

Argyll Community Housing Association

Board of Management Meeting

Thursday 11th December 2014 at 10.30am, Argyll Hotel, Inveraray

Minute

Present:

Michael Brown (Chair)
Jim Milne (Vice chair)
Councillor Roddy McCuish (Secretary)
Lorraine-Anne Drysdale (Finance and Audit Chair)
Colin Davidson
Stafford Day
Cameron Grant
Danny Kelly
John Muir
Douglas Prophet
Councillor Bruce Marshall
Councillor Richard Trail
Councillor Sandy Taylor
Councillor Donnie MacMillan
Margaret MacGregor
Kate Winton

Not in Attendance:

Andy Birnie

In Attendance:

Alastair MacGregor, Chief Executive
Nick Pollard, Director of Finance & IT
Colette Benham, Director of Human Resources & Corporate Services
Iona MacPhail, Regional Manager
David McColl, Investment Manager
Gayle Stead, Governance & Compliance Manager

Confidential:

Michael Brown welcomed Joyce Stewart and Lorna Clarke, of the Scottish Housing Regulator to the meeting for a confidential item.

Joyce Stewart and Lorna Clark left the meeting.

Michael Brown welcomed Iona MacPhail, Regional Manager and David McColl, Investment Manager to the meeting.		
1.	Apologies Archie Blair, Michael Roberts	
2.	Minutes of Previous Meeting – 13th November 2014 Page 3 `complain to be amended to read `complaint` Page 7, Item 9, end of last paragraph, change `virtually to video` Page 8 change `tenancy` to `tenant` and remove `been` Page 12 Officer responsible should be Linda Haig and not Colette Benham Subject to the above amendment, the Board of Management APPROVED the minute as a true and accurate record. Proposed by: Lorraine-Anne Drysdale Seconded by: Douglas Prophet	
3.	Matters Arising Page 2 – John Muir asked about the AHFA cashflow report and asked for clarification as to whether this would be presented at the end of the year or at the end of the financial year and Nick Pollard confirmed that it would be provided at the end of the financial year. Page 9 – John Muir asked for clarification on the IT arrangements between ACHA and the new provider and queried whether the systems would be compatible. Nick Pollard explained the system operation in relation to using a provider`s infrastructure would not intrude into their systems. Alastair MacGregor confirmed that he had spoken with Bruce West, of the Council, regarding the future of Right to Buy sales and he intimated that the Council`s Solicitor, Donnie Kelly was liaising with the Scottish Government. Cllr Roddy McCuish confirmed that he had responded to Mr Hastie and had signposted the association`s complaints process.	

4.	Minute of the Finance and Audit Committee for Ratification – 11th September 2014 The Board of Management Noted the minute	
5.	Conflict of Interest to Declare Alastair MacGregor stated that in relation to Item 10.2; staff members would leave the meeting.	
6.	Correspondence Michael Brown reported that a letter had been sent to the leader of the, Councillor Walsh, which would be circulated Board members. Alastair MacGregor reported that he had received a letter from a tenant in Dunbeg who had written in thanking the association for their consideration when undertaking the roofing and roughcast work in the village.	GS
7.	New Membership Applications The Board of Management APPROVED two new members. The Board of Management NOTED the membership total of 269 as at 4 th December 2014.	
8.	Chief Executive Presentation The Chief Executive gave a presentation covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Updates • External Matters All members in attendance were provided with a copy of the presentation. Margaret MacGregor asked if the houses at Ballochgoy would be fully refurbished to accommodate office accommodation and Alastair MacGregor confirmed that to be correct. Cllr Bruce Marshall asked for clarification on the new build programme slippage in Argyll and Alastair MacGregor confirmed that ACHA`s programme was on track, however, there may be slippage with the other Argyll associations programmes. There was also an indication of slippage in Scotland in general. Cllr Bruce Marshall asked for an update on the discussion with Highland and Island Enterprise (HIE) in relation to the population and economic summit and noted that if we build more houses	

