



**Cardiff Community Housing Association
Board Meeting Minutes**

Meeting Date	29 th April 2020	
Meeting Time	18:00	
Meeting Venue	Virtually via Microsoft Teams	
Present	<p>Mike Owen Janet Beauchamp Scott Rooks Emma Britton Michelle Wade Tamsin Stirling Vinita Nawathe</p> <p>Hayley Selway Brian Pickett Jonathan Jones Paul Folland Nigel Lewis Samantha Williams</p>	<p>Chair Board Member Board Member Board Member Board Member Board Member Board Member</p> <p>Chief Executive Corporate Director - Central Services Corporate Director – Property Services Finance Manager Head of ICT and Procurement Governance & Executive Support Officer (minutes)</p>
Agenda item ref.	Minutes of discussions held	Actions
B01.20/21	Apologies for absence	
	Apologies for absence were received from Daniel Lewis.	
B02.20/21	Declarations of interest	
	There were no declarations or conflicts of interest.	
B03.20/21	Minutes of previous meetings	
	The minutes of the previous meetings were approved as an accurate record.	
B04.20/21	Action Log	CLT/DL/ SW
	<p>MO noted the comments submitted in advance of the meeting and responses circulated¹.</p> <p>MO noted the action log. He requested that matters on hold due to the pandemic are reviewed and timescales put against all in readiness for the next meeting. HS noted those items on the agenda for this meeting. She highlighted the development meeting taking place next week. She confirmed that action 167 will be brought to the next meeting and we will also review the 2020/21 work plan to smooth Board's business and any deferments made due to the pandemic, potentially over the next 18 months.</p> <p>TS advised all to be mindful of workloads and priorities and ensure that we give ourselves enough flexibility when setting timescales.</p> <p>BP noted the review of Social Housing Grant Welsh Government are undertaking and confirmed that the programme approach has been put back to 2022.</p>	

¹ See copy of comments and responses appended to these minutes for record.



	The Board noted the action log.	
B05.20/21	CEO Coronavirus update	
	<p>HS noted the report. She gave a detailed update on the numbers of tenant and staff cases. She highlighted the one staff member who has symptoms but no diagnosis and confirmed that we are assigning them to the essential worker portal for testing as they are a front line essential worker.</p> <p>HS raised the Furlough Scheme and the new normal for discussion. She advised that we haven't furloughed any staff at present. She detailed the different approaches taken in the sector. She noted the debate this scheme is causing and iterated that the scheme was set up to support businesses experiencing difficulties with cash flow. She noted that our income is from tenants rent and advised that we received unofficial positive dialogue from Welsh Government when we advised that we haven't furloughed any staff. She noted that there has also been a letter circulated from The Policy Team at Welsh Government to the housing and third sector organisations advising that we should not get involved with the scheme if we are in receipt of public grant.</p> <p>SR questioned the impact of rental income at present. BP confirmed that there has been a slight uplift in arrears. We have seen an increase of 0.15% over the last 3-4 weeks. He noted that some of this is due to cash flow drag such as timing of payments rather than a loss. SR advised that in his opinion he can see this from both points of view and it all depends on how long the new normal goes on for. He noted that if it goes on for quite some time then we may need to consider this scheme for those long term self-isolating. TS noted that furloughing these members of staff could leave a sense that they are not part of the team and may cause them to feel that they may be made redundant after the period ends. She noted that it isn't a large sum of money and suggested reviewing our position again at the next meeting to see if the external context has changed. She noted the need to look at what other roles they could support with too. MO questioned if those long term shielding should go on sickness leave instead as furloughing only relates to job retention.</p> <p>VN iterated that furlough is supposed to be for job retention and to stop redundancies. HS noted she feels there may be reputational damage to the sector for those that have furloughed staff. TS asked if we can clarify who needs to be on long term sick and those that are shielding due to living with members of their family who are at risk.</p> <p>JB and EB expressed that they are morally opposed to this and that it sets the wrong tone. EB noted that the staff in question have also only just TUPE across to the business. HS noted that those shielding are engaging with us and also joined in an introduction to the M Team session that took place at the all staff briefing. They all asked that thanks was passed on for the positive way they have been treated. She noted that they have also stated that they are happy to not have their leave which was carried over from Axis due to how well they have been treated.</p>	NZ



