

FINAL Albyn Housing Society Board Meeting |MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 22 August 2023
Time: 6:00pm
Location: Inverness Office / Teams

Members Present

Lesley McInnes, Chair	Carl Patching, Vice Chair (Teams)	Ian Fosbrooke, Secretary (Teams)
Nile Istephan, Member (Teams)	Fiona Mustarde, Member (Teams)	Scott MacLeod, Member
Angela Currie, Member (Teams)	Clea Warner, Member	Jim Convery, Member

In Attendance

Kirsty Morrison, Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	Maureen Knight, Executive Dir. of Operations (ExDO)	Andrew Martin, Executive Dir. of Group Services (ExDGS)
Audrey Murphey, Interim Dir. of Governance & Business Improvement (DG&BI), (Teams)	Laurie MacLeod, Head of HR (HHR), (Teams)	Laura Morgan, Interim Corporate Lead (CL)
Brett Fletcher Executive Assistant		

Observers

Craig Russell, Highland Residential Director (Teams)	Stephen Lalley, Scottish Housing Regulator (Teams)	Slyvia Ward Scottish Housing Regulator (Teams)
Joseph Quinn Scottish Housing Regulator (Teams)		

Tenant Performance Monitoring Group (agenda item 4 only)

Mike Grist (Teams)	Liam Salkin (Teams)	Jackie Budgen (Teams)
Odette MacDonald (Teams)		

FINAL Albyn Housing Society Board Meeting |MINUTES

ACTION

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

- 1.1 Apologies had been received from David Cargill.

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. PRESENTATION

4.1 Tenant Performance Monitoring Group Presentation

- 4.1.1 The Tenant Performance Monitoring Group (TPMG) delivered a presentation on new build lettings to the Board and made a number of recommendations for improvement.

- 4.1.2 The Board enquired as to how the Leadership Team would ensure that the recommendations made would be addressed in a timely fashion. The CEO advised that the ExDO and ExDGS would oversee the implementation of the recommendations

- 4.1.3 It was agreed that a schedule of the recommendations with a timeframe for implementation should be drafted and reported back to Board and the Tenant Performance Monitoring Group. The ExDO and ExDGS accepted this **action**. **Maureen Knight / Andrew Martin**

- 4.1.4 The Chair requested that new build lettings be subject to an internal audit in a year's time. The ExDGS accepted this **action** to add it to the internal audit programme next year. **Andrew Martin**

- 4.1.5 There was a discussion about snagging and end of defects for new builds, and the importance of ensuring that the terminology and timeframes relating to these parts of the process were clear to tenants.

- 4.1.6 There was a discussion about accessibility and the Board requested a report at a future meeting on how the Society was meeting accessibility standards in its new builds. The CEO advised the Board that the Society built to the Highland based Firm Foundations housing standard and accepted an **action** to report back to Board with more details on this. **Kirsty Morrison**

FINAL Albyn Housing Society Board Meeting |MINUTES

ACTION

4.1.7 The Board asked the TPMG if it was satisfied with the recommendations that had not been accepted by the Society. The TPMG responded that there were good reasons provided in these cases and that they were satisfied with these.

4.1.8 The Board thanked the TPMG for its excellent presentation.

The TPMG left the meeting at this point.

5. PREVIOUS MEETING

5.1 Minute of Board Meeting: 27 June 2023

5.1.1 The minute of the last meeting was approved. This was proposed by Carl Patching and seconded by Nile Istephan.

5.2 Confidential Minute of Board Meeting: 27 June 2023

5.2.1 The confidential minute of the last meeting was approved. This was proposed by Carl Patching and seconded by Fiona Mustarde.

5.3 Matters Arising

5.3.1 A written update on the action items had been provided and was reviewed. All actions were complete or in progress.

5.3.2 Regarding the action on legal services procurement, the ExDGS advised the Board that this the tender process will be complete by the end of November 2023.

