

ARGYLL COMMUNITY HOUSING ASSOCIATION BOARD OF MANAGEMENT MEETING

Thursday 8th May 2014 at 10.30am, Argyll Hotel, Inveraray

Minute

Present:

Michael Brown (Chair)
Jim Milne (Vice chair)
Cllr Roddy McCuish (Secretary)
Lorraine Anne Drysdale (Finance and Audit Chair)
Archie Blair
Stafford Day
Cameron Grant
Danny Kelly
Margaret MacGregor
Sandra MacKenzie
Councillor Donnie MacMillan
Douglas Prophet
Councillor Sandy Taylor
Councillor Richard Trail
Kate Winton

Not in Attendance

In Attendance:

Alastair MacGregor, Chief Executive
Linda Haig, Director of Investment & Regeneration
Nick Pollard, Director of Finance & IT
Christine Johnston, Director of Housing & Neighbourhood Services
Colette Benham, Director of Human Resources & Corporate Services
Gayle Stead, Governance & Compliance Manager
Joyce Stewart, Scottish Housing Regulator (Item 6)
Lorna Clark, Scottish Housing Regulator (Item 6)
Lesley Lindsay, PA to Board of Management

The Chair advised Joyce Stewart from the Scottish Housing Regulator had requested all staff members leave the meeting during her presentation. The Chair advised the PA to the Board of Management would remain in the meeting to minute the item.

1.	Apologies	
----	------------------	--

	Councillor Bruce Marshall, Graham Kanes	
2.	<p>Minutes of Previous Meeting – 10th April 2014</p> <p>Page 5 – “Scottish” not “Social”</p> <p>Page 5 – Dunchologan spelt incorrectly</p> <p>Page 6 – Stationery spelt incorrectly</p> <p>Page 9 – “Danny” not “Donny” Kelly</p> <p>Page 10 – bottom – Kate Winton asked for training – short discussion on training for Governing Body – insert mention of discussion.</p> <p>Page 11 – “do” not “to”</p> <p>Page 11 – Recirculate spelt incorrectly</p> <p>Subject to the above amendments, the Board of Management APPROVED the minute as an accurate record.</p> <p>Proposed by Douglas Prophet</p> <p>Seconded by Kate Winton</p>	
3.	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>Page 8 – Item 11.1 - the Chief Executive advised he would update Board members in relation to the site at Rockfield School, Oban during his presentation.</p> <p>Page 9 – Item 12 – the Chief Executive advised he would be meeting with the Director of Finance & IT to progress the Association’s IT Efficiency Strategy. He also advised the Board would receive a further report in due course. The Director of Finance & IT advised the IT questionnaire had been re-circulated to Board members.</p> <p>The Chair stated that five self-assessment questionnaires remained outstanding. He asked the five Board members to complete the questionnaire at their earliest convenience.</p>	
4.	<p>Minutes of Finance & Audit Committee for Ratification – 13th March 2014 (attached)</p> <p>The Board of Management RATIFIED the minute.</p> <p>Douglas Prophet asked why the repairs expenditure was £7.9million underspent. The Director of Investment & Regeneration advised the Board had agreed at their meeting in January to re-model the expenditure due to issues with several contracts, including roofing and roughcasting programmes.</p>	

5.	Conflict of Interest to Declare None	
6.	Correspondence Letter from Scottish Housing Regulator and holding response in relation to the Payments & Benefits Policy The Chief Executive, Directors of Housing & Neighbourhood Services, Human Resources & Corporate Services, Finance & IT and Investment & Regeneration and the Governance & Compliance Manager left the meeting. The Board of Management discussed the Association's Payments & Benefits Policy with Joyce Stewart from the Scottish Housing Regulator. Joyce Stewart and Lorna Clark left the meeting. The Chief Executive, Directors of Housing & Neighbourhood Services, Human Resources & Corporate Services, Finance & IT and Investment & Regeneration and the Governance & Compliance Manager returned to the meeting. TPAS Membership Cameron Grant advised the Tenants Panel had agreed to renew their membership of TPAS. The Chair stated that the benefits provided from membership of TPAS were already being provided to the Association through its membership of the SFHA. The Chair recommended the Association did not subscribe to membership of TPAS. The Board of Management AGREED unanimously. Resignation Letter – Karen Carmichael The Chair advised that a letter of resignation had been received from Karen Carmichael. He stated that as Karen had terminated her tenancy she was no longer eligible to serve as a tenant member. The Board were advised that Karen had expressed an interest in becoming an Independent Member on the Board. The Chair confirmed she had been provided with the appropriate application form which would be considered by the Board on its return.	
7.	Chief Executive's Presentation The Chief Executive gave a presentation covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing Issues • Bedroom Tax Analysis • Wider Issues 	

