

HJALTLAND HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD AT 6 NORTH NESS (OR BY ZOOM ON REQUEST) ON THURSDAY 24TH OCTOBER 2024 AT 6.00PM.

Present: Colin Nicholson (**CN**) (Chair)
Neil Manson (**NM**)
Karen Eunson (**KE**)
Andrew Lyall (**AL**)
Bob McGeady (**BM**)
Pam Shead (**PS**) – joined via ZOOM at 6.25pm
Theo Smith (**TS**)
Rachel Hunter (**RH**)

In Attendance: Bryan Leask (**BL**) Chief Executive
Susan Gray (**SG**) (Head of Finance & Corporate Services)
Kim Laidlaw (**KL**) (Customer Services Officer)
Ian Bray (**IB**) (Head of Housing & Customer Services)
Paul Leask (**PL**) (Head of Investment & Asset Management)
Elizabeth Sinclair (**ES**) (Health & Safety Manager)
Jennifer Tait (**JT**) (Housing Admin Assistant Minute Taker)

The meeting started with CN welcoming everyone and introducing RH who is newly co-opted to the Committee and asking all in attendance to introduce themselves.

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Agnes Tallack and Lucy Lawson. Emma Perring did not attend.

2 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

3.1 Management Committee 28th September 2024

CN presented the minutes for the meeting held on 28th September 2024. The minutes of the Management Committee meeting were **APPROVED** on a motion by TS and seconded by BM.

APPROVED

3.2 Audit and Risk Sub Committee 17th October 2024

CN presented the minutes for the subcommittee meeting held on 17th October 2024. The minutes were **APPROVED** on a motion by TS seconded by NM.

APPROVED

4 MATTERS ARISING

SG stated that all internal reports are now available in the committee section of the website and are covered under the Audit and Risk Sub Committee meeting held 17th October 2024.

5 ADMINISTRATION

5.1 Chief Executive Report (1, 2, 4, 5, 6)

BL presented Members with a report which mostly focused on the current cost of living crisis and how this is and will affect our tenants. Funding is drying up and is reducing our ability to help our tenants. In the past we have been fortunate

to be able to claim fuel vouchers to help tenants, but the Scottish Government has cut the Fuel Insecurity Fund for 2024/2025. This reduction in funding will be made worse by the cut to the UK Government Winter Fuel payment which will see the Association's elderly tenants losing another source of income to meet the increasing fuel costs and will lead to more residents dropping into fuel poverty.

HHA were successful in securing SIC's Community Led Local Development (CLLD) funding this year and have been accepted as a member of Changeworks Tenant Energy Support service, one of only seven across the country. Tenants can access a range of energy advice guides and support from Changeworks, and there is also a small fund attached to the service for tenants in need to access emergency support.

SG asked if there was any feedback from the Changeworks service. IB stated that it was a very new service, but a very good outcome so far and early indications are very positive.

An extensive discussion was held around the issue of smart meters and ongoing meter issues. OVO/Octopus operatives have been quite slow at swapping meters and there has been post-work connection issues. PL highlighted the issue of meters not working or not connecting to heaters, and the communication from energy suppliers to tenants has been poor.

BL stated that at a recent OFGEM meeting in Glasgow, one of the main issues spoken about was energy suppliers and poor communication with customers.

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 further discussion, Member **NOTED** the report.

NOTED

5.2 Use of Seal (1)

BL presented the report regarding the use of the seal. There have been no uses of the seal during the period.

Members **NOTED** the report.

NOTED

5.3 Health and Safety (4)

ES presented a report with an update on building health and safety, and assurance in the Associations activities.

ES presented members with information relating the consultation on proposals for the Scottish Building Safety Levy (BSL) which is now open. Positive information provided includes that they intend to remove affordable homes from the BSL, so they seem to want to support the affordable housing delivered through the Governments Housing Supply Programme and protect RSL. They are also looking to remove small developers from the BSL, this includes those developers building up to 49 units per year. This would help protect our house builders in Shetland.

Also under consideration is the appropriateness to remove developments in rural areas and on islands, in recognition of housing delivery challenges, and in

support of the Scottish Government's commitments in rural and islands housing action plan.

All reporting and testing for Building Health and Safety is up to date.

PS sent through questions for ES in regard to Health and Safety prior to the meeting and ES responded:

- 1. Health and Safety item - is there anything we are thinking about regarding messaging around Carbon Monoxide- given the recent event in England and winter, it might be useful to put some messaging out? Especially if people consider using heaters or a camping stove if electric goes off etc?**

We can produce an article for the website and share to social media. We have surveyed CO detectors at Setters Hill Est and John Jamieson Closs when surveying stoves in August. Within the Gas policy we advise maximum number of 2 butane cylinders that can be kept within the property.

- 2. Mould - interesting. It will be interesting to see how the figures develop over the winter period and vary, perhaps depending on what type of winter we get?**

Figures provided are a 12month rolling. However, between July – September we had 2 damp and mould repairs

- 3. I see it is at approx. 65% completed within 10 days – what sort of work is that involving? What are the timescales we are looking at for the other 35% (given mould can cause serious health problems)?**

35% equate to 12 repairs which were late due to:

- 3 Access issues
- 8 Contractor delays
- 1 Other

Average completion time for all 38 repairs is 11days

ES also gave a breakdown list of repairs requested regarding damp and mould.

- 4. How would we check on any effects on the tenant's health after exposure especially if vulnerable? Would this be a question asked at the follow up to the work?**

Doesn't really fall under the landlords remit however we do log the following regarding tenants within the Damp and Mould Spreadsheet, which we use to assess our responses to repairs:

- Over occupancy
- No of young people under 5yrs
- No of adults over 65yrs

- Sheltered Housing / Independent Living / Supported / Wheelchair
- Household Member with Respiratory Ill-Health
- No. People with Amber Flag

5. Has there been any changes to Landlord insurance around mould, since this has become a hot topic (and the recent cases)?
No changes made by the insurers.

6. Is the dry riser now completed? & same with the lift?

- Dry Riser Test Inspection has been completed just waiting on the paperwork.
- Thorough examination and testing (LOLER) passenger lift report - 20/09/2024

Members **NOTED** the report.

NOTED

5.4 Annual Assurance Statement (7)

NM created and presented an Audit & Risk Dashboard so everyone could see that all evidence had been reviewed over the year and all submissions had been made on time. NM told committee the dashboard and draft Assurance Statement had been reviewed at the Audit and Risk Sub Committee Meeting on 17th October. Members were happy with the quality and quantity of information provided by Association staff and were satisfied that the evidence had been assessed and compliance with the regulatory standards was effective. There are no areas of non-compliance, and the Association complies with the standards of Governance and Financial Management.

Members **APPROVED** the Assurance Statement on a motion by KE and seconded by AL.

APPROVED

5.5 Committee Meeting Dates (1, 3, 4)

BL proposed the new Committee Meeting Dates for 2025. There are a few changes to be made which will be finalised at the next Audit and Risk meeting.

Members **APPROVED** on a motion by TS and seconded by LL.

APPROVED

5.6 Complaints Report (6 month update) (4)

BL gave a 6 monthly update to Members on our current complaints report. We received 19 complaints, 10 of which were upheld. Most complaints were maintenance related. Although none of the complaints received were a cause for concern, the report is beneficial for highlighting any identifiable patterns and using the opportunity to learn from complaints received.

Members **NOTED** the report.

NOTED

5.7 FOISA & EIR Update (2)

KL provided the Management Committee with an update on the FOISA and EIR request over the past 12 months. All requests were completed within the allocated timescales. None of the requests were targeting directly at the Association, more likely to be aimed at the entire housing sector looking for a general response.

	Members NOTED the report.	NOTED
5.8	Business Plan	
5.8.1	6 Month Update	
5.8.2	Performance Comparison	
5.8.3	SWOT Analysis	
	BL presented the above reports stating that the majority of our objectives are on target. Hold ups are partly to do with working with outside organisations which can delay works/progress.	
	In regard to supporting people to make positive connections within their communities, HHA has a Support Worker who provides bespoke, tailored support to new tenants to sustain their tenancies and through six monthly support plans supports Sheltered tenants in the community through housing support. She can signpost and refer tenants to different services and this is where delays can take place.	
	HHA continues to be a very active participant in various groups including community organisations in Bressay, Walls, etc., but proving viability of housing in rural communities is very difficult due to several different reasons including lack of funding, contractors unwilling to take on building projects, e.g. Orkney has had success on some of their outlying islands and is a good example of how building projects can work in smaller communities.	
	RH declared an interest at this point working with HIE and small communities.	
	We are at a 5-month position with the performance comparison and are very happy with where things are at the moment.	
	BL presented the SWOT Analysis to Members showing the tracked changes for the amendments to be discussed. Only a couple of items worth noting in the SWOT Analysis including the fact that we are a small staff team with limited resilience to cover staff absence or a member of staff leaving – expertise on an area of work can be limited to a single person, and the increased bureaucracy leading to more detailed information requests from external organisations, increasing demands on staff's time and resources.	
5.8.1	Members NOTED the report.	NOTED
5.8.2	Members NOTED the report.	NOTED
5.8.3	The report was APPROVED on a motion proposed by KE and seconded by NM.	APPROVED
5.9	Association Membership Report	
	BL presented this report to update Members on the level of Membership and any new applications for Membership.	
	One new application was received for Rachel Hunter and we are not aware of any reasons as to why the application should be refused.	
	Members APPROVED on a motion by NM and seconded by KE.	APPROVED

5.10 **Approved Contractors Report**

BL presented Members with a report, seeking Management Committee approval to add one contractor to the approved list of Contractors.

Members **APPROVED** on a motion by KE and seconded by NM.

APPROVED

6 **HOUSING AND CUSTOMER SERVICE**

6.1 **Housing Management Report (1, 2, 3, 4, 5)**

IB presented the Management Committee with an update on performance of service provision, during quarter two, as reported to Scotland's Housing Network.

- Rent Arrears – Global arrears are sitting at 3.5% which is very healthy. Only one tenant is due to appear in court later this month having failed to initially meet an agreed payment plan. However, they have since been making regular payments following the service of the court summons.
- Relets - The second quarter of 2024/25 saw a busy period in terms of tenants handing in terminations, with 22 properties let across the three months. Unlike quarter one, where a number of properties required a significant amount of work during the void period, resulting in a below average performance of 11 days to re-let 16 homes, this quarter was exceptional. Early engagement with outgoing tenants also makes a big difference.
- Reactive Repairs - Just over 300 repairs received in quarter two, only 2 of which were classed as an emergency repair in line with our maintenance policy and all completed well within target. All repair tickets are accompanied by a satisfaction survey and in quarter one, 56 surveys were returned.
- Antisocial Behaviour Reporting – For the first two quarters of the year, 40 complaints were received and logged. All of these were low level complaints which in most cases an initial letter from the Housing Officer was sufficient to deal with the issue. The key point is to ensure that tenants feel supported throughout the complaint procedure.
- Tenant Participation – PL attended the last meeting of the Tenant Focus Group. Members were delighted to hear about the Energy Efficiency Project at Thistle Court and the impact this has had on the tenants and the assurance that the Association was taking steps to support tenants in older properties.

Members **NOTED** the report.

NOTED

7 **INVESTMENT AND ASSET MANAGEMENT**

7.1 **Development Report (3, 4)**

7.1.1 **Development Appendix**

PL presented and update to Management Committee on the progress of the Associations new build development programme.

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.

Members **NOTED** the report.

NOTED

- 7.2** *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.*

Members **NOTED** the report.

NOTED

7.3 Asset Management (6-month update) (4)

PL started by stating the Association has so far spent approximately £279,513 of the 2024/25 budget, which equates to 53% and is roughly what is expected at the six-month stage. *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.* Two additional properties in the scheme have recently become available through tenancy changes which presents a good opportunity to complete the intrusive retrofit works when they are both empty. It also provides an option to have a decant house on the scheme to assist in future upgrades to tenanted properties. PL confirmed the asset management team were currently working on a bid to the Scottish Government for grant funding towards this and he would come back to committee in due course with a report seeking approval to progress. After some queries PL confirmed the timescales for this are very tight so the report will probably be before the next scheduled meeting and would therefore be circulated by email. He went on to confirm the grant funding through the Social Housing Net Zero Heat Fund (SHNZHF) would only fund 50% of the costs and the Association would need to cover the rest. *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.* Finally, he confirmed good progress is being made against the electrical testing, boiler and ventilation and full painter works with some items being purposely planned for later in the financial year.

Members **NOTED** the report.

NOTED

8 FINANCE AND CORPORATE STRATEGIES

8.1 Management Accounts 31st August 2024 (2, 3, 4)

SG presented an update.

- September accounts are in preparation at the moments and will go out next week.
- Income and expenditure is showing a surplus ahead of budget.
- We were a bit concerned about routine maintenance at the beginning of the year as properties coming back needed a lot of work and the relet time was very slow, but the second quarter has been exceptional with fast relet times and properties returned in excellent condition.
- Overheads are well within budget.
- Insurance costs have increased by 21% but this was expected.

Members **NOTED** the report.

NOTED

9 POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

9.1 Code of Conducts – Committee and Staff

BL referred to all the policies for updating. The changes to each of the policies is minimal, generally just some changes to wording and others are to review the date.

The Policy Updates were **APPROVED** on a motion by BM and seconded by KE.

APPROVED

9.1.1 GP11 Committee Code of Conduct

Track changes but no major changes to code of conduct.

Item previously **APPROVED** at Item 9.1.

APPROVED

9.1.2 Protocol for Dealing with a Breach of the Committee Code of Conduct

Track changes but no major changes to Protocols.

RH – 7.6 Investigation Under Route B – can the word ‘friend’ be changed or removed.

BM – protocol for complaints wording to be changed – ‘legal adviser may...under the chair’

Item previously **APPROVED** at Item 9.1.

APPROVED

9.1.3 GP43 Staff Code of Conduct

Track changes but no major changes to code of conduct.

Item previously **APPROVED** at Item 9.1.

APPROVED

10 AOB

BL informed Members that the replacement for Susan Gray Head of Finance and Corporate Services who will be retiring early next year has now been confirmed. The position of Head of Finance, IT and Corporate Services is Janice Thomason and her start date is 6th January 2025.

This item is confidential

11 DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

11.1 Finance Sub Committee – **Wednesday 6th November 2024 @ 1pm**

11.2 Management Committee– **Thursday 12th December 2024 @ 6pm**

The meeting closed at 8:02pm

.....Chairman