

ALBYN HOUSING SOCIETY LIMITED

REPORT OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 2014 AT 10:30 AM AT ALBYN'S OFFICES, INVERGORDON

Present

Mr D Russell (Chair)
Mr T Solle
Ms K Williams

Mr G Sinclair (Vice-Chair)
Mrs E Grant

Mr J Convery
Mrs P Dingwall

In Attendance

Mr C Macaulay: Chief Executive
Miss C Lawrie: Corporate Officer (Minutes)

Mrs L Ewart: Consultant (Agenda Item 4)

1. APOLOGIES

- 1.1 Apologies had been received from Ms Smith, Mrs McLaughlan, Mrs Slimon and Mr Nairn for this meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 No conflicts of interest were noted for this meeting.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

3.1 Minutes of Board Meeting: 24 June 2014

With one small amendment the minutes were agreed as a true record.

3.2 Minutes of Special General Meeting: 19 August 2014

The minutes were agreed as a true record.

3.3 Minutes of Meeting following Annual General Meeting: 19 August 2014

The minutes were agreed as a true record.

4. WORKSHOP: REVIEW OF COMMITTEE STRUCTURE AND THE BOARD'S PERFORMANCE AS A WHOLE

- 4.1 Mrs Linda Ewart, an external consultant, joined the meeting for this item. Mrs Ewart had been tasked to assist the Board in carrying out a self- assessment of its effectiveness in the context of the Scottish Housing Regulator's Regulatory Framework. As well as being good practice, the Regulatory Standards require governing bodies to regularly review their governance arrangements and to use the results to inform training and succession planning. The results of a self-assessment exercise can also be used to ensure that governance arrangements are fit for

purpose and to identify any areas for improvement or refinement. The self-assessment was intended to gather together the views of Albyn's Board and Executive Team on the effectiveness of the current governance arrangements.

- 4.2 Mrs Ewart confirmed that the overall feedback from the survey had been very positive. Mrs Ewart took the Board through the main survey outcomes. She provided advice and guidance on some areas that had been highlighted within the survey.
- 4.3 One of the weaker areas (in an overall strong response to the survey) was around the skills, knowledge and experience of Board members. The specific issues were regarding securing tenant involvement; assessing the skills profile; and supporting and appraising the Chief Executive. The Chair noted that training is provided to support Board members and ensure that any skills and knowledge gaps are addressed.
- 4.4 It was noted that the new Board members had fitted well into the team and the Board members worked well together as a whole. It was acknowledged that most of the Board members had the experience and skills required. However, asking questions of themselves ensured that the Board members did not get complacent. It was noted that training has a role, but this had to be balanced by having relevant skills and experience.
- 4.5 The Chair referred to the balance required between operational and strategic matters. Mrs Ewart agreed that a balance was required in order that Board members can make informed decisions. Mrs Ewart noted that the assessment from Albyn's Board had been one of the strongest that she had seen for a while.
- 4.6 The Chair thanked Mrs Ewart for her assistance with this process. At this point Mrs Ewart left the meeting.

5. DECISION MAKING PAPERS

5.1 Election to Committees and External Bodies

At the June meeting, Board members had been asked to complete a form indicating their preferences for Committee membership. Based on this information and discussions that had taken place at their appraisals, the Chief Executive and Chair had made some proposals for Committee membership going forwards. The Chief Executive also proposed that the Health and Safety Committee be incorporated into the Staffing Committee in order to reduce the number of Committees that each Board member joins.

5.1.1 The Board discussed the proposal to merge the Staffing Committee and Health and Safety Committee. It was confirmed that the merged Committee would only need to meet at most four times a year. This would reduce the amount of meetings currently held between the two. It was agreed that a revised remit for a merged Committee will be discussed at the November meeting.

5.1.2 Audit Committee

After discussion membership was confirmed as Ms Williams, Mrs Dingwall and Messrs Sinclair and Convery.

5.1.3 Performance Committee

After discussion membership was confirmed as Mrs Grant, Mrs McLaughlan, Mrs Slimon and Messrs Russell and Convery.

- 5.1.4 **Staffing Committee**
As noted above, it was proposed that the Staffing Committee incorporate the Health and Safety Committee. A merged remit will be provided to the November meeting for consideration. In the meantime membership of the Staffing Committee was confirmed as Mrs Grant, Ms Williams, Ms Smith, Mrs Slimon and Mr Russell. Membership of the Staff Consultative Forum will be decided at the next meeting of the Committee.
- 5.1.5 **Highland Small Communities Housing Trust**
In her absence, Mrs Slimon was proposed as Albyn's new representative.
- 5.1.6 **Scottish Federation of Housing Associations**
In her absence, it was agreed that Mrs McLaughlan will continue as Albyn's representative.
- 5.1.7 **Employers in Voluntary Housing (EVH)**
It was agreed that Mrs Dingwall will continue as Albyn's representative.
- 5.1.8 **Albyn Enterprises Limited**
Membership was confirmed as Mr Convery, Mrs McLaughlan, Mrs Dingwall and Mr Sinclair. In addition, Ms Smith will continue to represent Albyn Housing Society on the Board. Mr Russell will attend meetings as an observer.
- 5.1.9 **Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS)**
It was agreed that Mrs McLaughlan will continue as the representative.
- 5.1.10 **Rural & Islands Housing Association Forum (RIHAF)**
It was agreed that Mrs Slimon will continue as the representative.
- 5.1.11 **Highland Housing Alliance (HHA)**
It was noted that the Chief Executive will continue as one of the Housing Association members on the HHA Board.
- 5.1.12 The Board approved the membership of the Committees and external bodies.