	<p>new business may still not be attracted to help the LOCAL economy. Alastair MacGregor provided clarification on empty houses and the discussions with HIE surrounding them. Cllr Bruce Marshall raised a concern about the population decline in some areas of Argyll.</p> <p>Cameron Grant asked if the investment and regeneration department had been looking at sites in Helensburgh and reported that the old Hermitage Academy site has availability. Alastair MacGregor confirmed that he was aware of the site; however Dunbritton Housing Association may have plans to develop the site further. Alastair MacGregor confirmed that the site at Jutland Court, Helensburgh may be a better proposition for the association.</p> <p>Cllr Roddy McCuish commented that he has concerns about complexes being built in the hope that people would move to the area. Alastair MacGregor confirmed that he would go back to HIE with statistics and the offer of houses in Rothesay and Campbeltown which could assist their plans.</p> <p>John Muir enquired about the implications of drawing down money this financial year and whether we would lose it if it was not drawn down. Alastair MacGregor responded that he had been referring to a specific sum that required to be spent prior to the year end for related assets and this would be drawn down.</p> <p>Danny Kelly enquired whether; as the association would be unable to progress the development at Geilston Farm in Cardross, was there other land which was owned by ACHA within the Helensburgh and Lomond area that could be developed. Alastair MacGregor confirmed that the investment and regeneration department were aware of developers who have land in the area who would work with us to provide social housing.</p> <p>Danny Kelly mentioned a site vacant in Rosneath and Alastair MacGregor responded that the site may be developed by Link Housing Association.</p> <p>Michael Brown asked what the current lease termination period was for the Helensburgh offices leased from the Council and Alastair MacGregor confirmed that the leases were on a month to month basis.</p>	
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9.	<p>Strategic Housing Investment Programme 2015-2018 Alastair MacGregor provided a summarised introduction to the programme and highlighted the key issues of finance and proposed unit development within Argyll moving forward. The Scottish Government have asked for a reserved programme to be identified which is also included.</p> <p>The Council have made a decision of some significance whereby in order to receive grants for house building you require to be a registered social landlord and registered with the Scottish Housing Regulator.</p> <p>Lorraine-Anne Drysdale queried; in relation to table 2.2 why are the amounts reducing across the programme period and Alastair MacGregor responded that the Scottish Government make certain assumptions and that building may be earlier within the programme as opposed to later in the programme.</p> <p>Michael Brown provided an observation in relation to table 5 that the Golf Club site in Helensburgh had been on the programme for several years and Cllr Richard Trail confirmed that the site had now been included within the local plan.</p> <p>Cllr Roddy MacCuish reported that it would be beneficial to progress with those developments that we can.</p>	
9.1	<p>Naming of New Build Development in Inveraray The Board of Management APPROVED the recommendation to name the development Tower View.</p>	
9.2	<p>Naming of New Development in Connel The Board of Management APPROVED the recommendation to name the development St Orans Place.</p>	
9.3	<p>Welfare Rights Service Iona MacPhail, Regional Manager outlined the background to the service which had been funded by lottery funding. A funding application has been made to the Scottish Government and the outcome should be known prior to the end of January 2015. An update was provided in relation to the implications of the Smith commission and the further devolution of welfare matters.</p> <p>Iona MacPhail asked the Board to consider the options within the report. Cameron Grant asked whether the other Argyll partners had been approached to provide a joint welfare rights</p>	

	<p>service. Iona MacPhail responded that that arrangement had been initially undertaken and the other partners had pulled out leaving ACHA to fund the service.</p> <p>Jim Milne asked whether if the full grant was not provided whether a partial grant may be provided. Iona MacPhail reported that in her experience partial funding would be unlikely.</p> <p>Cllr Bruce Marshall commented that the service had been extremely successful in Argyll and Bute and asked whether CAB would be able to continue the work we have been doing.</p> <p>Cllr Roddy McCuish highlighted that there may be staff losses within other services if the welfare rights service continued and if funding wasn't received the Board would have to make some very difficult decisions.</p> <p>Douglas Prophet commented that although the service was successful the association would not be able to finance the service and if CAB were already doing welfare rights work then there would be a service provided by them in Argyll.</p> <p>Cllr Richard Trail asked why ACHA set up the service and asked whether rent arrears would increase if the service was disbanded. Michael Brown responded that staff have obtained a significant knowledge in relation to welfare rights, however, there would still be a welfare rights service in Argyll.</p> <p>Prof Colin Davidson commented that it was not feasible to increase rents to pay for the continuation of the service.</p> <p>John Muir asked if the association decided to increase rents would there be a requirement to consult again with tenants and Michael Brown confirmed that consultation would require to be undertaken again. Iona MacPhail confirmed that landlords were only able to put rents up once per year. John Muir further asked that the decision be deferred until the outcome of the grant application was known.</p> <p>Douglas Prophet proposed that option one be adopted if funding not obtained and the Board AGREED the proposal.</p> <p>Cllr Richard Trail asked that Officers communicate this decision and the impact to customers. Alastair MacGregor commented that staff would still be able to assist people and signpost to</p>	
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	<p>help.</p> <p>Iona MacPhail reported that training had been rolled out by the welfare rights staff to other staff within the Housing and Neighbourhood Services department to share knowledge and allow staff to continue to assist.</p> <p>The Board voted to continue with the service only if funding was forthcoming. If the funding was not forthcoming the service would be discontinued; 15 members voted in agreement.</p> <p>The Board NOTED that there was no provision within the existing staffing envelope to self-fund the Welfare Rights Service after 31st March 2105 and APPROVED that if grant funding is not received the service will be discontinued.</p>	
9.4	<p>Tenant Scrutiny</p> <p>Iona MacPhail, Regional Manager reported that the recommendation was a good solution to something that was developing as an issue. Michael Brown asked that members should make their area committees aware that they could now join the Tenant Scrutiny Panel.</p> <p>The Board APPROVED the recommendation.</p>	
10.	<p>UK Holiday Pay Ruling and Impact on ACHA</p> <p>Colette Benham, Director of HR and Corporate Services provided a summary position and stated that there would be more impact on AHFA than ACHA which was why the budget was proposed to be higher for AFHA. Advice has been obtained from BTO and an early reconciliation claim had been received from ACAS. Agreement was requested to allow the association to budget for future years.</p> <p>John Muir considered that the association may wish to enquire with the Council what formula they utilised to calculate holiday pay and Colette Benham confirmed that the Council had implemented holiday pay which they had backdated to April 2014.</p> <p>Cllr Bruce Marshall asked if there would be challenges if the association did not implemented within 2014/15. Colette Benham reported that it shouldn't as we only require to go back three months.</p>	

	The Board ACCEPTED and AGREED the recommendation to budget for holiday pay within future budgets to start in 2015.	
10.1	Payment and Benefit Decision – Confidential Item	
	Staff members left the meeting	
10.2	Remuneration Committee Report – Confidential Item Staff members returned to the meeting.	
10.3	SPSO Determination The Board of Management NOTED the determination.	
10.4	SPSO Determination The Board of Management NOTED the determination.	
11.	Refinancing Update Nick Pollard, Director of Finance and IT provided the Board with an update on refinancing progress and this was NOTED .	
12.	Monthly Investment Programme Update David McColl, Investment Manager provided an update on the association's current position with regards to Scottish Housing Quality Standard compliance. 1180 elements have been completed against the planned target and expenditure is currently at £3,900,000. Expenditure is expected to increase towards the end of the year and grants have been secured for private owners. With regards to Maitland Court; there have been only 4 defaulters to the proposed works. In relation to the Inveraray CARS project; challenges have been experienced, however, owners are now signing up. The Board of Management NOTED the contents of the report.	
12.1	Land Disposal Request Ladeside Play Park, Rothesay David McColl presented a request received to obtain an area of land from the Association.	

	<p>The Board discussed an adjacent area of land which may be for sale and whether there was a link to the request. Iona MacPhail confirmed that the land was not technically for sale but was part of a swap of land.</p> <p>The Board AGREED to the highlighted area of land at Ladseside Park, Rothesay being sold.</p>	
12.2	<p>Grounds Maintenance Procurement</p> <p>David McColl asked the Board to agree the tender list and also the request to obtain devolved power for the Investment and Regeneration Department which would assist with progressing the procurement process and tender acceptance decision.</p> <p>Prof Colin Davidson asked for clarification on previous costs and David MacColl confirmed that it was approximately £300,000.</p> <p>David McColl confirmed that the interview of four contractors would be held in January 2015 and asked for Board involvement at the interviews, suggesting perhaps two members may wish to attend. Michael Brown confirmed that attendance would be beneficial and that those interested should highlight their interest to David McColl.</p>	
13.	<p>AOCB</p> <p>Margaret MacGregor raised a concern regarding travel to the meetings being held in Dalriada House, Lochgilphead and asked if one of the Board members could provide a lift to assist with travel.</p> <p>Cllr Bruce Marshall highlighted that the next meeting of the Board would be held on the same date as the Council budget meeting.</p> <p>Michael Brown highlighted that this was Nick Pollard's last meeting and that he was moving on to pastures new. He added that Nick Pollard had serviced the Board of Management and the Finance and Audit Committee very well over the years and wished Nick all the best at Kingdom Housing and thanked him for his 8 years of service to ACHA as Director of Finance and IT and his work on the project team in the 2 years previous to that. A card and gift were presented on behalf of the association.</p>	
14.	<p>Date & Time of Next Meeting</p> <p>Thursday 12th February 2015 at 11.00am in Dalriada House,</p>	

	Lochgilphead	
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