	<p>All members in attendance were provided with a copy of the presentation.</p> <p>Councillor Trail asked what a housing bank was and queried whether it was the same as a nationalised bank or building society. The Chief Executive stated a housing bank was specifically for housing initiatives and was not a new concept.</p> <p>The Chair asked whether Argyll and Bute Council had discussed reimbursing the Association's costs in relation to the site at Rockfield. The Director of Investment & Regeneration stated the Council were keen for the partnership to continue and had suggested ACHA makes an application to the Strategic Housing Fund. The Board were advised that once the fixed tender price had been received, an application would be submitted.</p> <p>The Chair of the Finance & Audit Committee asked what KPMG stood for. The Chief Executive advised it was the name of a Dutch accountancy firm and he would pass the information directly on.</p>	AMG
8.	<p>Key Performance Indicators including Directorate Exception Reports</p> <p>Human Resources & Corporate Services</p> <p>The Director of Human Resources & Corporate Services stated the exception report was an amalgamation and summary of the exception reports provided throughout the year. She advised DDA audits had been undertaken in the shared offices and advised she was trying to arrange a meeting with the Council's Hugh Blake to establish responsibility issues. She stated the issue had been outstanding for a while and confirmed she would chase it up following her return from annual leave. The Director of Human Resources & Corporate Services talked the Board through her exception report and head line figures.</p> <p>Investment & Regeneration</p> <p>The Director of Investment & Regeneration stated there were no current issues and highlighted the main points within her exception report.</p> <p>Finance & IT</p> <p>The Director of Finance & IT advised he had no current issues. He further advised he had carried out a year on year analysis of the KPI information:</p>	

	<p>Creditor payments had reduced to 20 days Invoices settled have reduced by around 50% (not including AHFA invoices) Better management of invoices Cashless payments increased significantly Number of tenants with arrears of £200 have increased Slight increase in the number of invoices issued to tenants and owners RTB applications have increased by around 50% but the number of properties sold has decreased The number of tenants with contents insurance provided by the Association has decreased from 810 to 730, mostly due to end of tenancies Number of internal calls to the IT Helpdesk have reduced Number of email addresses and mobile numbers for tenants has increased</p> <p>The Chair of the Finance & Audit Committee asked how tenants with post office accounts have benefits paid. The Director of Finance & IT advised the Council could pay in to post office accounts. He further advised that the number of situations where ACHA struggle to repay credit was negligible.</p> <p>Councillor Trail asked what percentage of tenants can be communicated with electronically. The Director of Housing & Neighbourhood Services advised information was still to be gathered as to tenants preferred method of communication by the Association.</p> <p>The Board of Management NOTED the contents of the Exception Reports and Graphical Information.</p>	
9.	<p>Strategic Planning Outcome Documentation a. Strategic Plan</p> <p>The Director of Human Resources & Corporate Services advised that pages 13 – 20 had been updated as a result of the Strategic Planning days in February.</p> <p>Councillor Taylor asked when the five year business plan would commence. The Chief Executive advised from the next financial year onwards. The Director of Human Resources & Corporate Services confirmed the target was 2015/16 onwards.</p> <p>The Board were advised the Strategic Plan would be used in the Performance Development Review process once approved.</p>	

	<p>The Board were asked to approve joint leadership responsibility for the Modern Governance Review to the Chair and the Director of Human Resources & Corporate Services. The Board of Management APPROVED the request and further APPROVED the revised Group Corporate/Strategic Plan 2014/19.</p> <p>b. PEST Analysis The Board of Management APPROVED the revised PEST Analysis</p> <p>c. SWOT Analysis The Board of Management APPROVED the revised SWOT Analysis</p> <p>d. Risk Matrix The Board of Management APPROVED the revised Risk Matrix and NOTED they would be required to review the document on a quarterly basis.</p>	
9.1	<p>Conference Planning 2014 The Director of Human Resources & Corporate Services talked the Board through her report and made the following recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board members to confirm their attendance requirements for the year within budget parameters – Chair to oversee/agree • The selection of workshops to attend should be agreed in advance to maximise exposure to different workshops • Feedback for Board members would be mandatory by way of a written report, a copy of which should be provided to the PA to the Board of Management to be included within the shared area. <p>The Board of Management AGREED to the recommendations.</p> <p>The Chair advised he had attended a financial training conference last year, run by the SFHA and recommended it to Board members.</p> <p>It was AGREED Margaret MacGregor, Lorraine-Anne Drysdale and Jim Milne would attend the SFHA Annual Conference</p> <p>It was AGREED Mike Brown, Jim Milne, Lorraine-Anne Drysdale and Kate Winton would attend the RIHAF Conference</p> <p>It was AGREED no-one to attend the TPAS Annual</p>	

	<p>Conference</p> <p>It was AGREED if there was more than one Board member attending the same conference different workshops should be attended</p> <p>The Director of Human Resources & Corporate Services advised the staff conference budget was already overspent and that funds would have to be taken from the training budget to compensate.</p> <p>The Board were advised the PA to the Board of Management would provide their email addresses to the BDA to allow them to be contacted in advance of each webinar.</p>	LL
9.2	<p>Annual Return on the Charter</p> <p>The Director of Human Resources & Corporate Services advised there had been a number of issues with the SHR portal which had been logged with their Support Desk. She advised there were several issues that remained outstanding.</p> <p>The Governance & Compliance Manager stated it was the first year of the new process and there had been a number of teething difficulties with the portal.</p> <p>The Board were provided with information on the errors encountered with the SHR portal.</p> <p>The Board were advised the Scottish Best Value Network would go onsite week commencing 12th May 2014 to undertake a validation exercise.</p> <p>The Governance & Compliance Manager stated the submission was required to be made no later than 31st May 2014.</p> <p>The Board of Management APPROVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submitting the return to the Scottish Housing Regulator prior to 31st May 2014 • Delegation to the Chair to authorise any amendments prior to submission <p>The Board were advised they would be provided with a copy of the final submission.</p>	GS
10.	Void Rent Loss Report	

The Director of Housing & Neighbourhood Services talked the Board through her report and highlighted the Association had significant rent loss due to voids but that her department were trying to develop new strategies to stem the loss, in addition to major refurbishments being carried out.

