

ATRIUM HOMES

Minutes of Meeting of the Board held on Tuesday 29 March 2022

At 5:30 p.m. via Zoom

Present: Joe Keen, Marie Coyle, Ken Stewart, David Sherlock, Alistair Reid, Ken Tudhope, Steven Fraser, Carolyn Hope, Julie Templeton

Attending: Joyce McCroskie, Director of Operations (DoO), Celia Taylor, Director of Investment (DoI), Valerie Wilson, Director of Finance & Corporate Services (DoFCS), Shannon Watson, Chief Executive (CX)

Chair: Joe Keen

The Chair opened the meeting asking everyone to confirm that they had read and understood the papers which had been circulated via DropBox the week prior to the meeting.

Confirmed

Item	
1	Apologies
	No apologies were received for this meeting
2	Declarations of Interest
	Staff present declared an interest in item 7.a which was deferred until the end of the meeting
3	Minutes of Meeting 22 February 2022
	The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 22 February 2022 were reviewed and approved with one amendment to note Steven Fraser as an attendee at the meeting. <i>Approved for publication subject to one amendment noted</i>
4	Matters Arising
4.a	Board noted the position with regards to action points from previous Board meetings; <ul style="list-style-type: none">it was noted that a contract had been issued for the lease of land for grazing;it was noted that three expressions of interest and one application form had been received from potential new board members, and that CX would be following up with the candidates who had requested but not yet returned an application form. <i>Noted</i>
4.b	Board noted that Atrium was up to date with all compliance requirements and that the budget would be sent to the lenders after its approval at this meeting. <i>Noted</i>
10	Atrium Initiatives (AI)
	<i>This item was moved to the start of the agenda as the chair of AI had to leave the meeting early due to another commitment.</i>
10.a	The minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2022 were noted. It noted that the annual review letters had been sent to owners in March. <i>Noted</i>
10.b	In reviewing the budget, Board noted that the company's budget shows it generating a profit of only £10k per annum and asked how exposed AI was to the risk of this profit turning into a loss. A discussion was held on the commercial reasons for the original formation of AI as a trading subsidiary of the housing association, and in particular the requirement to separate the commercial activities of factoring services and mid-market rents in order for AH to satisfy

10.c	<p>the tax and legal requirements of its charitable status. This vehicle also allowed for external consultancy services to be provided to LAs and other RSLs.</p> <p>AI was formed to offer these services for strategic reasons rather than to generate profits, and so the company was not likely to generate large profits.</p> <p>It was noted that the business plan for AI did include some thoughts on how the business might be expanded in the future.</p> <p>The Budget for AI was approved with no amendments.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Approved</i></p> <p>There were no questions raised on the draft Business Plan presented. The Business Plan of AI was approved with no amendments requested.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Approved</i></p>
5	Internal Management Plan 2022/23
	<p>The Board considered the contents of the draft Internal Management Plan (IMP) for 2022/23. There was a discussion on how the organisation will be taking care of its customers and communities through the year. There was challenge on whether there was sufficient emphasis on our communities in the IMP following on from the focus of the earlier business planning sessions.</p> <p>Board noted that it has been difficult to gauge how happy tenants are with our service through the pandemic; the IMP is a comprehensive document but perhaps more could be done around engaging with tenants.</p> <p>It was noted that HFF21CLS works are ongoing but that they have been slower than planned and some properties had proved to be more difficult to complete; the question was asked as to whether there should be more communication on this via our website or social media.</p> <p>Two corrections to report details included in Appendix 1 were noted, and a request was made to change the layout of Appendix 3 to make it easier to identify which policies required to be reviewed at the same time.</p> <p>Subject to these changes, the draft IMP for 2022/23 was approved for finalisation.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Approved for finalisation</i></p>
6	Strategic Risk Register
	<p>CX noted that the Strategic Risk Register included in the papers was not significantly different from that presented at the February meeting; Board were asked to note the addition of zero-carbon as an emerging risk.</p> <p>CX noted that Board is required to assess their Risk Appetite at the start of the year, and that a survey would shortly be issued to Board members. Risk Appetite will be discussed further at the meeting in April 2022.</p> <p>The Strategic Risk Register was approved with no changes.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Approved</i></p>
7	Finance, Audit & Staffing ("FASSC") Report
7.a	<p>Discussion on item 7.a was deferred until the end of the meeting when staff attendees had left the meeting</p>
7.b	<p>Board considered the budget for 2022/23. It was noted that the salary budget is based on the Board's previous requirement that any cost of living increase awarded to staff should not exceed 3%. Board noted that the banks' financial covenant cover was satisfactory in the 2022/23 budget with the relaxation agreed in principle by the DoFCS.</p>

	<p>It was noted that after the budget for 2022/23 had been approved the five year projections would be brought to the April 2022 Board meeting.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Noted</i></p> <p>The budget for 2022/23 was approved with no amendments</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Approved</i></p>
8	Operations Report
	<p>Board noted the updates provided on the two cases which had previously been approved for eviction and confirmed their understanding of the individual cases and the actions taken and / or proposed by the Operations team.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Noted</i></p>
9	Ukrainian Refugee Programme
	<p>Board noted that we had been asked to indicate whether we were willing to be included in requests from East Ayrshire Council (EAC) for the provision of housing for Ukrainian refugees. This programme was likely to work in much the same as the Syrian refugee programme which had taken place previously, although likely to be larger than that previous programme.</p> <p>A discussion was held on what housing was likely to be needed, but Board noted that we have limited information at this time.</p> <p>Board gave approval in principle for the organisation to work with EAC on this.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Approved</i></p>
	KS left the meeting at this point
11	Board Training
	<p>Board were asked to note the schedule of upcoming training opportunities provided, and to advise the CX if they wished to attend any training courses listed. It was noted that some of the SHARE training courses would be available again at a later point if Board members could not attend those listed.</p> <p>Options on in-house training if more cost effective and potential future joint training courses with Eydent members were discussed.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Noted</i></p>
12	Health & Safety
	<p>It was noted that this is a standing item and that there were no particular issues which needed to be raised at this meeting.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Noted</i></p>
13	Applications for Membership
	<p>Eight applications for membership were put to the meeting and the Board approved all of these.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Approved</i></p>
14	Any Other Competent Business
	<p>CX requested that the timetable of meetings be amended to bring the May Board meeting forward from the 31st to the 24th. This change would allow time for the Board to review the draft Annual Return on the Charter report and for any investigations or changes needed to be completed before the submission deadline of 31 May 2021.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Approved</i></p> <p>A Board member asked whether the meeting in April was planned to be a hybrid meeting; CX noted that having the correct equipment was essential to hybrid meetings being effective and that this was being investigated. Board will be kept up-to-date regarding any future changes in the meeting format.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Noted</i></p>

7.a	<p>Annual Cost of Living Increase Review 2022/23</p> <p>Prior to leaving the meeting a verbal update to the paper which had been tabled at the Board meeting on 22 February 2022 was provided. Clarification was sought by Board on the various increase scenarios provided in the papers.</p> <p>It was noted that an email had been received from EVH today indicating that the employers had offered a 4.1% cost of living increase to the Union and were awaiting the Union's decision on whether this would be accepted by its members.</p> <p>A detailed discussion was held on what other organisations had shared as their plans or had already approved.</p> <p><i>Staff in attendance left the meeting shortly after 6:45 p.m.</i></p> <p>All board members present had views on the three options presented to the meeting. A final decision was made at a separate meeting where the award was finalised, on 11 April 2022.</p> <p>The final pay award for 2022/23 was agreed as 3% for all staff or £1,198, whichever amount is higher.</p> <p>In addition to the increase the Board asked that the CX carry out an informal comparison of posts and salaries/conditions with EVH member organisations during the next financial year.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Approved</i></p>
15	<p>Date of Next Meeting – Tuesday 26 April 2022</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Noted</i></p>
	<p>The meeting closed at 7:20 p.m.</p>