

Minutes of Meeting of the Management Committee of Orkney Housing Association Limited held on Wednesday 29 July 2020 at 10.30am in the Association's office.

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

In attendance: In person:
Craig Spence (Chief Executive – CE)
Paul Scott (Head of Housing & Customer Services – HHCS)
Connie Shearer (Minute Taker)
Remotely:
Anne Fletcher (Director of Finance & Asset Management – DFAM)
Mhairi Hughes (Secretary / Head of Corporate Governance – HCG)

PART 1 – STANDING ITEMS

1.1 Apologies for Absence

There were apologies from Philip Cook, Elaine Grieve, Roella Wilson and Sandy Dennison.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

1.3 Minutes of the Management Committee meeting 03 July 2020

The Minutes were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting and were proposed by Linda Forbes and seconded by Wendy Baikie. The Minutes to be signed by the Chair at a later date.

1.4 Matters Arising & Deferred Items (Paper No MC/20/18)

1.4.1 Development Update: The CE noted the positive media coverage received regarding the welcome investment in housing in the community. Work at the schemes at The Crafty and Kirk Park are due to commence very shortly.

1.4.2 COVID – Safely Delivery Services: The CE outlined the steps taken to allow staff to work remotely from home, with significant help from RM Computing. Staff planning meetings, team meetings, etc are all being held virtually and this has gone well with staff embracing this new way of working. This will continue until the end of August when it will be reviewed with the view of moving to Phase 4. This will give more flexibility for each department to operate in the best way for them.

1.5 Future Meeting Dates:

Wednesday 12 August, 10.30am – Performance & Resources Sub Committee (Apols: Dave Dawson, Mhairi Hughes)

Friday 14 August, 10.30am – Audit & Risk Management Sub Committee (Apols: Mhairi Hughes)
Wednesday 26 August, 10.30am – Management Committee (Apols: Jason Taylor)
Wednesday 02 September, 10.30am – Health & Safety Working Party
Wednesday 16 September, 5.30pm – Annual General Meeting
Wednesday 07 October, 10.30am – Management Committee (Apols: Dave Dawson)

The CE advised that submission of 5-year Financial Projections to the Scottish Housing Regulator had been extended from the end of June to the end of September. The Projections must be scrutinised before submission and although this could be done for the 26 August MC meeting, with things changing daily it was felt this might be too short a timescale. He suggested that MC consider delegating authority to Performance & Resources Sub Committee (P&R) to scrutinise and submit the Projections and, to do so, convening a P&R meeting during the last week of September. He will bring this proposal back to the August meeting for consideration, but Management Committee were supportive of this in principle.

PART 2 – STRATEGY

None.

PART 3 – GOVERNANCE & ASSURANCE

G1 SHR Self-Assessment Update

G1.1 Members noted that the situation remains as presented at the May meeting.

G2 Approval of Annual Return on the Charter 2019-20 (Paper No MC/20/19)

G2.1 The HCG reported that the SHR portal had been updated and was much easier to navigate, with some questions removed from the main part of the ARC to a background page. This related to Management Committee, Membership, Annual General Meeting data and stock figures, all of which had been updated accordingly. The HHCS also had access and inputted all his figures. She said there was a lot of good news with satisfaction levels increasing etc which gave a very positive Return.

G2.2 A member queried whether the Association was required to feed back to the SHR consultation of the Regulatory Framework due in August. The CE confirmed this was yet to be done and there would also be a sectoral response to the consultation.

G2.3 Members were pleased with the positive Return and the hard work done by staff and agreed this should be fed back to staff.

- G2.4 Responding to a query on scheduled stock condition, the DFAM confirmed that 10% of schemes are inspected annually, on a rolling basis, by our own staff to ensure our properties comply with standards.
- G2.5 A member asked if the Association received feedback once the Return was submitted. The HCG said the SHR only gets back if they have queries, other than that, information is put on their portal where there are comparisons with other landlords. She will email a link to the site to members.
- G2.6 Following this discussion, members authorised the Chief Executive to submit the Return to the SHR.

G3 AGM Arrangements and Pre-AGM Certification (Paper No MC/20/20)

- G3.1 The HCG explained that this year's meeting is to be held virtually via Zoom. She said General Members would be notified in writing, giving them all the details should they wish to attend. Email addresses would be required to enable a link to be sent to those attending and the meeting would be recorded to provide evidence to the SHR of how many members were present. The recording would then be destroyed. Members had a brief discussion and agreed that a simple format for the AGM would be appropriate this year.
- G3.2 Regarding elections, Wendy Baikie, Philip Cook and Bill Wallace agreed to stand for re-election. The Chair said that Elaine Grieve had intimated that she did not wish to stand for re-election, for personal reasons.
- G3.4 A member enquired whether the recent £100m Islands Deal funding would benefit OHAL. The CE explained that the original £300m 'ask' had included housing but this smaller package, spread over 3 island groups over 15 years, meant it was less likely to involve much housing.
- G3.5 Following discussion, Management Committee:
- a) Agreed that Wendy Baikie, Philip Cook and Bill Wallace stand for re-election as set out in Section 1.4 of the paper, and noted that Elaine Grieve would not be standing for re-election;
 - b) Noted the AGM arrangements as set out in Section 2 of the paper. All indicated they expected to be able to attend;
 - c) Agreed the format should be kept simple, with a slideshow focussing on the Annual Report and also on how services were delivered during lockdown;
 - d) Agreed the formal notice at Attachment 1;
 - e) Instructed staff to ensure that appointment of Auditors is carried out in accordance with sections 72-74 of our Rules;
 - f) Noted the information provided at Section 4 in respect of Secretarial matters; and
 - g) Noted the section on the registers as detailed in 5.1 above and that they will be signed by the Chair at a later date.

G4 Resolutions & Applications for Membership (Paper No MC/20/21)

G4.1 Members noted the cancelled membership as detailed in the paper.

PART 4 – PERFORMANCE

P1 Welfare Reform Update (Paper No MC/20/22)

- P1.1 The HHCS briefly went over his paper explaining that in term of Welfare Reform (WR), the Association has not seen any major impact of the COVID pandemic but, given the economic circumstances, this may change as the year goes on.
- P1.2 Responding to queries, he agreed that the temporary changes to Universal Credit claims were a complicated area. However, this only impacts on a small number of our tenants and the Association use specialist advisors from CAB on a day-to-day basis. Looking to the future, in terms of furlough ending and the possibility of tenants losing jobs etc, he confirmed that regular, informative meetings/discussions are held with OIC and Job Centre staff regarding Welfare Reform and Universal Credit. Housing staff have successfully contacted all tenants so are aware of who is furloughed or who might be facing redundancy and can offer advice and support or signpost them to relevant agencies. Staff are as best prepared as they can be should this happen and are proactive and approachable.
- P1.3 Members noted the content of the WR Mitigation Plan as detailed at Attachment 1 to the Paper.

PART 5 – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

None.

PART 6 – ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

I1 Arrears & Bad Debts Write Offs Q1 2019-20 (Paper No MC/20/24)

- I1.1 The HHC reported a slight change to one figure - £821.80 should now read £649.49 which means the total write off value for Q1 was now £1,416.61.

This referred to a deceased sole tenant who had no family living with them. This gave them time to clear the house so this fell within write-off policy.

- I1.2 Management Committee then:

- a) Noted the current position for write offs for Q1 of 2020/21;
- b) Approved one write off for tenancy 52607; and
- b) Noted the remainder of the paper.

Any Other Business

There being no further business, the Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 11.25am.

Signed

Date

Chairman