

Minutes of Meeting of the Management Committee of Orkney Housing Association Limited held remotely via Zoom on Wednesday 31 March 2021 at 10.30am

Present: Fiona Lettice (Chair), Wendy Baikie, Philip Cook, Dave Dawson, Linda Forbes, John Rodwell, Jason Taylor, 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)
Fraser Devine (Care & Repair Manager – CRM)
Connie Shearer (Minute Taker)

PART 1 – STANDING ITEMS

1.1 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies.

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

None were received.

1.3 Minutes of the Management Committee meeting 27 January 2021

At the request of a member, it was agreed that the second sentence at P1.2 be amended to include the word “flatted” and should read “The member could not recall previous discussion on building flatted one-bed properties in Kirkwall.”

A member pointed out discrepancies with paragraph numbering at items D1 and I3 - these will be amended accordingly.

With these changes, the Minutes were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting and were proposed by Linda Forbes and seconded by Roella Wilson. The Minutes to be signed by the Chair at a later date.

Minutes of the Management Committee meeting 12 March 2021

A member asked why the tender sum was not included as part of the decision. The CE explained that this was commercially sensitive information and therefore it had been decided not to include such information in the final, published Minutes. However, the information was available to members in the papers.

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

1.4 Matters Arising & Deferred Items (Paper No MC/20/81)

1.4.1 The CE said items 1.1 is being dealt with in a separate paper.

1.4.2 Walliwall 6: The DPM was pleased to report that he is due to sign the paperwork today for the site and the contract will be in place for 20 houses to be built at Walliwall.

1.5 Future Meeting Dates:

Wednesday 28 April, 10.30am – Audit & Risk Management Sub-Committee –
The ARM Chair requested that this meeting begin slightly earlier, ie at 10.15am and this was agreed.

Thursday, 29 April, 10.30am – Health & Safety Working Party

Wednesday 12 May, 10.30am – Performance & Resources Sub-Committee

Wednesday 26 May, 10.30am – Management Committee

PART 2 – STRATEGY

S1 Final Business Plans OHAL & OC&R (Paper No MC/20/82)

S1.1 The CE thanked members for their input into OHAL's Business Plan via the various meetings, seminars and following sub-committee scrutiny. The final document reflected those discussions and has been updated to reflect the COVID situation, together with updated Appendices.

S1.2 A member enquired whether the Association would have to go through a tendering process for Orkney Care & Repair services. The CE thought this would likely be the case during 2021/22.

S1.3 C&R Business Plan: The CRM presented the document which highlighted the possible challenges to be faced in the coming year. The COVID pandemic during the past year has had an impact on the service but he was positive about the opportunities for partnership working, both with outside bodies and OHAL's Trades Team.

S1.4 Following brief discussion, members approved:

- a) the Association's 2019-22 Business Plan as updated at March 2021;
- b) the detailed appendices to the 2019-22 Business Plan which form the Operational Delivery detail for 2021-22, noting that these will be updated and brought for approval annually;
- c) that the full Business Plan (excluding appendices) is published;
- d) Orkney Care & Repair's Business Plan 2021-22; and
- e) authority be delegated to staff to complete the documents, along with any minor typographical and layout amendments.

S2 2021/22 Budget Approval (Paper No MC/20/83)

S2.1 The FM presented the paper which detailed changes from the draft Budget which had been scrutinised by P&R sub-committee in February. He concluded that the current budget fulfils all the KPIs which had been set.

S2.2 Members approved the 2021/22 Revenue and Capital Budgets.

PART 3 – GOVERNANCE & ASSURANCE

G1 SHR Self-Assessment Update (Paper No MC/20/84)

G1.1 The HCG presented the paper, explaining there had been no changes since the last paper but she had focussed on Equality & Diversity and the SHR's requirements around this. A draft document had been issued to all landlords last year for feedback which the SHR is now reviewing, with the final document expected shortly and training to begin in May.

G1.2 Responding to a query, the HCG confirmed that once the final document (which will include draft templates) is received there will still be a lot of work to do including review of policies, procedures, Fair Processing Notices, 'OHAL-ising' the model templates and training for staff.

G1.3 She confirmed that the information required to be gathered – from staff, MC, tenants, applicants, etc – was voluntary but OHAL must explain why it is being requested and what we will do with it.

G1.4 A member enquired about receiving updates to the Evidence Bank information and the HCG said discussions are ongoing with our IT Consultants regarding a suitable, secure platform for members to access.

G1.5 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 Regulatory Requirements Evidence Bank additions and update regarding Equalities as per Section 5 of the paper;
- e) Noted the Regulatory Standards Evidence Bank additions as per Section 6 of the paper; and
- f) Noted the COVID-19 Evidence Bank additions as per Section 7 of the paper.

G2 MC Appraisal Feedback (Paper No MC/20/85)

G2.1 The Chair / Vice Chair's report noted that online communication has enabled members to attend meetings virtually during this past year. However, it was hoped that 'in person' meetings, and social interaction, could take place during the coming year.

- G2.2 A number of training issues had been raised, many of which the HCG had addressed. It was felt that some of these issues would benefit from input from the CE and DPM.
- G2.3 Regarding the issue of involving young members of the community, it was noted that the Association regularly get invited to 'Developing the Young Workforce' events and have attended sessions at both the Pickaquoy Centre and Stromness Academy. OHAL were due to go to a similar event at KGS but this was postponed due to COVID. The CE also highlighted our very successful Modern Apprenticeship programme which has seen 5 young people receive qualifications and go on to have promising jobs – 2 of which are with OHAL and continuing to study for professional qualifications.
- G2.4 Members noted the contents of the report.

G3 Report from Audit & Risk Management Sub-Committee (Paper No MC/20/86)

- G3.1 Linda Forbes presented her first paper since becoming the Chair of ARM, encouraging others to support and be part of the sub-committee. She went over the paper and said discussion had taken place about a potential fourth ARM meeting following the AGM (when the sub-committee membership is agreed) to look at training and succession planning, together with areas of interest rather than an official business meeting – this is to be discussed at a future ARM meeting.
- G3.2 Members noted the update and record of decisions from the Audit and Risk Management Sub-committee.

G4 Report from Performance & Resources Sub-Committee (Paper No MC/20/87)

- G4.1 The P&R Chair said this had been a difficult year for meeting KPIs due to the impact of COVID but he commended Leadership Team and staff for doing a great job in the circumstances
- G4.2 Members noted the update and record of decisions from the Performance & Resources Sub-committee meeting.

G5 Policy & Reviews (Paper No MC/20/88)

- G5.1 Complaints Handling Procedure: The HCG explained that the SPSO revised this model procedure, along with other bodies, which resulted in a completely different document which must be adopted by landlords in its entirety. The document has been 'OHAL-ised' where permitted by the SPSO. The 5 main changes were listed in the paper and the HCG said our Customer Facing Document has been revised and is available on our website.

Responding to a query, the HCG said there were procedures in place for complaints regarding senior staff, MC member and also against the CE. For repeated, vexatious complaints staff should continue to refer to the Unacceptable Actions Policy.

G5.2 TP Strategy: The HHCS presented the Strategy for 2021-26, which is a legal requirement for landlords. It is hoped this Strategy will encourage tenants to continue involvement which should help improve relationships between tenants/staff, help with improvements to our services, thereby increasing satisfaction, etc. If approved, a consultation with tenants and residents is planned for April this year to gather feedback and comments, with the results presented to members at May's meeting.

G5.3 Treasury Management Strategy: The FM presented the Strategy for the coming year and briefly went over the figures therein, together with information about the transition from LIBOR due in 2021-22.

G5.4 Members:

- a) Noted the update re outstanding policy reviews as detailed in Section 1 of the paper;
- b) Approved the Revised Complaints Handling Procedure as at Attachment 1, with amendments as highlighted in Section 2 of the paper;
- c) Discussed and approved the Draft Tenant Participation Strategy as at Attachment 2, pending consultation with tenants and residents as noted at section 3.6 of the paper;
- d) Noted and discussed the Draft Tenant Participation Action Plan for 2021/22 as at Attachment 3 of the paper; and
- e) Approved the 2021-22 Treasury Management Strategy as at Attachment 4 of the paper.

G6 Resolutions & Applications for Membership (Paper No MC/20/89)

G6.1 Members approved the resolution in respect of 2 shared ownership disposals and approved one application for membership.

PART 4 – PERFORMANCE

P1 Development Report (Paper No MC/20/90)

P1.1 The DPM updated members on development. The Crafty and Kirk Park are both progressing on programme. Regarding Walliwall 6, the DPM said he was due to sign the relevant documents later today to finalise the acquisition of the site. This will allow the target spend of AHSP grant this year to be achieved with an expected spend of £1.834m, which is good considering the delays due to the pandemic.

Progress has temporarily stalled with sites at Evie and Sunnybank, Stromness but the development at Burnmouth Road is progressing with a Stage 1 building warrant submitted and a planning application shortly.

- P1.2 Responding to a query about a billboard at Walliwall 6, the DPM said this was a requirement of the AHSP grant, he would need to discuss the location as the site is far from the main road, and forms part of a larger development by the contractor. A Press Release was being considered on this occasion, highlighting the value of works for the local industry and new homes becoming available.
- P1.3 Members then noted the current position with the development programme.

PART 5 – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

D1 Commercial Property (Paper No MC/20/91)

- D1.1 Commercially sensitive information redacted.

D2 MC Training Plan (Paper No MC/20/92)

- D2.1 The HCG presented the paper, explaining that it was an amalgamation of last year's plan, the majority of which were not delivered. She said online training this year had been successful and beneficial to participants.

- D2.2 A member suggested a briefing on the 'Islands Deal' might be useful. This was thought to be a good idea and it was agreed to hold this instead of 'Housing related concerns and issues in Orkney' which, it was felt, had been covered in recent meetings.

- D2.3 Members:

- noted the fantastic progress with training this year, albeit not as planned! and
- discussed and agreed the Training Plan for 2021/22 as detailed in Attachment 1 to the paper, with the one change mentioned above.

PART 6 – ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

I1 Arrears, Bad Debts & Annual Write Offs (Paper No MC/20/93)

- I1.1 The HHCS presented the paper, explaining that little had changed since Quarter 3. Two sequestrations have completed during Q4 and the low value for rechargeable repair write-offs can be attributed to the service's new approach to irrecoverable debt.

- I1.2 Members:

- a) Noted the current position for write offs as at the end of Q4 of 2020/21.
- b) Noted the remainder of the paper which is for information only.

Any Other Business

The CE said the Scottish Housing Regulator has today published their engagement plans for Scottish Landlords. He was pleased to report that OHAL was fully compliant with the regulatory standards and is required to continue submitting all scheduled returns without further engagement with the Regulator.

All staff, apart from the CE and HCG, left the meeting.

I2 Staffing & Recruitment Update (Paper No MC/20/94)

I2.1 Management Committee noted the contents of the paper which was for information only.

There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 12.55pm.

Signed:

Date:

Chair