

Minute of Langstane Housing Association’s virtual Board of Management Meeting held at 680 King Street, Aberdeen, AB24 1SL on 19 October 2023 at 12.30pm

Meeting start time	12:31pm	Meeting end time	2.14pm
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Present	Members - in person	Members - remote attendance	
			M Martin, chair
			J Knowles, vice chair
			D Bain
			T Dinozzi
			J Fraser
			I Jamieson
			G Urquhart
In Attendance	In Person	Remote Attendance	
			H Gauld, chief executive
			M Ballance, director of property
			J Sutherland, director of housing
		H Lawson, team leader - executive office (minute taker)	

Apologies	
	J Drummond
	S Gray
	A Habib
	D MacLeod
	A Stevenson
	M Macarthur, director of finance and corporate services

The chair opened the meeting by formally welcoming new Board member, Tony Dinozzi, to his first meeting of the Board of Management.

1. Board Discussions (In-camera)

The Board decided against holding in-camera discussions for this meeting, with the chair inviting any members to contact him directly if they wish to discuss anything in private, following today’s meeting.

2. Chief Executive Statement

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

3. Apologies / Absence

The apologies noted above were intimated to the Board.

4. Declaration(s) of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5. Draft Minute – Board of Management – 24 August 2023

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

5.1 Matters Arising

5.1 – Pay negotiations – restricted item

5.2 – Aberlour Trust

The director of housing confirmed the Aberlour Trust have now taken up residence on the second floor of the Aberdeen office.

5.3 – Men's Sheds

The director of housing has spoken with Jason Schroeder, chief executive at the Men's Sheds and he has expressed his willingness to work alongside the Association on referrals.

The director will arrange a meeting with Jason to discuss the process in more detail.

Claire McEleney, property manager, joined the meeting and gave a presentation to Board members on 'Property Services at Langstane'.

6. Draft Minute – Board of Management – 21 September 2023

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

6.1 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

7. Statement of Outstanding Business

Decision: The Board reviewed and noted the Statement of Outstanding Business.

8. Financial Report

8.1 To 31 August 2023

The Chair raised concerns regarding the August financial report, which had been made available to view.

The Chair's key observations included the large overspend on day-to-day repairs. The Board agreed the figures were alarming as the budget is almost double what has been forecast whilst less than half way through the year.

The chief executive sought to provide comfort to the Board by stating the leadership team will remain vigilant whilst looking closely at the figures presented. A stronger response to the budget overspend will be provided to Board at the mid-year review.

In response to a question set by J Fraser, the director of property confirmed the backlog of repairs following the pandemic had all been completed in the following financial year. The property team have carried out a high level analysis of the increase in repairs and there has been a significant increase in the volume of repairs reported. Further analysis will be required to understand the reason for the increase.

Upon the publication of the September 2023 financial report the spend is expected to have slowed slightly.

8.2 HomeMaster Costs – restricted item

9. Tenants Safety Presentation

The chief executive spoke to the previously circulated Tenants Safety Presentation, highlighting the key areas including:

- The Association's property profile;
- Different types of tenant safety including topics such as mould and condensation, gas safety and legionella;
- Our customers and who can help; and
- What the Association is doing to help.

The Chair noted how vital the Langstane Housing Support Service is in relation to the issues raised throughout the presentation. In response to the question raised by the Chair, the director of housing confirmed they are continually looking for external funding opportunities and reported the success in securing funds via the fuel support fund. The team were awarded approximately £60,000. Additionally, considerable funds were secured via the Homelessness Prevention Fund which has been spent over a 3-year period.

The team are yet to spend the full award given by the Fuel Support Fund and the director is currently seeking confirmation from the Scottish Government that the funds can be spent past the deadline.

J Knowles highlighted the increasing issues regarding mental health and whether the Association works in partnership with mental health specific organisations? For comfort, the director confirmed Langstane work alongside SAMH, Mental Health Aberdeen and Cornhill to provide assistance to tenants who require it.

10. Chief Executive Update

10.1 Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)

In addition to the previously circulated report, the chief executive advised the SHR wrote to all registered social landlords and local authorities on 13 October 2023 to ask for information in relation to RAAC (reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete).

