

TRUST HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

Minutes of the Board Meeting held on Thursday 5 December 2024 At 12 New Mart Road, Edinburgh EH14 1RL.

PRESENT:

Board Members

Dr Norval Bryson David Knight
Gordon Laurie Steve McGowan
Ali Ross Paul McFarlane
Sharron Elsdon Graham Curran

Officers in Attendance

Rhona McLeod, Chief Executive
Zoe Purdie, Director of Finance & People
Neil Ferguson, Director of Business Development & Digital
Jackie McIntosh, Director of Assets and Sustainability
Jenny Wallace, Director of Customer Experience
Annette Brown (Company Secretary & Minute Taker)

DR NORVAL BRYSON IN THE CHAIR

Agenda Item	Detail
1.	Chair's Opening Remarks
1.1	Dr Norval Bryson welcomed Board Members and the Executive Team to the meeting and thanked Calum Boag, Head of Assets and Sustainability, for his training session on health and safety. The Board confirmed that they were reassured by the health and safety processes that are in place at Trust.
2.	Chair of Audit & Performance Committee Opening Remarks
2.1	Ali Ross, Chair of the Audit & Performance Committee informed the Board that the committee had a really good audit meeting in the morning due to the quality of the reporting from both the Executive Team and TIAA who presented themselves very well.
2.2	Ali highlighted the key outputs from the Q2 Performance Report which included; <ul style="list-style-type: none">- A positive performance in rent arrears which now sits at 1.94% which is well below the Scottish average of 6.3%.- There was a slight increase in the number of complaints received in Q2 but nothing of concern. The committee noted that there may be a rise in complaints in the next quarter as customers are prompted and encouraged to give feedback through more regular pulse surveys.- There has been a 10% decrease in the satisfaction of those entering homes over the course of the year but this has been noted by the Executive Team who are already looking into this further to find out why.- The welfare benefits team have helped customers with over £0.5M in financial gains.

<p>2.3</p> <p>2.4</p> <p>2.5</p> <p>2.6</p> <p>2.7</p> <p>2.8</p>	<p>- Rent collected has gone down 4% year over the course of the year but this falling number could be due to the calculation in the Rubixx system and more work is being done in this area to find out why the number is decreasing.</p> <p>Martin Ritchie, internal auditor from TIAA, produced two audit reports which were very clear and easy to understand. Firstly, they provided substantial assurance for the Gas Safety report which is excellent and links to the work Calum Boag and his team do on Health and Safety. Secondly, we received reasonable assurance for Creditor Payments, and this was mainly due to some smaller issues regarding the system that is used - we are accepting the risk for this over the next 2 years.</p> <p>Following the reports TIAA were asked if they wanted to leave the meeting but opted to stay on and listen to the Damp & Mould policy discussion as they will be doing a report on this area in February 2025. The committee found this to be very encouraging.</p> <p>The committee were also presented with the risk register and the Leadership Team have advised that they will look at this in more detail in January to ensure that the risks are ranked appropriately.</p> <p>A new Damp & Mould policy has been introduced, and there was good discussion around how the damp and mould cases are raised and recorded. Ali advised that the majority of cases come from moisture in the air and a lack of ventilation and heating however there are some others which are due to leaking gutters and dampness. The committee were assured that a yearly tenancy visit takes place and it is through this route that damp and mould can also be identified. Responsibilities on the customer are also communicated via Trust Talk and social media. Going forward damp and mould will be reported on and this will now be included as a KPI in the performance report.</p> <p>The Board noted the updates on damp and mould and thanked the team for their work as this is an issue that is high on tenants' agenda which means that it is relevant and important.</p> <p>Norval asked if there had been any feedback from staff on how the internal auditors have been communicating. Zoe advised that the feedback has been very good, the auditors continue to be challenging but do so in a nice way.</p>
<p>3.</p> <p>3.1</p> <p>3.2</p>	<p>Chief Executive's Open Remarks</p> <p>The Employee Forum</p> <p>Rhona McLeod, Chief Executive, advised that as a result of the Employee Forum attending the Board Away Day in October and a further session with Rhona in November they have come forward with a few asks of the Board.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They would like 2 Board members to volunteer to answer 2-3 questions from the Employee Forum with the responses to be posted on the internal iTrust site. Rhona advised that she would contact the Board via Teams to see if anyone would like to volunteer. 2. They have suggested that Board members form a sub-committee to select the employee awards winner in Autumn. The Board agreed. 3. They have invited Norval in his capacity as Chair of the Board to an Employee Forum meeting, which Norval has agreed to do.

