

**CARE AND REPAIR SCOTLAND
MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 23rd SEPTEMBER
2022 BY ZOOM CONFERENCE CALL**

Present: Angela Brunton, Region 3
Ian Graham, Region 4

Robert Thomson, National Director

1. Welcome and Apologies

Robert welcomed Board members to the meeting. In some parts of Scotland, it is a Public Holiday. Apologies from Andy Douglas and Jamie Burgess. Gerry Power (Chair) also submitted apologies as he has taken up a new post and had to attend a training course. Robert advised that he would chair the meeting and that only two Board members are required for the meeting to be quorate. Robert and Angela welcomed Ian to his first meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of Previous Meetings

The minute of the June meeting is carried over for approval by email as only Angela had attended.

4. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

Action: Robert to write to Stewart, Elizabeth and Gerry and thank them for their contribution to the Board.

Robert has written to Stewart, Elizabeth and Gerry and will meet up with them at a convenient time. Companies House has processed the Termination of Appointment forms for each of them.

Action: It was agreed that Robert would arrange elections for Regions 1 and 4 to replace Stewart and Elizabeth. He will also speak to ALACHO about a nomination to replace Gerry.

The elections were held during July/August. Ian Graham was nominated by Region 1. Jamie Burgess was nominated to represent Region 4. The Board considered their nominations and agreed to accept Ian and Jamie as members.

5. Administrative Issues

Following the regional elections and appointment of Ian and Jamie, Dentons solicitors will arrange for the necessary Companies House forms. Robert will also send them OSCR literature and a copy of the Articles.

During the Covid restrictions, it has not been possible to meet with RBS Business Managers. We have now been advised that, following the retiral of Elizabeth, we need to update the account signatories. It also appears that Gerry was not put in the system following the resignation of Blair as Chair.

Action: It was agreed that Gerry and Angela should be the new signatories because of their geographical location. Robert will organise the relevant forms with RBS.

The financial procedures document, last reviewed in August 2019, will be carried over to the

DRAFT

December meeting for review.

The office lease has a breakpoint in March 2023. The members present felt that we should continue the lease. Robert advised that John Lewis was revising its property portfolio, and Buchanan Galleries in Glasgow would be closed and redesigned as a 'community space'. It is possible, therefore, that JL would look to break the lease before CRS.

Andy Douglas, Region 2, has advised that he wants to reduce his external commitments and wishes to retire from the Board. He is prepared to wait until Region 2 can hold elections and appoint a replacement before he resigns.

Action: Robert will discuss timings with Andy and arrange the Region 2 election in due course.

6. National Director's Report

Financial Audit

The A9 Partnership auditors previously advised the National Director that we would not require to include the grant of £1.1M in our accounts. However, they have since taken advice from OSCR and have now confirmed that we will need a full audit of the accounts because the grant is above the threshold of £500,000 set by OSCR. The National Director appealed against this decision and the Scottish Government advised that CRS incurs no income and expenditure under the terms of the grant. However, OSCR then said that, as they did not have enough understanding of the relationship between CRS and the local teams, we would have to defer to the view of the auditor. The A9 Partnership has confirmed that we will require a full audit for the financial year 2022/23.

The Board noted that no progress has been made with the audit, discussed the delays caused by A9 to the process, and was concerned about incurring penalties if we do not lodge the signed accounts with OSCR and Companies House by 30th December 2022.

Action: It was agreed that the lack of communication is a concern and that if there is no progress by 30th September, Robert should make a formal complaint to A9's Directors.

Adaptations

Stirling University has finalised their report on adaptations: **Adapting the Adaptations Process**. A number of practitioners were interviewed, including Robert, about the gap between policy and practice when delivering adaptations. The report was attached for discussion.

During this process, it became clear that very little progress is being made around the country on moving the agenda forward. The University was made aware of grant funding which potentially could help. A group was formed to discuss whether it would be feasible to apply for this funding and with the support of the group, that includes Care and Repair Scotland and Care and Repair Cymru. We have recently learned that funding will be provided for a five year period and the group will now be building an Inclusive Living Alliance, a UK wide network. Project partners already working with ILA include:

The Digital Health & Care Innovation Centre (DHI.)

Foundations

Public Health Scotland Springfield Properties plc

Link Housing Group

Motionspot

Stonewater Housing Association

Artlink Central

The Association of Local Authority Chief Housing Officers (ALACHO.)

Scottish Commission for People with Learning Disabilities (SCLD.)

Care & Repair Scotland

Care & Repair Cymru

DRAFT

The remit of the group was attached for information and discussion.

Falls Prevention Collective

The new 4 Nations Falls Prevention Collective has held its first meeting and agreed that it will pursue four key priorities, which are:

- Deconditioning
- Training and development
- Falls data
- Dissemination guidelines

There was also heated discussion about the group being named 'Better Together'. Following representations from Scotland and Wales, it will be renamed 'Together 4 Falls'.

Robert advised that, so far, there is not much benefit for Care and Repair in these discussions, but he will continue to attend as networking opportunities would be helpful.

DWP Review of Eligible Benefits for Adaptations

DWP had asked CRS to work with them to provide background information about variations in the benefits assessments used by Scottish Councils to assess applications for adaptation grants. Following discussions with ALACHO and the Scottish Housing Network, they have advised that it is a much more complex question than initially envisaged. Identifying individual council practices across Scotland would take a fair bit of work. Robert has compiled the Scheme of Assistance documents for each Council area and sent them to DWP. There is a current discussion within the Scottish Government about the possibility of abandoning the means-tested element of the adaptation grant, which would resolve the issue that DWP identified.

Care and Repair Conference

Robert advised that The Westerwood Hotel has offered the following dates for a conference in 2023: 13th, 20th, 27th April and 4th or 5th May.

It was agreed that offices should be able to attend a live event by then. However, as previously discussed, retaining the digital element of pre-recorded presentations from organisations in other countries would be good, as would a live stream facility.

Action: Robert will write to the offices to ask which dates would be most suitable and to test the water about staff willingness to attend and likely numbers.

Meetings

Robert advised he had attended the first live meeting with Lochaber Care and Repair Board. He also participated in a Teams meeting with members of East Lothian Council and Care and Repair. As a result, a Councillor has asked COSLA if he can be invited to their next meeting to discuss the need to review the funding arrangements for Care and Repair in Scotland. The Board discussed at length the various funding problems around Scotland.

At a meeting with Argyll and Bute Care and Repair, Robert was asked to discuss with CRS Board how we could support homeowners with their energy bills over the winter. The Board discussed the issues faced by homeowners but decided that they could only be resolved locally through casework.

Action: Ian will look at what energy advice is available, which could perhaps be collated for the CRS website.

7. Financial Statement

The financial statement was noted and approved.

DRAFT

8. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Robert previously with Gerry that the December meeting should be held on Zoom. We will return to live meetings in 2023. The next scheduled date is Friday 9th December at 11.00 am.

DRAFT

The Board approved the report.

9. Financial Statement

The Board noted and approved the Financial Statement.

10. AOCB

There were no other items of business.

11. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Friday 24th June 2022.