

Minutes of Meeting of the Management Committee of Orkney Housing Association Limited held remotely via Zoom on Wednesday 28 July 2021 at 10.30am

Present: Fiona Lettice (Chair), Wendy Baikie, Philip Cook, Dave Dawson, 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 Jason Taylor

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

Dave Dawson declared a possible conflict of interest in Item P2, Development Update.

1.3 Minutes of the Management Committee meeting 25 June 2021

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

A member enquired about the wording of redacted items and the HHCS confirmed this would read 'Commercially sensitive information redacted.'

1.4 Matters Arising & Deferred Items (Verbal report)

1.4.1 Commercial Property: Commercially sensitive information redacted.

1.4.2 Lettings Plan: The CE informed members that the Chair had finally received a response to the letter she sent to all OIC Councillors. The HHCS then gave members a comprehensive update on his recent meeting with OIC officials. He said a consultant's report commissioned by OIC is due, with a meeting scheduled in September to discuss that. A member felt consultation should look at the whole housing situation in Orkney to ensure future generations of young people are able to access decent, affordable housing.

1.5 Future Meeting Dates:

Wednesday 11 August, 10.30am – Performance & Resources Sub Committee
(Dave Dawson tendered his apologies in advance)

Wednesday 18 August, 10.30am – Audit & Risk Management Sub Committee

Wednesday 25 August, 10.30am – Management Committee (approve A/cs)

PART 2 – STRATEGY

S1 Approval of Loan Portfolio Submission (Paper No MC/21/25)

S1.1 The FM presented the paper which covered the annual loan portfolio return to the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR), a pdf copy of which was in an attachment to the paper. He explained there had been one complication regarding the balances outstanding at 31 March, but this had been discussed with the Regulator, with an appropriate comment included on the return.

S1.2 Following a brief discussion, members approved the 2020/21 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/21/26)

G1.1 The HCG gave a brief update on the paper, noting that guidance from the SHR regarding equalities and human rights information to be included in the 2021 Annual Assurance Statement (AAS) is expected to be received shortly, when work can be commenced in this area.

G1.2 The new Rules were approved by members at the SGM in June and the HCG confirmed they have been registered with the FCA.

G1.3 With regards to the Evidence Bank and following discussions with our IT Consultants on security aspects, the HCG created a Microsoft Team specifically for Management Committee which will enable all documents to be accessed securely by members via an OHAL email address which will be set up for each member. Initial trials of this system will take place shortly.

Members agreed this approach made sense and suggested that training on Microsoft Teams in general would also be beneficial.

G1.4 Responding to a query, the HCG confirmed that the AAS would contain, if applicable, a paragraph re the impact COVID-19 has had on our services.

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 the 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 per Section 6 of the paper;
- f) Noted the COVID-19 Evidence Bank additions as per Section 7; and
- g) Noted and agreed with the proposal to make the evidence bank accessible to members, 24/7, as detailed in Section 8 of the paper.

G2 AGM Arrangements and Pre-AGM Certification (Paper No MC/21/27)

- G2.1 The HCG presented the paper which outlined the Member Elections and AGM arrangements.
- G2.2 Members agreed to hold a virtual AGM again this year and had a discussion around invitees, particularly those who are not general members. In previous years invitations were sent out to a list of 'extras' but, due to number constraints, this did not happen last year. As arrangements for this year's AGM were well underway, it was agreed to look at this for next year.
- G2.3 Regarding elections, as per the Rules, Fiona Lettice and Linda Forbes were required to retire and agreed to go forward for re-election. Roella Wilson also agreed to stand for re-election this year.
- G2.4 Following discussion, Management Committee:
- a) Agreed that Roella Wilson stand for re-election along with Fiona Lettice & Linda Forbes, who all confirmed they are willing to do so;
 - b) Noted the AGM arrangements as set out in Sections 2 and 3 of the paper;
 - c) Confirmed they wish to progress with a virtual AGM which will consider the essential AGM business only;
 - d) All indicated they expected to be able to attend;
 - e) Agreed the formal notice at Attachment 1;
 - f) Instructed staff to ensure that appointment of Auditors is carried out in accordance with sections 72-74 of our Rules;
 - g) Noted the information provided at Section 4 in respect of Secretarial matters; and
 - h) Noted the section on the registers as detailed in 5.1 of the paper and that they will be signed by the Chair at a later date.

G3 Staffing Update (Paper No MC/21/28)

- G3.1 The CE thanked Philip Cook and Linda Forbes for their input in the recent recruitment.
- G3.2 A member enquired about delayed training and the DFAM confirmed this was due to a cyber attack at the University of Highland & Islands, which included Orkney College.
- G3.3 Members noted the contents of the report.

