

Management Committee Update

Issue 14

March 2019



Orkney Housing Association is governed by a voluntary Management Committee elected at our AGM in September each year. The Committee's role is to set and monitor our strategy and performance. Day to day operational management is carried out by the Leadership Team. Some of the Committee's main functions include: approving budgets, reviewing policies, diligent financial management, major decision making and organisational direction and good governance to ensure statutory and regulatory requirements are met. Management Committee are keen to issue an update following each formal meeting (6 per year).



Pictured from l to r:- John Stockan, Dave Dawson, Bill Wallace, John Rodwell, Linda Forbes (on screen) Fiona Lettice, Philip Cook, Elaine Grieve, Wendy Baikie.

Points of interest from the meeting

Committee Recruitment Update

Following a successful *Come and Meet our Committee Members* session held in January, members were delighted to approve the co-option of 2 new members and to welcome another 2 prospective candidates to observe the meeting.

OHAL Business Plan

The Association's Business Plan for 2019-22 was considered and approved by Committee. The plan includes key actions where, over the next three years, we will:

- Keep rents affordable, by limiting rent increases to no more than RPI inflation
- Sustainably build around 20 new homes each year
- Continue providing high quality services and support
- Ensure our staff are supported and developed
- Be efficient in how the Association is run.

Detailed budget information was presented which included further efficiencies, with budgets including salary and staff expenses reduced from last year. There was extensive work on financial stress-testing presented, to give reassurance of the financial viability of the Association for the next 30 years.

The full Business Plan will be available to view or download from our website from early April.

Care & Repair Business Plan

This was presented to members by the new C&R Manager, Fraser Devine, outlining the importance of retaining the service at the current level as the demand continues to rise. The 'scheme of assistance' being the core function of the service to ensure that everyone in Orkney has a home suited to their needs, living in safety and comfort. The plan set out a number of outcomes to explore new ways of working with local partners and accessing funds to deliver the service to those in most need.

John Rodwell, on behalf of members, thanked the retiring C&R Manager Mike Cooper for his dedication to the service over the last 30 years and wished him all the best for a long and happy retirement. In true OHAL style he was presented with a rather fabulous cake!

Members present

27 March 2019

- Wendy Baikie
- Philip Cook
- Dave Dawson
- Linda Forbes (via Skype)
- Elaine Grieve
- Fiona Lettice
- John Rodwell
- John Stockan



Universal Credit Update

Since January 2019 the Association has had access to the Department of Work and Pensions Landlord Portal. This portal allows staff to verify a tenant's claim for UC within 24 hours and then offer a face to face appointment with a Housing Officer within 7 days. These appointments discuss different payment options and tenants are encouraged to pay from their UC claim rather than set up an alternative payment arrangement (APA) where appropriate. The Head of Housing & Customer Services explained to members the complexity of setting up an APA which could see considerably longer waiting times for payments. Members were advised that early indicators of this approach has been positive with a number of affected tenants having a zero balance or credit on their rent account.

Cost of Being a Tenant - Members received a detailed breakdown on the cost of being an OHAL tenant using the SFHA affordability tool. This tool looks at living costs such as rent, council tax, energy costs and childcare and allowed members to see any differences between OHAL and peers such as OIC tenants.

Development Update

- Walliwall 5, Kirkwall has been acquired this month. The provisional completion of these 8 rented units will be in January 2020.
- The Crafty, Kirkwall site has an expected start date of October 2019.
- Upper Sunnybank, Stromness design team tender returns were received.

Governance

Sub-Committees - Reports were presented by the Chairs from the last ARM and P&R Sub-Committees setting out the work they had undertaken in order to give assurance to Management Committee.

Committee Appraisals - Members received a positive report from this year's appraisals from the Chair & Vice Chair and noted the paperwork will be reviewed in advance next year.

SFHA Chairs' Conference - Members were delighted to receive an entertaining and informative report from the Vice Chair following attendance at the conference.

Regulatory Framework

Committee were updated on the Scottish Housing Regulator's new Regulatory Framework and copies were issued to all Members.

Policy Reviews & Approvals

Committee were asked to approve amendments to 5 existing policies:

- Treasury Management Strategy - which sets out economic assumptions for how we manage quarterly and annual financial forecasting for the year ahead.

The policies listed below were reviewed and updated to take account of the new Regulation of Social Housing in Scotland guidance issued by The Scottish Housing Regulator in February 2019.

- Development Policy
- Development Risk Management Policy
- Landbanking Policy
- Membership Policy

Staffing Update

Members passed on their congratulations to Saffron Macivor on successful completion of her Charter Institute of Housing Level 5 Diploma.

Resident Panel Update

The Panel attended a training session last month with a procurement specialist. The session explored ways in which tenants can become involved in how their rent money is spent. The group will be carrying out a few estate walkabouts to see how the gardens and grounds maintenance contract is being executed. If you would like to find out more please contact Suzy Boardman, details below.



Anyone interested in getting involved with the Association can contact
Suzy Boardman on 01856 875253 ext 205 or suzy.boardman@ohal.org.uk

<http://www.ohal.org.uk/tenants/get-involved/>