

**Minutes of Shire Board Meeting  
Held on 26 February 2025  
at 18:00 via Teams**

**PRESENT:** S Roberts (Chair), W Gallacher (Vice Chair), H Carr (Convenor of the Audit Committee), N Allan, B Cuthbertson, L Logan, I McKnight, R Patterson, A Sutherland, M Youd.

**CHAIR:** S Roberts (Chair)

**IN ATTENDANCE:** J Munro (Chief Executive, CE)  
C Donnelly (Director of Corporate Services, DCOR)  
J Allison (Director of Housing, DH)  
M Scott (Asset Manager, AM)  
J McLelland (Minute Secretary, MS)  
E Garry (Emma Garry Consulting)

**APOLOGIES:** W White-Finnigan

**ABSENT:** W Paterson

**Leve of Absence:** None

**The meeting commenced at 18.00**

**The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and welcomed E Garry of Emma Garry Consulting**

Item		Action
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Formal Business</b>	
1.1	<u>Apologies</u> Apologies were received from W White-Finnigan.	
1.2	<u>Declaration of Interest</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Item 2.1 L Logan declared an interest in Item 2.1 as she is employed by SPA. It was agreed that L Logan will not participate in the discussions or decisions for elements of the recommendation relating to using the SPA Framework.</li> <li>➤ Item 2.2 H Carr declared that he is the Chair of Berwickshire Housing Association and has dealt with E Garry through this role. The Board agreed there was no conflict.</li> <li>➤ Item 2.6 Staff in attendance declared an interest in Item 2.6. Staff will not participate in the discussion or decision for this Item, other than introducing the paper itself.</li> </ul>	
1.3	<u>Minute of the Meeting held on 29 January 2025</u> The Chair presented the minute and invited any comments or corrections.	

Item		Action
	<p><b>The Board approved the minute as a true and accurate record of the meeting held on 29 January 2025.</b></p>	
1.4	<p><u>Action Plan</u></p> <p><b>The Board noted the content of the Action Plan.</b></p>	
1.5	<p><u>Matters Arising</u></p> <p>None.</p>	
1.6	<p><u>Notifiable Events</u></p> <p>The CE provided a verbal update on the December 2024 carbon monoxide incident and advised the Board that the Association has not yet heard back from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). The CE has spoken with Addleshaw Goddard who have advised that this is not unusual, with the HSE often taking several months to respond. The CE confirmed that the Notifiable Event will remain open with the SHR.</p> <p><b>The Board noted the verbal update.</b></p>	
1.7	<p><u>Membership Report</u></p> <p>None.</p>	
1.8	<p><u>Health &amp; Safety Report</u></p> <p>The AM presented the report to the Board. The purpose of the report was to update Board Members on Health and Safety matters since the last report on 29 January 2025. The AM confirmed that no general office related Health and Safety issues have occurred since the last meeting in January 2025.</p> <p><b>The Board noted the content of the Health and Safety report.</b></p>	
2.0	<p><b>Items Requiring a Board Decision</b></p>	
2.1	<p><u>Craigens Road Development Site Update</u></p> <p>The SLT and E Garry presented the report to the Board. The purpose of the report was to provide Board Members with an update on negotiations to develop 49 new homes at Craigens Road.</p> <p>E Garry highlighted that the project is being progressed via a Design and Build route, which means that the contractor assumes the risk and responsibility for designing and building the project.</p> <p>E Garry confirmed that, in line with Scottish Government standards, all units will meet Net Zero requirements at point of use.</p> <p>E Garry presented information on the financial viability of the project, including the assumptions made and sensitivity analysis.</p> <p>The DCOR explained the funding mechanisms available for the project's</p>	

Item		Action
	<p>cash flow. The Board noted that it would be necessary to progress funding this project in isolation first, but that the mechanism may change if a future decision was taken to progress the office project.,</p> <p>The DCOR provided information on the initial discussions with RBS around margins, pricing and covenants. Further work will be carried out in this area.</p> <p>E Garry advised the Board that the Planning Application was submitted to East Ayrshire Council on Monday 24 February, with an outcome expected in May 2025.</p> <p>The Board noted that the Association will carry out due diligence checks on Rosewood Homes, which will be presented to the Board in a future report.</p> <p>E Garry confirmed that the scores within the Risk Register are after mitigating actions but before contingent actions.</p> <p><b>The Board noted the report and its recommendations for the next steps in progressing the project. The Board:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Noted and approved the demands analysis which supports the proposed housing mix.</b></li> <li>• <b>Noted and approved the financial viability and scenario modelling.</b></li> <li>• <b>Approved the appointment of an Employers Agent via SPA Framework and delegated final selection to the CE.</b></li> <li>• <b>Approved the appointment of a firm to provide Legal Services for this project and delegated final selection to the CE.</b></li> <li>• <b>Approved the appointment of a Principal Designer via SPA Framework and delegated final selection to the CE.</b></li> <li>• <b>Noted an approved the pre-contract costs set out, with the understanding that they could be abortive if the project does not progress.</b></li> <li>• <b>Delegated authority to the CE to progress discussions with RBS about extending the loan facility before a final decision is made by the Management Board. It was agreed that further advice and assistance to staff on the RBS offer could be provided by David Tolson Partnership.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>E Garry left the meeting.</b></p>	
2.2	<p><u>Development Services Procurement</u></p> <p>The CE presented the report to the Board. The purpose of the report was to discuss procurement options for development services for the Craigs Road Project.</p> <p>Board discussed the situation and agreed that a direct award, in line with the Procurement Policy, to E Garry Consulting would provide the best value. Furthermore, the Board expressed that E Garry already has a firm</p>	CE

Item		Action
	background knowledge of the proposed development, which would provide continuity.	CE
	The CE confirmed that he would provide E Garry with clear guidance in terms of what outcomes are required.	CE
	The CE will also ensure that E Garry has adequate Professional Indemnity Insurance in place.	CE
	The Board noted that a report will be brought to the Board in April 2025 to discuss the formation of a new Board Committee or Sub-committee, which would be responsible for the governance of both the Craigens Road Development and Office project.	CE
	<b>The Board approve the direct appointment of E Garry.</b>	
2.3	<p><u>Office Project – Next Steps</u></p> <p>The CE presented the report to the Board. The purpose of the report was to allow the Board to decide the next steps on progressing the new office.</p> <p>The Board discussed the requirement for the new office and expressed their support in terms of moving the project to the next stage.</p> <p>The Board noted that the Chair and the CE met with Dean Reynolds, Regulation Manager with the Scottish Housing Regulator, to discuss the potential office build and development at Craigens Road. The Regulation Manager was comfortable with the actions of the Association thus far and the Association will continue to liaise with the SHR throughout the projects.</p> <p><b>The Board approved the re-appointment of Brown + Wallace, and the Design Team led by Collective Architecture, to progress the office project to RIBA Plan of Work Stage 3. The Board noted that project costs will continue to be monitored.</b></p> <p><b>The CE will present a report to the Board in April 2025 on establishing a Development Committee/Sub-committee to ensure robust governance of the Office Project and Craigens Road Development.</b></p>	CE
2.4	<p><u>Approval of 2025/26 Budget</u></p> <p>The DCOR presented the report to the Board. The purpose of the report was to preset the Final Budget for 2025/26, providing details of the business plan assumptions that underpin the budget.</p> <p>The DCOR advised that there were no significant changes from the draft budget, which was presented to the Board in November 2024.</p> <p>The DCOR confirmed that no funds have been designated for the actual office build or Craigens Road development within the budget, but that professional fees related to RIBA stages 3 and 4 were included.</p>	

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2.5	<p>The Board noted that there is still some uncertainty around the level of inflationary wage increase. The budget uses the increase proposed in negotiations between EVH and the Unions, which will be discussed under Item 2.6.</p> <p>The DCOR advised the Board that the Association bought back another property this week, which is not included in the budget. This will result in approximately £5,000 of additional rental income.</p> <p>Given the work done recently by DTP on the 30-year plan, the DCOR proposed that the plan submitted for board approval next month was the “base case” only. The Board agreed.</p> <p><b>The Board noted the changed between the draft and final budgets and approved the final Budget for 2025/26.</b></p> <p><u>Approval of Debt Write Off</u></p> <p>The DH presented the report to the Board. The purpose of the report was to seek approval for a credit write-off of £2,652.10, which is well within the 24/25 Business Plan and Debt Management practice. The report also sought approval to continue to take long-term Difficult to Let (DTL) void properties off-charge, in compliance with ARC validation requirements. Finally, the report provided an update on a long-term void at Meikleholm Drive, Patna.</p> <p>The DH highlighted that for ARC reporting, Credit Write-Offs are not offset against Former Tenant (FT) Arrear values so remain included in the return.</p> <p>The Board welcomed the update on the property at Meikleholm Drive and were pleased that this long-standing issue was reaching the point of resolution.</p> <p>The DH highlighted a typo in the recommendation and confirmed that approval was being sought for a total credit write-off of £2,652.10.</p> <p><b>The Board:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Approved the credit write-off of £2,652.10.</b></li> <li>• <b>Approved the Open Space Maintenance bad debt write-off of £1,075.38.</b></li> <li>• <b>Approved two off-charge long-term void properties that are not being actively let because there is no current demand or are subject to an asset decision.</b></li> <li>• <b>Noted the updated on the long-term void at 34 Meikleholm Drive, Patna.</b></li> </ul>	

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2.6	<p><b><u>EVH Member Salary Ballot 2025/26</u></b>  The CE presented the report to the Board. The purpose of the report was to consider the Association's response to the EVH salary ballot.</p> <p>The Board discussed the proposal and agreed that it is a very generous offer, expressing some concerns around the effect of such an increase on rent setting and affordability. The Board were comforted by the proposed cap if inflation rose. The Board discussed the erosion of differentials around grades and agreed that this should be included in the feedback in the Associations response. The Board also acknowledged the importance of being able to recruit and retain employees in the current competitive employment market.</p> <p><b>The Board considered the Association's response to the EVH 2025/26 Salary Ballot Proposals and reluctantly agreed to vote in favour of the proposal. The Board agreed for the CE to submit a response on the Board's behalf. The CE will share the response with the Chair prior to submission.</b></p>	CE
3.0	<p><b>Items for Discussion</b></p>	
3.1	<p><b><u>Updated Tenant and Owner Satisfaction Survey Action Plan</u></b>  The DH presented the report to the Board. The purpose of the report was to provide the Board with an update on the Action Plan following the results from the 2022 Tenant and Owner Satisfaction Surveys.</p> <p><b>The Board noted the progress with the Tenant and Owner Satisfaction Survey Action Plan 2022-25.</b></p>	
3.2	<p><b><u>Failure by a Tenant to Give the Association Access to Complete Repairs</u></b>  [FOISA Status- Exempt under Section 36 (Confidentiality)]</p>	
4.0	<p><b>Reports for Information Only</b></p>	
4.1	<p><b><u>Update on New System Implementation</u></b>  The DCOR presented the report to the Board. The purpose of the report was to provide the Board with an update on the status of the new system implementation and wider project.</p> <p>The Board thanked the DCOR for all her hard work on this project, as well as the staff involved in testing the system.</p> <p>The Board requested a demo of the new system once fully implemented.</p> <p><b>The Board noted the update on the status of the project.</b></p> <p><i>J McLelland and M Scott left the meeting at this point.</i></p>	
5.0	<p><b>Confidential Reports</b></p>	
5.1	<p><b><u>Confidential Staffing Update</u></b>  See confidential minute.</p>	

Item		Action
6.0	<b>Training</b> None.	
7.0	<b>Deferred Items</b> None.	
8.0 8.1	<b>AOCB</b> <u>Open Space Maintenance Tender</u> The CE presented the report to the Board.  <b>The Board approved the appointment of Tivoli Group Ltd on a three-year contract with the potential of up to two 1-year extensions to this.</b>	
9.0	<b>Date of Next Board Meeting:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Wednesday 26 March 2025</b></li> </ul> <b>Venue: Teams</b>  <b>Meeting concluded at 20.27</b>  I confirm this Minute is a true and accurate record of the meeting: -  Chair_____	