



# MINUTES OF BRIDGEWATER HOUSING ASSOCIATION

## BOARD MEETING

**Venue:** Virtually via Zoom

**Date:** 24 February 2021

**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, Scott Currie Corporate Services Manager, Angie Kennedy Head of Finance and Lesley Carr Minute Secretary.

Item	Details	Action
<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome and Chairs remarks</b>	
	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and confirmed that members had received their papers on time.  The Chair requested that although he would chair the meeting, for efficiency members agree for the CE to manage the meeting. Members <b>AGREED</b> .	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Apologies</b>	
	Apologies were received from: R McNally	
<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 16 December 2019</b>	
	Members were invited to consider the minute of the Board Meeting held on 16 December 2019	
<b>4.1</b>	Members approved the minutes as a correct record of the meeting as <b>PROPOSED</b> by J	

	Paterson and <b>SECONDED</b> by D Love.	
<b>MATTERS ARISING</b>		
<b>5.</b>	<b>Matters arising from previous minute.</b>	
<b>5.1</b>	<p><b>In relation to item 8, comments</b> were received by one Board Member on the Asset Management Strategy and the Scrutiny Committee considered an amended version which they subsequently approved. The Strategy has now been posted on the Association's Web Site in accordance with our Publication Policy.</p> <p><b>In relation to 11.2,</b> the application to the Health and Social Care Partnership for funding was not successful, however they have set aside a sum of £10,000 to help us work up our proposals and to resubmit for the financial year 21/22</p>	
<b>MATTERS FOR APPROVAL</b>		
<b>6.</b>	<b>Pandemic Support</b>	
	<p>The Chief Executive explained that since the Association was not raising rents in the new financial year, there was no need to consult tenants. Consequently, the annual survey became an opportunity to survey tenants on how well they thought we had supported them during the pandemic and what impact the change in our services has had on them, together with the impact generally on their wellbeing and their finances.</p> <p>Lorna Shaw from Research Resource, presented her findings to the Board and there followed a question and answer session. One Board Member asked what the next steps were and the Chief Executive indicated that the Leadership Team would be analysing the finds to see whether there were any additional operational issues which we needed to take account of or alternatively anything we should change. He further advised that the Newsletter would be posted on our Web Site and a copy would go to all of our Tenants and Members.</p>	
<b>6.1</b>	Members <b>NOTED</b> the presentation and report and the Chief Executive's comments.	
<b>7.</b>	<b>Budget</b>	
	The Head of Finance presented the Associations draft budget for the period 2021/22. She indicated that the covering report provides detailed information to allow the Board to consider the underlying assumptions behind the main figures contained within the Budget. She explained that the budget was approved by the recent Audit and Risk Sub Committee and that the sub- committee is recommending approval by the Board.	
<b>7.1</b>	Members <b>APPROVED</b> the budget for 21/22	
<b>8.</b>	<b>Smoke Free policy</b>	
<b>8.1</b>	Members were invited to consider a revised Smoke Free policy, the purpose of which was to protect employees and service users from exposure to second-hand smoke and to assist in compliance with the Smoking, Health and Social Care (Scotland) Act 2005.	

	The Corporate Services Manager pointed out recommended changes to the previously approved policy.	
<b>8.2</b>	Members <b>APPROVED</b> the policy	
<b>9.</b>	<b>Alcohol and Substance Misuse Policy</b>	
<b>9.1</b>	Members were invited to consider a revised Alcohol and Substance Misuse policy to purpose of which is to assist in the management of alcohol and substance misuse problems affecting the working environment.  The Corporate Services Manager pointed out recommended changes to the previously approved policy.	
<b>9.2</b>	Members <b>APPROVED</b> the policy	
<b>10.</b>	<b>Attendance and Absence Management Policy</b>	
<b>10.1</b>	Members were invited to consider a revised Attendance and Absence Management Policy the purpose of which was to assist in the management of absenteeism and to help employees achieve good attendance whilst applying a consistent and fair approach in managing attendance.  The Corporate Services Manager indicated that there were significant difference between the revised policy and the previously approved policy, in order to bring the policy in to line with the EVH model policy. There were also sections where our policy diverts from the EVH policy, based on the consultation which the CSO has had with staff. He pointed out the recommended changes.	
<b>10.2</b>	Members <b>APPROVED</b> the policy	
<b>11.</b>	<b>RC/ERC Care and Repair Contract Update Summary</b>	
<b>11.1</b>	Members were invited to consider a report from the CSO in his capacity as Care and Repair Manager, the purpose of which was to update the Board on the progress of the Renfrewshire and East Renfrewshire contract. The report dealt with the implications of the potential end of the contract in April 2021 and discussions the CSO has had in relation to an extension of that contract. He indicated that both councils seem willing to enter into a one year contract from April 2021 and that he is in active discussions with them on this. However because of the nature of the discussions and the speed at which negotiations need to be concluded, he needed delegated authority to make a decision.	
<b>11.2</b>	Members <b>NOTED</b> the position, and <b>DELEGATED</b> to the Chief Executive to accept a new contract based on current negotiations.	
<b>12.</b>	<b>Procurement of Strategic Finance Consultancy Services</b>	
<b>12.1</b>	Members were invited to consider a report by the Head of Finance, (presented by the Chief Executive), the purpose of which was to request authority to set aside the Association's procurement rules and to re-appoint EBCS as the Strategic External Finance Consultant for the year 2021-22. The Chief Executive reminded members that they approved the appointment of EBCS as an external support in March 2018. This has been	

	a very successful collaboration for the Association and in particular for the Head of Finance who has utilised EBCS's expertise in relation to strategic and high level planning and budgeting. This contract is due for renewal, however it is proposed that it is continued on the same terms and conditions	
<b>12.2</b>	Members <b>NOTED</b> the report, <b>INSTRUCTED</b> the Head of Finance to appoint EBCS as the Strategic Finance Consultant for one year from April 2021. Subject to satisfactory performance and fee negotiations <b>DELEGATE</b> to the Head of Finance to extend the contract for a further year thereafter.	
<b>13.</b>	<b>Proposed FLAIR Partnership with Scottish Refugee Council</b>	
<b>13.1</b>	<p>Members were invited to consider a report by the Chief Executive the purpose of which was to seek approval for Bridgewater as a member of FLAIR to enter into a two year partnering agreement with the Scottish Refugee Council to accept two nominations each year from SRC and for the Association to sign up to an agreement between FLAIR and SRC.</p> <p>The Chief Executive reminded members that there has been an ongoing dialogue with the SRC since their Chief Exec came to the FLAIR Conference and spoke about his own experiences and the work of the SRC. Additionally a presentation was made by SRC at the Annual FLAIR meeting in November 2020. As a result of discussions between the Chief Officers of FLAIR and SRC it is proposed to enter into an arrangement with SRC to provide two properties per Association for nominations from the refugee community. The Chief Executive explained how the allocations would work and how the partnership would benefit the Association.</p>	
<b>13.2</b>	Members <b>NOTED</b> the position, <b>APPROVED</b> establishing a two year partnership with SRC, <b>DELEGATED</b> the Chief Executive to finalise the details and <b>AUTHORISED</b> the Chief Executive to sign the agreement.	
<b>14.</b>	<b>Salary Negotiations Outcome of Board Member Survey</b>	
<b>14.1</b>	The Chief Executive reminded members that he had consulted them recently on EVH joint proposals with the unions in relation to the proposed increase in salaries for 21/22. Five members had responded positively, however this was not sufficient to provide EVH with the Board's view and he required other members to express a view.	
<b>14.2</b>	The Board <b>APPROVED</b> the EVH proposal and <b>INSTRUCTED</b> the Chief Executive to return the ballot paper.	
<b>MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION, COMMENT AND NOTING</b>		
<b>15.</b>	<b>Annual Review of Garage Rents and Service Charges</b>	
	Members were invited to consider a report by the Head of Housing and Customer Service, the purpose of which was to provide information on the review of Garage Rent and Service Charges for 21/22	
<b>15.1</b>	Members <b>NOTED</b> the position	
<b>MATTERS FOR BRIEFING AND INFORMATION ONLY</b>		

16	No issues	
<b>REGULATORY ISSUES</b>		
17.	Notifiable Events	
17.1	There were no notifiable events for consideration.	
<b>ADMINISTRATION</b>		
18.	Issues which the Chair has agreed as urgent	
18.1	No issues	
19.	Meeting concluded Date of next meeting – 31 March 2021	



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