

**Minute of Langstane Housing Association's hybrid Board of Management Meeting  
held at 680 King Street, Aberdeen, AB24 1SL on Thursday, 6 February 2025 at  
12.30pm**

<b>Meeting start time</b>	12.30pm	<b>Meeting end time</b>	
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<b>Present</b>	<b>In Person:</b>	<b>Remote Attendance</b>
	M Martin (Chairperson)	K Butler
	J Knowles	J Fraser
	A Stevenson	J Gillies
		I Jamieson

<b>In Attendance</b>	<b>In Person:</b>	<b>Remote Attendance</b>
	M Macarthur, director of finance and corporate services	M Ballance, director of property
	J Sutherland, director of housing	
	H Lawson, team leader executive office and communications (minutes)	

<b>Apologies</b>	J Drummond
	T Dinozzi
	H Gauld, chief executive

*K Adams from RSM was present for the start of the meeting.*

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Board discussions (in-camera)**

#### **1.2 Chief executive statement**

In the chief executive's absence, the director of housing confirmed there was nothing on the meeting's agenda that knowingly contravenes the rules, regulations and regulatory requirements of the Association.

#### **1.3 Apologies / absences**

The apologies noted above were intimated to the board.

#### **1.4 Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **2.6 External audit plan**

K Adams from RSM presented the previously circulated report and invited questions from the floor.

K Butler inquired why pre-year-end work was being conducted in May rather than prior to year-end. K Adams clarified this referred to pre-audit work, which

can occur before or after year-end, intended as planning for the main audit. K Adams expressed willingness to amend the wording as necessary for clarity.

The chairperson noted the board could take comfort in the fact that no concerns had been raised with RSM, indicating that the process is anticipated to be straightforward.

*Decision: The board of management approved the external audit as presented, including the fees for 2025.*

*K Adams from RSM left the meeting.*

1.5 Draft minute – 12 December 2024

*Decision: The minute of the previous meeting was approved as an accurate record.*

1.6 Matters arising

1.6.1 - 2.2.1 Business continuity plan

The board expressed their desire to remain informed about updates to the business continuity plan and requested an update in due course. An update on the timelines for developing an employee succession plan is anticipated at the next meeting of the people committee.

1.6.2 - 2.7 Review of underperforming schemes

The director of property confirmed the enhanced lighting and security measures for properties within the underperforming schemes have been allocated in next year's budget. The works are scheduled to start from April 2025 onwards.

1.6.3 - 2.8 Efficiencies report

The director of housing has confirmed the introduction of Blazor is still pending, with an anticipated implementation date of March 2025.

An update on the rollout will be provided at the board of management meeting in April 2025.

1.6.4 - 5.2 Care inspectorate

The Care Inspectorate are yet to commence an inspection of the Langstane Housing Support Service. The team have completed all relevant paperwork in advance of a potential inspection.

## 2. Discussion / decision making

### 2.1 Chief executive update report

The Board has been informed that Kirsty Porter is no longer the regulation manager at the Scottish Housing Regulator, following a review of the organisation's internal structure. The leadership team awaits formal notification regarding the appointment of a new regulation manager.

Concerning the changes to the annual return on the charter, the director of housing confirmed to the board that collecting data on damp and mould will be onerous. However, the team is scheduled to meet next week to review the proposed changes and discuss ways to better collect the relevant information to ensure preparedness by 1 April 2025.

*Decision: Decisions made by people committee who met on 20 January 2025 were ratified by the board of management.*

### 2.2 Budget 2025-26 + Proposed rent increase consultation results

Discussions were held regarding the proposed rent increase consultation results, with the director of housing confirming that the response from tenants had been unsatisfactory. A working group will be established to address the communication issues, and a short report on tenant engagement will be presented to the performance committee in March.

The board were assured that all respondents indicating financial hardship have been prioritised and referred to the relevant teams. Complaints raised, or repair requests, are currently being logged with completion anticipated within a few days.

Concerns regarding anti-social behaviour have been noted, particularly as reflected in the tenant satisfaction survey. A report on this will be presented to the performance committee in March 2025. A small group of employees are due to form a working group to collaboratively address the issues that have arisen, analysing behaviours, and determining appropriate interventions. Notably, incidents of anti-social behaviour have decreased compared to the same period last year.

