



## MARYHILL HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

### MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2020 AT 6.00 PM VIRTUAL MEETING VIA CONFERENCE CALL

Board Members	Attended	Apologies
Roger Popplewell (RP)	✓	
Caitlyn Maccabe (CM)	✓	
Isabella McTaggart (IM)		✓
Janaki LakshmiNarayanan (JL)	✓	
Jenny Crowe (JC)	✓	
Lindsay Forrest (LF)	✓	
Najah Plakaris (NP)		✓
Paul Imrie (PI)	✓	
Raphael Rickson (RR)	✓	
Richard Turnock (RT)	✓	
Tim Holmes (TH)	✓	

Officers	Items
Bryony Willett (BW)	1-13
Jennifer Simon (JS)	1-13
Karen Fee (KF)	1-13
Carol Bain (CB)	1-13
Robert Reid (RRe)	1-13
Alistair McArthur (AM)	1-13
Lesley Carnegie (LC)	1-13

Observers
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<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome</b>	
1.1	RP welcomed everyone to the meeting, including two observers who had applied to become Board members as part of the current Board recruitment process. RP also welcomed Heads of Service CB, RRe and AM, who were attending to present papers.	
1.2	Apologies were noted from NP and IM. There were no declarations of interest.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Approval of Board Minutes – 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020</b>	
2.1	It was noted that a correction had been made to the minutes to correct the initials for RRe. PI also asked about the recording of Board meetings. LC advised that currently they were not recorded but that this was very easy to do through MS Teams. However where initials had not been recorded in the minute this was because the comment or question had been submitted in advance by one or more Board members, rather than having been said at the meeting.	

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2.2	PI expressed his preference for initials to be recorded for all points on the minute, to indicate which Board members had put forward different views. RT suggested that current best practice is for minutes to be less specific and more condensed.	
2.3	RP suggested that the minutes should continue to be produced in the current format. This was agreed by Board.	
2.4	Board then approved the minutes from 2 <sup>nd</sup> November 2020.	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Action Tracker</b>	
3.1	Board members had submitted some questions and comments in advance that were addressed by officers.	
3.2	It was agreed that a brief explanation of bad debts and bad debt provision would be included in the next write off paper in March. It was also agreed that this action could now be closed as it was noted on the Board schedule for a future meeting, and so did not have to be on the separate action tracker. This was also the case for the action relating to a paper to be brought to March Board on the Community Regeneration Team. Board agreed this principle should be followed for similar actions in future.	BW/JS
3.3	It was confirmed that the first meeting of the Value for Money Group had taken place. This action would therefore now be closed.	
3.4	It was noted that one of the key outstanding actions related to the render at Glenavon. JC asked if the render, or the Glenavon blocks in general, could be briefly discussed at the special Board meeting being held in December on the Glenavon heating systems. BW agreed that the meeting could start with a short session on the blocks more generally.	
3.5	Board then approved the Action Tracker, including those actions proposed for closure.	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Chair's Update</b>	
4.1	RP provided an update on activities he had been involved in since the previous Board meeting. These included carrying out individual meetings with all Board members as part of the annual Board review process, and discussing items for tonight's meeting with PI and BW. RP had also attended Audit & Risk Committee and the North West Partners Hub, which is a joint Board with Queens Cross Housing Association for new development projects in the area.	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Feedback and approvals from Audit &amp; Risk Committee</b>	
5.1	RT provided an update on the Committee meeting held on 12 <sup>th</sup> November 2020. This included the results of the internal audit of the Association's overall financial controls, which had been given a rating of Strong assurance. There had also been good progress with addressing internal	

