

BOARD MINUTES



Meeting Date: 04 August 2022

Time: 6pm

Venue: Via MS Teams

Board Members in Attendance

Adam Turner
Martin Joyce
Neil Tulloch
Chris Boyle
Jeremy Hewer
Vicky Bluck
Craig Morton
Darren Lewis – Observer
Julie Riley – Observer
Tricia Hill - Observer

Apologies

Anne Gault

Staff in Attendance

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

Others in Attendance

Imogen Blood – for items 6790-6797
Linda Ewart – for items 6790-6798

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

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STANDING ITEMS

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| 6790 | <p>Welcome</p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the 3 potential new Board members who were attending the meeting as observers. Each of the new members introduced themselves and gave a brief overview of their background and experience.</p> |
| 6791 | <p>Apologies</p> <p>A record was made of apologies from non-attendees.</p> |
| 6792 | <p>Use of Seal</p> <p>JD advised that there had been one use of seal following the sale completion of a garden area at [REDACTED]</p> |
| 6793 | <p>AOCB Approval</p> <p>None.</p> |
| 6794 | <p>Declaration of Interest on any Agenda Items</p> <p>None.</p> |
| 6795 | <p>Minutes from Previous Meeting</p> <p>The Board approved the Minutes from the previous meeting without amendment.</p> |
| 6796 | <p>Matters Arising/Update/Information Papers for Discussion</p> <p>None</p> |

PRESENTATIONS

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| 6797 | <p>Housing First for Youth by Imogen Blood</p> <p>IB began her presentation by providing the Board with an update on the work that was carried out on behalf of Almond HA. IB also advised that she was delighted to work with AHA and informed the Board that a number of Almond staff members were involved in the review work. provided an update on work</p> <p>Upon completion of the review a review was produced detailing the findings of the Housing First 4 Youth (HF4Y) project. IB moved on to provide an overview of what Housing First is and informed the Board that the project provides housing for tenants and young people who have complex needs. She advised that HF4Y offers housing without tenants having to provide proof or evidence that they have held down a tenancy before.</p> <p>IB advised that the project was run in partnership with Rock Trust and has been run in West Lothian. It focuses on young care leavers and broadens out to young people who have gone through the care system. Throughout the project 7 out of 10 applicants had been supported into AHA tenancies.</p> <p>Initially the project was a 3-year pilot and IB advised that she was brought in to evaluate the pilot. Her evaluation was initially published but SY asked IB and her team to look at it from a Housing Associations perspective. Staff and Board members were interviewed and in the secondary review a lot of data was reviewed, surveys were completed and group discussions took place.</p> |
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| | <p>IB moved on to advise that there was evidence of a ripple effect and the experience helped staff realise what additional work was required in order to deal with all tenants regardless of their background and where they have come from.</p> <p>IB advised that the review has raised awareness of the project.</p> <p>With regards to financial consideration, IB advised that AHA gifted a sum in order to support the running costs and also provided a dedicated Housing Officer for these tenants from the outset. When a cost comparison was carried out, it was clear that some properties had a higher repair costs but there was a low turnover when compared with other AHA tenancies.</p> <p>During the review, IB learned that AHA and HF4Y was a critical support provider, it took the passion of the staff involved to make it work, the project was a good fit for AHA stock size, mission and values. It gave AHA opportunities to influence others and that there was an appetite there for others to learn.</p> <p>IB concluded by asking the Board what they would like her to do with the report.</p> <p>AT thanked IB for her presentation and noted that reading the report filled the gaps that as a group the Board hoped that the report would AT noted that the costs are doable on a small scale but couldn't provide this service for everyone, however others could take on this type of project and it could make a difference to a wider group. AT also wished to pass on his thanks to the individuals who made this work and advised that the dedication that the gave was extremely beneficial.</p> <p>JH noted that the report highlights the benefits of early intervention and advised that there are studies around that show that if people are given a decent start, the longer-term costs are reduced. He also advised that the report should be published everywhere possible, it's not just the right thing to do but sensible from a financial perspective.</p> <p>Regarding how to publicise the report, VB recommended inviting ministers along to hear about it.</p> <p>SY advised that SMT had a discussion regarding where the report could be taken, and their thoughts mirrored a lot of what Board were suggesting. He also advised that if the report is approved by Board, HF4Y would like to publish the report aswell. If report gets approved by board the housing first for youth would like to publish.</p> <p>SY also advised that AHA have been invited to Hungary to present details of the work involved. He informed the Board that the Scottish Minister at the time, Kevin Stewart, visited AHA to hear about the work and the local elected member, Angela Constance heard about it and took it to the Scottish Parliament to discuss.</p> <p>All of the ideas are doable, however SY advised that we are not in a capacity to widen ourselves and it is important not to lose momentum and could come back to Board at a later date to advise what AHA are doing with the recommendations.</p> <p>On behalf of the Board, AT thanked IB and her team for their work.</p> |
| 6798 | <p>Linda Ewart – Board Appraisal Feedback</p> <p>LE began her presentation by thanking the Board for the opportunity to carry out this year's annual appraisals.</p> <p>LE moved on to advise that the purpose of the report is to summarise the results of the appraisals.</p> <p>LE advised that reviewing the contribution that individual Board members give is both important and a regulatory requirement. LE also advised that it was important this year to</p> |

