

BOARD MINUTES



Meeting Date: 03 June 2021
Time: 5pm
Venue: Virtual meeting

Board Members in Attendance

Martin Joyce
Adam Turner
Jeremy Hewer
Steven Prevost
Neil Tulloch
Victoria Bluck (for items 6629 to 6642)
Craig Morton
Ann Wilson

Apologies

Anne Gault
Andrew Saunders
Bryony Stocker
Chris Boyle

Staff in Attendance

John Davidson	Chief Executive
Angela Coutts	Director of Corporate Services
Craig Porter	Director of Finance and ICT
Sandy Young	Director of Housing Management
Iona Taylor	Director of Asset Management
Tammy Allan	Business Improvement Officer (minutes)

Others in Attendance

Please note that these minutes have been edited to remove any commercially sensitive or confidential discussions.

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STANDING ITEMS

6629	<p>Welcome</p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Iona Taylor, Director of Asset Management, to the Board.</p>
6630	<p>Apologies</p> <p>A record was made of apologies from non-attendees.</p>
6631	<p>Use of Seal</p> <p>None.</p>
6632	<p>AOCB Approval</p> <p>None.</p>
6633	<p>Declaration of Interest on any Agenda Items</p> <p>None.</p>
6634	<p>Membership Applications</p> <p>None.</p>
6635	<p>Matters Arising/Update/Information Papers for Discussion</p> <p>None.</p>
6636	<p>Minutes from Previous Meeting</p> <p>The Board approved the Minutes from the previous meeting.</p>
6637	<p>Board Members – Items for Future Meetings</p> <p>MJ informed IT there had been previous discussions regarding the Board’s understanding of the stock condition survey and requested she present the data to the Board once she has settled into her post.</p>
6638	<p>Board Training – Verbal</p> <p>JH attended an SFHA webinar on Free Spaces to Stay which focused on tackling homelessness. AHA and the Housing First for Youth project were mentioned in the webinar.</p>
6639	<p>Chief Executive’s Report</p> <p>JD presented his report to Board and advised that, following a conversation with all staff regarding their preferred longer-term working arrangements, it was established that the vast majority have indicated a preference for a hybrid approach to office/remote working. JD also confirmed that the office has re-opened on an appointment basis for tenants. Before the office re-opens fully, a consultation will be carried out with tenants to ensure that any proposed changes to opening hours will complement both tenants and staff needs/requirements.</p> <p>NT enquired whether moving to a hybrid model would result in excess office space not being used. He also asked if staff handbooks and contracts would need to be updated. JD advised that the changes would provide an opportunity to look at using only one floor for staff whilst getting better use of the other floor by working collaboratively with partners. AC also confirmed that once final working arrangements have been made, contract amendments may be required along with necessary changes to policies.</p>

JH noted it will be vital for staff who will be working remotely to have access to real time systems. Therefore, upgrades to QL should be looked at as a priority.

SP asked what additional procedures will be put in place regarding office cleaning. JD confirmed that additional processes were implemented last year to ensure all office space is cleaned regularly.

SP also asked if Shona Robison would be invited along to the office to discuss the projects in place. AC confirmed that SR's team had already made contact with the Association to discuss the community benefits and AHA was working on a video response.

AW noted the importance of having face-to-face interaction with peers and feels that serious consideration should still be given to having physical office space for staff.

NT enquired as to whether there were any plans in place regarding Board meetings returning to the office. MJ noted that as the working from home order will remain in place until at least the end of July, nothing can change until that is lifted. However, AC advised that unless guidelines regarding AGMs are changed, this year's AGM would need to be a physical meeting and the Association would need to consider the logistics around this. An SGM would need to be held in order to adopt the new Model Rules which would allow future AGM's to be held virtually, normally SGMs are held immediately prior to the AGM, but alternative approaches would be considered.

AT noted that it will be interesting to see Linda Ewart's feedback report following the recent round of appraisals and see what her thoughts are around virtual Board meetings.

The Board **noted** the content of the Chief Executive's report.

CONSENT AGENDA

6640 **Approval of Consent Agenda**

CP informed the Board that formal approval was required to change the frequency of when the management accounts are brought to Board from monthly to quarterly. AW noted that any exceptional circumstances that arise outwith the schedule should be brought to the Board's attention.

SP also noted that SMT should ensure that all Board members have a full understanding of the Management Accounts.

JH asked that as Almond Enterprises is not Living Wage accredited, should this be included within their business plan. AC advised that should AEL wish to become Living Wage accredited this would have a direct impact on tenants as their service charges would increase. CP also advised that within the budget, AEL are paying the National Living Wage, however, they may find it difficult to commit to the Real Living Wage which is required for accreditation.

The Board was happy for the Management Accounts to be reported on a quarterly basis.

It was noted that there is no reference as to how equality and diversity will be monitored within the Allocations Policy. SY confirmed that within the Allocations Policy there is reference to the Equality & Diversity policy. It was confirmed that this would suffice.

The Board **agreed** to the recommendations within the consent agenda.