G4 Performance & Resources Chair Report (Paper No MC/21/29)

G4.1 Members noted the update and record of decisions from the Performance & Resources Sub-committee meeting.

G5 Resolutions & Applications for Membership (Paper No MC/21/30)

G5.1 Members approved the resolution in respect of three shared ownership disposals and noted the two cancelled memberships.

PART 4 – PERFORMANCE

P1 New Homes Satisfaction Survey Report (Paper No MC/21/31)

P1.1 The DPM presented the paper which related to the only project to reach the end of the defects period in 2020/21, Walliwall Phase 5. The survey return rate was 50% (4 returns from the 8 properties in the scheme) with the main concerns being around noise and ventilation.

P1.2 Unfortunately, the KPI target of 90% was not met as only 75% of respondents were satisfied/very satisfied with their new home. The DPM pointed out that due to the low number of returns, it took only one dissatisfied response to cause this fail.

P1.3 Members had a discussion around the issues highlighted in the survey responses, such as:

- homes not warm (this particular home was checked and found to be warm enough so could be a perception issue)
- ventilation system noises (the DPM is looking at other systems for future schemes)
- design changes in the future (ie, positioning of washing lines – for one property, this issue was unavoidable due to topographical constraints)
- electricity suppliers (OHAL use SSE but tenants can switch to which ever supplier they wish)
- storage capacity (tenants are discouraged from using attics but storage/wardrobes are built into the properties, with general storage space amounting to between 4.0 - 6.00 sq metres depending on the number of bedspaces)

P1.4 Members noted the contents of the report.

Bill Wallace left the meeting

P2 Development Update (Paper No MC/21/32)

P2.1 The DPM presented the paper which detailed the current position with the development programme. He said the Programme Agreement for 2021/22 had

been received from the Scottish Government, following the Strategic Investment Plan submitted by OIC last year. An estimated grant spend of £3.5m is projected for the programme.

- P2.2 Current developments are progressing although The Crafty and Kirk Park are slightly behind schedule.
- P2.3 Responding to a query on materials shortages, the DPM confirmed that building costs are likely to increase in the future
- P2.4 Members discussed the issues with the site at Upper Sunnybank, Stromness which led on to general talk about the reasons applicants stated a preference for properties in Kirkwall. At the moment 80% of applications are for Kirkwall properties.
- P2.5 Members:
- a) noted the current position with the development programme; and
 - b) granted authority to the Development & Properties Manager (or the Chief Executive in his absence) to sign the Local Programme Agreement 2021/22 received from the Scottish Government.

P3 Authority for Eviction (Paper No MC/21/33)

- P3.1 The HHCS went over the case up for eviction and updated members on historic cases. A member expressed disappointment that the COVID-19 situation had enabled tenants to accumulate rent arrears then declare bankruptcy.
- P3.2 Following this, members:
- a) gave authority to enforce the Decree for Eviction in the cases detailed in the paper; and
 - b) noted the content of Attachment 1 regarding historic cases where authority to evict has been previously granted.

PART 5 – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

None.

PART 6 – ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

I1 MC Training Plan Update (Paper No MC/21/34)

- I1.1 The HCG presented the paper which detailed a number of training sessions arranged with external trainers, together with brief in-house training.
- I1.2 The DFAM asked members what training topics they wished her to present at the next meeting and, following discussion, agreed:

- Loan portfolio
- Stock valuation
- Day in the Life of Finance

I1.3 The DPM agreed to cover Scottish Government funding at his session in November.

I1.4 Members noted the updates to the 2021/22 Committee Member Training Plan as detailed in Paper and shown in Attachment 1.

I2 Arrears & Bad Debts Write Offs Q1 2021-22 (Paper No MC/21/35)

I2.1 The HHCS presented the paper which detailed two irrecoverable rents to be written off and one irrecoverable recharge. Responding to a query, he confirmed that staff initially attempt to recover debts but if this is unsuccessful then a debt recovery agent will be engaged if necessary.

I2.2 Management Committee:

- a) noted the current position for write offs as at the end of Q1 of 2021/22; and
- b) noted the remainder of the paper.

I3 TP Strategy Action Plan (Paper No MC/21/36)

I3.1 The HHCS presented the paper which provided detail on the proposed activities planned for Tenant Participation. COVID restrictions will limit what can be done in person but it is hoped that estate walkabouts can take place this year. The Residents Panel continued to meet virtually over lockdown but have had one outside get-together.

I3.2 Members discussed previous outings with staff, members and the resident panel going on bus tours to various OHAL sites and meeting with residents and tenants. These had been very beneficial for all involved and it was hoped this could be done again once safe to do so.

I3.3 Members noted the content of this report and the updates it provided on the current action plan.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 13.10.

Signed:

Date:

Chair