

BOARD MINUTES



Meeting Date: 07 August 2025
Time: 6pm
Venue: Almond HA Office

Board Members in Attendance

Martin Joyce
Chris Boyle
Adam Turner
Simon Davies
Craig Morton
Gary Hay
Jack Rillie
Vicky Bluck for item 7167

Apologies

Julie Riley
Natalie Cryans
Darren Lewis

Staff in Attendance

John Davidson	CEO
Sandy Young	Director of Housing Management
Iona Taylor	Director of Asset Management
Craig Porter	Director of Finance and Business Support
Tammy Allan	Business Improvement Officer (minutes)

Others in Attendance

Linda Ewart for item 7167

PRESENTATIONS

7167

Board Appraisal Feedback

Linda Ewart (LE) opened her report by advising that there were a variety of views expressed during the appraisal process and everyone agreed that it had been a difficult year for Almond. It was also acknowledged that AHA has implemented a lot over recent years, more than has been done in its entirety and we cannot under-estimate the work that is involved in maintaining business as usual. Both Board and SMT need to agree the scale of change and drive changes whilst taking into account the expectations and requirements of tenants.

The Board recognised both how well AHA have handled the identity of RAAC in its properties and also the valuable contribution NC has on the Board as an AHA tenant, although she does not speak for all tenants. The Board agreed that they would like to hear the views and feedback from more tenants to inform decision making.

	<p>LE referred to requests from the Board regarding the possibility of having a training calendar. She also noted the request for AHA to articulate the approach that will be taken in terms of enhancing existing stock. However, her word of caution would be that if ambition cannot be achieved, AHA should clearly identify plan B.</p> <p>The view of the Board is that meeting agendas are standard and are tweaked on occasion when required. The Board reports are good and concise and longer serving Board members can see change but felt that we have started to take a step back and provide too much information. The Board were also happy with decisions that are being made but felt that improvement was required in feeding back after implementation has taken place.</p> <p>CB queried what changes LE was seeing in the AHA Board. She noted that the feedback is that the Board are more proactive than they have been in quite some time that they are clear in what they want to do. However, they are not yet clear on how achievable their decisions are and the what the consequences may be. Progress has also been made in becoming a more active and directive Board and is stronger by have a board range of expertise and knowledge.</p> <p>AT enquired whether there were themes that LE would have drawn out and whether other Boards have housing staff sitting on their Board. LE advised that the AHA Board are not any less alert than any other Board she has dealt with in terms of experience. In terms of housing staff, she advised that this was not something she had ever come across. This generated a conversation around previous Board members who had a strong housing background.</p> <p>LE left the meeting at this point.</p> <p>There was a discussion around what Board members would like to see in terms of training and it was agreed that they would like to receive a training recommendations, detailing what courses are mandatory. They would also like to hear about any regulatory changes that are on the way. There was also reference made to having a buddy system for new Board members and it was agreed that CB would be JRs buddy and SD would be GHs buddy.</p> <p>There was also a discussion around the format of Board papers and whether there was anything specific that Board members would like. It was agreed that alternative formats would be brought forward. Regarding the length of Board reports, CP advised that most reports do not span over 2 pages, and it's the detail of risk and the issue sections that take up a lot of space. CM also acknowledged that reports are always going to be lengthy, however in terms of governance, the detail that is provided is something that is required.</p> <p>It was also agreed that over the few cycles of Board meetings, Board should feedback to the Board what they have liked and disliked and this information would be feedback to SMT.</p>
--	--

STANDING ITEMS

7168	CEO & Board member only session
7169	<p>Welcome</p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p>
7170	<p>Apologies</p> <p>A record was made of apologies from non-attendees.</p>
7171	<p>Use of Seal</p> <p>CP advised that there have been 2 uses of the seal for the new Board members, Gary Hay and Jack Rillie.</p>
7172	AOCB Approval

