

Minutes of a Meeting of the Management Committee of Orkney Housing Association Limited, held in the office and via Zoom on Wednesday, 29 May 2024 at 10.30am

Present: In person: Fiona Lettice (Chair), Philip Cook, Bruce Pilkington, Mervyn Sandison and John White.
Remotely: Kate Hayes

In attendance: Craig Spence (Chief Executive – CE)
Tracey Longworth (Director of Housing & Operations – DHO)
Dean Campbell (Building Services Manager – BSM)
Emma McConnachie (Senior Housing Officer – SHO, Items G2 & G4)
Alan Sim, (Senior Housing Officer – SSHO, Items G2 & G4)
Connie Shearer (Minute Taker)

PART 1 – STANDING ITEMS

1.1 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were noted from Brian Kynoch, Mary Ann Lewis, John Rodwell, Roella Wilson, Suzanne Lawrence (her email indicated her approval of all recommendations), Mhairi Hughes and Kirstin Mackay.

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 27 March 2024**

The Minutes were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting and were proposed by John White and seconded by Bruce Pilkington.

- **Emergency Sub-Committee meeting held 30 April 2024**

The Minutes were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting and were proposed by Mervyn Sandison and seconded by Philip Cook.

- **Emergency Sub-Committee meeting held 10 May 2024**

The Minutes were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting and were proposed by Bruce Pilkington and seconded by Fiona Lettice.

1.4 **Matters Arising & Deferred Items** (Paper No MC/24/03)

1.4.1 OHAL Business Plan (Minute S1.4, 27.03.24): A further stress-test ‘perfect storm’ had been requested but was not finalised. Six scenarios had been developed, however, and forwarded for information to members who agreed that it the current economic climate the ‘perfect storm’ looked unlikely.

1.4.2 Salary increase: a member enquired if the 6% salary increase had gone ahead, and the CE confirmed this had happened at the end of March.

1.4.3 P&R Report (Minute G3, 27.03.24): The CE provided an update on the three NSSE units at Yorston Drive explaining that OIC have approved the purchase of the properties, and we await further action from them.

1.4.4 Authority for Eviction (Minute G1 27.03.24): The DHO updated members on the two cases:

- Case 1 - She was pleased to report that exceptional work carried out by OHAL staff meant significant progress has been made with all rooms, bar one, now accessible (for electrical checks, etc). We have engaged with OIC under their Hoarding Protocol and had a first multi-agency meeting yesterday. The tenant is engaging with everyone and looking for twice a week ongoing tenancy support via OIC, which will be implemented when the property is in a better condition. Our Housing Services Officer's work with the tenant has been outstanding and this was recognised at that meeting.
- Case 2 - Unfortunately, this eviction will be going ahead as scheduled due to the tenant not engaging at all.

1.5 **Future Meeting Dates:**

Wednesday 3 July, 4-6pm – MC Recruitment Event

Wednesday 31 July, 10.30am – Management Committee

PART 2 – STRATEGY

S1 5 Yr Financial Projections (Paper No MC/24/04)

S1.1 The CE presented the paper and explained that, in the absence of the DF, the final 5-year financial projections are being scrutinised and checked by the Director of Finance & Corporate Services at Hebridean Housing Partnership (HHP) who has experience of working with Brixx. The CE has been in communication with the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) who are aware that HHP will also be providing finance support for the coming year.

S1.2 The CE proposed that the final submission be circulated to MC for review/feedback, with authority then delegated to the Chair to approve the submission and authority to the CE to submit the return to the SHR on the Chair's behalf.

S1.3 Following detailed discussion, members noted the updates and:

- a) approved the process for finalising and submitting the 5-year financial projections;
- b) delegated authority to the Chair to review and approve for submission; and
- c) authorised the Chief Executive to submit the return to the Scottish Housing Regulator on behalf of the Chair and Orkney Housing Association.

S2 Approval of Loan Portfolio Submission (Paper No MC/24/05)

S2.1 The CE presented the paper which provided a comprehensive report required by the SHR providing details of the Association's loan facilities as at 31 March.

- S2.2 Members approved the 2023-24 Loan Portfolio return and authorised the Chief Executive to finalise and submit the return to the Scottish Housing Regulator on their behalf.

PART 3 – GOVERNANCE & ASSURANCE

G1 SHR Annual Assurance Statement (Paper No MC/24/06)

G1.1 Members noted the contents of the report and:

- a) Agreed that no material changes are required to the AAS since its submission;
- b) Noted no notifiable events have been made 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; and
- e) Noted that the revised SHR Framework is now in place.

Emma McConnachie and Alan Sim, Senior Housing Officers, joined the meeting for Items G2 & G4.

G2 Approval of Annual Return on the Charter 2023-24 (Paper No MC/24/07)

G2.1 The DHO presented the report on behalf of the HCG who was the main lead for the work together with the BSM and two SHOs.

