



MINUTE OF THE BOARD MEETING

28 June 2023

Present: R Hutton (Chair); I Crawford (Vice-Chair)

MEMBERS

**A Clark; N Hicks; G Kitchener; W Raeburn;
P Rowsby**

CO-OPTEEES

None

C Ironside (Secretary)

In attendance: C Hughes, A Hay, K Miller (Staff)
D Todd; R Elliot (Observers)

A Moodie, MEAL Chair (for Agenda Item 3)

A Jack, Link Housing Group (for Agenda Item 3)

The meeting was hybrid, A Moodie attended via Zoom for Agenda Item 3

The meeting started at: 5.30 p.m.

Apologies: A Groat

ACTION

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from A Groat

A Groat has requested leave of absence due to family circumstances. The Board agreed to the request.

2 Declarations of Interest

N Hicks	Board Member and Treasurer of The Action Group
R Hutton	Employee of Harbour Homes
G Kitchener	Tenant of Manor Estates Housing Association

3 Awareness Session on Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) – Andy Jack, Link Housing Association

A Jack gave a presentation on Environmental, Social and Governance and the approach that Link are taking.

In respect of retrofitting, A Jack advised that Link are taking a 'fabric first' approach, they are not currently changing heating types, mainly due to changing technology and development of alternative heating systems.

A Jack confirmed that Link are continuing with their new-build programme. They are likely to use air source heat pumps or similar, recognising that there are concerns about potential higher costs for tenants, due to electricity costs being higher than gas. Whilst fuel costs will be higher, it is anticipated that improved energy efficiency of homes will mean that householders will be able to use less

A Jack advised that Link have not yet started a full programme of retrofit, this is still at the planning stage, although some pilot projects are being undertaken. He acknowledged that tenants are likely to have concerns due to the potential increase in heating costs and the high level of disruption involved in undertaking works.

A Jack confirmed that the Scottish Reporting Standard for Social Housing) includes the main criteria that Link are using to develop and monitor ESG within the organisation.

C Ironside noted that there is no certainty regarding what information lenders will be looking for in respect of ESG. A Jack confirmed that different banks appear to be using their own criteria, rather than using a standard set. As an early adopter of ESG, Link are experiencing some difficulties that will need to be resolved.

The Chair thanked A Jack for his presentation.

A Jack and A Moodie left the meeting at 18.00.

C Ironside confirmed that the Association already collects information that will be relevant to ESG, however there will be some areas that will require further work. She advised members that SFHA will be issuing standards of sustainability, likely to be available in the Autumn. We will wait until this information is available before considering what our approach will be.

C Ironside noted that the purpose of the session was to raise awareness of the issue for Board members, however it is not necessary to look at this in detail at this time..

D Todd commented that the approach being taken by Link is very similar to Kingdom Housing Association who are facing similar issues, also that EESSH 2 and Net Zero will also impact on this.

4 Risk Management Issues / Health & Safety Issues / Notifiable Events / GDPR

C Ironside confirmed that there were no risk management issues, health and safety issues or notifiable events to report.

C Ironside advised members there had been 3 minor data breaches since the date of the last meeting:

- Email sent to an incorrect address (note: the email address used was supplied by the tenant).
- Letter issued using template included details of person the letter had previously been sent to; staff were reminded not to retain details on a template letter.
- Copy of passport for a new member of staff was sent to payroll in error.

C Ironside asked members to note that all cases were dealt with in accordance with advice from the Association's Data Protection Officer.

5 Board Minutes**(i) Minutes of Board Meeting of 31 May 2023**

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 May 2023 were approved as a true record, proposed by P Rowsby, and seconded by G Kitchener.

(ii) Outcome Note of Meeting 16 June 2023

The note of the meeting held 16 June 2023 was approved as a true record, proposed by W Raeburn, and seconded by I Crawford.

6 Matters Arising

Noted.

7 Board Actions

Noted.

8 Minutes of Sub Committee or Subsidiary Meetings

None.

9 Matters for Approval / Decision**9(i) SHR Returns (Loan Portfolio)**

K Miller introduced the report that had been circulated previously. She asked members to note that the return had been considered by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 21 June 2023 and was recommended to the Board for approval.

Following discussion, members approved the submission of the report to the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR), proposed by N Hicks and seconded by W Raeburn.

9(ii) Audited Accounts

K Miller advised that the audited accounts were presented for signing. She confirmed that the accounts had also been reviewed by the Audit Committee.

K Miller advised members that parts of the accounts are in a standard format, however some are very specific to the housing sector and SHR requirements.

N Hicks expressed concern that tenants may have a negative view regarding an increased income level of 3.8% with the accounts showing employee costs having risen by 8.8% in the same period. Whilst he appreciated fully the reasons for the figures, he felt that an explanation is necessary to pre-empt questions that may be raised. K Miller agreed to include appropriate narrative in the annual report.

Following discussion, members approved the signing of the Audited Accounts, proposed by A Clark and seconded by N Hicks.

KM/CI

9(iii) Letter of Representation

K Miller introduced the report that had been circulated, noting that the purpose of the letter to the External Auditor is to demonstrate the Board's assurance that the Association's business is being managed satisfactorily. She asked members to note that there were no significant changes from the previous year.

Following discussion, members approved signing of the Letter of Representation.

9(iv) Board Membership

C Ironside advised members that the Association had received 3 membership applications, from:

- L Fordyce
- R Elliot
- D Todd

The Board approved each of the applications, proposed by P Rowsby and seconded by I Crawford.

10 Matters for Information

10(i) AGM Arrangements

C Ironside introduced the report that had been circulated previously and advised members that we are proposing to hold this year's AGM in the Association's office.

C Ironside drew members' attention to paragraph 3.3 of the report and apologised that the reference to the 9-year Rule Policy was incorrect and should have been the Board Appraisal Policy.

C Ironside confirmed that N Hicks would be retiring from the Board, having served for 9 years.

C Ironside advised members that, in accordance with the Association's Rules, a further 2 members would be required to stand down. She confirmed that R Hutton and P Rowsby will be standing down, both have intimated that they wish to stand for re-election.

Members noted the report.

10(ii) SMT Report

C Ironside highlighted that 3 members of staff are leaving the Association, asking members to note that their reasons for doing so are all different and do not raise any concerns about the Association as an employer.

In response to a question from the Association's Chair, C Ironside confirmed that she would finalise and circulate notes from the Strategy Day held 16 June 2023.

11 Any Other Competent Business

i) Signing of the Audited Accounts and Letter of Representation

Noted that these would be signed by the Chair and Vice Chair immediately following the meeting.

ii) Stock Tour

A Hay confirmed that arrangements have been made for a stock tour to take place on Friday 28 July 2023 between 9.30 and 14.30. The tour will cover the north-west of the city and will also give members the opportunity to view the new development at South Queensferry.

A Hay advised that a further tour will be arranged later in the year to cover other areas of the city.

Further information regarding the stock tour will be issued prior to the event.

AH/CI

iii) Eviction

C Hughes advised members that the Association has been awarded eviction decree against a tenant who has a significant arrears balance on their rent account. She gave a summary of the circumstances of the case, noting the significant amount of work leading up to the case being referred.

Members also noted that the Association carries out a very small number of evictions.

Post-meeting note:

- 2022/23: no evictions
- 2021/22: 1 eviction (rent arrears)
- 2020/21: 1 eviction (anti-social behaviour)

12 Date and time of next meeting: Wednesday 30 August 2023 at 5.30 p.m.

The meeting closed at: 18.40