This requires all social landlords to check the construction drawings and specifications alongside those of subsequent works to identify any RAAC issues.

If RAAC is suspected or found, then a detailed site survey must be undertaken by a chartered engineer or surveyor.

10.5 Delegated decision making by Chairperson

Three tenders were authorised by the Chair and Vice chair. These were:

- 4 September 2023 – Void works – three contractors were appointed to a void work framework
- 7 September 2023 – Fire Security Servicing Equipment contract
- 18 October 2023 – EICR framework

10.6 Delegated decision making by Committees

In addition to the minutes for the LHA and LPL's AGM and meetings, and the Performance and Audit and Governance Committees a meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee took place on 10 October. At this meeting:

- Jamie Drummond was appointed convenor,
- the Annual Assurance documentation was reviewed and the Committee recommend to the Board that LHA is compliant with SHR Regulatory Standards, and
- noted the two internal audits that received substantial assurance – Corporate Governance, and Tenancy Sustainment and Debt Management.

The chief executive suggested it was unlikely the offer to Kirsty Blackman's team to job shadow officers within Langstane would be taken up as the offer has been made on numerous occasions without progressing further.

I Jameson asked if there was any reason to suspect Langstane properties would contain RAAC. The director of property does not believe it to be the case although one property in Elgin, built in the 1950's will be inspected due to its age. The SHR has asked housing associations to follow a particular process with evidence based on drawings. Some properties due to their age do not have drawings and a structural engineer will be required in order to evidence the roof comprises of timber.

In response to J Fraser, the director confirmed building control hold documentation for a maximum of 20-years. Most schemes from 1985 onwards have been secured.

Decision: The Board of Management noted the Chief Executive's Update report.

11. Annual Assurance Statement

On an annual basis every housing association is required to produce an annual assurance statement for the leadership team and the Board to confirm there are no material breaches of the Scottish Housing Regulator's regulatory guidance in relation to governance and financial management.

One signed and unsigned copy to the regulator with the unsigned version being added to the website.

T Dinozzi praised the amount of work and detail that had gone into the supporting documentation for the annual assurance statement. In response to a question set by Mr Dinozzi, the chief executive confirmed absence was at its lowest throughout the pandemic and has increased over time. The Association provides an extremely generous sick pay and historically the Association has not been consistent about challenging and advancing actions in regards to absence. The general trend for absence is however, coming down.

T Dinozzi asked for an explanation regarding the scoring around equalities on appendix 8. The chief executive confirmed there is a challenge in being able to replicate the demographics of the tenant and client group, such as the recent recruitment drive for the Board of Management.

Decision: The Board of Management approved signature of the statement by the Chairperson, and submission of the annual assurance statement to the Scottish Housing Regulator alongside an unsigned copy by the chief executive.

12. Corporate document

12.1 Merger Acquisition Strategy – restricted item

13. Quarter 2, 2023-24 Reports

13.1 Strategic Risk Register

The chief executive confirmed there was minimal changes observed between quarter 1 and quarter 2.

The chief executive will present an updated register at the turn of the year to Audit and Governance Committee with focus on finding the appropriate balance between easily maintaining the document and communicating the priority risks effectively to Committee and Board.

13.2 Signings Report

The Board had considered and noted the report which detailed information on the public relations, communications and social media activity during Quarter 2, 2023-24. The report had been available to view in the Board Portal.

13.3 PR, Communications and Social Media Report

The Board had considered and noted the report which detailed information on the public relations, communications and social media activity during Quarter 2, 2023-24. The report had been available to view in the Board Portal.

14. Draft Minutes

The Board had considered and approved the draft Minutes which had been available to view in the Board Portal and listed below as Items 14.1 to 14.5.

14.1 Draft Minute of LHA Annual General Meeting 21 September 2023

14.2 Draft Minute of LPL Annual General Meeting 21 September 2023

14.3 Langstane Property Limited – 24 August 2023

14.4 Joint Audit and Governance Committee – 15 August 2023

14.5 Performance Committee – 8 August 2023

15. AOCB

There were no items raised.

16. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday, 9 November 2023 (Board away day)