

Cloch Housing Association

Aug 31, 2023

**Minutes of Board Meeting
held on Tuesday 25th July 2023 at 6pm
via MS Teams and in the office**

Present - online: Kelly Ferns (Chair), Heather Thomson (Vice Chair), Ken Robertson, David Brown, Jackie Smith, Victoria Weir, Hristina Tarpanova (Co-optee), David McIndoe (Co-optee).

Present – office: Eileen Tamburrini (Secretary) and Eleanor Robertson.

Attending: Alana Durnin (Chief Executive Officer)
in office & online Valerie Wilson (Depute Chief Executive Officer)
Paul McColgan (Head of Property Services)
Louise Carlin (Head of Housing Services)
Carolynne Swinney (Corporate Services Assistant, Minute Taker)
Julie-Ann Cloherty (Observer).

1.	Apologies & Declarations of Interest
	Apologies: An apology was received from the Co-optee Board member, Nicola McLachlan. Declarations of interest: David McIndoe confirmed he is a member of another Housing Association in relation to the ARC benchmarking report.
2.	Minutes of Meeting held on 13 June 2023
	The Board discussed the minutes from the June 2023 Board meeting and the Private & Confidential meeting. RESOLUTION It was noted the mention of company names will be redacted and ‘Co-optee’ will be added to the relevant Board members. The Minutes were proposed, seconded, and approved with redactions noted. ACTIONS The June minutes will be amended accordingly and sent to the Chairperson for signing. Once signed, these will then be uploaded onto Cloch’s website.
3.	Matters Arising/Outstanding Actions
	The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) discussed the actions arising from the previous meetings and provided an update on actions being carried forward. The following points were noted: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff Structure Refresh – following the completion of the staff questionnaire re: resource gaps and succession planning, one to one meetings have been arranged with the relevant staff and a feedback report is due by the end of August 2023. The

	<p>Chairperson was also involved in a meeting to discuss her views on resource gaps against the Business Plan priorities and noted that the one to one meetings had been viewed positively by staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A report from The Housing Associations' Charitable Trust (HACT), re: measuring social value had been uploaded onto the Board Portal for Board members to review. • Board Appraisals are currently being carried out, with a report coming to the next Board meeting, (August 2023). • It was agreed future meetings would remain hybrid. • An optional reading appendix booklet has been uploaded onto the Board Portal as part of the July Board papers re: supplementary reading. • An update on the Pension Working Group was provided by the CEO and the Chair. It was noted the first meeting was positive, with an understanding by the working party members why the change was required. The Chair had opened the meeting and had emphasised the objective was not to reduce the existing annual pension budget but to reduce risk re: future increases and liabilities. The other Board member who attended the meeting confirmed the meeting felt positive and collaborative. • Items carried forward associated with timing related to the Board event, staff structure refresh project, 'gifts and hospitality report', which will be signed when Chairperson in the office and 2024 rents. <p>RESOLUTION The Board noted the contents of the matters arising report.</p>
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ITEMS FOR APPROVAL	
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4.	Annual Assurance Statement Plan
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	<p>The Depute CEO, (DCEO), discussed the contents of the report. With the following key points noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every year all Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) must submit an Annual Assurance Statement (AAS) to the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) by 31 October. This statement from the Board provides assurance to SHR that Cloch Housing Association complies with all the regulatory requirements and the Standards of Governance and Financial Management. • A comprehensive Governance Review was conducted by ██████████ in 2021 and there was a Board review in 2022, which provided additional assurance of compliance and improvement actions. These actions and progress against them were last presented to Board in April 2023. • The SFHA's toolkit is a comprehensive document reflecting the 25 requirements plus the 7 Regulatory Standards. As in previous years, Cloch are proposing that the Governance and Performance (GAP) working group is charged with reviewing and discussing the evidence gathered for the toolkit. A compliance assessment and draft Annual Assurance Statement will then be brought to the Board in October for approval, prior to submitting the Annual Assurance Statement to the SHR at the end of October 2023. • The CEO and DCEO will update the assurance toolkit and present the evidence to GAP group for consideration.
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- It is proposed that the 2023 GAP group has a minimum of 3 members and meets at least twice before reporting to the Board in October.

