

# ALBYN HOUSING SOCIETY LIMITED

## REPORT OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 26 JUNE 2012 AT 10:30 AM AT ALBYN OFFICES, INVERGORDON

### Board Members Present

Mrs I McLaughlan (Chair)	Mr D Russell	Mrs E MacRae (to Item 4.3)
Mr G Sinclair	Mr J Oag	Ms M Smith (to Item 4.5)
Mr J Convery	Mrs M Cairney	Mr B Summerfield
Ms S Slimon	Ms C Cameron	

### Staff Members in Attendance

Mr C Macaulay: Chief Executive	Mr J Clarke: Property Maintenance Director	Mr R Nairn: Finance & Corporate Services Director
Mr D Lockhart: Development Director	Ms H Barton: Housing & Communities Director	Corporate Officer (Minutes)

## 1. APOLOGIES

1.1 No apologies had been received for this meeting.

## 2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

2.1 Minutes of Previous Meeting: 22 May 2012

The minutes for the previous meeting were agreed as a true record.

### 2.1.1 Matters Arising

The Chief Executive still requires to progress the Board's core competencies. The Business Plan items have been addressed.

## 3. POLICY PROPOSALS AND REVIEW

3.1 Supporting Customer Engagement

3.1.1 The Housing & Communities Director's paper provided for the Board's review and adoption the policy and allowances for practical support to help customers engage with Albyn Housing Society.

3.1.2 As Mrs McLaughlan and Mrs Cairney are both members of registered groups they left the meeting whilst this discussion took place. Ms Slimon chaired this item in the Chair's absence.

3.1.3 In answer to a query, Ms Barton confirmed that in order to become a registered group, each would need to have at least three members to hold formal positions within the group. There was discussion about the proposed cost of care per hour and it was agreed that Ms Barton will consider this matter further.

- 3.1.4 The Board approved the policy.
- 3.1.5 Mrs McLaughlan and Mrs Cairney re-joined the meeting.

### 3.2 Supporting Communities Strategy

- 3.2.1 The Housing & Communities Director's paper provided a new strategy to guide Albyn's community development and regeneration activities for the Board's review and adoption.
- 3.2.2 Ms Slimon asked whether apprenticeships should be considered and Ms Barton confirmed that options like this will be reviewed as part of the action plan.
- 3.2.3 The Board agreed in principle the draft strategy, subject to the outcomes of wider consultation.

### 3.3 Debt Prevention and Recovery Policy

- 3.3.1 The Housing & Communities Director's paper provided the Debt Prevention and Recovery Policy for the Board's review and adoption.
- 3.3.2 It was agreed that each person should be treated as an individual, within the agreed policy. Ms Barton noted that changes had been made to ensure that people were not offered never-ending opportunities to pay arrears back, which had previously led to a small group of tenants who were constantly in arrears which were not being properly addressed. Tenants need to approach Albyn at an early stage if they are having difficulties.
- 3.3.3 Mr Macaulay suggested that potential write off of debt be reviewed on a quarterly basis. Mr Nairn commented on the auditors' view regarding this issue that Albyn should undertake a quarterly housekeeping exercise to ensure that resources are concentrated on debt that could be recovered.
- 3.3.4 It was agreed that the policy would be re-worded to ensure that tenants are given reasonable opportunity to make repayments.
- 3.3.5 With the amendments noted above, the Board approved the policy.

## **4. DECISION MAKING PAPERS**

### 4.1 Organisational Review: Proposals

- 4.1.1 The Chief Executive's paper updated the Board on progress with the organisational review and provided proposals to be considered by the Board. Mr Macaulay took the Board through the presentation he had given to staff.
- 4.1.2 Mr Macaulay noted that the paper tabled at the meeting regarding the Affordable Housing Supply Programme (under Agenda Item 4.9) would now need to be considered as part of this process, as Albyn's programme delivery role will be changing significantly.
- 4.1.3 The management team, led by the Directors, is taking the organisational review work forwards over the summer. This will include appropriate consultations internally and with tenants. A further paper will be provided to the September Board meeting.

