

Minute of the Meeting of the Board of Management of Langstane Housing Association Limited held on Monday 15 April 2019 at 680 King Street, Aberdeen, AB24 1SL

Present:
J Knowles, Chair
J Fraser
J Greener
K Hutchens
I Jamieson
J Marshall
S Stephenson

In Attendance:
H Gauld, Chief Executive
J Sutherland, Director of Housing and Social Justice
S West-Lewis, Interim Director of Finance
A Bruce, PA to the Chief Executive

Apologies:
C Lynch
M Martin
R Stewart
M Ballance

1. Apologies

The apologies noted above were intimated to the meeting.

2. Declaration(s) of Interest

K Hutchens noted an interest in Items 9, 11, and 13.

J Greener noted an interest in Items 11 and 13.

3. Draft Minute of Board of Management Meeting held on 25 March 2019

The Minute of the previous meeting was approved as a correct record subject to three minor typographical errors.

4. Matters Arising

4.1 3 –K Hutchens noted the reference to Board training being carried out via an on-line training tool and highlighted a personal preference for other options to be made available.

4.2 3 – Following discussions it was agreed there would be limited merit in discussing the findings of the report with the Association's auditors.

4.3 3 –The meeting noted the balanced score card will link to the 30-year projections and would be introduced some time after the end of June 2019.

4.4 7 – Statement of Outstanding Business - It was agreed the timing of the 30-year projections would be considered with a view to pulling this forward to May 2019.

4.5 10 – Final Budget 2019-20 - The Chief Executive confirmed that multi variant testing had been carried out. However, further testing would be carried out for the 30-year projections.

4.5 10 - Final Budget 2019-20 - The Interim Director of Finance informed the meeting the minimum limit for the capitalisation of fixed assets was not included in the model but would not significantly impact covenants.

4.6 14 – Funding Strategy - The Interim Director of Finance confirmed a report will follow detailing deposit fund accounts.

It was suggested the Association consider depositing the in three separate accounts, with varying degrees of access e.g. instant, 3-month and 6-month. The Treasury Management Policy will be checked to confirm whether or not this is possible.

4.7 17 – Recruitment of DLO Joiner - The advert had generated a good response.

4.8 22 – Complaints Policy Review Report - The Director of Housing and Social Justice confirmed the Policy complied with SPSO guidance and that care was taken over treating persistent complainants under the Unacceptable Actions Policy, especially where health and safety concerns were raised.

4.9 23 – Treasury Management Policy - The wording of the policy was noted in respect of access to funds and the meeting noted that if required, this could be amended. No decision taken to amend the policy at this stage.

4.10 24 – Equalities - It was noted that literacy issues are picked up when tenants sign for a property and information, with the tenant's permission, held on the housing management system. The Association provides support and assistance to individuals, as required, through the Social Justice Team.

The Chief Executive informed the meeting that both J Drummond and K McIntosh would like to join the Board.

In line with Association Rules, only one of the applicants can formally become a member, the other will be a co-optee until the annual general meeting.

Following brief discussion both applications were approved and agreement reached that J Drummond would fill the casual vacancy post and K McIntosh would be co-opted.

5. Draft Minute of Governance and Financial Management Recovery Committee Meeting held on 25 March 2019

The Board noted the Minute of the Governance and Financial Management Recovery Committee held on 25 March 2019.

It was noted the role of Company Secretary would now come under the remit of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services. It was further noted that the question mark under Item 3.2.2 should be replaced with "Treasury Management Policy".

6. Statement of Outstanding Business

The Board had before it the Statement of Outstanding Business. Having considered its terms, it agreed to remove Item 3 – Opening of Bob Tait Court and in respect of Item 7 – Membership of the Joint Audit Committee, it was agreed M Marshall would become a member of the Committee and J Drummond approached in this respect.

Amy Young, Grant Smith Law Practice, joined the meeting.

7. Financial Report to 31 March 2019

Speaking to the report, the Interim Director of Finance informed the meeting the report was based on year-end work to date. Further work is required as there are still outstanding items. As at 31 March 2019, the Association is fully covenant compliant.

