

ATRIUM HOMES

Minutes of Meeting of the Board held on Tuesday 27 May 2025

At 6:00 p.m. via Zoom

Present: Alistair Reid, Carolyn Hope, Ken Tudhope, Julie Templeton, Maureen Gimby, Alan White, Craig Leitch

Attending: Joyce McCroskie (Director of Housing & Community Services, DoHCS), Barry Lees (Director of Property Services, DoPS), Shannon Watson (Chief Executive, CX)

Chair: Alistair Reid

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.

The Chair confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

Confirmed

Item	
1	Apologies
	Dominic O'Donnell, Ron Sharpe, Scott Cunningham
2	Declarations of Interest
	No declarations of interest in business to be discussed were noted.
3	Minutes of Meeting on 29 April 2025
	The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 29 April 2025 were reviewed and approved as an accurate record of the meeting. <i>Approved for publication</i>
4	Matters Arising
	a) Board noted the items which remained in progress and the updates provided. <i>Noted</i>
	b) Board noted that Atrium is up to date with all compliance requirements. <i>Noted</i>
5	Annual Assurance Considerations Other Regulatory Requirements of RSLs
	<u>The Scottish Social Housing Charter and Listening and responding to Tenants and Service Users</u> Board considered the contents of the paper in order to agree whether Atrium is adequately demonstrating its compliance with the SHR's standards based on the matters discussed at this and previous meetings, and other evidence supplied. Board considered the statements made on how Atrium complies with each of the requirements under the topics above, and agreed that it was a good record of

	<p>Atrium's work and that this paper, together with the other papers discussed at this and previous Board meetings, demonstrated Atrium is complying with the standard.</p> <p>CX noted that the results from the Annual Return on the Charter which were to be considered at this meeting demonstrated that Atrium's performance on the key indicators of compliance with the Scottish Social Housing Charter is consistently good both year on year and in comparison to the Scottish averages reported by the Scottish Housing Regulator.</p> <p>A discussion was held the subject of involving tenants in the preparation and scrutiny of performance information. CX noted that good progress has been made in getting tenants involved in discussions through drop in sessions and additional sessions on specific matters such as the Home Fit for Works, etc. Atrium is working to get more people involved in influencing us by giving them a number of avenues through which they can engage with us, as there is little appetite at present from tenants for them to be involved in formal groups.</p> <p>DoHCS emphasised the importance of any tenant engagement we do needing to be meaningful, avoiding a superficial exercise which simply ticks a box. The Reach & Connect Initiative update paper which goes to the quarterly Housing & Communities Sub-Committee meetings provides Board with updates on activities undertaken and planned activities aimed at improving our engagement with our tenants.</p> <p>A Board member noted that the recent Customer Satisfaction Survey which is reported in the Annual Return on the Charter for 2024/25 shows that tenants' overall satisfaction with Atrium's services has improved since the last survey, and that in particular, tenants' satisfaction with the opportunities given to participate in Atrium's decision making has improved too.</p> <p>CX noted that the documents evidencing compliance with standards from previous meetings were included in the Board papers' background documents folder.</p> <p>Board approved the document as adequate evidence of its compliance with these regulatory standards.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Approved</i></p>
6	Annual Return on the Charter
	<p>CX presented the paper which summarised the results from the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) which is required to be submitted to the Regulator by 31 May, together with the stock returns which are submitted at the same time.</p> <p>Board considered the five year comparisons of results together with the Scottish averages reported by the Regulator for 2024, and noted that there were no indicators which reflected areas of performance which are poor. The results reported in this ARC are also consistent with the KPIs and operational updates provided to the Sub-Committees throughout the year.</p> <p>Board further considered the draft stock returns which were provided together with a note of the returns for 2023/24, and noted the increase in numbers of houses owned by Atrium which reflected the three houses acquired in quarter 4 of 2024/25.</p>

