

Minutes of Meeting of the Management Committee of Orkney Housing Association Limited held in person and via Zoom on Wednesday 29 March 2023 at 10.30am

Present: In person: Fiona Lettice (Chair), Brian Kynoch, Bruce Pilkington, John Rodwell, Mervyn Sandison, John White and Roella Wilson
Remotely: Bill Wallace

In attendance: Craig Spence (Chief Executive – CE)
Anne Fletcher (Depute Chief Executive – DCE)
Paul Scott (Director of Operations – DO)
Ruth Glover (Finance Manager – FM)
Mhairi Hughes (Secretary / Head of Corporate Governance – HCG)
Richard Flett (Development & Properties Manager – DPM)
Fraser Devine (Care & Repair Manager – CRM – left after item S1)
Connie Shearer (Minute Taker)

PART 1 – STANDING ITEMS

1.1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Philip Cook.

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 Management Committee meeting held 22 February 2023

Item 1.4.1, 2): A member requested clarity for this item and it was agreed to amend the Minutes to "...for required remedial works at Pickaquoy Loan linked to the gable end repair to be carried out as soon as possible." With this change, the Minutes were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting and were proposed by Roella Wilson and seconded by Bill Wallace. The Minutes to be signed by the Chair at a later date.

1.4 Matters Arising & Deferred Items (Verbal update)

1.4.1 At the January meeting, members agreed that the Tenancy Sustainment Fund be used to absorb shortfall debt linked to grass cutting. The CE informed members that the final amount of budget adjustment for this is £12,410.

1.5 Future Meeting / Training Dates:

Wednesday 26 April, 10.30am – Audit & Risk Management Sub Committee
Wednesday 10 May, 10.30am – Performance & Resources Sub Committee
Wednesday 31 May, 10.30am – Management Committee

PART 2 – STRATEGY

- S1 Approval of OHAL and Care & Repair Business Plans** (Paper No MC/22/86)
- S1.1 The CE introduced the paper, explaining this was a culmination of work which Management Committee has contributed to over the past six months. The planning process included a refresh of the Association’s Vision and Corporate Outcomes, along with reaffirming of our Mission. “Building a Sustainable Future” sets out a number of actions to be taken in the coming years to deliver the Plan. Updated appendices for year two of the plan, covering 2023-24, were presented to members for review/approval.
- S1.2 The CRM presented the Care & Repair Business Plan which outlined the current environment the service is operating in. He highlighted the challenges faced, particularly in the outer isles, and the importance of retaining the service at its present level. There have been uncertainties regarding the Care & Repair Tender. Recent highlights have been the installation of smoke alarms and the distribution of winter ‘cosy homes packs’ which were a great success.
- S1.3 A member queried the KPI rent arrears figure of 5% (last year 4.25%) and the DO explained that, in the current climate, it had been deemed prudent to set this at 5%. This remains challenging but is realistic against our peer group which is 5.5% average.
- S1.4 A member stressed the importance of having an IT Strategy. The CE said IT covered many strands across the organisation and development work was ongoing. It is included in the Risk Register and in Year 3 of the Business Plan. He suggested we set out a milestone of how IT fits across all aspects of our work and that was agreed.
- S1.5 Responding to a query on Item 7 in the Operational Plan (increase tenancy sustainment work), the DO confirmed this may prove challenging at the moment but, with recent successful recruitment, this is something to look at in a more targeted way, particularly regarding energy issues. The recent round of calls highlighted 60% of tenants requiring support of some sort, so we will be looking at a variety of ways to help and communicate with tenants and provide bespoke support.
- S1.6 Regarding Care & Repair enquiries about fuel poverty and passing clients onto other agencies, the CRM was asked if these cases were quantified. He explained the process of dealing with advice cases which are kept on a database and confirmed information could be extracted from that and included in reports to Performance & Resources Sub-Committee.
- S1.7 Members discussed the ongoing issues with the Care & Repair tender which has been frustrating. The CE has been in discussions with the relevant Director at OIC and is due to meet with their new CE.
- S1.8 The FM went over the finance figures. She highlighted a typo in the Assumptions: Year 1 of the 3 month borrowing rate should read 4.56 (not 2.56).
- S1.9 Following review and discussion, members approved the:

- a) detailed appendices to the 2022-25 Business Plan which form the Operational Delivery detail for 2023-24, noting that these will be updated and brought for approval annually;
- b) Orkney Care & Repair's Business Plan 2023-24; and
- c) delegated authority to staff to complete the documents, along with any minor typographical and layout amendments.

S2 2022/23 Budget Approval (Paper No MC/22/87)

- S2.1 The FM informed members that a draft of the 2023/24 budget was reviewed in detail by P&R Sub-committee on 01 March 2023. Further work on both the Budget and the Business Plan resulted in a lower surplus than originally budgeted, and these were detailed in the paper.
- S2.2 The FM made members aware that a calculation error in depreciation resulted in a higher figure than it should have been. She requested this higher figure be left as it is for now and it can be changed once the revised budget has been done. This was agreed.
- S2.3 Members approved the 2023/24 Revenue and Capital Budgets as presented.

