

Minutes of Meeting of the Management Committee of Orkney Housing Association Limited held in the office and via Zoom on Wednesday 31 May 2023 at 10.30am

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

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)
Connie Shearer (Minute Taker)

PART 1 – STANDING ITEMS

1.1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Bill Wallace.

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 29 March 2023**

Three amendments were suggested: 1) S1 numbering was incorrect; 2) the Minutes should record that the meeting was held ‘in the office’ as well as via Zoom; and 3) at P2.1, the word ‘with’ was missing from the end of the paragraph. With these changes, the Minutes were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting and were proposed by Roella Wilson and seconded by John Rodwell. The Minutes were later signed by the Chair.

- **Emergency Sub Committee meeting held 02 May 2023**

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

1.4 Matters Arising & Deferred Items (Paper No MC/23/01)

1.4.1 IT Strategy Milestones (Item S3.4, 29.03.2023):

Members noted the position re the IT Strategy and that the CE is to further explore options with Leadership Team and partner Associations in the Highlands & Islands.

Care & Repair Services Tender (Item S3.6, 29.03.2023):

The CE said discussions had been held with OIC and a contract was to have been with OHAL by end of May. The C&R service will continue as it is until the contract has been received.

OHAL/OIC Joint Seminar (G5.3, 29.03.2023):

The CE said OIC are keen for this to go ahead, aligning with local strategy work. This will likely be late summer / early autumn following a housing needs and demand survey being undertaken by OIC. Following discussion around key worker, empty homes, mid market rent to buy/build, the CE will prepare a discussion paper around these issues for a future meeting.

1.5 Future Meeting / Training Dates:

Wednesday 21 June, 4-7pm – MC Recruitment Event

Wednesday 19 July, 10.30am – Audit & Risk Management Sub Committee (re External Audit Tender)

Wednesday 26 July, 10.30am – Management Committee

PART 2 – STRATEGY

S1 5 Yr Financial Projections (Paper No MC/23/02)

S3.1 The DCE presented the paper explaining that the 5YFP use the estimated closing cash balance which results in the projections being aligned with those in the Business Plan, with adjustments to account for NSSE properties.

S3.2 She went on to answer a few queries from members.

S3.3 Members then approved the 5 Year Financial Projections as presented and authorised the Depute Chief Executive to make the submission to the Scottish Housing Regulator on behalf of the Association.

S2 Approval of Loan Portfolio Submission (Paper No MC/23/03)

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

S2.2 Members approved the 2022-23 Loan Portfolio return and authorised the Depute Chief Executive to submit the return to the Regulator on their behalf.

PART 3 – GOVERNANCE & ASSURANCE

G1 SHR Self-Assessment Update (Paper No MC/22/04)

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 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.

G2 Approval of Annual Return on the Charter 2022-23 (Paper No MC/23/05)

- G2.1 The DO presented the report and went over some of the main points for members to consider. He explained that the ARC data has been presented in a new format which he hopes members find easier to follow.
- G2.2 A member asked if there was a sense of apathy amongst tenants replying to the Customer Satisfaction Survey with “*neither satisfied nor dissatisfied*”. The DO said that, although response rates were still high, a number of factors may have contributed to this response including the grass cutting service, covid and cost of living issues. Results showed that older residents tended to be happier with services whilst younger people were less satisfied. This could be down to expectations which can be difficult to manage, particularly around social media and people expecting immediate results.
- G2.3 A member commended the new format of displaying the ARC data but enquired about the red/amber/green colouring and whether this was something of concern for OHAL or the SHR. The DO explained that the document is intended for internal use only and the colouring is intended to help Committee see as a snapshot how performance is relative to the previous year. He added that he was confident OHAL had robust evidence behind the figures presented and, overall, the data is generally positive.
- G2.4 Following discussion, members noted the contents of the Return and authorised the Chief Executive to submit both the ARC Return and Stock Return to the SHR.

G3 Policy & Reviews (Paper No MC/23/06)

- G3.1 Two changes were required to the Anti Fraud, Bribery & Corruption Policy as presented – 1) the Statement should be dated 31 May, not March; and 2) at 4.2, ‘discreetly’ should be replaced with ‘discretely’.
- G3.2 Following a short discussion on ethnicity and housing allocations, members:
- a) Noted the outstanding policy reviews and explanations at Section 1 of the paper;
 - b) Approved the revisions to the Anti Fraud, Bribery & Corruption Policy (with the amendments as above);
 - c) Approved the revised Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy.

G4 Annual Governance Report (Paper No MC/23/07)

- G4.1 A member enquired about Privacy Impact Assessments and the HCG explained this was in the Data Protection & Privacy Policy and something we must undertake if we do anything new.

G4.2 Members noted the contents of the report which was provided for assurance and information purposes.

G5 Performance & Resources Sub-committee Chair Report (Paper No MC/23/08)

G5.1 Members noted the very informative update and record of decisions from the Performance & Resources Sub-committee meeting.

G6 Performance & Resources Sub-committee Annual Report (Paper No MC/23/09)

G6.1 Members noted the contents of the Annual Report.

G7 Audit & Risk Management Chair Report (Paper No MC/23/10)

G7.1 The ARM Chair presented the paper which detailed the updates and assurance, and decisions from the last ARM meeting. A typo was noted in 3.1 (25) – training options will be brought to the ARM meeting on 19 July, not MC.

G7.2 Members noted the update and record of decisions from the Audit and Risk Management Sub-committee.

G8 Audit & Risk Management Chair Report (Paper No MC/23/11)

G8.1 This report detailed the decisions of the ARM sub-committee for 2022/23. The ARM Chair said it 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.