MO stated that we aren't struggling with cash flow at the moment, so it is too early to make any decision. He noted that if tenants aren't getting services due to us furloughing staff then we should reduce their rents in line with this. He commented that if it does go on past June to September, we may need to take a different view as a Board. HS noted the types of roles being furloughed in the sector which includes ASB and Housing staff. She confirmed that we have seen a spike in ASB and have had to move extra staff into housing to support the team. TS noted the amount of work being done in the community and our good role in this. She iterated exploring alternative work for them to do in the long term. MO noted the unanimous response to not furlough staff. It was agreed for HS to be more vocal in letting staff, the Local Authority and Welsh Government know that we're open and won't furlough unless we have to reduce service.

New normal: HS noted that we have delivered a lot of the ICT Strategy upfront due to the current situation. She confirmed the need to look at the new normal. She advised that our relationship with tenants has improved due to doing more one to one discussions. She asked Board if there is anything they would like us to work on and take forward into the new normal, so we don't go back to where we were.

EB noted the positive outcomes from the current situation and her own experience in working from home for a number of years. She advised that we need to look at how we can be more flexible with working hours/flexi-time and working at home procedures. She iterated that now we have got one to one contact with tenants it would be awful to go back and lose this. She reminded all of our values and ensuring we live them.

TS noted a sense of more interconnectedness since the lockdown within the community. She noted the vulnerable tenant's meetings she has been taking part in and how it has really shown what 'community' means in Cardiff Community Housing Association.

MW noted the benefits of asking staff how they're feeling and for their ideas to incorporate into our plans. HS noted the split of staff enjoying and not enjoying working from home as detailed in the report. She noted discussions with the Incident Management Team and confirmed that BP and Andrew Knight, Business Transformation Adviser, are leading an innovation group across the business with a cross section of staff representation.

MO noted the new normal way of working and that outside of the organisation there may also be more desire to work collectively in the future. He highlighted development and trying to build so it allows people to self-manage. He noted the potential need for a specific Board meeting to discuss this due to the pace of change. He noted the difficulties with distancing in open plan offices.

VN noted that if we are developing flats, we need to think about outside space and be mindful of this. SR noted Welsh Government building regulations. He suggested also considering reviewing our offices as we have a few, we could bring the staff team together centrally and use some of



	<p>the assets to re-develop into housing. He noted that if we give people the flexibility, we aren't going to need all of the office space we currently have. VN noted the need to capture what has and hasn't been working well.</p> <p>TS noted the intense work done on communications with tenants during the lockdown and that if we can repurpose some of our assets into housing this would be positive. MO advised that as we've all got used to reduced public services, we could also review our office opening hours. TS noted the importance of building trust into systems, processes and relationships.</p> <p>TS asked that we look at communicating decisions taken to tenants while we're working remotely. BP advised that we will look at drafting an overview to be published on the website.</p> <p>EB commented that the new normal also gives a good opportunity to look at our green credentials.</p>	JW
B06.20/21	Asset Management Strategy	
	<p>JJ noted the paper and fundamentals of the strategy previously agreed with Board. He advised that the stock condition surveys will be completed in two years' time from when we are able to start. He confirmed that the action plan is time bound and we have included the ability for an annual review with tenants, staff and Board. He asked if this needs revisiting more often with Board.</p> <p>MO commented that the strategy has been written well and he noted the need to have flexibility. It was agreed for all strategies to be reviewed annually and if any matters change these can be brought back to Board, but the document doesn't need to be re-written. TS asked if there are some basics that tenants could do to support with stock condition such as submitting pictures of certain components. JJ confirmed that we are thinking outside the box and whether could do something like this via an app. MO declared an interest in House Mark. He advised that they have an app that can facilitate this and in his experience most people will send pictures you ask for.</p> <p>JB questioned the availability of stock condition surveyors and skills. HS noted previous issues we have experienced with recruitment and confirmed that Savills can help with independent validations. JJ noted that we are looking to realign existing resources to get these completed ourselves. HS noted the new approved salary policy which allows us to go up to the upper quartile if required. She suggested that we would likely need to do this for surveyors. She confirmed that we have three members of staff doing their HNC in building surveying just finishing their first year. We should be able to have two more funded places for this year too. The Board echoed support of growing our own.</p> <p>The Board approved the Asset Management Strategy.</p>	SW/DL
B07.20/21	ICT Strategy	
	<p>MO noted the questioned received and answered ahead of the meeting. NL confirmed that we are ensuring the foundations are in place before we build</p>	



