

Minutes of a Meeting of the Management Committee of Orkney Housing Association Limited, held in the office and via Zoom on Wednesday, 26 March 2025 at 10.30am

Present: In person: Brian Kynoch (Chair), MaryAnn Lewis, Fiona Lettice, Bruce Pilkington, Mervyn Sandison, John White and Roella Wilson
Remotely: Kate Hayes and Suzanne Lawrence

In attendance: Craig Spence (Chief Executive – CE)
Mhairi Hughes (Interim Director of Corporate Services – IDCS)
Tracey Longworth (Director of Housing & Operations – DHO)
Dean Campbell (Building Services Manager – BSM)
Kirstin Mackay (Director of Finance – DOF, remotely)
Sandy Dennison (Relief Accountant – RA)
Connie Shearer (Minute Taker)

PART 1 – STANDING ITEMS

1.1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from John Rodwell.

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:

1.3.1 • Management Committee, 29 January 2025

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

1.3.2 • Emergency Sub-Committee, 13 February 2025

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

1.3.3 • Emergency Sub-Committee, 07 March 2025

The Minutes were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting and were proposed by Mervyn Sandison and seconded by Fiona Lettice. The Minutes were later signed by the Chair.

Suzanne Lawrence joined the meeting.

1.4 Matters Arising & Deferred Items (Paper No MC/24/85)

1.4.1 S2.3 – Rent Consultation Response: Members noted the majority of responses had been received by email with 20-30 forms by mail.

G1 – Procurement: Members noted the Association's offer to purchase a property had been unsuccessful.

1.5 Future Meeting Dates:

Wednesday 23 April, 10.30am – Audit & Risk Management Sub Committee
Wednesday 07 May, 10.30am – Performance & Resources Sub Committee
Wednesday 28 May, 10.30am – Management Committee

PART 2 – STRATEGY

S1 Business Plan – Orkney Housing Association (Paper No MC/24/86A)

- S1.1 The CE introduced the paper, explaining this was a culmination of work which Management Committee has directed and significantly contributed to over the past six months. The current Plan ends at the of March 2025 and a new draft Plan was being presented for approval. The planning process included a refresh of the Association's Vision and Corporate Outcomes, along with reaffirming our Mission.

“Delivering for Orkney” sets out a number of actions to be undertaken in the three years to deliver the Plan. Appendices for year one of the Plan, covering 2025-26, were presented to members for review/approval and the CE went over these in detail.

- S1.2 A few comments on wording and presentation were suggested. As the Plan was still in the draft stage, these would be edited, as well as photos, graphics, etc added prior to publishing.
- S1.3 Responding to a query on Stress Testing, the RA went over the various scenarios and associated graphs.
- S1.4 Following discussion, members reviewed and approved:
- a) the 2025-28 Business Plan “Delivering for Orkney” subject to any amendments;
 - b) detailed appendices to the 2025-28 Business Plan which form the Operational Delivery detail for 2025-26; and
 - c) delegated authority to staff to complete the documents, along with any minor typographical and layout amendments.

Business Plan – Orkney Care & Repair (Paper No MC/24/86B)

- S1.4 The CRM presented the Care & Repair Business Plan which outlined the current environment the service is operating in and highlighted the challenges facing the Service. The Plan detailed opportunities to explore, and proposed plans and targets for the service to achieve during the financial year.
- S1.5 Members acknowledged the great work done by the Care & Repair team and, in particular, the positive working relationship with the OTs and hospital.
- S1.6 Following review and discussion, members passed on their thanks to the CRM and his team for their excellent work, then:

- a) approved Orkney Care and Repair's Business Plan 2025-2026; and
- b) delegated authority to staff to implement the plan and make any necessary operational adjustments within the approved framework.

S2 2024/25 Budget Approval (Paper No MC/24/87)

- S2.1 The RA informed members that a draft of the 2025/26 budget was reviewed in detail by P&R Sub-committee on 12 February 2025. Further work on both the Budget and the Business Plan resulted in a decrease in the budget surplus, with these changes being explained by the RA and detailed in the paper.
- S2.2 Members approved the 2025/26 Revenue and Capital Budgets as presented, noting the updated KPIs.

The RA left the meeting.

PART 3 – GOVERNANCE & ASSURANCE

G1 SHR Self-Assessment Update (Paper No MC/24/88)

- G1.1 The IDCS presented the paper and, to enhance the process already in place, asked members consider reviewing the Evidence Bank against the Regulatory Standards, at the conclusion of each ARM Sub-Committee meeting.
- G1.2 Following discussion, 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 full compliance with Regulatory Requirements; and
 - e) Noted the additions to the Evidence Bank in relation to the Regulatory Requirements and Regulatory Standards; and
 - f) Discussed and agreed to check the evidence bank against the Regulatory Standards as proposed.

