

**Minute of Langstane Housing Association’s hybrid Board of Management Meeting
Held at 680 King Street, Aberdeen, AB24 1SL
on 14 November 2024 at 12.30pm**

Meeting start time	12:30pm	Meeting end time	1.54pm
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Present	Members - in person	Members - remote attendance
	M Martin, chair	J Knowles, vice chair
	A Stevenson	K Butler
		T Dinozzi
		J Fraser
		J Gillies

In attendance	In person	Remote attendance
	H Gauld, chief executive	
	M Ballance, director of property	
	M Macarthur, director of finance and corporate services	
	J Sutherland, director of housing	
H Lawson, team leader - executive office (minute taker)		

Apologies	J Drummond
	I Jamieson

1. Introduction

1.1 Board discussions (in-camera)

1.2 Chief executive statement

The chief executive confirmed there was nothing on the meeting’s agenda that knowingly contravenes the rules, regulations and regulatory requirements of the Association.

1.3 Apologies / absence

The apologies noted above were intimated to the board.

1.4 Declaration(s) of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

1.5 Draft minute – board of management – 22 August 2024

Decision: The minute of the previous meeting was approved as an accurate record.

1.6 Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

1.7 Draft minute – board of management – 19 September 2024

Decision: The minute of the previous meeting was approved as an accurate record.

1.8 Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

2. Discussion / decision making

2.1 CEO update

The chair inquired about any clarification regarding Aberdeen City Council's decision to declare a housing emergency in the city and whether there have been any subsequent consequences resulting from this action.

The budget for adaptations funding presents ongoing challenges related to overspending. Since the funding announcement, there have been no major referrals, resulting in a relatively quiet year. The association maintains an in-house budget for minor adaptations, which will continue to be utilised.

For major adaptations, funding provided by the Scottish Government has allowed for an expenditure of £45,000, with an anticipated £35,000 in funding support. However, there have been no additional referrals to date. The association will continue to accept referrals while evaluating the feasibility of ongoing support.

Decision: The board of management ratified the decisions made regarding agenda items 2.1.6, "Decision making under delegated power," and 2.1.7, "Decision making at committee."

2.2 Corporate document review

2.2.1 Business continuity plan

Following a recent webinar session attended by the chief executive, updates to the Business Continuity Plan (BCP) are forthcoming. These updates will encompass details regarding third-party organisations with which the association collaborates, as well as the implications of their inability to deliver services.

Additionally, internal audit findings from the recent cyber security audit conducted by TIAA have been integrated into the BCP.

The chair raised the issue of whether succession planning at the senior levels and the board should align with the BCP. The chief executive acknowledged the existence of a board succession planning policy but noted that a similar policy for employees is currently lacking. The chief executive will provide an update on this matter in due course

2.2.2 Cyber incident response plan

Following a recent review of cyber security conducted by TIAA, it was identified that a separate incident response plan was lacking. This gap has since been addressed with the development of a comprehensive plan.

The chair, supported by T Dinozzi, suggested the inclusion of reference to ransomware attacks given recent well publicised attacks on the NHS and social care organisations, emphasising that the threat persists even for charities.

In response to K Butler the chief executive confirmed a BCP exercise was previously completed, leading to necessary updates to the document. The cyber incident response plan will be tested annually to ensure its effectiveness.

K Butler suggested it was crucial for employees staff to be made aware of the plans, as involving them in the process can enhance education and awareness across the broader workforce.

Action: Include reference to ransomware attacks as part of the cyber incident response plan.

Decision: The board of management approved the cyber incident response plan subject to the aforementioned actions being implemented.

2.2.3 Information security policy

The information security policy was updated in accordance with the recent audit conducted by TIAA. The revisions incorporated the recommendations from the review into the document.

Decision: The board of management approved the information security policy as presented.

2.2.4 Joint audit and governance committee remit

Decision: The board of management approved the joint audit and governance committee remit as presented.

2.3 Annual priorities 2025/26

The chair commended the efforts made in organising the recent board away day session noting the discussion was engaging, and the positive and constructive atmosphere proved to be both encouraging and a productive use of time. Several valuable ideas emerged during the session, particularly around an intent-based leadership approach. Participants expressed a sense of alignment with this approach, noting that some of its elements were already present within Langstane. The conversation also highlighted the importance of integrating this leadership model coherently throughout the association. Overall, there was strong support for pursuing this initiative, though practical considerations regarding capacity and resources were raised.

J Fraser acknowledged the effectiveness of the day, noting that while the principles are promising, the success of implementation hinges on available resources. The chief executive received mixed feedback from employees, with the overall sentiment being positive, although there were concerns about

potential increases in workload. The leadership team expressed enthusiasm for implementation strategies that could be adopted at minimal cost, appreciating the opportunity for involvement.

