Minutes of Shire Board Meeting Held on 29 September 2021 at 6.00pm via Microsoft Teams Application (Covid-19)

PRESENT: L Campbell (Chair), S Roberts (Vice Chair), H Carr, N Allan, W Gallacher, R Irvine, D MacLeod, W Paterson, A Rae, S Roberts

CHAIR: L Campbell

IN ATTENDANCE: J Munro (Director), C Donnelly (Head of Corporate Services), J Allison (Head of Housing), M Scott (Asset Manager), J McLelland (Minute Secretary)

The meeting commenced at 6.00pm

The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting.

Item		Action
1.0	**Formal Business**	
1.1	Apologies A Malik.	
1.2	Declaration of Interest None.	
1.3	Minutes of the Meetings held on 25 August 2021 and 22 September 2021 The Chair presented the minutes and invited comment or corrections. **The Board approved the minutes as a true and accurate record of the meetings of 25 August 2021 and 22 September 2021.**	
1.4	Action Plan - Item 2.1: **Westgate House** The Asset Manager (AM) confirmed that drone footage has now been obtained. The Director (DIR) advised that a meeting was held with John Sharp, of Newmilns Regeneration Association, who confirmed that recruitment of a Development Officer is under way. The Association will continue to liaise with local community groups and partners to discuss potential options for Westgate House. **The Board noted the content of the Action Plan.**	
1.5	Matters Arising None.	
1.6	Notifiable Events	

Item		Action
	None.	
1.7	Membership Report The Governance Assistant (GA) presented the report to the Board. **The Board noted the termination under Rule 11.1.3.**	
1.8	Health & Safety Report The Asset Manager (AM) presented the report to the Board and advised that no general office related Health and Safety issues have occurred since the last meeting in August 2021. The Board noted that asbestos removal work has resumed where this is required. **The Board noted the content of the Health & Safety report.**	
2.0	**Items requiring a Board Decision**	
2.1	Draft 2021-26 Business Plan The Director (DIR) presented the report to the Board. The Board noted that this document is not intended for the wider public. It will be shared with the Scottish Housing Regulator, the Association's lender and partners and stakeholders. A summarised version is available for the wider audience. The DIR confirmed that the document will be reviewed/updated annually to ensure it remains relevant and robust. This is in addition to a comprehensive review of the Business Plan by the Management Board every five years. The SMT confirmed that the Strategic Delivery Plans will be added as appendices to allow the Board to measure the Association's success in delivering Business Plan objectives. The Board requested that the following changes are made: • Page numbers to be added. • Director's name to be removed from cover page. • [FOISA Status- Exempt under Section 36 (Confidentiality)]Be more creative in use of visuals to make the document less verbose. • Add Executive Summary. • Add section on barriers to success, with an emphasis on things we can control. This will allow the Association to prioritise areas under our control, enhancing the deliverability of the Business Plan. • Add a section detailing what progress has already been achieved – e.g. work undertaken on IT Strategy.	**SMT** **SMT**

Item		Action
	The Director will bring the Draft 2021-26 Business Plan, with the above amendments, back to the Board in October 2021 for final approval.	**DIR**
2.2	<u>LIBOR to SONIA Transition</u> The Head of Corporate Services (HCOR) presented the report to the Board. The HCOR confirmed that RBS have now provided the updated Amended Agreement following the 2 minor changes suggested by Addleshaw Goddard. **The Board approved Option 3 and authorised the HCOR or DIR to sign the Amended Agreement, in line with signing requirements of the Original Facility Agreement.**	
2.3	<u>Policy Reviews</u> The Head of Housing (HH) presented the report to the Board. <u>Arrears Management Policy</u> The Board fully discussed the content of the policy and requested the following amendments: • Page 6 – Rent Arrears Recovery – add 'exceptions may apply' in relation to allowances being used to offset outstanding arrears balances. • Page 5 – Prevention of Rent Arrears – and caveat pertaining to months' rent in advance to ensure there are no barriers for homeless applicants. The Board requested that the Association continue to support tenants with available financial assistance. **The Board approved the Arrears Management Policy, subject to the above amendments.** <u>Financial Inclusion Policy</u> The Board fully discussed the content of the Financial Inclusion Policy. **The Board approved the Financial Inclusion policy.** <u>Legionella Management Policy</u> The Board fully discussed the content of the Legionella Management Policy. **The Board approved the Legionella Management Policy.** <u>Lone Working Policy</u> The Board fully discussed the content of the Lone Working Policy.	**HH**

