

ATRIUM HOMES

Minutes of Meeting of the Board held on Tuesday 28 May 2024

At 6:15 p.m. at Atrium House, 14 Central Avenue, Kilmarnock

Present: Alistair Reid, Carolyn Hope, Steven Fraser, Julie Templeton, Maureen Gimby, Craig Leitch, Alan White, Ron Sharpe

Attending: Joyce McCroskie (Director of Operations, DoO), Barry Lees (Director of Investment, DoI), 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
	Ken Tudhope, Dominic O'Donnell
2	Declarations of Interest
	No declarations of interest in business to be discussed were noted.
3	Minutes of Meeting on 30 April 2024
	The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 30 April 2024 were reviewed and approved. <i>Approved for publication</i>
4	Matters Arising
	a) Board noted the updates given on actions arising from previous meetings, and progress made to date, and approved the closure of several items. <i>Noted</i>
	b) Board noted that Atrium is up to date with all compliance requirements. <i>Noted</i>
5	Annual Return on the Charter (ARC)
	Board considered the contents of the report and the draft ARC and Stock Return forms included in the papers. In particular, Board noted that the five-year comparison of Atrium's results with those of the Scottish Averages provided a good summary of trends and reflected the positive results of the team's work with tenants and contractors to ensure that service users received the best possible service from Atrium. A Board member asked whether Atrium was still holding properties void for allocation to Ukrainian Refugees, and DoO noted that the method of allocating properties to refugees had changed during 2023/24 which means that potential

	<p>property matches are now identified through SEARCH, the East Ayrshire common housing register.</p> <p>CX noted that the five-year summary included additional statistics which were not directly reported in the ARC but which provided context to the results reported. Board also noted the additional work done by the team to support tenants to have successful tenancies.</p> <p>CX also noted the grant funding secured which enabled Atrium to provide energy advice services as well as directed financial support to those most in need. This money was in addition to the funds distributed by Atrium annually, the levels of which were increased in 2023/24 to celebrate Atrium’s 25th anniversary.</p> <p>Board thanked all staff for their work to achieve the positive results reported, and approved the submission of the ARC and Stock Returns to SHR before the deadline of 31 May 2024.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Approved</i></p>
6	Risk Appetite
	<p>Board considered the updated results of the Risk Appetite survey which included responses from all Board members. CX noted that due to the current uncertain economic and operating environment, Board’s responses indicated that it remained Cautious in its attitude to risk.</p> <p>A Board member asked that examples of the types of issues which might arise under the key headings used in the survey be included in future versions. CX noted that each of the categories in the survey included the numbered references of the relevant strategic risks on Atrium’s risk register, but that they would consider how to make the survey more user-friendly and detailed next year.</p> <p>Board agreed that its attitude to risk remained Cautious.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Approved</i></p>
7	Policies
	<p>Board considered the three policies which had been reviewed at the May Sub-Committee meetings. Board noted that one policy was new and two were existing policies which had been reviewed and refreshed.</p> <p>A member of each sub-committee briefly noted the content of the policies approved at the meetings, and Board agreed to endorse the policies presented to them.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Endorsed</i></p>
8	Staffing
	<p>Board considered the report which had been prepared by the Executive Management Team, and the successful recruitment of three new team members to the Housing & Community Services team. DoO noted that they were collaborating with another Ayrshire RSL on a bid for grant funding for a Community Coach role, the practical considerations of which will be finalised shortly.</p> <p>Board noted the proposal to offer a one-year fixed term manager grade appointment to internal candidates to allow certain projects to be progressed while the organisation awaits greater clarity on wider environmental targets and the way in</p>

	<p>which these might be met, including the likely sources of funding available for the works needed.</p> <p>Board approved the proposal for the fixed term role and noted that this would create a personal development opportunity for an existing staff member to take on a different role while enabling Atrium to maximise the use of knowledge and expertise already embodied within its existing staff team.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Approved</i></p>
9	ICT Procurement
	<p>Board considered the update regarding recent activity which was provided to the meeting in respect of steps taken to start the process of sourcing and then procuring up to date housing management and finance software which it is intended will remove our reliance on the servers located in the office building.</p> <p>A Board member asked if a number of different options would be considered for the future software solutions needed, and CX confirmed that the consultant appointed to support the project would be considering all available options suitable for our size and complexity.</p> <p>CX noted that to improve the security of access to our data and to enable future agility in the way that we work, it is intended that a number of laptops and peripheral devices are purchased from an existing supplier to ensure that they were configured to meet the requirements of our systems. Costs quoted have been compared to those available direct from the manufacturer and represent value for money.</p> <p>The total cost is below the threshold for regulated procurement and there is therefore no legal requirement for the procurement to be put to open tender. The method of procurement would be slightly outwith the general framework of Atrium's Procurement Policy however, and so approval was sought from Board to procure the devices direct from the chosen supplier.</p> <p>Board approved the procurement of the devices as detailed.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Approved</i></p>
10	Annual Procurement Report
	<p>DoI presented the Annual Procurement Report to Board, noting that this is a regulatory requirement of all RSLs which are required to report on regulated procurement activities undertaken in the year ended 31 March 2024.</p> <p>Board considered the detail provided in the report and its appendices and approved the publication of the report and communication of this to the Scottish Ministers.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Approved</i></p>
11	Finance, Audit & Staffing Report
	<p>a) Board noted the minutes of the Finance, Audit & Staffing Sub-Committee (FASSC) meeting on 20 May 2024. It was noted that there had been an overspend compared to budget on Reactive Repairs in the year to 31 March 2024, offset by an underspend on Void and Cyclical Repairs in the year. It was further noted that the Homes Fit for 21st Century Living works programme had progressed well in the year, with final spend only slightly below budget.</p>

