

**ALBYN HOUSING SOCIETY LIMITED**  
**REPORT OF THE BOARD MEETING**  
**HELD ON TUESDAY 11 SEPTEMBER 2012 AT 10:30 AM**  
**AT ALBYN OFFICES, INVERGORDON**

**Board Members Present**

Mrs I McLaughlan (Chair)	Mr G Sinclair	Ms S Slimon (to Item 6)
Mr D Russell	Mr J Oag	Ms M Smith (except Item 5.8)
Mr J Convery (except Item 5.8)	Mrs M Cairney	Ms C Cameron
Mr G Kelman		

**Staff Members in Attendance**

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

**1. APOLOGIES**

1.1 Apologies were received from Mrs MacRae and Mr Summerfield for this meeting.

**2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

2.1 Minutes of Previous Meeting: 26 June 2012

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

2.1.2 **Action Items**

A discussion took place about how to produce minutes where Board members have noted a conflict of interest. It was agreed that the Board members concerned will continue to remove themselves from a discussion where they have identified a conflict of interest. They will, however, receive the full minutes on the basis that once a decision is made at a Board meeting, it becomes in effect public knowledge.

2.1.3 The Chief Executive continues to progress the production of a set of core competencies for the Board.

2.1.4 The Housing & Communities Director updated on the investigation carried out regarding the cost of care per hour which arose whilst discussing the Supporting Customer Engagement paper at the previous meeting. Ms Barton suggested a two tier approach, with the cost for specialist care being £15 per hour, and a lower cost provided for routine baby-sitting costs. This proposal was agreed by the Board.

2.2 Minutes of Special Meeting: 28 August 2012

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

### 3. POLICY PROPOSALS AND REVIEW

#### 3.1 Unacceptable Actions: Draft Policy

3.1.1 It was noted that this policy had been prepared to address the behaviour or actions of a small minority of Albyn's customers which become unacceptable as they involve abuse of Albyn's staff or the Society's processes. This was part of the work carried out regarding the new process for handling complaints.

3.1.2 It was noted that there should be staff support for this issue. It was suggested that staff needed to report issues when they happen and not let them continue for months before doing so. The Chief Executive confirmed that there is an Employee Assistance programme in place, but internal support will also be needed.

3.1.3 Guidance will be issued to staff and supplementary support put in place.

3.1.4 The Board approved the Policy, subject to tenant consultation.

#### 3.2 Highland Housing Options

3.2.1 The Housing & Communities Director's paper informed the Board of progress being made to develop a Housing Options approach to the Highlands. It also requested in principle approval for Ms Barton's continued involvement in the Project Board.

3.2.2 Ms Barton confirmed that the partnership is building a number of links across many services covering statutory, voluntary and private sectors. In answer to a comment from the Board, Ms Barton noted that Albyn had been part of a group which had considered implementing a social lettings agency. At the time it had been put in abeyance because of the cost and lack of requirement. However, it was still an option which could be considered again if necessary.

3.2.3 The Board agreed that Ms Barton should continue to be involved in the Project Board.

### 4. DECISION MAKING PAPERS

#### 4.1 Election to Committees and External Bodies

4.1.1 The Chief Executive's paper provided a briefing on the election of Board members to various committees and external bodies.

##### 4.1.2 **Audit Committee**

Mrs Slimon noted her interest in joining the Committee. It was agreed that the current members would remain, with the addition of Mrs Slimon. Membership is, therefore: Messrs Convery, Oag, Kelman, Miss Cameron and Mrs Slimon.

##### 4.1.3 **Performance Committee**

It was noted that there were currently eight members, which is one too many. Mrs Slimon and Mr Sinclair wished to resign from the Committee. Mr Kelman would like to join the Committee. Membership was therefore agreed as: Messrs Oag, Russell, Summerfield, Kelman and Convery, Mrs Cairney and Mrs McLaughlan.

