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	<b>Minutes of Berwickshire Housing Association Limited</b> <b>Board of Directors</b> <b>Tuesday, 03 February 2026, at 17:30</b> <b>Hybrid meeting – in person and via video conference</b>	
<b>PRESENT</b>	<b>IN ATTENDANCE</b>	
<b>In person</b> Hugh Carr (Chair) Jim McDevitt	<b>In person</b> Michelle Meldrum (MM), Chief Executive (CE) Richard Hukin (RH), Executive Director – Business Support (EDBS) Joanna Voisey (JV) Director of Assets and Sustainability (DOAS) Evie Copland (EC), Director of Customer and Communities (DOCC)	
<b>Via Teams</b> John Urwin Claire McMillan Carolyn Wood Clair Elliot (joined at 17:35) Sandra Leece Siobhan Archibald Caroline Wallace Paul Walker Karen Featherstone (joined at 18:14)	<b>Via Teams</b> Nikki Allman, Executive Assistant (Minute Taker)	
<b>PARA</b>		<b>ACTION</b>
	<b>1. Apologies for Absence &amp; Declarations of Interest</b>	<b>Noting</b>
1	Apologies were received from Calum Boag and Jordan Manning.	
	<b>2. Declarations of Interest</b>	<b>Noting</b>
2	There are no Declarations of Interest.	
	<b>3. Minutes of meetings held on the 25th of November 2025 and Matters Arising</b>	<b>Approval</b>
3	The Board approved the minutes of the meeting of the 25th of November 2025 as a true record of the meeting. <u>Matters Arising</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Refinancing continues to progress with the formulating of credit reports and finalisation of drawdown amounts with lenders. The EDBS confirmed final approval to Board is expected to be presented by the end of Q1.</li> <li>2. Pre-Construction Service Agreement (PCSA) – CE confirmed this has been received and is currently under review by the Development Consultant and a report will be presented to the Board in March for approval.</li> </ol>	
	<b>4. Rent &amp; Service Charge Increase 2026/27</b>	<b>Approval</b>
4	The DOCC presented the report with a comprehensive proposal for the 2026/27, including an evaluation of the findings following the	

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	<p>requirement for consultation with customers on two options, a 4.8% or 5.8% increase with 85% of customers opting for 4.8%, which was noted and discussed by the Board. EDBS confirmed that the base Business Plan (agenda item 5) is based around the 4.8% increase, and that it funded the planned investment programme and achieved expected covenants.</p> <p>The DOCC provided comment around the decline in the response rate with the electronic survey, advising a growing number of customers had asked for a hard copy to be considered for all customers, which is being considering for the future approach.</p> <p>The Chair noted that additional average rental comparability assumptions against other RSLs should include the East Lothian and Berwick area (Bernicia) for future comparability testing.</p>	
5	<p><u>Overview and outcome of service charge review</u></p> <p>The DOCC reported following the freeze last year on service charges, a project team have reviewed the charges against the current costs and developed a new service charge structure.</p>	
6	<p><b>RESOLVED</b> that the Board: The Board approved;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) To apply a 4.8% increase to all rents for homes, lock-up garages, and garage sites from 6 April 2026.</li> <li>b) To apply service charges as set out in relation to the Independent Living, heat with rent, amenity homes at Gowanlea and Station Court. <b>[1]</b></li> </ul>	<b>DOCC</b>
<b>5. Five-Year Financial Plan and 2026/27 Budget</b>		<b>Approval</b>
7	<p>The EDBS presented the 2026/27 budget and five-year forecast figures to the Board, reporting on projected income and expenditure, balance sheet position, and cash flows along with financial health targets and projected covenant compliance. The Board were requested to discuss and approve the budget along with a 4% salary increase for BHA colleagues including the Executive Team, following a salary benchmarking exercise.</p>	
8	<p>Reporting on the financial assumptions being set at the consulted 4.8% rent increase for 2026/27 and then CPI+1% from year two. The EDBS highlighted that although inflation is reducing, some costs remain higher than in previous year and are unlikely to reduce over time.</p>	
9	<p>A question was raised in relation to the proposed salaries increasing by 4%, in terms of what percentage of colleagues remain below the benchmarking data, and what risk does this present. The CE advised the only posts which are currently below the benchmarking threshold are those where colleagues are new in post, these will be reviewed during 2026-27, therefore presenting a low risk to the association. The benchmarking activity has closed the gap across the business and are now in line with the recommendations from the benchmarking report.</p>	
10	<p><b>RESOLVED</b> that the Board:</p>	



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	<p>across the sector. The CE assured the Board that BHA already has a robust process around Damp &amp; Mould, which largely complies with the English regime and Awaab's Law. The Board were advised this will be reviewed when the Scottish Government issues further detailed guidance and requirements in advance of October 2026 to ensure that BHA meet the requirements set out by the introduction of Awaab's law in Scotland. To provide some context the CE advised that currently BHA have 22 open damp and mould cases, of which 20 are low risk.</p> <p>The Chair of the Operations Committee noted, following their recent meeting, concerns about Awaab's Law relating to the eight homes located in England, and how the current policies are relevant given all policies currently follow Scottish Legislation, and does this ensure they meet legislation in England.</p> <p>The CE advised that Awaab's law does not currently apply to BHA's eight homes in England as they are not social housing. However, the UK government has committed to extending Awaab's Law to the private sector in future and we await further guidance and timescales.</p> <p>The DOAS advised of the intention to carry out a full options appraisal on these eight homes, and the findings will be brought to Board for discussion in the coming months.</p>	
15	<p><u>Office Accommodation</u> The CE provided an update on the options agreed by the Board, including a review of the current office building with architect designs being refreshed. The Board will be updated on any further progress when available.</p>	
16	<p><b>RESOLVED</b> that the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Noted the Chief Executives Report</li> <li>b) Noted the upcoming option appraisal report on the 8 properties in Berwick</li> </ul>	
	<b>7. Quarterly Reports (Q3)</b>	<b>Noting</b>
	<i>Karen Featherstone joined the meeting at 18:14</i>	
17	<p><u>7.0 KPI Dashboard</u> The CE presented the Board with the new dashboard showing performance across business-critical indicators and sought feedback on the content and level of information. The Board agreed it was useful and should continue to evolve within the new format.</p>	
18	<p><u>7.1 Master Delivery Plan</u> The CE presented the updated plan as at the end of Q3. The Board requested it would be useful to provide a narrative and assurance on risk on key areas that have not been started or delayed within the plan. <b>[5]</b></p>	<b>CE</b>
19	<p><u>7.2 Management Accounts</u> The EDBS reported on Q3 of 25/26 making surplus of £514.5k against a budgeted loss of £645.7k. Key variances noted to the Board were in relation to the Planned &amp; Cyclical works due to the timing and phasing</p>	



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25	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the Board: a) Noted all the Q3 Reports.	
<b>8. Annual Summary – Procurement Strategy (2024/25)</b>		
26	The EDBS provided the Board with an overview of regulated procurement activity for the year 2024-25 reporting there were 10 regulated procurement contracts awarded, mainly relating to responsive and void repairs contracts.	
27	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the Board: a) Noted the Annual Summary – Procurement Strategy and noted that this summary will in future be provided at the end of each financial year at the August meeting.	
<b>9. Health &amp; Safety Update Report (Bi-Annual)</b>		
28	<p>Seeking further assurance, questions were raised by the Board on being content with the current performance levels, in particular relating to Damp &amp; Mould.</p> <p>The DOAS responded that they are satisfied with current performance and following recent clarification on the future ARC requirements by the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR), BHA will be reviewing their approach and reporting back to Board to provide further assurance that all aspects of Awaab’s law will be fulfilled.</p> <p>The Scottish Housing Network (SHN) reports the average days to complete are 11 and we are at 17 days. There is some uncertainty that RSLs are calculating this indicator consistently.</p>	
29	It was requested that the EDBS review or remove the RAG status colour indicators that relate to the accident and incident reporting. [7]	
30	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the Board: a) Noted the Health & Safety Report (Bi-Annual)	
<b>10. Policies for renewal</b>		<b>Approval</b>
31	<p><u>1. Asset Policies</u> Damp &amp; Mould – a discussion took place in relation to the draft policy in terms of how proactively the team identify issues and for the policy to be more explicit around the requirements of Awaab's Law now this was clearer.</p> <p>The DOAS agreed that the policy will require further explanation and assurance along with guidance for BHA colleagues. A further review of the policy and toolkit will be completed in advance of October 2026 with a final policy to be presented to the Board for approval.</p>	<b>DOAS</b>
32	Reactive Repairs – The Board noted and approved the updated policy.	<b>DOAS</b>
33	Planned & Cyclical Maintenance – The Board approved the policy in the current format but noted the new Asset Lead will review it further, which will likely result in a revised policy being presented ahead of the scheduled tri-annual review. [8]	<b>DOAS</b>

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34	<u>2. Customer</u> Protecting Vulnerable Customers – Reporting minor updates at this point but may be re-presented to Board due to Ask & Act pending guidance from Scottish Government following consultation. [9]	<b>DOCC</b>
35	<u>3. Governance</u> Board Diversity Policy - No major changes for the tri-annual review [10]	<b>EDBS</b>
<b>11. Subsidiary Board Minutes</b>		
36	1) BCR Partnership Board (30 <sup>th</sup> October 2025) 2) BHA Enterprise Board (13 <sup>th</sup> November 2025)	
<b>12. BHA Committee Minutes</b>		Homologation
37	The Board homologated the following: 1) Risk & Assurance Committee (14 <sup>th</sup> October 2025) 2) Operations Committee (28 <sup>th</sup> October 2025)	
<b>15. Any other competent Business</b>		
38	There was no other competent business.	
<b>Date of next meeting: 24<sup>th</sup> March 2026 at 17:30</b>		
<b>The meeting closed at 19:10</b>		
Signed: _____ (Chair) _____ Date: _____		



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Item	DETAILS	RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET COMPLETION	STATUS
03/02/26-07	<b>Item 9 – Health &amp; Safety Report:</b> Remove the RAG status colour indicators that relate to the accident and incident reporting.	EDBS	02/06/2026	In Progress
03/02/26-07	<b>Item 10 – Policies for renewal (Assets)</b> <b>(Damp &amp; Mould):</b> Further explanation and guidance to be drafted with final policy to be presented to Board before October 2026. <b>(Reactive Repairs):</b> Distribute following approval <b>(Planned &amp; Cyclical Maintenance):</b> Distribute following approval	DOAS DOAS DOAS	02/06/2026 ASAP ASAP	In Progress Completed Completed
03/02/26-08	<b>Item 10 - Policies for renewal (Protecting Vulnerable Customers):</b> Distribute following approval.	DOCC	Unknown	Awaiting Government Guidance
03/02/26-09	<b>Item 10 – Policies for renewal (Board Diversity Policy):</b> Distribute following approval.	EDBS	ASAP	Completed
	Action completion overdue			
	Action ongoing and date not due			
	Action complete			