	<p>on them, to ensure our resilience. He noted the consultation with tenants and staff and what we are looking to bring into the business. He noted the importance of software being fit for purpose and the need to consolidate some of the products we've purchased previously.</p> <p>MO noted the need to look at how tenants access the digital agenda. JB suggested having Wi-Fi in homes where people can't afford it. NL noted trials done at Rhondda HA previously and suggested that we consider installing on new developments in blocks of flats as standard. He noted the cost implication of doing this retrospectively. He noted that we have also engaged with recycling companies to access cheaper devices. SR asked that we look to collect and review data on the ability to afford Wi-Fi before we make it standard in flats. NL noted the benefits of installing Wi-Fi as standard and that it will allow staff to connect if the development has a communal room. HS noted feedback from our vulnerable group that some of tenants would need to be shown how to use devices face to face. She iterated isolation and support needed.</p> <p>NL noted that the Community and Regeneration Team are in the process of trying to access a grant to purchase devices which ICT will support. TS noted that Digital Communities' Wales and asked if we can consider a partnership to help people get access online. NL iterated that digital exclusion is getting greater with matters like benefits going online.</p> <p>MO detailed his experience of canvassing digital access at Merthyr Valley Homes. He noted the benefit of having linked up Wi-Fi in flats as you can link in items such as cameras if you have ASB issues. NL noted smarter homes technology we could do and suggested we look at piloting in the first instance.</p> <p>The Board approved the ICT Strategy.</p> <p>NL left the meeting at 19:05.</p>	<p>NL</p> <p>NL</p>
<p>B08.20/21</p>	<p>Management Accounts</p>	
	<p>PF noted the report and confirmed that the overall surplus was slightly ahead of budget at £3.4mill, despite the Schooner Wharf sales being slightly lower than anticipated.</p> <p>He noted the projections presented to Board in January and confirmed that the surplus has come in lower. He advised that there has been a large spend for the M Team which hadn't been projected at that time. He confirmed that we have also spent more on fire risk assessments and estates costs as these hadn't been projected in full at the time.</p> <p>The Board approved the Management Accounts Q4 2019/20.</p>	
<p>B09.20/21</p>	<p>Governing Document review</p>	
	<p>MO noted the report, comments and responses.</p> <p>BP noted MO's initial review of the documents which we have responded to. He advised that most of the documents we have in place were</p>	



	<p>commissioned with Central Consultancy. What we've tried to do following time working with them is to take some operational matters back into the CLT whilst ensuring that there is enough for Board to be assured. He iterated that there is no fundamental changes to how the Board works, we have just tried to ensure the Board is seeing the right things.</p> <p>The Chairs of the Committee's confirmed that they are happy with changes to the terms of reference. JB noted the journey we have been on and the timing feels right. MW detailed the review process that took place with the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC). BP confirmed that Neil Harries, Independent ARC Member has reviewed the amendments and confirmed that he is comfortable with the proposals.</p> <p>The Board discussed progress with the ARC. MW noted the journey we're on and confirmed that the agenda is becoming less reactive and more proactive looking forward. She noted the deliberate choices made in adding additional assurance items to the terms of reference where the Committee sees risks, risks emerging or future risk to the business.</p> <p>MO iterated the importance of no surprise culture and the Executive notifying the Board of any concerns. The integrity of this relationship is really important.</p> <p>The Board approved the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheme of Delegation • Standing Orders • Financial Regulations • Audit and Risk Committee Terms of Reference • People and Culture Committee Terms of Reference • Remuneration Committee Terms of Reference. 	
B10.20/21	Use of Seal	
	The Board noted the Use of Seal report.	
B11.20/21	People & Culture Committee Chairs Report – 24.1.20	
	<p>JB noted the report and the new staff voice representative. She noted the Family Friendly Policy may now need more input with the new normal. She highlighted the launch of the People Strategy. She confirmed that work has started on the Happiness Index but review of the report has been delayed due to the pandemic. She noted that the Committee will be reviewing equality and diversity data for staff to see if we are becoming more of a diverse employer. MO noted the Committee and transparency it helps give between Board and staff.</p> <p>The Board noted the People and Culture Committee Chairs Report.</p>	
B12.20/21	Audit & Risk Committee Chairs Report – 26.2.20	
	MW summarised the report and noted the number of items approved as detailed at 2.2. She confirmed that the Committee is working well and feedback from Mazars and Bevan and Buckland has been positive. She stated that the relationship between the Committee and Executive is excellent and this is confirmed by the Auditors. She commented that she feels there is a culture of wanting to discuss emerging threats and risks and	



