

### EAST LOTHIAN HOUSING ASSOCIATION

A meeting of the **Management Committee** was held on Thursday 29 September 2022 at 3.30pm, in the Conference Room at Head Office, with Jim Curran joining via Microsoft Teams.

<b>Present:</b>	Peter Ewart	(1/1)	Brian Logan	(1/1)
	Alan Forsyth	(1/1)	David Rose	(1/1)
	Jim Curran	(1/1)	Joyce Bolan	(1/1)
	Peter Hayman	(1/1)	Iain Atkinson	(1/1)
	Eileen Shand	(1/1)	Pamela Macleod	(1/1)
	Katrina Hamilton	(1/1)	Paul Hillard	(1/1)

**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)

The meeting was preceded by a Care & Repair Training Session presented by Angela Brunton, Care & Repair Manager.

## 1.0 GENERAL

### 1.1 Apologies

Shirley Evans (0/1).

The Chair formally welcomed the new member of the Management Committee, Paul Hillard.

### 1.2 Declarations of Interest by Management Committee Members

There were no declarations of interest.

### 1.3 Minutes of Meeting 25 August 2022

The minutes were **approved** by the Management Committee. They were proposed by David Rose and seconded by Iain Atkinson.

### 1.4 Action List

The Chief Executive provided updates in respect of items on the Action List.

Item 2.1 – It was highlighted that legal advice had been sought, and the outcome was that full details of Management Committee member addresses did not need to be used in approving membership so could be omitted from Management Committee reports. However, they were required to be put in the Register of Members. Where a request was received to inspect the register, then only the name of the member and town of their address would be provided.

Item 4.1 – It was noted that confirmation of the £10k minimum level meeting regulatory requirements is being checked. A further update will be provided at the next Management Committee meeting.

The Management Committee noted the report.

1.5 **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

2.0 **GOVERNANCE**

2.1 **Election of Office Bearers**

At this point, Joyce Bolan chaired the meeting.

*Chair:*

Brian Logan was proposed by Peter Ewart and seconded by David Rose to be appointed as Chair of the Management Committee. There were no other nominations. The Management Committee **approved** this appointment.

From this point Brian Logan chaired the meeting.

Before moving on, the new Chair thanked everyone for the honour and privilege of being able to take over as Chair and noted that it would be a hard act to follow in the footsteps of the retiring Chair, Peter Ewart. In thanking the retiring Chair for his contribution, and leadership, during his time in office, the new Chair expressed his optimism about what lies ahead for the Association, despite the current challenging environment, with the cost of living crisis, and threat of rent freezes.

The new Chair believed that not only was the Association in a very good place just now, but that it has consistently punched above its weight, and in fact been pioneers in a number of areas, as evidenced by the presentations at the AGM, earlier today. In closing, the Chair stated that he was looking forward to the challenge, and in working together with staff and the Management Committee.

*Vice-Chair:*

Eileen Shand was proposed by Peter Hayman and seconded by Alan Forsyth to be appointed as Vice-Chair of the Management Committee. There were no other nominations, and the Management Committee **approved** this appointment.

The new Vice-Chair then echoed the comments of the new Chair, by noting that the AGM had helped demonstrate the strengths of the Management Committee and also the Senior Management Team.

*Secretary:*

Joyce Bolan was proposed by Brian Logan and seconded by David Rose to be re-appointed as Secretary of the Management Committee. There were no other nominations, and the Management Committee **approved** this appointment.

## 2.2 Other Management Committee Appointments

The Management Committee discussed the membership of the Audit & Assurance Committee, and it was noted that the Chair of the Management Committee should not be a member of the Remuneration Working Group (RWG). In light of this, the new Chair, Brian Logan, would step down from the RWG, and be replaced by Peter Ewart.

In respect of the R3 Repairs Limited Board, two of the three Management Committee members currently serving on the R3 Board, namely Alan Forsyth and Peter Ewart, are prepared to stand again, and their appointments were agreed. David Rose is stepping down from the Board, and he was thanked for his contribution to the R3 Board over the last few years. It was agreed that David would be replaced by Iain Atkinson.

