

**Minutes of the Hybrid Board Meeting
Held on Wednesday, 22 May 2024 at 6pm in person in
The McGinlay Suite in the Association's offices**

Present

Simon Gaunt, Chairperson (SG) (remote)
Michael Smith (MS)
Kimberley Barker (KB)
Fiona Koroma (FK)
Helen Gracie (HG)
Patricia Gallagher (PG)

In attendance

Nicola Logan, Chief Executive Officer (NL)
Cindy McNeill, Finance Director (CM)
Laura Strang, Corporate Services Manager (LS)
Kathleen Cochrane, Housing Services Manager (KC)
Catherine Sloey, Corporate Services Assistant (Minutes) (CS)

Observer

Andrew McCafferty (AMC) (remote)

Welcome

SG welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending. He also welcomed Andrew McCafferty, a potential new Board member, who had been invited to observe at today's meeting. He asked the group to introduce themselves.

1.0 Apologies and Declarations of Interest (including agenda item to which this refers)

Apologies:

Apologies were received from, Emma Brown, Donald Weir and Martha Hutcheson.

Declaration of Interests:

Item 5.3 - MS declared an interest in this item and would leave the room when this item was being discussed.

2.0 Health and Safety

2.1 Health & Safety Report

A short discussion took place on the damp and mould item within the report. NL advised that the Association was carrying out work to support tenants with any damp and mould issues. She mentioned that there would be an information stall at the Customer Conference and Technical staff would be available to answer any questions. In addition, the Association would be distributing free hygrometers.

Responding to a Board Member's question on outstanding cases, she advised that some cases were quite complicated to find the root cause of the problem. In these situations, the Association was working closely with contractors to try and resolve matters as quickly as possible.

The Board **noted** the Health & Safety report.

3.0 Minutes of Previous Board Meeting

3.1 Decisions taken between meetings - *Nothing to report.*

3.2 Board Meeting 27 March 2024

The previous Minutes were **approved** as an accurate record of the meeting.

3.3 Matters Arising/Actions/Decisions

The Decision and Action reports were **noted** by Board. The Action report was updated as follows –

Gold Service - NL confirmed that this item had progressed and stated that a report would be presented for Board approval at the August meeting.

In-house Board training - Tenant Participation and Human Rights training still to be arranged. CS to circulate potential dates and times and confirm final date with Board.

Board Advert - SG reported that there were two potential Board candidates. AMC, observer at today's meeting and David Mulhern who, unfortunately, was unable to make tonight's meeting. SG added they were both excellent candidates that would make welcome additions to the current Board.

The Board **agreed** that as the numbers were low, it would be beneficial to continue recruiting additional members. NL to progress the Board recruitment advert.

Surveys – NL advised that LS was working with cx-feedback on a redesign of the survey reports that would allow for additional reporting on compliments as well as complaints. It was **noted** that this report would be brought to the August meeting. NL was pleased to report that, overall, there had been an increase in positive feedback on the work of the new contactors and their staff.

Disturbance Payment – **See Confidential Minute**

4.0 Minutes of Sub-Committees and other Meetings

4.1 Housing, Technical and Health & Safety Sub-Committee (13.03.24)

See Confidential Minute

Following a question from a Board member regarding partner agencies invited to the Conference, KC confirmed that the Community Police had been invited.

The Minutes were **noted** by Board members.

5.0 Matters for Discussion

5.1 Chief Executive's Report

NL took her report as read and highlighted the following from her report -

Staffing – It was noted that JS, Housing Services Manager, was retiring on 30 June. (**See Confidential Minute**). To acknowledge her length of service, NL confirmed that the Association would arrange a retirement event in July.

On behalf of the Board, the Chair asked NL to pass on his thanks to JS for her service and contributions to the Association and the Board. He wished JS every success in the future.

Membership Applications – The Board **approved** the four Membership applications presented in NL's report.

Board Attendance – The average attendance at Board meetings last year was 65%, which was slightly lower from 71% in the previous year.

As hybrid meetings were becoming more frequent, SG asked NL to ensure that the correct technology was in place to allow meetings to run smoothly.

