

FINAL Albyn Housing Society Board Meeting |MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 20 September 2022
Time: 6:00pm
Location: Virtually via 'Teams'

Members Present

Carl Patching, Vice Chair	Ian Fosbrooke, Secretary	Jim Convery, Member
Clea Warner, Member	David Cargill, Member	Angela Currie, Member
Nile Istephan, Member		

In Attendance

Kirsty Morrison, Chief Executive Office (CEO)	Andrew Martin, Director of Finance & Corporate Services (DF&CS)	Maureen Knight, Interim Director of Customer Services (DCS)
Audrey Murphey, Interim Director of Governance & Business Improvement (DG&BI)	Laurie Macleod, Head of HR (HoHR)	Laura Morgan, Corporate Officer (minutes)
Graeme Hamilton, Tenancy Sustainment Manager	Alli Vass, Customer Services Manager	

ACTION

1. APOLOGIES

- 1.1 The Board welcomed Graeme Hamilton and Alli Vass to the meeting.
- 1.2 Apologies were noted from Lesley McInnes, Fiona Mustarde, and Nicola Underdown.

2. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- 2.1 No interests were noted.

3. STANDING ITEM

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

4. OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT UPDATE

- 4.1 Customer Services Update4.1.
 - 4.1.1 Graeme Hamilton and Alli Vass delivered a presentation to the Board about Customer Services. The presentation focused upon the limited provision of tenancy support services in the Highlands and the growing need amongst Albyn customers for tenancy sustainment support.

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- ACTION**
- 4.1.2 There was a discussion about what the scope of the Society was in addressing customer needs. The Board agreed that the Society could not be a replacement for the welfare benefits system and that its primary role had to be in supporting customers to make sure that they were in receipt of all the benefits they were entitled to, as well as any other support services that might be available to them.
- 4.1.3 The CEO advised the Board that the lack of support services in the Highlands and its rurality made it challenging for customers to get the support that they needed. There was a perceivable gap in service delivery between the Highlands and areas such as the Central Belt. There was a discussion about the need for the Society to collect data to evidence the impacts of this lack of provision so that this could be used for lobbying The Highland Council and Scottish Government. The DCS accepted an **action** to prepare a report setting out the gap in services experienced in the Highland and how the impact of this gap could be evidenced. This would be brought to Board in October 2202. **Maureen Knight**
- 4.1.4 CONFIDENTIAL **Maureen Knight**
- 4.1.5 The Board enquired why more of the TRUST and Energy Funds had not been distributed. The DCS advised the Board that staff were being careful with the funds as the winter would likely result in greater need for customers. Instead of using the fund, staff had been creative, for example, offering customers recycled furniture. It was added that the spend between patches was in some cases markedly different due to the level of need in difference communities, and that improved administration of the funds was being investigated.
- 4.1.6 The Board surmised that the challenge faced could be split into the tactical, and the strategic. It agreed that the Society had to carefully consider the balance between its remit as a Registered Social Landlord, and the level of support it could offer to customers due to the lack of adequate support services and welfare benefits available. It added that the Board was keen for momentum to be maintained on this matter.
- 4.1.7 The Board thanked Alli Vass and Graeme Hamilton for their presentation.
- 5. PREVIOUS MEETING**
- 5.1 Minute of Special Board Meeting: 09 August 2022
- 5.1.1 The minute of the Special Board meeting was agreed as accurate. This was proposed by David Cargill and seconded by Clea Warner.
- 5.2 Minute and Confidential Minute of Board Meeting: 16 August 2022
- 5.2.1 The minute of the last Board meeting was agreed as accurate. This was proposed by David Cargill and seconded by Clea Warner.
- 5.3 Matters Arising: 16 August 2022
- 5.2.1 A written update on the action items had been provided and was reviewed.
- 5.2.2 The DF&CS confirmed that a PEN test would be scheduled to take place by the end of the calendar year.
- 5.2.3 The DG&BI confirmed that the updates to the Board Action Plan would be sent out to Members by email in October 2022.

6. DECISION PAPERS

6.1 Q1 Performance Report

6.1.1 There had been a delay in issuing the Q1 Performance Report to the Board. To enable time to scrutinise the report it was agreed that Members would have an additional week to review it and that approval of the report would be sought via the emergency procedure. The DG&BI accepted this as an **action**. The DG&BI advised Members to submit any queries regarding the report to her directly by email and a response would be collated.

**Audrey
Murphy**

6.1.2 The DG&BI explained to the Board that the delay in issuing the report was due to issues in the migration of repairs data to Civica; there had also been issues with arears data and void data that had to be remedied. Teams had reviewed all impacted data manually and the Leadership Team was now confident that the data provided was accurate.

