



MINUTES OF BRIDGEWATER HOUSING ASSOCIATION

BOARD MEETING

Venue: Virtually via Zoom

Date: 16th December 2020

Time: 5.30pm

Present:

Alastair Morris Chair, John Paterson Vice Chair, Heather Stirling Secretary (part), Angela Westrop Board Member, Aileen Naismith Board Member (part), Frank Bradley Board Member, Ken McIntosh Board Member, Denise Love Board Member, Suzanne Austin Board Member and Steven Webster Board Member.

In attendance:

Ian McLean Chief Executive, Ruth Brogan Head of Housing and Customer Services, Gary Stapleton Technical Services Manager, Angie Kennedy Head of Finance and Lesley Carr Minute Secretary.

Item	Details	Action
1.	Welcome and Chairs remarks	
	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and confirmed that members had received their papers on time. The Chair requested that members agree for the CE to manage the meeting on his behalf. Members AGREED .	
2.	Apologies	
	Apologies were received from Rab McNally, Craig McGarry and Scott Currie .	
3.	Declarations of Interest	
	Members were invited to declare any interest in any of the items on the agenda, in terms of the Association's published policy.	
3.1	There were no declarations made by those present.	
4.	Minute of the Board Meeting held on 25th November 2020	
	Members were invited to consider the minute of the Board Meeting held on 25 th November 2020.	
4.1	Members approved the minutes as a correct record of the meeting as PROPOSED by Alastair Morris and SECONDED by Angela Westrop.	

MATTERS ARISING	
5.	Matters arising from previous minute.
5.1	<p><u>Item 9 - Annual Assurance Statement</u></p> <p>The Chief Executive updated that he had met with the Chair and together they had made the suggested amendments to the Assurance Statement which were agreed at the last meeting. He confirmed that this had now been uploaded to the SHR Portal within the set deadline.</p> <p>There has been no feedback on the Assurance Statement from the Regulator at this point in time.</p>
5.2	<p><u>Item 12 - Code of Conduct</u></p> <p>The Chief Executive reminded members of their requirement to accept the New Board of Conduct which was considered at their meeting on 25th November.</p> <p>The Chief Executive asked those who had not already done so, to send an email to the Office Administrator as confirmation of their acceptance of the new Code.</p>
MATTERS FOR APPROVAL	
6.	Discussion on approach to rent setting for 21/22
	<p>Members were invited to consider a discussion paper prepared by the Financial Consultant and Head of Finance, the purpose of which was to provide some background information to help members come to a conclusion about their position in relation to any rent increase for next year. In particular this paper focussed on the possibility of Board Members wishing not to increase rents during 21/22 and the potential cumulative impact that this might have in relation to income going forward and consequently on the Boards plans for maintenance and investment in the future. The paper also provided scenarios where the Board might wish to agree a rent increase and likely options are provided along with the impact these would have on our business plan going forward.</p> <p>The CE updated that earlier this year, a proposal for a national rent freeze was put forward by Green MSP's and although it was voted down back in May, Tenant groups continue to put pressure on Government and Landlords to stop rent increases due to economic hardship brought about by COVID.</p> <p>Part of the preparation of our annual budget for 2021/22 is to consult with tenants on the level of rent increase to apply and there are several key factors which need to be considered including rent affordability, value for money, service levels and the long-term viability of the Association. These issues are detailed in proposed rent increase report for 20/21, which was considered by the Audit and Risk Sub Committee in February 20. This report was provided to Members again for their consideration when making a decision for this year.</p> <p>The CE asked those present to consider the pros and cons of a possible rent freeze outlined in the report and opened the meeting up for discussion.</p>
6.1	Following a full discussion Members AGREED to a Rent Freeze for 21/22.
MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION, COMMENT AND NOTING	

