

ALBYN HOUSING SOCIETY LIMITED

REPORT OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 27 MAY 2014 AT 10:30 AM AT ALBYN'S OFFICES, INVERGORDON

Present

Mr D Russell (Chair)
Mrs S Slimon
Ms M Smith

Mr G Sinclair (Vice-Chair)
Mr J Oag
Ms K Williams

Mr J Convery
Mr T Solle
Mrs I McLaughlan

In Attendance

Mr C Macaulay: Chief Executive

Mr R Nairn: Finance &
Corporate Services Director

Ms H Barton: Customer
Services Director

Miss C Lawrie: Corporate Officer
(Minutes)

Ms H Cameron: Asset Management & Investment Manager
(Items 4.10, 4.11 and 7.1)

1. APOLOGIES

1.1 Apologies had been received from Mrs Grant, Mrs Dingwall and Mr Summerfield for this meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

2.1 Two conflicts of interest were noted for this meeting.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: 18 MARCH 2014

3.1 The minutes were agreed as a true record.

4. DECISION MAKING PAPERS

4.1 Annual Return on the Charter: 2014

4.1.1 The Chair noted that the Performance Committee had considered in detail the Annual Return on the Charter at their meeting on 20 May. The Committee had recommended that the Board approve the Annual Return on the Charter 2014 for submission to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

4.1.2 The Finance & Corporate Services Director tabled some amended pages for the Return and he took the Board through the tabled pages. The main change was the inclusion of the Scottish Housing Quality Standards (SHQS) data which had become available since the Performance Committee meeting.

4.1.3 The Board approved submission of the Annual Return on the Charter 2014 to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

4.2 Albyn Housing Society: Model Rules Change

- 4.2.1 The Chief Executive spoke to his paper which asked the Board to approve the proposed new Rules for Albyn Housing Society. This would ensure that the Rules reflected the Scottish Housing Regulator's new model rules. It also changed all references to the governing body from "Committee" to "Board".
- 4.2.2 One query was raised by the Board on which legal advice will be sought. It was agreed that the Chair will approve on behalf of the Board any amendment arising from this query.
- 4.2.3 Subject to the query noted above, the Board approved the proposed new Rules for Albyn Housing Society.

4.3 Approval and Authority Limits: 2014

- 4.3.1 The Finance & Corporate Services Director spoke to his paper which asked the Board to endorse the Approval and Authority Limits for 2014.
- 4.3.2 One of the changes made to the document was that tenders could be approved internally if they fell within the budget. Mr Nairn confirmed that the Board will receive retrospective reports on any tenders which are approved on or below budget.
- 4.3.3 The Board endorsed the Approval and Authority Limits for 2014.

4.4 Survey of Board Papers and Meetings: Outcomes

- 4.4.1 The Board members were asked to consider the outcomes of the surveys they had participated in following the Board meetings held in September and November 2013 and January 2014. The surveys had asked for feedback from Board members on their views on information and papers provided to Board meetings.
- 4.4.2 It was noted that a timed agenda was useful, as long as it did not stifle discussion on important matters. The Chair agreed with this comment and believed that those areas where discussion has taken longer were those matters which required more detailed debate.
- 4.4.3 It was agreed that policy documents should be placed at the end of the agenda and that Board members would be able to provide any comments at the end of the meeting.
- 4.4.4 The Board approved the proposals contained within the paper.

4.5 Equalities and Diversity Statement

- 4.5.1 The Finance & Corporate Services Director spoke to his paper which asked the Board to endorse Albyn's Policy Statement on Equality and Diversity. This statement had been approved by the Staff Consultative Forum at their meeting on 11 March 2014.
- 4.5.2 The Customer Services Director confirmed that policies were in place to support this statement, including Albyn's role as landlord.
- 4.5.3 The Board endorsed the Policy Statement on Equality and Diversity.

4.6 Albyn Enterprises Ltd: Business Plan

- 4.6.1 The Chief Executive spoke to his paper which asked the Board to approve the Business Plan for Albyn Enterprises Ltd. The Board of Albyn Enterprises Ltd (AEL) had approved the plan at their meeting on 3 April.
- 4.6.2 Mr Convery, as Chair of Albyn Enterprises Ltd Board of Directors, spoke to the plan and noted that the main new activity within the plan was the factoring business.
- 4.6.3 It was agreed that key AEL staff will attend a future Board meeting to give the Board a presentation on the factoring business.
- 4.6.4 The Board approved the Business Plan for Albyn Enterprises Ltd.

4.7 Staff Consultative Forum: Remit

- 4.7.1 The Board was asked to approve the proposed changes to the remit of the Staff Consultative Forum (SCF). The amendments included reference to: holding up to four meetings per annum; and that ad hoc or special meetings could be requested by either the Union or Non-Union Group. The Group requesting such a meeting must provide supporting papers in time to allow consultation to take place. The changes had been agreed by the SCF at their 11 March 2014 meeting.
- 4.7.2 The Board approved the changes to the remit of the Staff Consultative Forum.