Customer Conference (5 June 2024) – To help gain feedback on tenant priorities, NL confirmed that Sharon Donohoe from TIS (Tenant Information Service) would give a short presentation on the tenant priorities survey. This would assist the Association with the Business Plan preparation and rent consultation. NL then provided further information on the various information stands planned and partner agencies invited. In addition, the event would be a good opportunity to update tenants on the rent consultation process.

NL added that there would be a stand for the Board and Service Improvement Group. All Board members were invited to attend the event.

Assurance – As detailed in NL's report, LS would join the August Board meeting to present an update on Assurance.

Board Governance Workshop – NL working with Linda Ewart to streamline the Board Agenda. She added that it was likely that Board appraisals would be held in July (waiting on dates from LE).

Board Resignation – The Board **noted** JR's resignation. The Board were informed that Johnson Ayorinde had resigned for personal reasons.

5.2 Management Accounts for the year to 31 March 2024

CM sought Board approval for the Management Accounts for the year to 31 March 2024. She highlighted the following to Board -

Covenants – all bank covenants had been comfortably met.

Variances - **See Confidential Minute**

A Board member queried why the miscellaneous capital expenditure was a lot higher than had been budgeted for.

NL confirmed over the last quarter several kitchens and bathrooms were put in while refurbishing the voids and these properties would, therefore, be removed from future kitchen and bathroom programmes.

Following a request from a Board member, it was **agreed** that the reactive repairs trends would be reviewed in each set of management accounts.

Surplus – concern raised by a Board member that it can, at times, be too high, particularly when there had been a rise in rent last year - was there any scope to reduce rents?

CM explained that healthy surpluses were required to pay for future investment programmes in the housing stock and a significant planned maintenance spend had been budgeted for the next 5 years.

Underspends – A Board member suggested ringfencing some of the monies saved in underspends for the purpose of spending on community regeneration.

NL agreed that there was scope for the Association to do more on community regeneration and tenant participation. Management Accounts to be reviewed at the mid-year point (October Board meeting).

The Board **agreed** that the CMT to present proposals, which would benefit tenants, to the next Board meeting.

The Board **approved** the Management Accounts for the year to 31 March 2024.

Reactive Repairs Report

A Board member commented that it was very encouraging to see an increase in quality satisfaction. As mentioned above, Board noted that the Association to review cyclical and planned maintenance and link with increase spend on reactive repairs.

The Board **noted** the Reactive Repairs report.

5.3 Development Report

MS declared an interest in this item and left the meeting.

NL confirmed that the report was for information only. As stated in the report, developments on hold until funding had been confirmed.

A Board member queried if the developments interfered with the organisation's financial planning. NL confirmed that that there was no knock-on effect as New Build had been included in scenario testing in the Business Plan and not in the approved financial projections themselves.

The Board **noted** the Development report.

5.4 Treasury Strategy

(MS re-joined the meeting)

CM presented the Treasury Strategy for 2024-25 and the changes to the Treasury Management Policy for approval. She reported that the Strategy summarised the Association's Treasury plans for the year ahead.

SG commented that it was good to see the Association in a healthy position.

Policy – CM explained that the only changes made to the TMP concerned updating the cash flow projections twice a year, which was currently being done in practice, instead of

quarterly.

SG mentioned that it was a very useful and informative paper for Board.

The Board **approved** the Treasury Strategy for 2024-25 and the changes to the Treasury Management Policy.

The Board **noted** the Risk Summary report.

5.5 Risk Management

The Board **noted** the Risk Management report.

5.6 Complaints Report – Q4 January – March 2024

NL thanked LS for producing the report. She added that, unfortunately, the results were not as good as previous years, which was mainly due to dissatisfaction with the close cleaning service. All complaints had been followed up, however, they were recorded later affecting the final figures.

A short discussion followed. Key points raised by Board members.