conduct face to face, albeit virtual, appraisals and both AT and LE agreed that the process was helpful in exchanging ideas.

At the time of the appraisal process, there were 9 Board members. There is a L&D plan and succession planning prepared which ensures that AHA are well placed.

AHA has good governance in place which ensures compliance.

LE advised that the priorities for AHA are looking both backwards and forwards and agreed that the priorities in 2021/22 have been progressed. Developing the role of the Board is important. There are a lot of new Board members which should strengthen and establish the Board.

LE advised that there have been changes to both the Board and SMT composition and everyone agreed that AHA should be industry leaders. AHA now need to look at what will distinct them from others and also makes AHA valued.

Priorities have emerged for 2022/23 and there is a huge appetite to strengthen the strategies focus of AHA. There is also a commitment to improve tenant engagement and access tenant intelligence.

LE advised that the strategic focus over the course of the year is the work done on the development of the leadership role. The Strategy days are positive and important. It is also important to build relationships during in person meetings.

There is scope within the Board to have a leadership role and be less dependent on staff bringing them ideas.

There is recognition to plan ahead and the Board requires access to well informed sector knowledge as there has been a loss of knowledge over recent times, however the recent round of recruitment is very welcomed.

The theme over the recent year is that there is a huge concern around how informed the Board is regarding what is important to tenants. The regret of Covid and virtual working impact the only tenant Board member that AHA has. There is a priority to strengthen tenant engagement and tenant intelligence and development will be made on that side of things within the organisational function within AHA. Engagement should be maximised between tenants/focus group and the Board, this will bring the Board up to date around what tenants are saying about them.

The conduct of business has been improving and no requests have been made regarding improvements required to papers. The reports are both balanced and evidence based. The frequency of the meetings has been reduced and it was agreed that the frequency could be more balanced as there aren't enough with there being room for possibly one extra meeting per year. However, to counter the concerns regarding the frequency of the meetings, there is also the possibility of introducing interim reporting. There is also an appetite for minutes to be made available slightly earlier.

Regarding the Board composition, the diversity of the AHA Board is a huge strength and this needs to be maintained and actively kept under review. There was a seamless office bearer transition and the current Chair is expected to serve for 3 years. LE reiterated that it is important to carry out an induction with new Board members and have structured arrangements in place.

There is a view that the Board could be better at pursuing training. They realise that they should be attending external and national events but not just the ones that are highlighted by AHA.

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| | <p>AT thanked LE for the overview of her report and advised that he has already had a discussion with JD regarding picking up some of the points that have been made. He advised that some changes can be made easily and during the Strategy day in September Board can delve into some of the issues that have been highlighted. AT also thanked the Board members for participating in the appraisal process.</p> |
| 6799 | <p>Board Members – Items for Future Meetings</p> <p>AT advised that the points that were raised during the appraisal process will be picked up at the Strategy Day.</p> <p>VB advised that she has had a discussion with JD regarding possible changes that could be made to the Association’s risk map. She noted that it may also be worthwhile having a Board session on risk as well.</p> |
| 6800 | <p>Board Training – Verbal</p> <p>CB advised that he had attended various training sessions recently, all of which were extremely beneficial. These sessions were: GDPR, manual handling, corporate criminal offenses, recruitment, NEC 4 – contract administration, valuing CE’s, adding and omitting, loss and expense, net zero public sector building standard.</p> |
| 6801 | <p>Chief Executive’s Report</p> <p>JD presented the report and informed the Board that he had recently had a successful meeting with West Lothian Council discussing potential partnership working.</p> <p>JD also noted that the Ukraine position was disappointing. He informed the Board that there had been a miscommunication and lack of understanding on how the service would be taken forward. He advised that AHA have made it clear that we would like to take it forward, however, there have been some blockages that have prevented this from happening.</p> <p>The Board noted the content of the Chief Executive’s report.</p> |
| 6802 | <p>AGM Statement of Readiness</p> <p>JD presented the AGM statement of readiness and informed the Board that the AGM was due to take place on Thursday 1st September.</p> |
| REPORTS FOR DECISION | |
| 6803 | <p>Reports to be approved following Audit & Finance Sub-committee – Risk Map</p> <p>CP presented the Q1 risk map review and informed the Board that VB has kindly offered to provide some risk training in the future.</p> <p>CP advised that the sub-committee agreed the changes with recognition that there would be a change in the future.</p> <p>The Board approved the status of the risk map as recommended by the Audit & Finance Sub-committee.</p> |
| 6804 | <p>Reports to be approved following Audit & Finance Sub-committee – Bad Debt Write-Off</p> <p>CP informed the Board that this quarter AHA are only requesting that a small amount be written off. He also advised that the Sub-committee recommended that the Financial Regulations are reviewed in order to allow delegated authority for small amounts to be written off with approval of Audit & Finance.</p> |

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| | <p>The Board agreed the proposed bad debt write-off/write-off of credit balances as recommended by the Audit & Finance Sub-committee.</p> |
| 6805 | <p>Reports to be approved following Audit & Finance Sub-committee – Risk Management Strategy</p> <p>CP presented the Risk Management Strategy and informed the Board that it was proposed that a small amendment be made, however this can be reviewed again after the training with VB takes place.</p> <p>The Board approved the proposed Risk Management Strategy as recommended by the Audit and Finance Sub-committee.</p> |
| 6806 | <p>Reports to be approved following Audit & Finance Sub-committee – Final Audit Findings Report Incl. Letter of Representation</p> <p>CP presented the report and noted that both the internal and external auditors have changed this year. Previously the same external auditor had carried out work on behalf of AHA for the last 15 years so this was a huge change working with a different team.</p> <p>CP moved on to advise that no weaknesses were identified, or adjustments were required.</p> <p>The Board approved the Audit Summary report including the draft Representation Letter and are satisfied with the points raised with the report and the representations being requested.</p> |
| 6807 | <p>Reports to be approved following Audit & Finance Sub-committee – Internal Financial Control Statement</p> <p>CP informed the Board that if the Internal Financial Control Statement is approved, it would be included within the final accounts.</p> <p>There were no queries or questions from the Board.</p> <p>The Board approved the Internal Financial Control Statement included within the Financial Statements as recommended by the Audit and Finance Sub-committee.</p> |
| 6808 | <p>Reports to be approved following Audit & Finance Sub-committee – Financial Statements to 31 March 2022</p> <p>CP informed the Board there is a slight change in the financial statements from last week when they were presented to the Sub-committee as they now included the resignation of SP from the Board.</p> <p>CP also informed the Board that the financial statements highlight the new external auditor and that they recommend AHA reduce the amount that we disclose. He advised that there was a discussion at the Sub-committee regarding how AHA disclose wider role activity which includes tenancy sustainment services, and he advised that this will be reviewed next year.</p> <p>The Board approved the Financial Statements for the year as recommended by the Audit and Finance Sub-committee. These financial statements will then be presented at the AGM in September.</p> |
| 6809 | <p>Laurel Grove – SUDS pond</p> <p>IT presented the report and asked the Board to approve the formal transfer of the SUDS pond to Scottish Water.</p> <p>There were no queries or questions from the Board.</p> |

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| | <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>CP informed the Board that AHA were the first organisation to implement version 4, however we will not be the first to use the new product and are currently awaiting feedback from the 3 other organisations who are using it.</p> <p>The Board agreed that the Association progress with the reimplementation of the Aareon QL CRM system, and then upgrade and further develop the CRM with the SAAS (Software as a service) solution Yuneo from Aareon.</p> |
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Corporate Services

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| 6814 | <p>Board Election Information</p> <p>JD informed the Board that AT, JH and CB were all due to stand down at the year’s AGM, however they were all looking to stand for re-election along with the 3 new Board members. JD advised that there are sufficient vacancies on the AHA Board for this to happen.</p> |
| 6815 | <p>Election of Office Bearers</p> <p>JD informed the Board that within the Standing Orders there is an error within the Board pack. He advised that the old version of the standing orders was included and that the current version was approved in November 2021. He also advised that the Standing Orders state that office bearers will be elected at the last meeting before the AGM and therefore they would be elected tonight. However, given that the Board the Chair and Vice Chair are due to stand down at the year’s AGM it is proposed that the election takes place immediately after the AGM.</p> <p>The Board noted that they were happy to elect office bearers immediately after the AGM on 1st September 2022.</p> |
| 6816 | <p>Election to Sub-committees and Working Groups</p> <p>JD presented the table which detailed the current make-up of sub-committees and working groups within AHA. He moved on to advise that if anyone was interested in participating in either of the groups, they should make contact with TA.</p> |

Asset Management

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| 6817 | <p>Katherine Street Update</p> <p>IT presented the report and informed the Board that the purpose behind it was to provide an update on the reinstatement works. She advised that she has met with the loss adjusters and agreed to remove the internal finishes in order to allow the building to dry out, this will also allow for more investigation work to be carried out. The tender for this work has been received and the work should hopefully commence next month.</p> <p>IT moved on to advise that her team are in the process of pulling together the planning permission and it is anticipated that the works should conclude in 2024.</p> |
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[REDACTED]

MJ noted that there is now a vacant block and he queried whether there was a possibility that during the refurbishment could we broaden the scope of the reinstatement work and use it as a pilot. IT advised that the initial discussions confirmed that we should meet the current standards. There is some leeway with regards to the space standards but it should be the fire and EESSH standards that we need to adhere to. She also advised that AHA are looking to increase [REDACTED] levels within the building and review what difference is the installation is going to make to the SAP ratings. IT also advised that AHA need to establish whether there will be any tenants who are in blocks that AHA do not factor that will be affected or where there are owners involved.

[REDACTED]

The Board **noted** the contents of this report and the appointment of Fire Compliance Management Services.

Housing Management

6818

Garages leased to community at No Charge

SY informed the Board that a handful of garages that were being provided rent free date back to the Livingston Development Corporation. He moved on to advise that we recently received 2 requests for garages from groups that AHA work with. One of which is Growing Together who are a group that the Community Engagement Officer has been working closely with and they have advised that they are looking for storage in order to allow them to expand.

SY also advised that anything that is provided rent free effectively comes from tenants rent he therefore created a scoring matrix and wrote out to the organisations who are currently in receipt of a rent-free garage and has asked them to justify why they should be in receipt of the garage. There were some organisations who did not score well and as a result they will be asked if they can reduce the number of garages that they are using.

The Board **agreed** that we lease rent free a garage to each of the following groups:

- Ash Grove Residents Group

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing Together Project <p>The Board also noted the return of the rent-free garage that was provided to Housing Options Scotland (HoS) to the rental pool and that we are reviewing the number of garages that have been made available rent free with the intention of reducing them given the current climate of increasing costs.</p> |
| CONSENT AGENDA | |
| 6819 | <p>Consent Agenda</p> <p>JD informed the Board that membership application forms have been received from DL, JR and TH. The Board approved all 3 applications. JD moved on to confirm that all the 3 would become co-optees and would stand for election at the AGM in September.</p> <p>AT referred to the KPI report and noted that the Right First Time figure had dropped this quarter. IT advised that the main reason behind this was due to the fact that Response had taken over the additional patch that was previously covered by Turners and they were having difficulty recruiting staff in order to cover the significant backlog of routine repairs. She moved on to advise that she is due to meet with the Directors at Response this month to establish how they plan on getting back on track.</p> <p>JH recommended that AHA also report on actual numbers within the KPI report as percentages don't always provide accurate reporting.</p> <p>It was noted that applicants are refusing tenancies and that this seems strange given that there is a huge demand for social housing. SY advised that this was an ambitious target and the audit [REDACTED] highlighted some changes that AHA had to do in terms of reporting. However, there are no trends that SY or his team are concerned about.</p> <p>Within the policy reviews, AT noted that AC's role needs to be reviewed. JD advised that at the time of writing the review, it was accurate but he acknowledged that this needs to be amended now.</p> <p>JD informed the Board that their business forms need to be completed and returned to TA asap.</p> <p>The Board agreed to the recommendations within the consent agenda.</p> |
| 6820 | <p>AOCB</p> <p>AT informed the Board that SP has advised that he would be standing down with immediate effect from the Board due to personal reasons. The Board thanked SP for his contributions during his time on the AHA Board.</p> |
| | <p>Date of Next Meeting: 03 November 2022</p> |

Approved by:

Date: