

**Minutes of Meeting of the Management Committee of Orkney Housing Association Limited held remotely via Zoom on Wednesday 25 May 2022 at 10.30am**

**Present:** Fiona Lettice (Chair), Linda Forbes, John Rodwell, 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):  
Suzy Boardman (Communications & Engagements Officer – C&EO,  
items D1 & D2)  
Connie Shearer (Minute Taker)

**PART 1 – STANDING ITEMS**

**1.1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Philip Cook, Dave Dawson and Bill Wallace.

**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 30 March 2022**

1.3.1 There was a typo at G6.1, line 2: should read 'of' not 'off'.

A member queried P2.2 ‘... death of the tenants ...’ and whether this referred to one or more tenant(s). Once this has been clarified we will ensure this is accurately recorded in the Minutes.

With these 2 amendments, 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.

**1.4 Matters Arising & Deferred Items (Paper No MC/22/01)**

1.4.1 Members noted that the tender for the Care & Repair service had been submitted on 19 May and the CE said a decision from OIC was awaited.

1.4.2 The CE said it was hoped that in-person Committee meetings could commence shortly for those who wish, and options are being looked at for this.

## **1.5 Future Meeting Dates:**

Wednesday 27 July, 10.30am – Management Committee: Linda Forbes tendered her apologies in advance.

## **PART 2 – STRATEGY**

### **S1 5 Yr Financial Projections (5YFP) (Paper No MC/22/02)**

- S1.1 The FM presented the paper explaining that the 5YFP use the estimated closing cash balance which results in the projections being aligned with those in the Business Plan, with the addition of NSSE properties.
- S1.2 He went on to answer a few queries from members.
- S1.3 Members then approved the 5 Year Financial Projections as presented and authorised the Director of Finance to make the submission to the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) on behalf of the Association.

### **S2 Approval of Loan Portfolio Submission (Paper No MC/22/03)**

- S2.1 The FM presented the paper which he said was a comprehensive but straightforward report required by the SHR providing details of the Association's loan facilities as at 31 March.
- S2.2 Members approved the 2021-22 Loan Portfolio return and authorised the Director of Finance to submit the return to the Regulator on their behalf.

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

### **G1 SHR Self-Assessment Update (Paper No MC/22/04)**

- 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 there are no 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 the updates to the COVID-19 Evidence Bank.

## **G2 Approval of Annual Return on the Charter 2021-22 (Paper No MC/22/05)**

G2.1 The DO went over some of the figures in the Return and members noted that, although some of the figures were down on the previous year due to COVID, there were a number of positive results. Notably:

- The average time taken to complete non-emergency repairs dropped from 14.58 to 13.01, this despite a rise in the number of repairs carried out.
- Repair satisfaction survey completions rose from 174 to 289, with satisfaction rising from 98.85 to 99.31%.
- There were zero evictions due to our proactive approach to rent arrears and debt management.
- Rent arrears has fallen from 3.9% to 3.61%, with potential to drop to 3.3%.

G2.2 Responding to a query (2.2, Indicator 27), the DO confirmed that OHAL and OIC received £10,500 each via the Tenant Grant Fund.

G2.3 A member queried why figures relating to Tenant Satisfaction were the same as the previous year. The DO explained that the data was gathered from a Tenant Satisfaction Survey which is valid for three years, hence the same figures. A comprehensive survey is proposed for this coming year.

G2.4 Following discussion, members:

- a) noted the content of the Returns as at Attachments 1 and 2 to the paper; and
- b) authorised the Chief Executive to submit the Returns to the SHR.

## **G3 Policy & Reviews (Paper No MC/22/06)**

G3.1 Rent Setting Policy: The DO went over the changes to this policy, as detailed in the paper, and addressed some queries from members regarding the minimum income standard and the measuring of rent affordability.

G3.2 Factoring Policy: This has been updated to reflect operational changes and changes to the Code of Conduct as well as legislative requirements and best practice.

G3.3 Pensions Policy: The CE said the policy had been fully reviewed and required some minor changes which were incorporated and presented for approval.

G3.4 Members then:

- 1) Noted progress with outstanding policy reviews as detailed in Section 1 of the paper; and
- 2) Approved the:
  - a) Rent Setting Policy
  - b) Factoring Policy
  - c) Pensions Policy

**G4      Annual Governance Report (Paper No MC/22/07)**

- G4.1 A member enquired whether the 2 Freedom of Information requests were straightforward, and the HCG confirmed this was the case.

Responding to a query, she said that the training target of 12hrs had initially been an internal KPI set by, and reported to, MC. Though no longer a KPI, this forms part of MC Training & Development Policy.

- G4.2 Members noted the contents of the paper.

**G5      Performance & Resources Sub-committee Report (Paper No MC/22/08)**

- G5.1 Members noted the update and record of decisions from the Performance & Resources Sub-committee meeting.

**G6      Performance & Resources Annual Report (Paper No MC/22/09)**

- G6.1 Members noted the contents of the Annual Report.

**G7      Audit & Risk Management Sub-committee Report (Paper No MC/22/10)**

- G7.1 The ARM Chair thanked members for agreeing to hold a fourth ARM meeting which everyone had found beneficial.
- G7.2 Members noted the update and record of decisions from the Audit and Risk Management Sub-committee.

**G8      Audit & Risk Management Annual Report (Paper No MC/22/11)**

- G8.1 A member highlighted that the ARM sub committee had some concerns around the limited assurance awarded for the Duty of Care Internal Audit Review but had requested feedback on this. The CE said this referred to electrical work (fire & smoke alarms and electrical inspections) and that tenant safety was high on both our and the SHR agenda. The focus of the report had been that the target had not been met, not that tenants were at risk. However, this electrical inspection work was being addressed and due to be completed by 31/07/22.

