



**MINUTES OF THE
JOINT BOARD AND
SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEE MEETING
BRIDGEWATER HOUSING ASSOCIATION**

Venue: Hybrid Meeting
Date: Wednesday 27th April 2022
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, Rab McNally Board Member, Ken McIntosh Board Member, Denise Love Board Member and Suzanne Austin Board Member.

In attendance:

Ian McLean Chief Executive, Ruth Brogan Head of Housing and Community Engagement, Angie Kennedy Head of Finance, Scott Currie Head of Corporate Services and Business Development, Brenda Gibson Repairs Manager, Tracy McDonald Factoring Manager, Stephen McGinley ICT Officer and Lesley Carr Minute Secretary.

Andy Thomson New Chief Executive (part)

Item	Details	Action
1.	Welcome and Chairs remarks	
1.1	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and confirmed that members had received their papers on time. Andy Thomson, the new Chief Executive joined the meeting via Zoom to introduce himself to those Board members who had not met him already.	
2.	Apologies	
2.1	Apologies were received from Steven Webster and Gary Stapleton.	
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 Minute of Scrutiny Sub Committee held on 26th January and Board Meeting held on 30th March 2022 for Approval	

	Members were invited to consider the minutes of Scrutiny Sub Committee Meeting held on 26 th January 2022 and Minute of Board Meeting held on 30 th March 2022.	
4.1	Members APPROVED the minute of the previous Scrutiny Committee as a correct record of the meeting as PROPOSED by Angela Westrop and SECONDED by Heather Stirling.	
4.2	Members APPROVED the minute of the previous Board Meeting as a correct record of the meeting as PROPOSED by Alastair Morris and SECONDED by Suzanne Austin. <u>Item 8 - Equality Data Collection and Monitoring Approach</u> – The Chief Executive updated that he had recently attended a meeting with GWSF and the SHR to discuss the equalities data collection process. The Board have previously agreed the process for collecting this data and this is included in the Matrix, which will assist the Board in supporting their own consideration about which data will be most useful to collect and inform debate about what, if any, additional equality related policies and services the Association may wish to introduce. The CE reminded members that data collection will only be required for tenants and prospective tenants and will not apply to the factoring service or our owners. The new CE will take this forward.	
MATTERS ARISING		
5.	There were no matters arising from the previous minute.	
MATTERS FOR APPROVAL		
6.	Unacceptable Behaviour Policy	
	Members were invited to consider Unacceptable Behaviour Policy presented by the Head of Corporate Services and Business Development, the purpose of this policy is to define behaviour towards our staff which the Association deems to be unacceptable and to put safeguards in place should staff encounter such behaviour. The HCSBD outlined the minor changes to be made to the policy which was developed by a group of staff in 2017.	
6.1	Members APPROVED the Unacceptable Behaviour Policy.	
7.	Delegated Authority to Staff	
	Members were invited to consider a scheme of delegated authority to staff presented by the CE the purpose of which was to set out what decisions the Board needs to make and what decision and activities it has delegated to the staff team. The CE reminded those present that the Board had previously been provided with an update from the HCSBD on the C&R contract and had agreed to delegate authority to the CE to accept the contract. It has since come to light that the CE did not have the authority at the time of the request and therefore the Board are being asked to clarify that they agreed for the CE to accept the C&R contract by granting authority to do so. The CE updated that the delegated authority which is part of the Framework of Governance and requires a comprehensive review along with the financial regulations, however this review will allow the C&R and other similar contracts to be approved in the	

	<p>meantime. Members acknowledged that this would be a temporary change and agreed that the full review should take place within 6 months.</p> <p>If Members agree to this temporary change, the council has provided us with a form of words which should be recorded in the minute of this meeting.</p> <p>Members AGREED.</p>	
7.1	<p>Members AGREED to be bound by the tender response and offer issued by Scott Currie submitted via Public Contracts Scotland Tenders on 2 March 2022 by the declaration dated 29 February 2022 completed by Ian McLean and supported by the letter dated 16 March 2022 signed by the Chief Executive in respect of the Renfrewshire Council tender - Provision of an Adaptations and Small Repairs Service (RC-CPU-21-373)</p>	
MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION, COMMENT AND NOTING		
8.	Key Performance Indicators – January to March 22	
	<p>Members were invited to consider the Key Performance Indicators, the purpose of which was to provide the Scrutiny Sub Committee with quarterly management information in relation to these key indicators.</p> <p>The Chief Executive updated that this report reflects performance during the fourth quarter of the financial year (January to March) and covers a period of increasingly replaced restrictions in daily life in Scotland because of the Covid pandemic and at the same time increased prevalence of the disease across the country. Bridgewater was not exempt, as a number of staff and operatives succumbed to the virus during this quarter. Consequently, like quarter 3, it is no surprise that performance figures are affected by the pandemic with our constricted ability to provide services and deal with issues within the context of a changing and challenging environment is again all too obvious.</p> <p>The CE explained that arrears continue to present a problem for the Association with, it would seem, tenants moving onto Universal Credit making up a significant part of the arrears figure. The CE reminded members that at the start of the pandemic our arrears figure more than doubled and it has consistently hovered at similar figures throughout. However, Government grant to cover some of the arrears has been helpful in bringing the level to below the £100,000 mark.</p> <p>The CE stated that the individual performance reports indicate that things are not back to normal – far from it. The pandemic continues to have a significant effect on the association’s performance in all areas. But – it could be worse - would, I think be the message. Staff have gone above and beyond, whilst dealing with the impact of the pandemic on their own lives, to ensure that the Association continues to provide services as much to a level as customers have come to expect and over a gruelling two-year period.</p> <p>The CE believes that Bridgewater has weathered the pandemic relatively well, despite there being financial implications and trusts the Associations is on a good footing to get back to pre-pandemic levels during 22/23.</p> <p>The CE invited the Repairs Manager and the Factoring Manager to their first meeting and asked them to provide an update.</p> <p>The RM updated that in general everything was going well and since Turner have</p>	

	<p>confirmed they will be withdrawing their services, tenders have been prepared to ensure that the new contract is in place in time for the end of the contract with Turner. Even although some of the contracts had been stalled due to Covid we have caught up on the kitchen installations and the contractor has taken on another 23 installations, we have made a saving on the roofing contract. The RM updated that the COW had identified a defect within 8 properties who had their roof replaced and this is now being rectified. This will unfortunately delay the completion of works on these properties although the RM reported that if this had not been rectified at this stage it would have caused further problems at a later date.</p> <p>The FM updated that there had been a significant reduction in the factoring arrears, although the former arrears are still slightly high. The flat bills have been issued and The FM has adapted the information which is sent along with the bills to try and pre-empt the questions that people may have, and we are using new ways of keeping people informed.</p> <p>The HOHCE updated that we have a healthy waiting list and we have let a total of 88 properties and a total of 68 voids throughout the year which is significantly higher than previous years. Void loss is also significantly high due to the difficulties presented by Covid.</p> <p>A member said that he understands the difficulties we have experienced during Covid and expects the cost-of-living rise to have a further impact going forward.</p>	
8.1	Members NOTED the Key Performance Indicators.	
9.	Arrears Summary Report	
	<p>Members were invited to consider a report by the Head of Housing and Community Engagement, the purpose of which was to provide the Sub Committee with an analysis of current tenant arrears performance and high arrears as at the end of Quarter 4. 2021/22.</p> <p>The HOHCE explained that the total current arrears at the end of March 2022 was £99,973 which is a significant reduction of £44,728 from the end of December 21. This reduction is partly due to an award of £29,290 received from the Tenant Grant Fund for 30 tenants who had accrued arrears due to Covid. There was also a reduction in arrears of £15,430 over quarter 4.</p> <p>The total number of cases reduced by 3 to 225, however, the number of high arrears cases decreased by 20 to 29, with arrears of over £1,000 reducing by £37,569 to £43,615, details of which are appended to this report.</p> <p>The HOHCE explained that the arrears recovery strategy includes looking at new measures which can be introduced as incentives to those who continue to pay their rent. The HOHCE will work with the new CE to explore enhancing the current reporting functions via SDM or other software to improve the IT systems and processes in place, which would allow us to move from manual to automated reporting and ultimately free up staff time to concentrate on Arrears as well as other functions within the remit of the team.</p> <p>A member said that the statistics show that we now have 25% of our tenants are in receipt of UC and this is something that the Board should take note of.</p> <p>A member agreed that any improvements to the current IT systems which will make</p>	

	<p>reporting easier for staff should be progressed. The CE confirmed that there were contingency funds available in the budget for IT requirements, the Business Delivery Plan as well as the IT Strategy. The CE reminded those present that the IT Strategy was due to be presented to the Board for approval at this meeting, however, it had been agreed that the new CE should have input into the strategy before being considered by the Board for approval.</p> <p>The HOHCE will continue to develop the community engagement programme and will produce an engagement plan to work with other agencies throughout the year. There have already been some new funding opportunities identified which will be pursued.</p> <p>The HOHCE will continue to closely monitor and report to the CE on arrears performance.</p>	
9.1	Members NOTED the information contained within the Arrears report.	
10.	ICT Update Report	
	<p>Members were invited to consider a report prepared by the ICT Officer, the purpose of which was to provide the Scrutiny Sub Committee with an update on the Associations ICT plans and projects over the past three months since the last report provided in January 2022 and going forward towards July 2022.</p> <p>Whilst progress on plans continues to gather pace, the overall state of the Association's ICT infrastructure continues to be strong and robust, providing an excellent foundation on which to build and extend the availability of ICT services to all stakeholders.</p> <p>The ICT Officer confirmed that there were contingencies within the IT budget which will allow for any additional IT requirements (within reason) which may be raised going forward. He updated that IT Strategy includes the introduction of some exciting new projects going forward.</p> <p>The ICT Officer took the opportunity to thank the CE for his support in dealing with the IT requirements for the Organisation.</p>	
10.1	Members NOTED the update provided.	
11.	Major Property Investment Programme – Quarter 4	
	<p>Members were invited to consider a report by the Technical Services Manager, the purpose of which was to provide the Board with an update on the Current Major Property Investment Programme.</p> <p>The CE highlighted the information contained within the report which explains the contracts which need to be reviewed this year and explained that this is what the Technical Services Manager will be focussing his time on over the next two months. There are other contracts which will need to be reviewed in the 22/23 and there is a significant amount of money involved in this. Board will be asked to consider the 5-year financial projections at their next meeting and this will cover the financial investment that needs to be made.</p> <p>Another significant part of the report is the reporting on asbestos, legionella and fire risk, and Board need to understand the legislation and be confident that we are complying with this to ensure our Tenants safety.</p>	
11.1	Members NOTED the update provided.	

12.	Board Active Governance Statement	
	<p>Members were invited to consider a report by the Chief Executive, the purpose of which was to provide members with an update on the Active Governance Statement. This document provides context within which the Association’s Board can make sound decisions about the future direction of the Association, its purpose, and aspirations and how it is going to get to where it wants to be.</p> <p>This Statement should be read alongside the Association’s Rules and the Code of Conduct for Board Members, together with the Association’s Policies and Procedures, including the Framework of Governance and the SHR’s Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management.</p> <p>The Active Governance Statement also seeks to support the Associations Assurance Statement.</p>	
12.1	Members NOTED the Active Governance Statement.	
13.	Business Delivery Plan	
	<p>Members were invited to consider the Associations Business Delivery Plan (BDP).</p> <p>The CE reminded members that this an integral part of the Associations Business Plan, and has been developed following consultation with Board Members, customers, management and front-line staff and builds on the Association’s 2016-2019 Business Plan which was comprehensively reviewed in 2018. It sets out the objectives and business deliverables for the three years of business. It will be used to monitor activities and expectations in terms of business and service improvements which are the responsibility of specific Leadership Team members.</p> <p>The Delivery Plan will be reviewed at the start of each financial year to repopulate years two and three and the expectation is that this will become a rolling programme of priority activity for the Association’s ambition to continuously improve. However, in the context of the pandemic the plan was approved in 2021 with activities going forward into 2022, the expectation is that it will be comprehensively reviewed in 2022 to take account of lessons learned from the pandemic.</p> <p>Members are asked to consider this tracked version of the Plan which shows anything which has been updated since the last Scrutiny Sub Committee meeting.</p> <p>A member asked if there was still a shortage of LD2 Alarms, the RM explained that there is still a shortage in supply of battery-operated smoke alarms but hard wired alarms are available and these are being installed to the hard no access properties however there are contingencies in place and we continue to look for alternatives.</p>	
13.1	Members NOTED the Associations Business Delivery Plan.	
14.	Policy Review Schedule – April 22	
	<p>Members were invited to consider the policy review schedule for April 22, the purpose of which was to provide details of policies and their review dates, some of which had not been met due to the current pandemic.</p> <p>As in previous reports anything which has been updated since the last Sub Committee</p>	

	<p>meeting is highlighted in red.</p> <p>The CE asked members to be mindful that this needs to be mentioned in the Assurance Statement submission.</p>	
14.1	Members NOTED the Policy Review Schedule.	
15.	Gas Servicing update report – April 22	
	<p>Members were invited to consider a report by the Technical Services Manager, the purpose of which was to provide members with information regarding the current position in relation to the servicing of gas appliances.</p> <p>This document provides assurance to the Board that servicing of our gas appliance is being carried out within the set timescales.</p>	
15.1	Members NOTED the information contained within the report.	
16.	Tenant Engagement Survey Plan	
	<p>Members were invited to consider a report presented by the Head of Housing and Community Engagement, the purpose of which was to provide members with details of tenant engagement survey which are planned to take place during 2021-22 & 2022-23.</p> <p>These surveys will be carried out by CX Communication and Research Resource, and results of the surveys will be reported to the Scrutiny Sub Committee.</p> <p>The HOHCS explained that that due to resource issues we have been unable to progress the surveys and are hoping that we will be able to provide an update at the next Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>The My-home portal has electronic survey capabilities which gets better response so this may be something that we look at should we develop the Tenant Portal.</p>	
16.1	Members NOTED the Tenant Engagement Survey Plan.	
17.	SHR Letter to RSL's re complaints and significant performance failures	
	<p>Members were invited to consider a letter from the Scottish Housing Regulator the purpose of which was to inform all RSL's that they had published 3 factsheets to provide information about complaints and significant performance failures.</p> <p>The 3 fact sheets are: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complaints about a regulated body 2. Significant Performance Failures – Information for Social Landlord Tenants 3. Significant Performance Failures – Information for Social Landlords. <p>All factsheets are available on the SHR Website and the information for Social Landlord Tenants has been uploaded to Bridgewater's website and will be available from the Association Offices.</p>	
17.1	Members NOTED the information contained within the letter.	
18.	Minute of Land and Property Management Sub Committee held on 16th December 2021	

	<p>Members were invited to consider the minute from the Land and Property Sub Committee held on 16th December 2021.</p> <p>The Chair of the LPM Sub Committee updated that one significant issue which the Sub Committee had considered was the Tree Survey, as some of the trees on the Associations land may be subject to ash dieback, this will also be included in the Tree Survey.</p>	
18.1	Members NOTED the minute.	
MATTERS FOR BRIEFING AND INFORMATION ONLY		
19.	There were no items for briefing or information.	
REGULATORY ISSUES		
20.	Notifiable Events	
20.1	There were no notifiable events for consideration.	
20.2	<p>The CE explained that there were currently 2 live notifiable events, one being the retirement of the CE and the other being the office being closed to the public.</p> <p>The CE updated that the Office is now open to the public 4 days (Mon, Tues, Thurs, and Fri) between 10-12noon and 2-4pm and reminded those present that the recent survey had reported that 80% of our customers had said that the office closure had had no impact on them. So far, we have only welcomed a couple of visitors to the office.</p> <p>The CE will discuss this notifiable event with the regulator to see if they are happy to close this down now that the office is open, even although it is only for a part of the day 4 days per week.</p>	
ADMINISTRATION		
21.	Issues which the Chair has agreed as urgent	
21.1	There were no urgent issues for consideration.	
22.	<p>Meeting concluded - 7.10pm</p> <p>Date of next Scrutiny Sub Committee meeting – 27th July 2022</p> <p>The next full Board meeting is scheduled to take place on 25th May 2022</p>	
	This was the CE last meeting, and he took the opportunity to thank the Board for their support, hard work and commitment over the years.	



Signed: _____ (Chair)