

atrium homes

Minutes of Meeting of the Board held on Tuesday 25 November 2025

At 6:00 p.m. via Zoom

Present: Alistair Reid, Carolyn Hope, Maureen Gimby, Dominic O'Donnell, Ron Sharpe, Jon Hopkins, Joshua Hopkins, Martin Gilbertson

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 Ken Tudhope, Julie Templeton, Alan White, Craig Leitch
2	Declarations of Interest Staff present declared an interest in item 5 and RS declared an interest in item 15. No other declarations of interest in business to be discussed were noted.
3	1. Minutes of Meeting on 28 October 2025 The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 28 October 2025 were reviewed and approved as an accurate record of the meeting. <i>Approved for publication</i>
3	2. Minutes of Meeting on 6 November 2025 The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 6 November 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. Board approved the closure of the items which had been completed. A Board member requested that a timescale be added to the consideration of changes to the Board annual review process. <i>Noted</i>
	b) Board noted that Atrium is up to date with all compliance requirements. <i>Noted</i>
	Staff left the meeting at 6:07 p.m.

5	Pension Changes
	<p>Board considered the changes to future service contribution rates in its SHAPS CARE pension schemes. These proposed split of these amended contribution rates had been considered by FASSC and recommended to Board.</p> <p>Board further noted that past service deficit contributions are required to recommence from 1 April 2026, and this cost has been included in the budgets.</p> <p>Board noted in particular that, while the future service contribution rates were changing, the benefits offered by the pension schemes would not change for staff. It was noted that the contribution rates were reducing overall from 1 April 2026 due to the latest actuarial valuation of the funds, but this might be a temporary position until a revised valuation in the future required contribution rates to increase again.</p> <p>Board members were reminded that Atrium Homes had applied a cap of maximum employer pension contributions that it would make to the pension schemes in 2020, and so the cost to the organisation would never exceed this level.</p> <p>Board discussed the proposals presented and were happy to agree the proposed split across the 3 CARE schemes. There were a series of questions raised about the likely change in contributions in future years following the next review and Board agreed to have a further conversation in due course about the possible impact on Atrium's finances going forward.</p> <p>Management was authorised to consult with staff on the proposed changes to future contribution rates and bring the results of this to the January 2026 Board meeting so that final approval could be sought from Board ahead of the deadline to notify the amended rates to SHAPS at the end of that month.</p>
	<i>Approved</i>
	Staff rejoined the meeting at 6:20 p.m.
6	Eviction
	<p>Board considered the detailed report on the work carried out to attempt to reduce the tenancy arrears before the decree for eviction being sought from the courts.</p> <p>DoHCS noted that the case had called at court on 21 November and that the tenant had been present; due to a number of factors the Sheriff had continued the case until February 2026. Board noted that the level of arrears owed by the tenant were very high and were likely to increase in the intervening period.</p>
	<i>Approved</i>
7	Finance, Audit & Staffing Report
	<p>a) Board considered the minutes of the FASSC meeting on 17 November 2025. A Committee member noted that the Internal Auditor attended the start of the meeting and presented two internal audit reports. Both reports were considered to be of high standard and reported substantial assurance on both Governance and Tenant Safety systems and procedures. Both of these reports provided Board with additional assurance to support the signing of the Annual Assurance Statement (AAS) and had been made available to Board members before the AAS was finalised at the end of October.</p>

	<p>The Treasury Management report had been considered by FASSC and that Atrium continues to meet its lenders' covenants.</p> <p>A Committee member noted that there had been a detailed discussion at the meeting on the appropriate level of inflation of costs to budget for in the coming year and so the impact on the proposed rent increase consultation to be considered at item 15.</p> <p>The Strategic Risk Register was considered at the meeting and that the detailed provided in the deep dives of a selection of risks provided sufficient information for Committee to assess whether the scoring of these risks on the register was appropriate. Two new Board members with significant work experience of these types of control measures had expressed an interest in a more detailed session on the risk register outside of the Board meetings, and FM had agreed to meet with them in January.</p>
	<p><i>Noted</i></p> <p>b) Board considered the management accounts for the six months to September 2025 which were presented to the meeting along with the financial forecasts for the year ending 31 March 2026. Board noted that the results for the six months reported were better than budgeted.</p> <p>A Committee member noted that the management accounts represented a strong financial result. While the works on the Homes Fit For 21st Century Living Standards (HFF) had started slowly in the first six months, it was expected that the full number of homes programmed would be improved before March 2026.</p> <p>Board approved the performance reports for the period.</p>
	<p><i>Approved</i></p>
8	<p>Housing & Community Services Report</p> <p>a) A committee member noted that this had again been a quarter of excellent performance by the team. In particular, performance on rent arrears has been strong in the quarter. A committee member noted that it was considered that the residual risk score on the Welfare Reform strategic risk might be reduced by the evidence of continuing strong management of arrears levels, supplemented by support made available to tenants who are struggling.</p> <p>Staff were commended on the team's continuing strong performance. DoHCS also noted that, when there had been two properties which were proving difficult to let, the team had held an open day to encourage interest in the properties amongst waiting list applicants.</p> <p>Board discussed recent activity on tenant engagement and social media activity undertaken.</p> <p><i>Noted</i></p> <p>b) Board noted the positive performance reported in the quarterly performance summary to 30 September 2025.</p>

9	Property Services Report
	<p>a) A Committee member updated Board, noting that over 600 homes have now been improved under the HFF works programme. EWI improvements to a number of homes is commencing on site and will be completed in 2026. Atrium acquired four more properties on the open market in quarter two, and one final property at the start of quarter three. There will be no more acquisitions this year as the grant allocated for this activity has now been fully utilised.</p> <p>Board noted that an in-depth review of the condition of the Atholl Steel properties is to be undertaken, particularly with regards to their structural integrity before the HFF investment is undertaken on them. Board also noted the outcomes of recent procurement activity.</p> <p>Board received an update on the one remaining property where the tenant had consistently refused access to allow the five-yearly Electrical Inspection to take place. DoPS noted that the tenant had been cited to appear in court in the week of the Board meeting and if they do not appear it is likely that Atrium will be granted permission to force access to the property for the essential safety works to be completed.</p> <p>Board discussed the repairs procurement work which is currently underway with Atrium's Eydent partners, which had been the subject of a lengthy discussion at the Sub-Committee meeting. DoPS confirmed that there is a compelling case to explore this opportunity as the joint procurement should create scope for greater control and economies of scale. Board discussed the risks of the current operating environment as well as the efficiencies which might be achieved if the procured contractor was able to integrate their software systems with HomeMaster.</p> <p>A Board member also asked whether it would benefit Atrium to change its required response times for the contractor in line with those of the others involved in the procurement. DoPS confirmed that all aspects of the contract would be considered and that this would be brought to Board or the Sub-Committee for final approval before the contract is finalised.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Noted</i></p> <p>b) Board noted the positive performance reported in the quarterly performance summary to 30 September 2025</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Noted</i></p>
10	Policy Reviews
	<p>Board considered the two refreshed policies which had been reviewed in detail and approved by FASSC. Board endorsed these policies for adoption.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Endorsed</i></p>
11	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.</p> <p>Board considered the risks on the register and agreed that there were no new emerging risks requiring to be added to the Register.</p>

	CX confirmed that FM would host a session on the composition of the risk register and how the scoring is arrived at, as well as the deep dives which are considered at FASSC, at the Board meeting in January.
	<i>Discussed</i>
12	Health & Safety (standing item)
	DoPS confirmed that there were no new matters to report to the meeting.
	<i>Noted</i>
13	Any Other Competent Business
	No additional matters for discussion were noted.
14	Date of Next Meetings
	Tuesday 27 January 2026 at 6:00 p.m. – Board meeting - via Zoom
	RS left the meeting at 6:49 p.m.
15	Annual Rent Review Consultation and Business Planning
	<p>Board considered the recommendation on the potential rent increase for 2026/27 which should be consulted on with tenants. Board carefully considered the information on the potential impact of a number of different scenarios on the business and on tenants.</p> <p>Board discussed the importance of ensuring that Atrium is able to continue maintaining and improving its homes in line with acceptable living standards and regulations in place. Board expressed a strong desire to ensure that its rents remain affordable as far as possible.</p> <p>Board considered data from a consultant on how recent rent increases had generally tracked beneath the increases to benefits, pensions and living wage rates in the same period, recognising that the tenants who are in low paid work and do not claim benefits are likely to be those hardest hit by any rent increase which accompanied constant increase in the cost of living and heating their homes.</p> <p>It was noted that Atrium's rents are comparable to the other local social landlords. A Board member commented on the data from Scottish social landlords which indicated that some were considering large rent increases in order to fund increased costs of maintenance and taxes levied on all businesses. A Board member asked whether management had yet received the union-negotiated cost of living increase to salaries from its member organisation, and CX confirmed that this had been received.</p> <p>Board discussed the consultation activity which would take place and noted that, due to the work of the Housing & Community Services team, Atrium would be able to hold discussions with tenants in focus groups during December to discuss the content of the flier which would be issued to all tenants early in January. A Board member noted that the flier sent to tenants last year had been understandable and engaging, which encouraged a good response to the consultation.</p> <p>DoHCS noted also that all staff worked hard to gather in as many responses to the consultation document as possible in the first few weeks of January.</p>

	<p>Board further noted that budgets would be brought to the meeting in January, so that any changes to the assumed economic environment or known costs could be factored into the discussions on the lowest possible rent increase which Atrium could apply from 1 April 2026 while still ensuring that the organisation remained financially viable.</p> <p>Board approved management consulting with tenants on a 4.5% increase and also confirmed their agreement with the timetable proposed.</p>
	<i>Approved</i>

Chair:

Date: 27 January 2026