REPORTS FOR DISCUSSION

Housing Management

6641	<p>Allocations Sub Committee</p> <p>SY presented the report to Board and JH enquired what would happen with the additional points that were allocated to case 5083 as they had refused the housing offers that were made to them. SY confirmed that if the tenant does not accept the housing offer after receiving the additional points to support their case, the points would be removed.</p> <p>SY noted that CR was previously a member of the Allocations Sub-committee. However, as she has now stepped down from the Board, they were looking to see if anyone else would be interested in joining. SY advised that the majority of decision-making is largely done via email and AW confirmed that being part of this sub-committee is not a huge strain on your time.</p> <p>NT volunteered to join the Allocations Sub-committee.</p> <p>The Board noted the contents of this report.</p>
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6642	<p>Housing First for Youth Evaluation</p> <p>SY reminded the Board of previous discussions around the possibility of carrying out an evaluation of the Housing First for Youth Project. There will be a lot of information gathering and work required and AHA has approached Imogen Blood to carry out the evaluation.</p> <p>JH advised that there is a lot of similar work being carried out in other areas throughout the country and he enquired whether AHA had checked this before contacting Imogen Blood. SY confirmed he had and had made contact with the Scottish Housing Network to ensure there was no overlap of work being done.</p> <p>SP enquired if AHA plans on asking the beneficiaries and stakeholders for their views in the evaluation. SY confirmed that feedback had already been obtained from users and The Rock Trust. AHA will also liaise with West Lothian Council as they are users of this service.</p> <p>Information removed or edited due to information relating to personal/confidential items or being commercially sensitive.</p>
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Asset Management

6643	<p>Central Heating Contract: Tender Approval</p> <p>IT presented the report and informed the Board that the tender price was based on the presumed number of replacement heating systems and boiler replacements. The costs were originally over budget but were able to be reduced.</p> <p>IT also confirmed that in order to manage the contract, the contractor will be passed details of the properties involved in batches to ensure this does not go over budget.</p> <p>SP enquired whether future central heating papers should include the details of the risk around environmental impact. IT advised that by adhering to government guidelines and EESSH 2 requirements, AHA will be assessing the environmental impact.</p> <p>Information removed or edited due to information relating to personal/confidential Items or being commercially sensitive.</p>
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6644	<p>Render Contract: Tender Approval</p> <p>IT advised that the render contract has been set as a 3-year framework and the tender price for this contract has come in under budget.</p> <p>IT moved on to advise there has been concern raised regarding overall capacity as some contractors still have a backlog from last year. Therefore, she may return at a later date with a further paper requesting approval for MP Group to take on additional soffits and fascias.</p> <p>Information removed or edited due to information relating to personal/confidential Items or being commercially sensitive.</p>
Finance and ICT	
6645	<p>SHR Five Year Financial Return</p> <p>CP presented the report to Board and advised this is a standing paper that is looking for approval of the first five years of the 30-year plan. CP also noted that the detail included with the return is consistent with the plan which was recently approved by the Audit and Finance Sub-committee.</p> <p>The Board authorised the Director of Finance & ICT to submit the Five-Year Financial Plan to the Scottish Housing Regulator by the filing deadline of 30 June 2021.</p>
6646	<p>Accounting for Pensions – March 2021</p> <p>CP advised that this was now the third year that the Board had received a report on the accounting for pensions deficits. The Board was reminded that the calculation was specific to each RSL and there were assumptions the Board had to agree. These were: discount levels, life expectancy, earnings and RPI/CPI values.</p> <p>CP advised the Board had agreed last year to use the TPT central rates for life expectancy and discount levels and that a review of the earnings and RPI/CPI rates were undertaken, to ensure consistency with business planning assumptions and current market conditions. CP advised he had included with the appendices the proposed assumptions that were being sought for approval. This year proposals departed from those in previous years around the RPI and CPI levels. However, the TPT assumption rates were reflective of the current market impacts albeit higher than budgeted by AHA. CP highlighted that AHA was not proposing to adopt the earning rates suggested by TPT which were above RPI rates.</p> <p>AT advised the assumptions looked appropriate and he was happy with this approach. SP advised that the report from TPT was comprehensive and felt the executive summary was easily understood.</p> <p>The Board agreed the accounting for pension assumptions to use the cost and growth assumption of RPI of 3.27%, CPI of 2.87% and salary growth of RPI only.</p>
6647	<p>Treasury Update – Loan Portfolio return</p> <p>CP informed the Board that the Loan Portfolio return is due to be submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) on 30 June 2021. However, the SHR recently implemented a new website for the submission, and they have encountered some difficulties meaning that no one is able to submit their return.</p> <p>Once the error has been rectified within the SHR, CP will be able to arrange for the Loan Portfolio to be submitted.</p> <p>The Board approved the submission of the Loan Portfolio return by 30 June 2021 to the Scottish Housing Regulator.</p>

Corporate Services

6648	<p>Annual Assurance Statement working group</p> <p>AC informed the Board that when the Annual Assurance Statement was introduced in 2019, AHA received support from TIAA to ensure that the Association had sufficient processes and systems in place when submitting the Annual Assurance Statement.</p> <p>Going forward, in terms of best practice, the Association are looking to establish a short life working group to work remotely to review the evidence bank prior to the next submission.</p> <p>Both SP and MJ volunteered to be part of the short life working group.</p> <p>The Board approved the recommendation to form a short life working group to review the evidence for the Annual Assurance Statement.</p>
6649	<p>AOCB</p> <p>MJ informed the Board that feedback had been received throughout the recent round of appraisals regarding the number of times the Board meets throughout the year and the discussions that are being generated at each meeting. Therefore, it has been suggested that JD prepares a schedule of business meetings which would detail when particular matters need to be brought to Board. The aim would be to have approximately 6 business meetings instead of the current 10, which would include 2 strategy days.</p>
	<p>Date of Next Meeting: 01 July 2021</p>

Approved by:

Date: