



MINUTES OF BRIDGEWATER HOUSING ASSOCIATION

BOARD MEETING

Venue: Hybrid

Date: 7th December 2022

Time: 5.30pm

Present:

Rab McNally Chair, Heather Stirling Secretary, Frank Bradley Board Member and Suzanne Austin Board Member.

In attendance:

Andy Thomson Chief Executive, Angie Kennedy Head of Finance, Scott Currie Head of Corporate Services, Stephen Ferrie Head of Property Services and Lesley Carr Minute Secretary.

Item	Details	Action
1.	Welcome and Chairs remarks	
	Since the Chair and Vice Chair of the Association had given their apologies for this meeting, it was agreed by those present that Rab McNally would chair the meeting The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and confirmed that members had received their papers on time.	
2.	Training – GDPR – Really Good Data Protection	
	As the attendance was low it was agreed that the GDPR training be postponed. Trish did provide a brief overview to those present of the Association’s healthy status in relation to GDPR. The HoCS will arrange an alternative date for the Board presentation.	HoCS
3.	Apologies	
	Apologies were received from Ken McIntosh, Denise Love, Alastair Morris, John Paterson and Ken Caldwell.	
4.	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. The CEO reminded those present that although tenants on the Board have a potential conflict of interest regarding the rent increase item they are asked to be objective and consider the factors outlined in this report from a strategic point of view in determining a suitable increase amount to be implemented from 29th April 2023.	
4.1	There were no declarations made by those present.	

5.	Minute of the Board Meeting held on 26th October 2022 – for Approval	
	Members were invited to consider the minute of the Board Meeting held on 26 th October 2022	
5.1	Members approved the minutes as a correct record of the meeting as PROPOSED by Suzanne Austin and SECONDED by Frank Bradley.	
MATTERS ARISING		
6.	Outstanding action items arising from previous board meetings	
6.1	The CEO updated members on items outstanding and ongoing from previous meetings as detailed within the report.	
MATTERS FOR APPROVAL		
7.	Budget 2023/24 1st Draft (sent separately)	
	<p>Members were requested to discuss the content of the 1st Draft of the Budget prepared and presented by the Head of Finance, the purpose of which was to provide the Board with a Draft Budget for 2023/24 to review , to enable the Board to consider the proposed rent increase consultation options of 6% and 7% and to approve service charge revisions. It is proposed that the content of this report along with the Chief Executives report on the rent consultation should be considered simultaneously so that a decision on rent increase consultation options can be made with viability issues fully covered.</p> <p>The HOF provided those present with background to the current economic circumstances and outlined the main aspects detailed within the report which the Board should take into consideration.</p>	
7.1	Following full discussion and consideration of the detail provided, members NOTED the 1 st Draft Budget and NOTED that the next draft will be presented to the Board for Approval.	
8.	Rent Increase Options	
	<p>Members were invited to consider a report by the Chief Executive, Head of Housing Services and Head of Finance, the purpose of this report is to present rent increase proposals to Board and for Board to approve consultation with tenants on the proposed increases and approve the suggested service charge approach or make further suggestions, taking into consideration the information contained within the first draft budget which was also discussed at this meeting.</p> <p>The CEO explained that to enable the rent consultation process the Board must assess the impact that differing levels of rent increases will have on the overall finances of BHA.</p> <p>The CEO went on to explain that the 1st draft 2022/23 budget is based on an average rent increase of 6% (reflecting a below inflation uplift). This is the minimum rent uplift required to deliver our 2023/24 budget and future expenditure projections, including planned maintenance activities. However, members should note that this will still mean that some planned maintenance activities planned for next year will not be undertaken in the financial year 2023/2024. A 7% increase would allow us to deliver our business plan</p>	

	<p>whilst providing more planned maintenance activities and continue to provide a hardship fund; this information will be provided to tenants as part of the consultation process.</p> <p>The Leadership Team believe having evaluated the budget the minimum possible increase that can be proposed is 6% with tenants given the option of a 7% increase with additional services provided in exchange.</p> <p>The CEO asked Board to consider the following recommendations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve BHA consulting on a rent increase of 6% or 7% in line with our proposed budget. 2. Note the significant implications of a rent freeze/cap imposed by the Scottish Government and the relevant unintended consequences. 3. Consider and approve the proposal to increase garage rents by 12.1% 4. Consider and approve the proposal to increase managed property/shared housing service charges by 12.1% 5. Approve the proposal to increase service charges in line with costs, where this is not possible service charges will be increased by the same rate as the rent increase – 6% or 7%, and finally 6. Approve the proposals for consulting with tenants including the use of the telephone survey. 	
8.1	<p>Following full consideration of all the information provided, the recommendations made by the CEO were APPROVED by Heather Stirling and SECONDED by Suzanne Austin.</p>	
9.	<p>Business Plan 2023/2028 1st Draft</p>	
	<p>Members were invited to consider a report by the Chief Executive, the purpose of which was to present to the Board a 1st Draft Business Plan following previous discussions and the initial approval of the broad content at the Business Planning Workshop which took place on 29th September. The report from this event, drafted by Alison Smith of Allanpark Consultants, is attached to this report for Boards information.</p> <p>The CEO has now collated the information obtained at this event as well as performance information obtained and feedback from key stakeholders and considered discussions internally and has developed the first draft of the business plan. This is very much a draft and working document and some areas are missing.</p> <p>The draft Business Plan is attached to this report and members were asked to respond to the CEO if they have any comments or further changes to the draft.</p> <p>The Plan will be independently reviewed by Alison Smith of Allanpark Consultants who will provide feedback on the content. Once complete it is envisioned that the plan will be put out to staff during December/January, following which the Board will hopefully agree the final draft template for the new Business Plan, endorsing the new vision, values etc. and timeframe for commencing on 1st April 2023.</p> <p>The CEO updated that once the formal version has been agreed this will be developed and work will commence on a customer summary, which can be distributed online via our MyBHA portal. The additional associated documents will be completed and will come to the Board and Subs for approval in the months ahead. This will then form the basis of our business strategy and performance monitoring framework from 1st April 2023.</p>	
9.1	<p>Members APPROVED the draft business plan.</p>	

10.	Policy Review – Handling a Serious Complaint about the Chief Executive	
	<p>Members were invited to consider the Policy for handling a serious complaint about the Chief Executive. The Head of Corporate Services explained that this is a new policy which supports the Scottish Housing Regulator’s (SHR) Guidance Note on Notifiable Events.</p> <p>The HOCS outlined the flowchart appended to the Policy which provides details of the procedure which should be followed by the Chair of the Association should a serious complaint/grievance be raised against the Chief Executive of Bridgewater Housing Association.</p>	
10.1	The Policy was APPROVED by Frank Bradley and SECONDED by Heather Stirling.	
MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION, COMMENT AND NOTING		
11.	Quarterly Business Plan 2021-2023 Performance Update	
	<p>Members were invited to consider a report by the Chief Executive, the purpose of which was to provide the Board with the summary update on performance through our Key Performance Indicator (KPI) dashboards, action plans, and details of our most recent risk mapping review.</p> <p>This report will be issued quarterly to provide information on the Association’s strategic performance.</p> <p>There are areas which merit further focus and attention in the next quarter and these were highlighted by the CEO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average Re-Let Time and Void Loss - Void Management is a real concern for the Association based on last year’s performance – a significantly increased number of voids and an increase in days taken to let, void expenditure and void loss. While this year has started with a comparative reduction in numbers, the issues of increased days taken to let and void performance remain. The relevant members of the Leadership Team will meet and will work on strategies to resolve some of these issues. Where controllable, changes will continue to be made to ensure that the processes in place are as streamlined as they can be, however there are other issues which need to be considered in terms of contractor performance and asset management with a review of sheltered housing provision proposed for the next business plan. • Contractor Performance - Our main contractor Consilium, who had been working with Bridgewater since August 2022 (CEO noted incorrect date in papers) have now terminated the contract as of 31st October 2022 and reactive and void works are now being undertaken by smaller contractors meaning that the collation of data has been impacted; we hope to resolve this by the end of the next period. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the smaller contractors are performing well in both reactive and void repairs. • Complaints – There has been an increased focus on customer service and therefore complaints; there have been several complaints responded to late during the period. Further training will be undertaken with staff in early 2023 to address this issue. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrears of Rent and Factoring – Arrears levels are at a much higher level than I would be comfortable with, there will be a requirement to address resourcing issues and the implementation of new policies to help reduce the level of arrears in the longer term. 	
11.1	Members NOTED the Quarterly Business Plan 2021-2023 Performance Update.	
12.	CEO Report	
	<p>Members were invited to consider a report by the CEO, the purpose of which was to advise the Board on a range of relevant issues currently being considered and to seek approval for matters as noted throughout the report where required.</p> <p>The Board is asked to note the contents of the report and raise any queries or concerns with any of the items raised or the proposed methods of managing each item.</p> <p>There were no queries or concerns raised by those present.</p>	
12.1	Members NOTED the information contained within the CEO’s report.	
MATTERS FOR BRIEFING AND INFORMATION ONLY		
13.	There were no items for briefing or information.	
REGULATORY ISSUES		
14.	Notifiable Events (verbal update)	
	<p>There are two LIVE notifiable events</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The warden call system and Reactive repairs contractor <p>The CEO explained that we will aim to close both items down by the end of March.</p>	
ADMINISTRATION		
15.	AOCB	
	There was no other competent business for consideration.	
16.	Issues which the Chair has agreed as urgent	
	There were no urgent issues for consideration.	
17.	<p>Meeting concluded - 7.15pm</p> <p>Date of next meeting – 18th January 2023 at 5.30pm</p> <p>The CEO explained that depending on business requirements, this meeting may be postponed and the next meeting of the Board may therefore take place on 1st March 2023.</p>	

Signed: _____(Chair)