She advised there were three main reasons for long term voids:

- Low demand issues, particularly in Bute and Kintyre
- Some properties required significant works to common areas and the Association had been unsuccessful in gaining the co-operation of owners
- High levels of common repairs required but also uncertainty of relet likelihood even if the works were undertaken

The Board were advised the recommendations contained within the report would cost the association money:

Bute – pilot incentive scheme for new tenants:

- White goods, carpets and decoration
- Cashback scheme

Campbeltown – pilot incentive scheme similar to Bute, along with a trial impact of modest spend on environmental works

Cameron Grant asked if the white goods would place a liability on the Association. The Director of Housing & Neighbourhood Services advised the Association already provided white goods in MacMillan Court, Ardrishaig which were covered through a service charge, which included warranties.

Margaret MacGregor advised that once a year on Bute, CAB offer white goods and questioned whether tenants would be able to claim twice. The Director of Housing & Neighbourhood Services advised the Association would provide the white goods not a cash alternative.

The Secretary agreed that void losses need to be stemmed and suggested there may be an opportunity to work in partnership with other organisations. The Director of Housing & Neighbourhood Services stated she would be very interested in partnership working and advised she had been in contact with the Council and the NHS and would be open to other opportunities.

The Vice Chair stated he fully supported the idea to convert

	<p>properties in Queen Street, Campbeltown into offices. He suggested for a possible phase two or three, the Association consider converting further properties. The Director of Housing & Neighbourhood Services advised that not all strategies would be ongoing straight away. The Chair suggested liaising with Dalintober & Millknowe Tenants and Residents Association.</p> <p>Cameron Grant suggested that ACHA approach the Council to ask whether a council tax reduction or exemption on low demand properties would be possible as a further incentive.</p> <p>The Board of Management APPROVED the recommendations contained within the report:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete analysis of void properties requiring significant investment and programme works taking into account demand, relet likelihood, cost and impact on neighbours 2. Bute – pilot incentive scheme for new tenants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White goods, carpets and decoration • Cashback scheme 3. Campbeltown – pilot incentive scheme similar to Bute, along with a trial impact of modest spend on environmental works 4. Establish potential cost benefit to Association to convert part of Queen Street into office accommodation 5. Analyse Business Plan implications in respect of loss of income should sale or demolition be considered <p>The Director of Housing & Neighbourhood Services advised she would provide future updates to the Board on progress.</p>	<p>CJ</p> <p>CJ</p>
10.1	<p>Lettings Action Plan – Catalina Avenue, Oban</p> <p>The Director of Housing & Neighbourhood Services talked the Board through her report and highlighted the new build site would create 40 properties for allocation; more than half the normal allocation rate for one year.</p> <p>She outlined the benefits of more than straight forward allocations and stated the Home Argyll Policy allowed for a local lettings initiative following consultation.</p> <p>The Secretary stated he was 100% supportive of the Lettings Action Plan.</p> <p>Stafford Day asked when the open day was being held. The Director of Housing & Neighbourhood Services advised she would find out and notify Board members.</p>	<p>CJ</p>

	<p>The Board of Management APPROVED the recommendations contained within the report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACHA undertake consultation with the local community in Lorn and the Isles to determine priorities for re-lets at Catalina Avenue • ACHA analyse the results of the consultation and put in place a Local Lettings Plan if required • SMT consider whether a social media strategy is required for consultation 	
11.	<p>Monthly Investment Programme Update</p> <p>The Director of Investment & Regeneration advised the report was based on the end of year position. She then talked the Board through the target and actual spend figures.</p> <p>The Board were advised that Argyll and Bute Council had issued notices to make works at two blocks in Maitland Court compulsory. The Director of Investment & Regeneration advised she would find out if the tender could be revised.</p>	
12.	<p>A.O.C.B.</p> <p>The Chair reminded members there were five self-assessment questionnaires outstanding which should be completed as soon as possible</p> <p>The Chair asked all members to complete the IT survey before the closing date</p> <p>The Chief Executive stated he had been advised by Argyll and Bute Council that all Council staff will be moved out of Dalriada House, Lochgilphead by July 2014. The Board were advised the Council would be willing to lease or sell the property to ACHA. The Chief Executive advised he would report back to a future Board meeting on the opportunities after further evaluation of needs.</p>	AMG
13.	<p>Date & Time of Next Meeting</p> <p>Thursday 12th June 2014, 10.30am in the Argyll Hotel, Inveraray.</p>	