3.3	Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) Engagement Plan Update
3.4	Rhona advised the Board that over the last year the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) have been monitoring Trust's financial management, and in particular the equalisation account which was raised as a concern due to increases in Heat with Rent and Communal Energy payments. However, the SHR have now written to Rhona to advise that this will no longer be monitored and we have returned to a standard engagement plan.
3.5	Special Board Meeting
3.6	As a result of the Strachur project progressing well Rhona advised that a Special Board meeting will be called in early January to consider and hopefully approve the contract of works.
4.	Declaration of Interests
4.1	The Board did not declare any interests, however it was noted that the Executive Team declared an interest in the proposed level of pay increase which would be discussed as part of the budget paper.
5.	Apologies
5.1	Apologies received from Board Members Mary Niven, Kyle Ruparelia, Ian Mitchelmore and Laura Bornatici.
6.	Q2 Financial Review – 2024/25 - see private minutes*
7.	Draft Budget & Rent Consultations - see private minutes*
8.	Care and Support Update - see private minutes*
9.	Treasury Update - see private minutes*
10.	Procurement of Repairs, Voids and Out of Hours Contract – Eastern Scotland - see private minutes*
11.	Strachur Property Acquisition - see private minutes*
12.	Rent & Service Charge Review Update - see private minutes*
13.	October Board Away Day Playback
13.1	The Board noted the paper and approved the risk appetite classifications set out in appendix 2.
13.2	The Board noted the report and approved the risk appetite classifications set out in appendix 2.

14.	Time is Now Update - see private minutes*
15.	<p data-bbox="256 230 560 264">Governance Update</p> <p data-bbox="105 304 1489 376">15.1 Annette Brown, Company Secretary, presented the Governance Update to the Board outlining the following governance matters.</p> <p data-bbox="105 416 1126 450">15.2 Updated Code of Conduct for Governing Board Members</p> <p data-bbox="105 490 1489 703">15.3 Annette presented an updated Code of Conduct for Governing Body Members which is based on the Model of Code Conduct recently reviewed and published by the SFHA. Overall there have not been significant changes to the code itself but some words have been added to re-emphasise the importance of regular attendance at meetings, the importance of equality and inclusion policies and to remind Governing Body Members that there should be no disrespecting of RSLs their actions and people.</p> <p data-bbox="105 743 1489 848">15.4 In addition to the amendments to the code, the protocol for dealing with an alleged breach has also been updated in order to make the process clearer and easier to follow if and when it needs to be used.</p> <p data-bbox="105 889 1489 994">15.5 Norval referred to G.5 in the Code of Conduct and requested that the wording '<i>unless required by law</i>' be added to the end of the following sentence - G.5 I will not criticise or undermine the organisation, any of its people or our actions in public.</p> <p data-bbox="105 1034 1489 1106">15.6 The Board agreed and subject to the above amendment approved the Code of Conduct and the Protocol for dealing with an alleged breach.</p> <p data-bbox="105 1146 1489 1285">15.7 Annette advised that Board Members will receive a link to an annual governance return form in January where they will be asked to sign up to the new Code of Conduct, declare any interests they may have and let us know of their intentions for remaining on the Trust Board.</p> <p data-bbox="105 1326 788 1359">15.8 Board Member Development Visits</p> <p data-bbox="105 1400 1489 1505">15.9 Annette advised that there is now a proposed schedule including dates for Board Member Development Visits between January – March 2025. the Board are asked to put themselves forward, where possible, for 2 development visits.</p> <p data-bbox="105 1545 1489 1684">15.10 Jenny reminded the Board that we have packed a full year of Development Visits into the last quarter of 24/25 and from April onwards we will have a new schedule spread out over the course of 25/26. Board Members will only be asked to do 2 visits over the course of a year.</p> <p data-bbox="105 1724 1489 1796">15.11 The Board noted the updated Development Visit planner and agreed to confirm to Annette which visits they would like to attend.</p>
16.	<p data-bbox="256 1848 884 1881">Applications for Members of Association</p> <p data-bbox="105 1921 1489 1993">16.1 Norval informed the Board that he had received 4 applications from customers at the Duns development who wish to become Members of Trust.</p> <p data-bbox="105 2033 1038 2067">16.2 The Board unanimously approved the applications.</p>

17.	Board Meeting Minutes Approval
17.1	Minutes from the Board meeting held on 12 September 2024 were proposed by Paul MacFarlane and seconded by Sharron Elsdon.
17.2	Minutes from the Special Board meeting held on the 23 October we proposed by Gordon Laurie and seconded by David Knight.
18.	Action Tracker
18.1	The Board noted the action tracker.
18.2	Rhona requested that an action be added to formally record that the Executive Team will respond to the Board's challenge regarding the finance system.
19.	AOB
19.1	Gordon Laurie referred to the CIH awards that he attended on behalf of Trust in November. He congratulated the team for being shortlisted for 4 awards.
20.	Date of next meeting
20.1	It was noted that there may be a Special Board meeting in early January 2025.
20.2	The next scheduled Board meeting will take place on Thursday 6 February 2025, Board Meeting - (in person, Edinburgh Office, 12 New Mart Road, Edinburgh)

****Items marked private have been excluded from these minutes due to at least one of the following reasons:***

- ***Confidentially sensitive information***
- ***Discussion on commercial interests***
- ***Person specific information***