

FINAL Albyn Housing Society Board Meeting | MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 13 December 2022
Time: 6:00pm
Location: Virtually via 'Teams'

Members Present

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

In Attendance

Kirsty Morrison, Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	Andrew Martin, Director of Finance & Corporate Services (DF&CS)	Audrey Murphey, Interim Director of Governance & Business Improvement (DG&BI)
Maureen Knight, Director of Customer Services (DCS)	Laurie Macleod, Head of HR (HoHR)	Caroline Madden, Head of Property Services (HPS)
Laura Morgan, Corporate Governance Officer (CGO) – minutes		

ACTION

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

1.1 Apologies were noted from Fiona Mustarde.

2. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

2.1 No conflicts of interest 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. PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 Minute of Board Meeting: 25 October 2022

4.1.1 The minute of the last Board meeting was agreed as accurate. This was proposed by David Cargill and seconded by Jim Convery

ACTION

4.2 Matters Arising

- 4.2.1 A written update on the action items had been provided and was reviewed.
- 4.2.2 Regarding action 7.2 Civica CX - it was confirmed to the Board that a penetration test had now been commissioned and would be completed by the end of January 2023.

5. DECISION PAPERS

5.1 Q2 Performance Report

- 5.1.1 The DCS presented the Q2 Performance Report to the Board for its approval.
- 5.1.2 In summary, Q2 had seen stable performance but with some work still to do around void properties.
- 5.1.3 The Board enquired as to why there was no satisfaction data for repairs (indicator 12). The DCS advised the Board that Housing Officers were collecting satisfaction data, but unfortunately, there had been some issues with the new housing database which had impacted reporting. Anecdotally, the DCS suggested that customer satisfaction was beginning to increase.
- 5.1.4 The Board enquired about former tenant write offs (indicator C7) and why there had not been any this year. The DF&CS advised the Board that an annual report regarding tenant write offs would be brought to Board at the end of the financial year.
- 5.1.5 The Board requested that this report be provided twice per year and that this be stated explicitly within the Financial Regulations. Also, that the movement in former tenant debts be tracked within the Performance Report. The DF&CS accepted this as an **action**.
- 5.1.6 The Board approved the Q2 Performance Report. This was proposed by Angela Currie and seconded by David Cargill.

**Andrew
Martin**

5.2 Q2 Management Accounts

- 5.2.1 The DF&CS spoke to his paper and sought Board approval of the recommendations made within it.
- 5.2.2 The Board enquired if there was any risk of the Society breaking its covenants as result of the external economic environment and potential continuation of the rent cap. The DF&CS advised the Board that there was not a risk of covenant breach due to the rent cap as if it did continue into 2023/24, the Society would have to respond by curtailing investment. This was not a sustainable approach in the long term and further plans would need to be established in this event. It was confirmed to the Board that each lender had different covenant calculations, and therefore variations could be found within the covenant table provided with the Management Accounts.
- 5.2.3 There was a discussion about reactive maintenance costs which were ahead of budget for Q2, and which would be expected to have a further upturn in Q3/Q4 due to seasonal conditions. The DF&CS assured the Board that reactive maintenance costs were being monitored and continued to be in line with the forecast overspend. The cause of the overspend was related to the volume of repairs being completed, rather than to an increase in the average cost of each repair. Anecdotally, the DF&CS suggested that the increase in volume might be the result of customers returning to pre-pandemic behaviour and were reporting more repairs; also, the Society was visiting customer homes more frequently and uncovering repairs that needed to be completed. It was confirmed to the

ACTION

Board that an increase in the reactive maintenance budget would be built into the 2023/24 budget.

- 5.2.4 The Q2 Management Accounts were approved by the Board. This was proposed by Jim Convery and seconded by Angela Currie.

5.3 ATFS Loan Portfolio Recommendations

- 5.3.1 ATFS was a Treasury Advisor to the Society and had carried out a review of its Treasury Management Strategy, including a review of existing funding arrangements. A report with several recommendation had been prepared by ATFS and provided to the Board.
- 5.3.2 There was a discussion about the mix of fixed and floating rate debts of the Society. The DF&CS advised the Board that ATFS were comfortable with the current mix (60/40), but that the Board should consider if it wanted to fix a greater proportion of this debt. It was confirmed to Board that the current average cost of funds was around 4.5%.
- 5.3.3 Regarding the recommendation for early repayment of the Clydesdale Bank loan, the DF&CS advised the Board that there would be little impact of taking this action forward as the sum owed was relatively low. The Board discussed this and advised that the DF&CS should proceed with the early repayment of the loan.
- 5.3.4 The DF&CS advised the Board that it would be in a more informed position to respond to the other recommendations within the report following the sensitivity modelling that would be carried out as part of the 2023/24 budget, and this would be provided at the February 2023 Board meeting.
- 5.3.5 The CEO informed the Board that a facilitated session on 'risk appetite' was being prepared and would be offered to Members early next year.
- 5.3.6 The Board approved the early repayment of the Clydesdale Bank loan. It would consider all other recommendations following its review of the sensitivity modelling to be provided with the 2023/24 Budget. This was proposed by Jim Convery and seconded by Carl Patching.

