

EAST LOTHIAN HOUSING ASSOCIATION

A meeting of the **ELHA Board** was held on Thursday 21 August 2025 at 7.20pm, in the Hayman Room at ELHA Head Office, Haddington, following on from the meeting with the External Auditor, David Jeffcoat, of Alexander Sloan, Accountants.

Present:	Brian Logan	(6/6)	Eileen Shand	(5/6)
	David Rose	(6/6)	Katrina Hamilton	(6/6)
	Iain Atkinson	(4/6)	Peter Ewart	(4/6)
	Maureen Batten	(4/6)	Paul Hillard	(5/6)

In attendance: Martin Pollhammer, Chief Executive
 Karen Barry, Director of Housing.
 Gary Alison, Director of Finance & Corporate Services
 Charlie Cooley, Director of R3 & Asset Management
 Eric Stoddart, Executive Support Officer (Minutes)

GENERAL

1. **Apologies**
 Alan Forsyth (3/6), Pamela Macleod (4/6), and Shirley Evans (2/6).
2. **Declarations of Interest by ELHA Board Members**
 It was noted that both the Chair (Brian Logan) and Vice Chair (Eileen Shand) would leave the meeting at relevant points during the discussion of Item 17 (Annual General Meeting: ELHA Board Membership).
3. **Minutes of Meeting of 29 May 2025**
 The Minutes were approved by the ELHA Board. They were proposed by Iain Atkinson and Seconded by David Rose.
4. **Action List**
 The Chief Executive asked if everyone was happy with the amended Health & Safety Strategy wording shown under Item 12, and this was confirmed.
5. **Matters Arising**
 There were no matters arising.

PRIORITY ITEMS

6. **Annual Procurement Report**
 The Director of Finance & Corporate Services explained that where an organisation is required to prepare a Procurement Strategy, or review an existing one, it must also publish an Annual Procurement Report on its regulated procurements as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of the financial year.

The Annual Report must address all the matters contained within an organisation's Procurement Strategy, and this is covered off in Section 3.0 of the Report. Progress was made against all the actions within the Procurement Strategy Action Plan, and some of the actions have continued into 2025/26 as they are ongoing actions. The Key Performance Indicators set to measure progression against the Strategy were achieved in the year.

The Director of Finance & Corporate Services advised that he had nothing to add to the report. The items reported are low in number, and this is due to the relationship ELHA has with R3 and with reporting levels set for regulated procurement, which is any procurement for public goods, supplies or services with a value of over £50,000 or any procurement for works with a value of over £2m.

It was also noted that a condition, as part of Housing Association Grant (HAG) funding, is around carrying out a procurement capability assessment, and this report along with the strategy, help evidence ELHA's commitment and drive to ensuring value for money and transparency in its procurement processes.

The ELHA Board **approved** the Annual Procurement Report.

7. **Tenant Satisfaction Survey Results**

The Director of Housing advised that the Association appointed Research Resource to carry out a Tenant Satisfaction Survey on its behalf to seek views on the services ELHA provides, how well it performs these services, and to help identify where services can be improved. The survey took place during May and June 2025, when 752 tenants took part in the survey (749 were face to face interviews), representing a 54% response rate.

The survey results included questions relating to the Scottish Social Housing Charter indicators which ELHA is required to report on through the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC).

A comparison of results for the last three surveys (Appendix 1) demonstrates that satisfaction levels have increased significantly from the 2022 survey with regards to the overall service, the quality of home, and repairs service. All other indicators have remained consistent with the 2022 survey or have seen no significant change in satisfaction.

A comparison has also been made to the ARC Scottish national averages for 2023/24 in order to provide some wider context to the results. This demonstrates that the Association exceeds the average in all areas.

Plans are currently underway for 1 October 2025 when the full survey results will be presented to staff and the TIG, with an opportunity for group discussions. The ELHA Board will be updated at the Board Away Day in November 2025.

The Director of Housing indicated that she had nothing to add to the report, but she was obviously delighted with the excellent results, and in particular the responses in respect of the quality of Housing & Repairs Service.

It was noted that the responses are way above the National Average for 2023/24, and that it would be interesting to see where the Associations sits when the latest figures come out (for 2024/25) at the end of the month.

Only one figure was below national average, but did not relate to tenancy services. This was the satisfaction figure for factoring services, which was not unexpected. The Association has very few factored properties, and in most cases only communal insurance is provided, with owners reluctant to pay for this. Consideration will still be given around how to improve satisfaction in this area.

The Vice Chair commented that the figures were excellent, and the Chair agreed that the results were fantastic.