The two serving independent members of the R3 Board, Nick Pollard and Fiona Sheldon, have both indicated their willingness to continue, and this was agreed.

Paul Hillard will join the Audit & Assurance Committee.

The following memberships were **approved** by the Management Committee for 2022/23:

- (a) Audit & Assurance Committee: Iain Atkinson, Joyce Bolan, Peter Ewart, Katrina Hamilton, Peter Hayman, Paul Hillard, Brian Logan and David Rose. The election of a Convenor would take place at the first meeting of the Audit & Assurance Committee.
- (b) The Management Committee **confirmed** the membership of the Health & Safety Committee as: Joyce Bolan, Peter Hayman and David Rose.
- (c) The Management Committee **confirmed** the membership of the Joint Consultative Committee as: Joyce Bolan, Peter Hayman and David Rose.
- (d) The Management Committee **confirmed** the membership of the Remuneration Working Group as: Alan Forsyth, Peter Ewart and Eileen Shand.
- (e) The Management Committee **confirmed** the membership of the Governance Standards Working Group as: Joyce Bolan, Peter Hayman and David Rose.
- (f) The Management Committee **confirmed** the appointments of the following Management Committee members to the R3 Repairs Limited Board: Peter Ewart, Alan Forsyth and Iain Atkinson. The Management Committee **confirmed** that Nick Pollard and Fiona Sheldon be re-appointed as independent directors to the R3 Board.
- (g) The Management Committee **confirmed** the re-appointment for reporting to the Management Committee on the work of Care & Repair Local Advisory Committee for 2022/23 to Eileen Shand.

- (h) The Management Committee **confirmed** the appointment of David Rose as their Representative Member of the SFHA.
- (i) The Management Committee **confirmed** the appointment of David Rose as their Representative Member of EVH.

### 2.3 **Code of Conduct and Eligibility for Membership**

The Management Committee noted the Model Code of Conduct for Management Committee Members. They were also reminded to complete their Code of Conduct Form, Declaration of Interests Form and Eligibility for Membership Form, and return them to the Executive Support Officer by 29 September 2022. The Chief Executive noted that members could not continue to serve on the Management Committee if they did not complete and return these forms.

Any Management Committee member who has not received, or has mislaid their forms, should contact Eric Stoddart, Executive Support Officer, to request copies be issued.

### 2.4 **Secretary's Report**

The Management Committee **homologated** the Use of Seal for Homologation in respect of the Membership Certificate issued to Paul Hillard, Musselburgh.

## 3.0 **PRIORITY ITEMS**

There were no Priority Items.

## 4.0 **POLICIES**

### 4.1 **Sustainability Policy**

The Director of Asset Management highlighted that this policy has been reviewed as part of the regular policy review cycle, and it was recognised that the landscape around sustainability within the sector was very different five years ago, when last reviewed, to that which pertains today.

The reviewed policy goes some way to recognising this while noting the main issues which face the Association as a housing provider, not least of which is the quality of the homes which may be built in future, as well as existing homes and their impact on the environment now and in the future.

The policy begins to set out how the Association may be able to start to measure, monitor and manage these impacts and points towards the need for a long-term strategy that will be required to meet largely externally set goals while remaining within constrained resource availability.

Eileen Shand agreed with the overall direction, and the 'why' element of the strategy, but queried what would be the 'how', and what this would mean to staff on a day-to-day basis.

The Director of Asset Management explained that staff were looking at how they can reduce the environmental impact of the Association's activities, including initiatives such as energy saving, waste management and recycling. In addition, the Association was working with a key supplier, Travis Perkins, who have some quite innovative plans in this area.

A wider discussion also took place regarding the impact of ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) Reporting, and considerations such as replacing existing Gas Combi boilers, with Electric Combi boilers which may meet environmental targets, but currently are more costly for tenants to run.

It was acknowledged that the Sustainability Policy may be superseded in time by ESG, and the current development of a Stock Investment Strategy (the ninth strand of the Strategic Asset Management Strategy project), so in the short term this was a relatively basic review to ensure the policy was kept up to date. It was also felt that whilst the aspirations of the policy were valid, it was agreed that Section 2.1 of the policy should be amended to :

'We will aim to comply with the sustainability...'

