

EAST LOTHIAN HOUSING ASSOCIATION

A meeting of the **ELHA Board** was held on Thursday 20 February 2025 at 7.00pm, in the Hayman Room at ELHA Head Office, Haddington with Shirley Evans joining via Microsoft Teams

Present:

Brian Logan	(3/3)	Eileen Shand	(2/3)
David Rose	(3/3)	Katrina Hamilton	(3/3)
Maureen Batten	(2/3)	Shirley Evans	(1/3)

In attendance: Martin Pollhammer, Chief Executive
Karen Barry, Director of Housing.
Gary Alison, Director of Finance & Corporate Services
Charlie Cooley, Director of R3 & Asset Management
Eric Stoddart, Executive Support Officer (Minutes)

GENERAL

- 1. Apologies**
Peter Ewart (1/3), Iain Atkinson (2/3), Paul Hillard (2/3), Pamela Macleod (2/3), & Alan Forsyth (2/3).
- 2. Declarations of Interest by ELHA Board Members**
There were no Declarations of Interest.
- 3. Minutes of Meeting 27 November 2024**
The Minutes were **approved** by the ELHA Board. They were proposed by David Rose and seconded by Katrina Hamilton.
- 4. Action List**
The ELHA Board noted the report.
- 5. Matters Arising**
There were no matters arising.

GOVERNANCE

- 6. Secretary's Report**
The ELHA Board **homologated** the use of the seal.

PERFORMANCE**7. Key Performance Indicators 2024/25**

The Chief Executive advised that 'Voids as a percentage of Rental Income' was higher than target for the quarter, but this was due to the completion of the new developments at Hamish Gardens, Elphinstone, and Castlemains Gardens, Dirleton earlier in 2024, as the Association experienced high void numbers, particularly with the knock-on effect of internal transfers. The developments were completed earlier than budgeted, so the negative cash effect of increased voids has been far outweighed by the extra rental income received.

This has also had an impact on another target 'Unit Reactive and Void Maintenance Costs' as there is overspend due to the high number of voids.

The Chief Executive noted that Bronze and Gold Key Tenants are on a journey, due to the changing criteria around paying rent by Rent Collector. As a result of recent changes, some Gold Key Tenants had downgraded to Bronze Key Tenant status, whilst some of those who have moved to pay by Rent Collector have upgraded to Platinum Key Tenant status. Payment by Rent Collector is planned to become a requirement at Bronze Key Tenant level later in 2025, and this will result in further changes to these figures. This will be taken into account when setting targets for 2025/26.

The ELHA Board noted the report for information.

8. Care & Repair Quarterly Accounts for the Period to 31 December 2024

The Director of Finance & Corporate Services highlighted that the Care & Repair Income and Expenditure Account for the period to 31 December 2024, shows income £17k over budget and total expenditure £6.2k over budget, giving rise to a net surplus of £35.6k compared to a budgeted surplus of £24.6k.

The year end projection is for the surplus to be £5.8k lower than budget, due to redundancy costs following the closure of the Small Repairs Service (SRS).

PRIORITY ITEMS**9. Care & Repair Budget 2025/26**

The Director of Finance & Corporate Services explained that for the last eight years the Association has been awarded funding of £329.9k to deliver the Care & Repair Service. Despite being awarded £329.9k in 2024/25, East Lothian Council (ELC) had not included any expenditure in their budgets for this service.

ELC undertook a review of the Care & Repair Service in 2024/25. ELC have a statutory duty to deliver an aids and adaptations service, and, as a result of the review, ELC have decided that only grant funding to provide this statutory element will be offered to ELHA for 2025/26.

The income budget set for this year is based on what ELHA budgeted in terms of staffing costs and share of overheads, to allow the service to break even. ELHA advised ELC that funding of £196k was required, and this was accepted.

ELC were also presented with two other options (to continue with existing service levels and to enhance Small Repairs Service provision), but the Council did not wish to progress with either of these options.

This budget will be closely monitored throughout 2025/26 to ensure costs do not go over budget, as this would result in the service making a loss, which ELHA cannot sustain. The ELHA Board noted the report for information.

POLICIES

10. Policy Review Summary

The Chief Executive highlighted that in terms of the new Governance process that had been agreed, this update would provide a table setting out the policies reviewed by the Senior Management where they have Delegated Authority to undertake the review, since the last ELHA Board meeting.

The policies included in the current review are 'Shared Ownership', and 'Fraud & Theft'.

The ELHA Board noted the revised policies, and where the updated versions could be accessed.

11. Board Members Training Policy Review

The Chief Executive advised that in accordance with the Policy Review matrix, any changes made to this Policy should be approved by the Board.

It was clarified that the Policy remains fit for purpose and no material changes were suggested. A number of minor changes were required in order to remove references to the Management Committee and instead refer to the Board, including changing the title of the Policy

Eileen Shand referred to Section 3 (Board Member Responsibilities) and queried whether there is sufficient clear reference to Health & Safety responsibilities for Board Members. The Chief Executive felt that was addressed by other documents which could be referenced, and suggested that the rest of the section could be removed.

The Chair agreed with this proposal, and it was agreed that the contents of Section 3 should be removed, with the exception of the final sentence 'Board Members are expected to participate in training and development activities relevant to our business to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities'.

The ELHA Board **approved** the revised Board Members Training Policy, subject to the above amendment.

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

There were no matters arising under Business Management

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business, and the meeting closed at 7.13pm.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 19 March 2025 at ELHA Head Office, Haddington at 7.00pm.

**ADOPTION OF THESE MINUTES APPROVED AT THE MEETING ON
19 MARCH 2025**

Signed

(Chair)