



MINUTE OF THE BOARD MEETING

29 April 2020

Present: N Hicks (Chair); R Hutton (Vice-Chair)
S Brydon; A Clark; S Mills; A Scott; C Tait; M Trant
C Ironside (Secretary)

In attendance: C Hughes, A Hay, K Miller

Apologies: F Roslewski

Due to the current lockdown situation, this meeting was held 'virtually' with all Board members and staff present accessing the meeting remotely.

Prior to commencement of the meeting, N Hicks asked members to note that in the current situation staff will not always be able to comply strictly with approved policies and procedures. Board members agreed that this was inevitable under current circumstances. C Ironside confirmed that staff will keep a log of changes required as a result.

ACTION

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from F Roslewski.

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.
S Brydon – Employee of Home in Scotland, who also employ Novus as reactive maintenance contractor
C Tait – tenant of Manor Estates Housing Association
S Mills – employee of Changeworks

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

Outstanding Notifiable Event

Ref 1003264 - citation re court action, referred to insurer. No update.

4 Minutes of the Board meeting held on 25 March 2020

Members approved the decision log that recorded matters approved and noted by the Board in March 2020.

5 Matters Arising

None.

6 Board Actions

Members noted the Actions Report.

C Ironside confirmed that the Regulator has extended the date for submission of the ARC to 31 July 2020, however staff are still trying to have this completed for consideration at the May Board meeting.

CH/AH

7 Minutes of Sub Committee or Subsidiary Meetings

None

8 Matters for Approval / Decision

8(i) Impairment Review

K Miller introduced the report that had been circulated previously. Members noted that an independent valuation of the Association's stock had been carried out earlier in the year, resulting in an increased value of £50million across the whole stock. Members also noted that the properties are included at a net book value figure of £41million in the accounts to 31 March 2020.

K Miller confirmed that she has contacted our lender to advise of the increased valuation and sought confirmation on how this might impact on the Association's borrowing capacity.

Following discussion, members approved the report.

8(ii) A – Energy Efficiency Strategy B – Energy Efficiency Policy

A Hay introduced the report that had been circulated previously, noting the milestone dates of December 2020, 2025 and 2032. She further confirmed that the ESSH reporting requirements are now included as part of the ARC and will be submitted to Board in May 2020.

In response to queries from a member, A Hay agreed to make some minor changes to the Energy Efficiency Policy as noted below:

Appendix 2B

- wording to be amended to include efficiency of heating type and fuel costs as well as property type as being the factors used to determine the cost required to maintain an adequate level of warmth.
- in section 3.2, a further risk to be added that high fuel costs could affect a tenant's ability to pay their rent.

AH

Subject to those changes, members approved the Energy Efficiency Strategy and Policy.

8(iii) Policy Approval

A – Sabbatical

C Ironside introduced the report that had been circulating previously, noting that the proposed Policy was based on that provided by EVH with some minor amendments to reflect the Association's circumstances.

There was discussion around the minimum period of a sabbatical, which the draft Policy states should be 6 months. C Ironside confirmed that for a small organisation any shorter periods could be problematic in terms of covering the position while the staff member is absent.

C Ironside confirmed that the notice period of intention to return to work would be set on a sliding scale depending on the length of the sabbatical.

Following discussion, members approved the Policy.

B – Rechargeable Repairs

A Hay introduced the report that had been circulated previously, noting that the review had been on the basis of a recommendation made by the Internal Auditor. She highlighted some of the key changes and asked the Board to note the outcomes of tenant consultation on this issue. She further confirmed that the Board would receive an annual report on the outcomes of the Policy.

Following discussion, it was noted that the Association's approach to carrying forced entry to carry out gas servicing or other emergency repairs is in line with good practice guidance and is in accordance with the terms of the tenancy agreements. A Hay agreed to include reference to this as a note to the Policy.

AH

Members approved the Policy.

8(iv) Risk Register

C Ironside advised members that this report would normally have been presented to the Audit Committee, however in view of the current situation the register had been reviewed earlier and it was thought prudent to present it to the full Board. She asked members to note that the register has been amended to focus on strategic rather than operational risks. She further advised members that the level of 2 risks had been increased: that relating to the ability of staff and members to attend work/meetings; and to the potential liquidation of a main contractor.

C Ironside advised members that the Senior Management Team are reviewing the risk register on a regular basis and will bring any concerns to the attention of the Board.

Following discussion, members approved the revised Risk Register.

8(v) Regulatory Standard 2 and 3

C Hughes confirmed to the Board that they had previously agreed that we would review all standards in line with guidance issued in July 2019, as there had not been sufficient time to take this into account prior to the signing of the assurance statement in October 2019.

C Hughes clarified that she had reviewed Standard 1 in March 2020, and was presenting her review of Standards 2 and 3 to this meeting. Standard 2 was reviewed in line with both guidance and comments from Internal Audit. Standard 3 was reviewed in line with guidance only, there being no comments or recommendations made by Internal Audit. The areas where additional actions have been highlighted will be included in relevant work plans.

Standard 2: The RSL is open about and accountable for what it does. It understands and takes account of the needs and priorities of its tenants, service users and stakeholders. And its primary focus is the sustainable achievement of these priorities.

Standard 3: The RSL manages its resources to ensure its financial well-being, while maintaining rents at a level that tenants can afford to pay.

C Hughes confirmed that it was intended to bring the reviews of the remaining standards to the Board in May and June, to enable approval of the assurance statement in August 2020.

C Hughes suggested in future the Association should look to review 2 or 3 standards per year to allow for more in-depth consideration of the issues.

Following discussion, members approved the review of Regulatory Standards 2 and 3.

9 Matters for Information

9(i) Cov 19 – Budget Scenarios

K Miller introduced the report that had been circulated previously, asking members to note that the scenarios presented were based on best guesstimates and would be subject to regular review as the situation develops.

K Miller emphasised that there would need to be a substantial review of the budget and that this would be necessary in advance of usual timescales.

In response to a question from a member, K Miller confirmed that there has been no need to furlough staff at this stage, however the situation is being reviewed regularly by the Senior Management Team.

A member commented that the report highlighted good work being done in very challenging circumstances.

Members noted the report.

9(ii) KPIs

Noted.

9(iii) Complaints Monitoring

C Hughes agreed that future reports to include more information on year-to-year comparisons and also on the reasons why some Stage 1 complaints had not been resolved at that stage and required to be escalated to Stage 2.

CH

Members noted the report.

9(iv) Staffing Report

Members noted the report.

9(v) Allocations Outcomes 2019/20

Members noted the report.

9 (vi) Planned & Cyclical Maintenance

A Hay confirmed that the asbestos issue referred to had been identified during the kitchen replacement programme in Muirhouse, where it was identified that asbestos panels that would previously have been behind cooker spaces had been left in situ at a previous kitchen upgrade. They will require to be removed by an approved asbestos contractor but cannot now

take place until after lockdown. Households affected have been reassured by the contractor and the Association's Technical Inspector that there are no safety concerns and the matter will be addressed when the contractor is able to return to work.

Members noted the report.

9(vii) Health & Safety Report

A Hay confirmed that the Internal Auditor is due to review tenant safety in July 2020 and the outcome of that will determine a reporting format to cover issues such as fire risk assessments, legionella testing and asbestos management.

AH

9(viii) SMT Update

Members noted the report.

10 Any Other Competent Business

(i) Signing of MEAL/MEHA Intra-Group Agreement and Service Level Agreement

Members noted that this cannot take place under present circumstances, however noted that all parties accept that these agreements are in place.

(ii) Positive Feedback

The Chair advised members that a tenant had contacted the Association to advise that he had cause to contact a number of organisations since the start of the pandemic and that the service received from Manor Estates had been by far the best.

On behalf of the Board, the Chair expressed sincere thanks to all staff who have adapted quickly to very challenging circumstances and are continuing to work hard to ensure that the majority of services are being provided to our customers. He asked the Senior Management Team to convey this message to all staff.

CI

11 Date and time of next meeting: Wednesday 27 May 2020 at 5.30 p.m.

The meeting closed at 6.30 p.m.