

TRUST HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

Minute of the Board Meeting held on Thursday 7 April 2022 at 15:30 by Microsoft Teams call

PRESENT:

Board Members

Gordon Laurie
David Knight
Dr Norval Bryson
Ian Gunning
Wendy Wilkinson
Kyle Ruparelia

John Burke
Ali Ross
Sr Jenny Lindsay
Paul McFarlane
Karen Cawte

Officers in Attendance

Rhona McLeod, Chief Executive
Gail Gourlay, Director of Customer Experience
Zoe Purdie, Director of Finance & People
Neil Ferguson, Director of Business Development & Digital
Jackie McIntosh, Director of Assets & Sustainability
Mary Strathearn, PA/Company Secretary

JOHN BURKE IN THE CHAIR

Agenda Item	Detail
1.	Chair's opening remarks
1.1	John Burke, Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting and wanted to share that as a Board we should have a huge amount confidence around what our senior management team are doing to mitigate the risks that the business is facing due to the challenging economic climate.
1.2	He added that item 7 demonstrates how much work the team are carrying out to understand and plan for any risks that may impact on Trust. Item 7 also covers the matter of our loan covenants and includes a proposal to establish a Board sub-committee with the delegated authority to approve the new covenants. The suggestion is that we use our officer bearers for this sub-committee for overall good governance and oversight.
2	Chief Executive's Opening Remarks
2.1	Rhona McLeod, gave an update on the Covid-19 position at Trust and shared that in the general population it appears that covid is very prevalent and transmittable.
2.2	We currently have 32 tenants on our covid register and these cases are spread over 18 developments with sadly 5 tenants that are in hospital. We have 16 staff members isolating and these staff are spread over 8 developments. Rhona noted that it is has been slightly easier as we have had fewer staff cases than of late.
2.3	Rhona added that we have outbreaks at Dunfermline, Kirkriggs Court in Forfar, Matheson Road in Stornoway, Thornhill, West Lodge Gardens in Alloa. In 3 of those developments we have had to close the lounge. As the Board will appreciate, it takes a huge amount work to manage each outbreak as it requires staff liaising with Health Protection Scotland.
2.4	In relation to moving out of covid restrictions, Rhona advised that we still await detailed covid guidance from the Scottish Government for the sector on how to manage covid going forward.

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2.5	Rhona advised that the Leadership Team is currently working on a blended working approach which includes how office staff will work in the new post covid world and how our office space will provide for collaborative working. We have plans to make a modest investment in our 3 offices in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Wishaw. This is to provide a more conducive working space and to brighten the offices so that they are an engaging place to work for our business needs.
2.6	Rhona reported that at this time of year the Scottish Housing Regulator usually publishes engagement plans for the sector. We have had early sight of Trust's engagement plan and no concerns were identified. The regulator has asked us to keep them updated on 2 areas, one relating to the Bonds Drive latent defects and the other is around details of our bLEND refinancing.
2.7	The Scottish Government have funded an increase to the hourly rate for all adult care and support roles as of 1 st April 2022 which takes the rate to £10.50 per hour. The communication around this has been slow to filter through, however what it does mean is that our staff on the frontline will receive a further 0.9% pay increase on top of the 3.4% awarded to all Trust staff. As the increase is applied to all adult and care support roles this means at our developments we are able to maintain differentials of pay grades.
2.8	Lastly, Rhona updated on our voids position and shared that a lot of work has been done by the Customer Experience team and we have seen a big reduction in voids. As of today we are sitting with 117 voids which is in contrast to our peak in voids of 211. Rhona noted that this was a credit to Gail and the wider team.
3.	Declarations of Interest
3.1	None received.
4.	Apologies
4.1	Apologies were received from Nicky McLaughlin.
5.	Approval of Interim Works Invoice – Park Place, Wishaw – <i>please see private minutes</i>
6.	February Financials – <i>please see private minutes</i>
7.	30 Year Plan & Covenants Update – <i>please see private minutes</i>
8.	Corporate Re-Brand – <i>please see private minutes</i>
9.	bLEND Financing Update – <i>please see private minutes</i>
10.	New Build Financial Appraisal Model – <i>please see private minutes</i>
11.	Reactive Repairs Contracts – Proposed Price Increases – <i>please see private minutes</i>

Agenda Item	Detail
12.	Customer Panel Report
12.1	Gail Gourlay, Director of Customer Experience, advised that the Customer Panel is a tenant scrutiny panel and the members take their role very seriously. They have been especially committed to saving money and have received devices to be able to hold digital meetings which saves travel costs. The panel decide which topics and areas of the business to scrutinise and this year they have chosen tenants feeling safe and secure. Contained in the report are a number of recommendations compiled by the panel.
12.2	The panel have chosen to report in a slightly differently way this time. Previously some members of the panel would attend a Board meeting to share the findings but instead we have trialled some of the Board attending the panel meeting to learn about the report findings. Sister Jenny & Norval joined the meeting by Teams and Gail passed over to them for their comments and feedback.
12.3	Sister Jenny Lindsay reported that it was good to talk to panel and it was clear a lot of work and research had been undertaken. Some members reported concerns about front entrance doors being blown open in the high winds and also that developments had different entry video systems.
12.4	Sister Jenny added that there had been discussion around the PERA instructions. Also that tenants need a better understanding of staff cover. There was a suggestion that Saturday and Sunday night cover could run later into the evening as tenants have shared they feel vulnerable in winter when the nights are darker.
12.5	Dr Norval Bryson shared that Sister Jenny gave a good summary of the main points covered. He noted that he was very impressed by the Customer Panel who clearly had an open and easy relationship with Trust staff.
12.6	Norval shared that a lot of management responses to the recommendations were that we would publicise issues in articles within Trust Talk. He wondered if we get a good uptake of tenants reading Trust Talk. Gail reported that we do need to work on our tenant engagement and are in the process of shaping a new strategy.
12.7	Wendy Wilkinson suggested we post an article on our website which may have a broader reach. She noted that we don't want to make people feel scared when they do in fact feel safe and secure living in a Trust home. She added that Neighbourhood Scotland and National Centre for Fraud and Cybercrime can set up scam alerts for particular locations and we could publicise this for tenants. Also Community Police and Fire Officers can visit developments to speak to tenants and give reassurance.
12.8	Gail shared that we have had Community Officers to visit our developments and agreed with Wendy around not wanting to scare tenants who feel happy and safe in their homes.
12.9	Gordon Laurie wanted to extend his appreciation on behalf of the Board to the Customer Panel for the report and efforts.
12.10	Decision: Noted the contents of the report.

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12.11	Decision: Approved the statement presented in Appendix 1 to be published on the Trust website. the contents of the report.
13. 13.1 13.2 13.3 13.4	Duty of Candour Report Gail advised that since April 2018 we have been required to report to the Care Inspectorate our duty of candour, which relates to any customer receiving support or care who has incurred an injury that has resulted in harm and death whilst staff undertake care and support services. Gail was pleased to report that there were no duty of candour incidents to report for the past year. Wendy asked about the incident where a window fell on tenant and Gail advised this did not fall into duty of candour as it was not a care and support incident but was RIDDOR reportable. Decision: Noted the recommendations of the Trust Customer Panel. Decision: Approved the staff response and the proposed way forward.
14. 14.1 14.2	Delegated Authority Update Zoe explained that we have a new staff member in the post of Energy Officer and the Board are asked to approve that the Energy Officer is able to approve utility invoices up to the value of £5,000. She also noted that is version 10 of the Delegated Authority document. Decision: Approved the attached Financial Regulation FR06 Delegated Authority V010 including Appendix 1.
15. 15.1	Board Minutes The minutes of the Board meeting on 24 February 2022 were approved.
16. 16.1	Action Tracker Jackie gave an update the action tracker item relating to Bonds Drive – <i>please see private minutes.</i>
17. 17.1 17.2 17.3	AOB Rhona shared that she felt it had been a very good meeting with positive questions, constructive comments and clear support from Board. The wider Exec Team agreed with Rhona’s comments and thanked the Board for their input. Mary Strathearn, Company Secretary, extended the invite to the Customer Panel lunch on Friday 22 April at 12.30pm at Edinburgh Village Hotel. If any Board Members would like to attend to meet and have lunch with the Customer Panel please let Mary know. Mary added that the Board and Audit meetings and the Board celebration dinner taking place on Thursday 28 July will be held at the Dalmahoy Hotel & Country Club.

Agenda Item	Detail
17.4	Paul noted that it was clear from today's meeting that Trust has taken huge strides in what is a challenging climate. He noted especially our progress on voids and the great work around the re-branding exercise. He felt that Trust was a stronger organisation and ready for opportunities.
18.	Date of next meeting
18.1	Thursday 26 May 2022 (by Microsoft Teams call).

Signed as True Record by Chairperson:

