

## **Minutes of Meeting of the Management Committee of Orkney Housing Association Limited held remotely via Zoom on Wednesday 30 March 2022 at 10.30am**

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

**In attendance:** Craig Spence (Chief Executive – CE)  
Paul Scott (Director of Operations - DO)  
Richard Flett (Development & Property Manager – DPM)  
Anne Fletcher (Director of Finance– DF)  
Sandy Dennison (Finance Manager – FM)  
Mhairi Hughes (Secretary / Head of Corporate Governance – HCG)  
Fraser Devine (Care & Repair Manager – CRM)  
Amy Brough (Minute Taker)

Members began the meeting by reflecting on the sad and sudden passing of Wendy Baikie, one of our founder members. Wendy had been part of the Association since its inaugural meeting in June 1985 and remained a voluntary Management Committee Member till the time of her death. She served two separate terms as Chair and was hugely respected by her current and former Committee and staff colleagues. Wendy's input and passion for OHAL and its tenants, will be greatly missed. We have extended our heartfelt condolences to her family.

### **PART 1 – STANDING ITEMS**

#### **1.1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Dave Dawson and Connie Shearer.

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

There were none.

#### **1.3 Minutes of the Management Committee meeting 26 January 2022**

1.3.1 A Member queried in S2.5 if the further options around the affordability tool, part of the anticipated review of the rent setting policy are being presented at this meeting. The DO confirmed this had been deferred to the May meeting.

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

#### **1.4 Matters Arising & Deferred Items (Paper No MC/21/84)**

1.4.1 The CE informed Members that a possible governing body engagement event with other highland and island housing associations is still being considered. It is planned this will be held in-person rather than remotely and there will be one representative from each member organisation.

1.4.2 Members noted the contents of this paper.

## 1.5 Future Meeting Dates:

Wednesday 27 April, 10.30am – Audit & Risk Management Sub-Committee

Wednesday 11 May, 10.30am – Performance & Resources Sub-Committee

Wednesday 25 May, 10.30am – Management Committee. *Philip Cook gave his apologies for this meeting.*

## PART 2 – STRATEGY

### S1 Final Business Plans (Paper No MC/21/85)

S1.1 The CE thanked Committee Members and staff involved in producing the Business Plan. He informed Members this is a draft and there are opportunities to change the plan.

S1.2 Members discussed the financial assumptions and where the data had been gathered from. It was agreed that rather than change the Business Plan, updates will be presented quarterly to P&R Sub-Committee regarding the changing financial position and the impact on the Business Plan.

S1.3 Members advised of some errors they had spotted and changes they would like made to the plan. These were noted and will be addressed prior to it being finalised.

S1.4 The CRM presented the Care & Repair Business Plan. Members requested that its appearance be brought in line with OHAL's corporate style. Members discussed the tendering of the C&R service and the CE informed Members he had not had any updates from OIC regarding this.

S1.5 Following discussion, members approved:

- a) the 2022-25 Business Plan "Building a Sustainable Future" subject to any amendments;
- b) detailed appendices to the 2022-25 Business Plan which form the Operational Delivery detail for 2022-23, 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 2022-23 subject to it being reformatted in the OHAL corporate style;
- e) delegated authority to staff to complete the documents, along with any minor typographical and layout amendments; and
- f) that quarterly updates will be presented to P&R Sub-Committee regarding the changing financial position and subsequent impact on the Business Plan.

### S2 2022/23 Budget Approval (Paper No MC/21/86)

S2.1 The FM informed Members that a draft of the 2022/23 Budget was reviewed by P&R Sub-Committee in February 2022. There were a number of uncertainties at that time and Sub-Committee Members were advised that subsequent

changes would be detailed in the MC paper. These changes have resulted in a lower surplus than originally budgeted

S2.2 The CE informed Members that there may be some pressure on the budget as a result of the OIC deciding that garden and grounds maintenance charges were no longer eligible for Housing Benefit. The CE and the DO are in discussion with OIC seeking to find a resolution for this.

S2.3 A Member queried the increase in the property improvements budget. The DPM informed Members that an allowance had originally been made for works at 19 properties in order for them to achieve EESSH, but he had now added an allowance for a trial of an underfloor robot to provide underfloor insulation. Members noted it will be trialled in one or two properties before being rolled out further.

S2.4 Members then approved the 2022/23 Revenue and Capital Budgets.

### **PART 3 – GOVERNANCE & ASSURANCE**

#### **G1 SHR Self-Assessment Update (Paper No MC/21/787)**

G1.1 The HCG presented the paper.

G1.2 Members noted the content of the report and:

- 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 progress with regards to Regulatory Requirement 13 as detailed in Section 5 of the paper;
- e) Noted the Regulatory Standards Evidence Bank additions per Section 6 of the paper; and
- f) Noted there are no updates to the COVID-19 Evidence Bank.

