

## **Minutes of Meeting of the Management Committee of Orkney Housing Association Limited held on Wednesday 27 May 2020 at 10.30am in the Association's office.**

**Present:** Fiona Lettice (Chair), Philip Cook, Dave Dawson, Linda Forbes, Elaine Grieve, John Rodwell, Jason Taylor, Bill Wallace, John White, Roella Wilson and Wendy Baikie – all attended remotely via Zoom.

**In attendance:** In person:  
Craig Spence (Chief Executive – CE)  
Richard Flett (Development & Properties Manager – DPM)  
Mhairi Hughes (Secretary / Head of Corporate Governance – HCG)  
Paul Scott (Head of Housing & Customer Services – HHCS)  
Remotely:  
Sandy Dennison (Finance Manager – FM)  
Anne Fletcher, (Director of Finance & Asset Management – DFAM)  
Connie Shearer (Minute Taker)

The CE welcomed everyone and it was agreed the meeting could be recorded for the purpose of producing an accurate set of Minutes and destroyed afterwards. He then handed over to the Chair.

### **PART 1 – STANDING ITEMS**

#### **1.1 Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies. The Chair noted that the HHCS (who did not have papers on the Agenda) was in an adjacent room for social distancing purposes, could hear discussions and was available for any queries.

#### **1.2 Declarations of (a) interest and (b) hospitality given/received in last 12 months for any items on the agenda**

Dave Dawson and Jason Taylor both declared an interest in Items S1 & S2 and would not take part in discussions.

#### **1.3 Minutes of the Management Committee meeting held 25 March 2020**

1.3.1 2.9, Resolutions & Applications for Membership: A member requested clarification of this item, and it was agreed the wording be changed to “Members approved 4 resolutions in respect of shared ownership disposals”.

1.3.2 2.1.6, Approval of OHAL Appendices 2020/21: A member enquired whether postponing the rent increase had been discussed at national level. The CE explained that the current rent increase went ahead as planned on 1 April, not just for OHAL but, as far as he was aware, in all housing associations who had already notified tenants of an increase. Active discussions were ongoing and he deals with this in his paper later, MC/20/04.

1.3.3 2.1.13, Care & Repair Business Plan: In the final sentence ‘maximum’ should read ‘maximise’.

With these changes, the Minutes were agreed to be an accurate record of the

meeting and were proposed by Bill Wallace and seconded by Philip Cook. The Minutes to be signed by the Chair at a later date.

#### **1.4 Matters Arising & Deferred Items (Paper No MC/20/01)**

- 1.4.1 2020-21 Business Plan Appendices – Risk Register: The CE explained that he planned to send this out to members by the end of next week.

A member said they could not remember discussing a pandemic during risk planning. The HCG explained that this was in the Business Continuity & Disaster Recovery Plan (BCP) which was enacted at the end of March and was discussed when the BCP was reviewed. The CE said this risk had been identified previously but had now become the biggest current risk which was being managed daily.

Minutes 25 March 2020, Item 3.1, Coronavirus Update: As this was not covered elsewhere, a member asked about Standing Orders being changed to delegate more powers to the CE, and decisions by members made via email. The CE explained that this had been discussed in case circumstances required him to exercise such powers. However, nothing had changed, the BCP was in place and, to date, there had been no requirement for decisions beyond existing authorities. He set out that he felt there was no need to put additional delegation in place unless and until it was required. He also said that no decisions via email had been required but a meeting may be called at the end of June and he would prefer this to be in person (remotely) rather than by email.

#### **1.5 Future Meeting Dates:**

Wednesday 08 July, 10.30am – Audit & Risk Management Sub Committee  
Wednesday 29 July, 10.30am – Management Committee

As well as the above, there may also be the following meetings:

Late June – Management Committee

Late summer – Audit & Risk Management Sub Committee to approve accounts to go to full Committee

Possible Health & Safety Working Party - tbc

## **PART 2 – STRATEGY**

#### **S1 Development Update Report (Paper No MC/20/02)**

- S1.1 This report provided an update of the development programme to date. The DPM briefly went over the current status of the proposed developments at Upper Sunnybank and Evie, and said approval was being sought for the Walliwall 6 project.

- S1.2 There being no queries, members:

- a) approved the final out-turn costs for the Walliwall 5 project; and
- b) noted the current position with the development programme.