5.4 Equality & Human Rights Approach to Data Collection

- 5.4.1 The DG&BI spoke to her paper and sought Board approval of the recommendations within it.
- 5.4.2 The Board was advised that whilst the recommendation was for anonymous collation of equalities data, this approach could be reviewed in future once the Society had a more mature equalities strategy embedded.
- 5.4.3 The Board enquired if the Society had consulted with tenants about data collection. The DG&BI advised the Board that consultation would take place with CISMG (Customer Involvement Strategy Meeting Group).
- 5.4.4 There was a discussion about whether the collection of equalities data was a legal requirement of Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). The DG&BI advised the Board that Regulator guidance was that some activities of RSLs fall under the Public Sector Equality Duty (2010) and so data should be collected and used to inform service delivery. It was also a requirement of the Regulatory Framework.

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5.4.5 There was a discussion about the cost of collecting equalities data. The DG&BI advised that it was likely that an external company would be used to collate the data and that this would be relatively low cost.

5.4.6 The recommendations within the report regarding the approach to equalities data collection, next steps, and timelines were approved by the Board. This was proposed by David Cargill and seconded by Clea Warner.

5.5 Highland Residential Ltd Tenancy Allocation

5.5.1 The DG&BI spoke to her paper and sought homologation of the Chair's approval of the allocation of a Highland Residential Ltd (HRL) mid market rental property to a person closely connected to a HRL staff member.

5.5.2 The Board was assured that the Entitlements, Payments, & Benefits Policy guidance was followed in the allocation of this property.

5.5.3 The Chair's approval of the allocation was homologated by the Board. This was proposed by David Cargill and seconded by Clea Warner.

6. POLICIES

6.1 Gas & Oil Servicing Policy

6.1.1 The HPS spoke to her paper and sought Board approval of the Gas & Oil Servicing Policy.

6.1.2 The Board was advised that an operating procedure would be developed to underpin the policy.

6.1.3 The Board approved the Gas & Oil Servicing Policy. This was proposed by Nile Istephan and seconded by Angela Currie.

6.2 Electrical Safety Policy

6.2.1 The HPS spoke to her paper and sought Board approval of the Electrical Safety Policy

6.2.2 The Board requested that performance against the electrical policy be reflected within the Performance Report. The HPS accepted this as an **action**.

**Caroline
Madden**

6.2.3 The Board approved the Electrical Safety Policy. This was proposed by Nile Istephan and seconded by Angela Currie.

6.3 Financial Regs / Approval & Authority Limits 2023

6.3.1 The DF&CS spoke to his paper and sought Board approval of the Financial Regulations, and the Approval & Authority Limits 2023.

6.3.2 It was noted that references to 'Performance Committee' would be updated to Board and the biannual write off of former tenant debt would be added.

6.3.3 The Board queried if 'Rent Levels – New Asset & Investments' should be included within the Approval & Authority Limits as this was a calculation and did not require any authorisation. The DF&CS accepted an **action** to review this.

**Andrew
Martin**

ACTION

- 6.3.4 Subject to the amendments detailed, the Board approved the Financial Regulations, and the Approval & Authority Limits 2023. This was proposed by Angela Currie and seconded by Nile Istephan.

7. INFORMATION PAPERS

- 7.1 None this cycle.

8. CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

- 8.1 Confidential

9. APPROVED MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR NOTING

- 9.1 Audit & Risk Management Committee: 04 October 2022

- 9.1.1 The Board noted the minute.

- 9.2 Albyn Enterprises Board: 23 June 2022

- 9.2.1 The Board noted the minute.

- 9.2.2 The AEL Chair advised the Board that the intention was to have the company wound up by the end of the financial year.

- 9.3 RIHAF Conference Report

- 9.3.1 The Board noted the report.

10. AOB

- 10.1 Cancellation of meeting

- 10.1.1 The DB&BI proposed to the Board that the February 2023 meeting date be cancelled and that the agenda items be spread between the January and March 2023 meetings.

- 10.1.2 The Board approved the cancellation of the February meeting date. This was proposed by Lesley McInnes and seconded by Carl Patching.

- 10.2 Damp & Mould Update

- 10.2.1 The CEO provided a verbal update to the Board on damp and mould and advised that a full report would be provided at the January 2023 Board meeting.

ACTION

- 10.2.2 The Board was informed that the Society had completed a review of all complaints and repairs related to damp and mould in the past two years. It was found that only 0.9% of repairs, and a single stage one complaint were related to damp and mould. The Board was assured that the cultural approach of Albyn in relation to damp and mould was always to look at the fabric of a building first, rather than assume it is due to tenant lifestyle.
- 10.2.2 The DCS provided an update to the Board about how the Society was supporting customers during the inclement weather being experienced. Over 300 welfare calls had been made that week to vulnerable customers, and monies had been distributed via the Energy Fund and TRUST Fund. Comms had been issued to customers via various channels, and staff had been offering financial help through the various Funds available to support with additional heating costs. Heating contractors had been contacted to provide an accelerated response times where possible and in the event of any delay to repairs of longer than 2 hours then temporary heaters had been issued to customers during this period of extreme weather.
- 10.2.3 The CEO and DCS both praised the cross team effort that had been made to support customers. The Board echoed this praise and welcomed the update.

10.3 Confidential

10. DATES OF FUTURE BOARD COMMITTEE MEETINGS

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

The meeting ended.