Expectations regarding new kitchens and bathrooms remain high. The director of property has begun addressing some of the feedback received, acknowledging that certain repairs need to be followed up with the team to understand delays. The director noted managing expectations is crucial, and the property team are actively working through repair issues and progressing them as necessary.

A Stevenson requested a report to determine the legitimacy of complaints, emphasising the need to identify any areas for improvement, to which the chair concurred, suggesting a one-page summary to help understand if there are recurring issues. The chair expressed concern primarily regarding straightforward complaints and stressed the importance of ensuring that day-to-day repairs are being managed effectively.

In response to the chair the director confirmed the issue with roofers was a concern across the North-East, not only specific to Aberdeen.

I Jamieson highlighted the communications element as the primary opportunity for tenants to express their concerns. He noted a number of responses in favour of the proposed rent increase, though these were countered by requests for minor repairs. The director of housing mentioned the team is actively reaching out to tenants and connecting them with the welfare officer who may require assistance due to their personal circumstances. The team is systematically addressing each comment, utilising a workflow management system to ensure that issues are directed to the relevant officer, who will then contact the tenant to resolve the matter.

In response to concerns regarding undesirable behaviour at specific properties, I Jamieson noted some tenants expressed in their comments a desire to transfer to a different property but lack sufficient points to do so. The director of housing clarified that the Association's preferred approach is to address issues of anti-social behaviour directly, ensuring that future tenants are not affected by the same problems. Reported issues will be dealt with decisively. Furthermore, if a tenant applies for a transfer under the allocation policy, points will be awarded based on housing needs, including considerations for disabilities. Each case will be assessed individually however, the priority remains to resolve issues within the current area rather than relocating individuals.

In relation to parking spaces, I Jamieson inquired whether any actions could be taken to address tenants' concerns regarding the utilisation of spaces by non-tenants. The director of housing explained that a parking policy is in place, which includes the provision of stickers for tenants to display on their vehicles. Should any cars be found in private car parks without permission, they are subject to removal. The director noted that, as not all parking areas are gated, the team occasionally surveys tenants to gauge their interest in installing barriers. However, this would incur a service charge that many residents are reluctant to pay.

In response to J Fraser, the director of housing confirmed the tenant participation officer is addressing the list of comments received from tenants, with all queries answered except for those that are anonymised.

J Fraser raised concerns regarding the current issues with roofing services across the area and suggested employing roofers as part of the Direct Labour Organisation (DLO). The director of property mentioned the challenges in sourcing roofers and scaffolding, although the option of purchasing scaffolding was considered, the associated risks were deemed to outweigh the benefits, especially given the limited capacity of the small DLO. Instead, a partnership with a drone company for surveys has proven effective, yielding positive reports.

J Gillies emphasised the importance of communicating the outcomes of the consultation process to tenants to demonstrate that their responses are

making a difference. The director of housing agreed, noting that while the association's website was updated with relevant content following last year's consultation, this year's update will be more comprehensive, providing greater detail.

In response to the chair, the director confirmed housing and property teams contact tenants through a range of options, typically following the tenant's indicated preference as the first course of action. Officers are proactive in their approach, if contact is not established through one method, they will attempt the next.

In response to the chair, the director of property confirmed there is potential for a collaboration with other registered social landlords (RSLs) regarding roofing services. Discussions have taken place with several RSLs facing similar challenges. A common issue observed is that roofers are often reluctant to complete housing service forms, citing them as overly burdensome. Efforts are being made to review current paperwork and collaborate with associations to streamline processes.

The director noted the actual year-end figures will need to be assessed, particularly due to depreciation and changes anticipated in the Housing Association Grant (HAG) during the last quarter. However, these adjustments are not expected to be significant.

The chair noted the objective is to invest in properties, and it would be advantageous for board members to collaborate with directors and relevant employees to conduct a thorough review of the presented budget. A deeper understanding of the budgetary framework would be reassuring for board members and provide insight into the dilemmas being faced. It is important to recognise how to make the budget work for optimum impact. Scrutinising the financial details will contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the situation.

*Action: The chair will send an email to invite members to the proposed initiative and will consult with the director of finance regarding a closer examination of the budget.*

*Decision: The board approved the budget for the next financial year.*

#### 2.2.1 Appendix 1 – Rent consultation information

*Decision: The board noted appendix 1 - rent consultation information.*

#### 2.3 Chair succession planning

#### 2.4 Corporate document review

##### 2.4.1 Risk management policy

*Decision: The board approved the policy as presented.*

##### 2.4.2 Treasury management policy

*Decision: The board approved the policy as presented.*

#### 2.4.3 Financial regulations

*Decision: The board approved the financial regulations as presented.*

#### 2.4.4 Development strategy

Ahead of the development programme's restart, a review of the strategy was necessary, focusing on identifying suitable housing and ensuring effective governance, given the high-risk nature of the endeavour. This is particularly relevant to section 3, which outlines the development objectives.

J Fraser raised concerns regarding the Section 75 agreement with the contractor, highlighting the challenges of imposing specifications and the risk of the project devolving into a design-and-build scenario. He suggested the possibility of a hybrid approach that would allow for ongoing engagement with the contractor before finalising any variations or changes to the agreement. The director of property noted that off-the-shelf purchases represent a lower-risk property transaction, provided that the funding requirements are met and parameters can be established.

For clarity the director confirmed CIPP stands for Continuous Improvement Programme for Procurement (CIPP), which is a component of the process required to secure a Scottish Government grant for development. This programme necessitates an assessment every three years.

The chair expressed a desire to accelerate timelines, observing that substantial progress may not be achieved until next year due to recruitment gaps. He proposed that preliminary work could start earlier, including establishing relationships with developers and identifying their development pipelines. The chair suggested initiating some of the preliminary work this year, to align with the 2025-26 timeline, rather than delaying progress by an additional year. The director of property acknowledged the proposal, while highlighting the importance of high-priority tasks related to the repairs service and consideration of expanding the Direct Labour Organisation (DLO). The director also noted that securing funding for development is a prerequisite for on-site progress and stressed the need to focus on initiatives with the greatest impact on the Association, particularly repairs.

Acknowledging the need for clarity on funding timelines, it was noted that the director of property and director of finance and corporate services should collaboratively incorporate this into the business plan to assess its implications. It was agreed to revisit this discussion in three months, contingent on successfully recruiting a new manager, at which point more realistic timelines can be established.

J Fraser highlighted that two years ago, the board had agreed to reinvestigate development, and the current discussions echo the initial phase of the development strategy. He expressed concern that the same points are being reiterated without tangible progress. The director of property emphasised the importance of engaging with developers but stated that no commitments can be made until funding is secured. Communication with local authorities is

ongoing, but affirming intentions to developers is challenging without the necessary financial backing. J Fraser added the board would be reassured by knowledge of initial discussions taking place in the background, as this aligns with their original approval of the strategy.

*Decision: The board approved the development strategy as presented.*

### **3. Routine monitoring reports**

#### **3.1 Statement of outstanding business**

*Decision: The board noted the statement of outstanding business.*

#### **3.2 Health and safety update**

##### **3.2.1 Employee health and safety group**

##### **3.2.2 Landlord health and safety group**

J Fraser mentioned the necessity for targeted training for board members. The chief executive is sourcing costings for appropriate board level health and safety training and will revert back with an update at the next board meeting in April 2025. K Butler expressed a desire to have health and safety as a standing agenda item, highlighting the value of input from the group. The board agreed health and safety concerns should come early on in the meeting agenda.

J Knowles cautioned against the board becoming too involved in operational aspects of the business, emphasising the importance of strategic participation.

#### **3.3 Financial report to 31 December 2024**

*Decision: The board noted the financial report to 31 December 2024.*

#### **3.4 Financial report to 30 November**

*Decision: The board noted the financial report to 30 November 2024.*

#### **3.5 Quarter 3 reports**

*Decision: The following items were noted by the board of management:*

*3.5.1 Quarter 3, strategic risk register*

*3.5.2 Signings report*

*3.5.3 Communication and marketing report*

### **4. Draft minutes of committees**

#### **4.1 Draft Minute – People committee – 20 January 2025**

*Decision: The board noted the people committee meeting minute.*

### **5. AOCB**

There were no items discussed.

**6. Date of next meeting**

Thursday, 17 April 2025