7.	IFLAIR update report – verbal	
	<p>Members were invited to consider an update on the IFLAIR procurement process provided by the Technical Services Manager, the purpose of which inform those present that the new IFLAIR 3 Framework is now in place and this has been up and running since Monday 14th December.</p> <p>The TSM explained the background to the Framework, which is used to procure major improvement contracts and can be utilised by 8 Local RSL’s in Renfrewshire, East Renfrewshire and Inverclyde. Within the Framework there are 8 identified contractors for each type of work, who will be able to bid for any major contracts.</p> <p>Although the Association is under no obligation to use the Framework, the TSM informed those present that we have already started the process to procure our roofing contract through the framework, this will enable us to start the works quicker than if we had to go to the open market.</p> <p>The CE and TSM will be meeting on Friday 16th December for the signing of the Framework documentation.</p>	
7.1	Members NOTED the update provided by the Technical Services Manager.	
8.	Asset Management Strategy 2021/2024 Draft for Discussion (to be approved in January 21)	
	<p>Members were invited to consider the draft Asset Management Plan presented by the Chief Executive. The CE explained that this document builds on the largely successful strategy which was approved by the Board in 2014. A more comprehensive strategy was approved, incorporating input from the Asset Management working group, and covered the period to 2019.</p> <p>The CE updated that the document now includes a separate section to cover the impact of COVID 19. Section 10 within the strategy outlines our main asset types which may be regarded as cause for concern. These include Sheltered Housing, Flatted Housing Stock within Multi-tenure blocks and common footpaths, carparks and walls.</p> <p>Members of the Board were asked to consider the Draft Plan and to suggest any areas where changes or amendments could be made.</p>	
8.1	Members NOTED the Draft Asset Management Strategy and delegated APPROVAL of the final document to the Scrutiny Committee at their meeting in January, incorporating any comments or changes suggested by the Board.	
MATTERS FOR BRIEFING AND INFORMATION ONLY		
9.	Evictions for Rent Arrears - Verbal	
	<p>Members were invited to consider a verbal update provided by the Chief Executive, the purpose of which was to inform Members that the Rule brought in by the Scottish Government to ban eviction enforcement action for a six week period until the end of January has now been extended to the end of March 2021.</p> <p>The CE updated that the Housing Officer will look at setting criteria’s for rent arrears, depending on individual circumstances and strategies will be put in place to determine how these should be handled. These strategies will be in place before the end of March.</p>	

9.1	Members NOTED this update.	
REGULATORY ISSUES		
10.	Notifiable Events	
10.1	There were no notifiable events for consideration.	
ADMINISTRATION		
11.	Issues which the Chair has agreed as urgent	
	Staff Members were asked to leave the meeting at this point.	
11.1	<p><u>Funding Application - Supporting Community Fund</u></p> <p>The Head of Housing Customer Services updated those present that the Association in conjunction with Care and Repair have been successful in securing additional funding from the Scottish Government Supporting Communities Fund. This additional funding will allow us to continue our work in supporting the UBI Unites Group, extend our Welfare Rights service until March, provide festive treats for kids (to replace cash for kids), provide Fuel Bank top up power cards, and provide digital devices and free WIFI to those in the community who would benefit.</p> <p>We are delighted to have been successful in our funding application as this enable us to build on what support is already in place and allow us to carry on providing additional support within our Community.</p>	
11.2	<p><u>Funding Application – Health and Social Care Partnership</u></p> <p>The Chief Executive updated that he had made an application for funding to the Health and Social Care Partnership for Crime, Falls and Fire prevention. This funding will provide help to the Care and Repair Client Group.</p> <p>We will find out on Monday next week whether we have been successful in our bid.</p>	
11.3	<p><u>Office Mail re-direction</u></p> <p>The Chief Executive reminded members that at the start of lockdown Board had agreed that the office mail would be redirected by Royal Mail to the Head of Finance and Corporate Services Managers home address, however this re-direction is due to expire.</p> <p>Members were asked to consider whether the re-direction should be extended and for the HOF's daughter continue to be paid to open and distribute the mail from home under the supervision of the HOF and CSM.</p>	
	Members AGREED that this arrangement should continue and the re-direction be extended with Royal Mail.	
11.4	<p><u>Willie Robertson (former Board Member)</u></p> <p>The Chief Executive updated that Willie is now home from hospital following a short stay. The CE had spoken to him and he is in good spirits and he passed on his best wishes to fellow members.</p>	

12.	Meeting concluded - 18.45pm Date of next meeting – 24th February 2021	
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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. M. O.', with a small mark above the 'O'.

Signed: _____(Chair)