6.1.3 The Board asked for more detail as to the degree of confidence the Leadership Team had in the accuracy of the data, and if it was likely that a further review would be needed. The DCS advised the Board that in terms of Civica, there was confidence that the fixes applied to the system had rectified the data migration issues. There was also an issue with the human input of data into Civica that had been identified and had been rectified through the manual cleansing of data. Regarding this human error, the Board was assured that an action plan had been put in place to ensure that all staff would be following the correct procedure for data entry in future. The Board was assured by the Leadership Team that the Q1 data provided an accurate baseline for reporting going forward.

6.1.4 Regarding Q1 performance, the Leadership Team highlighted the following areas to Board:

- Overall performance had been solid given that Q1 had been a period of consolidation for the new Civica system.
- Arears were in target and down from last year.
- Void days were creeping up due to contractor availability and the disrepair that some properties were left in.
- SHQS (Scottish Housing Quality Standard) compliance had reduced following clarification from the Regulator in relation to EICR (Electrical Installation Condition Reports) reporting, which required testing outside of five years to be equal to failure.

6.2 Q1 Health & Safety Report

6.2.1 The DF&CS sought Board approval of the Q1 Health & Safety Report.

6.2.2 It was noted that the Society would be establishing a health & safety committee with representatives from the GMB and staff. A remit was to be agreed and training and development would be provided to support members with this role.

6.2.3 The Board asked for more detail on the problem of staff usage with the lone working devices and if there was an issue with the product being used. The DF&CS advised the Board that the issue was with staff adoption of the devices and not with the devices themselves. It was added that the Health & Safety Manager had been working closely with the provider, staff, and managers to encourage usage.

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6.2.4 The Board approved the Q1 Health & Safety Report. This was proposed by David Cargill and seconded by Clea Warner.

6.3 CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

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6.5 Highland Residential Appointment of Directors

6.5.1 The DG&BI spoke to her paper and sought Board approval of the recommendations within it.

6.5.2 The Board approved the appointments to the HRI Board of Craig Russell as an independent Director, and Carl Patching as a parent group Director. These appointments would be made at the HRI Annual General Meeting on 22 September 2022. This was proposed by Ian Fosbrooke and seconded by Clea Warner.

6.6 Shareholding Membership Approval

6.6.1 The DG&BI spoke to her paper and sought Board homologation of the Chair's approval of three shareholding Society memberships.

6.6.2 The Board homologated the Chair's approval of shareholding Society memberships for Nile Istephan, Angela Currie, and Nicola Underdown. This was proposed by Ian Fosbrooke and seconded Clea Warner.

6.7 Housing Allocation Approval

6.7.1 The DCS spoke to her paper and sought Board homologation of the Chair's approval of the allocation of Society housing to a person closely connected to a staff member.

6.7.2 The Board was satisfied that the allocation was in accordance with the Entitlements, Payments, & Benefits Policy and homologated the Chair's approval. This was proposed by Angela Currie and seconded by David Cargill.

7. INFORMATION PAPERS

7.1 Annual Assurance Statement – Verbal Update

7.1.1 The DG&BI provided a verbal update to the Board on the Annual Assurance Statement.

7.1.2 Self-assessment summary scoring forms had been issued to Board, Leadership Team, and the Operational Management Team, with over half having completed them.

7.1.3 A meeting of the Short Life Working Group would take place on 05 October where the evidence toolkit would be reviewed; if any further Members wished to attend this session, they should contact the DG&BI. The DG&BI would also offer one to one sessions with any Members who wanted further information on the annual assurance statement process and evidence toolkit.

7.1.4 The Board noted the update.

8. APPROVED MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR NOTING

8.1 Remuneration Committee Annual Report to Board

8.1.1 The Board noted the Remuneration Committee Annual Report, prepared by its Chair Jim Convery.

8.1.2 The Vice Chair extended the thanks of the Board to Jim Convery for his work as Chair of the Remuneration Committee.

8.2 Remuneration Committee – 17 May 2022

8.2.1 The Board noted the minute of the Remuneration Committee held on 17 May 2022, which was approved at the meeting of the Committee on 30 August 2022.

9. AOB

9.1 The CEO updated the Board on the meeting held with Members on 12 September to discuss the budgetary implications of the rent freeze. Various options were discussed, and the Society is feeding back to the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations on this matter. A formal paper of proposals would be brought to the Board meeting on 25 October 2022. It was noted by the Board that the Society would be planning some communications to customers to keep them updated on the situation.

9.2 The Board enquired if there had been any update from the Regulator regarding the status of the Society. The CEO responded that the Regulator had provided some constructive feedback following its attendance at the Board meeting in August but had not provided any further update on the status of the Society.

10. DATES OF FUTURE BOARD COMMITTEE MEETINGS

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

The meeting ended.