

Board of Management Meeting held on 16 March 2023 at 6.30 p.m.

***The Board meeting was held in Office Board Room and on Zoom
Due to a technical delay the meeting started at 6.43pm.***

Attendance at meeting in person: Fiona Boath, Theresa Elliot, Linda Anderson, Ken Butler, Susan Macmillan

Attendance at meeting via Zoom: Howard Dales, Graeme Darling

Staff in Attendance: Donna Birrell – Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
Gerry Casey – Deputy CEO / Director of Finance & Corporate Services (DCEO/DFCS)
Craig Wood – Director of Housing and Property Services (DHPS)
Jackie Leeds – Housing Services Manager (HSM)
Sandra McPhee – Governance and Compliance Officer (GCO)
(Minutes)

Also in Attendance: Ewan Macdonald – Macdonald Cameron (MC) – attended for Item 3 only

Item		Action
1.	<p>Welcome and Apologies</p> <p>Fiona Boath apologised for the late start and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Fiona particularly welcomed Gerry Casey, Deputy CEO/Director of Finance and Corporate Services to his first Board meeting in his new role.</p> <p>Apologies were received from Mark Griffiths, Margaret Vass, Andrew Faulk and Lorna Cameron.</p>	
2.	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>Declarations of Interest were declared as follows;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEO item 12.7 • Staff item 12.7, 12.8 & 12.9 	
3.	<p>Development Exception Report</p>	

3.1	<p>Lampson Road, Killearn and Buchanan Crescent, Croftamie</p> <p>MC presented the report and highlighted the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding applications submitted for Killearn and Croftamie were deemed to be too high by the Scottish Government and asked for both projects and the tender submission to be reworked. • RSHA and their agents met with Stirling Council and the Scottish Government on 2nd February to discuss the projects. • At the meeting partners agreed that the sites were a priority and were keen to find a way to progress them. • Agreed that a re-design of the sites was probably not practical in terms of timeframe or cost and that the Association should look at options to progress. • Lifecycle costs are still being prepared for Croftamie, however in the interim, applying the standard assumptions for lifecycle costs and an additional £6k per unit of private finance would result in a positive cash flow by year 18. • Updated business cases are now being reviewed. Once RSHA have agreed to the conditional contribution, the funding proposals will be resubmitted to the Scottish Government. <p>The Board raised the following comments / queries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is there any indications as to why Stirling Council are willing to contribute £6k per unit? Stirling Council are concerned that they would not meet their grant spend target for the year. ○ Is there any updates on the disposal of the land at Killin being a notifiable event to the Regulator? The CEO advised that clarity was to be obtained from the SHR on the impacts of future value of the land. MC agreed to action. <p>The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Noted the content of the report. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>E Macdonald left the meeting.</i></p>	MC
4.	Health and Safety	
4.1	<p>Moment</p> <p>The CEO offered a Health and Safety moment. Her car had broken down just outside Doune and she had had to walk to the office across the bridge at the river Teith. The footpath is extremely narrow and could be very dangerous especially crossing at night.</p>	
4.2	<p>Incident</p> <p>No incidents.</p>	