RECOMMENDATION

The Board was asked to consider the Annual Assurance Statement Plan and approve delegating the detailed review compliance consideration to the GAP working group. In addition, Board was asked to review the Advisory Guidance that had been sent with the initial Board papers.

The Chairperson asked if any Board members had any comments on the report and appendices.

The Chairperson confirmed they would like to be part of the GAP working group. Another member of the Board said that they would also be happy to be part of the working group and two other members confirmed interest, *(dates being compatible)*, therefore additional resource would be available once dates were confirmed.

RESOLUTION

The Board proposed, seconded, and approved the Annual Assurance Statement Plan and approved delegated authority to the GAP working group to carry out a detailed review of assurance.

ACTIONS

CEO and Depute CEO to confirm the dates for the GAP Working Group.

5. New Policies/Policy Reviews

5.1 Mould & Damp – New Policy

The Head of Property Services, (HoPS), discussed the new Mould & Damp Policy. The HoPS confirmed the management of condensation, mould, and dampness was highlighted in a letter from the SHR in December 2022 for landlords to review and consider what systems are in place to ensure tenants’ homes are not affected by mould and dampness, and that there are pro-active systems in place to deal with reported issues effectively and timeously. This is also linked to the Scottish Housing Quality Standards.

The HoPS explained that the policy presented to the Board for approval was a result of reviewing all the information available, including feedback on best practice used by other RSL`s. The Board were also asked to note that an in-house management procedure had also been devised, which is currently in use.

The HoPS explained that our policy and procedures were robust and covers no access scenarios and has a reporting procedure to record all cases. It was noted that there had been no policy available from the Employers in Voluntary Housing (EVH).

The HoPS asked if there were any questions or comments on the report. The following was raised:

- A Board member asked about humidistat fans and if these were installed by the Association. The HoPS confirmed that any bathrooms or kitchens being replaced included fans as part of the installation.
- A Board member asked about indoor drying, and it was suggested that standard fans could be replaced with humidistat fans. The HoPS confirmed he would investigate this as an alternative. The HoPS also explained that Cloch provides tenants with information in relation to drying indoors / impact on mould and damp.
- A Board member noted some grammar errors and the HoPS confirmed these would be rectified.
- A Board member asked about training. The HoPS confirmed mould and damp training had been complete for the Property Services Team, however further training is being considered for the wider staff team, including new staff.
- A Board member asked if there would be a 6-month inspection of a property following work being carried out to treat mould and damp. The HoPS confirmed, at the moment, this would be dependent on the report findings. However, following a discussion it was agreed this would be added to the procedure.
- A Board member raised concern about the cost-of-living crisis and tenants not heating all rooms. The CEO confirmed that the new reactive repairs contractor will be asked to provide feedback to Cloch if they pick up any concerns and this would be followed up by a member of the team, e.g., this could involve Financial Fitness or a member of the Tenancy Support Team to assess eligibility for vouchers or sign posting to external services.
- A Board member mentioned providing tenants with support options to consider re: heating. The Head of Housing Services, (HoHS), confirmed that Cloch is now registered with Home Energy Scotland and can make direct referrals to them on behalf of tenants.
- A Board member asked where there are indications of mould and damp in a property, if Cloch keeps a record in relation to the property condition before and then after work is carried out. The HoPS confirmed that void properties are fully inspected prior to being let and cases highlighted reactive repairs are recorded and reported on.
- A Board member asked if Cloch have any properties that they know are subject to damp and mould. The HoPS confirmed that Cloch do not have any properties that are susceptible, however if a tenant reports damp and mould, then Cloch investigates and carries out the required repairs.

