

**Minutes of Meeting of the Management Committee of Orkney Housing Association Limited held in the Association's offices and via Zoom on Wednesday 26 July 2023 at 10.30am**

**Present:** In person: Fiona Lettice (Chair), Brian Kynoch, Bruce Pilkington, Mervyn Sandison 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)  
Mhairi Hughes (Secretary / Head of Corporate Governance – HCG)  
Connie Shearer (Minute Taker)

**Observing:** In person: Mary Ann Lewis  
Remotely: Katherine Hayes

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly Mary Ann Lewis and Katherine Hayes who were observing as prospective new Committee members. She then introduced everyone at the meeting.

## **PART 1 – STANDING ITEMS**

### **1.1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Philip Cook, John Rodwell and John White.

### **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, 31 May 2023**

The Minutes were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting and were proposed by Brian Kynoch and seconded by Bruce Pilkington. The Minutes were later signed by the Chair.

### **• Minutes of the Emergency Sub Committee meeting, 21 June 2023**

The Minutes were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting and were proposed by Roella Wilson and seconded by Bruce Pilkington. The Minutes were later signed by the Chair.

### **1.4 Matters Arising & Deferred Items**

- 1.4.1 1) Care & Repair Tender: The CE has been in touch with OIC and this was to have been internally signed off by OIC last week but it has not yet arrived. The CE is to chase this up.
- 2) Joint OHAL/OIC Seminar: The CE said OIC are keen to engage with OHAL but propose waiting until they hear back from the Scottish Government regarding a Housing Needs & Demands Assessment which has been submitted to SG. If OIC don't have capacity to organise something, then OHAL could do so. The CE will bring a discussion paper to MC in August.

## 1.5 Future Meeting Dates:

Wednesday 09 August, 10.30am – Performance & Resources Sub Committee  
Tuesday 15 August, 10.30am – Audit & Risk Management Sub Committee  
Wednesday 30 August, 10.30am – Management Committee  
Wednesday 30 August – Summer Engagement Event

## PART 2 – STRATEGY

None

## PART 3 – GOVERNANCE & ASSURANCE

### G1 SHR Self-Assessment Update (Paper No MC/23/24)

G1.1 The HCG presented the paper, noting that an update regarding RR13 relating to ‘protected characteristics’ will be brought back to a future meeting. She explained that the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) is reviewing its Regulatory Framework, but no major changes are anticipated. A letter from the SHR advised that the next Annual Assurance Statement will require to contain assurance regarding the collection of equalities information, as well as confirmation that the Association is meeting its duties regarding tenant and resident safety.

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 update to the list of Governance Related Policies;
- d) Noted the additions to the Evidence Bank in relation to the Regulatory Requirements and Regulatory Standards per Sections 5 and 6 of the paper; and
- e) Noted the recent documents issued by the Scottish Housing Regulator as detailed in Section 8 of the paper.

### G2 AGM Arrangements and Pre-AGM Certification (Paper No MC/23/25)

G2.1 The HCG presented the paper which outlined the Member Elections and AGM arrangements.

She noted that Bill Wallace had indicated his intention to retire at the AGM for personal reasons, thanked him for his 7 years’ service and wished him all the best for the future.

As per the Rules, Philip Cook was required to retire and stand for re-election along with one of either Fiona Lettice or Roella Wilson. Roella agreed to retire and stand for re-election. Mervyn Sandison having been co-opted in September 2022, has indicated he will stand for election at the AGM.

- G2.2 Following discussion, Members agreed they would prefer a hybrid event held in a large venue, together with an informal presentation/speaker followed by a supper. Authority was delegated to the Secretary and Chair to explore this option. However, given the timescales involved, if it was not possible for this year then we would do that next year, with this year being a smaller hybrid event in the Association's office dealing with essential business, as per 2022.
- G2.3 Regarding the Auditors, members agreed they could present the accounts virtually, but this would depend on the outcome of the final Report & Financial Statements which are being presented to MC on 30 August 2023. A decision would be made following that meeting.
- G2.4 Following discussion, Members:
- a) Noted the AGM arrangements as set out in Sections 1, 2 and 3 of the paper;
  - b) Confirmed they wish to progress with a hybrid AGM at a large venue, with speaker and supper;
  - c) Agreed the accounts could be presented virtually by the Auditors with a final decision on this to be made following the MC meeting on 30 August;
  - d) All present 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 of the paper 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 Recruitment & Training Update (Paper No MC/23/26)**

- G3.1 The HCG went over her report which covered recent vacancies and successful recruitment, together with progress on staff professional training and development qualifications.
- G3.2 The DO updated members on the Building Services Manager vacancy and was pleased to report that this post had been successfully recruited to, with the successful applicant due to start end of August / start of September.
- G3.3 Members noted the contents of the paper.

### **G4 Policy & Reviews (Paper No MC/23/27)**

- G4.1 The HCG presented the paper noting that a number of policies due for review remain outstanding. She went over the changes required to the Business Continuity & Disaster Recovery Plan.
- G4.2 Responding to a query on Monitoring & Review, she confirmed that the Plan will be tested by a desktop exercise later this year.

- G4.3 A numbering mistake at 6.2.1 was noted and will be rectified in the final version.
- G4.4 Members then:
- 1) noted the outstanding policy reviews and explanations as detailed in Section 1 of the paper; and
  - 2) approved the revisions to the Business Continuity & Disaster Recovery Plan as at Attachment 1, with numbering amendments.