	<p>A Board member asked how the statistic for indicator 26 (percentage collected of rent due) could be more than 100%, and CX noted that, because the amount of rent collected includes the impact of the reduction in rent arrears from 2023/24 to 2024/25, the amount collected might be able to be more than 100% in a year.</p> <p>CX noted that a Board member had emailed with a few questions for clarification ahead of the meeting, particularly around indicator 23. Because Atrium participates in a combined housing register with the local authority and a number of other East Ayrshire registered social landlords, the statistic does not reflect the fact that 50% of all of Atrium's relets are to homeless households. It was further noted that this statistic has been removed from the requirements of the ARC for 2025/26 since there are other indicators reported which provide a clearer picture of our letting activities.</p> <p>Board approved CX submitting the ARC return and the stock returns before 31 May.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Approved</i></p>
7	<p>Drawdown of RBS Tranche C</p> <p>CX presented the paper which outlined the considerations for Atrium's drawdown of the final tranche of £6.3m loan funding which had been negotiated in June 2023 and had been available for drawdown over a two year period. At the time of the drawdown of the remaining £4.3m funding available in the facility, Atrium is required to advise RBS of whether this loan funding will be repaid over the remaining term of the loan on a variable rate basis or on a fixed rate basis.</p> <p>CX and the Finance & IT Manager had met with the RBS and Atrium's treasury advisor ahead of the Finance, Audit & Staffing Sub-Committee (FASSC) meeting in May. A number of options were discussed, which included the potential for Atrium to enter into a hedging transaction which would be more affordable than the 23-year fixed rate offered.</p> <p>FASSC received a detailed report at its May meeting. Atrium staff considered advice from a number of sources together with market information on expected rate changes over the coming year. Staff recommended to FASSC that the facility be drawn down on a variable rate basis at this time and confirmed that the balance of fixed rate to variable rate borrowing in Atrium's loan facility would remain within the levels allowed in Atrium's Treasury Management Policy. This option would produce a lower interest cost to the organisation and would also provide greater flexibility for a potential review of Atrium's loan portfolio in the medium term.</p> <p>FASSC is recommending to Board to approve the proposal to draw down this facility on a variable rate basis ahead of the expiry of the availability period. A Board member noted that the level of review and advice taken from various sources provided Board with assurance that the decision was sound.</p> <p>Board approved management drawing down the remainder of the loan facility before the end of the availability period on a variable rate basis.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Approved</i></p>

8	Policies
	<p>Board considered the updates to policies provided for the meeting.</p> <p>Board noted the changes to the Dignity at Work Policy which had been necessitated by recent changes to employment legislation, and had been reviewed and approved by FASSC. CX noted that this policy would be distributed to contractors together with the updated Unacceptable Actions Policy, and contractors would all be asked to comply with the spirit of these policies.</p> <p>A Board member asked whether these two policies would be incorporated into future procurement requirements, and staff confirmed that this could be done. Board agreed that this should be considered together with consideration on how compliance with the policies might be monitored and breaches acted upon.</p> <p>Board considered the updates made to the Deceased Tenant Policy to reflect recent best practice and regulatory clarifications issued. DoHCS noted that the provision of 28 days for relatives to clear a property and hand back the keys was more generous than the original 14 days allowed in the policy, and would Atrium to deal in particular with exceptional cases in a compassionate way. DoHCS clarified that the 28-day grace period would be communicated to family members when they initially contacted the office for advice.</p> <p>Board considered the update made to the Unacceptable Actions Policy which reflect current best practice and incorporated more detailed guidance on specific issues, particularly the use of video doorbells by tenants.</p> <p>Board approved all three updated policies.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Noted</i></p>
9	Annual Procurement Report
	<p>DoPS presented the paper which included Atrium's annual report on procurement activity for 2024/25. Once approved, this paper will be published on the organisation's website and Scottish Ministers advised of its availability.</p> <p>DoPS noted that the annual report only contains regulated procurement activities, and that there may also be procurements within Atrium's strategy which fall below the thresholds for regulated procurement and so would not be included in this annual report.</p> <p>Board considered the contents of the report and approved its publication.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Approved</i></p>
10	Finance, Audit & Staffing Report
	<p>a) Board noted the minutes of the FASSC meeting on 19 May 2025.</p> <p>A Committee member noted that the Internal Audit Reports received at the meeting had provided committee with considerable detail on the areas that had been reviewed and the findings of these. These reports provided strong assurance to the committee that controls were operating well at Atrium. They further noted that FASSC had considered some of the recommendations made to be of a very operational nature and had challenged the auditor on these.</p>