G2 P&R Report (Paper No MC/24/89)

- G2.1 Management Committee noted the update and record of decisions from the Performance & Resources Sub-committee meeting.

G3 ARM Report (Paper No MC/24/90)

- G3.1 Management Committee noted the update and record of decisions from the Audit and Risk Management Sub-committee.

G4 Staff Training & Development Update (Paper No MC/24/91)

- G4.1 Responding to a query on staff training for *Letting & Residential Properties*, the DHO confirmed that this qualification will allow for letting of third party properties via the subsidiary. The requirement for any other staff to undertake this qualification will be reviewed in the future.
- G4.2 Members noted the progress with staff professional training and development qualifications.

G5 MC Training Plan (Paper No MC/24/92)

- G5.1 The IDCS reported that MC had completed all of the planned training sessions for 2024/25. In addition, several conferences / events / webinars had taken place, together with brief training sessions delivered by staff.
- G5.2 MC appraisals highlighted a few potential training topics and the IDCS suggested a few courses for members to consider. Members agreed that training around allocations, waiting lists etc would be beneficial as they are occasionally asked about this by members of the public. The IDCS will prepare a draft training plan and circulate for approval, along with a list of conferences etc where dates are already known.
- G5.3 Members:
- noted the excellent progress with training this year; and
 - discussed and agreed a way forward for the 2025/26 Training Plan.

G6 MC Appraisal Feedback (Paper No MC/24/93)

- G6.1 The Chair and Vice Chair's report highlighted a year of consolidation, training and knowledge building. The achievements of the last year, particularly in terms of service delivery, was acknowledged but challenges are never far away. With the Association's 40th anniversary celebrations, rebranding, the re-launch of our subsidiary and development opportunities, an exciting time lies ahead. Several development topics were suggested, and these will form part of the MC Training Plan.

G7 Policy & Reviews (Paper No MC/24/94)

- G7.1 Two draft Strategies were presented for approval:
1. A revised ICT Strategy, the result of collaboration with our ICT Consultants and input from Leadership Team and reviewed by a MC member, was presented.
 2. An updated Workforce Strategy was presented, spanning 2025-28.

Both were in a very final draft form, and authority was granted to the IDCS to finalise these on completion of the Business Plan Operational Plan.

The CRM left the meeting.

G7.2 Following discussion, Members:

- a) Noted the deferred Policy Reviews as listed in Section 1 of the paper;
- b) Approved the 2025/26 Treasury Management Strategy;
- c) Approved the ICT Strategy as detailed above;
- d) Approved the Workforce Strategy as detailed above, noting that we will recruit for an additional Estates & Trades Team Assistant;
- e) Approved the revised Customer Engagement Policy;
- f) Approved the revised Anti-social Behaviour Policy; and
- g) Approved the revised Contractors Policy.

G8 Application for Addition to the Approved List of Maintenance Contractors
(Paper No MC/24/95)

G8.1 The BSM's paper sought approval for the addition of a contractor to the Approved List of Maintenance Contractors, to provide painting and grounds maintenance. References have been requested, and one has been received.

G8.2 Members approved the addition of 'Matty Wood' to the Approved List of Maintenance Contractors, subject to two satisfactory references being received.

G9 Resolutions & Applications for Membership (Paper No MC/24/96)

G9.1 In relation to final disposal of a share in a Shared Ownership property, a member enquired if it was unusual for a property to become fully disposed 32 years after the original share was purchased. The IDCS confirmed that this does occasionally happen.

G9.2 Members noted the resolutions in respect of two shared ownership disposal and one membership cancellation.

PART 4 – PERFORMANCE

P3 Development Report (Paper No MC/24/74)

P3.1 The BSM's report provided updates on the development programme. Members noted that there was no new information regarding the Corse West (Soulisquoy) development; an area which is key to the Association's development program over the next 5 years. He is continuing work to identify and secure 250 sites to support the development programme over the coming years.

P3.2 Members received information on a capacity study for 70-74 units at another area in Kirkwall, if the site was purchased. The BSM hopes to present a formal case for consideration at the next MC meeting.

- P3.3 Walliwall 9A is a partnership project in Kirkwall for 8 x NSSE by the Association plus another 12 units by other parties. A full construction program is awaited, with a proposed completion date of March 2026.
- P3.4 Members were updated on plans for Walliwall 10, noting that the Planning Authority requested re-location of properties and, therefore, a fresh planning application was required. Members will be kept informed.
- P3.5 Details of an opportunity to purchase a former shared ownership into rented stock, with grant funding, was presented for approval.
- P3.6 Members noted that the BSM continues to explore further opportunities to facilitate the Association's development program over the next 5 years.
- P3.7 On-site work at Walliwall 9 is at an advanced stage but there will be a 7 week delay, primarily due to issues with electric meters.
- P3.8 The purchase of a second former shared ownership property back into stock for potential key-worker housing has completed and work will be carried out to bring it up to lettable standard.
- P3.9 Following discussion around development sites in Kirkwall, members:
1. noted the current position with the development programme; and
 2. approved and delegated authority to the Building Services Manager to submit an offer as detailed in the Paper for the purchase of a shared ownership property being advertised on the open market and to accept associated Scottish Government Grant.

