

Meeting: Minutes of Board Meeting

Meeting Date: 5 March 2024

Time: 5.30pm

Location: AHA Boardroom, 355 Tormusk Road

Discussion

Meeting Opening

1. Welcome & Apologies

Present		Staff	
Liz McKenzie	Chair	David Byfield	Chief Executive (CEO) Company Secretary (CS)
Richard Mahon	Board Member		
Sharon Richford	Board Member	Karen Fee	Director of Finance, Digital Engagement and Corporate Services (DFDCS)
John Duncan	Board Member	Peter Kelly	Director of Asset Management (DAM)
Alex Warren	Board Member	Suzanne Casey	Director of Customer Services (DCS)
Fiona Dunwoodie	Co-opted Member	Michelle Hart	Finance and Corporate Manager (FCM)
		Jacqui Mills	Corporate Services Officer (CSO) (Minute Taker)
		Angela Mooney	Senior Housing Officer
		Christopher Paterson	Senior Asset Officer
Apologies		Leave of Absence	
Chinenye Anameje	Board Member	Maureen Cope	Board Member
Mark Ingram	Vice-Chair	In attendance	
Karen McDonagh	Board Member		

Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to this evening's meeting and suggested that everyone introduce themselves as there are new staff and Board Members in attendance.

CEO and Chair provided Angela and Christopher with an opportunity to talk about how their experiences have been so far in their new roles.

	Both Angela and Christopher left the meeting at 5.50pm.												
2.	<p><u>Declaration of Interest</u></p> <p>Alex Warren declared interest in agenda item 13.</p>												
3.	<p><u>Declaration of Receipt and Understanding</u></p> <p>Members present confirmed they read and understood the contents of the Board papers.</p>												
4.	<p>Minutes of Board Meetings for Approval</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="178 618 1471 734"> <tr> <td colspan="2">Minutes of Board Meeting 23 January 2024</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Approved by:</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Alex Warren</td> <td>Fiona Dunwoodie</td> </tr> </table> <table border="1" data-bbox="194 808 1455 925"> <tr> <td colspan="2">Minutes of Audit Sub Committee Meeting 6 February 2024</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Approved by:</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Richard Mahon</td> <td>Liz McKenzie</td> </tr> </table>	Minutes of Board Meeting 23 January 2024		Approved by:		Alex Warren	Fiona Dunwoodie	Minutes of Audit Sub Committee Meeting 6 February 2024		Approved by:		Richard Mahon	Liz McKenzie
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5.	<p><u>Matters Arising/ Action Sheet</u></p> <p>Action Sheet:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="178 1108 1471 1149"> <tr> <td>Approved by: Sharon Richford</td> <td>Seconded by: Liz McKenzie</td> </tr> </table>	Approved by: Sharon Richford	Seconded by: Liz McKenzie										
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Items requiring a discussion/ approval													
6.	<p>Reciprocal Agreement for Decants Report</p> <p>CEO presented report on Reciprocal Agreement, he advised members that in certain extreme circumstances there is a requirement for RSLs to decant tenants from their property. This may be due to major repair works. He advised that Housing Associations across the city are discussing the options to allow tenants to decant to housing in the city that suits their need with another Housing provider. It would be a lease agreement and entering a lease agreement would result in a Notifiable Event with the Housing Regulator in keeping with good governance.</p> <p>CEO recommended that Ardenglen is authorised to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter into a general reciprocal arrangement with other RSLs in the Greater Glasgow area to offer vacant homes as decant properties, on a lease basis, if available when requested; • Ardenglen be authorised to approach other RSLs to conduct short term leases with them if they have an appropriate property available for a short term decant; and • Our policy and procedures are amended to allow other RSLs to lease such properties from us <p>The Board queried whether this agreement is to allow greater flexibility in housing tenants in suitable accommodation which the CEO confirmed.</p>												

