



BRIDGEWATER HOUSING ASSOCIATION Ltd

**BOARD/COMMITTEE
MEETING**

Date: - Wednesday 5th March 2025

Time: - 5.30pm

Venue: - Boardroom/Teams

MINUTE

Sederunt:

Present	Apologies	In attendance
John Paterson, Chair Suzanne Austin, Secretary Ken McIntosh Rab McNally Ken Caldwell Jim O'Neil Gavin Dayer Derek Baker, Co-optee	Lynsey Breen Liz Bowden <u>Leave of Absence</u> Alastair Morris <u>Absent</u>	Andy Thomson, Chief Executive Alison McManus, Head of Corporate Services Hazel Aitken, Head of Housing Services Steven Ferrie, Head of Property Services Stephen McGinley, ICT Manager Lesley Carr, Minute Taker Gordon Birrell, In Attendance (part) Laura Jane Richards - Observer

GOVERNANCE

1.	Welcome and Chairs remarks	
	<p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and confirmed that members had received their papers on time.</p> <p>The CEO introduced Laura Jane Richards to those present, Laura Jane will be joining the Association as Head of Housing later this month.</p>	
2.	Apologies	
	<p>Apologies were received from Liz Bowden and Lynsey Breen.</p> <p>The CEO explained that we have been in contact with Alastair Morris who has requested that the Board consider a further 3 month leave of absence [REDACTED]</p> <p>Members AGREED to grant the leave of Absence for Alastair.</p>	
3.	Declarations of Interest	
	<p>Members were invited to declare any interest in any of the items on the agenda, in terms of the Association's published policy.</p>	
3.1	<p>Derek Baker declared an interest in item 9 on the agenda - EVH Employers Wage Increase Ballot.</p> <p>This declaration of Interest was NOTED.</p> <p>The CEO explained that staff members present will be asked to leave to allow members to discuss this item.</p>	
4.	Share/Board Membership Applications -	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share Certificate for consideration – Lynsey Breen 	

	Members were invited to consider the minutes of the Housing Land and Property Service Sub Committee of 12 th February 2025.	
7.1	Members NOTED the content of the minute which will be presented to the next sub committee meeting for Approval	
8.	Draft Minutes of Finance and Corporate Services Sub Committee 19/02/2025 - for information	
	Members were invited to consider the minute of the Finance and Corporate Services Sub Committee meeting held 19 th February 2025.	
8.1	Members NOTED the content of the minute which will be presented to the next sub committee meeting for Approval.	
Members agreed to move Item 14 - Pensions Presentation to this point in the meeting and Gordon Birrell joined the meeting.		
14.	<p>Gordon Birrell provided a presentation to those present on the current Associations Pension Schemes, following a request from the Board, and explained the transition from defined benefit to defined contribution. Gordon discussed deficit recovery contributions and future liabilities and outlined the current employer contribution rates and salary sacrifice options.</p> <p>A member asked if all organisations who are a member of this scheme are in the same position and have to cover the cost of the deficit. Gordon confirmed this as correct. A member commented that the cost to buy out of the scheme would be astronomical for the Association, again this was confirmed by Gordon Birrell.</p> <p>Gordon confirmed that the Association had done all it could to mitigate the risk of continuing with the Scheme.</p>	
MATTERS FOR DECISION		
9.	EVH Employers Wage Increase Ballot	
	Staff members left the meeting at this point.	
	<p>This report addresses the proposed multi-year pay offer from EVH/UNITE, outlining a three-year wage agreement proposal commencing April 2025. The core proposal includes a 4% increase in 2025, followed by CPI+1.5% in 2026 and 2027, with a 1-4% floor and ceiling.</p> <p>Notably, BHA has budgeted for a 5% increase in 2025, making the initial proposal 1% lower than anticipated.</p>	
9.1	<p>Members APPROVED the EVH wage increase proposal.</p> <p>As PROPOSED by Ken McIntosh and SECONDED by Gavin Dayer</p> <p>The vote of all employers and union members will be collated.</p>	
10.	Stock Condition Update / Surveyor Post	
	<p>Members were invited to consider a report by the HOPS, the purpose of which was to seek approval from the Board to appoint a permanent Project Surveyor at EVH Grade 7 to work within the Property Services Team, line managed by the Head of Property Services.</p> <p>The PSM reminded those present that a decision had been made to proceed with employing a Project Surveyor after an external tender exercise to procure a</p>	

	<p>consultant for the Association’s stock condition survey. The tender exercise aimed to conduct essential surveys as part of our ongoing commitment to maintaining and improving our stock and ensuring our financial assumptions were as accurate as possible.</p> <p>The HOPS seeks approval from the Board to create a permanent Project Surveyor post at EVH Grade 7 £39,072 - £42,903 (this is based on 2024-25 salaries and does not include 2025-26 wage increase). This job has been included as a permanent post within the budget and based on the lack of interest in stock condition work, the likely costs of appointing regular stock condition surveys and Clerk of Work services for ongoing contracts, we believe that this is effectively cost neutral to the Association in the longer term. The successful applicant will be responsible for surveying 1/3rd of our stock annually as well as managing/clerking ongoing contracts. The job description for this position is appended to this report.</p> <p>A member commented that this was originally considered as a fixed term post and not a permanent position. The HOPS explained that this had been changed in order to attract the best candidates, and the person specification will highlight the qualifications required for this post. It was agreed that this post will help [REDACTED] help to meet the NET zero targets as well as dealing clerk of works duties and any future development opportunities which comes the Associations way.</p> <p>The Head of Property Services presented the report “Cancellation of Stock Condition Tender” to the Board on 23rd November 2024 and detailing a revised approach was presented to the Board at its meeting on 23rd November 2024 to ensure an up-to-date planned maintenance dataset was available for budget preparations in the current and upcoming years.</p> <p>This work has now been completed through the collaborative efforts of the Head of Property Services, Head of Finance, and CEO. This data cleanse has highlighted some issues in relation to the extent of historical works being carried out; it would appear from the initial data analysis that little has been done in common areas, which means there is a significant amount of planned maintenance required to our stock in initial years. This data will only be fully checked by means of a condition assessment, hence the need for the surveyor post.</p>	
<p>10.1</p> <p>10.3</p>	<p>Members APPROVED the permanent post of Project Surveyor at EVH Grade 7 to utilise internal expertise to conduct stock condition surveys on a rolling basis and manage planned maintenance contracts. As PROPOSED by Derek Baker and SECONDED Suzanne Austin.</p> <p>And AGREED to proceed with the revised approach as set out in the report, to ensure accurate asset management and financial planning.</p>	<p>HOPS</p>
<p>MATTERS FOR APPROVAL</p>		
<p>11.</p>	<p>Policy Reviews:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICT Strategy (ICTM) • Falls Prevention (HOHS) 	
	<p>Members were invited to consider the above policies.</p> <p>The ICT Strategy was prepared by the ICT Manager, the aim of this IT Strategy is to ensure that Bridgewater’s ICT infrastructure, systems, and services are robust, secure, and aligned with the organisation’s strategic goals. By leveraging technology effectively, the Association seeks to enhance operational efficiency, improve customer service, and support the long-term sustainability of its digital</p>	

	<p>environment.</p> <p>The Falls Prevention Policy was presented by the Head of Housing, the aim of which was to provide guidance to ensure an integrated approach to falls prevention. The policy adopts a proactive approach in supporting our service users through identifying and reducing potential risks, working with key agencies, carers and family members where required. There were only minor changes to the layout and format to bring it in line with the standard layout.</p> <p>The HOH explained that the falls preventions policy would normally be presented to the Housing Land and Property sub committee but this had been missed from the last meeting. This policy will only apply up until and including the 31st March 2025.</p>	
11.1	Members APPROVED the above policies as PROPOSED by Suzanne Ausitn and SECONDED by Jim O'Neil	
12.	Procurement Annual Report	
	<p>Members were invited to consider a report by the Head of Property Services, the purpose of which was to outline the procurement activities undertaken by the Association during the financial year 2024-25 and provides an overview of planned procurement activities for 2025-26.</p> <p>Examples of community benefits delivered from procurement contracts are detailed within this report along with any strategic changes needed to improve the procurement processes.</p> <p>The report complies with the reporting requirements of the Association's Procurement Strategy and includes details on procurement routes, financial implications, and risk considerations.</p> <p>The report provides details of the procurement activities undertaken by the Association for the financial year 2024-25.</p>	
12.1	Members NOTED the contents of the report.	
12.2	APPROVED the ongoing approach for procurement and	
12.3	ENDORSED the outlined procurement activities for 2025-26. As PROPOSED by Derek Baker and SECONDED by Gavin Dayer	
13.	Purpose > Way > Impact Statement	
	<p>Members were invited to consider a report by the CEO, the purpose of which was to present a comprehensive framework for the future direction of the Association, following the conclusion of our culture programme with Kirsty Innes who members met at the away day in November, the report is appended to this report. It is based on a thorough review of our history, current challenges, and aspirations. The core of this framework is the Purpose Way Impact statement, which will serve as the foundation for our work and business planning in the years to come.</p> <p>The CEO recommends that the members adopt the Purpose Way Impact statement as the basis of our work and business planning for the years to come. We also seek the Board's comments and feedback on this document. All future business decisions would be assessed against the statement.</p>	
13.1	Members APPROVED to adopt the Purpose Way Impact statement as PROPOSED by Suzanne Austin and SECONDED by Gavin Dayer.	