- 4.1.4 The Chief Executive said that the implementation of the Scottish Social Housing Charter means that tenants need to be more closely involved in setting targets and reporting within RSLs. Mr Macaulay proposed that two or three tenants are invited to join the Performance Committee, rather than setting up a new group which might potentially be in conflict with the Committee. By bringing tenants into the Committee, their role and status can be clearly identified as being equal to the Board members.
- 4.1.5 The group looking at implementing the Charter will be asked to consider the process by which tenants are invited to join the Committee.
- 4.1.6 Mr Oag thought this was an excellent idea. Ms Smith suggested that a good geographical spread was required to represent the area. The Chair agreed that the tenants should feel equal to the rest of the members of the Committee. The tenants would only be members of the Committee, not Board members. They might not need to be members of the Society, although this will be clarified by Ms Barton.
- 4.1.7 The Board agreed that Ms Barton take this forwards. Ms Barton noted that the volunteers will need training and support. Mr Macaulay asked that the Customer Involvement Strategy Group consider what was needed and report back to the Board.
- 4.1.8 Proposals should be available by the next Performance Committee meeting in November.
- 4.1.9 Mr Convery asked when the Charter requirements needed to be in place. Ms Barton confirmed that reporting had to happen from April 2014, so the requirements had to be in place from April 2013.
- 4.1.10 Ms Barton noted that the Scottish Housing Best Value Network (SHBVN) will be making a presentation at the start of the next Performance Committee meeting regarding Albyn's benchmarking figures in the context of the Society's peer group(s). It would mean the meeting being longer than usual as the presentation will take approximately two hours. This was noted.
- 4.1.11 **Staffing Committee**  
It was agreed that Mrs Slimon will join this Committee. The membership will therefore be: Mrs Slimon, Mrs McLaughlan, Mrs MacRae, Mrs Cairney, Ms Smith, Miss Cameron and Mr Sinclair.
- 4.1.12 **Health & Safety Committee**  
It was agreed that membership will remain the same, which is: Messrs Summerfield and Russell, Mrs MacRae and Mrs Slimon.
- 4.1.13 **Highland Small Communities Housing Trust**  
It was agreed that Mr Oag continue as the representative.
- 4.1.14 **Employers in Voluntary Housing (EVH)**  
It was agreed that Mrs Slimon remain as the representative.
- 4.1.15 **Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA)**  
It was agreed that Mrs McLaughlan remain as the representative.
- 4.1.16 **Albyn Enterprises Limited**  
It was agreed that Mrs MacRae continue as the representative.

4.1.17 **Highland Housing Alliance**

It was agreed that Mrs McLaughlan and Mr Kelman will continue as the representatives.

4.1.18 **TPAS**

It was agreed that Mrs McLaughlan continue as the representative.

4.1.19 **Rural & Islands Housing Association Forum (RIHAF)**

It was agreed that Mrs Slimon continue as the representative.

4.1.20 The Board approved the changes to the Committees and external bodies.

4.2 Society Membership: Applications and Cancellations

4.2.1 Nine applications have been received for membership. The Board discussed these and approved them as listed below:

- Ms Currie, Evanton
- Ms Mackay, Beauly
- Mr Lasota, Fortrose
- Mrs Craib, Inverness
- Mr Noble, Kingussie
- Mrs Kafetzaki, Muir of Ord
- Mr Harrison, Invergordon
- Ms Anderson, Milton of Leys
- Mr Salkin, Balnain Street, Inverness

4.2.2 It was noted that potential new members had been identified through the tenant satisfaction survey and contacted, which had resulted in the above responses.

4.2.3 Albyn has been informed of some members who have passed away. In addition, a number of members have not attended an Annual General Meeting for five years, nor given their apologies or a proxy vote. The Chair noted that some members on the list had in fact given apologies, and they will therefore remain as members. It was agreed that the membership for the remaining people be cancelled.

4.2.4 The Board approved the additions and cancellations to the membership list, with the revisions as noted above.

4.3 Albyn Housing Society: Terms and Conditions of Employment

4.3.1 The paper asked the Board to consider the amendments required to the Society's Terms and Conditions of Employment as a result of legislative change; proposals from Employers in Voluntary Housing (EVH), the actions of pension providers; and local negotiation.

4.3.2 The Terms and Conditions of Employment had been discussed at the Staff Consultative Forum and at the Staffing Committee.

4.3.3 The Board approved the Terms and Conditions of Employment.

#### 4.4 Schedule 7: Approvals and Endorsements

4.4.1 The Housing & Communities Director's paper requested endorsement of the Chair's approval in respect of an enforcement of court decree for the recovery of possession. The Board was asked to note the buy back of a property and re-sale to a staff member's relative (known as a Schedule 7 allocation). Ms Barton had circulated separately a second approval for eviction.

4.4.2 Mr Lockhart referred to the issue whereby the relative of a staff member was successful in her application for a buy back LIFT property. The application had been processed with no knowledge of the applicant's relationship to a staff member. Once Albyn had become aware of this, the application form was amended to ensure that this will not happen again in the future.