## **S2 Development Projects (Crafty & Kirk Park4) (Paper No MC/20/03)**

- S2.1 The DPM gave an overview of the paper which included a background to the proposed developments at Kirk Park, Orphir and The Crafty, Kirkwall and outlined some of the issues to be considered before a decision is made on whether to progress these projects or not.
- S2.2 Discussion took place with key points being:
- Members did not want to risk losing the high level of grant funding from the Scottish Government (SG) as it was unlikely this level would be offered again.
  - Development was vitally important, and members wished to continue with this and support the local construction industry.
  - Members were fully aware of balancing a range of risks and that there would, inevitably, be extra costs due to the current pandemic.
  - The Association must be careful to protect its own position and was correct to be looking at the long-term financial viability of contractors.
- S2.3 The DPM was complimented on providing such a clear and concise paper, exploring and balancing the risks of the development projects. Members agreed to proceed with the first 2 recommendations, with an update paper to be presented at a future meeting.
- S2.4 Following this discussion, members:
- a) noted the current position with the developments at the Crafty and Kirk Park; and
  - b) granted authority to the Development & Properties Manager to sign the AHSP Grant Offer of £880,600 for Kirk Park Phase 4 on the understanding that no contract will be entered into without Member's authority.

## **S3 COVID-19 – Safely Delivering Services (Paper No MC/20/04 enclosed)**

- S3.1 The CE presented his paper which gave an update on the impacts of the COVID-19 global pandemic on OHAL, and the steps which have been taken to safely deliver services. He went over the paper summarising the:
- Impact on OHAL services
  - Impact on OHAL staffing
  - Financial consequences
  - Possible forward scenarios
  - Sectoral Guidance
  - Governance considerations
- S3.2 Regarding the staff survey, he was pleased to report that all staff (except one on sick leave) had participated and had presented numerous ideas and suggestions for going forward. He noted that staff had expressed gratitude for

the way OHAL continues to look after their staff. Once the responses have been properly collated the CE will send out this feedback to members.

- S3.3 A member suggested that Section 5 of the questionnaire (Your Personal Situation) was also relevant for Management Committee and the CE said he would send this out to all members.
- S3.4 Responding to a query about the significant impact on the budget, the CE said a report would be brought to members at the next meeting.
- S3.5 Members also noted that the HHCS and his team were in regular contact with other charities (CAB, Domestic Abuse Forum, etc) and looking at ways to support struggling families.
- S3.6 Members discussed the report, which they found very informative, and commended the Leadership Team and all staff for the exceptional work being done in sustaining essential services during this time.
- S3.7 Members:
- a) Discussed the contents of this report which has impacts for our short and long-term strategy;
  - b) Noted the questionnaire which has been sent out to staff, and that its findings will help define safe working;
  - c) Sought any assurances they required from the Leadership Team as to how the Association is ensuring safe delivery of essential services during the global COVID-19 pandemic; and
  - d) Agreed that options which allow for a quorate AGM with remote/digital participation for members be fully explored and reported back to Committee.

#### **S4 Approval of Loan Portfolio Submission** (Paper No MC/20/05 enclosed)

- S4.1 The FM said this was an annual return and attachment 2 provided a summary of the loans. A member asked about percentages of security and the FM explained that this referred to the value of properties that have been pledged against a loan.
- S4.2 In response to a query, the FM agreed to include next year, definitions of the 3 different basis for our loans.
- S4.3 Members then approved the 2019/20 Loan Portfolio return and authorised the Director of Finance & Asset Management to submit the return to the Regulator on their behalf.

### **PART 3 – GOVERNANCE & ASSURANCE**

#### **G1 SHR Self-Assessment Update** (Paper No MC/20/06)

- G1.1 This paper demonstrated that OHAL complies with everything we are required to, and the HCG pointed out that the letters received from the SHR showed

what they are advising and seeking from us.

**G1.2** Members then:

- a) Agreed that no material changes are required to the AAS since its submission;
- b) Noted the Notifiable Events reported to the SHR via our Account Manager, as detailed in Attachment 1 of the paper, since the last meeting;
- c) Noted the position with regards to Equalities & Human Rights;
- d) Noted the additions to the Regulatory Standards Evidence Bank as listed at Section 5 of the paper;
- e) Noted the content of the letter from the SHR regarding our first Annual Assurance Statement as at Attachment 2 of the paper;
- f) Noted the position with regards to our 2020/21 SHR Engagement Plan; and
- g) Noted the content of the letter from the SHR regarding monthly COVID-19 reporting requirements as at Attachment 3 of the paper and that our first report has been submitted.

**G2** **Annual Governance Report** (Paper No MC/20/07)

G2.1 The HCG presented the paper which monitors compliance with Governance Policies and also contains GDPR, FOI and EIR statistics which we are required to report annually.

G2.2 Responding to a query, the HCG said one FOI request had been received and responded to. She also confirmed that any such requests are published on OHAL's website.

G2.3 Two minor data breaches had occurred, and she assured members these had been fully investigated and procedures amended but that neither had met the criteria for reporting to the ICO.

G2.3 Members then noted the contents of this report.

**G3** **Resolutions & Applications for Membership** (Paper No MC/20/08)

G3.1 Members approved one resolution in respect of shared ownership disposals

## **PART 4 – PERFORMANCE**

**P1** **Q4 Finance Report** (Paper No MC/20/09)

P1.1 The FM gave an overview of the paper which summarised the financial position at the end of 31 March 2020. He went over the figures and explained that the main underspend was on reactive repairs, but this is likely to change once contractors return to work after lockdown.

P1.2 A member queried the number of major repairs which required replacing NIBE heating systems. The DPM explained this system was one of the first heat

pumps that we fitted and when there is a fault that is not economical to repair we are replacing the system with storage heating.

P1.3 A member queried the planned maintenance costs relating to the kitchen replacements at Queen Sonja Kloss and the DPM explained this was due to the high number of wheelchair standard kitchens in this scheme.

P1.4 Members then noted the financial position at 31 March 2020.

## **P2 Complaints & Compliments Report (Paper No MC/20/10)**

P2.1 The HCG presented the report which provides data and analysis of the complaints and compliments received during 2019/20. As in previous years, Garden & Grounds Maintenance receive the majority of complaints but the HHCS and his team continue to work with the contractors on this. However, she was pleased to report a high number of compliments had been received, particularly for OHAL's Trades Team.

P2.2 A member enquired about complaints against staff and the HCG said these were mainly about decisions made or how a situation was handled. All are fully investigated, and any lessons learned taken on board. She went on to explain the complaints handling process and said this is also on our website.

P2.3 Members noted the contents of the report.

## **P3 New Homes Satisfaction Survey Report (Paper No MC/20/11)**

P3.1 The DPM explained that the only project to reach the end of the Defects Period in 2019/20 was at Walliwall Phase 3. Questionnaires had been sent out to all 22 rented properties, with 9 being returned and the feedback shown in Attachment 3 of the paper.

P3.2 Responding to a query, he said the main areas of concern for residents were the layout of the scheme and noise from the ventilation systems. He explained that the layouts are as required from SG. OHAL has expressed concerns about this to OIC Roads Department but there is not a mechanism for feeding this back to SG. He has taken on board noise concerns and is looking at alternative systems.

P3.3 A member asked about the availability of power sockets with USB points had been considered for properties and the DPM said these are not being put in as technology changes and things quickly go out of date. Adequate numbers of sockets are being installed though.

P3.4 Members then noted the contents of this report.

## **P4 Contractors & Consultants Annual Review (Paper No MC/20/12)**

P4.1 The DPM gave an overview of the paper and, following a brief discussion, it was

agreed that members did not need to approve the list of development contractors or consultants as these were long-standing, did not change and were reviewed on a project basis.

P4.2 Members then:

- a) noted the annual performance figures for our Maintenance Contractors in Attachment 1 of the paper;
- b) noted that any member with an interest in any of the companies on any of lists given in Attachments 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the paper must declare so in the Register of Interests in accordance with the Entitlements, Payments and Benefits Policy; and
- c) approved the List of Maintenance Contractors given in Attachment 2 of the paper.
- d) Members noted the List of Approved Development Consultants and List of Approved Development Contractors.

**Any Other Business**

A member noted that this meeting (via Zoom) had worked better than the previous ones done via Skype.

The Chair then thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 1.15pm.

Signed .....

Date .....

Chairman