5.2 Society Membership: Cancellations

- 5.2.1 The Chief Executive's paper sought approval to cancel a number of memberships from those members who have had no contact with the Society for a period of five years.
- 5.2.2 The Board approved the cancellation of the memberships as listed in the paper.

5.3 Board Members Appraisals: Outcomes

- 5.3.1 The Chief Executive's paper provided proposals to address the skills and knowledge gaps identified through the recent appraisals process. Appraisals had taken place for all but one of the Board members. The final appraisal was due to take place after this meeting.
- 5.3.2 The Chair noted that he had found the appraisals process very useful and he thanked the Board members for their full contribution.
- 5.3.3 It was agreed that the action items will be reviewed in six months' time.
- 5.3.4 The Board noted the report.

5.4 Code of Conduct for Governing Body Members

- 5.4.1 The Chief Executive's paper provided the revised Code of Conduct for Governing Body Members. This Code had been produced by the Scottish Federation for Housing Associations (SFHA) and had been endorsed by the Scottish Housing Regulator.
- 5.4.2 It was agreed that the declaration form and list of contractors be circulated to all Board members, as the new Code may require additional declarations.
- 5.4.3 The Board approved the implementation of the revised Code of Conduct for Governing Body Members.

5.5 Code of Conduct for Staff

- 5.5.1 A Code of Conduct, similar to that for Governing Body Members, had been produced for staff. The SFHA document had been endorsed by the Scottish Housing Regulator.
- 5.5.2 It was noted that the document had been considered and endorsed by the Staff Consultative Forum at its 2 September meeting. The next step, after Board approval, would be a process to ensure that all staff sign up to the Code.
- 5.5.3 The Board approved the implementation of the Code of Conduct for staff.

5.6 Eviction Approvals

- 5.6.1 The Customer Services Director's paper requested the Board's endorsement of the Chair's approvals for the enforcement of two eviction decrees. It also requested the Board's approval of a further three requests for the enforcement of eviction decrees.
- 5.6.2 The Board discussed the Chair's two approvals. After consideration the Board endorsed both of the Chair's approvals.
- 5.6.3 After further discussion the three requests for the enforcement of eviction decrees were also approved by the Board.

5.7 Mid-Market Rent Proposal

- 5.7.1 The Finance & Corporate Services Director's paper requested the Board's endorsement of the Chair's approval to lease one property in Grantown-on-Spey. It also asked the Board to approve the buy back of a Sharing Owner's part share in a property in Inverness. Both properties would then be managed by Albyn Enterprises Limited (AEL) under the mid-market rent scheme.
- 5.7.2 The Board endorsed the Chair's approval to lease one property in Grantown-on-Spey. The Board also approved the buy back of a Sharing Owner's part share in a property in Inverness.

5.8 Sale of Property: Inverness

- 5.8.1 The Finance & Corporate Services Director's paper requested the Board's approval to sell a property in Inverness. The sale of the property would help with long-term support plans for the current tenant.
- 5.8.2 The Board approved the sale of the property.

6. MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

6.1 Albyn Enterprises Ltd: 26 June 2014

6.1.1 The minutes of the Albyn Enterprises Limited (AEL) Board of Directors meeting held on 26 June 2014 were noted. The Chair of the AEL Board reported that AEL continues to move forwards with the factoring work.

6.2 Performance Committee: 12 August 2014

6.2.1 The minutes of the Performance Committee meeting held on 12 August 2014 were noted.

6.3 Albyn Enterprises Ltd: 28 August 2014

6.3.1 The draft minutes of the Albyn Enterprises Limited Board of Directors meeting held on 28 August 2014 were noted.

6.4 Staff Consultative Forum: 2 September 2014

6.4.1 The draft minutes of the Staff Consultative Forum meeting held on 2 September 2014 were noted. This meeting had been convened specifically to consider the proposed Code of Conduct for staff. Some comments had been passed to the Committee by the non-union staff group and these had been addressed during the meeting.

7. HEALTH AND SAFETY

7.1 There were no health and safety matters to note.

8. LEAVE OF ABSENCE

8.1 No requests for a leave of absence were received for the Board Strategy meeting taking place on 21 October 2014.

9. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

9.1 Scottish Water

The Chair asked for an update on the outstanding monies that were due from Scottish Water. It was noted that the amount owed had been outstanding for some time. The Chief Executive confirmed that a staff member was now focusing on this matter.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

10.1 The Board Strategy Day is due to take place on 21 October 2014 in Inverness.

11. POLICY PROPOSALS & REVIEW

11.1 There were no reports for this meeting.

12. INFORMATION PAPERS

12.1 Welfare Reform: Update

This paper had been circulated separately by email to Board members.

12.2 Highland Housing Register (HHR) Joint Allocations Policy: Annual Monitoring Report

This paper had been circulated separately by email to Board members.

12.3 Aviemore Heating System: Update

This paper had been circulated separately by email to Board members.

12.4 Organisational Review Implementation: Update

This paper had been circulated separately by email to Board members.