



**Minutes from the meeting of the Board of
TAI CALON COMMUNITY HOUSING LIMITED
Held on Monday 26th September 2016 at Solis One, Blaina**

Present:

Norma Barry	Chair
Fred Davies	Vice Chair
Keren Bender	Chair of PARC
Ellen Jones	Member
Colber Adamian Thomas	Member
Joy Robson	Member
Delwyn Francis	Member
Katherine Howells	Member
Mark Perry	Member
Lynda Astell	Co-opted Member
Kelly Reynolds	Co-opted Member

Officers:

Joe Logan	Chief Executive
Marcia Sinfield	Director of Finance and Company Secretary
Andrew Myatt	Director of Communities & Housing
Liz Rogers	Director of OD, HR & IT
David Gray	Interim Head of Operations
Jayne Lewis	Assistant Company Secretary

Observers:

Maria Round	Regulation Manager, Welsh Government
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B52.16/17 Apologies for Absence

- B52.1 As the meeting was the first after the AGM, the Company Secretary opened the meeting.
- B52.2 The apologies from Tim Sharrem and Tommy Smith were NOTED.

B53.16/17 **Appointment of Chair**

B53.1 The Company Secretary advised that Norma Barry had been nominated for the position of Chair.

PROPOSED: Keren Bender SECONDED: Delwyn Francis

Norma Barry took the Chair. She thanked members for their continued support. A warm welcome was extended to Joe Logan.

B53.2 **Vice Chair**

The Chair advised that Fred Davies has been nominated for the position of Vice Chair. The Standing Orders state that a person cannot hold the same position for five consecutive years. The Chair proposed that in order to maintain stability that Standing Orders be suspended for this year only allowing Fred Davies to continue as Vice Chair.

PROPOSED: Keren Bender SECONDED: Delwyn Francis

The Chair proposed Fred Davies as Vice Chair.

PROPOSED: Mark Perry SECONDED: Katherine Howells

B53.3 **Performance, Audit and Risk Committee**

The Chair advised that Keren Bender has been nominated for Chair of PARC.

PROPOSED: Mark Perry SECONDED: Colber Adamian-Thomas

The other members of PARC were confirmed as:
Katherine Howells, Ellen Jones, Tommy Smith, Joy Robson, Kelly Reynolds, Mark Perry.

PROPOSED: Keren Bender SECONDED: Fred Davies

B53.4 Remuneration Committee

The Chair advised that Ellen Jones was nominated as Chair of the Remuneration Committee.

PROPOSED: Fred Davies SECONDED: Mark Perry

The other members of the Remuneration Committee were confirmed as:

Norma Barry, Keren Bender, Fred Davies, Lynda Astell

PROPOSED: Keren Bender SECONDED: Delwyn Francis

B54.16/17 Declarations of Interest

Lynda Astell and Kelly Reynolds declared an interest in Item B66.16/17 – Employment and Skills Action Plan.

B55.16/17 Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

B55.1 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 25th July 2016 were **APPROVED**.

PROPOSED: Vice Chair SECONDED: Ellen Jones

B55.2 Matters Arising

B42.16/17: The Chair commented that Nigel Perring's skills are primarily relevant to operational work and service delivery so subject to adoption of possible governance changes in the future, he should be asked to be an advisor to any such committee that may be established.

Action: Chair and Company Secretary

B48.16/17: It was noted that Rental Income Issues was due to be discussed as part of the Board Away Day. The Chair commented that the overall objectives for the Away Day needed to be clear

and that the discussion items should be related to these objectives.

Action: Chair and Chief Executive

B56.16/17 **Summary Notes BIG 21st July 2016**

B56.1 The Chair outlined BIG's remit and advised members that the meeting was in abeyance to allow the new Chief Executive to consider future governance arrangements.

B57.16/17 **Schedule 1 Exemptions: CONFIDENTIAL**

B58.16/17 **Chair's Report**

B58.1 A briefing paper on the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) cap for Supported Housing was circulated to members. The Director of Communities and Housing explained that supported housing was being suspended for a further period from the LHA cap but that the implications of this were still being considered.

