

CALEDONIA HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD

MINUTES OF THE MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 15 DECEMBER 2020 AT 6:00 pm BY VIDEO CONFERENCE

Present: Alan Nairn, Chair
Mary Clark
Tim Goddard
Ian Gray
Graham Logan
Alex McDougall
Douglas McLaren
Andrew Richmond
Lorna Williamson
Derek Robertson

In Attendance: Julie Cosgrove Chief Executive
Leigh Grubb Director of Finance & Governance
Garry Savage Director of Strategy & Innovation
Barry Johnstone Director of People
Andrew Kilpatrick Director of Assets
Tim Calderbank Director of Customer Services
Carol-Ann Burns Governance Officer (Minute Taker)

The meeting commenced with a presentation on the Rent Harmonisation Project by Freya Lees from North Star Consultancy. The presentation emphasised the range of different rent levels across the Group and provided an overview of the modelling work which had been performed with a view to harmonising rents, making them fairer and simpler to understand, whilst maintaining affordability.

The Director of Customer Services thanked Freya Lees for her presentation and advised Members that the presentation and full report would be made available via Decision Time. Members were asked to direct any follow up questions to the Director of Customer Services.

Management Board meeting commenced

140.20 Apologies

There were no apologies received. The Board noted the absence of Jenny Dalton and sent their good wishes.

141.20 Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

ITEMS for DISCUSSION and/or APPROVAL

142.20 Draft Minutes of the Management Board Meeting held on Tuesday 27 October 2020

The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record and were **APPROVED** by the Board. The minutes were duly adopted and the Governance Officer would arrange for them to be signed by the Chair.

143.20 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising that were not dealt with elsewhere on the Agenda.

144.20 Chief Executive's Report

Data Protection

Bellsmyre Data Breach

The Chief Executive reported that the ICO has confirmed that no further action was to be taken by them in relation to the accidental distribution of Bellsmyre Committee member contact details. The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) had also confirmed that they had now closed the related Notifiable Event and that no further action was required.

Governing Body Member Privacy Notice

Following a change in the information requested by Dundee City Council to renew HMO licences, the Association was now required to provide Board Members details as opposed to previous years when the Executive Officers details were accepted. The Governing Body Privacy Notice had been revised accordingly.

Business Continuity Plan – Update

Service Delivery/Performance

The Chief Executive presented an overview of the Association's performance against a number of key metrics and noted that the performance of the Association was broadly in line with sector data provided by SFHA.

The Chief Executive advised of an error in the repairs completion figures provided by our contractors, and noted that the corrected figures represented an improvement on the performance levels detailed in her report. Members would be updated in January 2021 with the amended figures.

The Chief Executive reported that gross rent arrears (current and former tenants) for the Group at the end of November was 7.5% of the Group's annual debit. Overall Group rental income collected to the end of November was 98% of the total rental income due, with the comparable figure for Caledonia equating to 99%.

Costs

The report contained an update of costs to date in managing the Group's business continuity response, with additional spend having been made on PPE. The Chief Executive reported that the costs of the enhanced cleaning service had yet to be reallocated from service charges and that these costs were likely to take total cost over the revised budget of £200,000. Additional sources of funding were currently being explored in relation to these costs and the updated financial position would be considered as part of the third quarter management accounts presented in January 2021.

Delegated Authority

No further actions had been taken in line with the amended delegated authority schedule approved by the Board. The Chief Executive requested a further three month extension to continue to provide the necessary flexibility in the Executive Team's response to the continuing uncertainty.

The Board **APPROVED** the three month extension of the amended schedule of delegated authority and congratulated the Executive Management Team (EMT) and staff on their work during these trying times.

Scottish Social Housing Charter - Self Assessment and Report

The Chief Executive commented on progress towards completing this year's self-assessment report including tenant consultation on the format of the Charter report. Board Members noted that the deadline for completion and publication had been extended to the end of December.

The assessment had been completed and had concluded that all outcomes were achieved in 2019/20, with the exception of the Equalities and Repairs and Maintenance outcomes, which were considered only partially achieved. In this regard the assessment acknowledged the challenges experienced in delivering the Equalities Action Plan, in part due to the delayed publication of sector-wide guidance, and in maintaining repairs performance levels as a result of temporary contract arrangements.

A summary of the assessment findings, including proposed areas for improvement, had been made available to tenants online and relevant feedback would be reflected in the finalised report, which would be published online prior to the festive break. A copy of the [assessment summary](#) had been uploaded to the Caledonia Only Document Library on Decision Time, while the full assessment would be made available to Board Members on request.

Strategy Review – Key Outcomes and Priorities

The Chief Executive referred to a comprehensive summary of the recent Board strategy event which was contained within her report. It was noted that the reported outcomes from the Board strategy session would form the basis of the Association's business plan and five-year budget that would be brought to the Board for consideration and approval in the New Year.

The Chief Executive and Director of Strategy and Innovation had presented a summary of the Board Strategy session to the Cordale Management Committee at its strategy event held on 26 November. The members were in general agreement on the importance of the key strategic priority areas identified, and acknowledged the challenges involved in each of these over the coming year. The members specifically asked about the Group's future new house building programme and how this might be affected by public funding and other wider economic challenges. The Cordale strategic objectives were expected to focus around local housing development and service delivery issues, as well as the recruitment of new members to the Management Committee, which Committee members requested be considered as a priority within the Group business plan.

A member queried the number of actions within the report without owners or timescales, and was keen to see early progress made on establishing a working group on net zero / climate change issues. The Chief Executive advised that the business plan would contain a clear schedule of all key business plan commitments, including the establishment of this working group, with identified owners and timeframes. The Executive Team's resources would in the short term be focussed on the completion of the business plan and budget prior to implementation of the agreed actions within the plan.

The Chair summarised discussions on this topic and it was agreed that actions arising from the Strategy day would first be formally documented within the business plan, which would enable the Board to review and agree priorities and timescales.

Draft Schedule of Meetings 2021

The Board **APPROVED** the proposed schedule of meetings for 2021 which had been included within the report. The Board was advised that a schedule of dates had yet to be agreed for the Cordale Management Committee, and that further consultation was ongoing. The dates for these meetings would therefore be reported to the Management Board once they had been agreed.

In addition, the schedule of Audit & Risk Management Committee meetings had been agreed by Committee members at their meeting on 2 December 2020. A Remuneration Committee meeting would also be scheduled for December 2021, with other meetings of this Committee being held on an “as and when required” basis.

Policy Review

Redundancy Policy

This policy remained fully compliant with legislation and ACAS recommendations and had not been affected by any organisational changes within the Group other than changes in job titles.

Travel and Subsistence Policy

The Chief Executive advised that the review of this policy had been postponed and would be considered as part of future consideration of working practices.

The Board **APPROVED** the minor amendments to the Redundancy Policy and **DISCUSSED** and **NOTED** the remaining items.

145.20 Treasury Management Proposal

This report is confidential as it is commercially sensitive and publication could harm commercial interests.

146.20 Development & Planned Maintenance

This report is confidential as it is commercially sensitive and publication could harm commercial interests.

147/20 Development Project Risk Appraisal – Muir Road, Bellsmyre, Dumbarton

This report is confidential as it is commercially sensitive and publication could harm commercial interests.

148.20 Development Project Risk Appraisal – Hall Road, Guildtown, Perthshire

This report is confidential as it is commercially sensitive and publication could harm commercial interests.

149.20 Development Project Risk Appraisal – Coupar Angus Road, Newtyle, Angus

This report is confidential as it is commercially sensitive and publication could harm commercial interests.

150.20 Development Project Risk Appraisal – 68-78 Townhead, Kirkintilloch

This report is confidential as it is commercially sensitive and publication could harm commercial interests.

151.20 Former Tenant Arrear Write off and Recharged Repairs Update

The Director of Customer Services (DoCS) provided the Board with information regarding former tenant arrears and requested approval from the Board to write off the sums included within his report. The report also provided information about the debts raised as rechargeable repairs for 2020/21 and the value of sums recovered.

The DoCS clarified the current total figure for Former Tenant arrears and advised that RSLs were required to include Current Tenant arrears, Former Tenant arrears and any Former Tenant arrears written off in year-end performance reports to the Regulator. Members expressed concern over the likelihood of further write offs given rising arrears levels and the increase to bad debts.

The DoFG advised that, although the level of arrears had increased, they remained well within the level of bad debt budgeted for 2020/21 which had been increased to 6.2% in the revised budget to reflect the uncertain and challenging operating conditions.

In response to a query from a Board member, the DoCS advised that the average cost of legal fees in pursuing arrears was approximately £600 per case.

A member noted that the Arrears Write off paper was marked as not confidential. This was agreed to be appropriate as individual tenants could not be identified from the data contained within the report.

The Board **NOTED** the information regarding former tenant arrears written off in 2020/21 and **APPROVED** the write off of the identified former tenant arrears cases where the sum was in excess of two months' rent.

152.20 Group Information Risk Management Policy

The Director of Strategy and innovation (DoSI) sought approval from the Management Board for a new Group Information Risk Management Policy.

The members requested an amendment to the scope of the policy to separate data protection and GDPR as distinct areas of focus. The DoSI agreed to make this amendment.

The Management Board **APPROVED** the Group Information Risk Management Policy.

153.20 Minutes of the Audit & Risk Management Committee meeting - 2 December 2020

The members **NOTED** the minutes.

154.20 Minutes of Cordale Management Committee meeting - 20 October 2020

The members **NOTED** the minutes.

155.20 Minutes of Bellsmyre Management Committee meeting - 26 October 2020

The members **NOTED** the minutes.

Any Other Business

It was **NOTED** that the Legal and Regulatory Overview session would take place on Monday 18th January 2021.

It was **NOTED** that the Culture Workshop would take place on Wednesday 20th January 2021.

It was **NOTED** that the next Management Board meeting would be held on Tuesday 26 January 2021.

There being no other business, the meeting was concluded at 8.30 pm.

Chair's signature