6. DECISION PAPERS

6.1 Q1 Performance Report

6.1.1 The ExDO presented the Q1 Performance Report to Board.

6.1.2 The Board noted that some performance indicators, e.g. staff turnover and SHQS were not suited to a quarterly timescale and requested that this be considered for future reports. It also requested that the report show the year to date alongside the quarterly figures so that trends could be seen more easily. The ExDO accepted this as an **action**.

Maureen Knight

6.1.3 There was a discussion about tenant safety indicators and the Board suggested that to give it more assurance, alongside gas, the compliance performance for the rest of the 'big six', e.g. legionella, asbestos, should be included. The ExDO accepted this as an **action**.

Maureen Knight

FINAL Albyn Housing Society Board Meeting | MINUTES

- ACTION**
- 6.1.4 The CEO commented that the Leadership Team was also now reviewing a damp and mould report on a quarterly basis and that this could be expanded and brought to Board to provide it with further assurance. The Board welcomed this. The ExDO accepted this as an **action**. **Maureen Knight**
- 6.1.5 The Board enquired about stage two complaints and how these were being managed in the interim before the Performance Manager and CX module were in place. The ExDO advised the Board that the Performance Manager was due to commence work on 29 August 2023. It was accepted that the customer services redesign had resulted in a lag in complaints as the new structure bedded in; however, the Board was assured that the figures so far for Q2 were much more comfortable. The CX complaints module was going through user acceptance and testing and would be rolled out on 01 September 2023.
- 6.1.6 The Board approved the Q1 Performance Report. This was proposed by Jim Convery and seconded by Clea Warner.
- 6.2 Q1 Management Accounts
- 6.2.1 The ExDGS spoke to his paper and sought Board approval of the Q1 Management Accounts.
- 6.2.2 There was a discussion about staffing due to reported underspends and the Board advised that the budget for this should not result in regular underspending, and that a settled structure needed to be put in place. It was requested that the principles of training and staff retention be a discussion topic at the Board Strategy Day. The CEO accepted an **action** to include this within the agenda for the day. **Kirsty Morrison**
- 6.2.3 The CEO advised the Board that the Leadership Team had recently reviewed the staffing establishment and a recruitment timeline was now in place.
- 6.2.4 The Q1 Management Accounts were approved. This was proposed by Nile Istephan and seconded by Jim Convery.
- 6.3 Financial Sensitivity Presentation
- 6.3.1 The ExDGS delivered a presentation on financial sensitivity modelling.
- 6.3.2 The Board thanked the ExDGS for the presentation and noted that the stress testing set out provided assurance and an element of comfort.
- 6.3.3 It was confirmed to the Board that CPI +1 was the underlying model for rent increases, and that this was used for long term planning and when forecasting for significant borrowing. The CPI rate in September 2023 will be used as the basis for the next rent increase; this will be modelled and brought back to Board before the end of the year.

ACTION

6.3.4 It was confirmed to Board that none of the Interest rate scenarios outlined in the presentation would require further action at this stage and will not need additional Board input.

6.3.8 It was confirmed to Board that the Society has a mixed portfolio of borrowing including fixed and floating rate debt and the monitoring of the treasury portfolio was an ongoing process supported by our retained advisors, ATFS.

7. STRATEGY & POLICY

7.1 Rent Setting Policy

7.1.1 The ExDGS spoke to his report and sought Board approval of the updated Rent Setting Policy.

7.1.2 The Board enquired about tenant consultation for the policy update. The ExDGS advised that the Society had had three consultation sessions with the Customer Involvement Strategy Monitoring Group (CISMG). It was clarified that the Society was not seeking to change how rents were set in the updated policy; were this to be the case in future, the Society would consult with tenants more widely.

7.1.3 The Board noted that service charges were included within a standalone Service Charge Policy. The Board suggested that all matters pertaining to tenant charge increases should be collated into a single document. The ExDGS accepted this as an **action**.

**Andrew
Martin**

7.1.4 The Board noted that Scottish Secure Tenancies (SSTs) were outside the scope of the policy and enquired about these. The ExDGS advised that the Society had 33 tenancies of this nature which were reviewed in line with Scottish Government guidance.

7.1.5 The Board enquired about shared ownership and garages. The ExDGS advised that the Society consulted annually on shared ownership charges, adding that only 108 of these properties remained within the Society's property portfolio. Garage rents had not increased for many years and there was a separate issue to review the condition of these buildings and assess if they were still needed at which point a review of charges would be undertaken.

7.1.6 There was a discussion about the review of rent setting that had been requested by the CISMG. The ExDGS advised that this activity would feature in the update to the Business Plan next year.

7.1.7 The Board approved the Rent Setting Policy. This was proposed by Carl Patching and seconded by Ian Fosbrooke.

7.2 Equality & Human Rights Strategy

7.2.1 The DG&BI spoke to her paper and sought approval of the Equality & Human Rights Strategy, and the Equality & Human Rights Policy.

ACTION

7.2.2 The Board had no queries.

7.2.3 The Equality & Human Rights Strategy, and the Equality & Human Rights Policy were approved. This was proposed by Clea Warner and seconded by Scott MacLeod.

8. INFORMATION PAPERS

8.1 Confirmation of Rule 62-67 Compliance

8.1.1 The Chair presented this report to Board on behalf of the Secretary.

8.1.2 The Board noted the report.

8.2 Approval of MMR Allocation via Emergency Procedure

8.2.1 The Chair noted that the report to approve a MMR allocation to a person closely connected to as staff member was sent to Board for approval outwith the meeting cycle via the emergency procedure on 11 July 2023.

8.2.2 A majority of Members approved the allocation detailed within the report. As per the Standing Orders, this approval and a copy of the report was being shared for information with the Board.

8.3 Group Risk Management Strategy & Society Risk Register 2023/24 via Emergency Procedure

8.3.1 The Chair noted that the Board agreed at the 27 June 2023 meeting to approve the Group Risk Management Strategy & Society Risk Register 2023 outwith the meeting cycle via the emergency procedure.

8.3.2 These were provided to Board for approval on 11 July 2023. A majority of Members approved the documents. As per the Standing Orders, this approval and a copy of the report was being shared for information with the Board.

9. APPROVED MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR NOTING

9.1 The Board noted the approved minutes of the Remuneration Committee meeting held on the 10 February 2023, which were approved by the Committee at its meeting on 10 August 2023.

10. AOCB

10.1 Verbal Update: Board Recruitment

10.1.1 The Chair provided a verbal update on the recent round of Board recruitment and stated it was hoped that five new Board Members would be elected at the AGM in 2023. It was

FINAL Albyn Housing Society Board Meeting | MINUTES

ACTION

noted that Nicola McLelland had resigned from the Board, and that Nile Istephan, David Cargill, and Jim Convery would be standing down at the AGM.

10.2 Verbal Update: Significant Incidents

10.2.1 The CEO provided a verbal update to Board regarding a number of significant incidents. Whilst these incidents were operational, the CEO wanted to highlight the impact on the Society of the lack of response from The Highland Council (THC) to tenant referrals made to its support services.

10.2.2 The Tenancy Sustainment Team was working with these tenants and going above and beyond the requirements of a Registered Social Landlord to support them. The ExDO was actively attempting to work with THC and had suggested a roundtable discussion take place to include other partners such as the police.

10.2.3 It was added that 20-30% of Society tenants had no access to support agencies. The Leadership Team is concerned about the impact on other tenants from having to spend significant resource on these cases.

10.2.2 The Board noted the update.

11. DATES OF FUTURE BOARD COMMITTEE MEETINGS

11.1 The dates of future meetings were noted.

The meeting ended.