

## Minutes of a Meeting of the Management Committee of Orkney Housing Association Limited, held in the office and via Zoom on Wednesday, 27 March 2024 at 10.30am

**Present:** In person: Fiona Lettice (Chair), Brian Kynoch, Suzanne Lawrence, Mary Ann Lewis, Bruce Pilkington, John Rodwell, John White and Roella Wilson.  
Remotely: Philip Cook and Kate Hayes

**In attendance:** Craig Spence (Chief Executive – CE)  
Mhairi Hughes (Secretary / Head of Corporate Governance – HCG)  
Dean Campbell (Building Services Manager – BSM)  
Kirstin Mackay (Director of Finance – DF)  
Fraser Devine (Care & Repair Manager – CRM – up to Item S3)  
Emma McConnachie (Senior Housing Officer – SHO, Items S4 & G1)  
Connie Shearer (Minute Taker)

### PART 1 – STANDING ITEMS

#### 1.1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were noted from Mervyn Sandison.

#### 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 31 January 2024

The Minutes were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting and were proposed by Brian Kynoch and seconded by Roella Wilson.

#### 1.4 Matters Arising & Deferred Items (Paper No MC/23/76)

- 1.4.1 Minutes, 31.01.24, AOBC, Salary increase: The CE informed members that a 5.5% increase had been rejected and a new proposal of 6% is out for consultation with EVH and Union members. The CE advised that the 2024/25 budget assumptions had been updated to reflect this proposed change.  
Minutes, 31.01.24, Rent Review, S2.2: responding to a query, the HCG confirmed that where concerns had been raised and contact details provided, these had been followed up by staff. In addition to this, the CE confirmed that 49 tenancies had been identified as being in high level of fuel poverty and struggling with costs, and staff have been giving assistance. In addition, funding had been received to enable all tenancies to get £150, either in their bank account or towards their rent account.

#### 1.5 Future Meeting Dates:

Wednesday 24 April, 10.30am – Audit & Risk Management Sub Committee  
Wednesday 01 May, 10.30am – Health & Safety Working Party  
Wednesday 08 May, 10.30am – Performance & Resources Sub Committee

Wednesday 29 May, 10.30am – Management Committee. John Rodwell tendered his apologies in advance.

## **PART 2 – STRATEGY**

### **S1 OHAL Business Plan (Paper No MC/23/77)**

- S1.1 The CE introduced the paper, explaining this was a culmination of work which Management Committee has directed and contributed to over the past six months. The planning process included a refresh of the Association’s Vision and Corporate Outcomes, along with reaffirming our Mission. “Building a Sustainable Future” sets out a number of actions to be undertaken in the three years to deliver the Plan. Updated appendices for year three of the plan, covering 2024-25, were presented to members for review/approval and the CE went over these.
- S1.2 He advised members that, whilst preparing the 30yr financial projections, the DF had completed a significant amount of work on Brixx modelling. The projected figures presented are based on a robust financial model and linked to the key economic assumptions in the plan.
- S1.3 The DF gave a brief summary of the cash flow position which indicated a healthier position this year than last. She presented a slideshow on Appendix 5, Stress Testing, and went through the six different scenarios and graphs on the financial viability of the Business Plan.
- S1.4 A member enquired about a further stress-test model based on all the scenarios happening (ie, a ‘perfect storm’) and the DF said she would do this and send out to members after the meeting.
- S1.5 Following review and discussion, members:
- a) approved detailed appendices to the 2022-25 Business Plan which form the Operational Delivery detail for 2024-25; and
  - b) delegated authority to staff to complete the documents, along with any minor typographical and layout amendments.

### **S2 Orkney Care & Repair Business Plan 2024/25 (Paper No MC/23/78)**

- S2.1 The CRM presented the Care & Repair Business Plan which outlined the current environment the service is operating in. He highlighted the challenges faced, particularly in the outer isles, the Cost of Living Crisis and Fuel Poverty, and the importance of retaining the service at its present level. The Plan detailed opportunities to explore, and proposed plans and targets for the Service to achieve during the financial year.
- S2.2 Members discussed the frustrating delays around the C&R service tender and hoped this would be finalised before long to enable the service to move forward.
- S2.3 A member suggested that, when looking at refreshing the next 3-year Business Plan, the C&R Plan could be integrated into the OHAL one; this was agreed.