	<p>The consideration of the plans for the RBS Tranche C facility have been separately reported to Board for approval.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Noted</i></p> <p>b) Board considered the financial performance reports to 31 March 2025.</p> <p>Board noted that the surplus for the period was better than budgeted. Reactive Repairs spend had finished the year more in line with budget than in earlier periods. Board noted the cost savings on void repairs in the year.</p> <p>Adaptations spend for the year includes £24.5k funded by Atrium in order to assist tenants to stay in their homes despite the severely reduced grant funding for these works award late in 2024/25.</p> <p>The revenue elements of the Homes Fit for 21st Century Living Standard works programme have been lower than budgeted, with the underspend largely matched by the expenditure on capital elements of the works. Overall spend is on target with the contractor continuing completing a further 149 properties by the end of the financial year. Atrium also funded EWI works to a number of properties from its own reserves during the year.</p> <p>Board noted that Atrium continues to comply fully with its lenders' financial covenants. Board approved the performance reports for the year.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Approved</i></p>
11	<p>Housing & Community Services Reports</p> <p>a) DoHCS noted that, due to the Sub-Committee being unable to meet in May, the papers for the meeting had been included in the Board papers for consideration.</p> <p>In particular, DoHCS noted that the Community Fund budgeted spend, which has been included in the planned expenditure for 2025/26 approved by Board in March 2025, required to be approved by Board. A discussion was held on the intended purpose of this fund and the way in which the activities were being focussed to ensure that the money has a positive impact on our communities.</p> <p>Board approved the Community Fund budget for 2025/26.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Approved</i></p> <p>Board noted that this had been another quarter of strong performance by the team. DoHCS noted that the papers included updated targets for 2025/26, some of which had been set to be stretch targets. Board agreed that these should be confirmed by the Sub-Committee at their meeting in August, but that staff should be aiming to meet the new targets now.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Noted</i></p> <p>b) Board noted the positive performance reported in the quarterly performance summary to 31 March 2025.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Noted</i></p>

12	Property Services Report
	<p>a) A committee member noted that external wall insulation works to 25 properties was now complete. An application for SHNZ grant funding has been submitted again, in the hopes that the funding might be secured to enable Atrium to complete EWI works to the remaining no-fines construction properties it owns.</p> <p>Board noted that 146 repairs had been undertaken as a result of damage from Storm Eowyn in the final quarter of the year.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Noted</i></p> <p>b) Board noted the positive performance reported in the quarterly performance summary to 31 March 2025.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Noted</i></p>
KT left the meeting at 18:47	
13	Strategic Risks – emerging risks and changes (standing item)
	<p>Board considered the current strategic risk register which had been included in the papers for the meeting. CX noted that FASSC would be undertaking a detailed review of the risk register and how this is monitored and reported on at its meeting in August.</p> <p>Board considered the risks on the register and agreed that no further changes were needed.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Discussed</i></p>
14	Annual Board Appraisals – verbal update
	<p>CX noted that Board would soon need to undertake annual appraisals and a discussion took place regarding the format and timing of the meetings to take place.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Noted</i></p>
15	Health & Safety (Standing Item)
	<p>DoPS confirmed that there were no new matters to report to the meeting.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Noted</i></p>
16	Any Other Competent Business
	<p>DoPS advised Board that Atrium had been successful in securing 75% of the requested grant funding for medical adaptations for 2025/26. The award of £113k is a significant improvement compared to the reduced level of funding received in 2024/25.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Noted</i></p>
17	Date of Next Meeting - Tuesday 24 June 2025 at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom
	<p>CX reminded Board that there would be a strategy development session with Arneil Johnston at the start of the meeting and so the meeting would be longer than usual.</p>
	<p>The meeting closed at 6:54 p.m.</p>

Chair:

Date: 24 June 2025