

## Minutes of a Meeting of the Management Committee of Orkney Housing Association Limited, held in the office and via Zoom on Wednesday, 29 November 2023 at 10.30am

**Present:** In person: Fiona Lettice (Chair), Mary Ann Lewis, Bruce Pilkington, John Rodwell, Mervyn Sandison, John White and Roella Wilson  
Remotely: Kate Hayes & Brian Kynoch

**In attendance:** Craig Spence (Chief Executive – CE)  
Mhairi Hughes (Secretary / Head of Corporate Governance – HCG)  
Anne Fletcher (Depute Chief Executive – DCE)  
Paul Scott (Director of Operations – DO)  
Dean Campbell (Building Services Manager – BSM)  
Kirstin Mackay (Director of Finance – DF – remotely)  
Connie Shearer (Minute Taker)

**Observing:** Suzanne Lawrence

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting, with a particular welcome to observer, Suzanne Lawrence. It was agreed to take Item G6 early, in order to consider Suzanne's co-option.

### PART 1 – STANDING ITEMS

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

Apologies were noted 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 on 04 October 2023**

Two errors were noted:

1.5.1 – the date in the second line should read '2024' not 2025.

G1.1 – the last paragraph should read '... was duly elected as P&R Chair' not 'Vice-Chair'.

With these two changes the Minutes were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting and were proposed by John White and seconded by Brian Kynoch. The Minutes to be signed by the Chair at a later date.

#### 1.4 **Matters Arising & Deferred Items (Paper No MC/23/51)**

##### 1.4.1 Tenant Safety – EICR

Members had previously queried why the Association had been unable to undertake safety works on 4 of our 840 properties. The DO explained that the main issue was not around gaining access but rather the condition of the properties once access had been made, with complex social reasons leaving contractors physically unable to carry out works.

Currently two cases are due to call in court in the new year. This is due to the deteriorating condition of the property meaning the Association can not physically carry out the work. Should there be no improvement, prior to the cases calling in court, the Association will have no option but to seek decree

for eviction. Should that come to pass, members would subsequently be presented with a paper requesting permission to enforce the decree. Part of the problem is difficulties with obtaining resources from OIC/OHAC to help tenants with complex needs.

A member queried whether the issue of residents' safety has consequences for the Association's Annual Assurance Statement (AAS). The HCG explained that we are compliant (as only 4 properties are affected, which are classified as being "in abeyance") and can evidence that we have done everything we can.

## **1.5 Future Meeting Dates:**

Wednesday 06 December, 10.00am-1.00pm – Strategy/ Planning Workshop  
Wednesday 31 January 2024, 10.30am – Management Committee

## **G6 Resolutions, Applications for Membership and Co-option (Paper No MC/23/59)**

G6.1 Suzanne Lawrence was asked to leave the room whilst members discussed her co-option. This was approved and she then came back to the meeting, and everyone introduced themselves.

G6.2 Members:

- a) approved the resolution in respect of two shared ownership disposals;
- b) approved the general membership as detailed in the paper;
- c) noted the one cancelled membership; and
- d) agreed to co-opt Suzanne on to Management Committee.

## **PART 2 – STRATEGY**

### **S1 Rent Review (Paper No MC/23/52)**

S1.1 The DO introduced the paper, detailing the background information regarding the rent review situation to date. To check for viability in rent setting, several scenarios were modelled based on a number of assumptions. Three options were presented to members to consider putting forward for consultation.

S1.2 Members discussed the various scenarios and the impact they would have on services such as planned maintenance and development. They also acknowledged the current cost of living pressures on tenants.

Responding to a query, the DO confirmed that consultation literature sent out to tenants would contain detailed information on the impact of each of the 3 options.

S1.3 A member said it would be interesting to see figures from the past 5 years and how balances worked out in relation to rent increases. The CE said this would be brought to the Strategy Day.

S1.4 As recommended, members:

- Discussed the content of the paper.

- Agreed the consultation timetable and options in section 5 of the paper; and
- Considered the details of the scenarios modelled and impacts for the Association.

## **S2 Revised Budget (Paper No MC/23/53)**

- S2.1 The DCE presented the paper on behalf of the DF. The paper detailed a re-forecasted budget after half-year results had been finalised. The process had involved all budget-holders and provided the most up-to-date forecast of this year's financial outcome, as well as providing a basis for the long-term projections.
- S2.2 She highlighted the opportunity pursued by staff to access funding for Net-Zero works. To accept tenders for this work, the revised budget included a virement between revenue slippage and planned capital spend. In approving a revised budget, this would allow staff to formally accept the grant offer and tenders to allow works to commence.
- S2.3 Following discussion, members approved the revised 2023/24 budget.

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

### **G1 SHR Annual Assurance Statement (Paper No MC/23/54)**

- G1.1 The HCG informed members that the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Assurance Statement had been submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator and a copy uploaded to our website.
- G1.2 Members noted the contents of the report and:
- a) Agreed that no material changes are required to the AAS since its submission;
  - b) Noted the Chair reported a matter to the SHR which has since been closed;
  - 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; and
  - e) Noted that the SHR's proposals for regulating social housing in Scotland will be discussed later on the agenda.

### **G2 Annual Committee Meeting Schedule (Paper No MC/23/55)**

- G2.1 The HCG's paper presented the standard meeting schedule for the coming year together with a proposed date for a Summer Engagement Event in August 2024. Members noted that an in-person Highland & Islands Liaison Group is scheduled to take place in Orkney during the last week of September 2024.
- G2.2 Members agreed:
- a) the proposed schedule of meeting dates for 2024/25; and
  - b) noted the contents of the paper.