B58.2 There had been four requests for Urgent Action since the previous meeting which required ratification by the full Board:

- Appointment of Independent Board Member;
- Funding Facility – letter of variation;
- Schedule 1 Exemption – housing allocation;
- Schedule 1 Exemption – staff appointment

The Board **APPROVED** the ratification of the urgent action report.

PROPOSED: Vice Chair

SECONDED: Katherine Howells

B59.16/17 **Terms and Conditions Review**

B59.1 The Director of HR, OD and IT presented the report. A copy of a presentation made to staff outlining the proposals was circulated for information. Members were reminded of the report considered in November 2015 and the verbal updates

that had been received since then on the progress of reviewing terms and conditions of employment for employees, excluding the Executive Team.

- B59.2 Members were reminded that the savings from the proposals have been included in the medium term financial plan that received Board approval in March 2016. It was projected that the changes would lead to savings of circa £250,000 with a significant proportion arising from the changes to the out of hours service.
- B59.3 The Chair of PARC queried the “in principle” agreement from the trades unions. It was explained that all had accepted the proposals around out of hours provision and that only Unison has accepted all the proposals. The Director said that GMB, acting on behalf of Unite and UCATT, had requested clarification on the mitigations for members affected by the withdrawal of the essential car user allowance.
- B59.4 The use of gardening leave was discussed with the Chair of PARC commenting that she had concerns over the number of staff who had previously been placed on gardening leave.
- B59.5 It was noted that the proposals for trades staff remained complicated, with a member questioning what other options had been considered. These were briefly outlined with the Director of OD, HR and IT reiterating that the trades unions were comfortable with the proposed changes. The possibility of changing working hours to reflect the low demand for appointments between 8am and 9am was discussed. The Board was reminded that the proposal affected emergency appointments only which had different criteria to routine appointments. The allowances currently paid for out of hours calls were outlined along with the cost implications.
- B59.6 The removal of probationary periods for internal candidates was discussed, with members expressing disquiet about the different approach for internal and external appointments. The Chair commented that internal promotions should be subject to a six month probationary period. The Director of OD, HR and IT

explained that the rationale for removing the probationary period was as result of the robustness of performance management within the organisation. Members disagreed with this approach stating that performance management should be used when the individual was under-performing. Members were resistant to this proposal so it was agreed that a briefing paper outlining the pros and cons of removing probationary periods for internal candidates be circulated to members.

Action: Director of OD, HR and IT

B59.7 A member questioned whether employees would be financially affected by the proposal for out of hours provision. It was explained that this was a non-contractual issue but was being added to new contracts and that the financial impact had been recognised. Members commented upon the importance of identifying best practice in the private and housing sectors in addition to local government.

B59.8 It was noted that the service would require three trades – electricians, water and gas – meaning 34 staff were affected. The potential risk of losing staff due to the proposed changes was raised. Members asked for assurance on any legal implications of removing regular allowances from staff be circulated.

Action: Director of OD, HR and IT

B59.9 Board members requested that work be undertaken to ensure that service delivery matched the expectations and needs of tenants. The Director of Finance explained that the current proposals were the first stage of the process. The Medium Term Financial Plan and the Repairs Policy were outlined as key linkages with the out of hours proposals. The Vice Chair and other members commented that the lack of routine repairs on a Friday afternoon remained an area of concern for Board members. A member identified the need to match tenant needs and aspirations to service delivery. In summary, the Chair said that Tai Calon should be ensuring services are delivered to meet tenants' needs and that the Board was keen to ensure much

improved service delivery. She requested that options and timescales to move towards offering a service 5 days a week be included.

Action: Director of OD, HR and IT

B59.10 The Chair summarised that the complex issue of service delivery and resources needed to be considered in more detail, however the proposals contained in the report linked to the Medium Term Financial Plan and Repairs Policy that had received Board approval and so members needed to move this item forward. However, she stressed that there is a need for the Executive Team to consider service improvement at reduced costs and present the Board with proposals on how to take forward organisational development to ensure Tai Calon becomes an excellent organisation in delivering services for its tenants. Individual items were considered as follows:

