



MINUTE OF THE BOARD MEETING

27 March 2019

Present: N Hicks (Chair); R Hutton (Vice-Chair)
S Brydon; D McEwan; S Mills; A Scott; M Trant
G Russell (Secretary)

In attendance: C Hughes, A Hay, K Miller

Attending as observer: Michael Hodgson

K McLeod is currently on leave of absence from the Board.

Apologies: A Clark; T Kelly; F Roslewski; C Tait

ACTION

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from A Clark, T Kelly, F Roslewski and C Tait

2 Declarations of Interest

N Hicks – Board member and treasurer of The Action Group, and member of SHAPS Pensions Employers Committee

R Hutton – Employee of Port of Leith Housing Association. Through work, also has relationship with Lothian Gas, Mitie and Greenfingers.

S Brydon – Employee of Home in Scotland, who also employ Novus as reactive maintenance contractor

D McEwan – tenant of Manor Estates Housing Association

3 Risk Management Issues / Health & Safety Issues / Notifiable Events

G Russell confirmed that there were no Health & Safety issues and no new notifiable events.

He further advised that the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) had confirmed that the complaint in respect of tenant consultation on the rent setting policy review had not been upheld as a Significant Performance Failure. The SHR did identify a

number of weaknesses in the Association's processes, however, action will be taken to address these. The SHR noted that the Association had responded quickly and positively to the complaint and had already addressed a number of the concerns raised.

Members noted the position.

4 Minutes of the Board meeting held on 30 January 2019

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2019 were approved as a true record, proposed by R Hutton, seconded by S Brydon.

5 Matters Arising

- **Agenda Item 8: Sale of Property at 73 Selvage Street, Rosyth**

G Russell confirmed that the property at 73 Selvage Street is to be sold on 3 May 2019, having achieved a sale price of £95,000. He confirmed that the amount of HAG to be repaid is £42,971.04.

- **Agenda Item 10 (ii): Kerry McLeod**

Members noted that they would need to appoint a new member to the Audit Committee and agreed that this would be dealt with under Any Other Business.

6 Board Actions

Members noted the following items that are outstanding:

- **Contingency Plan Testing**

G Russell confirmed that this had not be carried out due to a number of staff being absent, however he further advised that testing would be done during April.

GR

- **Rechargeable Repairs Policy Review**

Members expressed concern that this was being delayed until December, particularly as the review was a recommendation of the Internal Auditor. G Russell advised that a number of policy reviews required tenant consultation and that staff were seeking to avoid overlaps. It was agreed that the revised timing would be discussed with the Internal Auditor.

Post-meeting note:

Communication with the Association's Internal Auditor confirmed that in adopting a risk based approach, they regard this specific subject matter as low risk. They also indicate that in their experience recovery rates are generally low.

The Auditor indicated that a genuine consultation exercise would be advantageous, and that in light of other consultative priorities they have no issue with this policy refinement being delayed until December 2019.

▪ **Stock Profile Modelling Exercise**

A Hay confirmed that the survey results have now been received and will inform the ESSH report and the Energy Efficiency Strategy objectives update to be presented to Board in May 2019.

AH

Members noted the position.

7 Minutes of Sub Committee or Subsidiary Meetings

S Mills entered the meeting during discussion of this item at 5.50 p.m.

7(i) Draft Minutes MEAL Board Meeting 21 February 2019

R Hutton introduced the report that had been circulated previously, highlighting a number of key issues.

Members discussed the relationship between MEHA and MEAL in terms of performance. It was agreed that this should be monitored by the MEAL Board, minutes of their meetings to record clearly decisions and outcomes of issues discussed.

8 Matters for Approval / Decision

8(i) EVH Recommendation on Salaries

Members considered the report that had been circulated previously.

Following discussion, members homologated the decision that had been taken by the Chair, as agreed with the Vice Chair and Chair of the Audit Committee.

8(ii) Budget 2019/20

K Miller introduced the report that had been circulated previously, highlighting in particular some of the key assumptions noted in paragraph 2.2 of the report.

Following discussion, members approved the budget, proposed by R Hutton and seconded by S Brydon.

8(iii) Policy Revisions

(a) Allocation Policy

C Hughes introduced the report that had been circulated previously and highlighted a number of points that had been raised by members:

- With regard to paragraph 2.2 of the covering paper regarding reasonable preference, C Hughes clarified that preference can be given to groups other than those specified in the legislation, provided these groups do not dominate an allocation policy at the expense of the statutory groups.
- C Hughes confirmed that the survey had been issued to tenants by the following means:
 - 357 text message
 - 565 email
 - 1 postal surveys
- With regard to paragraph 3.3 of the Policy document, this will be amended to better clarify that applications from staff and Board members (and their relatives) are treated in accordance with the Allocation Policy, but must be declared.
- With regard to paragraph 3.12 of the Policy document, this should be re-worded to reflect situations where equalities characteristics can be taken into account, for example age in relation to retirement housing or disability in relation to adapted housing.
- With regard to paragraph 3.15 of the Policy document in relation to sensitive lets, it was noted that as worded the policy could be interpreted as in breach of equalities legislation. Members noted that the section would be reworded to specifically state that the management of sensitive lets would not be based on the exclusion of any group of applicants but rather on consideration of individual circumstances and assessment of evidence that indicates potential issues of concern.

In response to a query from a member, C Hughes confirmed that the next version of the Policy would include reference to relevant Human Rights provisions.

Following discussion, members approved the Policy.

(b) Assignment, Subletting, Joint Tenancies and Succession to a Scottish Secure Tenancy

C Hughes introduced the report that had been circulated previously. She highlighted the reasons for not consulting tenants on this particular policy but asked members to note the considerable amount of information that has been issued to tenants regarding the changes

and how these may affect tenants. She confirmed that regular reminders about the importance of updating the Association about changes to household details will be included in newsletters and other publication.

Following discussion, members approved the Policy.

(c) Annual Review (Appraisals) and Timetable

G Russell introduced the report that had been circulated previously. Members noted that a full appraisal of individual members need only be carried out every 3 years, with a 'light touch' approach being taken in the years between.

It was agreed that the collective assessment questionnaire be issued on 28 March 2019 for return by 19 April 2019 and that outcomes would be discussed at the Board meeting on 24 April 2019.

GR

It was noted that new co-opted members would not be in a position to make detailed comments, however it would be useful to consider their 'first impressions' of the Association.

Following discussion, members approved the report.

8(iv) Appointment of MEAL Board Members

The Chair introduced the report that had been circulated previously.

G Russell confirmed that A Moodie is a manager with Link2Let, part of the Link Group, and has considerable experience of dealing with private sector and mid-market rent.

Following discussion, members approved the appointment of A Moodie to the Board, and the appointment of B McMurray as Chair.

R Hutton confirmed that she would be leaving the MEAL Board in June 2019, members noted that this vacancy would require to be filled from the MEHA Board.

8(v) Approval of Draft MEAL Business Plan

G Russell introduced the report that had been circulated previously.

K Miller confirmed that the reactive repairs and cyclical maintenance come within MEAL budget, planned maintenance and replacement of goods are the responsibility of MEHA.

Following discussion, members approved the draft Business Plan.

8(vi) MEAL Request

K Miller introduced the report that had been circulated previously, noting the reasons for the request not to increase the lease charge.

Following discussion, members approved the report.

8(vii) Policy Review Process and 2019/20 Timetable

G Russell introduced the report that was circulated previously.

It was noted that a discussion forum for members had already been set up on Office 365 but not yet used. It was agreed that a further training session would be held at the Board meeting on 24 April 2019.

KM

Following discussion, it was agreed to trial using Office 365 to enable discussion of the first 4 policies to be reviewed by June 2019.

ALL

8(viii) Applications for Membership of the Association

G Russell advised members of 5 membership applications that had been received. There being no grounds on which to reject the applications, these were approved.

8(ix) Strategic Options Appraisal / CEO Recruitment

The Chair gave a verbal update on progress since the announcement of the Chief Executive's retirement.

Following discussion with the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) and an experienced consultant in this area, the sub group met to discuss how to proceed. The group concluded that the Association should proceed with the appointment of a new Chief Executive, taking account of the following points:

- The Association has a Strategic Business Plan that explicitly lays out a three year housing strategy that was unanimously adopted by the Board;
- That strategy is adequately resourced by Finance, Staffing , External Stakeholder Support and Enthusiasm;
- The Association is a founder member of "ARCHIE", an Association of Registered Cooperatives and Housing In Edinburgh which would deliver support in any discovered areas of knowledge or resource shortfall;
- The Association has a strong board whose individual skills adequately meet all areas and experience;
- The Association has good links with funders who are content to continue to support the organisation.

The Chair further confirmed that the Association sought expressions of interest from consultants to manage the recruitment process and interviews are to be held on 3 April 2019.

The Chair advised members that the SHR has sought more detailed information about the process by which options have been appraised and decisions taken. He will arrange to issue minutes of the special meeting held to discuss options and any other relevant information.

NH

Members noted the position.

9 Matters for Information

9(i) Treasury Management Update

K Miller introduced the report that had been circulated previously.

Members noted the report.

9(ii) Procurement Improvement Programme – Assessment Report

A Hay introduced the report that had been circulated previously. Members congratulated A Hay and the team for the positive report by Procurement Scotland.

There was some discussion regarding the issue of community benefits included in contracts, A Hay confirmed that she is to review a recent SFHA paper on this issues.

Following discussion, members noted the report.

9(iii) Customer Engagement Update

C Hughes introduced the report that had been circulated previously. Members were pleased to note that some progress has now been made in this area, in particular the high response rate to the recent tenant consultation on the Allocation Policy.

Following discussion, members noted the report.

9(iv) IIP Assessment Outcome

G Russell introduced the report that had been circulated previously and confirmed that the Association has achieved gold award Investors in People Status.

Board members congratulated G Russell and the staff team on this achievement.

9(v) Briefing Note – Update on Fire Safety Regulations

Noted.

9(vi) Briefing Note – Introduction of Freedom of Information Regulations to RSLs

Noted.

9(vii) Procurement Strategy Plan

A Hay introduced the report that had been circulated previously, asking members to note that this will be further developed to include summary information in respect of smaller contracts, such as stationery supplies.

It was agreed to include a further column to confirm the stage each contract is at, i.e. year 2 of 5 and to review the format of the appendix to make it easier to view.

AH

Following discussion, members noted the report.

9 (viii) Planned Maintenance Programme

A Hay introduced the report that had been circulated previously. Following discussion as to when this information should be presented to the Board, it was agreed that this level of detail should be included in the 5-year projections.

AH/KM

Following discussion, members noted the report.

10 Any Other Competent Business

10 (i) Co-Optee

Members agreed to invite Michael Hodgson to join the Board as a co-optee.

10 (ii) Audit Committee

Andrew Scott was appointed to the Audit Committee.

10 (iii) Board Strategy Day

G Russell confirmed that this is to be held on Saturday 1 June 2019 and that further details will be issued in due course.

10 (iv) CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

11 Date and time of next meeting: 24 April 2019 at 5.30 p.m.

The meeting closed at 7.20 p.m.