



MINUTE OF THE BOARD MEETING

31 March 2021

Present: A Scott (Vice-Chair)
D Duff; N Hicks; G Kitchener; S Mills; P Rowsby
C Ironside (Secretary)

In attendance: C Hughes, A Hay, K Miller

Apologies: R Hutton (Chair); A Clark

The meeting was held virtually.

In the absence of R Hutton, Vice-Chair A Scott chaired the meeting.

C Ironside confirmed that she had informed all members of M Trant's resignation from the Board following the January Board meeting, also that both she and the Chair had contacted him to thank him for his service to the Association and that a gift had been sent on behalf of the Association.

ACTION

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from R Hutton and A Clark.

2 Declarations of Interest

N Hicks – Board member and treasurer of The Action Group, and member of SHAPS Pensions Employers Committee
S Mills – employee of Changeworks
D Duff – tenant of the Association
G Kitchener – tenant of the Association

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

Notifiable event 1003661
Closure of the office due to CoVid 19 - ongoing

4 Minutes of the Board meeting held on 27 January 2021

Correction noted to Item 8(vii). Subject to correction, the minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2021 were approved as a true record, proposed by G Kitchener, seconded by N Hicks.

5 Matters Arising

None

6 Board Actions

Staff were asked that, where the proposed timescale refers to 'quarter', the last month of that quarter be referred to. **ALL**

C Hughes confirmed that the Complaints Report referred to would be submitted to the April Board.

7 Minutes of Sub Committee or Subsidiary Meetings

7(i) Minutes of MEAL 18 February 2021

C Ironside confirmed that the main item of note was the MEAL Business Plan which is included as an agenda item to this meeting.

Noted

7(ii) Minutes of Audit Committee 24 February 2021

K Miller asked members to note that this was an additional meeting of the Audit Committee, called to discuss the Azets presentation on investment options available to the Association.

Noted

8 Matters for Approval / Decision

8(i) Budget 2021/22

K Miller introduced the report that had been circulated previously. She asked members to note that the draft budget had been presented to the Board as part of the 25-year plan in January 2021. She then talked through the key issues outlined in the report in respect of planned maintenance, staffing and ICT that had led to a number of changes to what had been proposed earlier.

K Miller confirmed that the Association's lender has been informed of the insurance costs.

A member questioned if the proposed catch-up works on planned maintenance could have an impact on the Association's predicted surplus and the Association's covenants with the lender. K Miller advised that this is unlikely to

have a significant impact on compliance with the covenants in 2022/23 (as only £140k couldn't be accommodated in 2021/22), also that we will be having discussions with our lender in the near future and any concerns will be addressed at that time.

In response to a question, K Miller confirmed that the low level of rent increase applied this year could have a knock-on effect to next year's increase, however this will not be confirmed until we are aware of inflation rates nearer the time.

Following discussion, members approved the draft budget presented, proposed by N Hicks and seconded by S Mills.

8(ii) Asset Management Strategy and Action Plan

A Hay introduced the report that had been circulated previously, noting that the action plan presented includes issues that were raised by the Board during previously discussions held in May 2020.

In response to a question, A Hay confirmed that the EESSH 2 figures will have to be reported to the Regulator in May 2022. She confirmed that she intends to review what is required when preparing the Annual Report on the Charter (ARC) this year to ensure that members are aware of future requirements.

A Hay also confirmed that further information will be presented to the Board in May 2021 in respect of those properties that are considered to be low-performing in terms of energy efficiency. The information to be presented will give a clear picture of areas that are within Manor Estates' control and those where abeyances will apply due to tenant choice.

Following discussion, members approved the report, proposed by N Hicks and seconded by G Kitchener.

A Scott noted that the document presented was extensive and thanked A Hay for her work on this.

8(iii) Regulatory Standards Review

C Hughes introduced the report that had been circulated previously.

Members indicated that they were happy to proceed with review of Standards 1 and 6, as previously agreed, however noted that Standard 3 which covers financial management should be reviewed the following year.

A Scott, N Hicks, G Kitchener and P Rowsby confirmed that they would be interested in attending workshops to consider the standards in detail. C Hughes confirmed that information would be issued in advance of the meetings. A Scott asked that R Hutton and A Clark be contacted re their potential interest in attending the workshops.

CH

Following discussion, members approved the approach taken, proposed by N Hicks, seconded by G Kitchener.

9 Matters for Information

9(i) MEAL Business Plan

C Ironside advised members that there were no significant changes proposed. She further confirmed that the current financial position means it would not currently be feasible for additional staff to be appointed with a remit to look at business opportunities. She noted that any opportunities for business growth would be identified by the Senior Management Team or through the Association's membership of ARCHIE.

Members noted the plan.

9(ii) Board Appraisal and Timetable

Members noted that the timescale for appraisals has been brought forward to enable identification of any skills gaps that can be addressed through a recruitment exercise prior to the AGM in September 2021.

It was noted that 3 members only joined the Board in September/October 2020 and would not be in a position to comment on the performance of the Board over the past year. It was agreed that they should also take part in the exercise, particularly in relation to identification of any potential training needs.

C Ironside confirmed that questionnaires would be issued 1 April 2021.

Members noted the report.

9(iii) Policy Review Timetable

Noted.

9(iv) Procurement Strategy Plan 2021

A Hay introduced the report that had been circulated previously and invited questions.

K Miller confirmed that information regarding the 'top 30' suppliers used to be provided to the Audit Committee, however it was agreed some time ago that this was not necessary. A Hay advised members that information regarding this is included in the Procurement Action Plan, also that this is an area that is reviewed by the Senior Management Team on a regular basis.

In response to a question regarding delegated authority, A Hay confirmed that this is covered in the Association's Financial Regulations

CI

A Hay advised that the Association no longer has an approved suppliers list as tenders have to be open to all, however there is a framework that lists recent and current suppliers, contractors and consultants, details of which are presented to the Board on an annual basis.

A Hay confirmed that a number of staff regularly attend various training events in respect of procurement. Members noted that A Hay is the policy/strategy lead in this area of work, however other members of the SMT have responsibility for procurement in their areas of work.

A Hay confirmed that the Association always seeks interest from other ARCHIE members when seeking to procure any contracts.

Members noted the report.

9(v) Health & Safety Management Systems – External Audit

C Ironside noted that SMT and team managers had attended Health & Safety Training on 30 March 2021 and that Board members were due to attend a similar session on 14 April.

Members noted that the overall assessment was positive and that plans are already in place to address the small number of actions identified. C Ironside noted that the audit was onerous and commended the work of the Health & Safety Administrators (L MacKay and S McKay) during the process.

Members noted the report.

9(vi) Insurance Update

Noted.

9(vii) SMT Report

Members noted their appreciation of the report that gives a good overview of operational matters staff are dealing with.

C Ironside thanked those members who had taken part in the initial focus groups to discuss issues relevant to the development of the Association's next Strategic Plan.

10 Any Other Competent Business

A) Signing of Intra-Group Agreement between MEHA and MEAL

B) Signing of Service Level Agreement between MEHA and MEAL

11 Date and time of next meeting:

Wednesday 28 April 2021 at 5.00 p.m.

The meeting closed at: 6.00 p.m.

Members thanked A Scott for chairing the meeting.