



## MINUTE OF THE BOARD MEETING

27 May 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:** None

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 reiterated 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.

### ACTION

#### 1 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies received.

#### 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.

## **Risk Management**

In response to a query from a member, C Ironside confirmed that the current SPSO enquiry is not a notifiable event and no decision has been made as to whether or not a full investigation will be necessary.

*(Post-meeting note: Email from SPSO received 28 May 2020, confirming that there will be no further investigation of the case).*

In response to a query from a member, C Ironside confirmed that the risk of deflation is included in one of the strategic risks in the Risk Register and that this will be considered as part of the financial scenarios as these are developed as we respond further to the impact of Covid 19.

## **Health & Safety**

C Ironside confirmed that one member of staff and the partner of another member of staff had been tested for Coronavirus, both tests were negative.

### **4 Minutes of the Board meeting held on 29 April 2020**

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 April 2020 were approved as a true record.

### **5 Matters Arising**

None.

### **6 Board Actions**

With regard to the issue of joint training for ARCHIE Board members, C Ironside confirmed that there is a meeting of the group on 1 June 2020 and she will raise the matter again.

**CI**

Members noted the report.

### **7 Minutes of Sub Committee or Subsidiary Meetings**

#### **7(i) Audit Committee 6 May 2020**

A Clark, Chair of the Audit Committee advised that the meeting had considered the draft management accounts and asked members to note that the Association is in a healthy financial position.

He further advised members that steady progress is being made on the issues raised by the Internal Auditor and that the Internal Audit plan for the coming year has been agreed.

A Clark also confirmed that there were no matters of concern that required to be brought to the attention of the Board.

## **8 Matters for Approval / Decision**

### **8(i) ARC (including EESSH)**

R Hutton joined the meeting during consideration of this item.

C Hughes introduced the report that had been circulated previously, highlighting in particular the reasons why the Association had been unable to submit figures in relation to the new indicator I23.

In response to questions from a member, A Hay confirmed the following:

- The EPCs that had been obtained through the Energy Savings Trust register would have been assessed by organisations contacting tenants directly. The information has been matched with information that the Association already holds. Staff are also conducting a data scrutiny exercise to ensure that all data held is accurate.

**CH**

It was agreed that an article should be included in the next newsletter reminding tenants to contact the Association if they are approached by any organisation 'cold-calling' to offer services.

- With regard to the 11 properties that continue to have a low rating, A Hay confirmed that 6 of these are properties where tenants have not allowed the Association to install central heating. She further confirmed that a detailed report to be submitted to Board in August will include more information about these and the remaining 5 properties.

**AH**

**CH**

Following discussion, members approved the report and agreed that this should be submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

### **8(ii) Review of Regulatory Standard 4**

C Hughes introduced the report that had been circulated previously. She highlighted that it was intended that similar reports on Standards 5,6 and 7 would be presented to the Board at the June meeting, to enable members to consider the Assurance Statement at the August meeting.

**CH**

S Brydon indicated that the Scottish Housing Regulator has indicated that they may not be looking for RSLs to provide the Assurance Statement this year under the current circumstances and are more likely to want to review recovery plans.

Members approved the report.

### **8(iii) Policy for Approval:**

## **Adult and Child Protection**

C Hughes introduced the report that had been circulated previously, highlighting that this was a new policy that formalises and clarifies for staff the work they are already doing in this area. She confirmed that training is to be arranged for all staff and that the Association would be seeking to include contractors.

**CH**

In response to a comment from a member, C Hughes agreed to seek a review of the Policy by the NSPCC.

**CH**

Following discussion, members approved the Policy.

### **8(iv) Pension Working Group**

This item was deferred to the end of the meeting to enable members to discuss it without staff being present.

## **9 Matters for Discussion**

### **9(i) Asset Management Strategy**

A Hay introduced the report that had been circulated previously, asking members to note that this was a discussion document seeking to obtain members' views on a number of issues, prior to presentation of the full draft strategy.

She then talked through the key areas that required to be considered and the following points were made:

- The strategy should be clear about Customer Engagement in respect of asset management issues;
- There will be a regular report to the Board that will include progress on ESSH;
- As yet there is no timescale for publication of the SHR's recommended practice in this area;
- Members noted that risks associated with asset management are already included in the Risk Register and will be referred to in the strategy;
- The Association will follow up on issues raised by tenants in the recent Tenant Satisfaction Survey and will carry out more specific consultation arising from that. Thereafter, tenants will also be consulted on components and developing technologies.

In response to concerns raised by members that the discussion document was presented without the draft strategy itself, C Ironside confirmed that the intention had been to gather Board views prior to final development of the strategy to ensure that the updated strategy reflected these. She noted that this type of discussion would be more effective in an away-day session, however this is not possible in the current circumstances.

Following discussion of a number of issues relating to disposals, and valuation of properties, A Hay agreed to discuss options with JLL and consider this issue for further review at a later date.

**AH**

A Hay confirmed that there would be a further review of the strategy following internal audit and publication of the SHR's recommended practice.

Members then noted the report and the Chair thanked A Hay for the considerable amount of work in producing the report.

S Brydon left the meeting at 6.05 p.m.

## **10 Matters for Information**

### **10(i) Finance Update**

K Miller introduced the report that had been circulated previously, asking members to note that the 'virtual' external audit had gone very well. She confirmed that herself and C Ironside were due to meet with the auditors on Wednesday 3 June to discuss outcomes of the audit.

K Miller confirmed that the draft accounts presented had been prepared prior to the required adjustment in respect of pensions, however asked members to note that the inclusion of this has had a positive outcome.

K Miller advised members that, as a result of all staff currently having to work from home on a long-term basis, it will be necessary to provide them with appropriate equipment, noting that many have been using their own. She sought an increase of £5,000.00 to the approved budget to enable this to be achieved.

Members approved the request.

K Miller advised members that there may need to be further investment in the Association's telephone system if the current situation continues for a lengthy period.

### **10(ii) SMT Report**

The Chair noted that 2 members of staff are leaving the Association. He asked that the Board's thanks for their service be passed on, especially to A Naysmith who has worked for the Association for many years. C Ironside agreed to do so.

**CI**

## **11 Any Other Competent Business**

### **i) Housemark**

C Ironside advised members that the Senior Management Team are looking to end the Association's participation in Housemark. She noted that the outcomes and reports are not currently being fully utilised and that sufficient benchmarking opportunities are available through ARCHIE and the ARC information provided by the SHR.

K Miller advised that there is an inconsistent approach to data gathering meaning that the outcomes are not directly comparable.

In response to concerns raised that no full report had been provided on this issue, C Ironside confirmed that the matter is operational, staff were looking to be open and transparent by bringing the matter to the Board's attention.

Following discussion, it was noted that Housemark would be advised that the Association will not be renewing its membership.

**CI**

C Tait left the meeting at 6.30 p.m.

All staff left the meeting at 6.30 p.m. to enable members to discuss the Pensions Working Group report.

**8(iv) Pensions Working Group (confidential item)**

Appendix of outcome attached to confidential version of minutes

**12 Date and time of next meeting: Wednesday 24 June at 5.30 p.m.**