

HIGHLIGHTS OF IHA'S BOARD MEETING HELD ON 29 MAY 2019

CORPORATE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN UPDATE

The Board noted the progress which had been made against year 2 of the Implementation Plan and actions which had been identified and included in year 3 of the Implementation Plan.

AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Board approved the new membership of the Audit & Risk Committee as follows:

Mr R. Hill – Chair

Mrs M. Crearie

Mrs J. Murray

Mr D. Thornton

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

The Board approved the new Whistleblowing Policy.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The Board agreed to adopt Group's revised Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and also noted the progress made against the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan.

ARC

The Board approved the content of the ARC submission to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

ESSH

The Board approved the content of ESSH submission to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

MD REPORT

Board noted the updates in relation to the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act, Loan Funding, Board Member Recruitment, the Managing Director's Appraisal, Rebranding Proposals and Thistle Housing Services, the Association's subsidiary.

PENSIONS REVIEW

The Board noted the proposed process for the Group-wide review of pensions.

ANNUAL WRITE-OFF

The Board noted the schedule of debts written off and on during the 2018/19 financial year.

2. **Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes**

228th Board Meeting – 27 March 2019

a) Operational KPIs 2019/20 (Min. 8)

Mr P. Hillard advised that the staffing performance report would be added to the REX soon.

b) MD Report – Drongan Office (Min 10.b))

Mr Hillard advised that 2 informal offers had been received for this property. Proposals would be brought to Board for consideration at the point where these proposals became formal.

Special Board Meeting – 23 April 2019

a) Lloyds Loan Facilities (Min. 1)

Mr Hillard advised that the Association's new loan facility was executed on 24 May 2019. The Financial Plan agreed at the same meeting was now operational. Officials would now begin the process of progressing the potential developments which had been identified.

3. **Corporate Plan Implementation Plan Update**

Mrs H. Anderson, referring to Appendix 1, the 2018/19 Implementation Plan, advised that the 3 actions with over one month slippage were being updated as follows:

B3 Growth – the additional treasury funding was now in place.

B4 Risk and Oversight – it was currently envisaged that proposals for the development appraisal model would be presented to the Board at its June 2019 Meeting.

C1 – Transformation – additional temporary resources were being recruited to progress the move towards an electronic document management system. It was currently envisaged that the move to this system would be completed by the end of the year.

Referring to Appendix 2, Mrs Anderson highlighted the key projects being worked on in the 2019/20 Implementation Plan:

C8 – Retirement Living – development of a “Retirement Living at Home” model. The Board requested that consideration be given to the service offer in Scotland as well as England in recognition of the different operating environments and the service provided remaining competitive in the market. This was agreed.

R5 – Affordable Rents – making use of the Housemark / SFHA rent affordability tool in future considerations of rent levels.

V3 – Value for Money – the procurement of legal services to ensure best possible value for these services.

P4 – Admin Review – to enhance the capabilities within the team and ensure efficient use of resources.

P5 – Customer Satisfaction – Mr P. Hillard highlighted that this remained the biggest overall priority for the year, with the repairs services being the most significant driver.

The Board thereafter noted the contents of the Corporate Plan Implementation Plan Update.

4. **Audit & Risk Committee Membership**

Mr P. Hillard advised that the proposed membership of the Audit & Risk Committee had been developed in line with discussions between the Chair and Board Members following the review of the Terms of Reference for the Committee.

After consideration, the Board approved the membership of the Audit & Risk Committee as follows:

Mr R. Hill – Chair
Mrs M. Crearie
Mrs J. Murray
Mr D. Thornton

5. **Whistleblowing Policy**

Mr P. Hillard advised that the draft Whistleblowing Policy had been considered in detail by the Audit & Risk Committee at its March 2019 Meeting. The Policy was very closely based on Group's Whistleblowing Policy, with changes made to recognise the Association's different operating environment. The Committee, at its Meeting, had requested certain changes be made to add more clarity to certain paragraphs which had been incorporated within the Policy presented for approval.

The Board thereafter approved the Whistleblowing Policy.

6. **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

Mrs A. Fox-Smith advised that the Association had worked closely with Group on the review of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. She highlighted that a further review could be required within the 3 year period, subject to any changes to the Gender Recognition Act 2004 following the current government consultation.

Mrs Fox-Smith highlighted the progress which had been made with regard to the actions detailed in the action plan and advised of the work which would be done to seek to improve the percentage of staff disclosing their gender assignment, given there was a “do not wish to state” option on the system. The Board recognised that this was not uncommon and suggested that the Association promote the reason which it was asking for this information. Mr Hillard stated that, despite this low completion rate, he was content in the knowledge that it was widely recognised within the Riverside Group that staff felt able to be who they were.

The Board thereafter:

- a) agreed to adopt the revised Group Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
- b) noted the contents of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan Tracker.

7. **ARC**

Mrs A. Fox-Smith highlighted the areas where the Association had improved on its performance from the previous year and on the areas where performance had gone down. It was noted that in particular customer satisfaction had reduced across the board.