4.3	<p>H&S Update</p> <p>No updates.</p>	
4.4	<p>Landlord Facilities H&S Update</p> <p>The CEO advised that approach to Damp and Mould and review of procedures is ongoing.</p>	
5.	Group Minutes	
5.1	<p>Minutes of Board meeting held on 9 February 2023</p> <p>The minutes were proposed by Ken Butler and seconded by Theresa Elliot.</p>	
5.2	<p>Minutes of Audit & Risk Committee</p> <p>None</p>	
5.3	<p>Minutes of Venachar Board</p> <p>None</p>	
5.4	<p>Working Groups – Investment Working Group</p> <p>The Board requested that when meetings are being arranged can staff ensure that checks are done to make sure there are no competing events organised and also to give more notice for meetings taking place and cancellations.</p>	SMT
6.	<p>Matters Arising Schedule</p> <p>There were no further matters arising.</p> <p>The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Approved the Matters Arising Schedule 	
7.	Rural Stirling Group Key Risks	
7.1	<p>Quarterly Key Risk Review</p> <p>The quarterly Key Risks report was presented and the following highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk 2 Recruitment and Retention – reviewed and reduced the residual risk score with successful recruitment of the new Deputy CEO/Director of Finance and Corporate Services. • Risk 3 – Succession Planning – increased the residual risk due to recent Board resignations and ongoing recruitment campaign. • Risk 11 Financially Sustainable – decreased the risk following the announcement on the emergency legislation. <p>The Board raised the following comments/queries:</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Would the financially sustainable risk not remain high given the pressures on the development programme? The CEO advised that Risk 11 was increased in December due to the Scottish Government’s emergency legislation on rent freeze and evictions. It was agreed that the risk would be reviewed following the Scottish Government announcement in January 2023. As this threat has reduced, we have reduced the risk accordingly. There is a separate risk at Risk 14 which deals with the investment and new build programme. ○ With health & safety, is there a timescale for completing the last 24 properties with EICRs? The DHPS advised that the Notifiable Event has been closed off with the Scottish Housing Regulator. We are working with our new electrical contractor to arrange the outstanding EICRs as soon as possible. <p>The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Approved the Group Key Risks report. 	
8.	Strategy	
8.1	<p>Group Strategic Plan: Final Draft</p> <p>The final draft of the Group Strategic Plan for 2023-24 was presented.</p> <p>The Group Strategic Plan was updated to include the actions and outcomes arising from the discussion of the first draft at the February Board.</p> <p>The Board raised the following comments/queries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Like the way the summary is presented, clear and easy to read and a nicely detailed delivery plan. ○ The action around recycling, do we recycle and reuse furniture etc from void properties? The HSM advised that we previously used “The Valley” Salvation Army furniture recycling, which has unfortunately closed. There is limited availability of organisations who will pick up used furniture in the rural area. HSM advised that the Association has been informed that the Stirling Re-Use Hub may do so and will contact them as soon as possible. ○ Very pleased with the additions. ○ Good balance between provision of information and remaining accessible. <p>The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Approved the RSG Strategic Plan Update 2023/24 Final Draft ❖ Approved the Strategic Delivery Plan Update 2023/24 Final Draft. 	HSM
8.2	<p>Confidential – RSHA Business Plan 2023-24 – Final Draft</p> <p>This was a confidential report.</p>	

8.3	<p>Confidential – Venachar Business Plan and Budget 2023-24 – Final Draft</p> <p>This was a confidential report.</p>	
8.4	<p>Requirement for an Annual Procurement Strategy and Annual Procurement Report 2023-24</p> <p>Report deferred to May meeting.</p>	DHPS
9.	<p>Performance & Policy</p>	
9.1	<p>Q3 Performance Reports</p> <p>Appendix 1 – ARC Indicators and Universal Credit Appendix 2 – Planned Maintenance Appendix 3 – Development Programme Monitoring Appendix 4 – Strategic Delivery Plan Update – Operational Delivery Plan Update by Exception</p> <p>The Board raised the following comments / queries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ With regards to the rent arrears, given the usual Christmas issues, should we consider an advertising scenario regarding rent and therefore a roof over your head is the best present to your family? The DHPS advised that over the past 10 months the focus on arrears has had a real impact. Arrears did not go up over the Christmas period as we had expected to which is a real achievement by the team. Speaking with colleagues at other Associations, this was not the case as they have reported increased arrears in their areas. The CEO advised that we should include an advertising campaign on the important of paying rent over the Christmas period in our winter editions of Rural Matters. It was also agreed that the Winter issue would be paper to ensure as wide a reach as possible. ○ Timescales concerning the voids are worrying. Feedback was given on a void observed from the side lines which could have been let quicker. The DHPS advised that there was an increase in timescales, but as pointed out these were mostly due to the contractor availability or matters out with our control. Contractor availability is something all sections are having problems with. On EICRs we are looking at our process to see if we can arrange more routine works before tenancies end. It is important to note we remain below the peer figures. ○ A void property that was brought to our attention has been void since October time and is still void. This particular property had damage to the meter and we are having issues with SSE getting replacement/repairs done to meters. This is a significant issue for other organisations with void properties and meter issues. The CEO advised that the HSM will raise this issue at the Housing Management Forum with SFHA as SFHA have more influence at raising issues on behalf of Associations. <p>The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Approved the contents of the reports. 	<p>SMT</p> <p>HSM</p>