The Director of Housing highlighted that there had been a slight concern around the quality of communication, as this had dropped from the 2019 to the 2022 surveys, but that satisfaction levels had improved for this category. It was also noted that for all categories, the responses were above the ARC National Average for 2023/24. It was also pointed out that due to the cycle used for ARC Reporting, it will be next year before these results are reflected in national performance reporting.

The Chief Executive added that another positive about these results, is that a lot of these figures will last for three years for regulatory reporting purposes.

The Chair recognised that these results are presented for information purposes, but asked that congratulations be passed back to all staff involved.

The Director of Housing highlighted that the staff event being organised for 1 October 2025 will help staff to understand the context of the performances achieved.

The ELHA Board noted the Tenant Satisfaction Survey

PERFORMANCE

8. Key Performance Indicators 2025/26

The Chief Executive highlighted the KPIs referring to Board Attendance, where the Quarterly Target has been set at 75%. It was noted that there had been conversations at a previous Board Meeting about this changing to '100% being quorate' instead of retaining the previous target of 75%, but this discussion did not reach a conclusion.

Katrina Hamilton suggested that could move the target to 'have 100% of meetings quorate'.

The Chief Executive also mentioned that it was sometimes difficult to know in advance if Board Members are attending a meeting, and this is why it is important to respond on Decision Time.

It was also recognised that, in general, it was better to be above any target, rather than just being on, or meeting a specified target. Paul Hillard commented that he would be rather uneasy if the target was reduced to meetings being quorate. This was felt to be too low a bar, especially given that if the meeting is not quorate, then it wouldn't take place.

Accordingly it was decided to change Committee attendance to 67%, but retain ELHA Board attendance at 75%.

The Chief Executive referred to the KPI for 'Percentage of Tenants Using Their My Home Account' and highlighted that the target of this had been increased from 90% to 92%, as during 2024/25 the previous target was met. This is recognised as a challenging target, but performance is already at 91% at the end of the first quarter, and digital services continue to be promoted at every opportunity.

Similarly, the new target of 89% for 'Percentage of Tenant Paper-Free' is also considered challenging, however the percentage of sign-ups has increased slightly by 1% on the previous quarter to 88%.

In respect of the missed KPI relating to 'Unit Reactive and Void Maintenance Costs', it was agreed this would be covered when reviewing the Management Accounts.

Iain Atkinson commented that overall, this seemed a very positive report. The ELHA Board noted the Key Performance Indicators 2025/26 Report.

9. **Care & Repair Quarterly Management Accounts**

The Director of Finance & Corporate Services advised that the Care & Repair Income and Expenditure Account for the period to 30 June 2025, shows income £0.3k under budget and total expenditure £2.4k over budget, giving rise to a net deficit of £2.8k.

Whilst there are no significant variances compared to budget, there were a couple of ones to note, as follows:

1. SRS Client Contributions and SRS Materials costs - £0.4k and (£0.8k).
The Small Repairs Service (SRS) ended in March 2025, however a small number of client contributions and material costs fell into 2025/26. The Association does not accrue costs or income at this level, therefore there is no reversal to offset these.
2. Salaries, Employer's NI, Employer Pension Contributions – (£2.3k).
The redundancy costs were accrued in the year end accounts, but the actual salary payment for the month of April 2025 was missed. These will therefore be a permanent variance throughout the year.

The Director of Finance & Corporate Services advised that there was nothing further to add to the report. The ELHA Board noted the Care & Repair Quarter One Management Accounts.

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT**10. Former Tenancy Debt Write-Off**

The Director of Housing advised that there are no former tenancy debts in excess of £750 recommended for write off, for the period to 30 June 2025. However, Appendix 1 includes write offs of debts less than £750 for noting by the ELHA Board, as Senior Staff at ELHA have Delegated Authority to write off such debts in line with the Authorisation and Standard Charges / Allowances Policy.

The Chair invited any questions, but queried whether, given the new strategic approach for the ELHA Board, it still needed to see this level of detail.

The Chief Executive agreed that he would be happy for this task to be delegated entirely to the Senior Management Team.

Katrina Hamilton asked if it would be possible to just see the total, and the Chair asked if this could be added (just the total) into the Management Accounts, to which the Director of Finance & Corporate Services agreed.

The Director of Housing highlighted that to achieve this, it would be necessary to amend the authorisation levels within the Authorisation and Standard Charges / Allowances Policy, and this was agreed by the ELHA Board.

The ELHA Board noted the Tenant Debt Write Offs Report.

POLICIES**11. Policy Review Summary**

The Chief Executive highlighted that there are no policies timetabled for review at this meeting that have been delegated in this way.

The ELHA Board noted the Policy Review Summary Report.