	<p>The Board queried whether a family that has settled into a decant property with another Association would be allowed to continue in that property if they desired. CEO advised that this is something that the Housing organisations would need to collectively discuss and make an agreement on.</p> <p>The Board also queried whether families who have decanted outwith the area of their children's school would be recompensed or granted travel expenses. CEO advised that these are issues that would be discussed on a case by case situation should they arise.</p> <p>The Board approved all three recommendations in relation to the reciprocal agreement.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Final Budget 2024-25</p> <p>FCM presented the final Budget 2024-25. She advised that there had been few changes made other than the removal of the pension deficit. There is an operating surplus of £1.37k for 2024-25.</p> <p>The rent increase of 6.0% is incorporated within this Budget. Void rental loss has been estimated at 0.5%. Salaries are budgeted at an increase of 5.5% for 24/25. Projected salaries for new posts such as Financial Inclusion Officer and also a PAIH Trainee have been included within this budget. The cash balance at 31 March 2025 is projected to be £4,283k. FCM confirmed that all loan covenants are comfortably met within this budget.</p> <p>The Board queried whether other partner organisations are contributing to pantry costs for food. DS confirmed that pantry food is sourced from Fair Share and paid for through funding. DCS confirmed that she will be looking at the longterm viability of the Pantry as it was never intended to be managed by Ardenglen longterm. It is a project that she would be keen to see other potential partners leading on.</p> <p>The Board queried whether there is any concern over the level of bad debt increasing following two years of rent increases. FCM firstly advised that the bad debt levels had been low for the last two years and there is no indication this will change. CEO also advised that the introduction of an in house Financial Inclusion Officer should help offset any bad debt occurrences.</p> <p>The Board queried whether it would be possible to categorise within the budget the finances spent on tenant safety. Tenant Safety is of major concern to the Housing Regulator and Ardenglen doing great work meeting our responsibilities but it would be really useful for Board, Regulator and any external auditor to identify in our budget amount ring-fenced for safety of our tenants. CEO advised that monies spent on tenant health and safety matters would be reported to the Audit Sub and that the Association shares the regulators view on the importance of tenant health and safety so we have appointed a dedicated role for matters of tenant health and safety and compliance.</p> <p>The Board approved the Final Budget 24/25.</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>6 Ardencraig Street – Alterations Report</p> <p>DAM took members through the Alterations Report for 6 Ardencraig Street advising that any works costing over £50k must be procured through Public Contracts Scotland or a Framework or Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS). He sought permission to utilise the DPS to procure for contract works. The proposal would be to invite contractors on the multi-trade aspect of the DPS</p>

	<p>which includes a list of 33 multi-trade contractors to tender for the contract. It is proposed that the lowest tender would be appointed as the successful contractor.</p> <p>The Board queried whether there is any control over who can tender or is there a possibility that all 33 will tender. DAM confirmed that it could be all 33 who tender but that figure could increase if using contract Public Contracts Scotland.</p> <p>The Board approved utilising the Dynamic Procurement System to procure works at 6 Ardencraig Street.</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Write Offs 23/24</p> <p>DCS presented the write off report for 23/24 making recommendations for the following debt to be written off:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Former Tenant Write Off - £20,397.87 • Rechargeable Repairs Write Off - £2.13 • Former Tenant Pre-payments - £4,497.32 <p>DCS elaborated on the report in order to convey the efforts and extent to which the Association goes in order to recover all monies owed.</p> <p>The Board queried what happens with the prepayments. DCS advised that several attempts are made to claim monies back from Housing Benefit team but it has proven difficult to make contact.</p> <p>The Board approved Write Offs for 2023/24.</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p>KPI Schedule 2024/25</p> <p>DFDCS advised that she had made some changes to the Finance, Digital and Corporate KPIs. Income, Expenditure and Capitalised Major Repairs Expenditure have been removed and replaced with two new KPIs that focus on Performance Management.</p> <p>DAM advised that he has made slight adjustments to AM3, AM4, AM5, AM6 and AM10 to ensure that they better align with our maintenance contracts and policy timelines as well as being more realistic.</p> <p>DCS advised that she has made some adjustments to CS2 as rent arrears performance is strong and would like the KPI to be more challenging this year. Similarly CS10 Anti-Social Behaviour cases has been revised as performance has been good, the new target will provide more challenge. CS7 has been revised as customer expectations have altered when it comes to tenancy offers. The new target reflects this.</p> <p>The Board queried whether customers have visibility of our KPIs. CEO advised that specific KPIs are reported in an ongoing basis in the newsletter and also on our website. Our new scrutiny panel will also have access to our KPIs.</p> <p>The Board approved KPI Schedule for 2024/25.</p>

<p>11.</p>	<p>Internal Audit Tender Report</p> <p>DFDCS presented Internal Audit Tender Report advising that nine parties expressed an interest in tendering for Internal Audit contract but three submitted a tender. The three who tendered were scored on quality and price. Wylie and Bisset came first in overall scoring and it is recommended that the board approve their reappointment for three years.</p> <p>The Board queried whether there had been much of an uplift in the tendered costs presented from previous years. DFDCS advised that there had not been much of an increase.</p> <p>The Board approved reappointment of Wylie and Bisset as our Internal Auditor for three more years.</p>
<p>12.</p>	<p>Insurance Renewal</p> <p>DFDCS presented the insurance renewal report which refers to the annual renewal of the Association's insurance policies for the period 1st April 2024 – 31st March 2025. She advised that the Association remains in a hard market when brokering for insurance cover.</p> <p>*The minute has been redacted to remove sensitive information. *</p> <p>CEO advised that he had reached out to some of our peers and they have advised that they have experienced severe increase in premiums by comparison to Ardenglen's renewal which is testament to the DFDCS efforts in the renewal process.</p> <p>No questions arose.</p> <p>The Board approved Insurance Renewal Report.</p>
<p>13.</p>	<p>Eviction Report</p> <p>Alex declared interest in this item as the customer had been referred to his employer, Wise Group. It was noted that the customer did not engage with the Wise Group.</p> <p>DCS presented Eviction Report advising that the tenant had accrued rent arrears of £5,740.32 over a sixteen month period. The customer had self-referred themselves to a number of support agencies however became disengaged with them over time. The Association then made numerous referrals and offers of support to the tenant who has not engaged at all. DCS advised that the customer is thought to have abandoned the property and is no longer residing there. There are two courses of action for Ardenglen, one is to proceed with Eviction action as the decree was granted on 28 February or proceed with serving an abandonment notice on the property.</p> <p>Board agreed that the Association had done everything within its power to prevent eviction which is always a position of last resort.</p> <p>No questions arose.</p> <p>The Board approved the Eviction Report.</p>

