



MARYHILL HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 23rd August 2021 AT 6.30 PM VIRTUAL MEETING VIA TEAMS VIDEO CALL

Board Members	Attended	Apologies
Roger Popplewell (RP)	✓	
Caitlyn Maccabe (CM)	✓	
Colin O'Hara (CO)		✓
Isabella McTaggart (IM)	✓	
Jenny Crowe (JC)	✓	
Lindsay Forrest (LF)	✓	
Paul Imrie (PI)	✓	
Richard Turnock (RT)	✓	
Tim Holmes (TH)	✓	
Valerie Wilson (VW)	✓	
Raphael Rickson (RR)	✓	

Officers	Items
Bryony Willett (BW)	1-16
Jennifer Simon (JS)	1-16
Rebecca Wilson (RW)	1-16
Karen Fee (KF)	1-16
Carol Bain (CB)	1-16
Claire Hay (CH)	1-16
Joanne Reid, Maryhill Housing, (JR)	1-16
Observer	

Item No.	Issue	Action By
1.	Welcome	
1.1	RP welcomed everyone to the meeting. RP commented that the Board were pleased to welcome back RR after his leave of absence.	
1.2	Apologies were noted from CO.	
1.3	There were no declarations of interest.	
1.4	RP introduced JR as Maryhill Housing's newly appointed Head of Neighbourhoods and Communities.	
2.	Approval of previous Board Minutes	
2.1	JC advised that she had not intended to create an action based on her comments at section 7.11 but rather to raise a point regarding fees. RP confirmed that the Minutes remained accurate but that the Action Tracker would be updated accordingly.	
2.2	The Board approved the Minutes from their meeting on 24 th June 2021.	

Item No.	Issue	Action By
3.	Action Tracker	
3.1	RP queried whether the issue with emails (item 17.4) had been resolved. CM and IM both advised that they had been in contact with PG, the Association's Business Transformation and ICT Manager, and their problems had now been addressed.	
3.2	The Board approved the updates to the Action Tracker including the actions proposed for closure.	
4.	Chair's Update	
4.1	RP provided an update on activities he had been involved in since the previous Board meeting. These included 1:1 Board review sessions with Freya Lees of North Star. RP advised that the last session would be taking place tomorrow (24 th August 2021) and thereafter Freya would prepare a report and provide feedback to Board members individually.	
4.2	It was noted that RP had been involved in discussions regarding delegating authority to BW, in her capacity as CEO, to award the gas contract as well as discussions with BW, PI and LF regarding the Maryhill TRA.	
4.3	RP advised that he had attended the Audit & Risk Committee meeting on 12 th August 2021, had been in contact with CH regarding a photoshoot with elected members at the Locks View site and had also sought an update on the progress of appointment of senior staff including JR and the new Performance & Governance Manager.	
5.	Feedback from Audit & Risk Committee	
5.1	RT provided an update on the Committee meeting held on 12 th August 2021. The agenda included consideration of a variety of materials relating to the year-end audit carried out by Azets. RT confirmed that the Committee gave detailed consideration to the Financial Statements, Audit Findings Letter and Letter of Representation, all of which would be presented for approval at tonight's meeting.	
5.2	The Committee also reviewed the quarterly Treasury Management report and gave consideration to the updated Fraud, Theft, Anti-Money Laundering and Anti-Bribery Policy.	
5.3	An internal audit report on Procurement & Community Benefits was presented and a rating of substantial assurance had been achieved.	
5.4	The Committee were also presented with the outcome of the recent tender exercise for provision of external audit services for Financial Statements 2021/2022 to 2024/25 and recommended the appointment of Azets, subject to approval at tonight's meeting.	
5.5	There had also been the standing items of risk, governance registers and third line of defence reviews. In relation to the latter, it was noted that the gas safety, fire safety and water safety/legionella audits had all returned a result of adequate	

Item No.	Issue	Action By
5.6	assurance however the asbestos audit had returned a result of inadequate assurance. RP acknowledged that the Committee had conducted a very thorough review of the year-end audit and commented that the Board members could take due assurance from their scrutiny.	
5.7	RP advised that RT would be resigning from the Board at the AGM in September. On behalf of the Board, RP thanked RT for his efforts over last few years and particularly for chairing the Audit & Risk Committee.	
6.	Feedback from Board training / conferences	
6.1	RP noted that training on effective questioning for Board members and housing quality had been provided. CM commented that she found the effective questioning training very helpful, and RP acknowledged that it would be useful for all Board members to undergo this training at an early stage.	
7.	External Audit report	
7.1	RW introduced this item and confirmed that the Audit & Risk Committee had given detailed consideration to all of the papers presented by James McBride of Azets at the meeting on 12 th August 2021.	
7.2	RW confirmed that some minor changes had been made to Board member details as highlighted at section 3.4 of the report. CM queried whether this ought to be amended further to contain details of the latest Board member to resign (JL) and RW confirmed same.	RW
7.3	The Board approved the Financial Statements, Audit Findings Letter and Letter of Representation, with the amendment around JL's resignation noted above, and confirmed that RP and IM would sign the Financial Statements.	
7.4	The Board also approved the appointment of Azets as external auditors for the four-year period covering Financial Statements 2021/22 to 2024/25 with a possible extension for a further two years.	
7.5	PI joined the meeting during this item.	
8.	Gas servicing and voids contracts	
	<i>Removed as commercially sensitive.</i>	
9.	New leased properties	
9.1	JS introduced this item which recommended a number of changes to the Leased Property Policy and potential changes to the Rent & Service Charge Policy.	
9.2	JS explained that the Association had been approached by a charity named Elpis who have requested to lease a further five properties (on the same terms	

Item No.	Issue	Action By
9.3	<p>as their current leases) as part of their 'Sunflower' project to provide supported accommodation to pregnant care leavers.</p> <p>JS explained that Homeless Network Scotland had approached the Scottish housing sector to lease properties as part of a consortium project to support destitute asylum seekers. JS advised that the Association could offer studio, one and two-bedroom properties out with the high-rise stock. It was noted that the project had requested that a lower rent be charged for these properties which would require the Rent and Service Charge Policy to redefine Type 2 leases.</p>	
9.4	<p>JS explained that the Association had been approached by Glasgow City Council to lease additional properties for their Refugee Project to house families displaced by the crisis in Afghanistan.</p>	
9.5	<p>BW confirmed that a response had been received from the SHR since the Board papers were issued. BW advised that the Association required to submit the Board report and the SHR would revert to them with any queries.</p>	
9.6	<p>The Board approved:</p>	
	<p>Leasing up to five additional properties to Elpis.</p>	
	<p>Leasing up to ten properties to Refugee Survival Trust or Safe in Scotland.</p>	
	<p>Leasing up to ten additional Properties to the Glasgow City Council Asylum team.</p>	
	<p>Approved the amended Leased Property Policy.</p>	
	<p>Approved the changes to the Rent and Service Charge Policy to redefine type two leased properties.</p>	
10.	COVID impact analysis and relaunch	
10.1	<p>RW introduced this item and advised that the report commentary had been updated now that Scotland had moved beyond Level 0 of the coronavirus protections.</p>	
10.2	<p>BW confirmed that no further changes to service delivery were proposed until the start of September at the earliest however the key change from that date would be the re-opening of Community @ Maryhill to deliver community regeneration activities. BW advised that the Neighbourhood Team had been using this as an additional resting space since the beginning of the pandemic but had been consulted about the need for it to re-open for public use and were supportive of this change.</p>	
10.3	<p>BW advised that changes to procedures regarding social distancing and self-isolating as well as a widening of services offered from the Garrioch Road office would also be considered from September onwards.</p>	
10.4	<p>RP advised that feedback from the ongoing Board review meetings suggested that members were keen for in-person Board meetings to recommence at some stage however they appreciated that there were still issues regarding the need for these to be COVID-safe. It was suggested that RP, PI and LF meet with BW and the incoming Performance & Governance Manager to discuss options regarding this and circulate these to the other Board members. RW advised that</p>	<p>BW/RW /RP/PI/ LF</p>

Item No.	Issue	Action By
	the new Performance & Governance Manager would not be in post until early October.	
11.	Overall assurance position	
11.1	BW introduced this item and confirmed that there had been movement in all areas requiring improvement; all of which was highlighted in the dashboard.	
11.2	RT queried whether any consideration had been given to highlighting the asbestos issue as an area of material non-compliance given the findings from the recent audit. BW explained that, at the time the audit was carried out, the lack of asbestos surveys for garages led to a finding of inadequate assurance however surveys had been commissioned by the time this was reported to the Audit & Risk Committee and therefore it was now considered an area of compliance.	
11.3	BW advised that the officers considered water safety to be the one remaining area of material non-compliance (despite the external audit report returning a result of reasonable compliance) as significant work still required to be undertaken including staff training and developing a programme to address issues. BW to revert to the Board with timescales for this.	BW
11.4	JS then talked the Board through the performance report. It was noted that voids continue to be an area of concern with re-let times still higher than usual. JS explained that some of this was due to additional COVID-safe protocols carried out by City Building however these would soon cease and it was hoped that this would be reflected in the timeframes.	
11.5	TH commented that rent arrears levels appeared to remain steady rather than improving and queried whether staff could look at alternative ways to tackle this. JS advised that the impact of COVID and long-term staff absences had not helped but confirmed that this remained a constant focus for the team. JS acknowledged however that there was unlikely to be a significant drop in arrears for the rest of the year.	
11.6	RP queried whether there was any sign of the number of customers in arrears increasing or decreasing. JS confirmed that she would look into this and provide a response. RP pointed out that the end of the furlough scheme and changes to Universal Credit may result in further pressures in the months to come.	JS
11.7	<i>Removed as confidential.</i> BW also advised that the overall labour market was challenging at present, and the Association was struggling to recruit to fill temporary staffing gaps.	
11.8	TH commented that the level of arrears reduced significantly when Housing Management moved to specialist teams and suggested that consideration was given to doing this again.	
11.9	It was noted that performance had dropped in relation to Stage 1 complaints. JS advised that this was due to staff not dealing with these at the first point of contact and confirmed that frontline staff would be reminded of their responsibilities in relation to this.	

Item No.	Issue	Action By
11.10	<p>JS confirmed that most complaints were in relation to the repairs service. JS advised that a lot of work had been done to clear the backlog of routine repairs which had built up during the lockdown period however a number of more complex repairs which had not previously been reported were now coming to light. JS explained that these were difficult to manage as there were longer completion times for these jobs as well as a shortage of advisors within the Customer Contact Team to process the jobs. JS confirmed that staff were working hard to keep customers informed regarding the impact current material shortages were having on repair completion times.</p>	
11.11	<p>JS advised that the number of ASB surveys completed and overall satisfaction ratings had increased during the first quarter. It was noted that the Housing Management team recently undertook ASB training provided by TC Young. JS also advised that there had been an increase in the number of new tenant surveys being completed and satisfaction levels amongst new tenants also remained high.</p>	
11.12	<p>KF then talked the Board through the Management Accounts to 30th June 2021. It was noted that the Statement of Comprehensive Income showed an operating surplus of £908,276 for the year against a budgeted surplus of £488,876. It was further noted that cash balances remained stable, with a closing balance of £6,771,203. KF advised that there was an overall surplus of £773,578 for the year to date against a budgeted surplus of £390,627.</p>	
11.13	<p>KF also talked the Board through all amber and red variances against the budget.</p>	
11.14	<p>BW then talked the Board through the Health & Safety assurance report. BW confirmed that, in relation to asbestos, the Association had now addressed the critical issue which had led to the inadequate assurance rating.</p>	
11.15	<p>BW advised that, in relation to water safety, a full risk assessment across all the Association's stock was required. It was noted that a programme confirming when all the tanks within our properties would be dealt with was being developed and this was due for completion by the end of September. BW acknowledged that there was a lot of work still to be done but thanked JS, CB, and the Property team for their efforts to date.</p>	
11.16	<p>TH queried the timescale for completion of the lobby doors given this was essentially a fire safety protection measure. BW explained that significant improvement works to replace common doors in the mini-multies had taken place over the last two years however the lobby doors had not yet been completed as these works would be tied into the foyer improvement programme.</p>	
11.17	<p>The Board approved the assurance ratings proposed by officers as set out in Appendix A to the report.</p>	
12.	CEO report	
12.1	<p>BW introduced this item, which was a standard report for noting only.</p>	

