

OFFICIAL MINUTES

NOTE TO READER:

SBHA publishes the minutes of its Board of Management meetings, unless it considers, at the time of publication, that the minutes or part of the minute are exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. Where minutes or part of the minutes are not published, this is noted in these minutes.

MEETING: SBHA BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

DATE:	TIME:	VENUE:
07.12.23	5.30pm	Head Office, Selkirk and via Teams

PRESENT: In Person

Robin Hill - Chair (RH)
Ian McDonald – Board Member (IMcD)
Anthony Burnette – Board Member (AB)
Kenny Simpson – Board Member (KS)

Virtually via Teams

Michael Levack – Board Member (ML)
Philippa Brosnan – Board Member (PB)
Tracey Glover – Board Member (TG)
Matt Foreman – Board Member (MF)
Michael Grieve – Board Member (MG)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Julia Mulloy, Chief Executive (CE)
Maria Lyle - Chief Operating Officer (CO)
Carly Stewart - Director of Finance (DoF)
Caroline Purcell - Director Property Services (DPS)
Rachel Dickson – Head of People (HoP)

Via Teams

Catriona Notman - Governance Officer (GO)

The Chair opened the meeting at 5.36pm and welcomed all in attendance.

TG joined the meeting at 5.37pm

1.0 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received in advance of the meeting from team members Henry Coyle and Emma Garry.

2.0 Declarations of Interest

The following declarations of interest were received:

- Item 3.0 Rent and rent Restructure – TG, MG, AB and GO have a declared interest.
- Item 4.0 section 6.4 - KS has a declared interest.

3.0 Finance Report

Appendix 1 – Rent Setting

The DoF presented the report, confirming that the rent setting figures had been remodelled following a steer at the Board Away Day to consult with tenants on a 6% and 6.5% rent increase. It was confirmed that consultation with Scottish Borders Tenant Organisation (SBTO) had been completed and feedback was positive. SBTO understood the drivers behind the increase and were supportive of the steps taken by SBHA to engage and support tenants.

Members discussed the factors such as additional costs that might drive a 6.5% increase but felt that both levels to be consulted on were fair and affordable with rents remaining value for money. The need for clear communication on the support available if required by tenants was emphasised. The impact of the recently announced change to the Local Housing Allowance rates will be presented to Board at the next meeting in February 2024 if available.

RECOMMENDATION: The Board of Management approved the recommended rent increase options of 6% and 6.5% subject to Tenant Consultation for final decision by the Chair's Group.

Appendix 2 & 2a – Rent Restructure Project

The DoF delivered the report, confirming that the steer from members at the Board Away Day was included in the revised model. Discussion took place on the level of the cap with assurance being sought on the implementation at a time of a system upgrade in Northgate. DoF provided insight into the checks and balances and verification process to be complete post upgrade and that the final rent balance is uploaded, with the system calculating from the following year as future uplifts occur.

It was confirmed that 500 properties were currently under occupied of which 14% would be detrimentally affected by this project. Members were assured that pro-active steps would be taken to provide guidance and support to all tenants who are detrimentally affected.

Discussions continued into implementation of the changes and how they would be managed.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Board of Management:

- a) Agreed to implement the new rent restructure for implementation to commence in April 2024.
- b) Agreed the £2 weekly cap is to be used in developing and implementing the policy, which will be applicable to those rents both increasing and decreasing.
- c) Noted that a full rent policy will be proposed to the February 2024 meeting of the Board of Management.

Appendix 3a- 3h – Financial Monitoring to end September 2023

Minute of discussion on this Agenda Item redacted

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Board of Management:

- a) Noted the Management Accounts as detailed in Appendices 3 of the report;
- b) Approved the write-offs in Appendix 3h

Appendix 4 – Planned Maintenance Programme Budget 2024-25

Minute of discussion on this Agenda Item redacted

RECOMMENDATION: *Minute of discussion on this Agenda Item redacted*

SBBS Accounts for year ending 31 March 2023

The Board received the SBBS Financial Statements, circulated in advance via the Governance Portal. The DoF explained that although SBBS remains a dormant subsidiary

company, financial statements are still required to be filed with Companies House. It was agreed to progress closing the SBBS company as it was no longer required.

RECOMMENDATION: The Board of Management approved the SBBS accounts for the year ending 31 March 2023 for signing.

4.0 Board Operational Report

Section 3.0 – Procurement Strategy

DoF presented an update to members on the progress of the 3 year Sustainable Procurement Strategy. The key objectives and deliverables were highlighted.

RECOMMENDATION: The Board of Management considered and approved the proposed 2023-26 Sustainable Procurement Strategy.

Section 4 – More Inclusive Steps – EDI Strategy Action Plan

CO delivered the action plan for the strategy as agreed at the Board Away Day in October. It was acknowledged that there was a good range of actions and focus. It was confirmed that measures were identified in the strategy to evaluate progress and this would be built into the 2024-5 KPIs and that progress would be reported 6-monthly.

RECOMMENDATION: The Board of Management commented on and approved the More Inclusive Steps Action Plan.