- 4.1.4 New information regarding the housing supply programme had only crystallised in the last few days. The Board discussed what this meant for Albyn. It was noted that Albyn would require a detailed report on the corporate structure of the work and how it would be carried out to ensure that any risks are mitigated.
- 4.1.5 Business development within the organisation is still to be addressed. Discussions were continuing on where this should be situated within the structure.
- 4.1.6 It was agreed that there still needs to be a customer service approach, with day to day reactive maintenance being aligned with day to day housing management activity. Asset management needs to be separate but within Albyn. Finance and Corporate needs to be structured appropriately to provide internal business support.
- 4.1.7 Ms Smith noted that staff wanted more integration and working together, and customers wanted a more joined up approach. The work to date addresses these factors.
- 4.1.8 The Board agreed the proposals contained within this paper, subject to further clarification on the role that Albyn Enterprises Ltd might play in supporting effective change across the Group.

#### 4.2 Schedule 7 Allocation

- 4.2.1 The Housing & Communities Director's paper sought the Board's approval for a potential Schedule 7 allocation to the relative of a staff member.
- 4.2.2 The Board approved the Schedule 7 allocation.

#### 4.3 Statutory Accounts to 31 March 2012

- 4.3.1 The Finance & Corporate Director's paper sought approval from the Board for the Statutory Accounts for the 12 months to 31 March 2012. Mr Convery noted that the statutory accounts were discussed in detail at the Audit Committee meeting the previous week. It had been agreed at that meeting that information on component accounting needed to be provided to the Board.
- 4.3.2 Mr Nairn advised the Board that, put simply, component accounting means splitting up the various components within a property, for example the kitchen, heating system etc. Each component is then written off over its anticipated useful life.
- 4.3.3 Mr Nairn took the Board through some brief headlines on the subject. He will provide a more detailed presentation to the Board at a later date.
- 4.3.4 The Board approved the Statutory Accounts and the Accounts Consolidation System Financial Statements.

#### 4.4 Revised Budget to 31 March 2012 and 5 Year Projections 2012-17

- 4.4.1 The Finance & Corporate Director's paper sought approval for the Budget revisions that have been made following completion of the Statutory Accounts as they now incorporate the effects of Component Accounting and future implications with regard the treatment of component replacement and associated depreciation.
- 4.4.2 Mr Nairn tabled the Financial Projections and Assumptions paperwork required by the Scottish Housing Regulator which needed to be approved by the Board.

4.4.3 The Board approved the revised Budget and the Scottish Housing Regulator paperwork.

#### 4.5 Loan Portfolio and Return for Scottish Housing Regulator

4.5.1 The Finance & Corporate Director's paper sought approval for the interest rates strategy for the next year or two and approval for the submission of the Loan Portfolio Return for 2012.

4.5.2 The Board approved the strategy for interest rates and the submission of the Loan Portfolio Return for 2012.

#### 4.6 Pension Consultation

4.6.1 The Finance & Corporate Director's paper reported on the consultation exercise being carried out by the Pension Trust and sought approval in principal to Albyn's response to the consultation. Mr Nairn gave the Board a presentation regarding this issue.

4.6.2 The Board approved the proposed response from Albyn to the Pension Trust's consultation.

#### 4.7 Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Tender

4.7.1 The Finance & Corporate Director's paper sought approval from the Board to implement the revised ICT infrastructure based on the detailed costings provided, following agreement on the ICT infrastructure.

4.7.2 The Board approved the proposal to implement the revised ICT infrastructure.

#### 4.8 Eviction Approval

4.8.1 With regards this paper, Ms Barton noted that approval for eviction was no longer required, as suitable arrangements for repayment of the arrears had been agreed with the tenant concerned.

