

Minutes of Meeting of the Management Committee of Orkney Housing Association Limited held remotely via Zoom on Wednesday 25 November 2020 at 10.30am

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

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

PART 1 – STANDING ITEMS

1.1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Dave Dawson and Jason Taylor.

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 07 October 2020

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

1.4 Matters Arising & Deferred Items (Verbal Report)

1.4.1 The CE gave a brief update on the premises at 46 Victoria Street and said a paper will be presented at the next Management Committee meeting.

1.5 Future Meeting Dates:

Wednesday 09 December, 10.00am – Strategy Day

Wednesday 27 January 2021, 10.30am – Management Committee

PART 2 – STRATEGY

S1 2021/22 Business Planning (Paper No MC/20/52)

S1.1 The CE updated members on the progress with plans to review the Business Plan, in light of COVID impacts and how that relates to 2021/22. The Strategy

Day in December will provide an opportunity to look at what the Association has learned in 2020 and how it will impact the Business Plan up to March 2022.

S1.4 Members noted the current position and that the next important stage is a strategy workshop 10.00-13.00 on Wednesday 9th December 2020.

S2 Rent Review (Paper No MC/20/53)

S2.1 The FM provided an overview and went through the various scenarios and resulting graphs.

S2.2 A member enquired about the probability of the Scottish Government announcing a rent freeze but the CE said that, although this, and wider rent controls had been discussed in the sector, it was not anticipated in 2021/22. Tenants on Universal Credit had already been given a £20 per week uplift for this year.

Responding to a query about development units in Years 2-12, the FM confirmed the business plan base-case assumption was to build 20 properties per year.

S2.3 The HHCS gave a brief summary of the comparability, affordability and consultation sections.

S2.4 Responding to queries on affordability, the CE confirmed that the Association is looking to establish a Tenancy Sustainment Fund for the next few years. Monies from the rent increase will go into this Fund which will be used for targeted support for tenants who are struggling, not just now but in the future as the economy attempts to get back on track.

S2.5 Following discussion, members:

- agreed that no consultation was required based on the outcome of 2019/20's multiyear consultation;
- noted the risks which exist in applying a rent freeze;
- agreed to the proposed rent and occupancy charge increase of 1.1% for 2021/22;
- agreed that the annual management fee for sharing owners should remain frozen at its current annual charge of £340.08; and
- agreed that the annual insurance charge for sharing owners and owners in factored properties should be increased to £32.40.

S3 Revised 2020/21 Budget (Paper No MC/20/54)

S3.1 The FM presented the revised budget which had gone to Performance & Resources Sub Committee last week for detailed scrutiny. Minor changes had been made since then and the Revised Budget provided an up to date forecast to the end of the financial year. He explained that, with a necessary draw-down of development finance, cash balances were projected to be as much as £5.5m by 31 March 2021. This money will be required for deferred planned and cyclical maintenance works, which will be spread out over the next few years. Overall,

he said the Association was in a healthy cash, and broader financial position but there is a significant amount of backlog works due to COVID.

S3.2 Members discussed the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and its impact on the Association. After some discussion, members agreed that this money should be used to help the Association meet its charitable aims and to support its tenants and residents.

S3.3 Members then approved the revised 2020/21 budget.

PART 3 – GOVERNANCE & ASSURANCE

G1 SHR Self-Assessment Update (Paper No MC/20/55)

G1.1 Following a brief overview from the HCG members:

- a) Agreed that no material changes are required to the AAS since its submission;
- b) Noted that no Notifiable Events have occurred or been reported to the SHR since the last meeting;
- c) Noted there are no amendments to the list of Governance Related Policies;
- d) Noted the addition to the Regulatory Requirements Evidence Bank as per Section 5; and
- e) Noted the additions to the Regulatory Standards Evidence Bank as per Section 6.

G2 Annual Committee Meeting Schedule (Paper No MC/20/56)

G2.1 Following a query from a member about future meeting dates, it was agreed to postpone any decision until the next meeting. The HCG will send out a Poll to members regarding preferences on days/times, although it was felt that mornings were more suitable.

G3 Staffing Update (Paper No MC/20/57)

G3.1 This paper was taken at the end of the meeting.

Members noted the content of the paper which was for information only.

G4 Policy & Reviews (Paper No MC/20/58)

G4.1 The HCG said the amendments to the Committee Training & Development Procedure had been suggested following last year's appraisals. Training Logs had also been included as these were not mentioned previously.

G4.2 A member enquired what would happen should a new member join, given the current COVID restrictions. The HCG said a new member of staff had joined us in September and had undertaken much of their induction via Zoom/Teams

meetings. This had all gone well and she saw no reason why this could not be done with a new Committee member if required.

