

**LOCHABER HOUSING ASSOCIATION
MINUTES OF BOARD OF MANAGEMENT MEETING
HELD IN PERSON ON FRIDAY 13TH DECEMBER 2024**

Present: Andrew Carr (Chair)
Stewart Leitch
Cathy Osborn
Moira MacVicar
May Tosh
Rosemary Bridge

In Attendance: Margaret Moynihan, Chief Executive
Jenny MacKay, Director of Customer Services
Sean Doherty, Director of Asset Management
Gary Hay, Director of Finance
Siobhan Toal, Customer Services Officer
David Smith, Accountant

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received Di Alexander, John Cooney and Nigel Patterson.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Declarations of Interest report was **approved**. It was also noted that Moira MacVicar would leave the meeting while Agenda Item 4(ii) discussed and be invited to re-join when this item concluded.

3. Minutes of Meeting held on 14th November 2024

The Board **approved** the Minutes of the meeting held on 14th November 2024.

4. Matters arising from the meeting held on 14th November 2024

i. Budget

The Director of Finance presented the draft budget to the Board in which they were advised the assumption of the draft budget was based on a proposed rental increase of 3.9%, they were also shown three other increase scenarios to show how each would affect the overall operating surplus for 2025/26.

The Director of Finance outlined the main variances, and it was **noted** that there is still work to be carried out on the maintenance and estate management costs.

The Chief Executive also provided the Board with the up to date position provided by EVH in relation to the wage settlement for 2025/26.

The Board **discussed** and **noted** the draft budget.

ii. Update on Development Agent

The Director of Finance provided the Board with a verbal update, Communities Housing Trust (CHT) have now been informed that a new development agent has been appointed and agreed to extend the termination date from 31st December 2024 to 31st January 2025, thus allowing a smooth handover to MacDonald & Cameron. MacDonald & Cameron have been appointed on an interim basis up until 31st March 2025 by which time a full procurement exercise will be undertaken.

The Board **discussed** and **noted** the update.

iii. IT Survey

The Director of Customer Services thanked the Board for completing the IT Survey which had been sent out for completion in November and updated the Board on the responses.

The main concerns/comments raised by the Board within the survey results were discussed.

The Director of Customer Services advised the Board that the new LHA website has a Board section which would be more accessible and streamlined and would also allow the LHAPS and LCR Committees to view each Board/Committees documents as outlined in the intergroup agreement. The Customer Services Officer gave a demonstration of the new website, and advised work still requires to be undertaken before this goes live to the Board.

The Board **discussed** the new Board member section of the website, and it was **agreed** that going forward:

- Board papers/confidential documents would be uploaded to the website; and
- LHA would hold a stock of LHA Board devices for members who do not have access to a device.

5. Regulatory Standards -Demonstrating Compliance

The Board **noted** the compliance with Regulatory Standards report.

6. Rent Consultation

The Chief Executive presented the rent consultation report to the Board in which they were asked to discuss rent proposal scenarios and agree the option/options to be consulted on for 2025/26.

The Board **discussed** the content of the report in particular the impact inflation has had on costs including the examples which have been noted within the consultation document. The Board also **discussed** the different rent increase scenarios, in which it was **noted** that that all proposals would meet the affordability test within our rent policy.

The Board **agreed** we should consult with tenants on a proposed rent increase of 5%. The Board also **approved** the rent consultation document with the agreed amendments.

7. Business Plan

The Board **considered** and **approved** the Business Plan and **agreed** it should now be published on the LHA website.

8. Asset Management Strategy

Some of the detail within this report has been deemed to be commercially sensitive and is therefore, not available to the public at this time

The Director of Asset Management presented the report to the Board in which he advised that the document still at draft stage. The Board were informed of the work still to be undertaken and which will be included in the final iteration of the document.

The Board discussed the ROTS properties and the requirement to re-visit and update.

There were also discussions around the development design brief and the need for this document to be reviewed going forward, it was agreed this would be looked at in April/May when we go through the procurement process for a development agent.

The Board **noted** the draft Asset Management Strategy, and it was **agreed** that the Director of Asset Management and the Vice-Chair would meet in the New Year to discuss this document further.

9. Development Update

Some of the detail within this report has been deemed to be commercially sensitive and is therefore, not available to the public at this time

The Director of Finance updated the Board on the most up to date position in relation to sites at Rankin Crescent, Mallaig and Glenkingie Terrace.

The Board also discussed whether a development sub-committee should be put in place to allow the sites to be discussed further, it was agreed the Chief Executive would follow this up.

The Board **noted** the development update.

10. Disposal of Rental of Shelf Property

Some of the detail within this report has been deemed to be commercially sensitive and is therefore, not available to the public at this time

The Chief Executive presented the report to the Board in which they were advised that the repair works agreed at the November meeting are currently progressing. Once the works are complete a valuation will follow, and the property will go on the open market.

The Board **noted** the content of the report and **approved** the disposal of Rental of the Shelf Property.

A.O.C.B

i. BID Appeal

The Chief Executive advised the Board that the Fort William BID had been successful and that contact had been made with the BID regarding the appeal process to gain exemption from payment of the levy. It was noted that the Board would be kept informed on the process.

The Board **noted** the verbal update.

ii. CEO Appraisal

The Director of Customer Services advised the Board that the CEO is due a 360 degree appraisal which will be carried out by EVH between April – June 2025. The Director of Customer Services has also sourced training which will be rolled out to the Office Bearers in the new year.

The Board **noted** the update.

iii. Date of next meeting

The Board **noted** the next meeting will be held on Thursday 13th February 2025.