G8.2 Members noted the Annual Report from the Audit & Risk Management Sub-committee.

G9 Staffing Update (Paper No MC/23/12)

G9.1 The HCG presented the paper and updated members on recruitment. Interviews had been held for the Business Admin Modern Apprentice with an appointment due to be made following interviews for the Customers Services Assistant vacancy this week. The deadline for the Building Services Manager post has been extended to 19 June.

G9.2 In addition, one of the Care & Repair Small Repairs Assistants is retiring in July after 17 years' service and this post is being advertised.

G9.3 Responding to a query, the HCG explained how the Modern Apprentice scheme worked regarding funding, college time and training, etc.

G9.4 The Chair wished to express her thanks to Richard Flett, Development & Properties Manager, for all his hard work over the years.

G9.5 Members then:

- a) Noted the updates on vacancies and recruitment;
- b) Noted progress with professional training and development; and
- c) Noted the verbal updates with regards to recruitment.

G10 Resolutions & Applications for Membership (Paper No MC/23/13)

G10.1 Members approved the resolution in respect of one shared ownership disposal.

G11 Annual Internal Audit Report (Paper No MC/23/14)

G11.1 The HCG presented the paper which detailed the Internal Auditor's Annual Report for 2022/23 and which had gone to ARM sub-committee in April. It provided assurance to MC that recommendations from the audits had progressed.

G11.2 Members noted:

- a) the assurances provided by the Internal Audit reviews;
- b) progress made in respect of recommendations received; and
- c) the content of the Annual Report in Attachment 1 to the paper.

PART 4 – PERFORMANCE

P1 Q4 Business Plan & Risk Management Report (Paper No MC/23/15)

P1.2 The CE presented the report which provided members with assurance of effective management of organisational performance and risks during 2022/23. They noted that 5 out of 19 actions in the Operational Plan had been completed, 9 partially completed and five have been carried forward.

P1.3 It was noted that, of the 20 KPIs in the Business Plan, 14 had been met at year-end, with six reporting as fails, many of these were very marginal fails.

P1.4 A member queried the number of Actions (5) which are being carried over and whether these are likely to be achieved. Target dates should be realistic and not aspirations with MC reassured about what really is deliverable in the year.

The CE explained that there were a number of 'chunky' pieces of work to be finished on one year. He said that significant unplanned workload linked to the Government-introduced rent freeze had to be prioritised, and this impacted on capacity to deliver other work. However, he was confident that the Actions can be completed by the year end although the ESSH2 progress will depend on what is required.

- P1.5 Responding to a query on the Staff Survey, the CE said he would forward the results to members, and these can be discussed at the next meeting. IBP gave a presentation to staff on the findings, with 4/5 main themes being identified for focussed work. An external facilitator will be doing this with staff in June.
- P1.6 A member enquired about the F2 KPI (Reactive Maintenance costs per unit) which showed a steady increase over the year and has exceeded its annual target. The CE explained that, although not a huge variant, this was due to inflation / costs of building materials together with chasing up year end invoices. The target for the coming year has increased as there are likely to be pressures on that for the foreseeable future.
- P1.7 The CE was pleased to report, however, that the DCE and Senior Building Officers have been doing work on a grant application for fabric improvements to properties. 150 windows / 12 doors / insulation works have been identified and upgrades to doors, windows and adding extra insulation, would save tenants money in energy costs, improve comfort of properties, and make a significant carbon saving.
- P1.8 Following this discussion, members noted the contents of the paper.

P2 Complaints & Compliments Report (Paper No MC/23/16)

- P2.1 The HCG presented the paper noting that, discounting complaints regarding garden and grounds maintenance, complaints were comparable to last year. She was pleased to report that compliments had increased, with OHAL's Tradesman Team receiving a high number.
- P2.2 Members noted the contents of the report.

P3 Development Report (Paper No MC/23/17)

- P3.1 The DO presented the report and said that, since the paper went out, OIC had been in touch regarding the Strategic Housing Investment Programme and he was hopeful there would be an agreement going forward for additional units in Kirkwall, depending on grant funding.
- P3.2 Three NSSE units in Stromness remained unsold and members discussed the reasons why and possible options for these going forward.
- P3.3 Members noted the current position with the development programme.

P4 Contractors & Consultants Annual Review (Paper No MC/23/18)

- P4.1 The DO's report gave details of a review of work performed by external contractors. This highlighted the need for regularly managing OHAL's relationship with contractors in an efficient and evidenced manner, something

which will form an important part of the new Building Services Manager's post. This will ensure that tenants are receiving a prompt and efficient repairs service.

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.

PART 5 – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

D1 Engagement Events (Paper No MC/23/19)

D1.1 Following suspension of engagements events due to COVID restrictions between 2020 and 2022, members were asked to consider a proposed schedule for an in-person Summer Engagement Tour this year.

D1.2 Members agreed the proposed schedule and requested the Communications & Engagement Officer contact members to co-ordinate a preferred and suitable date.

PART 6 – ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

I1 Cost of Living Update (Paper No MC/23/20)

I1.1 The DO 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 had decreased significantly during the last quarter of 2022/23. They were pleased to hear that funding from the Social Housing Fuel Support Fund (£123,600) had been distributed directly to tenants to assist with energy costs (£125 per tenancy). Winter Support Calls resulted in 22% of contacted tenants receiving bespoke support.

I1.3 Members noted the contents of the report.

I2 Highlands & Islands Liaison Group Chairs Meeting Feedback (Paper No MC/23/21)

I2.1 The Chair said this had been a very good, useful meeting. Members noted the contents of the feedback.

Any Other Competent Business

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 12.40pm.

Signed:

Date:

Chair