#### **G2 Performance & Resources Sub-committee Report (Paper No MC/21/88)**

G2.1 Members noted the update and record of decisions from the Performance & Resources Sub-committee meeting.

#### **G3 Audit & Risk Management Sub-committee Report (Paper No MC/21/89)**

G3.1 The DF informed Members she had discussed the 10% increase in the annual fee with the CE and the external auditors. It was agreed this was not disproportionate and had therefore been accepted.

G3.2 Members noted the update and record of decisions from the Audit and Risk Management Sub-committee.

**G4 Staffing Update** (Paper No MC/21/90)

G4.1 The HCG presented the Paper and also advised that a Small Repairs Service Trainee had joined the Care & Repair Team earlier this week, on a 6 month, fully funded placement.

G4.2 The HCG informed Members that two members of staff have accepted new positions in different organisations. A Member commented on the positive nature of the situation where members of staff, having been trained and developed at OHAL, move on to another organisation, providing a great contribution to our community. Members agreed these staff members are good ambassadors for OHAL. The HCG noted that both staff members were very appreciative of OHAL and the opportunities they had received.

G4.3 Members noted the contents of this paper.

**G5 MC Appraisal Feedback** (Paper No MC/21/91)

G5.1 The Chair presented the Paper and thanked the Committee Members for their participation in the process.

G5.2 Members noted the contents of the paper.

**G6 Policy & Reviews** (Paper No MC/21/92)

G6.1 The FM informed Members the Treasury Management Strategy for 2022/23 has been modified and extended in light of new SFHA Guidance. A member commented that they found having all the figures in one place very helpful. The FM mentioned that the Strategy may be helpful for benchmarking purposes for the proposed quarterly economic update to P&R.

G6.2 When discussing deferred Policy Reviews, a member requested an anticipated timescale for the review of the Sustainability Policy. The CE replied that this would form part of the work due to be undertaken in Years 1 and 3 of the Business Plan, with regards to the Environmental Social & Governance (ESG) Strategy and Action Plan.

G6.3 Members:

- a) Noted the deferred Policy Reviews as listed in Section 1 of the paper; and
- b) approved the revised Treasury Management Strategy for 2022/23 as detailed in Attachment 1 to the paper.

**G7 Internal Audit Services 2022-2027** (Paper No MC/21/93)

G7.1 The HCG informed Members that the on-line procurement exercise had proved very straight forward, that 2 responses had been received and thanked Roella Wilson for volunteering to be part of the Selection Panel.

G7.2 Management Committee members:

- a) noted that a thorough tender exercise for Internal Audit Services had been undertaken; and
- b) agreed that the winning tenderer be appointed as Internal Auditor for 2022-27, with the option of an extension for one or two further years, subject to annual review.

**G8 Resolutions & Applications for Membership** (Paper No MC/21/94)

G8.1 Members approved the resolution in respect of two shared ownership disposals and approved the application for membership as detailed in the Paper.

**PART 4 – PERFORMANCE**

**P1 Report from Health & Safety Working Party** (Paper No MC/21/95)

P1.1 The HCG presented the Paper and informed Members that there were updates issued to the Health & Safety Control Manual as detailed in the Paper.

P1.2 A lot of work has been done following the H&S Audit around COSHH. The DPM is working on taking the Landlord Safety Manual forward and will present this to MC when complete.

P1.3 Members then:

- a) Approved the updates to the Health & Safety Manual as detailed in Section 2 and in Attachment 1 of the paper; and
- b) Noted the remainder of the Report.

**P2 Arrears & Bad Debts Write Offs** (Paper No MC/21/96)

P2.1 The DO advised members that there had been no sequestrations during the year which explained why this was significantly under budget. Also contributing to this was that debts are no longer just written off but kept live where recovery was thought possible.

P2.2 Irrecoverable recharges were nearly at the budget limit but was due to one property as detailed in the Paper. This void has resulted from the death of the tenant who had no estate and so the debt was not realistic to pursue.

P2.3 A member queried whether the tenancy sustainment fund could skew these figures? The DO replied that this was an interesting point but that not all of the

monies granted via the tenancy sustainment fund had been credited to rent but used for other means. He advised that updates on this are, and would continue to be, presented to members via the Welfare Reform Updates and if further information was required this could easily be provided.

Management Committee:

- a) noted the current position for write offs as at the end of Q1 of 2021/22;
- b) approved the write off for former tenancy 50509; and
- c) noted the remainder of the paper.

### **P3 Development Report (Paper No MC/21/97)**

P3.1 The DPM presented the Paper and provided an update to the figures presented. He advised that we had achieved 20 completions as the 12 properties at The Crafty were being handed over today and that site starts remain at 28 due to delays progressing works at Evie and Upper Sunnybank.

P3.2 The DPM informed members that 7 properties at Kirk Park had been handed over in February with the remaining one which required adaptations being handed over on 23<sup>rd</sup> March. Work at Walliwall is progressing as programmed.

P3.3 The Association had secured an interest free £2million revolving credit facility from the OIC. This will first be used to fund 6 New Supply Shared Equity (NSSE) properties in Stromness. The DPM informed Members these will be 2 x 3 apartment and 4 x 4 apartment, 2 storey semi-detached properties. A Member asked if there were other NSSE properties in the pipe-line. The DPM confirmed there may be, but these are still at discussion stage. The DF confirmed that it is important we look for opportunities to use the revolving credit facility as, this would demonstrate it has been utilised well for the benefit of the community. This would be good news for all of OHAL, OIC, Scottish Government and those awaiting housing. The DPM noted that the aim is to have a rolling programme of NSSE properties which allows a new project to start once the current properties are sold.

P3.4 A Member asked if there was ever opportunity for MC Members to have a look round completed sites before they are handed over. The DPM confirmed that Members do "*normally*" get the opportunity to do this, but that this had not been possible at The Crafty site – committee member visits will be offered in future. The Chair advised that it had been unfortunate that the annual engagement events had not been possible due to the pandemic the previous two years, but we are hopeful of being able to do something this summer.

P3.5 Members then:

- a) noted the current position with the development programme;
- b) noted the position of the Yorston Drive project; and
- c) granted authority to the Development & Properties Manager (or the Chief Executive in his absence) to accept the tender submitted by Orkney Builders (Contractors) Ltd for 6 NSSE units at Yorston Drive and sign all relevant

associated documentation on receipt of a suitable funding offer from the Scottish Government.

## **PART 5 – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

### **D1 MC Training Plan (Paper No MC/21/98)**

- D1.1 The HCG was delighted to report that MC have done a lot of training the past year, achieving almost all of the planned activities and have well utilised on-line opportunities.
- D1.2 Members discussed and were happy to accept the suggestions listed at 4.7 of the Paper and expressed preferences for two of the courses listed for the additional ARM session in November. A Member advised they would be interested in learning more about factoring and the legal context which could possibly be provided by either an external training provider or staff during a brief session.
- D1.3 The HCG thanked members for their contributions to the discussions and advised she would pull together a suggested programme for the year ahead.
- D1.4 Members:
- a) noted the fantastic progress with training this year; and
  - b) discussed and agreed the Training Plan for 2022/23 as detailed in Section 4 of the paper.

### **D2 MC Recruitment (Paper No MC/21/99)**

- D2.1 The HCG expressed the importance of recruitment to members as we now have only eight members, with two casual vacancies.
- D2.2 She was delighted to report that a tenant had expressed an interest in joining MC. We are awaiting their Personal Profile form, prior to having a discussion with them, the Chair and Vice Chair.
- D2.3 Members discussed options for attracting interest including having an open session, promoting it as widely as possible throughout the County and asking Radio Orkney if they'd consider doing an evening slot focussing on OHAL and the great work our Committee Members do.
- D2.4 The HCG confirmed she will pull together advertising materials and email members to ascertain their availability for an in-person event.
- D2.5 Following discussion, members:
- a) Noted the current position with regards to Committee Membership numbers;
  - b) Noted the interest expressed by a tenant which is being actively followed up;
  - c) Discussed options for recruitment as detailed in the paper;

- d) Agreed they were happy to attend an in-person event;
- e) Delegated authority to the Head of Corporate Governance and the Admin & Governance Assistant to make the necessary arrangements and promote the event.

*Bill Wallace and Linda Forbes left the meeting.*

**PART 6 – ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

There was none.

**PRESENTATIONS**

The CE and DPM delivered a presentation covering “*How we build a house – including development policy and planning*” and “*Local & National Housing Policy – including SHIP*”. Copies of the presentations were to be emailed out to members afterwards and stored in Microsoft Teams.

*All staff except the HCG left the meeting.*

**Any Other Business**

All staff except the HCG left at this point.

**AOUB Confidential Paper (Paper No MC/21/100)**

- 1. Members noted the contents of the paper and approved the recommendation.
- 2. A member asked what was happening re the reinstatement of in-person meetings as they were keen to see this progressed as quickly as possible. The HCG being the only staff member present advised that staff were aware of members’ wishes but that the office remained closed to visitors and it was her opinion that an alternative venue may have to be sought as our meeting room was probably too small to allow distancing. She endeavoured to discuss this with Leadership Team and feedback to members prior to the next meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 13:40.

Signed: .....

Date: .....

Chair