12. Procurement & Value for Money Strategy Review

The Director of Finance & Corporate Services advised that a Procurement & Value for Money Strategy was approved in August 2023, and that this Strategy was for the three years to August 2026. Whilst there is no requirement for an organisation to prepare a completely new procurement strategy each year, there is a requirement that an organisation must review its Procurement Strategy annually and make such revisions as it considers appropriate for the purposes of the Act.

The only proposed key changes are to the Action Plan (Appendix 2) to update the Action Plan from 2024/25 to 2025/26. Progress against actions from the 2024/25 Action Plan are covered in the Annual Procurement Report (Agenda Item 6).

To align the Procurement Strategy Action Plan to each Business Plan year, the Procurement Strategy will next be reviewed in March 2026 to set the Action Plan for the next financial year. The Action Plan presented is reflective of actions to be completed between now and the end of March 2026.

The ELHA Board **approved** the updated Action Plan for the Procurement & Value for Money Strategy.

13. **Association Membership Policy Review**

The Chief Executive advised that the Association's Membership Policy is due its periodic review, and that any changes to this Policy requires ELHA Board approval. It was noted that only minor changes are required to the policy, as listed, but it was recognised that a significant amount of time had been spent due to the recent Governance changes, and principally the change in name from 'Management Committee' to 'ELHA Board'.

It was pointed out that this has had a considerable impact on the annual review of the 'Guide to Information' by Executive Support, which has been a far bigger job this year due to the level of changes as a result of the changes in governance.

The Chair concurred and added that there was a further change required because of this, under Section 4.3. It was also noted that (under Section 1.4) reference should be to the 'Equality Act 2010' rather than 'the Equalities Act 2010'.

The Vice Chair referred to Section 3.2, and the experience looked for in applicants for membership, and wondered if some reference to IT should also be included here. The Chair responded that this sort of background or experience was probably more applicable when seeking to recruit new Board members, so he was happy to leave Section 3.2 as it stands at present.

The ELHA Board **approved** the Association Membership Policy Review, subject to the minor corrections highlighted above.

14. **Chief Executive's Appraisal Policy Review**

The Chair explained that the Board approved the Conversations Framework Policy at its last meeting in May 2025, and with that noted the requirement for a Chief Executive's Appraisal Policy. This Policy had been developed using a cut-down and slightly amended version of the previous Appraisal Policy, and has been prepared through discussions with the Vice Chair and Chief Executive.

The Chief Executive thanked the Chair and Vice Chair for their involvement.

The Chair added that the Policy is presented as a new Policy and so no changes are tracked in the attached Policy Document. The most notable addition is at Section 3.3, where it is noted that in future the Senior Management Team will be consulted ahead of the appraisal meeting.

The ELHA Board **approved** the Chief Executive's Appraisal Policy.

15. Records Management Policy

The Director of Housing explained that a Records Management Policy ensures that records are managed systematically and securely, to support operational needs, regulatory compliance, accountability and transparency, whilst enabling effective service delivery.

The Director of Housing added that having a Records Management Policy also ensures compliance with the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA). The Scottish Ministers Code of Practice on Records Management, issued under Section 61 of FOISA, recommends that the Association have a Records Management Policy and organisational arrangements in place that supports record management.

Katrina Hamilton referred to section 6.2 of the Policy and asked that there be a full stop added after 'regulatory requirement' and that 'so stop' be removed, and this was agreed.

Katrina Hamilton also asked if there should be a further phrase added at the end of 6.2 to the effect that 'This could result in disciplinary action being taken, including dismissal'.

The Director of Housing offered to add an appropriate phrase, but the Director of R3 & Asset Management highlighted that this is already covered elsewhere in the Policy (under Section 11.3) so it was agreed not to add under 6.2.

The Vice Chair asked if there was any reference to retention of documents, and the Director of Housing explained that there is reference in the Policy to the Data Retention Schedule, and that this is reviewed annually.

The Chief Executive added that this is a brand new policy, and noted that it is proposed that only material changes will come to the Board.

The ELHA Board **approved** the Records Management Policy.

GOVERNANCE**16. Secretary's Report**

An application for membership has been received from Mr Andrew Philip of Longniddry.

In addition, seeking to homologate the use of the Seal, in respect of a Minute of Agreement transferring the Association's 75% share of 23 Fowlers Court, Prestonpans, to the new owner of the property.

The ELHA Board:

- a) Approved the application for Membership; and
- b) Homologated the use of the Seal.

17. Annual General Meeting: ELHA Board Membership

The Chair introduced the report and explained that the Board of East Lothian Housing Association may consist of up to fifteen members, however the Association's Standing Orders aim for between ten and twelve places to be filled at any one time, allowing other places to be used for succession planning purposes. Following last year's Annual General Meeting, the Association had eleven elected members.

Under Rule 39.1 at least one third of the members of the ELHA Board must retire. If no other members, or an insufficient number of members have indicated their intention to retire to fulfil this requirement, those with the longest period since their last election should retire.

