



Board Meeting

Wednesday 30 November 2022 at 5.45pm

Coffee and tea available from 5.30pm

The meeting will be held at 119 Main Street with the option to join through MS Teams

Agenda

- 1) Welcome and apologies
- 2) Declarations of interest
- 3) Minute of the Board meeting of 26 October 2022 (enclosed)
- 4) Matters arising and decision log (paper enclosed)
- 5) Business development
 - a) Minute of the Development Committee meeting of 26 October 2022 (enclosed)
- 6) Housing management activity
 - No additional items
- 7) Property maintenance activity
 - No additional items
- 8) Financial matters
 - a) Financial scenario planning – restricted rental income (paper enclosed)
 - b) Rent consultation proposal (paper enclosed)
- 9) Operational matters (paper enclosed)
 - a) Quarterly Board and Director effectiveness report (enclosed)
 - b) Minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting of 16 November 2022 (enclosed)
- 10) Any other business
 - a) Publication of Board papers
 - b) Date of the next Board meeting – Wednesday 25 January 2023



Board Meeting – Wednesday 30 November 2022

Agenda Item: 3

Subject: Minutes of Board Meeting Wednesday 26 October 2022

Prepared by: Kirsty Broadfoot

Minute of the Board meeting held on Wednesday 26 October 2022 at 5.45pm in 119 Main Street and via Teams.

Present:

Tenant Members
Alice Craig (Teams – from item 5a)
Marcus Tindal (in person)
Anne Wason (Teams)

Community Members
Gemma Collins (Teams)
Simon Leslie – Chair (in person)
Bobby Pyper (in person)
Mike Tomlinson (in person)

In Attendance (all in person)
Kirsty Broadfoot – Minutes
Jen McCann
Alan Park
Carine Strain
Jim Whiston

Jim began by advising that volunteers were sought for the positions of Chair and up to two Vice Chairs. Simon indicated he was happy to stand as Chair again and this was agreed by the attendees. Simon confirmed that Amanda had expressed an interest in standing as Vice Chair and Rhonda was also happy to continue in this role.

- 1. Welcome, appointment of Chair and apologies**
Simon welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular to new Board member Marcus. Apologies were received from Amanda, Kelsey and Suzi.
- 2. Declarations of interest**
No matters were discussed.
- 3. Minute of the Board meeting held on Wednesday 31 August 2022**
The Minutes of the meeting held on 31 August 2022 were accepted as a true record and were proposed by Bobby Pyper and seconded by Gemma Collins. Simon asked that those attending Board and committee meetings on Teams keep their camera switched on.
- 4. Matters arising**

Jim confirmed that there were no outstanding items.

5. Business Development

5a. Performance Digest for the period 1 April to 30 September 2022

Jim, Jen and Carine highlighted various aspects of performance.

Jen noted that void rent loss is stable but that there has been a high turnover of properties which has had a knock-on effect on turnaround times. The team are working hard to minimise losses. Jen went on to note that we continue to report a strong position with regards to non-technical arrears. The team continue to work extremely hard to manage arrears in what is a very challenging time for our tenants. Moving onto applications, Jen highlighted that she and the team are looking at ways to streamline the process to try and cut down on time taken to deal with inputting applications. Void relet times are decreasing which is very encouraging. The figures are reflective of the fact that new contractors are starting to settle in. On antisocial behaviour, Jen noted there had been a few low-level cases. Jim advised that there had been one subject access request which has now been dealt with.

Carine then spoke to the repairs and maintenance targets. She began by noting that we have a new Technical Services Officer, Mitchell Connor, who started recently so the team are now fully staffed. This will mean an improvement for tenants as well the team. She went on to confirm that gas servicing was 100% compliant. Electrical safety testing has seen an increase in Q2 but Carine would like to see an improvement in Q3. Non-emergency repairs were below target at 9.4 days. Carine explained that she is working with Jim W and Caroline regarding reporting and a procurement exercise is being planned to look at performance in the longer term. Emergency repairs was out with target at 9.9 hours. This had been due to some contractor inputting errors. The picture is similar for right-first-time repairs. Appointments made for repairs had increased to 36% however there continues to be issues with accessing slots in the main contractor's system. Despite the issues Carine noted that 65% of tenants had expressed satisfaction with the repairs service when completing surveys.

Marcus felt that tenants should be encouraged to report their dissatisfaction if they are not happy with their repair.

Simon felt that the team had been working very hard and that possibly some targets should be coloured amber instead of red. Carine confirmed that the team are working very hard. She hopes that a monthly action plan that she is implementing would generate some betterments.