- Close cleaning - include an article in the Newsletter to provide tenants with a better understanding of the issues. NL agreed and advised that there would be further information available at the Customer Conference.
- Change the colour of the report (remove the red).
- Timescale for responses continued to be an issue, which had previously been raised last year. NL advised that this would be picked up with additional staff training.
- Overall, the number of complaints were fairly low and no major concerns had been raised.
- Standard of repairs had increased.
- Breaking down complaints by area – LS to introduce this detail in future reports.

The Board **noted** the Complaints report.

5.7 Business Plan Review

A Board member highlighted that following a discussion at last year's Board Strategy session regarding timescales, there were a few projects that had not been completed and asked if this could be reviewed for next year.

NL confirmed that she has addressed this issue in the Business Plan for 2024-2028, with work /projects given target dates.

The Board **noted** the Business Plan review.

6.0 Matters for Approval

6.1 Annual Return on the Charter 2023 - 2024

NL provided some background on the regulatory requirement to submit the return to the

Scottish Housing Regulator. She advised that the Scottish Housing Network had carried out a desktop review exercise, which produced a very useful report.

Referring to the ARC Comparison report, it did not include everything that the Association reported on, just the main categories. Many of the indicators had improved, particularly void turnaround times. However, the Association would continue to aim for to reduce the void re-let days. NL highlighted some key points in the return

Board comments as follows -

- Overall trends were in the right direction.
- Comparison report was considered a useful addition to the report.
- Waiting list – Board members raised concern regarding the high number of applicants on the list and asked the CMT to monitor this. This led to a wider discussion on the waiting list and although positive that people wished to join the Association, it was a significant increase to staff workload. It was also noted that this was a city-wide issue.

SG thanked all staff involved in collating the ARC return.

The Board **approved** the Annual Return on the Charter 2023 – 2024 (V.2)

6.2 Five-year Financial Plan

CM reported that the Five-year Financial Plan was a regulatory requirement. She added that the Board had approved the Plan previously in the business plan appendix and that year 0 was based on the management accounts figures to 31 March 2024 that were approved by the Board earlier in the meeting.

The Board **approved** the Five-Year Financial Projections for submission to the Regulator.

6.3 Loan Portfolio

CM highlighted that the information in the loan portfolio submission was outlined in the treasury summary approved by the Board at 5.4 above.

The Board **approved** the Loan Portfolio Return as at 31 March 2024.

6.4 Lettings Plan 2024 – 2025

KC spoke to her report and highlighted some key points - **See Confidential Minute**

SG thanked KC for her report.

The Board **approved** the Lettings Plan 2024/25. In addition, the Chair asked the CMT to consider a longer-term strategy for Arden.

6.5 Stock Report

The Board **approved** the Stock report.

7.0 Performance Reports (for information)

7.1 Governance Handbook

The Board agreed that they were comfortable with the changes to the handbook.

The Board **approved** the changes to the Governance Handbook.

8.0 Report back from Meetings / Conferences Attended

SFHA Governing Bodies Members Forum on 16 April 2024 – A member provided Board with an update on the Forum.

9.0 Any Other Competent Business

9.1 Board Applications (2)

- Andrew McCafferty – AMC was asked to leave the meeting, to allow the Board to discuss his application to become a Board member of the Association. After a brief discussion, the Board unanimously agreed to offer AMC a casual vacancy place on the Board, as per the Association's Rules. AMC would be asked to stand down at the AGM in September and stand for re-election to the Board.

AMC rejoined the meeting and thanked the Board for his accepting his application and would attend as many meetings in person as possible.

- David Mulhern (DM) – Provided some background on DM's application. The Board unanimously agreed to offer DM a casual vacancy place on the Board, as per the Association's Rules. DM would be asked to stand down at the AGM in September and stand for re-election to the Board.

The Board **agreed** to endorse both applications.

- ### 9.2 Agenda Format
- A Board member suggested listing all items for approval at the beginning of the meeting. SG commented that this would be raised in conjunction with discussions with Linda Ewart when agreeing a more streamlined Agenda. This would allow further time for Board discussion at a strategic level.

10.0 Date and Time of Next Meeting - 14 August 2024

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, 14 August 2024 at 6pm.