

FINAL Albyn Housing Society Board Meeting |MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 19 March 2024
Time: 6:00pm
Location: Inverness Office / Teams

Members Present

Lesley McInnes,
Chair (Teams)

Clea Warner,
Vice Chair (Teams)

Ian Fosbrooke,
Secretary

Carl Patching
Member (Teams)

Fiona Mustarde,
Member (Teams)

Scott Macleod,
Member

Niall Owen,
Member (Teams)

Jackie Bugden,
Member

Lynne Holburn,
Member (Teams)

Craig Levy,
Member (Teams)

In Attendance

Kirsty Morrison,
Chief Executive Officer
(CEO)

Andrew Martin,
Executive Dir. of Group Services
(ExDGS)

Maureen Knight,
Executive Dir. of Operations
(ExDO)

Laurie MacLeod
Head of Human Resources
(HHR)

Laura Morgan,
Corporate Governance Manager
(CGM) - minute

1. APOLOGIES

- 1.1 Apologies had been received from Angela Currie and Craig Russell.
- 1.2 It was noted that Niall Owen would join at 6.30pm.

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: 23 January 2024

- 4.1.1 The minute of the last meeting was approved. This was proposed by Clea Warner and seconded by Fiona Mustarde.

4.3 Matters Arising

- 4.3.1 A written update on the action items had been provided and was reviewed. All actions were complete or in progress.
- 4.3.2 With regard to the potential new build premium action, the Chair advised that this would be a discussion item for the Board Strategy Day in November 2024.
- 4.3.3 It was noted that the action regarding the procurement of legal services would not require a Board report and so could be closed down.
- 4.3.4 It was noted that the accessibility standards action would be addressed at the May 2024 Board meeting.
- 4.3.5 It was noted that Board would receive an update on the action plan for tenants by email by the end of June 2024. Board was assured that many actions were underway but were yet to be documented.

5. DECISION PAPERS

5.1 Albyn Housing Society Business Plan 2022-27 Year 3 Update

- 5.1.1 The CEO delivered a presentation on the Year 3 Update to the Business Plan 2022-27 and sought Board approval of it.
- 5.1.2 Niall Owen joined the meeting at this point.
- 5.1.3 The Board welcomed the introduction of a programme of estate walkabouts.
- 5.1.4 The Board enquired about the parameters for the new Cost of Living Fund. The ExDO advised that the Cost of Living Fund would replace the Energy Fund and TRUST Fund, and the eligibility criteria would be broadened so that those tenants who were struggling despite being in work would not be excluded. A tenant cost of living survey had been

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carried out in January 2024 which had identified a range of challenges being faced by tenants; the new Cost of Living Fund would provide targeted support on these areas. It was added that the Society was building up an invaluable bank of knowledge on customer need.

5.1.5 The Board welcomed this progress and requested that this evidence base be documented so that it could support future funding bids and partnership working. The ExDO advised that this was already in progress and an impact analysis on tenants who had received support would be presented to Board in May 2024

5.1.6 The Board approved Business Plan 2022-27, Year 3 Update. This was proposed by Scott MacLeod and seconded by Jackie Bugden.

5.2 Albyn Housing Society Budget 2024/25

5.2.1 The ExDGS spoke to his paper and sought Board approval of the recommendations made within it.

5.2.2 The Board welcomed the report and noted it was comprehensive and based upon sound assumptions that provided adequate headroom.

5.2.3 There was a discussion about the timing of moving the current RBS loan facility to a fixed rate, given that interest rates were likely to go down over the next few months. The ExDGS advised that there might be potential savings should interest rates continue to fall, but locking in at the present value would give the Society certainty that the loan was affordable within the proposed financial model. It would also be in compliance with the Treasury Management Policy.

5.2.4 The Board enquired about the budget provision for new development and what the impact of the large reduction to the Affordable Housing Supply Programme in 2024/25 would be. The ExDGS advised that development for 2024/25 was already planned and so would not be impacted, it would be future years where challenges might arise. It was added that the Society would only proceed with development where it received appropriate grant funding from Scottish Government.

5.2.5 The Board approved:

- The proposed Albyn Housing Society Budget 2024/25.
- The long-term financial forecast for 2024/25 for the next 5 and 30 years.
- The recommendation to move the current RBS £15m facility to a fixed rate based on a total rate of less than 6.0%

This was proposed by Fiona Mustarde and seconded by Niall Owen.

5.3 Highland Residential (Inverness) Ltd Business Plan 2023-26, Year 2 Update

5.3.1 The ExDGS spoke to his paper and sought Board approval of the Highland Residential (Inverness) Ltd Business Plan 2023-26, Year 2 Update.

5.3.2 The Board approved the Highland Residential (Inverness) Ltd Business Plan 2023-26, Year 2 Update. This was proposed by Clea Warner and seconded by Niall Owen.

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5.4 Scottish Government MMR Acquisition

5.4.1 The ExDGS spoke to his report and sought Board approval of the recommendations made within it.

5.4.2 It was noted that since the report had been issued, one of the 12 properties detailed which was located in Broadford had been sold as a shared equity and so the borrowing required for the acquisitions would be reduced.

5.4.3 Regarding the properties on Skye, there was a discussion about the challenges in getting contractors to this location and the increased cost of repairs and maintenance. The ExDGS advised that there were some concerns about the two properties in Kyleakin due to location and condition, and as a result full surveys would be carried out as part of due diligence in advance of any purchase. The Board was assured that the Society would only proceed with acquisition if there was a positive Net Present Value

5.4.4 The Board was supportive of the positive partnership working the acquisition would represent between the Society, Scottish Government, and Highland Council.

5.4.5 The Board approved the recommendations:

- To acquire up to 12 Scottish Government owned properties for Midmarket rental for a value of following survey assessment and final appraisal.
- That the total borrowing commitment does not exceed £1,253,386.

This was proposed by Niall Owen and seconded by Lynne Holburn.

5.5 Commercially Confidential Item

6. POLICY & STRATEGY

6.1 None

7. INFORMATION ITEMS

7.1 None.

8. APPROVED MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR NOTING

8.1 The Board noted the approved minute of the Highland Residential (Inverness) Ltd (HRIL) Board meeting held on 30 November 2023.

8.2 The Board noted the approved minute of the Audit & Risk Management Committee meeting held on 11 December 2023.

9. AOCB

9.1 None.

10. CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

10.1 Confidential Item

11. DATES OF FUTURE BOARD COMMITTEE MEETINGS

11.1 The dates of future meetings were noted.

The meeting ended.