The four Members required to retire are as follows:

- Shirley Evans
- Paul Hillard
- Brian Logan
- Eileen Shand

Under Rule 37.6, the ELHA Board must satisfy itself that any ELHA Board member seeking re-election after a period of continuous service of nine or more years can demonstrate their continued effectiveness. Rule 37.6 is applicable this year as Shirley Evans, Brian Logan and Eileen Shand all have nine or more years of continuous service each.

The Chair highlighted that the ELHA Board has developed its Succession Plan to ensure the right balance of experience, renewal and refreshment of the ELHA Board going forwards. This included ensuring that the proportion of ELHA Board members with nine or more years' service does not normally exceed 50%. Of the current ELHA Board, by the date of the 2025 AGM, six members will have served more than nine years, or 55%.

Shirley Evans has confirmed that she wishes to retire as an ELHA Board Member at the Annual General Meeting due to work commitments. Shirley has made a significant contribution to the work of ELHA over many years and her input to the Association on legal and housing management issues will be missed. It was recognised that her input on legal issues has been incredibly valuable to the Association, and it is the intention to also note her departure at the AGM.

Paul Hillard requested that her contribution be reflected in the wording of the Minute.

The Chair advised that Paul Hillard and Eileen Shand have both confirmed they are willing to stand for election, as is the Chair. In accordance with Rule 39.4, Paul Hillard may stand for re-election.

However, as the Chair (Brian Logan) has served for more than nine years, and as Eileen Shand reaches that point at the AGM, under Rule 37.6, the ELHA Board must satisfy itself that any ELHA Board Member seeking re-election after a period of continuous service of nine or more years can demonstrate their continued effectiveness, and in order to stand, their nominations require to be endorsed by the ELHA Board.

Eileen Shand was invited to leave the meeting, whilst her nomination was discussed by the rest of the ELHA Board, and she left at 7.53pm.

The Chair highlighted that Eileen Shand is Vice Chair of the Association and brings extensive housing management experience from her previous roles as well as valuable experience from her current roles with Dalkeith CAB and as a member of the Housing and Property Chamber of the First-tier Tribunal for Scotland.

The Chair stated that in his view, Eileen continues to make a valuable contribution to the ELHA Board's discussions and activities, and recommended that the ELHA Board endorse her nomination for re-election at the forthcoming 2025 AGM. The ELHA Board agreed with that recommendation.

Eileen Shand re-joined the meeting at 7:56pm, at which point Brian Logan left the meeting, and Eileen Shand, as Vice Chair, took over the chairing of the meeting at 7:57pm.

It was noted that Brian Logan also had to stand down and seek re-election, and in addition the ELHA Board needed to satisfy itself that in seeking re-election after a period of continuous service of nine or more years, that Brian Logan can demonstrate their continued effectiveness. As the current Chair, and a hard working Member of ELHA Board, the ELHA Board was happy to endorse the nomination of Brian Logan for re-election at the forthcoming 2025 AGM.

Paul Hillard highlighted that the Governance Committee had recently interviewed a potential candidate, Andrew Philip, to join the ELHA Board, and thanked those Governance Committee members who had been able to attend the interview at short notice.

Paul Hillard explained that Andrew is Director of Finance at Capability Scotland, holds accounting qualifications, and has previous experience in employment & the NHS. Andrew also holds a Non-Exec role with Deaf Scotland, so has experience of the Third Sector, and is involved with other organisations in the local area (Longniddry / East Lothian).

It was recognised that Andrew is employed by the same organisation as the Chair, and it would be important to be able to evidence his independence. It was for that reason in particular that Andrew's interview was undertaken by the Chair of the Governance Committee, and the Chair of Risk & Audit, rather than the Chair of the ELHA Board.

Paul Hillard indicated that he wished to nominate Andrew, and believes that the skills and experience he would bring to the ELHA Board would be very useful, and in line with the skills requirements identified in the Succession Plan.

Brian Logan re-joined the meeting at 8.07pm and resumed as Chair.

The ELHA Board approved:

- a) The endorsement of nominations for Brian Logan and Eileen Shand for re-election to the ELHA Board; and
- b) The potential nomination of Andrew Philip.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business, and the meeting closed at 8.08pm.

DATE OF NEXT BOARD MEETING

AGM: Thursday 25 September 2025 at the Maitlandfield Hotel, Haddington at 2.30pm, followed by ELHA Board meeting on Thursday 25 September 2025 at the Maitlandfield Hotel, Haddington at 4.00pm.

**ADOPTION OF THESE MINUTES APPROVED AT THE MEETING ON
25 SEPTEMBER 2025**

Signed

(Chair)