Jen spoke about new tenant visits, these are a bit behind due to the new Troon development sign ups. Meetings with these new tenants are being undertaken by the Project Manager and Senior Housing Officer as there have been lots of questions from the new tenants. Jen highlighted a minor change to the digest going forward regarding the new tenant visit reporting. She also noted that the tenant handbook contains lots of useful information but tenants don't tend to refer to it. She hopes to carry out a review of the handbook and possibly have it available on My Home. Jen then summarised

the money advice team outcomes. The team are very busy and currently dealing with 130 cases, their workload will increase as demand for the service increases but they are doing an amazing job.

Jim reported that performance on the Corporate KPIs had been strong. The pipeline programme is positive however the prospects for development are uncertain given construction inflation, grant levels and the proposed rent cap. Staff have taken part in some fun days and neighbourhood events. There continues to be steady growth in numbers of tenants using My Home. The Local has been very successful with around 15 local groups using the space so far. Jim thanked Shonya for her hard work. He noted that an Event Host is being sought to help with evening events.

Jen advised that she has applied for some funding from the community health and wellbeing 'cosy spaces' grant scheme. She is holding a mid-week movie event on 16 November. This is open to tenants and the wider community and has been publicised on the social media channels.

The Board noted the report.

5b. Delivery Plan progress to date

Jim reported progress made with the Delivery Plan tasks. Overall, the report confirms steady progress is being made. Jim discussed the proposed rent cap, he had circulated briefing papers to the Board. A report will be made to the Scottish Parliament mid-January on whether there will be a cap from 1 April. We will then adjust our financial planning accordingly. He advised that associations are being encouraged to consult on a possible rent increase as normal. Jim noted that a paper will come to the Board in November with proposals for the basis and timing of the consultation. Bobby commented about the need to be as explicit as possible with tenants and the Regulator on the implications of a rent cap. Alan confirmed that a rent freeze would reduce the value of the business by up to a third. It was agreed that depending on timing an update could be included in the next newsletter.

The Board noted the report.

6. Housing management activity

No additional items.

7. Property maintenance activity

7a. Asset Management Plan update

Carine summarised the report. She began by noting that there had been one open market purchase this quarter and the market had been slow. She advised that there is a big focus on rationalising the stock profile, discussions are taking place with South Ayrshire Council to buy back some properties. We are accessing Eco 4 grant funding to try and remove reliance on fossil-based heating systems. Air source heat pumps are being installed in two properties in Crown Square (above the office) due to ongoing issues with utilities suppliers. Carine advised that we are also looking at remote access to SDM which would allow for key elements of stock data to be updated whilst staff are at a property. Carine noted that the association is

prioritising additional surveying of our stock, focusing on updating the information we hold on energy efficiency ratings (EPCs) and in relation to the management and control of asbestos within our stock.

Simon asked if there was the option to look at different types of heat pumps. Carine confirmed we had limited options.

The Board approved the suggested changes to the plan.

8. Financial matters

8a. Management Accounts for the 6 months ended 30 September 2022

Alan summarised the accounts, confirming that the association had performed well in Q2. He referred to the Cash flow statement and noted that the operating surplus for the 6 months was £1.7M with £2.3M having been generated from operating activities. Alan went on to discuss interest on loans, stating that the variable rate will increase and we are starting to see better rates coming through for deposits as a consequence. Moving onto development costs, Alan confirmed that £4.8M had been spent on the Troon and Carrick Street developments and just over £500k on improvements to existing properties. £47k had been spent on additional PCs for remote working and office equipment. Alan confirmed there was £2.2M less cash at the end of the period due to funding the development programme from previously drawn bond finance. He then went on to summarise the income and expenditure report noting that this was within budget. Rent receivable was ahead of budget at £62k which was due to the phased handover of Troon. The Local generated an income of £3k. Management costs were under budget. Open space maintenance was over budget as the tender price accepted was higher than anticipated. Alan confirmed that his narrative was incorrect in the paper and that due to the higher tender prices this heading will likely be overspent at year end. Interest payable was below budget, Alan said that we should be able to accommodate the higher interest rates in this financial year. Moving onto the financial performance indicators, Alan confirmed there was no cause for concern and that the covenants were satisfactory. There will be a possible change to one of the covenants which will need to be considered from 2023/24 budget.

Bobby enquired if all the loans were fixed rate. Alan confirmed that the majority were. The split is approximately 75% fixed and 25% variable.

The Board approved the Management Accounts for the six months to 30 September 2022.