9.2	<p>Q3 Complaints Report</p> <p>The quarterly report for October to December 2022 was presented and highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 26 complaints for the quarter. • Of the complaints 16 were at Stage 1 and 10 were at Stage 2. • 15 of the Stage 1 complaints were resolved within the SPSO timescales and 9 of the Stage 2 complaints were resolved within the SPSO timescales. • The average timescale for complaints being resolved was 4.56 days for Stage 1 complaints and 19.90 for Stage 2 complaints. • Compensation payments to a tenant totalling £1,030.83 which required Board approval. <p>The Board raised the following comments/queries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The high reactive repairs complaints presumably ties in with the lower repairs satisfaction levels from the earlier KPI report? The DHPS advised that we have received a lot of heating complaints over the Q3 period due to issues relating to the ground source heat pumps and contractor availability. ○ Good timescales for completing Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints. <p>The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Approved Quarter 3 complaints performance report in keeping with SPSO and SHR requirements. ❖ Approved compensation payments totalling £1,030.83 to the same tenant. 	
9.3	<p>Policies for Approval</p> <p>Policies were issued to Board on Decision Time on 6 March 2023 for review prior to decision at this meeting.</p> <p>The policies that have been reviewed are:</p> <p>Appendix 1 – Group Learning & Development Policy and EIA Appendix 2 – Group hot Works Policy</p> <p>The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Approved all policies for implementation. 	
10.	<p>Finance</p>	
10.1	<p>Confidential – Final Budget 2023-24</p> <p>This was a confidential report.</p>	

10.2	<p>Confidential – Quarterly Management Accounts to 31st December 2022</p> <p>This was a confidential report.</p>	
10.3	<p>Community Donations Fund 2022-23 Annual Report</p> <p>The annual report was provided, and Board were advised for the year 2022-23 only one application was received and an award of £100 was given.</p> <p>The budget for the year was £2,000.</p> <p>The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Approved the Community Donations Fund annual report for 2022/23. ❖ Noted that for future reports these will be for noting only. Approval not required. 	
10.4	<p>Community Donations Fund Budget 2023/24</p> <p>The report for the Community Donations Fund Budget for 2023/24 was presented.</p> <p>Discussion took place regarding amending the maximum donation amount that we can award to a single applicant. The current maximum amount is £1,500 which was based on a higher donations fund budget in the past was felt to be too high.</p> <p>The Board raised the following comments/queries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Board agreed that lowering the maximum amount had clear benefits and agreed on a figure of £500. <p>The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Approved the budget for 2023-24 of £2,000. ❖ Agreed maximum donation awards of £500. 	
10.5	<p>Annual Bad Debt Write Off Report</p> <p>The annual report for bad debt write off was presented and approval requested for write off £10,191.38 which is made up of recharge repairs and former tenant arrears.</p> <p>Discussion took place regarding the write-off of recharge debts that are owned by current tenants.</p> <p>The Board raised the following comments/queries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Following a query from a Board member the HSM advised about 10% of tenants are paying recharges. 	

	<p>The HSM advised the Board of the recovery process and that once this is exhausted it becomes uneconomical to continue the process. If there is no evidence of debts being pursued, with charges being years old, we legally cannot continue to pursue the debt.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Following discussion it was agreed that recharge debt and % paid would be added to the performance report for a time, so the Board can have a clearer understanding of the amounts owed and the progress made in recovering the debts. The HSM advised that this will be included in future performance reports. It was also agreed that there would be a review of existing procedure and whether for example, payment up front could be introduced. <p>The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Approved the write of £10,191.38 for bad debts for rent and recharge repairs. 	HSM
11.	Operations	
11.1	<p>Three Year Planned Investment Programme</p> <p>Report deferred to May Board Meeting.</p>	DHPS
11.2	<p>Procurement of Reactive Repairs Service to Replace Framework</p> <p>The report seeking Board approval to proceed with the procurement of a single Reactive Repairs Contract to replace the existing repairs framework was presented.</p> <p>The Board raised the following comments/queries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Our first priority must be to provide a reliable service to our tenants. ○ Acknowledged challenges with contractor capacity and availability. ○ Queried whether we could encourage use of local contractors. The DHPS advised that contractors tend to subcontract for specialised work or to cover for leave. The CEO stated that this should be possible through Community Benefits clauses. ○ Would void works be done as properties are vacated or kept back until a few in the same area were to be done? The DHPS advised that this is an issue with the management of the contract. For ourselves, works are done as we request of the contractor. <p>The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Approved the procurement of a full reactive repairs service with a 3 year plus 2 contact period. ❖ Noted that all efforts are being made in the interim to find a solution and that a Notifiable event will be submitted to the SHR. 	DHPS