Subject to this amendment, the Management Committee **approved** the revised Sustainability Policy.

#### 4.2 Flexible Working Policy Amendment

The Chief Executive advised that the current version of the Flexible Working Policy is not yet due its periodic review but following a recent request from a member of staff, it was recognised clearer guidance was required on who processed / approved Flexible Working Requests.

Peter Hayman picked up that the final section of amended wording should read ...Flexible Working Requests are rejected.. so as to use the plural.

Subject to this amendment, the Management Committee **approved** the Flexible Working Policy Amendment.

#### 4.3 Comments and Complaints Policy Amendment

The Director of Housing highlighted that as the Association has registered with the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) to provide the regulated activities of Debt Adjusting and Debt Counselling, such activities come under the jurisdiction of the Financial Ombudsman Service. This requires the Comments and Complaints Policy, which currently reflects the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman's Model Complaints Handling Procedure for Social Landlords, to be aligned with FCA Guidance.

Eileen Shand noted that Section 6.1 also needs to include reference to the Financial Services Ombudsman.

Subject to this amendment, the Management Committee **approved** the Comments and Complaints Policy Amendment.

#### 4.4 **Quality Assurance Framework – Money & Home Energy Advice**

The Director of Housing advised that as the Association has registered with the Financial Conduct Authority to provide the regulated activities of Debt Adjusting and Debt Counselling, it is necessary for a Quality Assurance Framework to be developed.

The Quality Assurance Framework sets out the approach the Association will take to ensure a high quality, effective and accountable Money & Home Energy Advice Service that delivers what customers need at the right time. It ensures strong governance arrangements are in place and that the Service is continuously reviewed, adapting, and learning where required.

Peter Hayman recommended re-wording paragraph 4.1 to remove the word 'however' in the first line. The wording should then read:

'We comply with the National Occupational Standards. Currently, the Association provides a Type ....'

Section 5.2 was queried, in respect of whether the auditing of 10% of cases each month was being achieved. The Director of Housing advised that the Housing Manager is currently undergoing training to be able to undertake this once the Framework has been fully implemented.

The Chief Executive added that these steps were the final jigsaw pieces in terms of compliance with the FCA requirements. This will allow the Association to re-think how these kind of services are provided in the future, but in the short-term, this may well depend on the content of announcements by Government on rent caps or a rent freeze, since these kind of services are over and above those required by the tenancy agreement and so will come under scrutiny across the sector if cuts have to be made.

Eileen Shand proposed that Section 5.4 be extended to include '...and will identify and contact any other cases, where there may be detriment.'

It was also proposed that a new Section 6.4 should be added under Customer Feedback, 'To record and review any Praise received.'

The Director of Housing advised that Praise is currently recorded and reviewed as part of the quarterly report that goes to the Business Management Meeting but agreed that this should also be noted within the policy.

Subject to these amendments, the Management Committee **approved** the Quality Assurance Framework – Money & Home Energy Advice.

#### 4.5 **Vulnerable Customer Policy – Money & Home Energy Advice**

The Director of Housing advised that as the Association has registered with the Financial Conduct Authority to provide the regulated activities of Debt Adjusting and Debt Counselling, it is necessary to develop a Vulnerable Customer Policy.

The Policy Document details the Association will be proactive in identifying vulnerable customers, and how it will take extra precautions when delivering the Money & Home Energy Advice Service to ensure vulnerable customers are treated fairly and are not disadvantaged in any way.

It was suggested that under Section 6.3, second bullet point, that as well as the 'plain English and large print' options, that '...& provide an 'Easy Read' version' should be added

Subject to this amendment, the Management Committee **approved** the Vulnerable Customer Policy – Money & Home Energy Advice.

**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**

**Saturday 26 November 2022 at 09.30am** at The Marine Hotel, North Berwick.  
The meeting will be followed by the Management Committee Away Day.

**ADOPTION OF THESE MINUTES APPROVED AT THE MEETING ON  
26 NOVEMBER 2022**

Signed Brian Logan (Chair)