

Meeting: Minutes of Board Meeting

Meeting Date: 23 April 2024

Time: 5.30pm

Location: Virtual (MS Teams)

Discussion			
Meeting Opening			
1.	<u>Welcome & Apologies</u>		
Present		Staff	
Liz McKenzie	Chair	David Byfield	Chief Executive (CEO) Company Secretary (CS)
Mark Ingram	Vice-Chair		
John Duncan	Board Member	Karen Fee	Director of Finance, Digital Engagement and Corporate Services (DFDCS)
Chuks Nwadi-Nwadi	Board Member	Peter Kelly	Director of Asset Management (DAM)
Fiona Dunwoodie	Co-opted Member	Suzanne Casey	Director of Customer Services (DCS)
		Michelle Hart	Finance and Corporate Manager (FCM)
		Jacqui Mills	Corporate Services Officer (CSO) (Minute Taker)
Apologies		Leave of Absence	
Chinenye Anameje	Board Member	Maureen Cope	Board Member
Alex Warren	Board Member	In attendance	
Karen McDonagh	Board Member		
Richard Mahon	Board Member		
Sharon Richford	Board Member		
2.	<u>Declaration of Interest</u>		
	None		
3.	<u>Declaration of Receipt and Understanding</u>		
	Members present confirmed they read and understood the contents of the Board papers.		
4.	Minutes of Board Meetings for Approval		
	Minutes of Board Meeting 5 March 2024		

Approved by:	
Fiona Dunwoodie	John Duncan
Minutes of Policy Sub Committee Meeting 11 March 2024	
Approved by:	
Minutes were deferred to the next Board meeting for approval due to no available policy subcommittee members.	

5.	<u>Matters Arising/ Action Sheet</u>
	Action Sheet:
	Approved by: John Duncan
	Seconded by: Liz McKenzie

Items requiring a discussion/ approval

6.	<p>CEO Report</p> <p>CEO presented his CEO report highlighting the following key items:</p> <p><i>Lived Experiences Group</i> SFHA will be promoting the work of the Lived Experiences Group and are keen to link in with member organisations on follow up work and a news article. SFHA would like to do some more work with the group and will come back to us on this. The Equalities Director at the Scottish Government has confirmed that he will attend the next meeting.</p> <p><i>Jenniburn Development</i> Ardenglen have been supported by John Mullholland and NRS to look at preparing a viable financial option for the Association to acquire the Jenniburn site. The Association has been clear to GCC that it will be flexible to the purchase options made available but will not expose itself to risk.</p> <p><i>Scottish Housing Regulator</i> CEO reported that he and DFDCS had met with SHR Regulation Manager, Eleanor Sneddon and Regulation Analyst, David Allison to discuss Ardenglen and our recent threads of work including Damp and Mould, human rights, tenant safety and assurance process among others. The feedback from SHR was very positive with them advising that Ardenglen is seen as a forward thinking organisation.</p> <p><i>AGM Date Change Request</i> CEO requested that the AGM date is changed from Tuesday 10 September to Wednesday 18 September.</p> <p><i>Annual Assurance Process</i> CEO reported that the Association is preparing for the Annual Assurance Process. To ensure a Board lead assurance process the CEO asked Board if they would like a specific focus on any particular aspect of the business. This could be in the form of opening up the scope of independent reviews on governance and tenant health and safety or a specific report from any member of the SLT. The Board suggested that it would be good to continue our focus on Tenant</p>
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	<p>Safety measures. CEO took note of this and advised that we have already scheduled external validation for our approach to tenant health and safety in line with previous years.</p> <p>New Employees All the new starts have settled into the Association really well and have provided really positive feedback on our culture.</p> <p>Office Closure Request to change the half day closure on Wednesday 5 June to full day on Friday 7 June to accommodate a Colleague Away Day.</p> <p>The Board approved the CEO Report and the request to change AGM date and Office Closure on 7 June.</p>
7.	<p>Policy Sub Committee Update – 11 March 2024</p> <p>Policy Sub Chair provided a brief overview and recommended the following policies for approval:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Policy • Void Management Policy • Electrical Safety Policy <p>The Board approved three policies as recommended by the Policy Sub Committee.</p>
8.	<p>Final Business Plan</p> <p>30 Year Financial Plan Paul McNeil joined the meeting at 5.55pm to present an independent financial appraisal of the Association’s Financial Plan. He highlighted that inflation dropped to 3.2% in the year, the lowest it has been since September 2021, however interest rates will continue to stay higher for longer. One of the biggest challenges for Associations’ will be making homes energy efficient.</p> <p>On a positive note, Paul advised that the Association is in a good place with an opening cash balance of £4.6 million. Debt per housing unit is also very low. He suggested that it may be an opportune time to introduce a golden rule around covenants.</p> <p>The Board queried whether a £50,000 reduction in Business Plan costs per year as per the work of the VfM working group is sustainable in comparison with other Housing Associations. Paul advised that in theory it is although dependent on whether insurance costs or electrical testing goes up each year. It could become difficult to achieve if the Housing Regulator places an onus on Associations to carry out more compliance tests.</p> <p>The Board also queried whether inflation plus 2% and reduction in a few years of the Business Plan is a claw back of the increases made in prior years. Paul confirmed that it is.</p> <p>Paul confirmed that he has validated the Association’s 30 year financial plan which confirms the Associations viability and overall robust financial strength.</p> <p>The Board thanked Paul for his presentation. He left the meeting at 6.15pm.</p>

	<p>Final Business Plan 2024-25 FCM presented the final updates to the Business Plan and advised that EVH wage rise had now been approved at 6% as opposed to 5.5% previously reported.</p> <p>She advised that budget, inflation and interest rates have all been revised within this plan.</p> <p>The Board queried whether the Association should consider paying off some of our debt earlier and what re-profiling looked like. FCM advised that it is not something the Association had looked at. DFDCS agreed, that it is not something we had considered, as there are potentially exit fees, can be reviewed if the Board request this.</p> <p>The Board approved the 30 Year Financial Plan</p>
9.	<p>Share Membership Report</p> <p>CSO requested approval to add a new member to the Share Register.</p> <p>The Board approved membership and update to the Share Register.</p>
10.	<p>ESG Report – Sustainability Reporting Standard</p> <p>DFDCS sought approval for Ardenglen to progress and adopt the Sustainability Reporting Standard for Social Housing (SRS) in the year 2024-25. The first Submission is due by October 2025. Gillian Campbell Consulting (GCC) has provided support to SLT. The inclusion of sustainability and awareness of the environmental impact of our services is now a central focus for all funders in the social housing sector.</p> <p>DFDCS requested the Board note both the Appendices provided by GCC, including the readiness assessment which will provide a baseline for Ardenglen to measure future years outcomes.</p> <p>The SRS is a voluntary, sector led reporting framework, encompassing work that we already do. There are eleven Scottish RSLs participating, if approved Ardenglen being the smallest.</p> <p>The Board advised that it seems a very good report and the information presented seems thorough.</p> <p>The Board approved Ardenglen participation in the Sustainability Reporting Standard.</p>
11.	<p>Tenant Satisfaction Survey – Action Plan</p> <p>DCS presented report on tenant satisfaction survey, action plan and requested that Board note the contents and monitor the progress of the plan on a six monthly basis until the next survey . DCS advised that the actions have been introduced to try and improve satisfaction levels the next time the survey is carried out. DCS requested permission to change the timing of the next satisfaction survey to bring it forward to August 2025 to allow time to work with tenant groups and scrutiny panel. The last one was carried out in December which classes with rent consultation and just generally doesn't seem an appropriate time to survey.</p> <p>The Board approved changing the timing of the next Tenant Satisfaction Survey to August 2025 and noted the contents of the Action Plan.</p>