8b. Proposal to repay borrowings from the [REDACTED]

Alan provided background to the report. He highlighted that we can repay the loans with this provider which would reduce annual finance charges given the emerging cost pressures in service delivery and improvement works alongside potential limits on rent increases. This would free up [REDACTED] of security for the business.

The Board agreed to the recommendation on the basis that there would be a further report on the matter.

9. Operational matters

Health and safety

H&S audits have been planned for towards the end of the year. Actions following these will be reported at the next H&S committee meeting in January 2023.

Board effectiveness and governance

Jim advised that new Chairs are to be appointed for the various committees. Simon will put a post on Basecamp about this. ¹

Community Engagement and Publicity

There is to be an opening event for the new Troon development on 4 November.

We are awaiting publicity from Cruden's PR team following the event at Troon Angling Club last month.

Jim has been given two tickets to the Gaiety's panto which will be raffled for staff and Board. We have developed a positive relationship with the theatre and are also running a competition in conjunction with them to name our new Carrick Street development. The competition will be open to tenants and the wider community.

Glasgow and West of Scotland Forum of Housing Associations

Jim declared an interest in this matter as he is a director of GWSF. He confirmed they are considering a modest fee increase. This was agreed by the Board.

Notifiable events and disposals

Jim confirmed that a complaint is being investigated under the Whistleblowing Policy. The SHR have been notified.

9a. Equalities – monitoring arrangements

Jen provided background on the purpose of the report.

The Board noted the ongoing collection of data and agreed the matrix to be used.

9b. Strategic and Organisational development

Jim summarised the paper. It is proposed that the association commissions Indigo House to undertake a Strategic Options Appraisal. The appraisal would test how we deliver services to tenants, review the Business Plan and organisational development. It would also look at succession planning.

General discussion took place regarding the proposal. It was agreed that this is a worthwhile exercise given the current climate. The Board approved the proposal on the basis that we work with the consultant to bring the project under budget.

9c. Minutes of the Audit Committee meeting of 31 August 2022

This was noted.

10. Any other business

¹ Action: Simon Leslie

10a. Publication of Board papers

It was agreed to redact the wording at item 8b on the agenda as well as the paper itself and usual covenant information. It was noted that the Indigo House report had been highlighted as confidential given its commercial content.

10b. Date of next Board meeting

Wednesday 30 November 2022.

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 7.45pm with a vote of thanks to the Chair.

Signed

Dated



Board Meeting – Wednesday 30 November 2022

Agenda item: 4

Subject: Matters arising including outstanding matters from earlier meetings and decision log

Prepared by Jim Whiston

Matters arising including outstanding matters

Ref	Date	Subject	Progress	Complete?	Due by Board:
B512	26 October 2022	Appointment of Committee chairs.	See agenda item 9a	Yes	November 2022

Completed Items will be removed from the following month's report. The previous reports are retained within the within the bound Board papers on the websites.

Log of decisions made over a rolling twelve-month period:

As an aid to decision making a log of decisions made since October 2022 is below.

Decision Number	Final Decision Taken	Date Decision Taken	Why decision was Taken	Who made the Decision	Other alternatives/actions considered
1	Board approved suggested changes to the Asset Management Plan	26/10/22	Recommendation supports Business Plan objectives	Board	Different types of Heat Pumps
2	Board approved Mgt Accts	26/10/22	Governance	Board	None
3	Repay Borrowings if appropriate	26/10/22	Financial Management	Board	Do nothing
4	Use suggested matrix	26/10/22	Equalities legislation	Board	None
5	Commission consultants for SOA	26/10/22	Service delivery/succession planning	Board	Consider different supplier
6	Publish Board papers with redactions	26/10/22	Transparency	Board	None
7	Rent increase consultation	30/11/22	Governance	Board	Assessment of other HAs
8	Financial scenario planning	30/11/22	Financial Management	Board	Exact rent cap level
9	Agreed new Chairs for committees	30/11/22	Governance	Board	Nominations sought
10	Timescale for Business Plan review agreed	30/11/22	Governance	Board	None



Board Meeting – Wednesday 30 November 2022

Agenda Item: 8a

Subject: Financial scenario planning – restricted rental income

Prepared by: Alan Park

Summary - This paper is intended to provide the Board with an overview of the correlation between rents and overall business value alongside the more visible potential impact on our ability to provide the services through reduced cash generation if restrictions are placed on our rent levels by the government

Background

The Scottish Government has introduced emergency legislation to bring in a cap on increases in rents at 0% until the end of March 2023 for homes provided by social and private landlords. The legislation gives Scottish Ministers the ability to extend the rent cap beyond March 2023 for two periods of six months and commits Scottish Ministers to set out no later than 14 January 2023 their decision on whether to expire the rent restrictions at the end of March 2023, continue with a 0% cap for a further six months or set a different level for the cap from 1 April.

We have been considering carefully for some time the implications of this for our decision making on setting rent levels for 2023/24. We recognise that the forthcoming annual rent setting exercise will be one of the most difficult we will have faced, and that we will need to consider the impact of rising costs and inflation on our organisation while recognising the financial hardship that is a reality for many of our tenants. We also must take account of the Scottish Government's potential further intervention in rent setting. This will inevitably mean that we, together with our tenants, will face some difficult choices and decisions as a result.

Consulting tenants

As things stand social landlords can increase rents from 1 April 2023, and it may be the middle of January before the Scottish Government is able to set out a definite position for 2023/24. The process to determine rent levels, including consulting with tenants, can take several months. Given this, government advice is for us to proceed with the preparatory work to determine what level of rent increase we require for 2023/24, including engaging with our tenants to ensure that we understand what is important to them and what they want, and can afford, to pay for. This is challenging: the Scottish Government may extend the rent freeze or cap rent increases for 2023/24; and there may be uncertainty, or even confusion, amongst tenants about what is to happen in April. However, not to proceed with rent setting and consultation could leave us in a position where we are not able to increase rents on 1 April 2023 if the government permits us to do so. We are legally required to give at least 28 days' notice of any rent increase.

Scenario planning

Financial scenario planning is a strategic planning tool we can use to improve financial forecasting by evaluating the uncertainties, risks and opportunities of potential future states, in this case we focus on the loss of rental income and its impact on our available cash and the overall value of our business. The objective of financial scenario planning is to secure the best immediate outcome while also preparing suitable alternative action plans which can be actioned depending on how a situation unfolds.

There is significant uncertainty and for the purpose of this exercise I have looked at three scenarios against our base position. The base position is the 30-year financial plan which underpins the current business plan which assumes real rent growth for years 1 to 4 and thereafter inflation only increases.

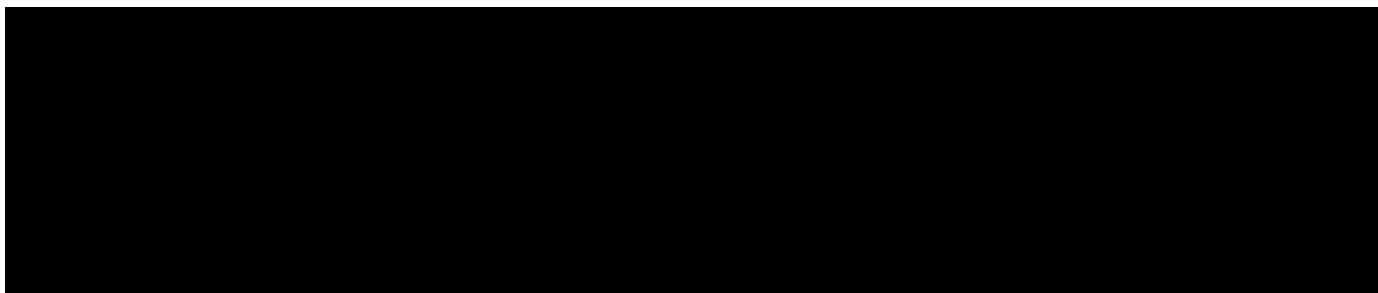
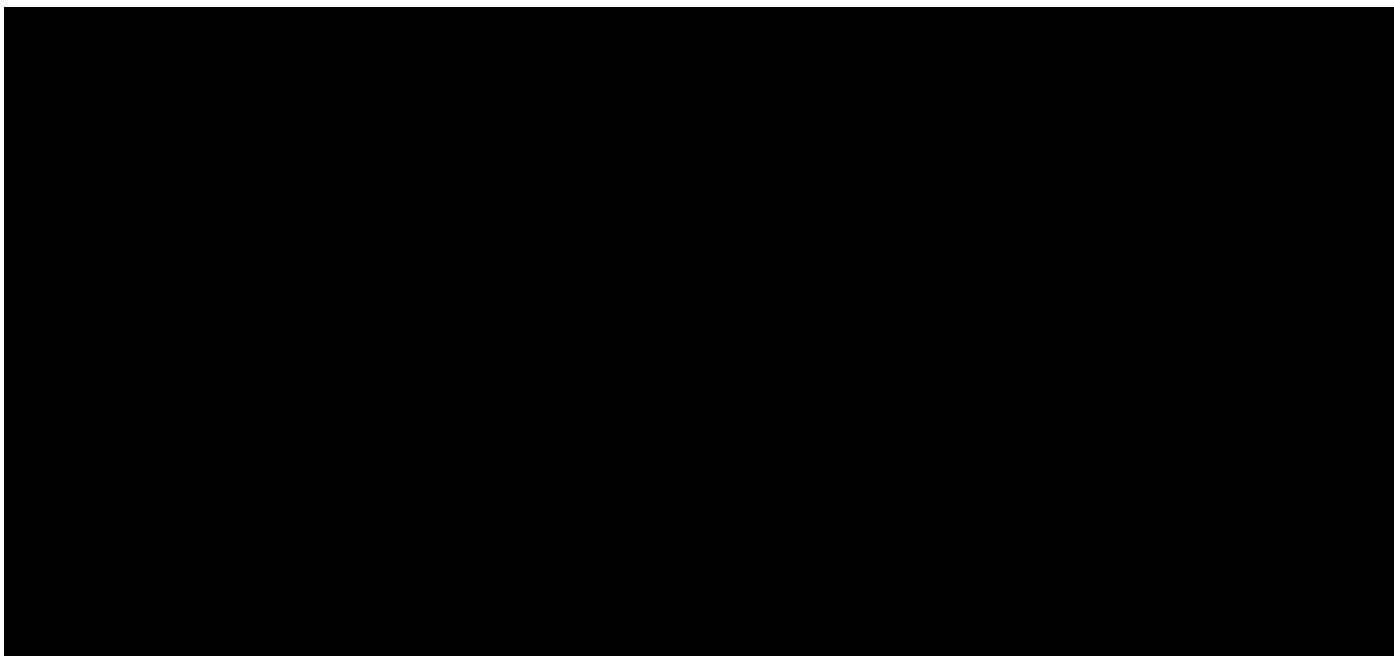
Scenario A - is the base position, the reasonable best case.

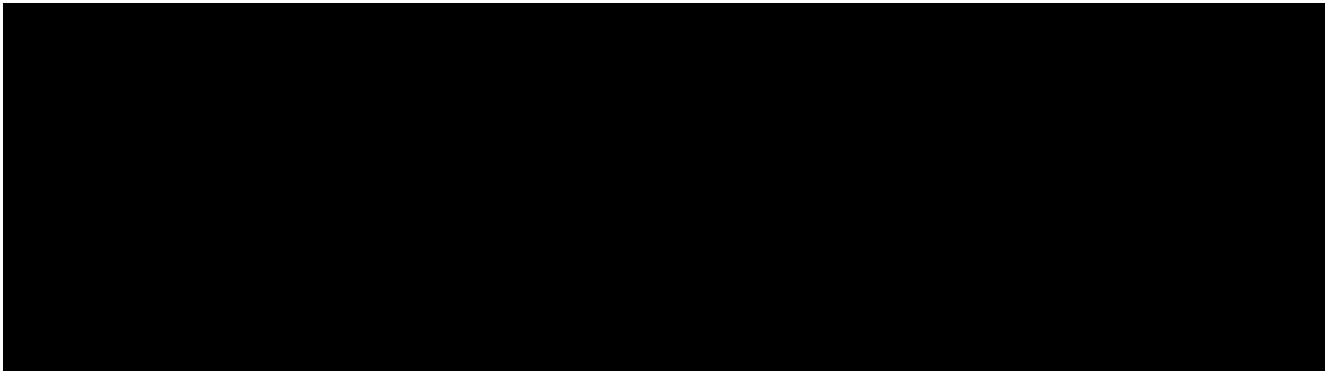
Scenario B - assumes a rent freeze for 3 years, the pessimistic case.

Scenario C - assumes a rent freeze in year 1 followed by rent caps at 3% in years 2 and 3, the reasonable worst case.

Scenario D - assumes no rent freeze but real rent rises of 1% throughout the 30-year period, the optimistic case.

Attached is a summary of each scenario showing the impact on available cash and business valuation (EUV-SH).





At this stage we can only assume that we will be ‘free’ to set our rents i.e., no freeze and any cap would be at or above our intended increase from next April, and that scenarios B and C won’t come to fruition. This prediction is based on the announcement in the Chancellors Autumn Statement on 17 November of a cap for rents for social housing landlords in England of 7% (Wales announced a 6.5% cap on 16 November) so we should assume that Scotland will introduce a cap as well. Our scenario A above uses a rent increase of 4% for illustrative purposes and hopefully any cap imposed by the Scottish Government would be above 4% and at, or below, 7%. For this reason, a separate paper on our rent consultation based on an indicative 5% increase for 2023/24 has been prepared for consideration at this evening’s Board meeting. Our projected operating costs and interest payable for increases for 2023/24 combine to show a 15.1% increase over this years’ budgeted level.

Scottish Ministers have said that they will consider what rent increases are being consulted on when they decide (no later than mid-January) on what the position is to be on social housing rents from April 2023 and the SFHA is gathering this information now.

Recommendation

The paper is intended to provide the Board with an overview of the correlation between rents and overall business value alongside the more visible potential impact on our ability to provide the services that our tenants expect through reduced cash generation. It hopefully demonstrates how sensitive the financial model is even to small changes and the perhaps unintended, financial consequences on loan covenants and through time perhaps could even weaken the commitment of lenders to our sector.

Given the uncertainty around this subject it would probably be unwise to begin detailed work on specific mitigations on a ‘what if’ basis. It would instead likely be prudent to wait until we have greater certainty before deciding what action we need to take, if any, to deal with any further downside to our plans.



Board Meeting – Wednesday 30 November 2022

Agenda Item: 8b

Subject: Rent Consultation Proposal

Prepared by: Jennifer McCann

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board with an update on Ayrshire Housing's approach to the required statutory rent consultation on a rent increase proposal for 2023/24.

The Board will determine the final rent increase at its February 2023 meeting based on the outcome of the consultation and in the context of the Scottish Government's position on a rent cap.

Recommendation

The Governing Board is asked to:

Agree the timeline and the format of the consultation based on a suggested rent increase of 5% assuming no cap is imposed. In the event of a cap, the consultation would be on a figure equivalent to the cap.

Legislative and Regulatory Position

The Cost of Living (Tenant Protection) (Scotland) Act 2022 has been introduced as part of the Scottish Government's overall response to the emergency caused by rising prices and following incomes. The temporary measures are intended to:

- protect tenants by stabilising their housing costs.
- where possible, reduce impacts on the health and wellbeing of tenants caused by being evicted and/or being made homeless by giving them more time to find alternative accommodation; and
- seek to avoid tenants being evicted from the rented sector by a landlord wanting to raise rents between tenancies, and reduce unlawful evictions, via a moratorium on evictions and by raising the level of damages that may be awarded.

The key measures of the Act applying initially to 31 March 2023:

- the introduction of a temporary freeze on in-tenancy rent increases.
- a temporary moratorium on evictions for rent arrears.

- The Bill, as passed, commits the government to set out a decision to provide certainty to the Social Rented Sector, by the 14 January 2023 at the latest, as part of the required 3 month reporting for the legislation.

Scottish Ministers are required to confirm whether they intend to raise the cap, suspend/expire the rent restrictions or continue with a 0% cap for the social sector by 14 January 2023. This will ensure that social landlords will be able to practically raise rents from the 1 April if the cap is not at 0%.

Proposal for consultation

Ayrshire Housing would normally commence the annual rent consultation in December. Given that a decision is not expected from the Scottish Government before January 2023, it is proposed to consult once we are in a position to provide our tenants with a definitive figure.

In the absence of a cap, we would propose to consult on a 5% increase. This equals £4.89 a week for a typical 2-bedroom house. This figure is intended to provide a small margin on the tight planning figure given scenario A in the proceeding figure. This helps to accommodate to some degree the uncertainty until the rent increase is finally agreed by the Board in February.

If a cap is imposed, it is proposed that the consultation is on that figure irrespective of its value.

As in previous years we will seek feedback on tenants' perceptions of value for money against the effect of lower rent rises.

Consultation Timeline

- Consultation rolled out 16 January 2023.
- Fixed time period of 3 weeks for responses.
- Collation and evaluation of the feedback compiled ready for the final proposal presented to the board on the 22 February 2023.
- Letters to tenants circulated on the 24 February 2023 (allowing for full 28 days' statutory notice).

Data Collection Methods

- Online survey
- Paper Based Survey
- Online Social Media Surveys
- My Home – tenant portal
- Face to face consultations will be considered

The following information will be circulated to all tenants early in December through the Winter newsletter:

“Ayrshire Housing provide housing services to over 1600 homes across Ayrshire. We are committed to delivering high quality services to enhance the wellbeing of you, your family and the wider community.

The past few years have been challenging for us all, following on from the global pandemic we now face escalating costs and supply problems. We are very aware of the rising cost of living and are continually looking at ways that we can help manage the challenges many of you are facing.

As an association, we are also experiencing many pressures, costs such as replacement components and labour costs have increased, these are being passed on to us by our contractors and service providers which mean that there is less in the pot. These are unprecedented times, and we are doing what we can to continue to provide the day-to-day services that our tenants expect.

We will consult shortly on our rent increase for the forthcoming financial year. We appreciate that these are exceptionally difficult times for many of us. But we need to be realistic about the costs involved in maintaining and investing in our houses and communities. Therefore, we do need to consider a rent increase and this year it will be subject to any rent cap that the Scottish Government sets. Once we know whether or not a cap will apply, we will be in contact to get your views on the proposed rent increase.”

Consultation Requirements

Engagement with our tenants will be the key element of our rent consultation.

Health and Safety Considerations

No relevant considerations.

Financial Implications

Consultation will be undertaken based on the existing human and financial resources.

Regulatory Standards, Legislation and Guidance

All requirements have been covered earlier in this report.

Assurance Statement, Regulatory non-compliance and areas for improvement

No direct impact at this time assuming a rent increase of no less than 5%.

Freedom of Information Publication Scheme

This paper will be published on the website



Board Meeting – Wednesday 30 November 2022

Agenda Item: 9

Subject: Operational matters

Prepared by: Jim Whiston

For noting

Health and Safety

ACS have carried the first of their two audits. Reports on the audits and any actions required will then be presented to the Health and Safety Committee in January.

Board effectiveness and governance

See separate paper.

Eydent

A meeting of chief officers will be held on 2 December.

Placement opportunities within Ayrshire Housing

Following the recent successful school pupil placement, we are seeking further ones.

Staffing issues

See the Human Resources Committee minute below.

Staff pension schemes

See the Human Resources Committee minute below.

Audit Committee

The Audit Committee meets on 30 November.

Community engagement and publicity

The naming competition for the Carrick Street development is underway in association with the Gaiety.

This year's Christmas card is being produced with Dalmillig Primary School.

Notifiable events and disposals

There have been no disposals since the last meeting.

There have been no notifiable events since the last meeting.

A consolidated report on disposals and notifiable events will be considered by the Audit Committee at its February 2023 meeting.



Board Meeting – Wednesday 30 November 2022

Agenda Item: 9a

Subject: Quarterly Board and Director Effectiveness Report

Prepared by: Jim Whiston

For noting

Board member induction

These have been completed in accordance with the Board Effectiveness Policy. The code of conduct has been signed by the new members.

Board member retiral

Alice Craig is moving to new house with another association. Her tenancy with Ayrshire Housing ceases on 5 December. This will create a casual vacancy. We have had interest in joining the Board from a number of tenants.

Office bearers

Following a call for volunteers, the position regarding Committee chairs is:

Audit: Amanda Bryan
Community Engagement: to be confirmed
Development: Mike Tomlinson
Health and Safety: to be confirmed
Human Resources: Bobby Pyper
Tenancy Matters: to be confirmed

Declarations of interest

New declarations have been made by all staff and Board members save by one employee who is on sick leave.

Board members handout

This has been issued and covers the calendar and content of meetings. This includes guidance on hybrid meeting etiquette as requested.

Board development action plan

The action plan below incorporates issues raised at the Board-manager development sessions.

Action	When	Progress
Committees	October 2022	See above for progress on chairs

		Additional action – consider changing the balance of Board and Committee meetings for the 2023-2024 session
Board paper format	November 2022	Small working group being formed. Sample changes being trialled in November papers. Decision log introduced.
Board reviews	May 2023	Programme of work to be developed
Training plan	August 2023	Delivery in hand
Job shadowing	August 2023	Opportunities to be offered from January
Leave of absence guidance	October 2023	Complete – included in handbook
Jargon guides	October 2023	Feedback on EVH guides being sought
Information on Electoral process	October 2023	Complete – included in handbook Additional action – amend the articles to cover appointment period of Chair – legal advice being sought.

Training

The first session in the programme on regulatory issues was held in October. The next is in January on health and safety.

Director's review

The autumn quarterly meeting is scheduled for 28 November. The panel is the Chair and the two Vice-Chairs.

Board Meeting – 30 November 2022

Agenda Item: 9b

Subject: Minute of Human Resources Committee held on 16 November 2022 at 4.30pm

Prepared by: Kirsty Broadfoot

For noting

Present: Amanda Bryan – in person (until item 6)
Gemma Collins - Teams
Simon Leslie - Teams
Bobby Pyper – in person
Marcus Tindal – in person
Mike Tomlinson – in person
Anne Wason - Teams

In attendance: Kirsty Broadfoot (Minutes) – in person
Alan Park – in person
Jim Whiston - Teams

1. Appointment of Chair, welcome and apologies

Bobby was confirmed as Chair of the committee, following Simon's earlier request for volunteers. He welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Suzi Williamson.

2. Declarations of Interest

No matters were discussed.

3. Minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting of 10 November 2021

These were proposed by Amanda and seconded by Mike.

Although the committee is due to meet just once a year, Bobby felt it might be wise to note that meetings could be held whenever the need arose. The committee agreed to this.

4. Annual Staffing Report

Establishment review

Jim discussed the key points in the report, highlighting there had been lots of changes in the last year including retirements and restructuring of some posts. The retirement of a part-time Finance Assistant had brought about a restructuring of the Receptionist post which now means the department is light on reception cover following the office reopening. Jim put forward a proposal to recruit a full-time Receptionist. Jim also confirmed that the association was in the process of recruiting a casual Events Host to assist with facilitating evening events in The Local.

Absence

Jim summarised the report, noting that figures had been skewed slightly due to a staff member being off long-term sick who has now retired. There were no other standout items. Jim highlighted that absence is closely monitored and that a 'return to work' process is carried out. Refresher training on absence and stress management had been carried out recently for managers. Jim went on to summarise gender pay gap information. Bobby felt that it would be useful to have a year-on-year comparison in addition to the current situation as this would allow for trends to be identified. Amanda also commented on the disability statistics and felt that the association could be more pro-active in trying to recruit employees with disabilities. It was felt that this could heighten our standing within the community and give a different perspective. It was also noted that current employees should also feel comfortable to report any changes to their own circumstances which may fall under this category. Jim confirmed that we use EVH recruitment policies. It was agreed to have a refresh of our recruitment practices.

The committee agreed to the proposal to adjust the establishment.

5. Pensions Update

Alan updated the committee on the key areas. He noted that himself, Jim and Kirsty are all members of the SHAPS pension scheme and so declared an interest in the topic. He advised the Committee that we have two pension schemes – SHAPS and Strathclyde Pension Fund and that the valuation figures had been disclosed in the annual accounts. The position for both schemes has improved recently with Strathclyde showing an overall funding improvement from 94% in 2014 to 120% in 2022. The deficit for this fund had decreased from £1M to £611K in 2022. Alan confirmed that we are committed to pay 3 years past deficit service contributions. In the case of the SHAPS scheme, Alan noted that the funding level had improved in 2021 to 98% from 88% in 2018. He advised the committee that a Court opinion is being sought by SHAPS following legal advice they have received regarding a change they made in calculating pensions, the outcome of which may affect future liabilities but that the ramifications of this may not be known until late 2024. The next SHAPS valuation will be September 2023 with any increased contributions applying thereafter. In response to a question from Bobby, Alan anticipated that it may be too early for the 2023 valuation to take account of any potential extra liabilities. However, that could change depending on the timing of the court outcome. Alan confirmed that the association is committed to the provision of a pension scheme for all employees, any increase could be accommodated within the budget. Following further questions, the committee noted the update on pension provision for the association and agreed to the retention of Punter Southall for advice where needed. Bobby thanked Alan for his continued hard work in this area.

6. Staff Development and Succession Planning

Jim provided a summary. He confirmed that the style of the employee wellbeing surveys may change given that agile working is now in place. Jim spoke about staff development and confirmed that a formal personal development planning (PDP) process is in place and is enhanced by 8 weekly meetings which provides a formal process for issues to be raised. Jim went on to note an uptake in

training, particularly online sessions. The Eydent conference was well attended by both staff and Board members in November 2021. Three repairs assistants are currently undertaking HNDs in Construction and Caroline Donald has achieved the CIPFA Diploma In Corporate Governance. Jim summarised a breakdown of training costs by department. Marcus noticed an error which will be corrected and the paper reissued.

7. Wages Ballot

Alan discussed the collective bargaining agreement and confirmed that the potential rent cap for 2023/24 should not impact on funding the increase in salaries proposed in the EVH ballot paper. It was confirmed by Simon that the matter could be determined by the Human Resources Committee. Alan, Jim and Kirsty were asked to leave the meeting at this point.

The Committee agreed to support the proposal of EVH's negotiating committee and to cast the association's vote accordingly.

8. Any other business

In response to a question from Bobby, Jim noted that the topic of the handling of confidential information would be covered at the next staff meeting.

The committee raised the issue of summarising Board and committee papers as it is sometimes difficult to follow them with ease. It was proposed to have a cover summary sheet indicating which areas the Board or committee should pay particular attention to. Jim said that a working group could be set up to look at this.

The meeting closed at 5.50pm.