

HJALTLAND HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (Operations) HELD AT HJALTLAND OFFICES – 6 NORTH NESS AND VIA ZOOM ON THURSDAY 20th FEBRUARY 2025 AT 6.00 P.M.

Present: Colin Nicholson (**CN**) (Chair)
Agnes Tallack (**AT**)
Lucy Lawson (**LL**)
Neil Manson (**NM**)
Rachel Hunter (**RH**)
Bob McGeady (**BM**) – Via Zoom
Pam Shead (**PM**) – via Zoom

In Attendance: Bryan Leask (**BL**) (Chief Executive)
Paul Leask (**PL**) (Head of Investment & Asset Management)
Susan Gray (**SG**) (Head of Finance & Corporate Services)
Janice Thomason (**JT**) (Head of Finance & Corporate Services)
Ian Bray (**IB**) (Head of Housing and Customer Service)
Kim Laidlaw (**KL**) (Corporate Services Officer)

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Emma Perring, Karen Eunson, Andrew Lyall and Theo Smith.

2 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

The Chair asked for any declarations of conflict of interest for the evening's business. Pam Shead, a tenant, will not be involved in the rent settings agenda point 5.3, and Lucy Lawson will abstain from agenda point 7.2 due to her connection to SHEAP.

3 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

3.1 Management Committee Meeting 12th December 2024

CN presented the minutes of the previous meeting in December, there were no issues with the minutes, Members **APPROVED** the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 12th December on a motion by AT seconded by NM.

APPROVED

3.2 Audit & Risk Sub-committee Meeting 23rd January 2025

CN presented the minutes of the Audit and Risk Sub-committee meeting. There were no issues with the minutes, Members **APPROVED** the minutes of the Audit and Risk Sub-committee held of the 23rd January on a motion by NM, seconded by BM.

APPROVED

3.3 Finance Sub-committee Meeting 5th February 2025

CN then presented the minutes of the Finance Sub-committee meeting, held earlier in the month. Again, there were no issues with the minutes, Members **APPROVED** the minutes of the Finance Sub-committee meeting held on 5th February on a motion by LL, seconded by CN.

APPROVED

4 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

5 ADMINISTRATION

5.1 Use of Seal

There has been one use of the seal during the reporting period:

Members **NOTED** the report.

NOTED

5.2 Health & Safety Report

BL presented a report to Members and introduced the new My Compliance software system, which aims to provide quicker and easier access to information. The system will be trialled for a year. BL also discussed the recent audit by EVH, which showed a high level of compliance with health and safety responsibilities, scoring 211/214. It is recommended that this audit takes place every three years. NM noted the absence of damp and mould issues in the report, IB highlighted new ARC Damp and Mould management indicators to be reported on for next year. After some discussion, Members **NOTED** the report.

NOTED

5.3 Rent Setting Report

IB presented the report on rent setting, noting an increase in feedback from tenants compared to the previous consultation. Concerns about affordability were raised by a few tenants, with requests for support from the Association's Financial Inclusion Officer. Feedback included both positive and negative comments, and efforts were made to address tenant concerns. Discussions with Members highlighted the importance of improving communication, managing tenant expectations, and considering strategic decisions regarding retrofitting older properties and new builds. The Tenant Focus Group will be consulted on the information tenants would like to receive and the format this should take.

After some further discussion, Members **APPROVED** the Rent Setting for 2025/26 on a motion by AT, seconded by RH.

APPROVED

5.4 5.4.1 Business Plan - Budget (Assumptions)

BL presented the Budget Assumptions for the Business Plan (BP) to the Committee, noting that these figures had been discussed at the Finance Sub-committee meeting earlier in the month. He mentioned a slight change in the salary increase assumption due to the late agreement of a 4% salary increase, pending final union approval.

The Committee **APPROVED** the Budget Assumptions for 2025/26 following a motion by LL, seconded by NM.

APPROVED

5.4.2 Business Plan – Lettings Plan

IB presented the proposed Lettings Plan for 2025-26 to the Committee, outlining housing allocations, legislative requirements, and housing needs in Shetland. There are currently 609 live applications for social housing, with significant demand from various applicant types. The Association collaborates with Shetland Islands Council through a Common Housing Register and a nomination agreement, allowing the Council to nominate applicants for 50% of available properties. The plan includes 50% allocations to SIC and 30% to Hjaltland transfers, creating more movement in the Associations stock. The Tenant Focus Group agreed to advertise by property location, size, and rent for a more flexible and easier applicant process.

After some further discussion regarding targets for social needs, Members **APPROVED** the Lettings Plan for 2025/26 on a motion by AT, seconded by LL.

APPROVED

5.4.3 Business Plan - Tenant Participation Action Plan

IB presented The Tenant Participation Action Plan for 2025/26 which outlines various activities, meetings, surveys, and events planned throughout the year to

involve tenants in decision-making and keep them informed, this is reviewed by Tenant Focus Group. The Tenant Satisfaction Survey will be conducted in September and results will be available for the Assurance Statement sign off in October.

Members **APPROVED** the Tenant Participation Action Plan for 2025/26 on a motion by NM, seconded by LL.

APPROVED

5.4.4 Business Plan - Asset Management Strategy

PL presented the Asset Management Strategy 2025-26 for Hjaltland Housing Association (HHA), focusing on maintaining and improving housing stock to meet current and future standards. HHA has invested in energy efficiency and is preparing for the new Social Housing Net Zero Standard (SHNZS). PL is a member of the review group and is attending the next workshop on 25th March and will report back to Committee. The timeline and funding for these standards are uncertain, possibly delayed until 2026. PL is assessing various scenarios, but delays in government decisions are making planning difficult. There was an in-depth discussion on the process and challenges.

Bob McGeady left meeting 18.55

RH commented that the strategy has a lot of information in it, but it appears more operational than strategic, and this was noted by BL. BL reminded Members that the approval of the asset management strategy allows staff to tender and organise works and is based on detailed 30-year projections with the initial five years included in the business plan.

PL then updated Members on the recent tenders received for seven properties in Stucca, with Sullom block problems, highlighting the challenges being faced due to local building inflation, lack of contractors, and increased material prices. There was an in-depth discussion on this with various options being proposed. PL confirmed it was very early in the tender assessment process, but different options were being considered.

APPROVED

Members **APPROVED** the Asset Management Strategy for 2025/26 on a motion by NM, seconded by LL.

5.5 Budget Holders & Limits of Authority and 5.5.1 Cheque signatories

BL presented the updated Budget Holders and Limits of Authority Policy. There have been some significant changes, including the addition of Janice Thomason as the new Head of Finance and Corporate Services and the removal of Susan Gray who is retiring as Head of Finance and Corporate Services. Furthermore, Janice's signature has now been added to the signatories list.

After some productive discussion, Members have **APPROVED** both the Budget Holders and Limits of Authority policy update also the removal of Susan Gray and the addition of Janice Thomason to the signatories list. This decision was made on a motion by LL and seconded by AT.

APPROVED

5.6 Membership and Authorities

BL presented the update membership and authorities to include Janice Thomason and also to list the new Sub-committee Members as there has been some movement in membership. It was also noted that Bob McGeady was to be added onto Companies house as a Director of Hjaltland Trading.

APPROVED

After a brief discussion, the membership and authorities were **APPROVED** on a motion by LL, seconded by AT.

5.7

Membership Report

BL presented the membership report, Members were unanimously in their approval of Robert Bell joining the Management Committee as a co-opted member.

After a brief discussion, the Co-option of Robert Bell to the Management Committee was **APPROVED** on a motion by CN, seconded by AT.

5.8

Senior Management Job Titles

BL presented the report proposing a change to the Senior Management job titles.

After a brief discussion, it was agreed the titles would be changed and policies etc would be updated as and when required. There followed a discussion regarding the changes, and these were then **APPROVED** on a motion by NM, seconded by AT.

APPROVED

5.9

Investor in People Feedback

BL presented the IIP report to Members, highlighting Hjalmland' s achievements and areas for improvement. Key recommendations included introducing a Leadership Project, enhancing reward and recognition strategies, and embarking on a Digitisation Project. The Committee Members complete an annual skills audit and have approved a new co-opted member with extensive housing experience to join the board. Members recognised that this was a very good report.

NOTED

After some discussion, Members **NOTED** the report.

5.10

Contractors Report

BI presented the Contractors report. After a brief discussion, both contractors are **APPROVED** on a motion by NM, seconded by RH.

APPROVED

6

6.1

Housing report

IB presented the housing report for quarter 3 which highlighted:

Housing Applications: The service received 460 housing applications since April 2024, with an average processing time of just over 3 days. The majority of applicants prefer the Lerwick area, and single applicants and couples dominate the waiting list, seeking properties with up to two bedrooms.

Re-let Performance: The average re-let time is 5.82 days, significantly better than the average of 56.73 days across all social housing landlords last year. The Association ensures the condition of re-let properties meets the adopted Lettings Standard, with a high tenant satisfaction rate.

Repairs and Tenant Satisfaction: The routine repairs team completed over 1300 reactive repairs, with 97% of respondents satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of service. Emergency repairs were completed within the 6-hour target, and non-emergency repairs averaged 5.9 working days.

Rent Arrears: Total rent arrears at the end of December stood at 3.46%, an improvement from 3.92% the previous year. The Financial Inclusion Officer is assisting tenants transitioning from Housing Benefit to Universal Credit.

NOTED

After some discussion, Members **NOTED** the report.

7 INVESTMENT & ASSET MANAGEMENT

7.1 Development Report

PL presented the Committee with an update on the progress of the Associations development programme. Highlights of the report are:

Practical completions for several projects have been submitted to the Scottish Government, with costs still being finalised for the Forralea project at Walls.

Financial implications involve the Association covering any overspend on specific projects. Development risks are included in the 2024/29 Business Plan. Members are asked to note the report.

Specific information in this section has been removed as it has been deemed to be commercially sensitive and is therefore, not available to the public at this time.

After some discussion, Members **NOTED** the report.

NOTED

7.2 Staneyhill Update Report

PL finished this section of the agenda by giving Members an update on the Staneyhill development

Specific information in this section has been removed as it has been deemed to be commercially sensitive and is therefore, not available to the public at this time.

After some discussion, Members **NOTED** the report.

The Chair asked if Members would agree to a 15-minute extension of time to 8.15pm, Members unanimously agreed to the extension if necessary.

NOTED

8 FINANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES

8.1 Management Accounts 31st December 2024

SG presented the Management Accounts, highlighting that cash flow at the end of December has decreased due to payments for schemes at Walls & Aith.

Specific information in this section has been removed as it has been deemed to be commercially sensitive and is therefore, not available to the public at this time.

SG reminded Members that the management accounts have also been reviewed by the Finance Sub-committee on 5th February 2025. Members **NOTED** the report.

NOTED

9 POLICIES & STRATEGIES

9.1 Policy Update Report

BL followed on and presented Members with a report, seeking approval for various Housing and Health and Safety Policies.

BL commented that there were only a few minor changes of note on the reviewed policies with three new policies up for approval.

After brief discussion, Members APPROVED all the policies on a motion by NM and seconded by AT.

APPROVED

9.1.1 New & Expectant Mothers

New Health and Safety Policy with regards to health and safety of expectant mothers, maternity entitlements are covered on Page 13 of Hjaltland's Terms and Conditions.

Previously APPROVED in Item 9.1.

9.1.2 Manual Handling

Reviewed no significant change

Previously APPROVED in Item 9.1.

9.1.3 Risk Assessment

Reviewed no significant change

Previously APPROVED in Item 9.1.

9.1.4 Safe systems of work

Reviewed no significant change

Previously APPROVED in Item 9.1.

9.1.5 Hoarding Policy

New policy to give clearer guidance and standards to both and staff and tenants with regards to Hoarding.

Previously APPROVED in Item 9.1.

9.1.6 Pest Control Policy

New policy to give clearer guidance and standards to both and staff and tenants with regards to pest control.

Previously APPROVED in Item 9.1.

10 AOB

Colin reminded Members this was Susan Gray's last Management Committee meeting as Head of Finance & Corporate Services after an impressive 22 years. Susan will be retiring in March and will be a great loss to the Association. Colin took a moment to express the Committee and staff's collective gratitude for all the hard work from Susan over the years. And reminded Members there will be a celebration on the 28th February in the conference room of the main office.

BL reminded Members that the Business Plan will be sent out hopefully next week to allow Committee Members to review the Business Plan in more detail with the rest of the papers sent out as usual one week before the meeting.

There was no other business

11 DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

11.1 Finance Sub-committee – **Wednesday 5th March 2025 @ 1pm**

11.2 Management Committee – **Thursday 27th March 2025 @ 6pm**

11.3 Audit & Risk Sub-committee – **Thursday 10th April 2025 @ 5:30pm**

The meeting closed at 8.04pm

Chair