

EAST LOTHIAN HOUSING ASSOCIATION

A virtual meeting of the **Management Committee** was held on Thursday 25 March 2021 at 7.00pm, using Microsoft Teams

Present:	Peter Hayman	(4/4)	David Rose	(4/4)
	Jim Curran	(4/4)	Joyce Bolan	(4/4)
	Peter Ewart	(4/4)	Iain Atkinson	(4/4)
	Brian Logan	(4/4)	Alan Forsyth	(4/4)
	Shirley Evans	(3/4)	Eileen Shand	(3/4)

In attendance: Paula Oliver, Director of Finance
 Martin Pollhammer, Chief Executive
 Duncan Mackay, Director of Asset Management
 Karen Barry, Director of Housing
 Eric Stoddart, Executive Support Officer (Minutes)

1.0 GENERAL

1.1 Apologies

There were no apologies.

1.2 Declarations of Interest by Management Committee Members

A Declaration of Interest was noted in relation to David Rose in respect of Item 3.1 on the Agenda (Charitable Donations 2020/21). David is a Trustee of East Lothian Care & Repair Charitable Trust, which is the recipient of the proposed donation.

1.3 Minutes of Meeting 25 February 2021

The Minutes were **approved** by the Management Committee. They were proposed by David Rose and seconded by Peter Hayman.

1.4 Action List

The Management Committee noted the report.

1.5 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

2.0 GOVERNANCE

2.1 Secretary's Report

The Management Committee **approved** the use of the Seal for Homologation.

2.2 Equality and Diversity Action Plan 2021/22

The Chief Executive advised that the SFHA are developing Equalities Reporting Guidance. However, whilst there are only around nine new questions that will need to be asked in future, the initial draft guidance was over 130 pages long, with wide-ranging compliance requirements.

This could become a time-consuming exercise, and the effort required could be disproportionate to the output required. Further updates will be provided to Management Committee once the guidance is published.

The Management Committee **approved** the Equality and Diversity Action Plan.

3.0 PRIORITY ITEMS

3.1 Charitable Donations 2020/21

The Management Committee noted the Conflict of Interest for David Rose. There was no further discussion on this item. The Management Committee **approved** the proposed Charitable Donations for 2020/21.

4.0 POLICIES

4.1 Authorisations and Standard Charges / Allowances Policy Review

The Director of Finance provided background to the report, including a summary of the proposed changes.

In addition, there had been some additional changes made after the papers were issued, and these are as follows:

- Page 6, Section 5.6: Frank Colston should be removed as a Member of Management Committee
- Page 11, ELHA Allowances (First Aid) – It was confirmed that this amount should read as £478 (changed from £474)
- Page 8 Procurement Policy: This will be updated once the Procurement Policy is reviewed in May 2021, and references to ‘Compliance with EU procurement regulations’ will be updated to reflect that these are now UK procurement regulations
- Section 10 – Administration Fees: It is proposed that administration charges are not applied to tenant Chargeable Repairs and are applied on a discretionary basis for arranging repairs for Sharing Owners and owner occupiers, depending upon the cost and nature of the repairs being arranged

David Rose queried the level of ‘out of pocket expenses’ under Section 17.1 (Management Committee / Board Member Allowances) as the amount of £15 had remained unchanged for some time. The Director of Finance confirmed that EVH had been contacted, as requested at an earlier Management Committee meeting, but they did not provide any guidance on this issue. Care had to be taken as any allowances could be taxable.

It was agreed that receipted out of pocket expenses would continue to be reimbursed up to a limit of £15.00 per night.

The Management Committee **approved** the Management Committee / Board Member Allowances Policy, including the changes advised by the Director of Finance at the meeting.

4.2 **Gifts & Hospitality Policy**

Brian Logan questioned the existing wording under Section 1.7, and proposed this be amended to read as follows:

‘Any breach of these procedures by a Management Committee Member may result in an investigation being launched, in line with the Management Committee Member’s Code of Conduct.’

The Management Committee **approved** the Gifts & Hospitality Policy, subject to the change proposed by Brian Logan.

4.3 **Insurances Policy Review**

The Director of Finance advised that the Policy has been updated with three additional categories of cover (Terrorism, Cyber Cover and Entity Defence), and with other minor administrative changes.

The Management Committee **approved** the Insurances Policy.

4.4 **ICT Security Policy**

The Director of Finance advised that the ICT (Information and Communications Technology) Security Policy has been drafted following a recent recommendation from the Association’s Internal Auditors.

The Policy addresses the critical importance of the security of Group ICT systems for business continuity and for the safeguarding of the information these systems hold.

It was also noted that this is a Group policy applying to both ELHA and R3.

The Management Committee **approved** the ICT Security Policy.

4.5 **Chargeable Repair Service Policy Review**

The Director of Housing advised that several recommendations had been made by TIAA in relation to Chargeable Repairs which are currently being implemented through the review of procedures and staff training.

One operational suggestion made by TIAA, of obtaining payment from tenants prior to non-essential works being instructed, is not recommended for adoption by the Senior Management Team, as noted in the report.

The other key change proposed is to remove the administration charge and discount for early payment.

A short discussion took place over the distinction between the Association’s obligations as a landlord, and its obligations as a factor. It was noted that the Association currently factors around 70 properties.

It was agreed that a specific 'Factoring Policy' should be considered as part of the response to the new Code of Conduct to be in place by Autumn 2021. It was agreed that this would be done in collaboration between the Director of Housing and Director of Asset Management.

The Management Committee **approved** the Chargeable Repair Service Policy, as it stands.

5.0 BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

There were no reports for this section.

6.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 27 May 2021 at ELHA Head Office, Haddington at 7.00pm.

**ADOPTION OF THESE MINUTES APPROVED AT THE MEETING ON
27 MAY 2021**

Signed *Signature* (Chair)