RECOMMENDATION

The Board were asked to consider and approve the Mould & Damp Policy and also the accompanying procedure.

RESOLUTION

The Board proposed, seconded, and approved the Mould & Damp Policy and also the accompanying procedure. This was subject to the amendments being made as noted in blue text below.

ACTIONS

- To update the Mould and Damp Policy and procedure to reflect:
 - Grammar updates.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 6 months inspection following mould and damp repair work being carried out. • To appraise installing humidistat fans versus standard fans. • To consider further mould and damp training for the wider staff team, (relevant staff) and new staff members. • To arrange training for the new reactive contractors re: feedback to Cloch staff associated with concerns regarding mould and damp / impact of the cost-of-living crisis.
5.2	<p><u>Salary Sacrifice Policy (No,109)</u></p> <p>The Depute CEO explained that the Salary Sacrifice Policy was adopted in August 2021. Though not yet due for review, the policy was being brought back to the Board following the approval of changes to the policy. These were noted as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reference to ██████████ had been removed as they were no longer the healthcare plan provider, and this has been updated to a generic reference of 'Healthcare plan'. • In January 2023, Board approved the employer savings associated with employee salary sacrifice contributions, (employer National Insurance savings), could be utilised for other staff wellbeing activities. <p>RECOMMENDATION The Board were asked to approve the updated Salary Sacrifice Policy.</p> <p>RESOLUTION The Board proposed, seconded, and approved the changes.</p> <p>ACTIONS To update the Salary Sacrifice Policy to reflect the above.</p>
	<p>ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/NOTING **</p>
6.	<p>Reactive and Void Repaid Contract Update.</p>
	<p>The HoPS explained the purpose of the report was to update the Board on progress and actions taken forward on the procurement of both the reactive and void contracts, following the previous update reports provided at the Board and Housing & Property Services Sub-Committee meetings in April, May, and June 2023. The key points of note were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The contract end date with the existing contractor is 14th/17th August 2023. • The out of hours/emergency contract will be with one contractor, which makes it easier for tenants. • The core trades tendered for within the reactive contract were plumbers, joiners and electricians, with good responses received. • All contractors will be managed via performance against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). • Contractors all know and understand service delivery expectations and standards and a meeting will be held with contractors prior to the official start date. • An 'out of hours' tender report had been provided to the Board.

The HoPS welcomed any feedback or question on the report, with the following noted:

- A Board member acknowledged the hard work that had gone into setting up the new contracts and asked if there was an alternative contractor available for the out of hours contract in relation to the right to repair criteria. The HoPS explained that right to repair is not applicable for out of hours/emergency repairs. With reference to managing performance of the contracts it was confirmed that the Property Service Team manage performance to the level expected and if KPIs are not met this would be managed through the performance management process, which ultimately could result in a new procurement exercise being taken forward if improvements were not made.
- A Board member asked if the new contractors for out of hours and reactive repairs would be taking over on the same day as the previous contractor's contract ended. The HoPS confirmed that the out of hours contractor would start at 5pm on the Monday and the other contractors would start at 9am on the Monday. It was also noted, if for any reason this does not go to plan, then Cloch would use the services of pre-identified contractors in the short term.

[REDACTED]

- It was noted that some of the staff from the previous contractor are now working with some of the new contractors.

The Chairperson reflected on the hard work that had went into setting up the new contracts and noted that it was starting off well.

RECOMMENDATION

The Board were asked to note Cloch's progression with the void and reactive contracts.

RESOLUTION

The Board noted the contents of the report.

7. ARC Amendments, QEF Benchmarking Presentation – 2022/23 ARC Results.

7.1 ARC Amendments

The HoHS, discussed the content of the ARC amendment report. With the following key points highlighted:

- The 2022/2023 ARC was submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) on 31st May 2023.
- Following the submission, the Association recruited the consultant [REDACTED] to carry out an ARC audit, starting with the Housing ARC indicators.

- The audit flagged up errors with the ARC submission and KPI statistics, relating to report formatting and interpretation of some calculations.
- The HoHS provided a detailed update on why the changes were required.

A Board member asked if there was anything that they should be concerned about following the audit. The HoHS confirmed that the CEO had been in discussion with the SHR, to update them of the changes required, and they had confirmed that updates were not uncommon following ARC audits and if the changes were made prior to the end of July the Landlord Report would reflect the updated information.

The HoHS explained that the reports used in completing the ARC figures were complex in terms of connection to sourced data, within SDM. It was noted that the Consultant had undertaken robust data analysis and a detailed report was provided on why changes had to be made to the report structure. It was also noted that the results from the changes made were not material, e.g., not showing a significant variance.

A Board member asked about the ARC rental income amendment and how this linked to Cloch's Financial Plan. The DCEO confirmed that the overall income in the Annual Accounts was not affected.

The HoHS then discussed and highlighted the changes to Housing's Q1 2023/24 KPI results and indicators, following the amendments to the reports.

The HoHS also requested approval to remove KPI 5, Current Technical Arrears from the quarterly KPI report, with non-technical arrears continuing to be reported. The rationale was noted as technical arrears being out with Cloch's control and therefore this KPI is impacted by external influences, rather than the team's performance.

The HoHS also proposed that the following KPIs be added to the quarterly performance report to provide a more holistic view of performance:

- Rent collected as percentage of total rent due in the period.
- % of tenancies sustained.
- Abandonments per 100 properties.
- No. of anti-social cases per 100 properties.

The above changes were agreed.

A Board member asked about the low percentage in satisfaction of quality on their home and the HoHS confirmed this was based on survey results that were 2 years old, with a tenant satisfaction survey currently being procured to provide up-to-date results.

The Chairperson acknowledged the benefits of the ARC audit for assurance purposes.

RECOMMENDATION

The Board were asked to:

1. Approve the amendments to the 2022/23 ARC Submission

	<p>2. Approve the changes to the key performance indicators used to monitor Housing Services performance – these were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Remove KPI 5, Current Technical Arrears as a % of current rent roll.</i> • <i>Add the following ARC indicators to monitor performance on a regular basis:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Rent collected as percentage of total rent due in the period.</i> ○ <i>% of tenancies sustained</i> ○ <i>Abandonments per 100 properties</i> ○ <i>No. of anti-social cases per 100 properties</i> <p>3. To note the outturn changes made to the Q1 2023/24 Housing Services KPI's.</p> <p>RESOLUTION The Board noted the contents of the report and approved the amendments to the 2022/23 ARC Submission and the changes to the Housing Services KPIs. They also noted the outturn changes made to Q1 2023/24 Housing Services KPI's.</p>
A	<p>Quality Efficiency Forum (QEF) Benchmarking – 2022/23 Annual Return Charter (ARC) Results.</p> <p>A report on Cloch's ARC performance incorporating benchmarking data from the QEF group, (noted as 22 Housing Associations), was presented via a power point presentation. The CEO confirmed the results reflected the changes confirmed in the HoHS report, noted at 7.1 above. The CEO confirmed the report to Board also incorporated last year's performance to provide trend information. Colour coding was also used against results, for example, green to highlight where performance was improved against the QEF average and local peers and red where performance was below both.</p> <p>Where performance was noted as red or amber, actions being taken to improve performance was confirmed to the Board.</p> <p>RESOLUTION There were no questions asked by the Board and they noted the contents of the report and presentation.</p>
8.	<p>CEO REPORT</p>
	<p>The CEO Report provided information on performance for Q1 2023/24 against targets and an update on the Risk Register.</p> <p>The key points of note from the presentation were:</p> <p><u>Housing Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Total gross rent', 'current non-technical arrears', 'average re-let time' and 'anti-social behaviour cases resolved within target' were all showing as green, with performance meeting or above target.