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5.2	<p>and external audit recommendations.</p> <p>The Committee approved the management accounts for quarter 2 and noted only slight movement in the risk register. A report was presented to update members on other third lines of defence, which provided independent sources of assurance for the Board. Finally the latest fraud, declarations of interest and entitlements, payments and benefits registers were presented.</p>	
5.3	<p>RT noted that this was the first meeting led by KF in her new role as Interim Director and that it had gone well.</p>	
<b>6.</b>	<b>Feedback from conferences / training</b>	
6.1	<p>Relevant Board members provided updates on events they had recently attended.</p>	
6.2	<p>TH had attended a SHAPS Pension Scheme event. TH noted that some housing associations were behind Maryhill Housing and had therefore got into difficulties when furlough started. It was therefore a good decision for Maryhill Housing to have moved forward with pension changes early. TH also noted that salary sacrifice was discussed at the event and that this might be something worth looking at for the Association. BW advised that this was looked at in 2018 and discounted at the time, but that this could be looked at again in the new financial year.</p>	KF
6.3	<p>KF then provided an update on the local government pension scheme, noting that the Association's solicitors were looking at the scheme and the risks involved. A report with recommendations would be brought to Board in the new year.</p>	
6.4	<p>PI had attended SHARE training on chairing, being an office bearer, and conducting an appraisal of the CEO. These had all been helpful in the context of recently having become the Vice Chair. PI noted that because courses were currently only online they were not as interactive, and proper networking opportunities had unfortunately been lost.</p>	
6.5	<p>CM had attended SHARE training on housing association finances. This was an introductory course that had been useful as a new Board member. The session covered regulatory standards, treasury management, audit, business planning and more. CM recommended the course for other new members.</p>	
<b>7.</b>	<b>North Maryhill TRA Update</b>	
7.1	<p>AM provided an update on the North Maryhill Transformational Regeneration Area (TRA). AM advised that the next step was customer consultation, and that this could no longer take place in person due to COVID restrictions. Instead a specialist company would be assisting in setting up a dedicated and interactive website. AM accepted that online consultation would not be suitable for everyone and that once restrictions</p>	

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7.8	<p>allowed it may be possible to supplement this with physical consultation activities in the spring.</p> <p><i>Detail removed as confidential – consultation close to public publication</i></p> <p>Board noted the update on the North Maryhill TRA.</p>	
7.9	<p>JL joined the meeting at this point, having experienced internet issues.</p>	
<b>8.</b>	<b>Development Agreement Renewals</b>	
	<p><i>Removed as commercially sensitive</i></p>	
<b>9.</b>	<b>Maryhill Locks Practical Completion and Ongoing Repair Issues</b>	
	<p><i>Removed as commercially sensitive</i></p>	
<b>10.</b>	<b>Adaptations Policy</b>	
10.1	<p>CB introduced this item, presenting a revised draft Adaptations Policy to Board. Board members had asked a range of questions in advance, which CB addressed.</p>	
10.2	<p>In relation to funding, CB explained that it was part of the stock transfer conditions that ex Glasgow Housing Association stock did not attract grant, and that this was the case for other housing associations in a similar position.</p>	
10.3	<p>CB advised that around 25% of adaptation requests are for properties above the ground floor. These were for things such as handrails and level access showers. The new policy aimed to strengthen the Association's ability to decline to do an adaptation if a property was not suitable for the tenant in the longer term. In those cases the Association would seek a management transfer to a more suitable property. At Board members' request, CB agreed to strengthen the policy further in relation to this.</p>	CB
10.4	<p>CB advised that the current policy prioritises funding in terms of waiting time and need. If this was changed to only priority need the Association would have to wait until the end of the year to assess all applications. A combination of time and need allows the Association to be more flexible and reactive. Last year the full budget was not spent, so prioritisation had not been an issue.</p>	
10.5	<p>CB advised that a referral was accepted from a qualified medical professional for minor and low cost adaptations such as handrails. If a major adaptation is requested, or a condition is progressive, an Occupational Therapist is always involved. It was agreed that this was not clear in the policy and that the final version should be amended to explain this approach.</p>	CB