G2.2 Members noted that the Scottish Housing Network had undertaken a Stage 1 validation of our 2023/24 data prior to submission. A Stage 2 validation exercise is scheduled to take place in-house in September. This will involve an in-depth scrutiny of the evidence behind our figures, with any material amendments being submitted to the SHR retrospectively.

G2.3 A member queried the number of 'reds' in the Return and was informed that these were mainly to do with the repairs service. The previous Director of Operation had undertaken a significant repairs review as part of the Business Plan. The DHO and BSM are working on this, having already implemented improvements with regards to team meetings, and are confident the repairs service will improve moving forward.

G2.4 Following discussion, members noted the contents of the Return and authorised the Chief Executive to submit both the ARC and Stock Returns to the SHR.

G3 Confidential Paper (Paper No MC/24/08) - taken at the end of the meeting

G4 Customer Charter (Paper No MC/24/09)

G4.1 The DHO presented the paper, recognising the significant amount of work undertaken by Senior Housing Officer, Emma McConnachie, in preparing the

Customer Charter. The MC-approved Draft Charter was shared with the Residents Panel, List of Interested Tenants and staff, to get feedback. Note: it was not shared on our website as mentioned in the paper. Positive feedback was received, and this was incorporated in the final version up for approval.

- G4.2 Members noted feedback from the consultation exercise and, following discussion, approved the Customer Charter as presented

Emma McConnachie and Alan Sim, Senior Housing Officers, left the meeting.

G5 Policy & Reviews (Paper No MC/23/90)

- G5.1 A number of policies remain outstanding, but all are in the Business Plan for completion when workloads permit. Minor amendments to 3 policies were put forward for approval.

G5.2 Members:

- a) Approved the minor amendment to the Staff Code of Conduct;
- b) Approved the minor amendments to the Management Committee Code of Conduct, Breach Protocol & accompanying Guidance; and
- c) Approved the amended Dignity at Work Policy as per Attachment 5.

G6 Audit & Risk Management Report (Paper No MC/24/11)

- G6.1 The ARM Chair presented the paper which detailed the updates and assurance, and decisions from the last ARM meeting. He highlighted two outstanding items which referred to electrical checks and fire risk assessments but said these are both in hand.

- G6.2 Members noted the update and record of decisions from the Audit and Risk Management Sub-committee.

G7 Audit & Risk Management Annual Report (Paper No MC/24/12)

- G7.1 This report detailed the decisions of the ARM sub-committee for 2023/24. The ARM Chair noted that one meeting was a training session which was very useful and will be repeated again this year. The report showed clear and informative reports over the year which gave strong assurances to MC that the systems of internal control are effective and support good governance.

- G7.2 Members noted the Annual Report from the Audit & Risk Management Sub-committee.

G8 Performance & Resources Report (Paper No MC/24/13)

- G8.1 Members noted the very informative update and record of decisions from the Performance & Resources Sub-committee meeting.

G9 Performance & Resources Annual Report (Paper No MC/24/14)

- G9.1 The report detailed the work of the P&R sub-committee for 2023/24, which gave assurance that systems for management performance and resources are comprehensive and have been fully scrutinised over the year.
- G9.2 Members noted the contents of the Annual Report from the Performance & Resources Sub-committee.

G10 Annual Governance Report (Paper No MC/24/15)

- G10.1 This report monitors compliance with Governance Policies relating to members and contains assurances around compliance with Data Protection, Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Regulations, all of which we are required to report annually.
- G10.2 A member queried whether the number (if any) of Declarations of Interests should be recorded in the paper, as well as any updates to Registers of Interests throughout the year, and it was agreed this would be useful information to receive.
- G10.3 Members noted the contents of the report which was provided for assurance and information purposes.

PART 4 – PERFORMANCE

P1 Q4 Business Plan & Risk Management Report (Paper No MC/24/16)

- P1.1 The CE presented the report which provided members with assurance of effective management of organisational performance and risks during 2023/24. He provided an update informing members that 14 out of 20 actions in the Operational Plan had been completed, 4 partially completed and 2 have been carried forward.
- P1.2 It was noted that, of the 19 KPIs in the Business Plan, 13 had been met at year-end, with five reporting as fails (many of these were very marginal fails) and one does not yet have data to report. This one, P3 Satisfaction with New Homes, is expected to pass once all the satisfaction forms come back, and members will be kept informed.
- P1.3 Following discussion, members noted the contents of the paper.

P2 Complaints & Compliments Report (Paper No MC/24/17)

- P2.1 The DHO presented the report which provided data and analysis of the complaints and compliments received during 2023/24. Members noted the significant decrease in complaints and were pleased to see that OHAL's Tradesman Team continue to receive a high number of unsolicited compliments and expressions of appreciation for services provided.