S2.4 Following review and discussion, members:

- a) approved Orkney Care & Repair's Business Plan 2024-25; and
- b) delegated authority to staff to complete the documents, along with any minor typographical and layout amendments.

*The CRM left the meeting.*

**S3 2024/25 Budget Approval** (Paper No MC/23/79)

S3.1 The DF informed members that a draft of the 2024/25 budget was reviewed in detail by P&R Sub-committee on 14 February 2024. Further work on both the Budget and the Business Plan resulted in a slight decrease in the budget surplus with these changes being explained by the DF and detailed in the paper.

S3.2 Members approved the 2024/25 Revenue and Capital Budgets.

**S4 Arrears & Bad Debts Write Offs** (Paper No MC/23/80)

S4.1 The SHO presented the paper, informing members there were 6 irrecoverable debts requiring MC permission to be written off, not 7 as stated in the paper. Members noted that in all cases the tenant had passed away, had no estate and the debt was irrecoverable.

S4.2 Following discussion, members:

- a) noted the current position for write offs as at the end of 2023/24;
- b) approved the write off for current and 6 former tenancies as detailed; and
- c) noted the remainder of the paper.

**S5 Workforce Plan** (Paper No MC/23/81)

S5.1 The HCG presented the paper which had been a Key Action of the Operational Plan. The Workforce Plan considers the long-terms goals of the Association, analyses current staffing, determines future staffing needs, and identifies future skills gaps and considers how to fill these. She recommended that, going forward, a 3-year Workforce Plan be prepared and aligned with the OHAL Business Plan.

S5.2 The Chair said this was a very comprehensive paper covering a wide range of staffing requirements.

S5.3 Members discussed the various issues and recommendations in the paper then:

- a) approved the Workforce Plan as per Attachment 1;
- b) approved all the recommendations as presented in the paper.

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

### **G1 Authority for Eviction (Paper No MC/23/82)**

- G1.1 The SHO presented the paper which gave Members details of two cases presented for eviction. Both cases highlighted the increasingly difficult environment in which Housing staff operate and the little, if any, support from external agencies when dealing with such cases.
- G1.2 Members had a lengthy discussion about the complexities of the two cases, the issues faced by staff, the process of obtaining Decree for Evictions, and noted that eviction is not something taken lightly and is always seen as a last resort.
- G1.3 Following a query, it was noted that support was available for housing staff dealing with difficult situations
- G1.4 Following discussion, Management Committee give authority to enforce the Decree for Eviction in the cases detailed in Section 2 of the paper.

### **G2 SHR Annual Assurance Statement (Paper No MC/23/83)**

- G2.1 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 SHR has issued its revised Regulation Framework with a summary of the changes as detailed in the paper.

### **G3 P&R Report (Paper No MC/23/84)**

- G3.1 Management Committee noted the update and record of decisions from the Performance & Resources Sub-committee meeting.
- G3.2 The CE updated members on the position with the Yorston Drive properties. He was due to have a meeting with OIC and SSEN later today and will keep members updated. He advised that OIC now wish to purchase the properties and he would pursue that.

### **G4 ARM Report (Paper No MC/23/85)**

- G4.1 Management Committee noted the update and record of decisions from the Audit and Risk Management Sub-committee.

**G5 Recruitment & Staffing Update** (Paper No MC/23/86)

G5.1 Members noted the progress with recruitment, the proposed change to OHAL Addendum to Terms & Conditions of Service, and the progress with staff professional training and development qualifications.

G5.2 Members noted the contents of the report.

*Kate Hayes and Philip Cook left the meeting.*

**G6 Management Committee Appraisal Report 2023-24** (Paper No MC/23/87)

G6.1 The report highlighted successful MC recruitment, with 3 new members coming on board during the year who were proving to be valuable members. A year of some considerable change for OHAL was acknowledged but confidence going forward was expressed. No particular training issues were identified though PR was highlighted with ideas given for staff to take on board.