	<p>share this with the Committee. This is evidence of the growing relationship and trust.</p> <p>MO asked how MW is finding chairing the meetings with such a volume of information. MW confirmed that she has spoken to BP and would welcome us being really disciplined with the size of papers. BP confirmed that he will take this forward with DL on how we can create more time for debate over the coming year.</p> <p>TS noted the opposite experience at People and Culture Committee with less papers and more discussion. The Board discussed audit approach and its link to strategic risk. MW noted the need to continue a blended approach that gives focus to ensure operations continue to work well but also having focus on the long term.</p> <p>It was agreed that there needs to be more of a link with the risk register at People and Culture Committee.</p> <p>The Board noted the Audit and Risk Committee Chairs Report.</p>	DL
B13.20/21	Remuneration Committee Chairs Report – 27.3.20	
	<p>JB summarised the report. She asked if those staff being paid below the median had now been brought up to the median. HS confirmed these staff moved to median as of the 1st April. She noted the flexibility in the new pay policy to allow to pay up to the upper quartile. JB confirmed that Committee agreed to no longer run the performance related pay as it doesn't fit with our values. BP confirmed that we have not paid a balance scorecard payment since 2018. JB noted that we're waiting on the next pension scheme valuation before taking any further decisions. She advised that the CEO's appraisal went very well and is very positive.</p> <p>The Board noted the Remuneration Committee Chairs Report.</p>	
B14.20/21	Any other business	
	<p>BP asked all if meetings can start earlier while we are working remotely via Teams. It was agreed for meetings to start at 5pm.</p> <p>Director of People and Places: HS confirmed that the advert for this role is out and closing date for applications is Monday. She noted that TS and JB will be working with her on the recruitment process and interviews on the 11th and 12th May. She noted that we have done some head hunting this time as well and have two people from the last tranche shortlisted. Acorn Recruitment have five candidates they feel would be suitable for interview and further candidates for us to review. She confirmed that the cohort of skills coming through this time is much better.</p> <p>Development: It was noted that there will be a meeting next week with Board and staff to discuss our development approach.</p> <p>TS gave thanks to HS and Team for the way they have adapted. She noted that she feels CCHA has particularly paid real attention to staff health, safety and wellbeing. HS confirmed that will pass this onto staff.</p>	



MO iterated that questions beforehand really helps and we should consider this for in person meetings too.

It was noted that the Board approved the following decisions between meetings:

- **DM12.19/20 – The Board approved the use of Travis Perkins as a flexible material supplier from 24th March 2020.**
- **DM1.20/21 – The Board approved the Data Protection Policy.**
- **DM2.20/21 – The Board approved:**
 - **The new Salary Policy to set out a clear, easy to understand approach to setting and reviewing salaries across the business.**
 - **To carry out further consultation with staff over the removal of the performance related pay contained in the previous salary policy. If there are any significant issues arising from this consultation, we will bring these back to Remuneration Committee later in the year. If not, and this change is approved at this meeting, the changes will be implemented.**

The meeting closed at 19:30.

Date of next meeting: 3rd June 2020, 5pm

Signed:
Chair

Date: