



# MINUTES OF BRIDGEWATER HOUSING ASSOCIATION

## BOARD MEETING

**Venue:** Virtually Via Zoom

**Date:** 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020

**Time:** 5.30pm

**Present:**

Alastair Morris Chair, John Paterson Vice Chair, Heather Stirling Secretary, Angela Westrop Board Member, Aileen Naismith Board Member, Frank Bradley Board Member, Ken McIntosh Board Member, Denise Love Board Member, Suzanne Austin Board Member and Craig McGarry Board Member.

**In attendance:**

Ian McLean Chief Executive, Angie Kennedy Head of Finance, Scott Currie Corporate Services Manager, Lesley Carr Minute Secretary

Item	Details	Action
<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome and Chairs remarks</b>	
	<p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and confirmed that members had received their papers on time.</p> <p>Members agreed for the Chief Executive to manage the meeting on behalf of the Chair who would continue to chair the meeting.</p>	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Apologies</b>	
	Apologies were received from <b>Steven Webster and Rab McNally</b> .	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
	Members were invited to declare any interest in any of the items on the agenda, in terms of the Association’s published policy.	
<b>3.1</b>	There were no declarations made by those present.	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Minute of the Board Meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2020 – for Approval</b>	
	Members were invited to consider the minute of the Board meeting of 23 <sup>rd</sup> September 2020.	
<b>4.1</b>	Members approved the minute as a correct record of the meeting as <b>PROPOSED</b> by John Paterson and <b>SECONDED</b> by Heather Stirling.	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Minute of Covid Emergency Committee Meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2020 – for Approval</b>	

	Members were invited to consider the minute of the Covid Emergency Committee Meeting of 26 <sup>th</sup> October 2020.	
<b>5.1</b>	Members approved the minute as a correct record of the meeting as <b>PROPOSED</b> by Angela Westrop and <b>SECONDED</b> by John Paterson.	
<b>MATTERS ARISING</b>		
<b>6.</b>	There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.	
<b>MATTERS FOR HOMOLOGATION</b>		
<b>7.</b>	<b>Updated membership of Audit and Risk Sub Committee – verbal update</b>	
	Members were asked to homologate the decision made by the Audit and Risk Sub Committee to accept Suzanne Austin as a member of this Group.  Members were also asked to consider a change to the membership of the Housing Support Services Sub Committee.  Members agreed that Craig McGarry take up the vacant position on this Sub Committee.	
<b>7.1</b>	Members <b>APPROVED</b> the updated membership of the Audit and Risk and Housing Support Services Sub-Committee's.	
<b>MATTERS FOR APPROVAL</b>		
<b>8.</b>	<b>Revised Budget 20/21</b>	
	Members were invited to consider a report by the Head of Finance, the purpose of which was to provide members of the Board with a revised budget for 2020/21 and to seek approval for this Budget going forward.  The HOF stated that the original budget had been considered by the Audit and Risk Sub Committee and approved by the Board in February 2020. The CE explained that in the past we had carried out a mid-year review of the budget and due to the impact of the Pandemic this year, it had been agreed that a review would be beneficial and provide a more realistic financial position at this point in the year. The HOF had consulted with the Chief Executive, each Head of Service and the Association's External Finance Consultant during preparation of the revised budget.  The HOF outlined the main areas where significant changes had been made which allow us to predict income and expenditure at this point.  This position will be closely monitored and will be reported quarterly to the Audit and Risk Sub Committee through the Management Accounts.	
<b>8.1</b>	Members <b>APPROVED</b> the Revised Budget.	
<b>9.</b>	<b>Annual Assurance Statement</b>	
	Members were invited to consider a report by the Chief Executive, the purpose of which was to provide the Board with an opportunity to discuss the second Annual Assurance Statement which is due to be submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) by the	

	<p>end of November 2020. Versions of this report, the Assurance Statement, the Schedule of evidence and Action Plan were considered by the Audit and Risk Committee at their meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2020.</p> <p>The suspension of the Audit and risk sub-committee during lockdown has meant that the sub-committee has not received the quarterly assurance report. Nevertheless, the Covid-19 Committee considered the Action plan at their meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> October and now that the Sub Committee is operating normally, albeit remotely, this action can now be completed. Information on the SHR requirement was originally provided to the Board at their meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2019.</p> <p>The CE reminded members that the requirement for submission places responsibility on Boards to seek assurance that the organisation has in place effective governance processes, understands it's statutory, legal and regulatory duties, and has been provided with all the relevant information in order to make appropriate and informed decisions. Members should note that the individual pieces of relevant evidence are available to them on the Intranet.</p> <p>The new Assurance Framework had the potential to create a significant amount of work. However, the CE explained that the Association's previous approach to quarterly self-assessment updates has meant that the process has involved updating our existing assurance model and creating a more detailed bank of evidence, as well as pulling all of the evidence together in one place. Helpfully the process has allowed the Association to identify areas of improvement where we can up-date our policies or do better in terms of the availability of evidence.</p> <p>It is proposed that the self-assessment and action plan document, together with the summary narrative report, appended to this report, will allow the Board to take a view in 2020 about compliance against each of the seven standards.</p> <p>The CE updated that he had asked the Association's Solicitor for his view on the proposed wording of the Statement, the Solicitor was unsure as to whether all the information on the impact of COVID was necessary. Members were given the opportunity to consider the comments made by the Solicitor and agreed that the impact of the Pandemic should not be ignored as it has been the most significant event which had taken place this year. Members suggested that the paragraph on COVID should be edited and also suggested that it should be noted that the advice received from the Solicitor had been taken into consideration.</p> <p>The CE and the Chair will review the wording of the Assurance Statement and edit where appropriate. Members approved the Assurance Statement in principle, subject to some changes being made.</p>	
<p><b>9.1</b></p> <p><b>9.2</b></p> <p><b>9.3</b></p> <p><b>9.4</b></p> <p><b>9.5</b></p> <p><b>9.6</b></p>	<p>Members <b>NOTED</b> the contents of the report.</p> <p><b>CONSIDERED</b> and <b>NOTED</b> the Assurance Statement Evidence Log.</p> <p><b>CONFIRMED</b> that there were no areas of material non-compliance.</p> <p><b>CONSIDERED</b> and <b>APPROVED</b> the draft Assurance Statement (subject to some small changes being made) together with the Summary Narrative Report</p> <p><b>CONSIDERED</b> and <b>APPROVED</b> the Additional Assurance Action Plan and</p> <p><b>INSTRUCTED</b> the Chair to sign the statement and submit it to the Scottish Regulator prior to the submission date, following review of the wording included in the statement.</p>	

<b>10.</b>	<b>Customer Service Policy</b>	
	<p>Members were invited to consider the Customer Service Policy presented by the Chief Executive, the purpose of which was to summarise our standards in the areas of Customer Service Communication and draws on a wide variety of policies and procedures which describe in greater detail the various activities carried out by the Association. The CE explained that this policy applies to Staff, Volunteers' Contractors and Board and Subcommittee members of the Association and reflects the Association's customer service approach to its tenant customers and other service users.</p> <p>The policy will be reviewed in its entirety every 3 years, unless an earlier review is required due to changes in legal, regulatory or best practice requirements, or because monitoring and reporting reveals that a change in policy is required sooner.</p>	
<b>10.1</b>	Members <b>APPROVED</b> Customer Service Policy.	
<b>11.</b>	<b>Care and Repair Q2 and RC/ERC Contract Completion Report</b>	
	<p>Members were invited to consider the report by the Corporate Services Manager, the purpose of which was to update the Board on the progress of the current Care and Repair Contracts and other relevant Care and Repair Team issues.</p> <p>The quarterly statistical report summarises completion for all services showing the year to date progress against Contractual targets. This report provides statistics up to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020 and (for RC &amp; ERC) Contract completion statistics up to 30<sup>th</sup> October 2020.</p> <p>The CSM updated that despite a 4-5 month period during lockdown where no adaptations or small repairs could be carried out, the Contract completion statistics are high and only just fell short of targets. RC and ERC confirmed that they are happy with final outputs particularly given the circumstances.</p> <p>The CSM went on to remind members that the current Care &amp; Repair Contract with Renfrewshire and East Renfrewshire Councils expired on 31 October 2020 and the Association had received an offer of up to a 6 month extension, which if utilised would extend the Contract to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2021. This offer was made on the basis of existing pro rata funding levels and target completions. The Chair had been asked to use his delegated powers to allow the CSM to accept this extension.</p> <p>RC and ERC's intention is to re-tender the Contract during this extension period, so it is hoped that no further extension will be necessary.</p> <p>The CSM took this opportunity to thank his team for their hard work over the duration of the Contract.</p>	
<b>11.1</b>	Members <b>NOTED</b> the Quarter 2 update and	
<b>11.2</b>	<b>HOMOLOGATED</b> the decision made by the Chair on the 13 <sup>th</sup> November to authorise the Corporate Services Manager to provide written acceptance of the Contract extension to Renfrewshire Council.	
<b>MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION, COMMENT AND NOTING</b>		

<b>12.</b>	<b>Code of Conduct for Board Members - 2020</b>	
	<p>Members were invited to consider the updated model Code of Conduct for Board Members issued by SFHA in September 2020. The CE updated that SHR had confirmed that the model document fully complies with its regulatory standards and their input during production is acknowledged.</p> <p>The new code of conduct will now be issued to Board Members and they will be asked to confirm their acceptance.</p>	
<b>12.1</b>	Members <b>APPROVED</b> the updated Code of Conduct for Board Members.	
<b>13.</b>	<b>Employee Counselling Service – Service Level Agreement</b>	
	<p>Members were invited to consider a report by the Customer Services Manager, the purpose of which was to provide members with details of the Service Level Agreement between Bridgewater Housing Association and Rowan Consultancy, who provide an employee counselling service.</p> <p>The CSM updated that the service has already proven to be helpful to those staff who have been referred and members agreed that it is especially essential to have a counselling service in place at this time due to the Covid pandemic.</p>	
<b>13.1</b>	Members <b>NOTED</b> the Service Level Agreement with Rowan Consultancy.	
<b>14.</b>	<b>Minutes from SGM and AGM held on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2020</b>	
	Members were invited to consider the minutes from the SGM and AGM held on 21 <sup>st</sup> September 2020.	
<b>14.1</b>	Members <b>NOTED</b> the minutes from the SGM and AGM.	
<b>MATTERS FOR BRIEFING AND INFORMATION ONLY</b>		
<b>15.</b>	There were no matters for briefing and information.	
<b>REGULATORY ISSUES</b>		
<b>16.</b>	<b>Notifiable Events</b>	
	There were no notifiable events.	
<b>ADMINISTRATION</b>		
<b>17.</b>	<b>Issues which the Chair has agreed as urgent</b>	
	There were no urgent issues for consideration.	
<b>18.</b>	<b>Meeting concluded - 6.40pm</b> <b>Date of next meeting – 16<sup>th</sup> December 2020</b>	

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Chair)