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10.6	Board then approved the revised Adaptations Policy, subject to the amendments above.	
<b>11.</b>	<b>COVID impact and relaunch</b>	
11.1	Board members noted that it was positive to see rent arrears reducing in September and October. RRe confirmed that this trend was continuing and that the specialist teams were working well. It would be important to move back to generic working at the right time and with improved procedures in place. RRe also confirmed that Housing Teams were now back carrying out all key functions, and that housing options was the only area where a backlog remained. Home visits were more restricted to keep staff and customers safe, and as such biannual visits and other more routine visits were not yet taking place.	
11.2	BW advised Board members that the Association had had its first positive tests in the last week. Three staff members had tested positive. All were experiencing relatively mild symptoms. All three had been in the office so cleaning and track and trace protocols had been carried out as per agreed procedures. There had been no customer contact.	
11.3	Board noted the update on COVID impact and relaunch.	
<b>12.</b>	<b>CEO Report</b>	
12.1	BW introduced this item, also giving a verbal update to advise Board members that the new Interim Head of Finance had left the organisation and HR were now seeking a replacement.	
12.2	BW advised that since the last Board meeting a delegated decision had been taken to purchase another large family home in the area. Board then approved delegated authority to officers to purchase further larger family homes until the end of March 2021 with grant funding from Glasgow City Council where the total financial input required from the Association is both no more than 50% of the notional private finance that the rental income will support and also is not anticipated to exceed £25,000.	
12.3	It was noted that JC would like to join the in-house services working group. JS would contact JC about this in the new year.	JS
12.4	It was noted that in relation to bulk uplifts of refuse the current cleaning contract included an allowance of £27k. JS advised that employing an additional staff member for the Neighbourhood Team would cost less than this, and should mean an improved and more reactive service. This approach would be taken on a pilot basis and re-visited in the new year once the plans for the Glasgow City Council uplift service were clearer.	
12.5	It was noted that a customer consultation was planned for the move to more remote working in future, once COVID restrictions had been relaxed. BW confirmed that this consultation would be run by the	

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	<p>corporate team rather than the operational team, and therefore it would be impartial. RP suggested that the Service Improvement Panel be involved in this consultation and this was agreed. Alongside the consultation, information would also be gathered to fully understand the business case for this change, and to look at best practice and different approaches elsewhere.</p>	
<b>13.</b>	<b>Overall Assurance Position</b>	
13.1	<p>RP explained the background to the annual Assurance Statement, which outlines the Association's compliance with the Regulatory Framework, legal responsibilities and Scottish Social Housing Charter. The Association had decided to focus on assurance quarterly, culminating in the annual Assurance Statement that was now being proposed for approval.</p>	
13.2	<p>RP also noted the changes to the Assurance Dashboard since the previous Board meeting, which were agreed by Board. However it was agreed that Regulatory Standard 1 should be changed to green, rather than the amber given by officers, as the current review of the Company Secretary role did not constitute non-compliance. This would be changed in the final version submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator.</p>	BW
13.3	<p>NP had raised in advance that the welfare reform and rent collection item may also want to mention COVID impact. RP suggested that this point was wider than COVID and that welfare reform had its own longer lasting impact. It was agreed that this part of the Statement would not be changed.</p>	
13.4	<p>On the issue of digital inclusion, BW confirmed that the My Home online portal had not been promoted as hoped and there was lower take-up than had been targeted for the year. Part of the issue was that new lets had stopped, and new tenants were usually a large percentage of new My Home accounts. The portal was now being promoted by the Customer Contact Team, and was featured on the website, social media and on the mainline hold message. A larger campaign was planned for April 2021 when the new repairs contract would mean that customers could log their own repairs through the portal.</p>	
13.5	<p>JC commented that the Assurance Framework was well laid out with a lot of information, and was a good piece of work by officers. RT agreed, noting that Board could take comfort from the depth of information available and the fact that officers were erring on the cautious side with their ratings, as was shown in the fact that Regulator Standard 1 was amber but that Board were changing it to green.</p>	
13.6	<p>RT also noted the context of this year's Assurance Statement, with a lot more scrutiny having taken place the previous year when the Assurance Framework was introduced. This year was not about repeating the full exercise, but instead about maintaining the Framework and reviewing any changes made on a quarterly basis.</p>	

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13.7	<p>RP encouraged Board members to focus on the Assurance Dashboard and Performance appendix for future quarterly meetings. Over the next year the Association may also want to look at how assurance is managed and whether an amended approach should be taken for future meetings. RP noted that the Assurance Board meetings used to involve slides and that it was hoped that these could be re-introduced when returning to in-person instead of remote meetings.</p>	
13.8	<p>Board then approved the Assurance ratings proposed by officers and the annual Assurance Statement for submission to the Scottish Housing Regulator.</p>	