P2 Report from Health & Safety Working Party (Paper No MC/24/98)

- P2.1 This paper reported on the Health & Safety Working Party meeting held on 05 March 2025. Members received updates on the current position as presented in the paper.

PART 5 – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

D1 Member Recruitment (Paper No MC/24/99)

- D1.1 The ICDS presented the paper which set out the current position and presented recruitment opportunities for consideration for both the Association's Management Committee and Orkney Housing Enterprises' (OHE) Board.
- D1.2 With this being the Association's 40th year and a public event being planned for June, members agreed this would provide a good opportunity to promote recruitment and have conversations with interested people.
- D1.3 Members:
- Noted the current position with regards to membership;

- Discussed and agreed options for recruitment;
- Agreed to inform the IDCS of suggestions for individuals who may be a good addition to either Board; and
- Delegated authority to the IDCS and AGA to make the necessary arrangements and promote the event.

D2 Community Bonds Update (Paper No MC/24/100)

- D2.1 The CE presented the paper which updated members on the positive progress being made with our subsidiary, Orkney Housing Enterprises, and Community Bonds. The report summarised the background, noting one action from the Association's 2024-25 Operation Plan was to explore options to ensure adequate finance for future developments. This led to considering delivery of alternative housing tenures (eg, Mid Market Rent and Key Worker Housing), via Orkney Housing Enterprises, to meet Orkney's housing needs, and financing such work via Community Housing Bonds.
- D2.2 A draft Prospectus was presented, and the CE said advice on the content had been received from a finance specialist and the Association's solicitors. It is hoped that the Prospectus should be finalised within the next few weeks.
- D2.3 Members made a few suggestions regarding wording of the Prospectus, to make it read clearer, and these will be taken on board.
- D2.4 Members noted the progress to date.

D3 OHAL 40 – plans for year ahead

- D3.1 The CE said that as this is the Association's 40th year, there are tentative plans to celebrate this milestone - a public event in June, special AGM, launch of new Business Plan, rebranding, etc. A paper will be presented at a future MC meeting but any suggestions from members would be appreciated.

PART 6 – ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

I1 Arrears & Bad Debts Write Offs (Paper No MC/24/101)

- I1.1 Management Committee:
- a) Noted the current position for write offs as at the end of 2024/25;
 - b) Approved the write off for four former tenancies as detailed in the paper; and
 - c) Noted the remainder of the paper which was for information only.

I2 Residents Satisfaction Survey Results (Paper No MC/24/102)

- I2.1 The report informed members of the results of the recent satisfaction survey. 824 tenancies were surveyed with a response of 304 (37%). The Sharing

Owners and Owners survey was sent to 267 households, and 62 responses (23%) were received.

- I2.2 Overall, the responses from both groups were positive and have improved from 2022, indicating strong levels of satisfaction across the board.
- I2.3 One area which showed slight (1%) decrease was Satisfaction with the Management of the Neighbourhood; however, ratings for grounds maintenance and neighbourhood appearance have increased significantly to 67%, (54% in 2022).
- I2.4 Cost of living pressures and fuel poverty continue to impact tenants; however, there is evidence that these issues are diminishing, and staff continue to focus on helping our tenants, and improving all our services to tenants and residents.
- I2.5 Members noted the contents of the report.

I3 Employee Survey Results (Paper No MC/24/103)

- I3.1 The CE's paper updated members of the results from the recent staff survey which had been carried out by an external consultant. A good response rate (94%) was received and showed a healthy set of statistics. Comparing the 2023 and 2025 results, most areas showed improved percentages, with a highlight being that the majority of employees (94%) advised that they strongly or mostly agreed that they are proud to work for the Association. A number of suggestions regarding future priorities and service development, income generation ideas, and general changes to practices were received and these have been / will be incorporated into operational and team plans for the coming year.
- I3.2 Management Committee noted the positive outputs from the 2025 Employee Survey.

Any Other Competent Business

The CE updated members on his recent visit to the Scottish Housing Regulator where he met with the Association's new Regulatory Team and Financial Analyst. He reported a good meeting was had with discussion around the work of the Association and future plans.

Presentation: *Housing Options & Housing Needs Assessment*

Director of Housing & Operations

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 1.20pm

Signed:
Chair

Date: