



MINUTES OF BRIDGEWATER HOUSING ASSOCIATION

BOARD MEETING

Date: 6th March 2024

Time: 5.30pm

Venue: BOARDROOM/TEAMS

Sederunt:

Present	Apologies	In Attendance
John Paterson, Chair Suzanne Austin, Vice Chair Rab McNally Ken Caldwell Jim O'Neil Gavin Dayer Liz Bowden	Aileen Naismith Alastair Morris <u>Leave of Absence</u> Denise Love <u>Absent</u> Ken McIntosh	Andy Thomson, Chief Executive Steven Ferrie, Head of Property Services Ruth Brogan, Head of Housing Services JS Hazel Aitken, Head of Housing Services JS Alison McManus, Head of Corporate Services Lesley Carr, Corporate Services Assistant (Minute Secretary)

Prior to the meeting commencing Board Members were provided with a training presentation from the CEO on the Code of Conduct and Meeting Standing Orders. The slides have been added to the Board Portal.

GOVERNANCE

Item	Details	Action
1.	Welcome and Chairs remarks	
	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and confirmed that members had received their papers on time.	
2.	Apologies	
	Apologies were received from Aileen Naismith and Alastair Morris.	
3.	Declarations of Interest	
	Members were invited to declare any interest in any of the items on the agenda, in terms of the Association's published policy.	
3.1	There were no declarations made by those present.	
4.	Minute of the Board Meeting held on 31st January 2024	

	Members were invited to consider the minute of the Board Meeting held on 31st January 2024	
4.1	Members APPROVED the minutes as a correct record of the meeting as PROPOSED by Suzanne Austin and SECONDED by Rab McNally.	
5.	Matters Arising	
	Members were invited to consider the Matters Arising Report which details the outstanding actions. The CEO updated that the TP Policy and Strategy and the Equalities Policy and Strategy are being considered at tonight's meeting.	
5.1	Members NOTED the update provided by the CEO.	
6.	Minutes of Sub-Committee Meetings for Information	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Land and Property Services Sub 01/02/2024 • Finance and Corporate Services Sub 29/02/2024 (verbal update) 	
6.1	The draft minute from the LPS Sub Committee Meeting held on 1 st February 2024 was NOTED by those present.	
6.2	<p>The CEO provided members with a verbal update on the issues which were considered at the F&CS Sub Committee meeting held on 29th February. The main areas for discussion were the Management Accounts and the Final Staff Structure.</p> <p>These draft minutes will be uploaded to the Board portal for members to review and will be presented to the next Board Meeting for information and the Sub Committee for Approval in May.</p>	
MATTERS FOR DECISION		
7.	Acquisition Programme ROTS (Verbal)	
	<p>Members were invited to consider an update on the Acquisition Programme provided by the CEO. The CEO explained that initially the Association were looking at the possibility to purchase up to six properties, however this has been reduced to one property, which should be concluded by 31st March before the funding runs out.</p> <p>A member asked about the availability of funding for the purchase of ROTS properties going forward, the CEO explained we are waiting to see if funding is put in place by the local authority for the next financial year. If funding is available, we would be happy to look at the purchase of other properties next financial year.</p> <p>A member asked why when we had identified six properties that this had reduced to one, the HoPS explained that although we had been approached by the owners of the other potential properties these did not proceed as the owners felt that they could achieve more money on the open market.</p>	

	A member asked how much we would offer for this property, the HoPS explained that we would offer the valuation of the property which is set by the Home Report.	
7.1	Members NOTED the update provided and confirmed that they were happy to proceed with the purchase of this property.	
8.	Customer Engagement Strategy	
	<p>Members were invited to consider a report by the Head of Housing Services. Members will be aware that the Association aims to provide opportunities for all our customers to play an active role in the Management of their homes and the delivery of our services. These opportunities will vary to ensure that customers can participate in a way and at a level that encourages customers to contribute both individually and collectively.</p> <p>The HoHS explained that the customer engagement strategy sets out the framework for how the Association will collaborate with its customers over the next three years to ensure they can influence decisions about their homes and the neighbourhoods they live in.</p> <p>Tenants and staff have been consulted on this strategy and it has been posted on MyBHA portal, the website and social media and the draft policy was presented to the F&CS Sub Committee.</p> <p>The HoHS explained that this is a new strategy and replaces the Tenant Participation Policy and Strategy.</p> <p>Appended to this report is: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Customer Engagement Action Plan 2024/25 • Bridgewater Customer Service Standards • Jargon Buster • Equality & Diversity Impact Assessment (EIA) <p>A member commented that we have not had much success encouraging tenant to participate in the past and we may need to look at how we encourage this in the future. The CEO said that we will be looking at new ways of encouraging our customers to engage with us. We have already started to organise a Gala Day which should be a fun way of getting people involved.</p> <p>A member commented that the action plan is quite light and asked if we were mandated to have a tenant forum. The CEO explained that we have a legal obligation to consult with tenants on policies, but we are not required to have scrutiny panels, however, this is an unwritten obligation from the Regulator. The member suggested that we look at establishing contact with local community groups and speak to the Community Council, who have held Gala days in the past.</p> <p>A member commented that the Strategy was very comprehensive but agreed that the action plan was slim and suggested that it includes information on what is available to tenants so that they are aware on how they can participate. It was also noted that the targets and response times within the customer service standards were light and suggested stretching the targets as it is easy to set targets that can be met. The CEO explained that there will be more information which we can publish and agreed that the targets are light, however, as we don't have anything to compare against, he explained that once this is up and running it may be brought back to the Sub Committee for their re-consideration. The CEO</p>	