Removal of Essential Car User Allowance

PROPOSED: Katherine Howells SECONDED: Mark Perry

Reduction in Mileage Allowance

PROPOSED: Colber Adamian-Thomas SECONDED: Vice Chair

Removal of Telephone Allowance

PROPOSED: Vice Chair SECONDED: Katherine Howells

Flexi Arrangements

PROPOSED: Katherine Howells SECONDED: Joy Robson

Out of Hours Provision

PROPOSED: Mark Perry SECONDED: Vice Chair

Monthly Payroll

PROPOSED: Mark Perry SECONDED: Delwyn Francis

Payment in Lieu of Notice and Gardening Leave

PROPOSED: Mark Perry SECONDED: Ellen Jones

Removal of Probationary Period for Internal Staff

This was not supported.

B60.16/17 **Strategic Voids – Glan Yr Afon Court: CONFIDENTIAL**

B61.16/17 **Health and Safety Executive – Hand Arm Vibration: CONFIDENTIAL**

B62.16/17 **Complaints – Quarter 1 Report**

B62.1 The Director of Communities and Housing presented the report. The number of complaints had increased from the previous quarter by 83%. This was as a result of the number of complaints received regarding planned works not done within set dates. The Board was pleased to see that lessons were being learnt from the majority of the upheld complaints and welcomed that element of the report. It was acknowledged that work was being done to improve tenants' experience in respect of planned works.

B62.2 A member raised the issue of out of hours Customer Services taking three hours to answer an emergency call. It was explained that this was the result of particularly bad weather nationwide which resulted in the Out of Hours provider having difficulties responding to the volume of calls.

B62.3 The Regulator advised that Welsh Government had received a number of complaints from tenants regarding Tai Calon. She stated that several members of QDF had been collecting negative comments regarding tenants' experiences of the repairs service via a closed Facebook page. The Regulator added that the recent Regulatory opinion had been positive around customer experiences based on evidence provided and that she would be considering the outcomes of the forthcoming STAR survey results to assess wider tenant satisfaction.

B62.4 The Chair expressed disappointment that the tenants concerned had not come to the Board about the complaints. She added that she had recently met with some of the involved tenants to hear their concerns and had emphasised the need for tenants to

work as a team with Tai Calon to improve overall services. This was reiterated by the Regulator, who added that partnership working was the way forward.

- B62.5 A member asked about the recharge policy and whether the cost of 'wasted' call-outs was recorded. The recharge policy was outlined and members were advised that although recharges were invoiced, payment was not always received. The figure for 'wasted' call outs was not readily available. However, a report showing the charges to tenants who leave homes and create voids is accessible and would be circulated to members for information.

Action: Director of Communities and Housing

The Board **NOTED** the report.

B63.16/17 Repairs Policy – Pilot Outcomes

- B63.1 The Interim Head of Operations presented the report. It was explained that the pilot exercise to move to a two hour response time for emergency repairs had commenced in mid August. It had shown 87% of emergency calls had been visited within the two hour target time. The Chair of PARC requested that in future, the results were shown as actual job numbers as well as percentages.

Action: Interim Head of Operations

The Board **NOTED:**

- 1) The outcome of the pilot and the implementation of the two hour emergency attendance response relating to the Repair Policy review.
- 2) Emergency attendance within 2 hours will continue to be monitored monthly within the service and reported to the Executive Team.

- 3) Performance data will continue to be analysed in order to understand root causes of non-attendance and identify trends.

B64.16/17 Board Agenda Forward Planner

B64.1 The Chair and Vice Chair commented that the proposed agenda for October was heavy as it contained a number of business critical items which needed full discussion. Particular reference was made to the Tenant Engagement Strategy. It was agreed that the Chief Executive would review October's agenda and liaise with the Chair to see which items needed to be considered and which could be moved.

Action: Chief Executive and Chair

The Board **NOTED** the report.

B65.16/17 Health and Safety – Accident and Incident Report

B65.1 The Board **NOTED** the report.

B66.16/17 Employment and Skills Action Plan

B66.1 The Board **NOTED** the report.

B67.16/17 2015/16 Value for Money Report

B67.1 The Chair commented on the good quality of the report. The Board **NOTED** the report.

B68.16/17 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting is to be Monday 31st October 2016.

B69.16/17 Any Other Business

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 19:56.