



MINUTE OF THE BOARD MEETING

26 August 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

C Ironside confirmed that F Roslewski was given special leave of absence and hopes to attend the AGM and the meeting in October 2020.

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

None

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 24 June 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2020 were approved as a true record.

5 Matters Arising

Meeting Attendees

C Ironside confirmed that 2 of the 3 tenant members who had attended the last meeting have been nominated for election at the AGM. 2 applications were received in response to the advertisement for Board members. They have met with senior staff and are due to meet with N Hicks and R Hutton prior to the AGM.

6 Board Actions

N Hicks noted that the delays in arranging training were understandable in the current circumstances.

In response to a question, C Hughes confirmed that the revised dates for detailed review of 2 regulatory standards was in accordance with the original plan approved by the Board and are due to be reviewed in 2021/22. She noted that in the current circumstances it would be difficult to achieve the level of scrutiny by Board members that could be achieved at an away day or similar event, which had been the original proposal.

C Hughes confirmed that there is no requirement that all standards need to be reviewed on an annual basis. She sought to reassure members that if any material or significant issue arose that could affect the level of assurance in respect of any standard, senior staff would bring this to the Board's attention.

Members noted the position.

7 Minutes of Sub Committee or Subsidiary Meetings

7(i) None

8 Matters for Approval / Decision

8(i) Confirmation of Association Register

C Ironside introduced the report and asked members to note that Board meeting minutes have not been signed by the Chair since January 2020, due to meetings being held virtually. It was agreed that once staff are back in the office, these can be printed and sent to Nigel for signing.

CI

Following a concern being raised about Board assurance on submission of returns that do not require prior Board approval, K Miller agreed to provide the

KM

Board with an annual report in November each year confirming that all requirements have been met.

Following discussion, members approved the report.

8(ii) Five Year Financial Plan (FYFP)

K Miller introduced the report that had been circulated previously, noting that the Scottish Housing Regulator had extended the deadline for submission of the FYFP to enable organisations to demonstrate their response to the current crisis.

K Miller stressed that the figures presented are 'best guesstimates' as there is still much uncertainty about how things will develop going forward.

The Chair of the Audit Committee was satisfied that the figures presented show the Association to still be in a strong financial position. He expressed concern at the amount of reserves held by the Association, it was agreed that this would be discussed under the report on Treasury Management.

In response to a question, K Miller advised that the proposed rent increase of 0.5%, this has not yet been discussed and a range of scenarios will be considered as part of the budget process. She agreed that the next review of the Rent Setting Policy would include a more detailed methodology for rent setting.

K Miller confirmed that the additional £10,000 that had been approved to enable staff to be provided with appropriate equipment to enable them to work from home had been spent.

Following discussion, members approved that the FYFP be submitted to the Regulator.

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8(iii) Development Programme Update

CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

Following discussion, members approved that senior staff progress the development proposals.

8(iv) Membership Application

The Chair advised members that an application for membership had been received from a Mr George Fyvie. The application was duly approved.

9 Matters for Information

9(i) Treasury Management Review

K Miller introduced the report that had been circulated previously, highlighting a number of key points.

Members discussed the issue raised during consideration of the FYFP (agenda item 8(ii)) regarding the level of reserves held on deposit by the Association. Following discussion, it was agreed that K Miller would come back to the Board in October 2020 with options on procurement of independent professional financial investment advice.

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In response to a question, K Miller confirmed that the FYFP already takes account of using some reserves to meet development costs prior to draw down of loans.

Members noted the minor changes required to update the Treasury Management Policy, noting that the reference to TSB was still to be removed and also that the reference to Scottish Government should also refer to Government Agencies.

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Following discussion, members noted the report.

9(ii) KPIs

In response to a question, C Hughes confirmed that there was no commentary on the arrears performance as this had already been detailed in Appendix 4 to the FYFP report (agenda item 8(ii)) as referenced in the KPI report.

Members noted the report.

9(iii) Complaints Monitoring Quarter 1

C Hughes confirmed that the number of complaints recorded did appear to be lower than expected and that she and C Ironside would be carrying out further

training with staff to ensure that all complaints are recognised as such and recorded appropriately.

Members noted the report.

9(iv) Finance Update Quarter 1

Members noted the report.

9(v) Entitlements, Benefits and Payments Record 2019/20

C Ironside introduced the report. In response to a concern raised about staff offering or receiving gifts or hospitality, it was noted that the approach is consistent with the Association's Policy. Members also noted that the numbers and amounts involved are not high, and nothing is targeted at individuals.

K Miller confirmed that the figure missing from the report in respect of an event hosted by TC Young was £70.00.

Members noted the report.

9(vi) SMT Report

The Chair highlighted the significant amount of work that has been carried out despite the majority of staff continuing to work from home and the other constraints in place due to the current situation. He expressed congratulations and thanks to all staff.

10 Any Other Competent Business

(i) Retiring Board Members

The Chair advised that S Brydon would be standing down at the AGM, noting that she had served on the Board for 3 years. He further advised that C Tait would also be standing down at the AGM, having served on the Board for 9 years.

The Chair thanked both retiring members for their service and contribution to the work of the Association.

(Post-meeting note: C Tait has agreed to continue her membership of the MEAL Board as an independent member).

(ii) Role of Chair

The Chair confirmed that he would be standing down from the position of Chair, having served in that role for 5 years. Following the AGM in

September, election of office bearers will take place at the October Board meeting.

The Chair confirmed that the AGM will take place on 9 September and asked that as many members as possible attend.

(iii) Research Project

R Hutton advised members that she is carrying out a research project on the recruitment, selection and appraisal of Board members. She indicated that she would be issuing a short questionnaire and hoped that members would respond. A report on the outcomes of the project will be presented to the Board in due course.

The Chair noted that to date he has received only 2 completed appraisal forms and requested that members submit these to him as soon as possible.

11 Date and Time of Next Meetings

SGM/AGM Wednesday 9 September at 5.30 p.m.

MEHA Board Wednesday 28 October at 5.00 p.m.

The meeting closed at: 6.20 p.m.