Item		Action
	The Board requested that the Association investigates available technology that can be used to ensure staff safety when out in the estates. This will bolster the monitoring process. The Board requested that the Lone Work Policy and ICT Strategy are updated accordingly to reflect this.	**SMT**
	Several Board Members advised that they have knowledge of lone working technology and are happy to share this with the Association.	
	The Board approved the Lone Working Policy, subject to the above amendment.	
	<u>Buy-Back Strategy for 2021-2024</u> The Board fully discussed the content of the Buy-Back Strategy. The HH advised that a Policy will be developed to support the Buy-Back Strategy.	**HH**
	The Board requested that Section 3 is amended to include the following: • To allow the Association to achieve majority ownership within individual blocks or estates.	**HH**
	The Board approved the Buy-Back Strategy for 2021-2024, subject to the above amendment.	
2.4	<u>Half Year Debt Write Off</u> The Head of Housing (HH) presented the report to the Board, confirming that the proposed write off is within the Association's bad debt budget provision.	
	The Board welcomed the Association's involvement in the Refugee Resettlement programme. The Board requested that the HH make contact with SeAscape to explore how the Association can fully support these tenants.	**HH**
	The Board: • **Approve the half-year net write-off of £24,232.15 and authorised the Customer Services Manager to update accounts accordingly.** • **Approved the off-charge long-term voids that are not being actively let as there is no current demand.** • **Approve the two void properties being held short term for Refugee Resettlement.**	
3.0 3.1	**Items for Discussion** <u>Energy Supply Crisis – Impact on Fuel Poverty</u> The Director (DIR) presented the report to the Board. The Board welcomed the report and thanked the DIR for producing this	

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	at short notice. The Association will launch an advertising campaign to make tenants aware that the Association is there to provide help and support. In addition, the campaign will highlight the benefits of smart meters and the Association's preferred supplier.	**SMT**
	The Head of Housing (HH) advised that the Association is currently in talks with Aico regarding a pilot scheme. The pilot would involve technology being used in one of the Association's properties which detects utility usage. The Board requested that the Association target tenants who first claimed Universal Credit at the beginning of the pandemic and who have not experienced UC without the additional £20 per week.	**HH**
	The Asset Manager (AM) confirmed that the Association is in the process of signing up to 'Energy Angels' who will instal smart meters in void properties. The Board requested that the Association undertake financial calculations and bring this item back to the Board in October/November 2021 for Hardship Fund approval.	**SMT**
	The Board noted the report. <u>Verbal update from the Office Working Group Meeting of 28 September 2021</u>	
3.2	The Director (DIR) advised that the Office Working Group met with Crown Commercial Services on 28 September 2021. The meeting went well, and the Office Working Group will bring a report to the Board in October 2021 with their formal recommendation.	**OWG/DIR**
	The Board noted the verbal update. **Reports for Information Only** <u>Electrical and Fire Safety Update</u>	
4.0 4.1	The Asset Manager (AM) presented the report to the Board and confirmed that the Association is on track to meet the February 2022 deadline.	
	The AM advised that an update report will be brought to the Board in November 2021.	**AM**
	The Board noted the update on Electrical and Fire Safety. **Training** None.	

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5.0	**Deferred Items** None.	
6.0	**AOCB** <u>Potential Board Members</u> The Director (DIR) confirmed that he is in talks with 3 potential Board Members.	
7.0 7.1	The Board confirmed that they are happy for the DIR to progress discussions and offer applicants a 2- or 3-year fixed appointment. <u>Stock Tour</u> The Director (DIR) confirmed that he is exploring the best way to carry out a stock tour given the current Covid levels in East Ayrshire.	
7.2	**Date of Next Board Meeting:** • **Wednesday 27 October 2021**	
8.0	**Venue: MS Teams.** **Meeting Concluded at 8.05pm.** I confirm this Minute is a true and accurate record of the meeting:- Chair_____	