	<p>explained that there is some information that we are unable to measure until we have made some changes to our software systems.</p> <p>A member went on to ask if the targets cover both tenants and owners, the CEO confirmed that this covers any customer of the Association, and he is aware that we may need to be more specific in some areas, therefore this will be reviewed and members will be kept up to date with any changes that are made going forward.</p>	
8.1	Members APPROVED the Customer Engagement Strategy as PROPOSED by Suzanne Austin and SECONDED by Gavin Dayer.	
9.	Equalities Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Strategy Review	
	<p>Members were invited to consider a report by the CEO. The Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Strategy have now been reviewed and are being presented for approval by the Board following a period of public consultation.</p> <p>The CEO updated that there are no significant proposed changes and although we had a few tenants requesting copies of the policy and strategy, this did not lead to further amendments to the documents, therefore these are being presented to the Board with the following minor changes: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy - Strategy front page updated to reflect revised approval date following consultation. • Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy - front page updated to reflect approval date. Some of the dates have been updated in the Strategy action plan to reflect actions taken and to remove reference to “draft strategy” within the document. <p>A member commented that it was good to see the amount of information contained within this report.</p> <p>The CEO reminded members that the action plans will be monitored by Staff and Board will be provided updates.</p>	
9.1	Members APPROVED the Equalities Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Strategy as PROPOSED by Gavin Dayer and SECONDED by Rab McNally.	
MATTERS FOR ASSURANCE		
10.	Regulatory Engagement Report	
	<p>Members were invited to consider a report by the CEO, the main purpose of which was to provide Board with an update on our regulatory engagement with the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) and to provide an update with our tenant and resident safety and governance compliance.</p> <p>The CEO updated that the fourth and fifth monthly updates have been submitted to the Regulator, the latest being on 27th February 2024, and a summary of the items covered is contained within the report.</p> <p>The Tenant Safety Review/Audits for Gas Safety and Lifts are being presented to the board for consideration at tonight’s meeting. Recommended actions will be considered and actioned, and our policy and procedures will be reviewed</p>	

	<p>and updated and provided to the Regulator.</p> <p>The CEO updated that once a response has been received feedback from the Regulator he will provide the Chair with an update. This may result in a Notifiable event being submitted confirming our view that we are now compliant with the Regulatory Standards and requesting a review of our engagement status.</p>	
10.1	Members NOTED the information included in the report.	
11.	Notifiable Events Register	
	<p>Members were invited to consider a report by the CEO, the purpose of which was to provide members with an update on the notifiable events and reminded members that the Association is clear on its obligations under the current Scottish Housing Regulator’s Notifiable Events Guidance and keeps a register of all Notifiable Events lodged – this can be substantiated via the SHR portal.</p> <p>This is an update on the report provided at the last meeting. There are no new notifiable events. The CEO provided a verbal update that NE30439 has now been closed now that the final staff structure is in place, this will be reflected in the next report.</p>	
11.1	Members NOTED the information contained within the report.	
12.	Tenant Safety Review/Audits – Gas and Lifts	
	<p>Members were invited to consider a report by the HoPS, the purpose of which was to advise the Board on a range of relevant issues currently being considered and to seek approval for matters as noted throughout the report where required.</p> <p>The HoPS updated that both the Gas Safety and Lift Maintenance audits have been conducted by Housing H&S Compliance UK and updated that overall both audits were extremely positive on reflection of where the Association has improved in Compliance monitoring over the last year.</p> <p>The outcomes of the audits both classed the Association with “Adequate Assurance (with some improvement required).” This is extremely positive as no practical failings were found and all recommendations were noted mainly to introduce a written procedure or amend policies.</p> <p>The Gas safety and Lift Maintenance audit both had six non-critical recommendations, which have been formed into an action plan with realistic target deadlines.</p> <p>The HoPS updated that he would arrange a six-month review to be conducted by Housing H&S Compliance, to check progress on action plans.</p> <p>The HoPS explained that the tenant’s safety report will be revamped before being presented to the Board next time and a member asked if the procedure could be drawn up as a flowchart to make it more visual. The HoPS will look at creating a flowchart.</p> <p>A member asked how we know that the contractor is providing the receipt to the Tenant as it is imperative that we can confirm that this is happening. The HoPS explained the process involved.</p> <p>A member asked if the PDA receipt can be provided in different formats as it may be difficult to read, the HoPS confirmed that this can be provided in an alternative</p>	