#### 4.9 Affordable Housing Supply Programme: 2012-15

4.9.1 The Development Director's paper was tabled at the Board meeting. It advised the Board on projects proposed to be included in the Affordable Housing Supply Programme 2012-15 as agreed with The Highland Council. It also sought Board approval for the submission of the Affordable Housing Supply Programme 2012-15; for the strategy of developing houses on behalf of Albyn; and to contribute to the provision of new homes, providing Development agency services to others.

4.9.2 This paper was partly considered along with the discussion regarding the organisational review at Agenda Item 4.1.

4.9.3 In answer to a query from the Chair, the Chief Executive confirmed that this proposal does not contradict the organisational review taking place. The agreement of the organisational review paper earlier gave the staff latitude to explore various options. Although this was slightly at a tangent to the discussion to date, approval of the paper would allow Mr Lockhart to continue with discussions on this issue.

4.9.4 The Board approved the submission of the Affordable Housing Supply Programme 2012-15; for the strategy of developing houses on behalf of Albyn; and to contribute to the provision of new homes, providing Development agency services to others.

## **5. INFORMATION PAPERS**

### **5.1 2012 Resident Satisfaction Survey: Results**

5.1.1 The Housing & Communities Director's paper updated the Board on the outcomes of Albyn's most recent resident satisfaction survey.

5.1.2 In answer to a query from Mr Summerfield, Ms Barton confirmed that some of the questions are standardised across the sector. Mr Summerfield was concerned that the questions are framed to obtain a positive response, for example "how satisfied are you that...". Ms Barton noted that this structure was the same as previous years and was the commonly used wording. Two different consultants have offered advice on the wording of the questions. The STAR survey methodology is also used.

5.1.3 The report was noted by the Board.

### **5.2 Preparing for Welfare Reform**

5.2.1 This paper provided an update on progress to date with the Successful Tenancies Strategy approved in September 2010.

5.2.2 The Chair noted that welfare reform scenarios have been placed on Albyn's Facebook page to help inform tenants about what might happen. Discussions will need to take place with tenants who are currently in a property too large for their needs to try and identify other options for them.

5.2.3 The report was noted by the Board.

## **6. MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

### **6.1 Performance Committee Meeting: 15 May 2012**

6.1.1 The draft minutes of the Performance Committee meeting held on 15 May 2012 were noted.

### **6.2 Health and Safety Committee Meeting: 24 May 2012**

6.2.1 The minutes of the Health and Safety Committee meeting held on 24 May 2012 were noted.

### **6.3 Staff Consultative Forum: 12 June 2012**

6.3.1 The minutes of the Staff Consultative Forum meeting held on 12 June were noted.

### **6.4 Albyn Enterprises Limited: 14 June 2012**

6.4.1 The minutes of the Albyn Enterprises Ltd Board of Directors meeting held on 14 June were noted.

## **7. HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### **7.1 Verbal Update**

As the Director responsible for health and safety, Mr Clarke thanked the Board for participating in today's fire drill, which appeared to have gone well.

## **8. LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

8.1 There were no requests for a leave of absence for the next Board meeting.

## **9. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS**

### **9.1 British Government Response to Consultation on The Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation (ECO)**

The Property Maintenance Director reported that on 22 June, the Government issued its response to this consultation. The most significant item for the Society is that a new section has been added to the ECO. This "Carbon Savings Communities" section will focus on rural, low income settlements of less than 10,000. It also has a heavy focus on solid wall insulation.

### **9.2 Scottish Government Consultation Document: "Developing an Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing"**

The Property Maintenance Director reported that on 25 June this consultation document was issued. The intention is to set a standard which is challenging for landlords, but achievable by 2020. Responses are required by 28 September 2012.

### **9.3 SFHA Elections**

There is one place available on the SFHA Board for the Rural and Islands constituency. The closing date for nominations is 13 July. If the Board members wish to nominate someone please inform Mr Macaulay.

## **10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is due to take place on Tuesday 11 September 2012 at Invergordon.