	<p>The action plan tracker appended to this report has been updated to show the progress that has been made to date towards de-regulating the current sheltered housing service which will allow us to proceed with the Amenity Plus pilot. Additional tasks are being added to the tracker as the project evolves.</p> <p>Further details on progress towards de-registration since the last Board meeting are detailed within the report.</p>	
18.1	Members NOTED the contents of the report.	
19.	Quarterly Business Plan 2024-2025 Performance Update Q3	
	<p>Members were invited to consider a report by the CEO, the purpose of which was to provide a comprehensive overview of Bridgewater's strategic and operational performance, covering the period 2023-2028, with a focus on the 2024/2025 deliverables. It includes the Strategic Delivery Plan, Key Performance Indicator (KPI) analysis, Risk Assessment Mapping, Global Action Plan, and Policy Schedule.</p> <p>The Strategic Delivery Plan serves as the central summary of Bridgewater's business plan, updated quarterly to ensure alignment with strategic objectives. The KPI Summary highlights areas requiring focused attention, including staff sickness, membership growth, complaints handling, void turnaround times, rental arrears, contractor performance, and factoring debt. Notably, a new KPI reporting format has been implemented for enhanced clarity.</p> <p>The Risk Assessment Mapping identifies 44 operational and strategic risks, with 17 classified as medium-level strategic risks. Progress has been made in mitigating some risks, as evidenced by score reductions. The CEO explained that 2 risks have decreased.</p> <p>The Global Action Plan tracks 186 strategic actions, with a significant majority completed or on track, though some delays and cancellations are noted.</p> <p>The Policy Schedule reflects recent policy updates but acknowledges delays in achieving full completion by the initial target date. The CEO explained that all Policy documents are almost complete and updated.</p> <p>Overall, the report provides a transparent view of Bridgewater's performance, highlighting both successes and areas requiring further attention.</p>	
19.1	Members NOTED the content of the report and information contained within the appendices.	
MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION		
20.	CEO Report	
	<p>Members were invited to consider a report by the CEO, the purpose of which was to provide an update on regulatory engagement, legislative changes, governance and staffing matters.</p> <p>Key highlights include:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulatory: No significant updates are anticipated until the annual review in March/April. • Governance: Progress continues towards achieving an 11-member Board by the new financial year. Lynsey Breen's application will be considered at this meeting, and Derek Baker was co-opted in January. A Board development session, focused on enhancing member understanding, is scheduled for March 26th, 2025, in response to 2024 appraisal feedback. • Staffing: Laura Jane Richards has been appointed as the new Head of 	

	<p>Housing Services following a robust recruitment process. She will commence in March, bringing extensive housing management experience.</p> <p>The CEO took this opportunity to update members that Hazel Aitken, the current Head of Housing will be leaving the Association on 31st March and wanted to record his thanks to Hazel for all the hard work she has done whilst in post.</p>	
20.1	Board NOTED the content of this report.	
21.	Development & Acquisitions	
	<p>Members were invited to consider a report by the CEO, the purpose of which was to provide Board with an update on all relevant property development opportunities being considered at the time of reporting.</p> <p>Key highlights include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Florish Road Development (Cala Homes): Following Cala Homes' acquisition of the former Stewart Milne site, discussions are underway to revise the original development plans. Cala Homes proposes a reduction in units and a potential shift to cottage flats. Alternative proposals are anticipated in the coming weeks, with a target for formal agreement in the coming months, subject to Renfrewshire Council approval and financial appraisal. • Development Strategy: The tender process for the Development Strategy consultancy has encountered challenges due to the broad scope of the brief. The brief will be reviewed and potentially segmented to encourage wider participation. • Rental Off The Shelf (ROTS): Using SG/ Renfrewshire Council grant funding and existing ROTS funds, the Association is in the process of acquiring four properties. These acquisitions align with financial assessment criteria and are targeted for completion by 31st March. Board approval is requested for the associated expenditure profile. 	CEO
21.1	The Board NOTED the contents of the report and raise any queries or concerns with any of the items raised or the proposed methods of managing each item.	
21.2	Board APPROVED the acquisition of four properties as outlined in Section 3 of the report with the Association's contribution being £240,000. As PROPOSED by Ken McIntosh and SECONDED by Ken Caldwell.	
ADMINISTRATION		
22.	AOCB	
	<p>There was no other competent business for discussion.</p> <p>The Head of Corporate Services reminded members that they were required to sign the Health and Safety Manual.</p>	
23.	Issues which the Chair has agreed as urgent outwith Meeting Cycle	
	There were no other urgent issues for consideration.	
24.	Update from Members who have attended training sessions or events since the last meeting.	
	There was no update from any members present.	
25.	Date of next Board Meeting – Wednesday 16th April 2025	

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and appears to be 'J. R. ...'.