Moving forward, the leadership team will reflect on the outcomes of this session and consult with employees. They will present thoughts and proposals through the people committee regarding the potential implementation of the discussed initiatives.

In the financial presentation, the challenges ahead were acknowledged, and key considerations were discussed. The proposal to transition to a longer-term budgeting strategy was well-received, as it would provide more certainty and aid in financial planning over a three-year period.

K Butler extended gratitude for the effort invested in the day's activities, noting that the workshop elements and instruction were particularly beneficial.

The director of property suggested that while an annual security and safety budget may not resolve all issues, prioritising the safety of existing tenants remains crucial.

2.4 Meeting schedule 2025

The meeting schedule has been removed from the documents due to changes in scheduling. The people committee will now convene four times annually, prioritising flexibility in scheduling.

The updated schedule will be presented at the next board of management meeting in December 2024.

3. Routine monitoring reports

3.1 Statement of outstanding business

The long-term funding (LTF) strategy should prioritise identifying future funding requirements and aligning them with the development strategy. The short-term approach must balance fixed and variable terms. The intention is to keep this strategy concise.

The stock assessment has identified five schemes with anti social or insurance-related issues. These schemes present notable challenges and it is essential to summarise the key issues raised by the software analysis

J Fraser suggested it is critical to establish realistic timelines for presenting various papers to the board rather than subjecting the team to undue pressure. In response the director of property confirmed the asset management strategy contains relevant dates, and recruiting an additional manager could facilitate this process.

A summary of the five schemes by the director of property will clarify our ongoing approach to managing developments. J Fraser emphasised the need to set a clear timeline for the commencement of developments, with the chair expressing concern about reaching critical decision points.

Decision: A comprehensive report on this area is anticipated by the end of the financial year, ideally by January or February 2025, to clarify intentions and establish decision making deadlines.

3.2 Langstane Housing Association management accounts June 2024

T Dinozzi expressed gratitude to the director for the presented information, noting it provided the board with considerable reassurance.

In conclusion, the association is on track to address current challenges effectively and is well-positioned to capitalise on upcoming projects.

3.3 Detailed mid-year financial review

The director of finance and corporate services reported the association appears to be in a reasonably strong position. However, it is essential to maintain vigilance regarding spending, particularly in relation to components and property. Anticipated outcomes should result in an overall surplus position which exceeds that initially budgeted.

Staffing costs have seen some positions left unfilled, and the new hire for the property team is yet to commence. Some staffing expenditures are recurring and have been accounted for in the adjusted budgets.

Efforts are underway to analyse day-to-day budgeting however, identifying specific causes of overspending has proven challenging. Although there are low-level administrative issues that could benefit from resolution, a workshop with the customer services and property teams regarding work orders has been scheduled. Additionally, improvements have been made in processing recharges, which were not previously handled appropriately.

Another area identified for improvement is the proactive management of fire door inspections and risk assessments, which have led to significant remedial work. The association will evaluate the appropriateness of allocating these costs to a separate code within the SOCI to improve visibility. It has also been noted that the property team are encountering an increase in vandalism repairs, although evidence of this trend is difficult to gather. A new tagging system is being implemented to track these trends effectively. Furthermore, increased expenditures have been observed in addressing damp cases, with costs rising from £240 to £420 per case for cleaning and disinfection while underlying issues are resolved. The next year's budget assumes higher maintenance costs for properties.

There is potential for improvement in managing the order-to-invoice values, which have increased by 40%. Training sessions will be provided to ensure that employees utilise the correct schedule of rate codes.

With regard to the voids budget, the team have experienced more voids than anticipated this year, with a higher associated value. This surge can be attributed partly to inflation and to the return of properties in poorer condition.

The director of property recognised the need for further work to be done to reallocate spending toward planned maintenance rather than reactive repairs, which varies depending on the nature of the repairs.

The approved recommendations are documented in the accompanying report.

Decision: The board of management noted the update on the mid-year financial position and forecast through 31 March 2025.

4. Draft minutes of committees

The board had considered and approved the draft minutes which had been available to view in the board portal and listed below as Items 4.1 to 4.2.

4.1 Draft minute – Performance committee – 5 November 2024

4.2 Draft minute – Joint audit and governance committee – 28 October 2024

4.3 Draft minute – Board of management LPL – 17 October 2024

5. AOCB

5.1 Director of housing - Resignation

The chairperson acknowledged the decision of the director of housing to retire from the association at the end of April 2025.

The chair expressed sincere gratitude for the director's valuable contributions during their tenure. While the association will miss their presence, the board of management extends its best wishes for the director's future endeavours.

Efforts will be made to promptly recruit a suitable candidate for the position of director of housing to ensure a seamless transition.

6. Date of next meeting

Thursday, 12 December 2024