G4.3 Members then approved the:

- a) Revised Committee Member Training & Development Procedure as at Attachment 1; and
- b) The amendment to the Scheme of Delegations as detailed in the Paper.

G5 Resolutions & Applications for Membership (Paper No MC/20/59)

G5.1 Members approved the two resolutions in respect of shared ownership disposals.

PART 4 – PERFORMANCE

P1 Business Plan Progress to 30 September 2020 (Paper No MC/20/60)

P1.1 The CE presented the paper, explaining that this year's COVID-19 pandemic has had an effect on services provided and, in turn, has impacted KPI targets. However, the Risk Register showed that 7 risks were now lower than they were previously which was due to effective, active management.

The Chair said that an absent member requested updates on some areas of the Operational Plan:

Item 1: TP Strategy	The CE said a lot of work has been done on this and should be complete by the end of March.
Item 7: SHIP	This is now completed ahead of timescale.
Item 8: Brixx	A planning review was done with a consultant in July which resulted in useful improvements for the latest round of long term projections. This is mostly complete.
Item 11: Golden Share	This has been approved by OIC for Kirkwall properties, so it is now complete.

The CE went on to explain, for the sake of new members, how the 'Golden Share' enabled people to purchase low cost home ownership, with the Government retaining a % of the property. Should that property be sold at a later date, it can be retained and re-sold to help the next person requiring low cost home ownership. Previously, properties could be bought outright and then sold on the open market but by the Government retaining a Golden Share this means the property remains available for others requiring low cost home ownership.

P1.2 After this discussion, members noted the contents of the paper which was presented for information.

P2 6-month Complaints & Compliments Report (Paper No MC/20/61)

P2.1 The HCG reported that complaints had decreased slightly since last year. 95% had been responded to within the timescales which demonstrated that staff

continue to maintain the KPI target figure. Compliments were much reduced due to the reduction in services which was expected due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In response to a query, the HHCS explained that the complaints about a new gardening contractor had been due to teething problems and was not an issue for concern.

A member enquired about the ownership of a contractor and whether this should have been approved by Committee. The DPM explained this was merely due to one director retiring and had been addressed during the Annual Review of Contractors.

P2.2 Members noted the contents of the report.

P3 Development Report (Paper No MC/20/62)

P3.1 The DPM was pleased to report that work is progressing at both The Crafty and Kirk Park. However, the contractors are experiencing difficulties with the sourcing and supply of materials, due to the COVID situation.

P3.2 A Planning Application has been submitted by the contractor for the first phase at Walliwall 6. It is hoped that this will be approved by Christmas or shortly after so we can obtain Tender Approval this financial year and acquire the site by the year end.

P3.3 A Project Briefing document is currently being prepared for the Evie site and the DPM hopes to get the Design Brief out to consultants before Christmas.

P3.4 A member queried the length of time it takes to get building projects underway. The DPM agreed it was very frustrating but said that gaining the required Statutory Consents is much more complex and time consuming than it used to be. However, he was aware that the national Planning system is currently being reviewed.

P3.5 Regarding the supply difficulties, the DPM confirmed this was currently due to the COVID situation but was also aware that Brexit may also have an impact.

P3.6 Members noted the current position with the development programme.

P4 Authority for Eviction (Paper No MC/20/63)

P4.1 The HHCS went over the history of the case being put forward for eviction. He also provided an update on cases where permission to evict had been previously granted and was still valid. A member expressed disappointment that a few tenants appear to be unwilling to accept the help offered by housing staff to manage their debt and avoid the possibility of eviction. It was noted that the legal process can also take some time, if the Sheriff continues a case, and this also leads to increased arrears.

P4.2 Following discussion, Committee gave authority to enforce the Decree of Eviction in the case detailed in Para 2.1 of the paper and noted the contents of Attachment 1 regarding cases where authority to evict had been previously granted.

PART 5 – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

There were no items for discussion.

PART 6 – ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

I1 Quarterly Write Offs (Paper No MC/20/64)

I1.1 The HHCS reported no write-offs during Q2 but advised that two sequestrations are anticipated to take effect later this year or early next year. It is expected these two will amount to the majority of the irrecoverable rent budget.

Responding to a query, the HCCS explained that if tenants are sequestrated and their debts written off, it is not possible to recover them at any point in the future

I1.2 Management Committee then:

- a) Noted the current position for write offs as at the end of Q2 of 2020/21; and
- b) Noted the remainder of the paper.

Any Other Business

There was no other business.

All staff, apart from the CE and HCG, left the meeting for item G3 (Paper No MC/20/57) to be discussed in private.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 1.10pm.

Signed:

Date:

Chair