4.8 Digital Health: Business Opportunity

- 4.8.1 The Chief Executive spoke to his paper which updated the Board on progress with identifying a business opportunity regarding Digital Health. The Board was asked to allocate a budget for the funding of this project.
- 4.8.2 Mr Macaulay reported that he and Ms Lucy Fraser, Albyn's Communities Co-ordinator, had been participating in the "Wavelength" project. This aimed to bring together people from different sectors, particularly third sector and private, so that they could learn about leadership, business growth and to allow ideas to cross-pollinate. As a result of contacts made through Wavelength a meeting had been held with a large commercial organisation to discuss this digital health opportunity. It may be that the organisation can provide further support.
- 4.8.3 The Board approved the proposals for funding for the Digital Health project.

4.9 Eviction Approvals

- 4.9.1 The Board was asked to endorse the Chair's approval of one request for enforcement for a court decree for eviction which had been given between meetings, and to consider one further request. Since the paper was prepared, two further eviction requests had been identified and the paperwork was tabled at the meeting.
- 4.9.2 It was noted that in one of the cases the debt had built up over a period of quite some time. It was suggested that perhaps proceedings should start earlier in the process as this might have prevented such a debt build up. This would be a judgement call for those involved. The Customer Services Director agreed with the suggestion and responded that this is being addressed internally so that the process to take action will start earlier in future.

4.9.3 The Board ratified the Chair's approval of one request for enforcement for a court decree for eviction, and approved the further three requests for enforcement of a court decree for eviction.

4.10 Annual Painting Contract: 2014

4.10.1 The Asset Management & Investment Manager joined the meeting for this item. The Board was asked to approve awarding the tender for the annual painting contract for 2014.

4.10.2 It was confirmed that 620 properties plus three garages will be included in the painting contract.

4.10.3 The Board approved that the tender for the annual painting contract for 2014.

4.11 Smithton Forestry Site: Newbuild Tender

4.11.1 The Asset Management & Investment Manager remained in the meeting for this item. The Board was asked to approve awarding the tender for the design and build contract at the former Forestry Commission site at Smithton. Work on this site is due to start end June / early July.

4.11.2 The Board approved the tender for the design and build contract at the former Forestry Commission site at Smithton.

5. POLICY PROPOSALS AND REVIEW

5.1 Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement: Changes

5.1.1 The Customer Services Director spoke to her paper which asked the Board to approve two changes to Albyn's Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement. This was to incorporate a proposal to restrict the number of pets that tenants can keep without prior written permission; and a change of wording to clarify the ambiguity relating to Albyn's rights of access for work other than repairs or provision of service installations.

5.1.2 Ms Barton noted that the new Housing Bill currently working its way through Parliament may lead to further changes to the Tenancy Agreement once it becomes law.

5.1.3 The Board approved the two changes to Albyn's Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement.

5.2 Risk Management Strategy

5.2.1 The Finance & Corporate Services Director spoke to his paper which asked the Board to approve the Risk Management Strategy for Albyn. This strategy is based on the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) good practice and on guidance issued by the Regulator. The strategy has also been subject to recent review by the internal auditors.

5.2.2 The Board approved the Risk Management Strategy for Albyn.

6. MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

6.1 Audit Committee: 27 March 2014

6.1.1 The minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 27 March 2014 were noted.

6.2 Albyn Enterprises Ltd Board: 3 April 2014

6.2.1 The draft minutes of the Albyn Enterprises Ltd Board meeting held on 3 April 2014 were noted.

6.3 Staffing Committee: 8 April 2014

6.3.1 The minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 8 April 2014 were noted. The Board considered the revised Staffing Committee remit. The main amendments to the remit were: the inclusion that the Committee may establish working groups from time to time, the results from which the Committee will oversee and report to the Board on; and that the Committee will oversee all matters relating to staff remuneration.

6.3.2 The Board approved the revised Staffing Committee remit. Ms Williams, as Chair of the Committee, drew the Board's attention to the Committee's comments regarding the positive outcomes from the recent staff survey.

7. STANDING ITEMS

7.1 Aviemore Heating System Update

7.1.1 The Asset Management & Investment Manager joined the meeting for this item.

7.1.2 Ms Cameron updated that the contract with the company maintaining the system in Aviemore will be terminated at end May. This is because the company concerned is due to sell its energy business to another organisation. An alternative management system will then take over. An organisation called Ignus will provide a consultative service over the next six months to ensure that the right decisions are made for the future of the project.

7.1.3 The Chair had recently visited the site and he suggested that all of the Board members visit at some point.

7.1.4 The Board noted the report.

8. HEALTH AND SAFETY

8.1 Reference was made to the recent health and safety training that the Board members had received which had given them some useful information. There were no health and safety issues to report.

9. LEAVE OF ABSENCE

9.1 No requests for a leave of absence for the Board meeting taking place on 24 June 2014 were received.

10. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

10.1 Albyn's Current Performance

The Chair reported that for the first time within Albyn's performance reports there were no longer any red, or danger, areas. This had been noted at the recent Performance Committee meeting. The data had been tabled at the meeting for the Board members' information. The Chair thanked the staff for this significant achievement.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

11.1 The next meeting is due to take place on 24 June 2014 in Invergordon.