

HIGHLIGHTS OF IHA'S BOARD MEETING HELD ON 30 JANUARY 2020

30 YEAR FINANCIAL PLAN

The Board approved the 2020/21 Budget and Long Term Financial Plan, subject to approval by Group Board.

STREAMLINED EVICTIONS

The Board noted new powers for dealing with anti-social behaviour which were granted in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014, which had been factored into the Association's Anti-Social Behaviour Procedures.

OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE

The Board noted the performance report, noting in particular projections regarding year end targets and current actions being progressed to seek to achieve the targets.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

The Board noted the performance report, noting in particular that the operating surplus showed a favourable variance when compared to budget and forecast. The increase in void repairs costs was being closely monitored by officers.

PROGRESS REPORTS ON DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

The Board noted the update report in relation to the Association's current development projects which included the Tarryholme Phase 1 and 2 projects.

SCHEME OF DELEGATION – FINANCIAL AUTHORISATION LIMITS

The Board approved the revised Scheme of Delegation – Financial Authorisation Limits.

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR POLICY

The Board approved the new Unacceptable Behaviour Policy.

DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY

The Board approved the new Domestic Abuse Policy.

GROUP HEALTH, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY

The Board approved the Group Health, Safety and Environment Policy.

BOARD LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Board noted the requested training and proposed methods of delivery and thereafter approved the Board Training Session Programme for 2020.

MD REPORT

The Board noted an update from the Managing Director in relation to:

- Notifiable Event
- Data Issue
- Succession Planning for Chair

THE RIVERSIDE GROUP LIMITED

IRVINE HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Two Hundred and Thirty Fourth Meeting of the Board held at 5.30p.m. on
30 January 2020 at 44-46 Bank Street, Irvine, Ayrshire

Minutes

Present:

Mr D. McEachran (In the Chair), Mrs M. Burgess, Mr C. Donohue, Mrs J. Galbraith (From Item 3), Mr R. Hill, Ms C. McGuinness and Mrs J. Murray.

In attendance were Mr P. Hillard, Mrs D. Boyle, Mrs M. Hutchinson, Ms A. Kamara and Ms S. Shanab.

Apologies for Absence

Mr C. Bell, Ms M. Crearie, Mr G. Darroch and Mr D. Thornton.

Declarations of Interests

None.

1. **Preliminaries**

The Chair welcomed Ms A. Kamara and Ms S. Shanab to the meeting.

2. **Minutes of Previous Meetings – 232nd Board Meeting held on 21 November 2019 and 233rd Board Meeting held on 18 January 2020**

The minutes of the 232nd Board Meeting held on 21 November 2019 were noted and approved. The minutes of the 233rd Board Meeting held on 18 January 2020 were noted and approved, subject to the “Apologies” section being amended to reflect that Mrs J. Murray had been present at the Meeting.

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

Board Meeting – 21 November 2019

a) Irvine Housing Association Name Change (Min 2c))

Mr P. Hillard advised that the market research exercise to establish views on a proposed name change had not been progressed to date due to staffing changes. He expected the research work to be progressed shortly and undertook to present a paper for consideration by Board when the results of the research were known.

b) Freedom of Information – Guide to Information (Min. 2b))

Mr P. Hillard reported that there had been no Freedom of Information requests to date. The first quarterly update to the Guide to Information and website was due in February and this was currently being progressed by officers. Information on Board Member and Senior Staff expenses would be uploaded to the website for the first time. The format of this report was tabled and noted by the Board.

c) Sheltered Housing Review (Min. 5)

Mr Hillard stated that consultation had commenced with staff and customers at the sheltered housing units. Negative press articles had been featured in the two local newspapers and the Association had been contacted for information. Unfortunately, one particular newspaper had chosen to be selective with the information which had been provided to them.

3. **30 Year Financial Plan**

Mrs J. Galbraith joined the Meeting.

Mrs M. Hutchinson advised that a new corporate plan was currently being drafted. It was unlikely there would be a significant move away from the key strategic priorities which featured in the current corporate plan.