	JD advised that there will be an update on the Boards appraisal follow up.
7173	Declaration of Interest on any Agenda Items None
7174	Minutes from Previous Meeting CP referred to Min Ref 7162 and noted that this would be amended as it had been left in draft form. The Board approved the Minutes subject to the above amendment.
7175	Matters Arising/Update/Information Papers for Discussion None
7176	Board Members – Items for Future Meetings None
7177	Board Training – Verbal AT advised that he has attended training on AI and the implications of it. He also noted that AI for AHA will be on the agenda for the next Strategy Day.
7178	Chief Executive’s Report JD informed the Board that he had recently attended the RAAC Housing Group meeting where the cabinet minister for housing was present and also noted that it will be interesting to see what the Scottish Government look to do going forward. There were no queries or questions from the Board. The Board noted the contents of this report.
7179	AGM Statement of Readiness The report was presented to the Board who noted the content. The Board noted the Associations compliance with Rule 38 of the Association in readiness of holding the Annual General Meeting 2025.
REPORTS FOR DECISION	
7180	Reports to be approved following Audit & Finance Sub-committee – Impairment review of housing assets AT informed the Board that the recent Audit & Finance Sub-committee meeting was not quorate, therefore all reports from the meeting were being brought to the Board for approval. However, both AT and CM who were present went through all of the reports and were happy to recommend approval. AT moved on to advise that they were both happy that the impairment review appeared sensible. The Board agreed the methodology and results of our impairment review of housing assets included within the Financial Statements.
7181	Reports to be approved following Audit & Finance Sub-committee – Final Audit Findings Report Incl. Letter of Representation AT informed the Board that the external auditors, Chiene & Tait, were present at the meeting and presented the Final Audit Findings. He also noted that the Letter of Representation was a standard.

	<p>CP also advised at this point that 2 amendments have been identified in relation to staff costs and that the changes will be made.</p> <p>CB agreed to sign the Letter of Representation in VB's absence.</p> <p>The Board agreed the Audit Summary Report including the draft Representation Letter and are satisfied that points raised within the report and that the representations being requested can be agreed prior to the approval of the Financial Statements.</p>
7182	<p>Reports to be approved following Audit & Finance Sub-committee – Internal Financial Controls</p> <p>AT presented the Internal Financial Controls noting that they were familiar and that he was comfortable with the steps that were taken.</p> <p>The Board agreed the Internal Financial Control Statement included within the Financial Statements and is satisfied that the control mechanisms undertaken this year enable approval of the Financial Statements.</p>
7183	<p>Reports to be approved following Audit & Finance Sub-committee – Financial Statements to 31 March 2025</p> <p>The report was presented and there were no queries or questions from the Board.</p> <p>The Board approved the Financial Statements for the year.</p>
7184	<p>Reports to be approved following Audit & Finance Sub-committee – Internal Audit Action Plan</p> <p>The report was presented to the Board and AT advised that there was nothing within it that was untoward.</p> <p>There were no queries or questions from the Board.</p> <p>The Board noted the inclusion of recommendations in respect of recent audit exercises, as well as progress made in relation to the outstanding recommendations.</p>
7185	<p>Reports to be approved following Audit & Finance Sub-committee – Risk Map: Quarter 1 Review</p> <p>The report was presented and there were no queries or questions from the Board.</p> <p>The Board noted the status of the risk map.</p>
7186	<p>Annual Assurance Statement</p> <p>CP presented the report and thanked those who were involved in reviewing the bank of evidence which supported the annual assurance statement.</p> <p>Board members present who were involved in reviewing the evidence noted NC's invaluable contribution and thanked AA for making the process run smoothly.</p> <p>CP moved on to inform the Board that AHA were looking to make the Annual Assurance Statement preparation less onerous going forward and it is proposed that we have a rolling schedule where we would focus on one or two standards per year.</p> <p>The Board approved AHA's Annual Assurance Statement to the Scottish Housing Regulator and noted the self-assessment findings of the Annual Assurance Working Group in the associated Action Plan.</p>
7187	<p>Proposed Meeting Schedule</p> <p>The report was presented to the Board who noted and agreed the dates proposed.</p>

