

HILLHEAD HOUSING ASSOCIATION 2000

Minutes of the Management Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 7 September at 5.30pm via Zoom

Present: J Jamieson (Chair)
C Taylor
M Docherty
S Niven
K McIntyre
P O'Connell
R Smith
W Hassan
Cllr S Murray
Cllr P Marshall
L Scott

In Attendance: C McKiernan, Depute Director/Housing Manager
M White, Head of Finance and Corporate Services
S Tait, Head of Development & Property Services
K Tait, Corporate Services Assistant
P Long, FMD
J Chittleburgh, Cheine+Tait

Before the meeting began J Jamieson introduced Cllr Pamela Marshall to the Management Committee as the new representative of East Dunbartonshire Council on the Association's Committee.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from D Wilson and G Jackson.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & Deferred items

There were no declarations of interest or deferred items.

3. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Management Committee Meeting 3 August 2022

These Minutes were approved by J Jamieson & seconded by M Docherty.

HR Sub-Committee Meeting 30 August 2022

These Minutes were approved by J Jamieson and seconded by C Taylor.

(3ii) Action List

Committee noted the contents of the Action List.

4(i) DIRECTOR'S REPORT

SHR

C McKiernan advised that the Scottish Government had yesterday announced that it planned to implement a rent freeze for all private and social landlords up until 31 March 2023. C McKiernan added that this will have an impact on the rent consultation for the year 2023/24 which the Association would normally hold around in January. It is yet unclear if this will carry on into the year 2023/24, the Scottish Government intends to bring forward emergency legislation.

Hybrid Working

C McKiernan advised Committee of the proposed changes to the hybrid working model that the Association has been working on over the last year, and that had been scrutinised by the HR Sub Committee and recommended for approval. C McKiernan advised that the proposed changes would see staff work the majority of their week within the office on a 60/40 basis, and all staff would be required to attend the office every Wednesday. The office will close in the afternoon on the first Wednesday of the month for staff training. The office will be open from 9-5 Monday to Thursday with the office closing at 4pm on a Friday. S Niven asked if the changes proposed are to be tested on a trial basis or if it is to be implemented permanently. C McKiernan advised that the recommendations were the result of a long trial period and therefore it was felt appropriate to move to a permanent position. Committee subsequently approved this.

Health & Safety

C McKiernan advised that a Health & Safety Sub-Committee meeting will be arranged for week commencing 26 September.

Cyber Security/IT

Committee noted that the Association's formal Cyber Essential+ assessment is due to take place on 8 & 9 September.

Committee member portal

Committee were advised that work to set up the Committee portal has now been completed and the Association is planning to distribute laptops to all Committee members which will grant them access to Association files in the coming weeks.

Governance Software

C McKiernan advised that the Association had met with a governance software designer called Decision Time. It is the opinion of the Management Team that due to the high costs quoted to the Association and a commitment for 3 years we would look at other options.

4.1 Benchmarking Report

C McKiernan presented Committee with the Benchmarking report for the period 1 April to 30 June. C McKiernan advised that unfortunately the millennium benchmarking group which the Association is part of has suspended these reports for now due to the number of members reducing to just 3 Associations. The Association is still able to collect and compare a range of performance measures against 37 other organisations thanks to the Association's membership of Scotland Housing Network (SHN) Committee were asked to read over some of the performance comparisons and take note of the contents of the report.

C McKiernan noted that the Association's Annual Performance Visit from SHN will take place on Tuesday 4 October at 2.00 p.m., any Committee member who wishes to attend would be welcome to do so and should notify a member of staff.

4.2 Annual Compliance Checklist

Committee noted the contents of the Annual Compliance Checklist for the period to the end of August.

4.3 Hybrid Working Policy

Attached to the reports was a copy of the Hybrid Working Policy which was agreed in the Directors report and will be adopted by the Association.

5. Finance Reports

Annual Accounts to 31 March 2022

P Long presented Committee with the annual accounts for the year up to 31 March 2022 and asked for Committee's approval of the accounts.

Committee noted that the Association had an income of £4.352 million with operating costs sitting at just under £3.1 million leaving the Association with a surplus of £1.254 million

P Long advised that the value of the Association's fixed assets was £24.878 million with the office fixed assets sitting at just under £972,000.

Committee also noted that the Association's cashflow generated just under £1.9 Million through its day-to-day activities with the Association spending £674,000 on new projects and £838,000 on loan repayments. The Committee noted that this left a net surplus of £379,000.

P Long advised that there may be some challenges in the near future with the news of the proposed rent freezes that may affect the Association. He did advise that the Association had good cash reserves and that the Association is in a strong financial position.

Jeremy Chittleburgh from Chiene +Tait was in attendance to confirm the annual accounts to March 2022 along with an Audit Summary Report for the Committee.

J Chittleburgh referred Committee to the Audit Summary Report. The auditors highlighted they did not identify any breaches based on the samples checked and they advised they are content with the Association's financial controls. The Committee noted the contents of the Audit Summary Report.

Chiene +Tait confirmed the Association can comply with all financial covenants with the Royal Bank of Scotland.

J Chittleburgh confirmed that the accounts comply with all latest guidance. In terms of the accounting adjustment for pensions, the auditors are happy with the way that this is presented in the accounts.

J Chittleburgh highlighted the performance with the low level of rent arrears and how well the Association has done to maintain a good level of rental income and keep arrears low.

J Chittleburgh confirmed that Chiene +Tait can offer an unqualified audit opinion.

Committee subsequently agreed to approve the accounts for the year up to March 2022.

Management letter response

P Long advised Committee of a draft letter that was included with the report and asked for the Committee's approval of its content. This was agreed.

Letter of Representation

P Long advised that this letter is also required to be returned to the auditors on behalf of the Committee. After reading over the letter Committee also gave its approval for the letter of representation to be returned to the auditors.

Surplus Reconciliation

P Long advised that the previously reported surplus for the Management Accounts to 31 March 2022 was £530,701. However due to things such as an increase in comprehensive income along with a decrease in depreciation costs the year end surplus has now been adjusted and is reported as £735,736.

6.1 EDC Request for Temporary Accommodation

C McKiernan presented Committee with a report on a request by EDC to the Association to provide the council with extra properties so that they can provide temporary accommodation lets in the area. Following some discussion the Committee subsequently approved the request to provide EDC with up to a maximum of 8 additional units.

6.2 Write Offs

C McKiernan presented Committee with the write off report. Committee approved the proposed write offs.

7. Development Report

S Tait presented Committee with the Development Report.

Fauldhead Road North/South

S Tait advised that planning permission has been approved although CALA are working with EDC to clarify several conditions. S Tait added that at the Association's last meeting with McTaggart Construction they advised that CALA Homes had informed them of their intention to reduce the number of affordable units being built from 45 to 41 at the Fauldhead Road North side. CALA also advised McTaggart of a proposed site start of June 2023; albeit McTaggart indicated that this seems rather ambitious. S Tait explained that he had no further indication of the project/unit costs, this is unlikely to be known until CALA establish costs of enabling works to provide a serviced site. McTaggart have requested up to date details from CALA and await this information.

S Tait advised that John Mullholland who has been providing Development Services to the Association has indicated that he plans to retire and is reducing his workload and although he is still able to provide some services, he cannot provide the level of service

we would require on this development. S Tait advised that due to this the Association sought recommendations for development services and invited C-urb Property Development to complete a tender submission. Having reviewed the tender and comparing their hourly rate against John Mullholland and other development companies and considering their knowledge of similar projects it is the recommendation of the Management Team to appoint C-urb Property Development. Committee subsequently approved this appointment.

8. A.O.C.B.

K McIntyre wanted to discuss with Committee how the Association could help the community in response to the cost-of-living crisis. C McKiernan advised that the Association has various funding bids which if all were accepted would bring in over £100,000 to the Association which would be used to support the tenants and wider community. C McKiernan advised that she has been in contact with different teams at EDC, with the HSCP and with EDVA because she believes that the best way to support tenants in the area is for a range of agencies to come together and be able to offer to help collectively. R Smith advised that his Charity GRACE holds a drop in café every Monday to Friday in the Hillhead Community Centre which allows members of the community to drop in and pick up free food helping people who may struggle to get a meal. R Smith suggested that GRACE are looking to get more white goods in to provide more support in the area. C McKiernan took note of the suggestions made and advised that the Association will do everything in its power to help the community along with other organisations in the area.

K McIntyre asked if it be possible to set up a sub-group to try and come up with ideas to support these issues discussed today and asked if anyone in committee and staff be able to support the group. C Taylor & M Docherty volunteered, and it was agreed that relevant members of the Associations staff would support this sub-group.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Management Committee meeting 05/10/22

Minutes prepared by K. Tait, Finance & Corporate Services Assistant

Chairperson's Signature:

Date:

Copies of the above reports are available on request.