.1.1 The DF&CS spoke to his paper and sought Board approval of the Q1 Management Accounts & Financial Forecast.

7.1.2 There was a discussion about the loan portfolio of the Society which was a currently a 60/40 split between variable and fixed rate loans. The DF&CS advised the Board that the Society was working with ATF to prepare some recommendations for it to consider regarding amending this split, and that these would be brought to the Board in October.

7.1.3 The Board commented that interest rates and inflation would add complexity to a number of issues including the annual rent increase and pay award for staff. The Chair advised the Leadership Team that consideration of these matters needed to be timetabled. The CEO accepted an **action** to ensure that consideration of these matters with the Board was timetabled.

Kirsty Morrison

7.1.4 The Board enquired if there were any non-utilisation costs for not drawing down available loans. The DF&CS advised that there was a fixed non-utilisation cost, but that this was less than the interest that would have been applicable had the debt been drawn down. It was added that delays in the development programme was the cause of this debt not been drawn down.

7.1.5 The Board enquired about the travel expenditure being over budget. The DF&CS advised that it had been difficult to budget for travel expenditure in the 'new normal'. It was added that the overspend was likely to continue at this rate and so would be factored into future budgets. The CEO added that the new 'Hub, Home, and Roam' model had seen staff traveling out to communities more which might be the cause of the overspend.

7.1.6 The Board enquired about office energy costs and if there had been any consideration of the increase to these in the heavy use periods of Autumn and Winter, given the likely increase of energy prices. The DF&CS advised that energy costs for Q3 and Q4 were back profiled to take extra energy usage into account and it was not expected that these costs would become unmanageable, but that this would be monitored.

7.1.7 The Board enquired about expenditure on voids. The DF&CS advised that the volume of voids in Q1 had been high, and that it remained the case that costs were driven by the need to completely redecorate some void properties. The DCS added that the Customer Services Team was working with the Asset Management Team to better understand void costs, and that stock tours were being undertaken so that the Society could be smarter in the work it chose to conduct on void properties.

7.1.8 The Board enquired about underspend on cyclical maintenance and the impact of increasing contractor costs. The DF&CS advised that the Society had existing contracts in place for the current year and so increases in contractor prices was not a concern; however, the Society would need to be mindful that the quality of service delivered was not compromised.

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7.1.9 The Board approved the Q1 Management Accounts & Financial Forecast. This was proposed by AC and seconded by David Cargill.

7.2 Civica CX – Next Steps Presentation

7.2.1 The Change Manager gave a presentation to the Board on the next steps for Civica CX.

7.2.2 The Board noted that this item was for information only and that a decision paper would be brought back to the Board in October 2022.

7.2.3 The Board congratulated the staff team for achieving the go live of the housing management system.

7.2.4 The Board enquired as to how much value for money the Society was getting from the new housing management system and how the benefits were being documented to form an evidence base. The Change Manager advised that the Society needed to draw out the detail around this and that it would be included in the October report.

7.2.5 The Board enquired about what consideration was being given to cyber security concerns. The DF&CS advised that the Society was working with the new ICT Director service on how the new housing management system could be hosted to make it more secure.

7.2.6 The Board suggested that an independent pen test of the housing management system be conducted. The DF&CS advised that this was conducted for the Society on annual basis but accepted this **action** and agreed to bring the results to the Audit & Risk Management Committee.

**Andrew
Martin**

7.2.7 The Board enquired as to how staff were feeling about the new housing management system. The DCS advised that the team were supporting each other to adapt to the new system and that an administrative team was now in place to support Housing Officers and Assistants. The Change Manager added that the new system would take time to embed as it was a big shift, and that targeted training for staff would be part of future plans.

7.2.8 The Board noted the update.

7.3 CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

7.4 Strategic Delivery Plan

7.4.1 The DG&BI spoke to her paper and sought Board approval of the Strategic Delivery Plan.

7.4.2 The Board approved the Strategic Delivery Plan. This was proposed by Carl Patching and seconded by David Cargill.

7.5 Board Development

7.5.1 The DG&BI spoke to her paper and sought Board approval of the recommendations made within Board Development report.

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7.5.2 It was noted that the Board had met with the DG&BI on 03 August 2022 to discuss its learning and development needs. Following the outcome of this meeting the DG&BI would explore flexible e-learning options to deliver some training to Members.

7.5.3 The Board suggested that the Society should get some expert advice from the ICT Director service on e-learning modules, as the delivery of this should be part of the overall ICT Strategy. It also advised that care was taken when choosing an e-learning provider as the quality of these was variable.

7.5.4 The Board approved the recommendations made within the Board Development report. This was approved by Angela Currie and seconded by Nile Istephan.

Fiona Mustarde left the meeting at this point.

8. INFORMATION PAPERS

8.1 Customer Services Initiatives

8.1.1 The DCS provided an update to the Board on Customer Services Initiatives.

8.1.2 The Board was advised that stock tours were scheduled for the 13th and 14th September and that further details would be provided to Members in due course

8.1.3 The Board reflected that the report was testament to the change in how the Society engaged with customers through actively finding out what they wanted. Also, task allocation to staff was being considered to improve service delivery. The Board extended its thanks to the DCS and to the staff team for all its hard work.

8.1.4 The Board noted the update.

9. APPROVED MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR NOTING

9.1 The Board noted the approved minutes from the Highland Residential (Inverness) Ltd Board held on 10 February 2022 (approved at meeting on 30 June 2022).

9.2 The Board noted the approved minutes from the Albyn Enterprises Ltd Board held on 17 February 2022 (approved at meeting on 23 June 2022).

10. AOB

10.1 None.

11. DATES OF FUTURE BOARD COMMITTEE MEETINGS

11.1 The dates of upcoming meetings were noted by the Board.

The meeting ended.