	The Board approved the list of dates proposed for 2025-26 Board meetings, the proposed date for the AGM, the proposed dates for the 2025-26 Audit & Finance committee and Asset Management Sub-committee, and the proposed dates for the Board Strategy Days.
7188	<p>Strategic Housing Investment Plan preparation 2025</p> <p>IT informed the Board of discussions that have taken place at the Asset Management Sub-committee around the preparation of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP). IT moved on to inform the Board of possible sites that are likely to become available at the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] plus the regeneration projects that will predominantly involve [REDACTED] [REDACTED] West Lothian Council (WLC) will collate the information from Almond along with other develops before they submit the information to the Scottish Government in a request for funding over the next 5 years.</p> <p>Previous submissions from AHA have included more projects, however WLC have asked everyone to be more concrete in the information that they provide this year given the current financial pressures. This lead on to further discussions around the funding that is available throughout Scotland.</p> <p>The Board noted the contents of the report and the approach being taken in preparing the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) submission for this year while we are at the early stages of producing the long-term Development and Regeneration Strategy.</p>
7189	<p>AEL update</p> <p>IT informed the Board of the recent Board interviews for AEL which the AHA Chair participated in, and 2 applicants have been identified that will bring a great deal of strength to their Board.</p> <p>The Board noted the content of the report and approved the appointment of the 2 new Board members detailed within.</p>
REPORTS FOR INFORMATION	
7190	<p>Job Evaluation Projection</p> <p>JD informed the Board that the tender for this work has gone out and that 2 bids were received out of the 3 interested parties. He moved on to note the plan for the project which will commence in September. The successful bidder will also be invited along to the September strategy day.</p> <p>CB noted that he felt that having a review every 3 years felt too frequent, and it was also queried why we would use 2 different parties with Gary Brewer also carrying out the cost of living pay award.</p> <p>It was noted that AHA will commit that this review will not be to the detriment of staff, [REDACTED] [REDACTED]</p> <p>The Board noted the progress with the Job Evaluation project.</p>
7191	<p>Business Plan 2025-30</p> <p>JD informed the Board that he was presenting the final corporate version of the Business Plan 2025-30.</p> <p>There were no queries or questions from the Board.</p> <p>The Board noted the attached corporate version of the Business Plan 2025-30.</p>
Asset Management	

7192	<p>Procurement Challenge</p> <p>Following the previous update, IT advised that written confirmation has been received that the case has been withdrawn but there are lessons to be learned from what has happened.</p> <p>CB noted that the behaviours of ██████ should be called into question, and he queried whether there was any risk of this happening again. IT advised that they are in the process of completing the ██████████ and she has also reached out to both Procurement for Housing and The Scottish Procurement Alliance to discuss utilising their frameworks.</p> <p>The Board noted the contents of this report and the proposed actions to ensure that there are no further procurement challenges.</p>
7193	<p>RAAC Update</p> <p>IT provided the Board with an update on RAAC and CB queried how long it was going to take to complete the work in the properties where full removals and rewires are required. IT confirmed that it will be a further 6 weeks and at present there are no concerns around the contractor achieving this deadline.</p> <p>The Board noted the contents of the report.</p>
Finance and Business Support	
7194	<p>Election of Office Bearers and Sub-committee membership</p> <p>CP reminded the Board of the requirement to have a short meeting after the AGM to appoint office bearers for the coming year. IT was noted that VB will take on the role as Chair and CB will stand as Vice Chair. However, consideration also needs to be given with regards to both the Chair and the membership for the Audit & Finance Sub-committee.</p> <p>There was also reference made to MJ approaching the 9-year rule where the remaining Board members should review and assess the effectiveness of the affected member. Board agreed that they had no concerns regarding MJ.</p> <p>The Board noted the requirement to hold a short Board meeting immediately after the AGM closes, to elect the Associations Office Bearers and agree membership onto Sub-committees.</p>
Housing Management	
7195	<p>The Customer Voice</p> <p>SY presented a new format of The Customer Voice and queried whether it was what Board would like to see. He noted that details around complaints could be included within the report along with commentary regarding community engagement.</p> <p>It was agreed that the report would be brought to Board on a quarterly basis moving forward.</p> <p>AT referred to the Squinty Tree animation and the level of engagement in the community. Board members do not always get a chance to see and fully understand the good work that is being done. He also referred to the presentation sessions that took place in previous years and noted the importance of receiving community feedback.</p> <p>Board agreed that they liked the dashboard style of report that included important information for Board to know.</p> <p>The Board agreed on the proposed content of the customer voice report.</p>
CONSENT AGENDA	

7196	<p>Consent Agenda</p> <p>CB referred to the development report and the delay with the Blackburn & Katherine Street sites and queried what costs were involved. IT advised that Blackburn has been pushed back to 12th September and the consultants are currently working through the extension of time. The Jesperson block has been pushed back to 3rd October as we still await the meter supply for 2 of the closes.</p> <p>CB moved on to refer to the planned work report and queried whether it was the same property that was holding up the achievement of EESSH and SHQS. IT confirmed that it was as the tenant has been refusing access despite having conversations with staff around the benefits involved in having the improvement work carried out.</p> <p>The Board agreed to the recommendations within the consent agenda.</p>
7197	<p>AOCB</p> <p>AT informed the Board that he met with [REDACTED]</p>
	<p>Date of Next Meeting: 02 October 2025</p>

Please note that these minutes have been edited to remove any commercially sensitive or confidential discussions.

If you need this publication in larger print, audio, Braille, or in another language, please contact our office and we will try to help you.