**G7 MC Training Plan** (Paper No MC/23/88)

G7.1 The HCG reported that MC had completed 75% of the planned training sessions by external facilitators delivered in 2023/24. In addition, several external/online courses had taken place together with brief training sessions delivered by staff.

G7.2 Although no specific training had been identified during MC appraisals, she had suggested a few topics for members to consider and members agreed training sessions as follows would be beneficial:

- a) 3 yearly refresher session on Code of Conduct
- b) Equalities & Human Rights for Committee/Board (SHARE)
- c) Questions you should be asking - about your tenants (SHARE)

G7.3 Members:

- noted the excellent progress with training this year; and
- discussed and agreed a Training Plan for 2024/25.

**G8 MC Recruitment** (Paper No MC/23/89)

G8.1 Members had a short discussion, agreeing that the previous recruitment process had worked well and were keen to repeat the “Come and Meet Us” session.

G8.2 Members:

- Noted the current position with regards to Committee Membership;
- Noted aspirations for resident and younger members and perhaps someone with a background in PR and branding;
- Discussed options for recruitment and agreed 03 July was suitable for a “Come and Meet Us” session;
- Would come back with any suggestions for the interested persons list; and

- Delegated authority to the Head of Corporate Governance and the Admin & Governance Assistant to make the necessary arrangements and promote the event.

**G9 Policy & Reviews (Paper No MC/23/90)**

G9.1 The HCG explained that a number of policies remain outstanding but all are in the Business Plan for completion with input required from the incoming Director of Housing & Operations.

G9.2 Members:

- a) Noted the deferred Policy Reviews as listed in Section 1 of the paper.
- b) Approve the revised:
  1. Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25;
  2. Performance Management Policy; and
  3. Settlement Agreement Policy.
- c) Agreed to not adopt the Sustainability Reporting Standard for Social Housing at this time, but review sustainability reporting options in the 2025-28 Business Plan.

**G10 Customer Charter – Consultative Draft (Paper No MC/23/91)**

G10.1 A Draft Customer Charter was presented for approval and will form part of the revised Tenant Handbook. Consultation will take place on the Draft prior to a final version being presented at the May Committee meeting.

G10.2 Members approved the Draft Customer Charter for consultation as detailed in the paper.

**G11 Application for Addition to the Approved List of Maintenance Contractors (Paper No MC/23/92)**

G11.1 The BSM's paper sought approval for the addition of a contractor to the Approved List of Maintenance Contractors, mainly to provide garden and grounds maintenance. He pointed out that a second satisfactory reference had been received.

G11.2 Members then approved the addition of 'Kenny Foulis Gardening Services Ltd' to the Approved List of Maintenance Contractors.

**G12 Amendment to Bank Mandate (Paper No MC/23/92)**

G12.1 Members approved a resolution for the removal of the former Director of Operations and the addition of the incoming Director of Housing & Operations as authorised signatories to the current Royal Bank of Scotland mandate.

**G13 Resolutions & Applications for Membership (Paper No MC/23/94)**

G5.1 Members approved the resolution in respect of one shared ownership disposal.

**PART 4 – PERFORMANCE**

**P1 Development Report (Paper No MC/23/95)**

P1.1 The BSM updated members on progress with the development programme. It was noted that the SHIP had still not been issued but is expected soon. There was no progress with the Corse West (Soulisquoy) site following the withdrawal of the infrastructure tender. Walliwall 8 is progressing well, with a revised completion date of 27 September, and Walliwall 9 funding has been agreed with the Scottish Government.

P1.2 Members had a discussion regarding the site at Soulisquoy and the issues/ complexities surrounding this proposed large scale development. The Association owns part of the land and had hoped to develop around 60 new units. Members will be kept updated accordingly.

P1.3 Members noted the current position with the development programme.

**PART 5 – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

There were none.

**PART 6 – ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

There were none.

**Any Other Competent Business**

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 1.30pm.

Signed: .....

Date: .....

Chair