The Board was assured an action plan is in place to address the situation regarding empty property and an improvement should be seen in 2019-20. The significant variance in bad debt levels was discussed. This was mainly due to tenant recharges at the end of tenancy. The variance in office costs was due in the main to unexpected legal fees.

Interest cover covenant compliance was discussed and confirmation provided that outstanding issues were unlikely to have a significant implication on the rates seen.

It was confirmed Bank of Scotland had rolled three draw downs into one alongside the draw down in March, giving the Association more flexibility to draw down smaller amounts in the future.

The Board noted the report and further noted it would be forwarded to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

8. Write-Off Report

The Board considered the Write-Off report.

Lengthy discussion ensued with the consensus being early intervention was the key to reducing the former tenant debt. In this connection, The Director of Housing and Social Justice informed the meeting a short term Officers Working Group will be established to review the arrears process and a report brought back to the Board in July / August 2019.

It was highlighted the Financial Regulations presented separately, stated write-offs are to be presented quarterly when, in fact, they are now being presented on a monthly basis. It was agreed monthly presentations would continue and the Financial Regulations would be updated accordingly.

The Board agreed to write-off former tenant debt contained within the report.

Post meeting note: M Martin who was unable to attend the meeting suggested this is an area for focussed attention where small actions / improvements might cumulatively have a significant impact.

9. Chief Executive's Update Report

The Chief Executive agreed to ascertain how much of the Association's stock could be adapted for wheelchair access.

The Board approved the suggested minor wording changes to the Information Security Policy.

Post meeting note: M Martin suggested an overarching target of ensuring revenue expenditure does not exceed revenue income. This will be added to the targets for improved performance sheet.

10. Governance and Financial Management Recovery Committee Update Report

The Board considered and noted the above report.

Agreement was reached to provide the Regulator with the Recovery Action Plan. It was agreed a formal process for the consideration of the Chief Executive's remuneration would be agreed, and that discussions be held independent of any officers.

11. Allocations Policy Report

Speaking to the report, the Director of Housing and Social Justice informed the meeting policy had been fully consulted upon. Following the consultation minor changes were suggested a summary of which were detailed.

Following lengthy discussion, it was noted there was no legal requirement to provide an equality assessment but suggested this could be further improved to include information provided in different formats e.g. video / YouTube. This was the first assessment undertaken and the Director agreed to take the comments on board for future assessments.

It was highlighted that anti social behaviour was of significant concern to tenants and the Director confirmed this will form targeted actions by staff.

The Board noted the consultation results, the amendments made following the consultation, and approved the Allocations Policy V3.

12. Financial Regulations Report

The Board approved the Financial Regulations subject to the suggested changes to Item 4.3, 7.5, 13.8 and 21. In respect of the suggested change to Item 8.3, the Interim Director of Finance agreed check the terms of the Procurement Policy.

13. Tenant Satisfaction Survey Report

The Director of Housing and Social Justice informed the meeting, a staff session will be held on Wednesday 17 April to review the survey results and to formulate an action plan to address the issues raised e.g. anti social behaviour. A report would be brought back to the Board on 20 May 2019.

The Board noted the Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2019 results and await the action plan being brought back to the Board on 20 May 2019 which may include annual surveys.

14. Tender Register

It was agreed that clarity on future reports would be provided as to the length of the tender period and estimated and actual costs would cover the same period.

The report was noted.

15. Quarter 4, 2018-19 Signings

The Board noted the signings for Quarter 4.

16. Membership of Audit Committee

Item 4.10 refers

17. The Gathering

K Hutchens provided the meeting with a brief verbal report on the Gathering and the seminars attended. A number of information leaflets were passed to the Director of Housing and Social Justice and the Chief Executive for information.

18. AOCB

There were no items raised under this heading.

19. Board Away Day

A poll on suitable dates / times will be held.

20. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 20 May 2019 at 7.00pm.

J Greener submitted her apologies.