	<p>A member of FASSC noted that a question had been raised at that meeting as to whether the delayed expenditure identified in the final results for the year would have a material impact on the budgets approved for 2024/25. CX confirmed that the budgets for 2024/25 had been prepared on the basis of the forecasts for the year and that there should be no material negative impact on the budgets for the new year.</p> <p>A discussion was held around interest rates on borrowings and the potential impact on budgets of recent projections of slower than hoped reductions in the base rate by the Bank of England. CX noted that the sensitivity scenarios which had been considered by Board when approving the budgets in March 2024 had included a scenario where bank borrowing rates remained higher than expected for longer, and that the impact of this is considered to be manageable. CX further noted that the Finance Team will be reviewing the budgets before the next FASSC meeting and reporting on the impact on the budgets of the latest economic projections available to them.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Noted</i></p> <p>b) Board considered the financial performance reports to 31 March 2024. A discussion was held regarding the costs of the Reactive Repairs service provided to tenants as a result of the increased activity and higher average costs over the past few years. Board discussed the fact that many RSLs were reporting a similar trend of increased costs.</p> <p>A Board member asked whether there were some properties which regularly required repairs compared to some where repairs were infrequently reported. CX noted that a recent review of expenditure demonstrated that an average of 80% of the homes in each of our developments had required a repair during the year, regardless of whether they had recently been upgraded or not.</p> <p>Board approved the performance reports for the year.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Approved</i></p>
12	Operations Report
	<p>An Operations Sub-Committee member noted the highlights of the minutes of the meeting held on 16 May 2024. It was noted that the reporting of progress made to date on the Internal Management Plan targets would be reviewed for the next quarterly meeting and that management was considering including the key performance dashboard from these meetings within future Board papers.</p> <p>Board noted the contents of the minutes.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Noted</i></p>
13	Investment Report
	<p>An Investment Sub-Committee member noted the highlights of the minutes of the meeting held on 14 May 2024. In particular, it was noted that Atrium has been advised that its application for funding of the proposed External Wall Insulation works to our no-fines homes had not been successful and so the majority of this work would not progress as planned in the 2024/25 budgets.</p> <p>Board discussed the proposed pilot project whereby moisture sensors are planned to be installed in ten homes. Data from these sensors can be accessed by Atrium and the tenants living in the homes via an app which will also provide hints on how the readings can be improved.</p>

	<p>Board noted the Community Benefits that had been achieved through contracts procured which included donated items, apprenticeships and new permanent employment contracts within contractor organisations. Board also noted that a discussion was held regarding the potential for strategic disposals of a small number of properties should these become void.</p> <p>Finally, DoI noted that a contractor’s representative has again made contact with regards to a historic disputed contract sum. The legal advice from Atrium’s solicitors has changed since this was considered in 2022, but management maintain their stance that there are no further sums owed to the contractor.</p> <p>Board noted the contents of the minutes.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Noted</i></p>
14	Strategic Risks – emerging risks and changes (standing item)
	<p>Board considered the current strategic risk register which has been included in the papers for the meeting. CX noted that this register included the two recent changes re Board succession planning (increased risk) and the ICT DR solution (decreased risk) discussed at the April meeting.</p> <p>No additional risks were noted as being required to be recorded on the register and no changes were required.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Discussed</i></p>
15	Annual Board Appraisals – verbal update
	<p>CX noted that Board would once again be asked to attend a meeting with the Chair during the course of July / August so that the annual Appraisals of Board members could be completed ahead of the finalisation of the Annual Assurance Statement made by Board to the Scottish Housing Regulator. The process is being reviewed for the new year and more information will follow.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Noted</i></p>
16	Health & Safety (Standing Item)
	<p>DoI confirmed that there were no new matters to report to the meeting.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Noted</i></p>
17	Any Other Competent Business
	<p>No additional business matters were noted.</p> <p>A number of apologies for the June meeting were noted.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Noted</i></p>
18	Date of Next Meeting – Tuesday 25 June 2024 at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom
	<p>The meeting closed at 7:30 p.m.</p>

Chair:

Date: