

TRUST HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

Minute of the Board Meeting held on Thursday 16th September 2021
at 15:00 by Microsoft Teams call

PRESENT:

Board Members

John Burke
Paul McFarlane
Ali Ross
Kyle Ruparelia
David Knight
Gordon Laurie

Nicky McLaughlin
Sr Jenny Lindsay
Wendy Wilkinson
Karen Cawte
Dr Norval Bryson

Officers in Attendance

Rhona McLeod, Chief Executive
Gail Gourlay, Director of Customer Experience
Zoe Purdie, Director of Finance & People
Jackie McIntosh, Director of Assets & Sustainability
Claire Mottram, PA / Company Secretary

JOHN BURKE IN THE CHAIR

Agenda Item	Detail
1.	Appointment of Office Bearers
1.1	Claire Mottram, Company Secretary, opened the meeting and noted that as per our rules officer bearers must be elected at the Board meeting following the AGM. She asked for nominations.
1.2	Ali Ross proposed John Burke as Chair of the Trust Board and this was seconded by Paul McFarlane.
1.3	Paul McFarlane proposed Gordon Laurie as Vice-Chair of the Trust Board and this was seconded by Ali Ross.
1.4	Nicky McLaughlin proposed Paul McFarlane as Chair of the Audit & Performance Committee and this was seconded by Gordon Laurie.
1.5	Gordon Laurie proposed Ali Ross as Vice-Chair of the Audit & Performance Committee and this was seconded by Karen Cawte.
2.	Chair's opening remarks
2.1	John Burke, Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting and expressed his hopes that everyone enjoyed the AGM this morning. John noted the formal election of our new Board Members, Kyle Ruparelia, Ian Gunning, David Knight and Dr Norval Bryson at the AGM, adding that he hopes they enjoy their time with Trust Board. John gave a special welcome to Kyle as this was his first Board meeting and invited those attending to briefly introduce themselves.
2.2	John noted that whilst we have a shorter agenda than usual today, there are key items which relate to the future and sustainability of Trust and this is a chance for the board to test the assumptions behind the recommendations. John referred to Item 7, advising that Zoe Purdie, Director of Finance & People will be presenting the budget assumptions which Trust Board are signing off a time of much change in the UK every day. John added that Jackie McIntosh, our new Director of Assets & Sustainability will be

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2.3	<p>presenting her new Assets and Development Strategy Framework under Item 8 which Board will certainly welcome as we are keen to move forward with this piece of work and away from what has been a more a reactive Asset Management style recently to one that is more proactive. John concluded by noting that Zoe is updating the Board on Re-Financing after a very extensive piece of analysis on the market, adding that this is part of a project which has been going on for a while, for the benefit of our newer members.</p> <p>John advised that the senior team will take the Board through the papers and noted for all members that questions and comments are very welcome and will inform our discussions and debate.</p>
3	<i>CEO Opening Remarks – please see private minutes</i>
4. 4.1	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>Wendy Wilkinson, Board Member, declared an interest in Item 11 and noted that the MSP who is involved - Keith Brown – is her Cabinet Secretary.</p>
5. 5.1	<p>Apologies</p> <p>Apologies submitted by Ian Gunning, Board Member, and Neil Ferguson, Director of Business Development & Digital in advance of today's meeting.</p>
6.	<i>Finance Review – July 2021 – please see private minutes.</i>
7.	<i>Budget Assumptions 2022/23 - please see private minutes.</i>
8.	<i>Assets & Development Strategy Approach & Framework – please see private minutes</i>
9.	<i>New Build Update – please see private minutes</i>
10.	<i>Re-financing Update – please see private minutes</i>
11.	<i>Housing Support Funding – Clackmannanshire Council – please see private minutes</i>
12.	<i>Eviction Action Update – please see private minutes</i>
13. 13.1	<p>Procurement Strategy</p> <p>Zoe referred to the Procurement Strategy within the boardpack and noted the requirement from the Public Sector Procurement Regulations that Trust as an RSL must publish its procurement strategy on its website and submit this as well to the Scottish Government. Zoe noted that the strategy ties in with the Time is Now and also supports the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy. Zoe highlighted that under Time is Now, we approved a centralised procurement team and noted that the Procurement Strategy centres around this and the changes required, with a delivery plan in place.</p>