- 'Void rent loss' was showing red and noted as below target. The CEO confirmed that the HoPS and HoHS were reviewing void loss days to identify bottlenecks in the process, for further assessment.

Maintenance KPIs

'Percentage of voids returned from contractor', 'emergency repairs complete on time', 'average emergency repairs time', 'average non-emergency repair time', 'percentage of jobs complete right first time' and 'gas safety inspections' were all green with performance meeting or above target.

The CEO confirmed that the 'percentage of voids returned from contractor' indicator was well above target and therefore proposed that the Q2 target is increased to 45%, reflecting performance but also that the new contractors are still bedding in.

'Non-emergency repair completion' was amber, however the CEO confirmed that performance has increased from 84% last year to 88% in Q1.

Finance KPIs

'Staff costs as percentage of turnover' was green.

'Factoring debt' was amber; due to the value of debt being higher than the same period last year. The CEO confirmed that the debt collection performance against target is reported in the second half of the year due to the timing of invoices being issued, however the Finance Team are focussing on debt collection with reminder letters being issued and direct debits being increased to collect the debt.

Corporate & Customer Connector KPIs

'Number of days lost to sickness absence', 'stage 1 complaints closed on time', 'stage two complaints closed on time' and 'calls answered in 5 rings' were green and above target.

'Board attendance' and 'membership' were amber. The CEO confirmed membership has increased since last year's results and Board attendance had exceeded target at the June meeting.

'Telephone messages responded to in one working day' was red. The CEO explained that in part, this was due to staff not changing the SDM action box to confirm messages had been responded to. This has been highlighted to staff and should now improve.

The CEO highlighted changes to the Risk Register with the following key points noted:

Three risks had increased:

- Risk 5 (meeting customers' changing needs and expectations): This had been increased following the May staff meetings and feedback from staff that there had been an increase in calls and queries from customers associated with the planned

	<p>maintenance programme. The CEO confirmed an article was being included in the Newsletter about this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk 7 (change of leadership): This had been increased following the departure of a Leadership Team member in May 2023. However, it is anticipated this will be reduced in Q2, based on the resource changes implemented. • Risk 12 (data and information): This was increased as the ARC audit had highlighted issues with reporting, which has now been rectified in and therefore it is anticipated this risk will reduce in Q2. <p>The CEO asked if there were any questions associated with the report.</p> <p>The Chairperson confirmed she liked the presentation layout of the report, and the CEO confirmed it helps the Leadership Team re: monitoring and agreeing actions being taken.</p> <p>RESOLUTION The Board noted the contents of the report and presentation.</p>
9.	Global Action Plan – Verbal Update
	<p>The CEO shared her screen and showed the Board the draft Global Action Plan. The CEO confirmed the actions within the document related to taking forward the Business Plan objectives and priorities and that these were the actions the Staff Team had put forward as priorities over the next year. In terms of reporting to Board, an exception report will be provided going forward.</p> <p>The Chairperson noted that the layout is simpler to follow than the previous document and asked if the full Global Action Plan progress will be made available on the Board portal. The CEO confirmed it would be, with quarterly updates provided to Board.</p> <p>A Board member asked if it would be flagged to them when the updates are uploaded to the Board portal and the CEO confirmed it would. She also suggested a pdf copy could be added to Board Papers in the supplementary reading booklet.</p> <p>RESOLUTION The Board noted the contents of the Global Action Plan.</p> <p>ACTIONS Global Action Plan to be uploaded on to the Board Portal once finalised and when updated on a quarterly basis, an exception report will be provided to the Board meeting and the Board will also be informed of the availability of the full update on the Board Portal.</p>
10.	AGM
	<p>The DCEO presented the Annual General Meeting (AGM) report. The key points of note were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The AGM will be held on Wednesday 20 September 2023 at 7pm at the Beacon Arts Centre.

- The meeting is being held as a hybrid meeting and members will have the option of attending in person at the Beacon or via MS Teams.

The DCEO asked if the current Chair, Vice-Chair & Secretary plan to stand for re-election and also asked members who might be considering standing for these positions to let Cloch know prior to the AGM. One Board member confirmed they will be standing down.

The DCEO reference the 9-year rule for two Board members. It was noted this is part of the Scottish Housing Regulator, Regulatory Framework in which Part 6.3 states ‘The governing body ensures that any non-executive member seeking re-election after nine years’ continuous service demonstrates continued effectiveness’.

Papers will come to the August Board meeting to confirm compliance prior to the AGM.

The DCEO explained that staff are looking for ways to encourage more members to attend the AGM and that the AGM will be used to discuss this with members. It was noted that an agreed activity would need to be before or after the meeting, as the AGM format is fixed under the rules of the Association.

The Chair confirmed she was keen to have an engaging activity and the CEO suggested a wellbeing speaker or an event that launches the Cloch Plus Project.

The Chairperson expressed a preference for a social activity, that supported getting to know the tenants more and linking in with the Wider Action Strategy.

A member of the Board is part of a tourist group that undertaken historic tours. It was noted that she has carried out Cloch specific tours before which have been very engaging in terms of raising awareness of the local area. It was agreed a presentation on Greenock’s history would be a good additional event.

RECOMMENDATION

The Board were asked to:

- Approve the use of the Beacon Arts Centre together with MS Teams as the platform for the meeting and the proposed time.
- Approve the use of a postal vote, if required for the Board Elections.
- Note the places that require filling at the AGM because of Board Members standing down.
- Note the proposed quorum and arrangements for the AGM.
- Note the Secretary’s compliance with the Association Rules will be tabled at the August meeting.
- Note the intention of the office bearers moving forward and request anyone interested in standing for election to notify beforehand.

RESOLUTUON

The Board approved the actions noted above in blue text.

11. AOB

Extending the Auditors Contract: The DCEO requested extending the external audit contract. The request was being made due to a shortage of auditors and feedback that tender results are showing limited responses and significant cost increases. The DCEO is therefore seeking approval for Cloch to enter discussions with the current Auditor about extending the contract, with a focus on value for money. The DCEO confirmed the CEO had discussed this with the SHR and they had confirmed no concern, as long as internal procedures were followed, (the current Auditor has been working Cloch for over 9 years, however two tender exercises have been complete during this period).

The Board agreed with the proposal, and it was confirmed that the DCEO would provide the Board with a report on the outcome of the discussion with the Auditor.

Board Away Day: The CEO provided the Board with an update on the Board Away Day survey results, with 8 responses and the best date of the 10/9/23 noted with Largs being the preferred option. The Chairperson highlighted they would not be able to make this date due to other commitments. The CEO confirmed further dates would be proposed via a doodle poll, based on Sundays in September / October.

August Board Meeting: Following the Board survey results, it was confirmed that the August Board meeting would take place on the 22nd of August, with the Corporate Services Sub Committee now taking place on the 29th of August.

EVH Representative: As full members of EVH, Cloch is entitled to have 2 Board representatives. It was highlighted that one of our current Board representatives is unable to continue with the commitment. It was therefore requested that any other Board member interested in the role should get in touch with the Corporate Services Assistant.

REFLECTIONS

The Chairperson confirmed she liked the appendix booklet for supplementary information and that she felt there was good interaction during the meeting. The Chairperson suggested including a link within the Board Papers to appendix booklet.

The Chairperson also noted that hybrid is working well and asked if anyone had any comments. There were no further comments.

The Chairperson ended the meeting by saying a lot of hard work had gone into the Board papers and that the presentations given were very good.

The meeting ended at 8.00pm.

At the end of the meeting, the Finance & Corporate Services Sub Committee members were asked to stay on to discuss the Treasury Management report. The minutes for this meeting will be presented to the August Finance & Corporate Services Sub Committee meeting for approval.

12. Date of Next Meeting – 22 August 2023