FINAL Albyn Housing Society Board Meeting |MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 25 March 2025
Time: 6:00pm
Location: Inverness Office / Teams

Members Present

Carl Patching Member & Chair for meeting	Craig Levy, Member	Fiona Mustarde, Member (Teams)
Jackie Bugden, Member	Niall Owen, Member (Teams)	Scott MacLeod, Member

In Attendance

Kirsty Morrison, Chief Executive Officer, (CEO)	Maureen Knight, Executive Dir. of Operations (ExDO)	Andrew Martin, Executive Dir. of Group Services (ExDGS)
Laurie MacLeod Head of HR (HHR)	Jim Banks, Head of Group Customer Services (HGCS)	Laura Morgan, Corporate Governance Manager (CGM) - minute
Elaine Lovegrove, Corporate Governance Assistant (CGA)	Olwyn Gaffney, SHARE (Observer)	

ACTION

1. APOLOGIES & WELCOMES

1.1 Apologies had been received from Lesley McInnes, Clea Warner, Lynne Holburn, and Ian Fosbrooke.

1.2 The Chair welcomed Olwyn Gaffney, SHARE, who would be observing the meeting.

1.3 It was noted that Craig Russell was on a leave of absence that expired at the end of March 2025. The Board agreed to extend this leave of absence until the AGM.

2. STANDING ITEM

2.1 Board Remit

2.2 The Chair confirmed that the meeting met the quorum as set out within the Board Remit.

3. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

3.1 Fiona Mustarde noted an interest in confidential item 10.1.

4. PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 Minute of Board Meeting: 28 January 2025

4.1.1 The minute of the meeting was approved. This was proposed by Jackie Bugden and seconded by Scott Macleod

4.2 Matters Arising

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

5. DECISION PAPERS

5.1 Delivery Plan 2024/25 End of Year Update

5.1.1 The CEO spoke to her paper and sought approval of the recommendation made within it.

5.1.2 The Board advised that where delivery items spanned more than one year, specific actions should be defined for each year so that these could be closed off annually, rather than rolled over. The Leadership Team accepted an **action** to review the 2025/26 Delivery Plan to ensure that actions were defined in this way. **Leadership Team**

ACTION

5.1.3 There was a discussion about the action to visit every customer within three years and why this had not been achieved. The ExDGS advised that this was due to the challenging geography of some properties and also gaining access to properties.

5.1.4 The Board approved the Delivery Plan 2024/25 End of Year Update. This was proposed by Craig Levy and seconded by Jackie Bugden.

5.2 Albyn Housing Society Business Plan 2022-27 Year 4 Update

5.2.1 The CEO delivered a presentation on the Business Plan 2022-27 Year 4 Update and sought approval of it.

5.2.2 The Board enquired about the bespoke operational resource that was required for FIT Homes. The CEO explained that the growth of FIT Homes had necessitated a dedicated staffing resource for FIT Homes tenants and that this had been included within the budget.

5.2.3 With reference to the ICT Strategy detailed, the Chair of Audit & Risk Management provided the Board with a verbal summary of actions that had been taken by the newly established ICT Working Party.

5.2.4 The Board approved the Business Plan 2022 -27 Year 4 Update. This was proposed by Fiona Mustarde and seconded by Jackie Bugden.

5.3 Annual Budget

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

5.3.2 There was a discussion about the provision made within the 2025/26 budget for ICT and the Board requested assurance that there would be sufficient contingency to address legacy systems and issues. The ExDGS advised that the systems and solutions required would need to fit within the parameters of the budget, but was confident that the amount provided was appropriate.

5.3.3 The Board enquired about the dip in year 2 overheads. The ExDGS advised that this was due to consultancy commitments that would no longer be required, and that all overheads were specifically itemised and reflected in year costs.

5.3.4 The ExDGS explained to Board that when developments were completed, an element of the Development Team cost was capitalised; this would fluctuate dependent on the number of handovers.

5.3.5 The Board approved:

- The proposed budget for 2025/26 including the planned development programme for the period. It.
- The long term financial forecast for the next 5 and 30 years.

This was proposed by Scott MacLeod and seconded by Jackie Bugden.

5.4 Q3 Performance Report

5.4.1 The ExDO spoke to her paper and sought approval of the recommendation made within it.

5.4.2 There was a discussion about the number of tenancies refused. The HGCS advised a review of refusals in Q3 found that the reasons for 50 per cent of these were outwith the influence of Albyn. The CEO added that the Leadership Team was now receiving regular allocations reports to monitor refusals.

5.4.3 The Board queried the number of open damp and mould cases within the report. The ExDO accepted an **action** to review this and provide an email update to Board. **Maureen Knight**

5.4.4 The Board enquired about adaptations funding for the coming year. The ExDO accepted an **action** to bring an update on this to the May Board meeting by which point funding should be confirmed. **Maureen Knight**

5.4.5 The Board approved the Q3 Performance Report. This was proposed by Fiona Mustarde and seconded by Scott MacLeod.

5.5 Q3 Management Accounts

5.5.1 The ExDGS spoke to his paper and sought approval of the recommendation made within it.

5.5.2 There was a discussion about the delay to planning applications. The CEO advised that she had raised this matter with The Highland Council and Scottish Government. and noted that the delays might potentially result in a loss of grant funding. It was agreed that the CEO would revisit this matter with Office Bearers in May should further progress not have been made.

5.5.3 The Board enquired about the increase in void costs. The ExDO advised that this was as a result of increased costs of materials and labour as well as the introduction of a void standard for properties. It was added that this was a sector wide problem.

5.5.4 The Board enquired about the increase reactive maintenance costs. The ExDO advised that an analysis of these costs was to be carried out and that the Leadership Team would be reviewing the reactive maintenance budget on a monthly basis. It was added that the move to CX Assets and the introduction of a schedule of rates would support improvements in this area.

5.5.5 The Board approved the Q3 Management Accounts. This was proposed by Craig Levy and seconded by Scott MacLeod.

5.6 Highland Residential (Inverness) Ltd Business Plan 2023-26 Year 3 Update

5.6.1 The ExDO spoke to her paper and sought approval of the recommendation made within it.

5.6.2 Highland Residential (Inverness) Ltd (HRIL) Board Members present at the meeting noted that the HRIL Business Plan had been scrutinised and signed off by HRIL Board at its meeting in February.

5.6.3 The Albyn Board accepted that due to the improvements proposed within the HRIL Business Plan, it would likely to result in a reduced contribution to Albyn in the coming year.

5.6.4 The Board approved the HRIL Business Plan 2023-26 Year 3 Update. This was proposed by Fiona Mustarde and seconded by Jackie Bugden.

5.7 Board Calendar

5.7.1 The CGM spoke to her paper and sought approval of the recommendation made within it.

5.7.2 The Board approved the Board Calendar for AGM year 2025/26. This was proposed by Carl Patching and seconded by Fiona Mustarde.

5.8 Former Tenant Arrears

5.8.1 The ExDGS spoke to his paper and sought approval of the recommendation made within it.

5.8.2 The Board queried why some historic arrears had been allowed to build up. The ExDGS advised that these arears were often associated with abandonments. The Board was assured that all arrears to written off had been reviewed by an Income Officer who specialised in this area.

5.8.3 The Board approved the proposal to write off irrecoverable tenant debts of £405,263.48. This was proposed by Fiona Mustarde and seconded by Craig Levy.

5.9 Homologation of Allocation

5.9.1 The Board was asked to homologate the approval made by the Vice Chair of an allocation to a person closely connected to a staff member.

5.9.2 The Board homologated this decision. This was proposed by Carl Patching and seconded by Jackie Bugden.

6. POLICY & STRATEGY

6.1 Whistleblowing Policy

6.1.1 The HHR presented the Whistleblowing Policy to the Board for approval.

6.1.2 The Board requested that a paragraph be added to the policy setting out the arrangements that would apply should a Board Member wish to whistle blow. The HHR accepted this as an **action**. **Laurie MacLeod**

6.1.3 Subject to the amendment detailed above, the Board approved the Whistleblowing Policy. This was proposed by Carl Patching and seconded by Jackie Bugden.

7. INFORMATION ITEMS

7.1 Health & Safety Update.

7.1.1 The ExDGS presented the Health & Safety Update to the Board for its information.

7.1.2 The Board noted the updated.

8. APPROVED MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR NOTING

8.1 The approved minute of the Highland Residential (Inverness) Ltd Board meeting that took place on 12 December 2024 was noted.

8.2 The approved minute of the Audit & Risk Management Committee meeting that took place on the 17 September 2024 was noted.

9. AOB

9.1 HRIL Independent Director Board Appointment.

9.1.1 The Chair of the meeting sought the approval of the Albyn Board of the appointment of Margaret Morrison to the position of Independent HRIL Director.

9.1.2 The Board was advised that on 05 March 2025, the Chair of HRIL and the ExDO interviewed Margaret Morrison for the position of Independent HRIL Director. Following the interview, the Chair of HRIL recommended the appointment to the HRIL Board who approved of it. Subsequently, the Chair of the Albyn Board had also given her support to the appointment.

9.1.3 The ExDO provided a short summary of the skills and experience that Margaret Morrison would bring to the HRIL Board.

9.1.4 The Board approved the appointment of Margaret Morrison to the position of Independent HRIL Director. This was proposed by Scott MacLeod and seconded by Niall Owen.

9.2 Collective Board Survey

9.2.1 The CGM advised Members that the Collective Board Survey would be issued shortly, and it would be appreciated if everyone could complete it.

9.2.2 The Board noted this update.

10. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

Olwyn Gaffney, Elaine Lovegrove, and Jim Banks left the meeting at this point.

10.1 Confidential Item 1

10.2 Confidential Item 2

10.3 Confidential Item 3

10.4 Confidential Item 4

11. DATES OF FUTURE BOARD COMMITTEE MEETINGS

10.1 The dates of future meetings were noted.

The meeting ended.