Section 5 – *Minute of discussion on this Agenda Item redacted*

RECOMMENDATION: *Minute of discussion on this Agenda Item redacted*

Section 6 – General Governance Update

6.1 Proposed Entitlements, Payments & Benefits

CO advised of one offer of tenancy under the proposed Entitlements, Payments and Benefits.

RECOMMENDATION: Board Members ratified and approved the Chair's decision to approve the offer of the tenancy.

6.3 Shareholding Membership

CO confirmed of 1 new shareholder application and 3 shares requested to be cancelled.

RECOMMENDATION: Board Members approved the application for shareholding membership and agreed the ending of membership and cancellation of shares as noted.

6.4 Governance Recruitment and Succession planning

RH declared an interest in the next item so handed Chair to PB for this item.

PB advised that David Bell had been interviewed for the appointed member vacancy. An overview of Davids skills and experience was provided. Having considered the value that David would bring, the Board agreed to appoint David to the appointed member vacancy.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Board of Management agreed to appoint David Bell to the Appointed Member vacancy on the Board

PB returns Chair back to RH.

The CO informed the Board that David Cressey and John Paton-Day had resigned as Elected Tenant Board Members due to personal reasons. On behalf of the Board, the Chair expressed thanks to David and John for their significant contribution to the Board over the years and wished them well for the future. Board Members agreed to transfer Kenny Simpson from a Co-optee to the casual vacancy until the next AGM to mitigate quoracy risks. The Board agreed to consider the vacant Board Nominee positions on the sub-committees after collation of the recent Board Member appraisals.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Board of Management:

- a) Formally noted the Board Member resignations of David Cressey and John Paton-Day;
- b) Agree to appoint Kenny Simpson to one of the casual vacancies in the Elected Non-Tenant Elected Member category.

6.5 Governance, regulation and Policy Publications

CO confirmed to members that the Scottish Government has recently published a consultation on Social Housing Net Zero Standard (SHNZS) and that SBHA will respond both collectively as a member of the Scottish Federation Housing Association (SFHA) and directly due to SBHA's presence in the Scottish Borders. Consultation on the Regulation of Social Housing will be conducted via SFHA.

Section 7.1 – Freedom of Information Policy

CO presented an overview of the proposed policy, confirming no significant changes to the content

Section 7.2 – Maximising Attendance Policy

HoP presented an overview of the changes proposed to the policy. It was advised that while long term absence is treated on a case-by-case basis, the revised policy updates the procedures for managing frequent short-term absence and mixed long and short-term absences.

Members discussed the policy and challenges in current performance with insight being given into some of the trends and factors behind long-term and short-term absence. It was suggested that Private Medical Cover be explored and it was agreed that this would be explored as part of any future Rewards Package.

It was queried whether there was relationship between home working and absence rates. It was confirmed, as previously agreed, a review of hybrid working would be carried out and reported to Board in August 2024 and absence levels would be considered as part of this. Members approved the policy with one abstaining.

Section 7.3 – Open Market Purchase Delegation of Authority Limits

The Chairs Group received and approved in advance via the Governance Portal.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Board Members:

- a) Approved the revised Freedom of Information Policy;
- b) Approved the Maximising Attendance Policy; and
- c) *Minute of discussion on this Agenda Item redacted*

RH notified the meeting that the meeting was reaching two hours. Members agreed to continue with the meeting.

Section 8.0 – Key Performance Indicators Q2 2023/24

The CO presented the report providing an overview of the areas of significant impact. Feedback was provided from the Chair that considerable discussion had taken place at the Customer Board in relation to the highlighted areas for improvement.

RECOMMENDATION: The Board commented on the Key Performance Indicators for Quarter 2 2023-24.

5.0 Development Update – Private and Confidential

Minute of discussion on this Agenda Item redacted

6.1 Minutes of the Board of Management meeting 14 September 2023

An amended to minutes was noted confirming that apologies had been received from Board Member DC. Subject to this amendment, the minutes of the Board of Management meeting held on the 14 September 2023 were approved as a true and accurate record, proposed by RH and seconded by MG.

(i) Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising from the Minutes.

(ii) Minutes held under separate cover

The minutes held under separate cover of the Board of Management meeting held on the 14 September 2023 were approved as a true and accurate record, proposed by RH and seconded by MG.

6.2 Minutes of the Board of Management meeting 27 October 2023

The minutes of the Board of Management meeting held on the 27 October 2023 were approved as a true and accurate record, proposed by IMcD and seconded by AB

(i) Matters arising from the minutes

Item 13.1 – Board Member appraisals are now complete for 2023 and outcomes will be reported at the next meeting.

7.0 Board Reflection

Discussion took place around the need to reflect on resource discussions in meetings and connect this with the decisions being made on Business Plan commitments. This led to a general discussion on resource planning, engagement and ensuring that support work is focussed on delivering stronger outcomes.

8.03pm MG left the meeting

8.0 Any Other Competent Business

8.10pm GO declared an interest in the next item and left the meeting.

The Minute of discussion on this item is held under separate cover.

9.0 Date of the next meeting: 22 February 2024

The Chair thanked all Members for their attendance and contribution, closing the meeting at 8.20pm.