



MINUTES OF BRIDGEWATER HOUSING ASSOCIATION

BOARD MEETING

Venue: Virtually Via Zoom

Date: 31st March 2021

Time: 5.30pm – Training Session to start at 5pm

Present:

Alastair Morris Chair, Heather Stirling Secretary, Angela Westrop Board Member, Frank Bradley Board Member, Rab McNally Board Member, Ken McIntosh Board Member, Denise Love Board Member, Suzanne Austin Board Member.

In attendance:

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

Item	Details	Action
1.	Welcome and Chairs remarks	
	<p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and confirmed that members had received their papers on time.</p> <p>The Chair requested that although he would chair the meeting, for efficiency, members agree for the CE to manage the meeting.</p> <p>Members AGREED.</p>	
2.	Apologies	
	Apologies were received from: John Paterson, Aileen Naismith	
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 24th February 2021	
	Members were invited to consider the minute of the Board Meeting of 24 th February 2021.	
	Members approved the minutes as a correct record of the meeting as PROPOSED by Denise Love and SECONDED by Ken McIntosh.	

MATTERS ARISING

<p>5.1</p> <p>5.2</p>	<p>Minute of Board Meeting held on 16th December - The Chief Executive explained that he had omitted to get the minute of this meeting authorised. The Minute was retrospectively proposed by John Paterson and Seconded by Denise Love.</p> <p>It was also noted that Scott Currie, Corporate Services Manager was in attendance at this meeting. The minute will be updated to reflect these changes.</p>	
PRESENTATION		
<p>6</p>	<p>GDPR Board Training session – Mark Chyonweth RGDP</p>	
	<p>Members attended a training session facilitated by Mark Chyonweth from RGDP on Data Protection and Freedom of Information the presentation covered the following points.</p> <p>Data Protection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The legal framework and BREXIT • Some key definitions • The data protection principles • Compliance and Accountability - 3 key things: • Data Protection Impact Assessments • Dealing with breaches • Subject Rights (Subject Access Requests) <p>Freedom of Information & Environmental Information Regulations – key compliance points as well as an update on Bridgewater’s compliance.</p>	
MATTERS FOR APPROVAL		
<p>7.</p>	<p>SPSO Model Complaints Handling Process</p>	
	<p>Members were invited to consider this report prepared by the Corporate Services Manager, the purpose of which was to provide the Board with details of the revised SPSO’s, Model Complaints Handling Process (MCHP). The first MCHP was introduced in 2012 and adopted by the Association following approval by the Board in October 2012.</p> <p>In 2018-19 the SPSO conducted a review to establish its effectiveness and usability. The updated model was published on 31st January 2020 to give public sector organisations time to implement any changes by the deadline of April 2021.</p> <p>The Corporate Services Manager clarified that although the documents and core text are different, the principles remain the same e.g. 2 stages of complaints, the process itself and the timescales. There are however minor change in respect of upheld complaints, with an additional requirement for resolved complaints, this will show how complaints have been dealt with. This change will require some amendments to the complaints recording database and changes to the standard letters within the database. The CSM will arrange for these changes to be made.</p> <p>The CE explained that the new complaints process includes more emphasis on learning from complaints, with a requirement to publish information on any changes to policies and procedures or any improvement to services which have come about following a complaint.</p> <p>A member pointed out that the document stated that the procedure does not apply to</p>	

	factored owners. The CE clarified that the same procedure does apply to owners, however at the last stage of the process owners will be directed to the Housing and Property Chamber First-tier Tribunal for Scotland instead of the SPSO and this will be made clear in final the documents we publicise.	
7.1	Members APPROVED to adopt the new MCHP.	
MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION, COMMENT AND NOTING		
8.	Covid Impact Report – March 2021	
	<p>Members were invited to consider a report by the Chief Executive, the purpose of which was to provide the Board with “end of year” information in relation to the impact of COVID-19 on the Association’s services and on the work of the Association generally.</p> <p>The CE outlined the main areas for consideration within the report and explained that although the last year had been a challenging time for the Association both in terms of governance and service delivery, Staff had met these challenges with enthusiasm and willingness to do things differently. In fullness of time there will be an opportunity to examine what has worked and what has not and some work is already underway to identify any issues. The CE explained that there will also be an opportunity for decisions to be taken on any permanent changes going forward, in the meantime, the Association will continue to operate as close to business as usual as it can, whilst at the same time protecting staff and customers and looking to the future and addressing current challenges and future anticipated challenges post Covid.</p> <p>The CE informed those present that following the submission of our Assurance Statement he had received confirmation from the SHR that they consider Bridgewater to be compliant with regulatory expectations, which is great news for the Association.</p>	
8.1	Members NOTED the information contained within the report.	
8.2	APPROVED temporary amendment to the Working at home Policy.	
8.3	DELEGATED the Chief Executive to deal with any requests from Staff to carry Annual Leave entitlement forward into next year.	
8.4	And INSTRUCTED the Chief Executive to provide a copy of the report to the SHR for information.	
9.	SHR – Regulatory Returns	
	Members were invited to consider the letter issued from SHR’s Chief Executive, Michael Cameron to all Social Landlords, the purpose of which was to inform members that all Annual returns will revert back to the normal schedule.	
9.1	Members NOTED the information contained within the letter from the Regulator.	
10.	SHR – Coronavirus – Advisory guidance for governing bodies Feb 21	
	Members were invited to consider the letter from SHR, the purpose of which was to provide advisory Guidance on Coronavirus to Governing Bodies. The Guidance covers issues which RSLs have asked about. This guidance will be updated as relevant issues are raised with the Regulator and to take account of any changes.	

	<p>A member asked whether we would be continuing with virtual meetings going forward. The CE said he thought it would be beneficial to have a mixture of face to face and virtual meetings, as this would allow us to recruit members who live further away without the need to travel. It was agreed that the ability to join meetings remotely would benefit some members.</p>	
10.1	Members NOTED the information contained within the guidance.	
11.	Health & Safety Report	
	<p>Members were invited to consider the Health and Safety Report prepared by the Corporate Services Manager, the purpose of which was to provide members with an update on Health and Safety matters in relation to the office premises and staff over the past year during the Covid-19 Pandemic.</p> <p>The CSM updated that under normal circumstances the Health and Safety Group would meet quarterly and make decisions on all office and staff related H&S matters. The Minute of these meeting are then presented to the following Board Meeting for consideration, comment and noting. However, since the office has been largely unoccupied, the H&S Group meetings have not taken place, although all routine H&S requirements have continued to be met.</p> <p>The CSM provided members with an update on the outcome of the recent H&S Audit, the concluded that there is a good level of health and safety management and awareness within the company with all arears graded as ‘confirm’ or ‘part conform’. However, it was obvious during the audit that some slippage had occurred in the record keeping. This slippage seems to be mostly due to the impact of Covid-19 restrictions. A number of recommendations for improvement have been made in several areas as per the management plan.</p>	
11.1	Members NOTED the report.	
12.	Annual Renewal of Insurance Services	
	<p>Members were asked to consider the Annual Renewal of Insurance Services report prepared by the Head of Finance, the purpose of which was to provide members with information in relation to the annual renewal of insurance services.</p> <p>The CE reminded members that the Association is required to have in place a number of insurances to mitigate against catastrophic and other incidents. Insurance is a significant cost to the Association and employs an expert firm of Insurance Brokers to negotiate the best deal they can achieve for us. The Board will recall that Bruce Stevenson were awarded a 3-year contract for the Provision of Insurance Services in 2019 following a competitive tendering process, with the provision to extend the contract by a further 2 years.</p> <p>The report outlined the insurance renewal process and provided a summary of the insurance costs over the last 6 years. The HOF explained that overall our Insurance premiums have increased, although there have been some reductions in the premium for Public Liability Insurance.</p> <p>A member asked why there had previously been a significant reduction in costs, the HOF</p>	

	<p>explained that the re-tendering exercise, which took place in 2019-20, had made significant savings.</p> <p>The HOF confirmed that sufficient Budget provision has been include in the 2021-22 Budget for the insurance provision.</p>	
12.1	Members NOTED that the insurance renewal process for 2021-22 is now complete and insurances will be in place for the 1 st April 2021 renewal date.	
13.	Minute of Housing Support Services Sub Committee Meeting – 2nd December 20 and 3rd March 21	
	<p>Members were asked to consider the minutes from the last two Housing Support Services Sub Committee Meetings which took place on 2nd December 2020 and 3rd March 2021.</p> <p>The terms of reference for this Sub Committee states that a quorum will require at least 2 members of the Board in attendance. The CE explained that since attendance had fallen below this requirement, there is a need for an additional meeting to be called in order for matters considered to be ratified.</p>	
13.1	Members NOTED the minutes from these meetings and AGREED that items considered should be ratified at an additional meeting.	
14.	Discussion on Housing and Support Services Sub Committee	
	<p>The Chief Executive updated Members on the recent situation with attendance at the Housing Support Services Sub Committee Meetings and the Board were asked whether they feel that there is a need to continue with this Sub Group. The CE explained that the Housing Support Service remains an important part of the services we provide and he thought that we should continue with the sub group and make sure it continues to carry out its function.</p> <p>The CE updated that this Sub Committee is chaired by Alastair Morris and current members are Rab McNally, Aileen Naismith and Craig McGarry, which leaves one vacancy, the CE suggested that this vacancy be filled. The HOHCS will attempt to recruit a new tenant member who could be appointed as a full member and would count towards the quorum for meetings.</p> <p>Meantime the CE asked if any members of the Board would be interested in joining the Sub committee.</p>	
14.1	Following discussion, Members AGREED for Suzanne Austin to join the Housing Support Sub Committee.	
15.	Minute of Land and Property Management Sub Committee – 9th December 20	
	Members were invited to consider the Minute from the Land and Property Sub Committee held on 9 th December 2020. The Chair of the Sub Committee provided an update on the discussions which took place on owner's arrears, further discussions will take place at the next meeting of this Sub Committee.	
15.1	Members NOTED the minute from this meeting.	

MATTERS FOR BRIEFING AND INFORMATION ONLY	
16.	RSLs and FOI: One Year On (main points outlined in GDPR Presentation)
	Members were invited to consider a report by the Scottish Information Commissioner, the purpose of which was to provide members with the findings of the RSL's and FOI one year on. The report will also be shared with the Scottish Government, to help inform its own evaluation of the extension of FOI and RSLs and subsidiaries.
16.1	Members NOTED the information contained within the Report.
17.	Inside Housing – Interview with Regulator
	Members were invited to consider a report Inside Housing who had assembled the four housing regulators from Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England, for a wide-ranging chat about the changing role of regulators, ensuring tenants are properly involved and how they learn from each other.
17.1	Members NOTED the information contained within the report.
18.	Copy of Regulator's Chief Executive, Michael Cameron Speech at Share Conference
	Members were provided with a copy of the speech given by the Regulator's Chief Executive, Michael Cameron at the recent Share Conference.
18.1	Members NOTED the content of the speech from the Chief Executive of the SHR.
REGULATORY ISSUES	
19.	Notifiable Events
19.1	There were no notifiable events for consideration apart from the information which was contained within the Covid Update Report.
ADMINISTRATION	
20.	Issues which the Chair has agreed as urgent
	<p>The Chief Executive explained that the Arrears Policy is due for review and the SFHA have indicated that it would be best practice to have a separate Covid Arrears Policy.</p> <p>Since the next scheduled meeting of the Board is not due to take place until May, the CE asked if the Board would delegate authority to the Scrutiny Committee to consider both policies at their meeting at the end of April.</p> <p>Members AGREED to delegate authority to the Scrutiny Committee to consider the Arrears Policies.</p>
21.	<p>Meeting concluded - 18.40pm</p> <p>Date of next meeting - Next Board Meeting – 26th May 2021</p>

Allen

Signed: _____(Chair)