**G3 P&R Chairs Report (Paper No MC/23/56)**

G3.1 The P&R Chair briefly went over the paper then Members noted the contents of the report.

**G4 Recruitment & Training Update (Paper No MC/23/57)**

G4.1 Members were pleased to note that the Director of Finance has now started with the Association, bringing a range of transferrable skills and knowledge essential to the role.

G4.2 Management Committee noted progress with recruitment and professional training / development qualifications.

**G5 Policy Reviews & Approvals (Paper No MC/23/58)**

G5.1 The HCG's paper noted outstanding policy reviews and highlighted minor revisions to the Scheme of Delegations. A member enquired about revised dates for policies that remain outstanding. The CE explained that the policies are still 'fit for purpose', won't require major changes and will be reviewed as soon as time permits. Responding to a query about legislation, the CE confirmed that policies are reviewed, either by MC or LT, and updated as per new legislation.

G5.2 Members:

- a) Noted the outstanding policy reviews and explanations; and
- b) Approved the revision to the Scheme of Delegations.

**G7 Application for Addition to the Approved List of Maintenance Contractors (Paper No MC/23/64)**

G7.1 The BSM presented the paper and informed members that the contract that the new contractor will be invited to tender for was for Net Zero insulation works.

G7.2 Members approved the addition of Orkney Insulation and Small Jobs to the Approved List of Maintenance Contractors.

**PART 4 – PERFORMANCE**

**P1 Business Plan Progress to 30 September 2023 (Paper No MC/23/60)**

P1.1 The CE's paper presented the position at the mid-year point of the KPIs and ARC data and went over the highlights.

Members noted that of the 20 Actions in the Operational Plan, 9 were complete, 8 on-track/ minor slippage and 3 off-track/ significant slippage.

P1.2 At the end of Q2, 13 of the 19 KPIs are being met, with a further 4 expected to be met over the course of the year.

P1.3 Following a query about the Care & Repair risk being reduced in the tracker, given the uncertainty with the ongoing provision of the service, the CE explained how this decision was made and said further discussion would take place at the Strategy Day.

## **P2 6-month Complaints & Compliments Report (Paper No MC/23/61)**

P2.1 The HCG reported that the number of complaints received had reduced significantly from 225 last year to 27 this year. This being mainly due to the termination of one garden and grounds contract.

P2.2 During the same period, 75 (148 last year) unsolicited compliments were recorded. 59 of these were attributable to OHAL and Care & Repair staff, and 16 for third party contractors.

P2.3 Members noted the contents of the report.

## **P3 Development Report (Paper No MC/23/62)**

P3.1 The BSM informed members that the Strategic Housing Investment Programme (SHIP) was still to be completed by OIC but they will shortly submit a draft to the Scottish Government.

P3.2 The Association is still on track to complete 20 units per year. He noted that the main focus for local developers and OIC was for more properties in Kirkwall. OIC are progressing with the design and tendering of infrastructure works at Corse West (Soulisquoy). OHAL will be involved in this project as we own part of the site.

The tender documents for Walliwall 9 have been received from the contractor and are higher than anticipated so we will have to go back to the Scottish Government to see if it is feasible to move forward.

Projects at Waliwall 6 & 7 are almost complete with 6 NSSE properties going through the last stages of sale.

The BSM noted potential issues at Walliwall 8 with meter installation by SSE. He said the contractor is in discussion with SSE and the BSM will update members in due course.

P3.3 A member enquired about the vacant properties at Yorston Drive, Stromness and the BSM confirmed discussions are being held with OIC who hope to bring these properties into their own stock.

- P3.4 Members noted the high costs per unit at Walliwall 8 and the BSM said these costs included infrastructure. Building costs in general are increasing but grants will be applied for to cover these. The CE said encouraging feedback had been received from the Scottish Government regarding funding and a paper will be brought to MC in January seeking approval for Walliwall 9.
- P3.5 Members noted the current position with the development programme.

## PART 5 – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

### D1 SHR Review of Regulatory Standards

*Presentation by Paul Scott, Director of Operations*

- D1.1 The DO provided members with background information on the SHR, who they are and the work they do. He explained the Regulatory Requirements which each landlord must comply with and the reasons why the SHR is undertaking their current consultation. 64 responded to the SHR's original discussion paper which then fed into the consultation document that is open for responses until 16 December 23. Both these pieces of work will help inform the SHR Strategy for 2024 onwards. The proposed response from the Association was discussed.
- D1.2 The DO said that further information, including the consultation document, was available on the SHR's website.

Management Committee considered the presentation, discussed the detail of the consultation and delegated to the Leadership Team to submit a response on the Association's behalf.

## PART 6 – ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

### I1 Quarterly Write Offs (Paper No MC/23/63)

- I1.1 The DO noted that no write offs required explicit permission from Management Committee at this time due to the small amounts involved. A member noted the low rent arrears and the DO said these have consistently reduced which is a tribute to the hard work of the Housing Services team who pro-actively assist tenants with arrears.
- I1.2 Members
- noted the current position for write offs as at the end of Q2 (2023/24); and
  - noted the remainder of the paper.

### Any Other Competent Business

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 12.45pm

Signed: .....  
Chair

Date: .....