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13.2	<p>Gordon referred to the average of 650 suppliers used annually by Trust and wondered how many Trust feels this can be reduced by over time. Zoe advised that it was a bit early to estimate and agreed that this appeared a very high number when she first came across this, however when you get into the detail and realise, we have suppliers like a butcher or fishmonger in one of our 100+ locations that you realise how this can be so high. Zoe added that she could cut this down to two national food suppliers, but she is not sure this is the best service for tenants. Zoe confirmed that they will review each commodity area by location and knows there will be opportunities to reduce this.</p>
13.3	<p>Decision: Approved the Procurement Strategy which will be published on the Trust Housing Association website, submitted to the Scottish Government.</p>
14.	<p>Governance Update</p>
14.1	<p>As Company Secretary, Claire advised that her report contained several governance updates including a summary of common themes from the Board Appraisals completed earlier this year, a confirmation of the new date for our Board Away Days in November and a copy in Appendix 1 of the remit for the Assets & Development Working Group, for approval.</p>
14.2	<p>David referred to the board appraisal theme around a desire from Board to get the visits to developments reinstated when safe to do so. David queried when we realistically expected that this would be possible. Rhona noted that Leadership Team have, over recent months, been out visiting developments but in a way that is somewhat more restricted than usual to ensure the safety of our tenants during Covid-19. Rhona noted that we would normally get tenants together in the lounge and take comments and questions, however this size of gathering is not something we can do safely at present. Rhona advised that we could either wait until a time where we can safely reinstate visits that are much more in line with what we used to do, or we consider visits a bit sooner which are similar to the Leadership Team visits and would at least allow board to meet with staff members and a few tenants by appointment to control numbers. Rhona recognised the importance of this for board members, particularly our new members, going forward.</p>
14.3	<p>David agreed and advised he would not want to do anything that would cause concern for residents or be considered a high risk for anyone. David noted that it would be good to get out to visit developments and to reassure tenants that we're carrying on with business and have their best interests at heart. Kyle agreed that he would be very keen to get out and see the developments, as and when it is safe to do so. Rhona added that lateral flow tests have been taken by Leadership before any visits as a precaution and this could also be done by the Board. Rhona suggested that she takes this to our Business Continuity Planning group to get some guidance from our experts on what would be sensible and practical.</p>
14.4	<p>Decision: Noted the contents of the report.</p>
14.5	<p>Decision: Approved the remit of the Assets & Development Strategy Working Group Appendix 1.</p>

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14.6	Decision: Agreed the meeting dates for 2021.
15 15.1	<p>Appointment of External Auditors</p> <p>Zoe summarised the tender process for new external auditors following the end of Armstrong Watson’s contract with Trust. Zoe noted that Anderson Anderson Brown (AAB) were scoped as the top-ranking supplier and referred to their tender document in Appendix 1. Zoe noted that AAB were appointed at the AGM this morning.</p> <p>Paul noted that he met with the external auditors, alongside Zoe, and they have a similar ethos to Trust so he feels it will be a very good partnership.</p> <p>Decision: Noted the contents of the report.</p>
16. 16.1	<p>Minutes for approval and noting</p> <p>Minutes for the Board Meeting on the 29th July 2021 approved.</p>
17. 17.1	<p>Action Tracker</p> <p>Discussion held on which items could be removed / greyed out on the action tracker and updates given on outstanding items.</p>
18. 18.1 18.2 18.3	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Gordon advised that he had raised with Zoe after the AGM this morning that Karen Rae from Armstrong Watson gave the impression in her presentation that the audit report was perhaps not finalised or approved. Zoe advised that she picked up on this tone as well and will be taking this forward with Karen. Zoe confirmed that Trust have a signed set of accounts from the auditors and Karen had advised that she was going to file those immediately after the AGM.</p> <p>Nicky reported to the Board that the Local Area Committee for Wishaw & District will meet again on the 19th October 2021 and engagement has been good so far.</p> <p>Norval raised that he felt the AGM went very well and noted the presentations from Rhona and John around Time is Now and the business being very motivating for him as a new member. Norval passed on his congratulations for this being coped with so well virtually.</p>
19. 19.1 19.2	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>Special Board Meeting to be held at the end of October and is still to be arranged.</p> <p>Thursday 2nd December 2021 (by Microsoft Teams call).</p>