The Board enquired why it appeared that there had been no Section 5 Referrals allocated. Mrs Fox-Smith advised that there had been 41 allocations made to homeless applicants, however, this was recorded under ‘other’ due to these allocations being made via the Common Housing Registers.

A discussion then followed on different options for gathering customer feedback. It was suggested that a face to face customer survey could be used from time to time in addition to the current telephone and online surveys to establish if there were any differences in the results.

Following a query in relation to the SAP levels, Mrs Fox-Smith advised that this figure was due to the fact that tenants did not want specific work carried out to their property rather than the Association not carrying out the work. The required works to these properties were routinely carried out when the property became void.

Further to a query from Board in relation to factoring, Mrs H. Anderson advised of the intention to engage with the Association's current owners with regard to a review the Association's factoring services.

The Board thereafter:

- a) reviewed the content of the ARC Submission and the Global Validation Report
- b) approved the ARC Submission to the Scottish Housing Regulator
- c) authorised the Managing Director to approve and submit the Return on behalf of Irvine Housing Association.

8. **ESSH**

Following a Board query on the level of works being carried out when compared to the previous year, Mrs H. Anderson advised that the Association had taken the decision in the previous year to take a more balanced view of its budgets and seek to address the issue of there being a perception of a lack of investment in the housing stock. This did, however, relate more to the interior of the property rather than the external. In terms of energy efficiency works the Association had decided for the year being reported to focus on the "quick wins".

The Board enquired if the Association had access to any grant funding through the local authorities as they were aware of this being available to other registered social landlords in other areas. Mrs Anderson advised that the Association was not aware of any funding being available, however, she undertook to make the necessary enquiries with local authorities in the areas which the Association operated.

The Board thereafter:

- a) reviewed the content of the ESSH Return and the Global Validation Report
- b) approved the ESSH submission for submission to the Scottish Housing Regulator
- c) authorised the Managing Director to approve and submit the return on behalf of Irvine Housing Association.

9. **Leasing of Properties**

Mrs H. Anderson advised that the Board at its Special Board Meeting in October 2019 had previously approved the lease of a maximum of 10 properties [REDACTED] Mrs Anderson advised that 6 properties had been leased [REDACTED] so far and the current lease arrangements were working well.

After the discussion, the Board agreed to the continued lease of properties [REDACTED] beyond the initial 6 month period, and on a rolling basis thereafter, until such times as steps are taken by either party to terminate the arrangements.

10. **MD Report**

Mr P. Hillard gave his report on the following key items of significance to the Association:

a) Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act

Mr P. Hillard advised that staff had attended recent seminars on this subject in order to gather all the required information to commence developing the Association's action plan for being able to meet its new obligations by November 2019. The Board recognised the resource impact of dealing with Freedom of Information enquiries moving forward.

b) Treasury Update

Mr Hillard updated Board Members on the terms which the loans were fixed on when the new loan facility had been concluded on Friday 24 May 2019.

Mr C. Bell left the Meeting.

c) Board Member Recruitment

Mr Hillard advised on the recent recruitment exercise to seek to recruit tenant Board Members on to the Board. The Board noted that one individual had expressed an interest to date.

A discussion followed on the previous recruitment exercises and the difficulties which the Association had had in attracting interested individuals. The Board agreed it may be appropriate to consider a Rule change at some point in the future regarding tenant representation on the Board.

d) Managing Director's Appraisal

Mr Hillard advised on the process for his appraisal which had been agreed with the Chair and his direct report within Group, Patrick New, Executive Director, Customer Services. The Board noted that the Chair would report on the results of the appraisal process at the June 2019 Board Meeting.

e) Rebranding

The Board discussed the proposed timescales for the re-branding process in line with other current priorities.

f) Thistle Housing Services Limited

The Board noted that advice relating to a change of process for the election of Board Members would be provided in due course by Harper MacLeod.

11. **Pensions Review**

The Board noted the proposed process for the review, should the Board agree to proceed with any proposals made.

The Board noted the progress on the key work streams and that a further update on the recommended provider would be available in June.

12. **Annual Write-Off**

Further to a query from Board, Mrs A. Anderson advised that some debtors in certain circumstances were offered an incentive to pay half of their outstanding debt, and the remainder would be written off.

After discussion, the Board noted the contents of the schedule of debts written off/on during the 2018/19 financial year.

13. **Minutes Updates**

The Board noted the contents of:

- The Minutes of Group's Neighbourhood Services Committee Meeting held on 7 March 2019.
- The unconfirmed Minutes of Group's Neighbourhood Services Committee Meeting held on 25 April 2019.
- The Core Brief for Group's Board Meeting held on 14 March 2019.

14. **Any Other Business**

a) **Development Update**

The Board noted the progress in relation to the current developments which the Association was either on-site with or were progressing towards attaining the relevant approvals.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

15. **Date of Next Meeting**

Board Meeting – 5.30 p.m. Wednesday 26 June 2019, 44-46 Bank Street, Irvine.

P. Hillard
Secretary
29 May 2019
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