	<p>The Chair proposed and Board members agreed that several items of AOCB could be taken before Item 12 to allow staff in attendance to be involved in discussions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rent Review Letter: A Board member queried a discrepancy between the monthly rent amount from April 2023 and the All Pay payment. This will be investigated. • Office Contact: A Board member advised that a neighbour had experienced difficulty trying to report a repair by telephone and that it had not been answered or allowed a voicemail to be left. They had then tried to report the repair at the office which was locked and the person that opened the door said they were on lunch. The DHPS agreed to check that the phonelines were working correctly and that voicemail was in operation and will speak to the staff member concerned. • Insurance Renewal: The DCEO/DFCS advised that as part of the renewal process, we had had been offered an extension to the Long-Term Agreement and Rate Guarantee to 2026. The Board agreed that given the current insurance market for the housing sector, this made financial sense and should be confirmed with insurers. This was noted. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>The staff in attendance left the meeting at this point.</i></p>	DCEO/DFCS
12.	Governance; Ethical Conduct and Notifiable Events	
12.1	<p>Notifiable Events</p> <p>The report on Notifiable Events submitted to the SHR since that last meeting was presented.</p> <p>The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Noted the contents of the report of the Notifiable Events submitted to the SHR. 	
12.2	<p>Office Bearers Decisions</p> <p>No Report</p>	
12.3	<p>Record of Electronic Approvals</p> <p>The report on Electronic Approvals since that last meeting was presented. The Board noted the decision with respect to the EVH consultation exercise on updates to the Terms and Conditions.</p> <p>The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Noted the contents of the report. 	
12.4	<p>Recommendations from Committee</p> <p>No report</p>	
12.5	New Member Applications	

	<p>Two new members were recommended for approval.</p> <p>The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Approved the contents of the report. 	
12.6	<p>Governance of the Development Process / Investment Appraisal Assumptions 2023/24</p> <p>Report deferred to May Board meeting.</p>	DHPS
12.7	<p>Confidential HR Report: Annual Leave Carry Forward</p> <p>This was a confidential report.</p>	
12.8	<p>Confidential HR Report: Structure Consultation</p> <p>This was a confidential report.</p>	
12.9	<p>Confidential Board Member Leave of Absence</p> <p>This was a confidential report.</p>	
13.	<p>Chief Executive’s Report</p> <p>The report provided the Board with an update on key issues, actions, and developments since the last meeting.</p> <p>The Board noted the summary headline results from the Tenant Satisfaction Survey and looked forward to a full discussion at the May meeting. It was noted that communication continues to be an issue and needs to be improved.</p> <p>The report highlighted the forthcoming CEO End of Year Appraisal review. Board members were encouraged to provide feedback to Fiona Both.</p> <p>The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ noted the contents of the report 	
14.	<p>Action Tracker</p> <p>The Action Tracker was presented to the Board. It was noted that in addition to the Chair and CEO meeting with the CEO of National Park, it had been agreed that meetings would also take place with local representatives. The Action Tracker will be updated.</p> <p>The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ approved the Action Tracker subject to the above amendment. 	CEO

15.	<p>Attendance at Conference/Seminar or Networking Events:</p> <p>None</p>	
16.	<p>Any Other Competent Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scottish Housing News Podcast: the Chair raised awareness of the above podcast and encouraged others to listen as it was very informative and dealt with topical issues. • Chair Mark Griffiths: the CEO updated the Board on Mark’s position and visiting arrangements. • Potential collaboration with Pineview HA: the CEO highlighted that she had been approached by the CEO of the above HA regarding a project with potential to strengthen and develop staff and respective Boards. The project would involve staff from one association joining the Board of another and vice versa. The Board agreed that this had good potential and should be followed up. 	
17.	<p>Review/Reflections of Meeting: Fiona commented that she welcomed feedback. Please email your feedback to Fiona Boath, Vice Chair. BoardBoathF@rsha.org.uk</p>	ALL
18	<p>Date of Next Meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training – Health & Safety – Session 2 – Thursday 30 March 2023 @ 6.30pm by Zoom • Board Appraisals – 24 and 25 April arrangements confirmed with individual Board members • Audit and Risk Committee Meeting - Thursday 27 April 2023 at 2.00 p.m. • Training – Risk Management Refresher Training – Thursday 4 May 2023 @ 6.30pm by Zoom • Venachar Board of Management Meeting – Thursday 18 May 2023 at 4.30 p.m. • Board Meeting - Thursday 18 May 2023 @ 6.30 p.m. Hybrid Meeting • Training – Housing Services Session – Thursday, 25 May 2023 @ 6.30pm. Location to be confirmed. • Investment Working Group – meeting to be rescheduled to be confirmed <p>The Chair thanked the Board for their attendance and closed the meeting.</p>	

Chair’s signature