*Katherine Hayes left the meeting for the next item.*

**G5 Resolutions, Applications for Membership & Committee Recruitment Update** (Paper No MC/23/28)

- G5.1 The HCG went over the paper then Members:
- a) noted there were no resolutions;
  - b) approved one application for general membership; and
  - c) invited Katherine Hayes to join Management Committee as a co-optee until the AGM in September.

*Katherine Hayes rejoined the meeting.*

**G6 External Audit Tender** (Paper No MC/22/29)

- G6.1 The DCE went over the paper which detailed the tendering process to appoint an External Auditor. She explained that Audit & Risk Management Sub Committee considered the outcome of the process at its meeting on 19 July and made a recommendation to advise Management Committee to accept the tender.
- G6.2 Members then agreed to accept the tender from Wylie & Bisset (Audit) Limited and appoint them as External Auditors to Orkney Housing Association for 2024 for an initial period of 5 years. This will be subject to formal appointment at the AGM, in accordance with our Rules.

## **PART 4 – PERFORMANCE**

**P1 Development Report** (Paper No MC/23/30)

- P1.1 The DO presented the report, updating members on progress with current and proposed developments. He noted that, of the 6 NSSE properties in Kirkwall to be handed over in July, one remains unsold.
- P1.2 Three NSSE properties at Yorston Drive, Stromness remain unsold, and we are looking at options for these. Responding to a query, he explained that NSSE properties come with specific criteria from the Scottish Government (SG)

who funded the builds along with OIC. No Association money/finance is tied up in these properties whilst we explore other options such as alternate tenure.

P1.3 A member enquired about the Walliwall 9 project and the DO said he and the CE were having a meeting with OIC and the SG today and will report back at the next MC.

P1.4 Following discussion, Members noted the current position with the development programme.

## **PART 5 – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

### **D1 Staffing Paper (Paper No MC/23/31)**

D1.1 All staff, apart from the CE and HCG, left the meeting for this paper which was taken at the end of the meeting. Katherine Hayes also left the meeting at this point.

D1.2 Members considered the changes, challenges and opportunities with regard to Finance team staffing at OHAL and then agreed:

- a) to create the post of Director of Finance, on salary band 9 to match Director level posts.
- b) disestablish the Finance Manager post, subject to successful recruitment to the Director of Finance role.
- c) adjust the staffing establishment to include a 1.0WTE Trainee Finance Assistant.
- d) a selection panel for the role of Director of Finance, and
- e) instructed staff to advertise the role without delay, via the external Recruitment Agency as detailed in the Paper.

### **D2 Employee Survey 2022/2023 (Paper No MC/23/32)**

D2.1 The CE's paper updated members of the outputs from the survey and follow-up work undertaken. He noted that, looking at the results in isolation and comparing to other employers, they were a healthy set of statistics. However, compared to the 2019 survey results, a small number of areas showed improvement but several were lower.

D2.2 A number of focus groups for staff were held to discuss key themes and develop actions. The results of this were presented at the staff monthly meeting in June and a number of recommendations were outlined. LT have been actively discussing these points and measures have been put in place to positively and actively engage staff and deliver on the recommendations.

D2.3 The Chair acknowledged the huge amount of work which had gone into this.

D2.4 Management Committee discussed and noted:

- i) The outputs from the 2023 Employee Survey;

- ii) Work taken forward by the CEO and the Leadership Team;
- iii) Outputs from staff focus groups held in June; and
- iv) That recommendations from the staff focus groups work have all been adopted and are being implemented.
- v) Initial plans for the next staff survey to be carried out in late 2024.

## **PART 6 – ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

### **I1 TP Strategy Action Plan (Paper No MC/22/33)**

- 11.1 The report, introduced by the DO updated Members on the current action plan for 2023-24. A drop-in session in Kirkwall had been held in April 2023 and it is hoped similar events can be held in other locations across Orkney. We also plan to carry out a number of estate walkabouts in the coming year.
- 11.2 The Residents Panel continues to meet regularly but numbers are low so consideration will be given at ways to encourage new panel members. Responding to a query, the DO confirmed that the Association promotes the Residents Panel at every opportunity though contact with tenants, rent consultations, etc.
- 11.3 Members noted the content of the report and the updates it provided on current and previous annual action plans.

### **I2 Quarterly Write Offs (Paper No MC/22/34)**

- 12.1 The DO noted that no write offs required explicit permission from Management Committee at this time due to the small amounts involved.
- 12.2 Members
  - noted the current position for write offs as at the end of Q1 (2023/24); and
  - noted the remainder of the paper.

### **Any Other Competent Business**

- 1) The CE said the DCE had bid successfully for a grant from the SG to go towards fabric improvement – replacing double-glazing with triple-glazing on old windows, repairing doors and extra insulation. Contractors must be found to do the work before the end of the year. Most of the ‘big’ contractors are on our approved list but we would like to invite two other local firms to be part of this list prior to sending out tenders. The CE asked MC for approval to add The Glass Shop Orkney and Hutchison Windows to our approved list, with all formalities concluded should they be successful (subject to insurance and references). Members agreed to this request.
- 2) Workshop, Hatston – The Trades Team and C&R Team share a workshop at Hatston, occupying  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the building. The other  $\frac{1}{4}$  has just become vacant and the CE is exploring what the options would be if OHAL can rent or buy the whole unit. He will report back at a future meeting.

- 3) The Co-Wheels 3-year electric vehicle project is coming to an end and OHAL have three charging points (in Dounby, Holm and Kirkwall) which we can keep and either maintain or decommission and remove. Positive discussions have taken place with the Reflex project who are keen to take them on.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 1315hrs.

Signed: .....

Date: .....

Chair