S3 Equalities Strategy (Paper No MC/22/88)

- S3.1 The HCG's paper updated members on progress with actions to address the Scottish Housing Regulator's Regulatory Requirements in respect of equalities and human rights. An updated Action Plan, draft Strategy, and Equalities Impact Assessment and information on data currently collected were presented.
- S3.2 A member felt the Strategy was more workplace focussed rather than tenants and there should be more of a balance. The HCG agreed to work with the member to review the Strategy and bring it to the next MC meeting.
- S3.3 Members:
- Noted progress with the Action Plan as at Attachment 1 to the paper;
 - Noted the draft Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy as at Attachment 2 to the paper and that a revised version will be brought to the next meeting;
 - Noted the EIA as detailed in Attachment 3 of the paper, and that consideration will be given to appending this to the Policy & Planning Framework when reviewed later this year; and
 - Noted the information currently collected in respect of the 9 protected characteristics in respect of job applicants, committee, staff, tenants and waiting list applicants.

PART 3 – GOVERNANCE & ASSURANCE

G1 SHR Self-Assessment Update (Paper No MC/22/89)

- G1.1 The HCG presented the papers and 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 minor amendment to the list of Governance Related Policies;
 - d) Note the Regulatory Requirements Evidence Bank additions; and
 - e) Noted the Regulatory Standards Evidence Bank additions per Section 6.

G2 P&R Chair Report (Paper No MC/22/90)

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

G3 ARM Chair Report (Paper No MC/22/91)

- G3.1 The ARM Chair highlighted one item on the paper (3.1, 4) regarding adequate resources to address outstanding recommendations. The HCG confirmed progress had been made and an update will be provided at the next ARM meeting.

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

G4 Staffing Update CONFIDENTIAL (Paper No MC/22/92)

- G4.1 The HCG presented the paper and, following brief discussion, members:
- a) Noted the updates on vacancies/ recruitment;
 - b) Approved the regrading of a post as detailed in the Paper and associated budget;
 - c) Approved the creation of post as detailed in the paper and associated budget and
 - d) Noted the training update.

G5 MC Training Plan (Paper No MC/22/93)

- G5.1 The HCG was pleased to report that MC had completed 100% of the planned training sessions for 2022/23. In addition, several external/online courses had taken place together with brief training sessions delivered by staff.

- G5.2 Although no specific training had been identified during MC appraisals, she had suggested a few topics for members to consider. After discussion, members agreed on two sessions:
- a) Questions you should be asking – Finance
 - b) Covenants & long-term financial planning for Committee/Board

Regarding brief sessions, it was agreed to hold one session, delivered by staff, covering: 1) Housing Options; 2) Housing Needs Assessment; and 3) Management of Waiting List.

Members also thought sessions by local agencies whom we refer clients to would be useful eg, CAB, THAW, etc.

G5.3 The joint seminar with OIC was discussed and the Chair and CE agreed to get together and discuss this.

G5.4 Members then:

- noted the excellent progress with training this year; and
- discussed and agreed a Training Plan for 2023/24 as detailed in Section 4 of the paper.

G6 MC Appraisal Feedback (Paper No MC/22/94)

G6.1 The HCG said that, whilst appraisals overall were very positive, a number of useful points were raised which members had discussions to clarify.

G7 Policy & Reviews (Paper No MC/22/95)

G7.1 The DCE presented the paper and explained the purposed of the Treasury Management Strategy. A typo was identified at 2.7 in line two: '211' should read '189'.

G7.2 After short discussion, members:

- a) Noted the deferred Policy Reviews as listed in Section 1: and
- b) Approved the Treasury Management Strategy for 2023/24 as detailed in Attachment 1 of the paper.

G8 Resolutions & Applications for Membership (Paper No MC/22/96)

G8.1 Members approved the resolution in respect of one shared ownership disposal.

PART 4 – PERFORMANCE

P1 Arrears & Bad Debts Write Offs (Paper No MC/22/97)

P1.2 Management Committee:

- a) Noted the current position for write offs as at the end of 2022/23;
- b) Approved the write off of 2 former tenancies as detailed; and
- c) Noted the remainder of the paper.

P2 New Homes Survey Results (Paper No MC/22/98)

P2.1 The DPM informed members that, despite the low returns, tenants were generally happy with their new homes and any issues raised were being dealt with.

P2.2 Members noted the contents of the report.

P3 Report from Health & Safety Working Party (Paper No MC/22/99 enclosed)

P3.1 The HCG said there had been very little changes since the last report in December 2022. A few queries had been answered and the paper gave updates on the current position, with MC required to approve amendments to the H&S Control Manual.

P3.2 Members:

- a) Approved the updates to the Health & Safety Manual as detailed in Section 2.6 and in Attachment 1 of the paper; and
- b) Noted the remainder of the Report.

PART 5 – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

D1 Workshop Lease (Paper No MC/22/100)

D1.2 Following a brief overview of the paper, members:

- a) approved entering into a 5 year lease for the workshop premises; and
- b) granted authority to the Development & Properties Manager to agree and sign the lease for a 5 year period from April 2023 to March 2028.

D2 Development Report (Paper No MC/22/101)

D2.1 The DPM updated members on progress with the development programme. It was noted that works at Walliwall 8 had been agreed with an offer accepted for the design and build contract; this scheme should be completed in April 2024.

Three NSSE properties at Yorston Drive, Stromness have not yet been sold and other options for these are being explored.

The DPM advised members of the final out-turn costs for Phase 4, Orphir and also for The Crafty, which required additional costs.

D2.2 Members:

- a) noted the current position with the development programme;
- b) approved the final out-turn costs for the Orphir Phase 4 project; and
- c) approved the final out-turn costs for The Crafty project and the additional costs as advised in the paper.

PART 6 – ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

There were none.

Any Other Competent Business

A member highlighted the work of Aberlour Urgent Assistance Fund which provides financial support for children and their families in crisis in Scotland – details will be emailed to members.

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

Signed:

Date:

Chair