P2.2 Members discussed some of the reasons for housing application complaints.

P2.3 They were pleased to hear that grass cutting in the West Mainland is progressing well and noted the amount of work put in by the Senior Housing Officer (Housing Management) in securing contractors for those areas.

P2.4 Members noted the contents of the report.

P3 Development Report (Paper No MC/24/18)

P3.1 The BSM presented the Paper and informed members that the SHIP was delayed but has now been approved at OIC Education, Leisure and Housing Committee in March, and submitted to the Scottish Government.

P3.2 There has been no further update from OIC in relation to the withdrawal of the infrastructure tender at Soulisquoy. However, members heard that during a recent meeting with the More Homes Division of the SG, it was confirmed that the infrastructure funding is no longer available. Progress with plans to develop the area will be reopened with relevant parties but other opportunities are being explored by the BSM and members will be kept updated.

P3.3 The BSM provided an update on Walliwall 9 explaining that the original tender figures (approved by MC) have been increased due to fire suppression legislation for social housing. The extra costs will be covered by an amended grant offer from the More Homes Division. However, this brings the total cost over what the BSM/CE can accept under delegated authority, so members are being asked to grant authority to accept both the amended tender and the amended offer.

P3.4 Members had a discussion around the SHIP and its purpose, as well as a general discussion on developments/ land around Orkney, contractors able to undertake such work, and the needs and demand for property.

P3.5 Following this discussion, members:

- a) noted the current position with the development programme;
- b) granted authority to the Building Services Manager (or the Chief Executive in his absence) to accept the amended tender submitted by Orkney Builders (Contractors) Ltd for 9 rented units at Walliwall Phase 9 for the maximum sum of £2,372,608.57 and sign all relevant associated documentation; and
- c) granted authority to the Building Services Manager (or the Chief Executive in his absence) to accept the amended offer of £1,763,353.00 AHSP funding from the Scottish Government for the Walliwall Phase 9 project.

P4 Contractors & Consultants Annual Review (Paper No MC/24/19)

P4.1 The BSM's report reviewed the work performed by both our in-house Trades Team and external contractors, and provided details of annual performance figures of the maintenance contractors.

P4.2 Members:

- a) noted the annual performance figures for our Maintenance Contractors in Attachment 1 and the commentary provided in section 2 of the paper;
- b) noted that any member with an interest in any of the companies on any of the 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.

P5 Report from Health & Safety Working Party (Paper No MC/24/20)

P5.1 This paper reported on the Health & Safety Working Party meeting held on 15 May 2024. Members received updates on the current position, with revisions to the Health & Safety Control Manual, and updates to the Landlord Safety Manual with 2 Policies requiring MC adoption.

P5.2 Members:

- a) approved the new section of the Health & Safety Control Manual regarding the use of electric and hybrid vehicles, as detailed in Section 2.1 of the paper;
- b) approved the Plant, Equipment & PPE and the Damp & Mould Policies as presented in Attachments 4 and 5 of the paper; and
- c) noted the remainder of the Report.

PART 5 – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

D1 Summer Engagement Event Options (Paper No MC/24/21)

D1.1 An engagement event has been scheduled for late summer, involving a mix of property visits and tenant engagement. Members were presented with two possible options to consider.

D1.2 Members:

- a) discussed the proposals and opted for the second option in the paper, ie Kirkwall/Shapinsay tour, for this year's Summer Engagement Event; and
- b) delegated authority to the Corporate Governance Team to finalise arrangements.

PART 6 – ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

I1 Cost of Living Update (Paper No MC/24/22 enclosed)

- I1.1 The DHO presented the report which highlighted the continued impact the cost-of-living crisis is having on tenants. OHAL staff continue to engage, locally and nationally, with support organisations which augments the support offered by our staff and allows access into funding streams.
- I1.2 Members noted that rent arrears was comfortably under the KPI of 5%. They were pleased to hear that funding from the Social Housing Fuel Support Fund (£150,000) had been distributed directly to tenants to assist with energy costs (£150 per tenancy). A more targeted approach was taken to this year’s tenant support calls to offer support to those most in need, with the majority benefitting from additional energy advice from OHAL’s dedicated Energy Officer.
- I1.3 Members noted the contents of the report.

Any Other Competent Business

The CE informed members that he had been invited to join the Board on the newly established Kirkwall Town Board whose remit is to distribute £20m of UK Government funding for the benefit of the town.

Staff members left the meeting so members could discuss Item G3.

G3 Confidential Paper (Paper No MC/24/08)

- G3.1 The CE introduced the paper and provided an update.
- G3.2 Following detailed discussion, members noted the contents and agreed to approve the recommendations as detailed in the paper.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 1330hrs.

Signed:

Date:

Chair