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Mrs Hutchinson stated that the financial plan still required to be approved by Group Board. The financial plan would only be brought back to Board for further consideration if any material change was required. Subject to Group Board approval, the plan would be submitted via a financial return to the Scottish Housing Regulator by the May deadline.

After full consideration, the Board thereafter approved the 2020/21 Budget and the long term financial plan; both of which were subject to subsequent approval by Group Board.

4. **Streamlined Evictions**

Ms P. Adrain highlighted the additional powers the Association now had for dealing with incidents of anti-social behaviour, whereby, it could now convert a Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement to a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement on anti-social behaviour grounds. This

measure allowed the Association to thereafter work with the customer and partners to put a support plan in place and assist the customer to sustain their tenancy. The Board noted that this new measure had been used on one occasion so far and had proven to be a successful tool in supporting the customer. Following a query from Board, Ms Adrain explained the process of converting a tenancy to a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy which could now be extended to a 12 month period.

Ms Adrain advised that the Association could now take action to end a tenancy within a 12 month period, if a customer was prosecuted in a criminal court for an act which had taken place in the locality of the customer's home. She advised that this new power would only be used in extreme cases in order to protect neighbourhoods. This new power made the process for ending the tenancy more streamlined and less costly for the Association.

The Board thereafter noted the new measures introduced by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 to manage and prevent incidents of anti-social behaviour.

5. **Operational Performance**

Mr P. Hillard referring to the Performance Dashboards stated that the Association was currently within target for tenancies ending in eviction, however, would be outwith this target if any further tenancies ended in this way prior to year end.

Mr Hillard advised that the Tenancy Sustainment Team worked closely with customers to provide support, however, not all customers choose to engage with officers. The Tenancy Sustainment indicator being outwith target was reflective of this fact and also the increasing customer base with support needs.

Mr Hillard highlighted the Customer Satisfaction dashboards and advised that the actions approved in the new Customer Improvement Plan were unlikely to deliver an improvement in satisfaction in time to achieve targets by year end. Although it was too soon for any trends to be determined, there had been a significant improvement in overall satisfaction since the previous month.

Mr Hillard stated the arrears levels had reduced in line with seasonal trends due to the rent free weeks. End of year campaigns would be carried out to encourage tenants to make payments in advance of year end, however, it was unclear at this stage if overall target could be met by year end.

Following a query from Board, Ms P. Adrain advised that the Dumfries area had historically had the highest arrears levels. It was hoped that

the additional member of staff would help to reduce the arrears levels in this area.

Referring to the spike in void loss figures, Ms Adrain stated that this had been due to the customers moving from existing properties to new lets in Tarryholme and moving straight on to Universal Credit. The Board noted that 659 of the Association's customers had now moved on to Universal Credit. This was approximately half of the customers that officers envisaged would move on to this benefit.

The Board commented on the quality of the new reporting format and thereafter noted the operational performance position.

6. **Financial Performance Report**

Mrs M. Hutchinson advised that the operating surplus showed a favourable variance when compared to budget and to forecast.

Mrs Hutchinson highlighted that all covenants were well within target.

Mrs Hutchinson referred to the risk of increased costs associated with poor quality voids and advised that this would be closely monitored by the Asset Services Manager moving forward.

The Board thereafter noted the financial performance information presented in the report.

7. **Progress Reports on Development Projects**

Mrs P. Hillard confirmed that all properties at the Tarryholme Phase 1 development had been let. The Board advised that the development had received good feedback in relation to the quality of the properties from the community.

Mr Hillard referring to Tarryholme Phase 2, advised in response to a query regarding the negative NPV for the development, the history to the Association acquiring the site from the Scottish Government with the grant being in the land. This grant had been apportioned between the two phases, based on 200 properties being built. Since then, an updated flood report had been received which meant that less properties could be built on the site. The development proposals for the site were based on previous Board discussions regarding what was appropriate for the site rather than maximising the buildable space on the site.

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Mr Hillard referring to the Tarryholme Phase 2 development, advised that there was likely to be further potentially abortive costs incurred relating to the pre-construction design of the development which would require financial approval. Mr Hillard recommended that authority be delegated to him to approve these costs. This was agreed.

The Board thereafter noted the update report on Development Projects.

8. **Scheme of Delegation – Financial Authorisation Limits**

Mrs M. Hutchinson advised that the Scheme of Delegation had been updated to reflect recent organisational changes.

The Board discussed the amounts proposed for the receipt of Over the Counter Payments and agreed that these should be reduced.

The Board approved the revised Scheme of Delegation – Financial Authorisation Limits, subject to the Over the Counter Payments section being amended to reflect that the Managing Director, Head of Finance & Planning and Head of Services could receive amounts up to £10k and all other staff could receive up to £2.5k.

9. **Unacceptable Behaviour Policy**

Ms P. Adrain advised that the new Policy had been created in order to protect and support staff and offer guidance as to how difficult situations should be handled.

After consideration of the proposed new Unacceptable Behaviour Policy, the Board approved the Policy, subject to the word “complainants” being replaced with “customers” throughout the document.

10. **Domestic Abuse Policy**

Ms P. Adrain advised that the Association had worked closely with Group to develop a Domestic Abuse Policy following its pledge to “Make a Stand” against Domestic Abuse in partnership with Women’s Aid and the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance.

After consideration, the Board approved the new Domestic Abuse Policy.

11. **Group Health, Safety and Environment Policy**

Mr P. Hillard advised that the document presented was a Group-wide Policy. The Policy had been drafted in ensure that all responsibilities within Group and the Association were clearly defined, recognising the Association as a separate legal entity, with its own responsibilities as an employer and landlord. The Association’s Board, therefore, had responsibility for approving the Association’s Policy and the Managing Director had responsibility for the oversight of the Association’s Health, Safety and Environment compliance, whilst at the same time allowing the Association use of Group’s systems and also recognising that Group’s Chief Executive signed off on the Group Health, Safety and Environment Statement.

Mr Hillard highlighted that moving forward the creation of the Improvement Plan would be considered by the Audit & Risk Committee and then brought to Board for final approval.

Following a query from Board, Mr Hillard advised that the Association had appropriate health and safety expertise in-house through a member of staff with a Nebosh qualification.

After full discussion, the Board approved the Group Health, Safety and Environment Policy.

12. **Board Learning and Development Plan**

Mrs D. Boyle referred to the Board Training Session Programme and highlighted that in addition to the Risk Management training which the Association would organise later in the year, Group were organising a Risk Management Board Briefing Session on 27 February 2020 which Board Members could participate by video conference from the Boardroom.

The Board thereafter:

- a) noted the requested training and agreed the proposed methods of delivery.
- b) Agreed the proposed Board training session programme for 2020.

13. **MD Report**

Notifiable Event

Mr P. Hillard advised that confirmation that the Notifiable Event had been closed off would be sought from the Scottish Housing Regulator.

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Chair Succession Planning

Mr Hillard suggested that it would be timely for the Board to consider the appropriateness of Board remuneration prior to commencing any recruitment exercise for a new Chair. He therefore intended preparing a paper for consideration at the May Board Meeting.

In response to a query from Board, Mr Hillard advised that a paper regarding potential rule changes around a name change and Tenant Board Membership would also be presented at the May Board Meeting.

A discussion on Group's Governance and Remuneration Committee's role in any future process took place.

The Board thereafter noted the content of the Managing Director's Report.

15. **Minutes / Updates**

The Board noted the contents of:

- The Neighbourhood Services Committee Update (21 November 2019).
- Group Board Core Brief – 12 December 2019.

16. **Any Other Business**

Age Scotland Questionnaire

The Board and officers noted that an Age Scotland questionnaire for over 55s was currently being circulated to customers.

17. **Date of Next Meeting**

Board Meeting - 5.30 p.m. on Thursday 26 March 2020, 44-46 Bank Street, Irvine.

P. Hillard
Secretary
31 January 2020
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