

Minutes of Meeting of the Management Committee of Orkney Housing Association Limited held on Wednesday 26 August 2020 at 10.30am in the Association's office – held remotely via Zoom.

Present: Fiona Lettice (Chair), Philip Cook, Dave Dawson, Linda Forbes, John Rodwell, John White, Roella Wilson and Wendy Baikie

In attendance: Craig Spence (Chief Executive – CE)
Paul Scott (Head of Housing & Customer Services – HHCS)
Mhairi Hughes (Head of Corporate Governance – HCG)
Sandy Dennison (Finance Manager – FM)
Richard Flett (Development & Properties Manager – DPM)
Connie Shearer (Minute Taker)

PART 1 – STANDING ITEMS

1.1 Apologies for Absence

There were apologies from Elaine Grieve, Jason Taylor, Bill Wallace and Anne Fletcher (Director of Finance & Asset Management).

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 29 July 2020

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

1.4 Matters Arising & Deferred Items (Paper No MC/20/24)

1.4.1 COVID-19

The CE updated members on the current situation, given the recent outbreak in Orkney. Following LT discussion and Staff Planning meeting, it was agreed that we would remain working as 2 Teams on a two-week rotation, with a maximum of 8 staff in the office, until the end of October. This arrangement will be monitored closely.

1.4.2 AGM

The HCG explained the AGM would be held remotely via Zoom and was pleased to note that we were already destined to be quorate. Once ready, the Annual Report will be emailed or posted out to members who will be invited to forward any queries prior to the AGM. In response to a query, she said there was unlikely to be any voting required.

1.5 Future Meeting Dates:

TBC – Health & Safety Working Party

Wednesday 16 September, 10.30am - Performance & Resources Sub-Committee

Wednesday 16 September, 5.30pm – Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 07 October, 10.30am – Management Committee (Apols: Dave Dawson)

The Chair expressed her thanks to Elaine Grieve, who was standing down from Committee for personal reasons, for all her support over the past 5 years. Elaine had been an active member whose knowledge had proved very useful to Committee.

PART 2 – STRATEGY

S1 Report & Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2020 (Paper No MC/20/25)

- S1.1 The FM noted that this was the 20th set of Accounts he had produced for the Association and said the Audit & Risk Management Sub Committee (ARM) had scrutinised the accounts thoroughly. He was pleased to note that the Auditors' Management Letter said the Accounts put the Association in a very strong financial situation at the end of March
- S1.2 Philip Cook, the Chair of ARM, said he was pleased to receive a clean bill of health from the External Auditors who had carried out a thorough audit. He said ARM were recommending they be reappointed.
- S1.3 The CE reported that the Auditors were very complimentary on the level of work that the Finance Team did in preparation of the audit. This was the 4th year in a row they produced a clean Management Letter which they reported was very rare amongst housing associations.
- S1.4 The FM said the Auditors are still waiting for a statement of our HEEPS loans from Energy Savings Trust but he is chasing this up.
- S1.5 Following discussion, members:
- 1) approved the Report and Financial Statements for the year to 31 March 2020 as presented, authorised the Chair to sign the Report of Management Committee at page 5, and the Chair, another Committee Member and the Secretary to sign the Statement of Financial Position at page 11;
 - 2) noted the contents of the Management Letter, and authorised staff to respond to Wylie and Bisset LLP;
 - 3) approved the Letter of Representation, and authorised the Chair to sign the letter on their behalf; and
 - 4) authorised the Director of Finance and Asset Management to make the on-line submission of the financial statements to the Regulator on the Chair's behalf, after approval at the AGM.

S2 5 Year Financial Projections (Paper No MC/20/26)

- S2.1 The CE explained that, as agreed at MC meeting on 29 July, he is proposing that P&R be delegated authority to scrutinise and approve the 5 Year Financial Projections prior to the AGM.

S2.2 Members then:

- 1) noted the update on the 5YFP submission dates and process; and
- 2) agreed to delegate authority to the Performance & Resources Sub-Committee to meet on 16 September 2020 to scrutinise and approve the return for submission to the SHR.

PART 3 – GOVERNANCE & ASSURANCE

G1 SHR Self-Assessment Update

G1.1 Members noted that the situation remains as presented at the May meeting. The HCG said that the Annual Assurance Statement will be presented at the October meeting so, prior to that, all the evidence will be updated onto pen drives and issued to members.

G2 Annual Internal Audit Report (Paper No MC/20/27)

G2.1 The HCG said she was delighted to get *substantial assurance* for the review of Corporate Governance & Risk Management. The GDPR review had received *reasonable assurance* with the recommendations in hand but delayed due to COVID-19.

G2.2 Philip Cook, Chair of ARM, expressed his congratulations and thanks to the HCG for the excellent work she and her team do.

G2.3 Members noted:

- a) the assurances provided by the Internal Audit reviews;
- b) progress made in respect of recommendations received; and
- c) the content of the Annual Report in Attachment 1.

G3 Annual Audit & Risk Management Sub-Committee Report (Paper No MC/20/28)

G3.1 Members noted the assurances provided to them by the Annual Report from the Audit & Risk Management Sub-committee.

G4 Annual Performance & Resources Sub-Committee Report (Paper No MC/20/29)

G4.1 Members noted the Annual Report from the Performance & Resources Sub-committee and the assurances it provides.

G5 Resolutions & Applications for Membership (Paper No MC/20/21)

G4.1 Members approved two resolutions in respect of shared ownership disposals and noted one cancelled membership.

G6 Governance Report (Paper No MC/20/31)

G6.1 The CE explained that this paper would normally have gone to Audit & Risk Management Sub-Committee but it had been agreed to bring it to Management Committee. He briefly went over the paper explaining some matters were outwith our control (Brexit, economic impact of COVID, Universal Credit/DWP changes, etc) but LT were looking at ways of dealing with these.

G6.2 Members noted the contents of this report.

G7 New Deposit Account (Paper No MC/20/32)

G7.1 The FM gave an overview of the paper. Members were generally in agreement but had a number of queries about the organisation and how it operates.

G7.3 The CE said members may appreciate a presentation from the Charities Aid Foundation and suggested that the FM be authorised to begin the set-up process but to delay depositing funds until members were satisfied to proceed. The FM agreed to arrange the presentation.

G7.2 Members agreed with this suggestion and:

- authorised staff to open a CAF Bank deposit account and to subscribe to their deposit platform but to delay depositing any funds until their queries about the investment platform had been resolved.

PART 4 – PERFORMANCE

P1 2019/20 Business Plan & Risk Management Report (Paper No MC/20/33)

P1.1 The CE went over the paper, explaining that the 2 sub committees scrutinise the reports throughout the year with summaries presented in their Annual Reports.

P1.2 Members noted the contents of this paper which provided assurance of our effective management of organisational performance and risks during 2019/20.

The FM left the meeting.

PART 5 – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

D1 Development Update Report (Paper No MC/20/34)

D1.1 Members noted the current position with the development programme and noted the Strategic Housing Investment Plan.

D2 Tenant Satisfaction Survey (Paper No MC/20/35)

- D2.1 Members were pleased to note that levels of satisfaction had continued to improve since the last survey, particularly with regards to Customer Service, Repairs & Maintenance, and Grounds Maintenance.
- D2.2 Responding to a query about possibly doing surveys in-house, the HHCS explained that the Resident Panel do become involved in scrutinising policies, etc but an external firm is used for this particular survey. A number of these questions are set by the Scottish Housing Regulator and it is a significant piece of work which requires responses to be anonymised and verified, hence the use of an external body.
- D2.3 A member noted that tenants can be unaware of who manages the Association or that Committee members are all volunteers. The HCG pointed out that MC members profiles/photos can be found on the website, and the Committee Update publishes a list of members who attended each meeting.
- D2.4 Following discussion, members were pleased to note the content of the paper and the results of the survey.

PART 6 – ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

I1 Staffing Update (Paper No MC/20/36)

- I1.1 Finance Officer
Following a successful recruitment, the HCG said that Angela Fitzpatrick had accepted the post of Finance Officer, following the retirement of Katherine Skea. Angela will commence work on 01 September.
- I1.2 THAW Orkney
The HCG informed members that Robert Leslie, Energy Officer, had accepted the post of Manager with THAW Orkney, on a 4-day a week basis. During this time, he will remain at OHAL for one day a week. A member queried if this would impact on OHAL's services but the DPM said it shouldn't cause a problem as, since THAW began, we have been referring energy queries to them. He said a joint project with THAW had been discussed so the timing of this was perfect and it would have benefits for both organisations.
- I1.3 Modern Apprentice
Our current apprentice, Shannon Tait, has been successful in applying for another post. The HCG said that, in the current climate, it had been decided not to take on a new apprentice this year. This will be reviewed and we hope to recruit again when possible.
- I1.4 Training
Staff are being encouraged to do as much training as they can at the moment, particularly when not on duty in the office, and a lot has been done.
- I1.5 Members noted the contents of the paper.

Dave Dawson left the meeting.

I2 Affordable Housing Supply Agreement 2020/21 (Paper No MC/20/37 – TABLED)

I2.1 The DPM briefly went over the 3 projects currently in progress – the Crafty, Kirk Park and Walliwall 6, and explained that the Scottish Government had issued a revised Agreement for 2020/21.

I2.2 Members then:

- 1) noted the Affordable Housing Supply Agreement 2020/21; and
- 2) authorised the Chief Executive (or Development & Properties Manager in his absence) to sign the Affordable Housing Supply Agreement 2020/21.

Any Other Business

There being no further business, the Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 12.40pm

Signed:

Date:

Chair