Items for Noting

14.	<p>Value for Money Report</p> <p>DFDCS presented report on Value for Money. She advised that the target of saving £50,000 had already been exceeded with savings of £50,800 recorded already. The VFM Working Group will next meet to look at the plan for the year ahead.</p> <p>The Board noted the Value for Money Report.</p>
15.	<p>Day to Day Repairs Report</p> <p>DAM presented the report advising that it is not yet as detailed as he would like but it is still fairly early into the employment of the new multi trade procuring system. It is not an easy system to manage initially but early signs are that the procurement of the smaller contractors for repair jobs has led to our main contractor improving their performance. There will be a more detailed report brought to the Audit and Risk.</p> <p>The Board queried how the Asset team know if there has been a fair split of the repair work. DAM advised it is very difficult for staff to know the exact split at any one time however it is something the senior asset officer is monitoring and will advise the frontline staff of the split. The senior asset officer is also looking at coaching the team to allocate different jobs to different contractors based on cost as well, so it is unlikely their will ever be a perfectly even split.</p> <p>The Board queried whether Asset team can have a conversation with the contractors about their involvement. DAM advised that it is possible to talk to contractors about the work they are carrying out.</p> <p>The Board queried when DAM would be in a position to take an objective view on the procurement system. DAM advised that it is difficult to say at this stage, but we are gathering survey responses and our new admin assistant will monitor these when they are in post which will give us meaningful feedback on how it is working. The DAM advised a more detailed report will be presented to the Audit and Risk.</p> <p>The Board noted day to day repairs report.</p>
16.	<p>30 Year Plan Update</p> <p>FCM presented a 30 Year Plan update to the Board. She advised that even at the 30 year point, there is a significant cash balance.</p> <p>The Board requested a sensitivity analysis on 30 Year Plan. FCM advised that she would include this in the next update.</p>

	<p>The Board queried whether there was any possibility the Association will be proactive about the pavement parking ban if implemented. CEO advised that Ardenglen will monitor the situation but there is not much the Association can do regarding this.</p> <p>The Board noted the 30 Year Plan Update.</p>
Meeting Close	
17.	<p>Notifiable Events</p> <p>None.</p>
18.	<p>Health & Safety</p> <p>None.</p>
19.	<p>Correspondence</p> <p>None.</p>
20.	<p>Use of Delegated Authority</p> <p>None.</p>
21.	<p>A.O.C.B</p> <p><i>Staffing Sub Committee Membership</i> CEO raised notice that the Staffing Sub Committee requires some new members and invited interested members to get in touch with him or CSO to express their interest.</p> <p><i>Recruitment Update</i> DAM advised that the new Asset Officer post was appointed today, and the assistant interviews will take place on 6 March, followed by the Administration Assistant later in month.</p> <p>DCS advised that she has appointed a Housing Officer who will commence her post on Monday 11 March. Financial Inclusion Officer vacancy received thirty seven applications and will interview seven or eight applicants on 12 March. A Housing Assistant is due to go on maternity leave and there is a permanent vacancy on front desk which will also go to recruitment soon too. Once settled in post, it would be good to have an open day and allow tenants the opportunity to meet our new staff team.</p> <p><i>Tenant Scrutiny Update</i> DFDCS advised that the recent event to launch our tenant scrutiny programme was held at the office and we were able to secure two interested customers to join our scrutiny panel. The next stage will be to hold a virtual meeting with the group and take the programme forward.</p> <p><i>Lived Experiences Group</i> CEO advised that the second Lived Experiences meeting took place recently. The plan is to link in with the local schools on the project and engage more with the wider community.</p>
22.	<p>Summary of actions/ decisions at this meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Board Approved the minutes and action sheet ➤ The Board Approved Audit policy subcommittee minutes ➤ The Board Approved Reciprocal Agreement Report

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Board Approved Final Budget 2024/25 ➤ The Board Approved 6 Ardencraig Street Procurement ➤ The Board Approved Write Offs 23/24 Report ➤ The Board Approved KPI Schedule 2024/25 ➤ The Board Approved Internal Audit Report ➤ The Board Approved Insurance Renewal Report ➤ The Board Approved Eviction Report ➤ The Board Noted Value for Money Update ➤ The Board Noted Day to Day Repairs Report Update ➤ The Board Noted 30 Year Plan Update ➤ The Board Noted Jenniburn Update
23.	<p>Meeting Evaluation</p> <p>The Board thanked staff for their reports and advised the meeting had lots of good discussion.</p>
24.	<p>Date and time of next meeting – 5 March 2024 (In Person)</p>
25.	<p>Meeting Close</p> <p>The meeting closed at 7.10 PM with a vote of thanks to the Chair.</p>