Item No.	Issue	Action By
12.2	<i>Removed as commercially sensitive.</i>	
12.3	<i>Removed as commercially sensitive.</i>	
12.4	<i>Removed as commercially sensitive.</i>	
12.5	<i>Removed as commercially sensitive.</i>	
12.6	BW advised the Board of a letter she had received today from Shona Robison MSP regarding the draft agreement between the Scottish Government and the Scottish Green Party for housing in Scotland. BW explained that although this included some positives such as more investment in social housing and energy improvements, there were a number of risks for RSL's to stay live to such as extending eviction bans and the implications of further regulation. BW confirmed she would provide an update to the Board once more information was received regarding this.	BW
12.7	RW discussed the request from the Tenant Service Improvement Group that the Association consider commissioning an external agency to carry out the rent increase survey to prevent any unconscious bias/influence when tenants complete the survey with staff assistance. RW explained that a quote of £2,500 (including VAT) had been provided by the external company currently carrying out the Customer Satisfaction Survey. It was noted that the process which would be undertaken by the external company would be very similar to the process carried out by the Association last year.	
12.8	The Board were in agreement that this would not be good value for money and an external agency should not therefore be used to carry out this year's rent consultation survey however they were keen to see further analysis on the responses received by tenants with and without staff assistance.	
12.9	RW explained that the Treasury Advisors, DTP, had recommended that the Association opt for early transition from LIBOR to SONIA ahead of the January 2022 deadline and this approach had been agreed by the Audit & Risk Committee on 12 th August 2021. The Board approved the LIBOR to SONIA transition method recommended by DTP and previously agreed by the Audit & Risk Committee.	
13.	Governance report	
13.1	RW introduced this item and confirmed that she had emailed the Board to advise of an additional notifiable event which had occurred since the Board papers were issued. It was noted that this related to a member of staff's email account being hacked and a fraudulent email being circulated to all business contacts. RW advised that the email did not appear to have been sent to any personal accounts and there was nothing to suggest that any data had been lost. RW confirmed that this incident had been reported to both the SHR and the ICO.	
13.2	RW advised that a further Board member resignation (JL) had been received since the Board papers were issued. RW advised that the SHR had confirmed that this was not a notifiable event as the Association was within a six-month grace period. RW confirmed that the Association's summer newsletter would be	

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13.3	<p>posted out to customers this week and contained an article regarding Board recruitment which may lead to some interest from potential new members.</p> <p>RW advised that AGM packs were issued to all shareholders last week (Friday 20th August) however stamped-addressed envelopes had been omitted by mistake. RW confirmed that an additional letter and stamped-addressed envelope had been posted to all shareholders today with the exception of Board members who should email to confirm their attendance or submit their apologies.</p>	Board Members
13.4	<p>It was noted that, as the longest-serving Board members, both IM and TH would require to be re-elected at the AGM and both VW and CO co-opted. RW confirmed that she would email a form regarding the Association's rules to all four members for completion in advance of the AGM.</p>	RW
13.5	<p>RW confirmed that there were currently two customer member vacancies in respect of the Board and advised that, if more than two nominations were received prior to the AGM, an election would require to be held. RP requested that all of the Board members encouraged any customer members they knew of who were interested in joining to come forward.</p>	
13.6	<p>RP once again thanked RT for his contribution and support since joining the Board in 2016.</p>	
13.7	<p>The Board noted the Governance report. All officers then left the meeting.</p>	
14.	Meeting review	
14.1	<p>Board members commented that the approach in tonight's meeting to take each of the key assurance papers in turn had worked better than previous assurance meetings and should be adopted in future meetings.</p>	
14.2	<p>Board members also discussed the prospect of returning to in-person meetings. Members agreed that this should be arranged at the earliest opportunity but acknowledged that any venue needs to have the facility to run hybrid meetings for those who are unable to attend in person.</p>	