12.	<p>Local Letting Plan – letter from HSCP re Homelessness Lets</p> <p>DCS referred the Board to the letter from HSCP in regard to Homelessness Lets and a request for Ardenglen to provide a 67% of our lets for 24/25 to homeless applicants. DCS advised the Board that a slight increase of our current allocation to 40-45% would be more sustainable and allow the Association to manage the demand of our own waiting list whilst recognising Glasgow being in a homelessness and housing emergency. DCS advised that due to ongoing partnership working and through the matching process we have achieved 100% tenancy sustainment for Sec 5 lets that took place in 22/23</p> <p>DCS also requested that Board approve a written response to Jim McBride, Head of Homelessness, confirming our decision.</p> <p>The Board discussed the report and agreed that a 40-45% allocation to section 5 referrals was appropriate.</p> <p>The Board approved the 40-45% allocation to section 5 and the written response confirming the decision.</p>
13.	<p>Eviction Report</p> <p>DFDCS presented an Eviction Report in relation to a commercial lease. The lease has fallen into arrears and the customer is non responsive to attempts made to recoup the funds. An irritancy letter has been issued requesting that the lessee returns the keys. The Association will use debt agency to attempt to recover monies owed.</p> <p>The Board approved the Eviction Report.</p>
14.	<p>Update to Bank Mandate and IA Re-engagement</p> <p>DFDCS sought approval to update Nationwide mandate for authorised signatories as their current mandate dates back to 2017. It is proposed that the new authorised signatories are the Directors and Finance Manager.</p> <p>The Board were also requested to note the letter of re-engagement for internal auditors Wylie and Bisset.</p> <p>The Board approved Bank Mandate and noted Internal Audit Letter of Engagement.</p>
Items for Noting	
15.	<p>Community Investment Team – Action Plan</p> <p>DCS presented Community Investment Team Action Plan and requested that members note the contents. She advised that approval had recently been sought to defer the Community Investment Strategy for a year.</p>

	The Board noted the Community Investment Team Action Plan.
15.	<p>NFI – Pilot Scheme</p> <p>DFDCS presented NFI – Pilot Scheme Report and advised members to discuss any concerns they have about Ardenglen participating in the scheme. She advised that the Association is just fact finding at the moment and has not made a decision about participation. DFDCS did advise that involvement should provide extra assurance that our controls against fraud are working.</p> <p>The Board raised a concern about storing information with electronic data and they would not want their personal data shared. They expressed that they would prefer to wait and see the outcome of the pilot scheme before Ardenglen participate. DFDCS advised that if any tenant does not want their data shared, we would ensure that their wish was granted.</p> <p>The Board noted Ardenglen’s interest in participating in the NFI pilot scheme.</p>
16.	<p>Regulatory Framework</p> <p>CEO referred to the recently revised Regulatory Framework and highlighted the main changes including Tenant Focus, Transparency and Information and Tenant Safety. CEO advised that the ARC reporting framework would likely be subject to change in due course following SHR consultation with sector.</p> <p>He advised that the full Regulatory Framework has been included with the Board papers and encouraged members to familiarise themselves with the new document.</p> <p>The Board noted the Revised Regulatory Framework.</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>Leave of Absence Request</i> The Chair and CEO advised that Board Member Karen McDonagh has requested a three month leave of absence.</p> <p>The Board approved leave of absence request.</p>

	<p>Board Member Retirement Chair advised that Maureen Cope MBE had been on an extended Leave of Absence which is due to end and it is anticipated that she will retire from the Board shortly. Board will be notified when official notification is received.</p>
<p>22.</p>	<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 Equality and Human Rights Policy ➤ The Board Approved Electrical Safety Policy ➤ The Board Approved Void Management Policy ➤ The Board Approved 30 Year Financial Plan ➤ The Board Approved AGM date change ➤ The Board Approved full day Office Closure on 7 June ➤ The Board Approved Share Membership ➤ The Board Approved participation in ESG ➤ The Board Approved 40-45% allocation of lets to Section 5 Referrals ➤ The Board Approved Tenant Satisfaction Action Plan and date change for next survey ➤ The Board Approved Eviction Report ➤ The Board Approved Update to Bank Mandate and noted IA Letter of Engagement ➤ The Board Noted Community Investment Team Action Plan ➤ The Board Noted NFI Pilot Scheme Report ➤ The Board Noted Regulatory Framework
<p>23.</p>	<p>Meeting Evaluation</p> <p>The Board thanked staff for their reports and advised the meeting had lots of good discussion.</p>
<p>24.</p>	<p>Date and time of next meeting – 21 May 2024 (In Person)</p>
<p>25.</p>	<p>Meeting Close</p> <p>The meeting closed at 7.10 PM with a vote of thanks to the Chair.</p>