- G8.2 Members noted the contents of the Annual Report.

**G9      Staffing Update (Paper No MC/22/12)**

- G9.1 The HCG presented a positive report in terms of recruitment with two new staff members due to begin shortly.

- G9.2 Interviews for a new Housing Services Officer had taken place and a verbal offer had been made and accepted.
- G9.3 A member enquired about the Equal Opportunities Form and whether it was required by the SHR. The HCG explained this was the Association's own internal form and was something that always went out, though not all candidates return it. Discussing gender, it was agreed the form would be updated to reflect current trends.
- G9.4 Members noted the contents of the report.

#### **G10 Finance Manager Recruitment (Paper No MC/22/13)**

- G10.1 The paper outlined the process for the recruitment of a new Finance Manager. Members acknowledged it was a challenging time for recruitment to managerial financial posts. However, they hoped that the positive, attractive, recruitment package proposed would result in a number of applications.
- G10.2 Following discussion, members:
- approved the process as detailed in the paper with regards to the Selection Panel, advertising arrangements and timescales;
  - approved the offer of reimbursement of relevant interview expenses and relocation costs as detailed in Section 4 of the paper; and
  - noted that the panel may engage a recruitment consultant if this round of recruitment is not successful.

#### **G11 Resolutions & Applications for Membership (Paper No MC/22/14)**

- G11.1 Members approved the resolution in respect of one shared ownership disposal and noted one cancelled general membership.
- G11.2 It was agreed to defer any decision on filling a casual vacancy until discussions with all MC members have taken place.

### **PART 4 – PERFORMANCE**

#### **P1 Business Plan & Risk Management Report (Paper No MC/22/15)**

- P1.1 This report provided assurance of effective management of organisational performance and risks during 2021/22 and members noted 6 out of 15 actions in the Operational Plan had been completed, 8 partially and one not yet due.
- P1.2 It was noted that a minor issue with how one KPI (P2, repairs) had been recorded. This had had an impact on reporting for all quarters of 2021-22 but was fully updated for ARC submission. However, a full review of the repairs services is to take place for 2022-23.
- P1.3 Members noted the contents of the paper.

**P2      Complaints & Compliments Report (Paper No MC/22/16)**

- P2.1    The HCG presented the paper noting that complaints were comparable to last year. She was pleased to report that compliments had increased, with OHAL's Tradesman Team receiving a high level of positive responses.
- P2.3    Members noted the contents of the report.

**P3      Development Report (Paper No MC/22/17)**

- P3.1    The DPM's report updated members on progress with current and proposed developments. Properties at Kirk Park, Orphir and The Crafty, Kirkwall have been handed over. Final Accounts for these schemes are being worked on and will be presented to Management Committee once agreed.
- P3.2    Work is well underway at Yorston Drive, Stromness with 6 NSSE properties due for completion by October 2022. Six properties are planned for the site in Evie, and it is hoped to get the project on-site in early 2023.
- P3.3    Responding to a query, the DPM said 2 units were being proposed for Greenfield, Toab.
- P3.4    Members noted the current position with the development programme.

**P4      Contractors & Consultants Annual Review (Paper No MC/2218)**

- P4.1    The DPM presented the paper saying there were no concerns regarding contractors and noting the effect that the COVID pandemic had on response times due to staff and material availability.
- P4.2    Responding to a query, he confirmed that no new contractors had been added to the approved list.
- P4.3    Members then:
- a) noted the annual performance figures for our Maintenance Contractors in Attachment 1 of the paper;
  - b) noted that any member with an interest in any of the companies on any of lists given in Attachments 2, 3 and 4 of the paper must declare so in the Register of Interests in accordance with the Entitlements, Payments and Benefits Policy;
  - c) approved the List of Maintenance Contractors given in Attachment 2 of the paper;
  - d) approved the List of Development Contractors given in Attachment 3 of the paper; and
  - e) approved the List of Development Consultants given in Attachment 4 of the paper.

*Suzy Boardman, C&EO, joined the meeting.*

## **PART 5 – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

### **D1 Engagement Events (Paper No MC/22/19)**

- D1.1 The C&EO presented the paper which outlined plans for an in-person engagement event for MC members, the Residents Panel and staff.
- D1.2 Following discussion, members decided to defer any decision today but agreed that a poll should go out to all members regarding dates and a preferred option for the event.

### **D2 Housing Benefit Presentation (No paper)**

- D2.1 The CE and DO gave a presentation on OHAL Garden Maintenance & Housing Benefit which outlined the history of the garden & grounds maintenance services.
- D2.2 This had been provided to tenants since 1987 and which had always been covered by housing benefit. This service is a non-optional part of the tenancy agreement and a condition of tenancy.
- D2.3 Members heard that OIC notified the Association that housing benefit would no longer be paid to claimants to cover the charge for garden maintenance with effect from 1 April 2022.
- D2.4 The possible impacts, implications of this and some outline options or actions were discussed with members. The CE said more updates and a course of action would be presented to MC at a future meeting.

*The C&EO left the meeting.*

## **PART 6 – ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

### **I1 Welfare Reform Update (Paper No MC/22/20)**

- I1.1 Members noted the update on the current situation regarding Welfare Reform and the WR Mitigation Plan.

### **Any Other Business**

Responding to a query, the CE confirmed that it was hoped members could return to having in-person meetings in the office if they so wished, possibly at the July meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 1.30pm

Signed: .....

Date: .....

Chair