	<p>format if requested.</p> <p>The CEO explained that historically none of this information had been input into SDM and as we had been looking at the possibility of moving to another software provider, we have not been inputting this information. Now that we have agreed internally to stick with SDM for the foreseeable future then work will continue in updating systems with relevant data.</p> <p>The CEO reiterated that the reports has been issued to the SHR and once feedback has been received from the Regulator he will provide the Chair with an update. This may result in an Notifiable event being submitted confirming our view that we are now compliant with the Regulatory Standards and requesting a review of our engagement status.</p>	
12.1	Members APPROVED the final versions of both audits as PROPOSED by Jim O'Neil and SECONDED by Ken Caldwell.	
13.	Tenant Safety Report	
	<p>Members were invited to consider a report by the Head of Property Services, the purpose of which was to provide members of the Board with an update of the Association's status regarding tenant safety.</p> <p>This report provides members with an update on the current position of the following key Tenant Safety categories:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asbestos Management • Legionella Management • Electrical Safety • Fire Safety • Gas Safety • Lift Safety • Dampness and Mould <p>The HoPS provided a summary update and confirmed that all outstanding tenant's safety policies have been updated.</p> <p>The HoPS explained that there remains one outstanding Electrical Safety test, however, we can demonstrate that numerous contact attempts have been made.</p> <p>The HoPS updated that the Audit on the Electrical and LD2 was due to start this week this will now be a progress report, which will recommend a different approach as the procedures are new. This progress report will be suitable to be provided to the regulator.</p>	
13.1	Members NOTED the information contained within the tenant safety report.	
14.	Annual Return – Care Inspectorate	
	The HoHS reminded members that as the Association is registered with the Care Inspectorate for our sheltered housing services, they have asked for information from new Board Members and require their signatures. This is part of the Care Inspectorates requirements for their annual return, the deadline for this information is 17 th March. The HoHS is asking members to complete this information and thanked those who have already provided this information.	

	<p>A member asked if the copy was the final submission and commented that there is a lot of information which is not relevant to the Association. He also asked if we are still required to produce an infection control Policy. The HoHS explained that there is a lot of information which is not relevant to the Association as we don't provide personal care etc.</p> <p>This return is not normally brought to the Board, however, the consultant carrying out the review of the Sheltered Housing Service suggested that this be presented to the Board for best practice purposes.</p>	
14.1	Members NOTED the information contained within the Annual Return to the Care Inspectorate.	
MATTERS FOR OVERSIGHT/MONITORING		
15.	C&R Contract Update (Verbal)	
	<p>Members were invited to consider the update provided by the HoCS. All three C&R contracts have been signed and budgets have been set. ERC have advised that they are hoping to increase their budget this financial year and will notify C&R when the budget has been agreed.</p> <p>The new Project Officer has taken up his post on Monday of this week.</p>	
15.1	Members NOTED the update provided.	
MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION		
16.	CEO Report	
	<p>Members were invited to consider a report by the CEO, the purpose of which was to advise the Board on a range of relevant issues currently being considered and to seek approval for matters as noted throughout the report where required.</p> <p>The report included updates on the following issues: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulatory/legislative sector updates • Development • Customer service review • Flair updates • Staffing matters <p>The CEO highlighted that the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA) has launched a new Governing Body Members' (GBM) Forum. This is a free event and is taking place on 16th April 2024 at Thenu Housing Association's office in Glasgow. This facilitated networking session will offer an opportunity for members of the forum to meet with other board and committee members from across the country. If any members are interested in attending, they should contact the CSA to book a place.</p> <p>Training on the Board Portal will be provided to members at the next Board Meeting.</p>	

16.1	Members NOTED the contents of the report.	
17.	Website Demonstration/Feedback (verbal)	
	<p>The CEO explained that the link to the new website was issued to members, and some have provided feedback. The CEO is confident that the website will go live next week, meantime, if members have any other comments these should be passed to him as soon as possible.</p> <p>The CEO commended the ITC Manager and members of the Website working group for their hard work in updating the new website.</p> <p>A member observed that the tab and drop-down colours are very similar and may cause issues with people who are visually challenged. The CEO stated that these colours can be changed if deemed necessary.</p>	
ADMINISTRATION		
18	Share/Board Membership Applications and Use of Seal	
	The CEO updated that this will be a standard item on the agenda and confirmed that there were no share memberships received since the last meeting and the Associations Seal had not been used.	
19.	AOCB	
	There was no other competent business for consideration.	
20.	Issues which the Chair has agreed as urgent outwith Meeting Cycle	
	There were no other urgent issues for consideration.	
21.	Meeting concluded – 19.05. Date of next meeting – 17th April 2024	



Signed: _____ (Chair)