4.4.3 The Board approved the Chair's action and the additional approval for eviction.

#### 4.5 Insurance Tender 2012: Results and Recommendation

4.5.1 The Finance & Corporate Services Director spoke to his paper which requested the Board's approval to award the insurance contract for three years to a specific organisation.

4.5.2 The Board approved the awarding of the insurance contract to the named organisation.

#### 4.6 Mid-Market Rent Proposals for Albyn Enterprises Ltd

4.6.1 The Finance & Corporate Services Director spoke to his paper which requested the Board's approval to lease four properties to Albyn Enterprises Limited (AEL) for a period of five years to be used under the mid-market rent scheme.

4.6.2 The information required for the Regulator had been sent to them as required.

4.6.3 The Board approved the lease of four properties to Albyn Enterprises Limited for a period of five years to be used under the mid-market rent scheme.

### **5. INFORMATION PAPERS**

#### 5.1 Regulatory Advice Note: Payments and Benefits

5.1.1 The Chief Executive referred to the Advice Note circulated by the Scottish Housing Regulator regarding Payments and Benefits.

5.1.2 The report was noted by the Board.

#### 5.2 Scottish Government and Scottish Housing Regulator Consultations

5.2.1 The Housing & Communities Director spoke to her paper which referred to the Right to Buy and Scottish Social Housing Indicator consultations.

5.2.2 The Board noted the report.

### 5.3 Scottish Government Consultations: Presentation by Property Maintenance Director

5.3.1 The Property Maintenance Director provided the Board with a presentation on two Scottish Government consultations: Scotland's Sustainable Housing Strategy, and the Scottish Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing.

5.3.2 Mr Clarke confirmed that thermal imaging had been carried out on properties in Milton and this had helped determine what further work was needed. It can also be used on new properties after they are built but the work has to be carried out in the winter months as it needs to be dark.

5.3.3 The Board noted the presentation.

### 5.4 Audit Committee: Annual Report

5.4.1 The Finance & Corporate Services Director's paper presented the Annual Report from the Audit Committee for the year to 31 March 2012.

5.4.2 The Board noted the Audit Committee's Annual Report.

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

### 6.1 Staffing Committee Meeting: 31 July 2012

6.1.1 The minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 31 July 2012 were noted.

### 6.2 Health and Safety Committee Meeting: 16 August 2012

6.2.1 The minutes of the Health and Safety Committee meeting held on 16 August 2012 were noted.

## 7. **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

7.1 There was nothing to report on this item.

## 8. **LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

8.1 Ms Smith requested a leave of absence for the Board Strategy meeting on 23 October.

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

### 9.1 **Board Meeting Dates: 2013 / 14**

The proposed meeting dates for the 2013/14 year had been circulated to the Board for information.

### 9.2 **Board Meeting held on 14 August 2012**

It was noted the minutes of the special Board meeting held following the AGM will need to be considered at the next available meeting, which will be in November.

### 9.3 **Report from Property Maintenance Director**

The Property Maintenance Director proposed to bring forward the bathroom replacements at Kilmuir Place and Ardross Place in Invergordon. The Board approved this proposal. Recommendations from the Milton Group are expected for the expenditure of £50k funding within the scheme.

### 9.4 **Welfare Reform**

The Housing & Communities Director reported that Albyn was receiving useful publicity regarding welfare reform, which started after one of Albyn's tenants campaigned on the issue. Albyn's PR company had also carried out work on this campaign. Other case studies had also been identified, including Milton of Kildary as an area of interest. Mrs McLaughlan had been interviewed by STV. SFHA were also running a double page spread in their next newsletter. The Chair noted that this had been a theme at the recent SFHA conference. She asked for a Welfare Reform paper to be prepared for the next Board meeting to highlight the effect to Albyn. Mr Sinclair added that the start of planning for this issue needed to be a financial impact assessment. Other organisations had a formal, planned strategy. Ms Barton confirmed that the Board had considered Albyn's plan at their last meeting. She will update the information and provide it to the next Board meeting.

### 9.5 **Tenant Handbook**

The Housing & Communities Director reported that the new tenants' handbook is now available. She will circulate copies to the Board.

## 10. **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

- 10.1
- Board training event: Friday 28 September at Invergordon
  - Staff Consultative Forum: Tuesday 9 October at Inverness
  - Audit Committee Meeting: Tuesday 16 October at Invergordon
  - Board Strategy Meeting: Tuesday 23 October 2012 – venue to be confirmed