

EAST LOTHIAN HOUSING ASSOCIATION

A meeting of the **Management Committee** was held on Saturday 26 November 2022 at 9.30am, at the Marine Hotel, North Berwick.

Present:

Peter Hayman	(2/2)	David Rose	(2/2)
Eileen Shand	(2/2)	Joyce Bolan	(2/2)
Peter Ewart	(2/2)	Iain Atkinson	(2/2)
Brian Logan	(2/2)	Pamela Macleod	(2/2)
Katrina Hamilton	(2/2)	Jim Curran	(2/2)
Alan Forsyth	(2/2)	Paul Hillard	(2/2)

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)
Linda Ewart, Consultant

1.0 GENERAL

1.1 Apologies

Shirley Evans (0/2).

1.2 Declarations of Interest by Management Committee Members

There were no declarations of interest.

1.3 Minutes of Meeting 29 September 2022

The minutes were **approved** by the Management Committee. They were proposed by Peter Hayman and seconded by Peter Ewart.

1.4 Action List

The Chief Executive highlighted that under Section 1.4, Anderson Strathern had confirmed that a £10k limit would be appropriate, but a £5k limit would be a stronger position, therefore a £5k limit will be adopted.

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 noted the report.

2.2 Management Committee Calendar 2023/24

The Management Committee **approved** the meeting calendar for 2023/24.

2.3 Key Performance Indicators 2022/23

The Chief Executive indicated that these had remained fairly stable, so was generally happy with position.

Pamela Macleod highlighted that the 'Year to Date' figure for '% working days lost through short term sick leave' seemed to be incorrect (it should read 0.8%) and this to be amended.

The Management Committee noted the report.

3.0 PRIORITY ITEMS**3.1 Independent Review of ELHA Performance**

Linda Ewart introduced the performance review for 2021/22 and explained that this is based on a revised dataset, which is intended to provide a basis for comparison that is more relevant to ELHA, its tenant profile, and operating environment. It is acknowledged that this will have limited usefulness in this year, but establishes a platform for Year 1, and this will be helpful in future years.

The previous benchmarking groups had, over time, diverged from ELHA, particularly in terms of scale, and the revised groups are intended to provide a more realistic base for comparison.

The composition of the two comparison groups (neighbours and peers) has been changed. 'Neighbours' has been adjusted to remove East Lothian Council and replace with a RSL; consequently the group now consists of Melville, Manor Estates, Places for People Scotland, and Berwickshire. The 'peer group' has been significantly altered (and slightly expanded) and now comprises Angus, Eildon, Loreburn, Osprey and Waverley. Data from East Lothian Council is provided individually for reference.

Linda explained the rationale behind some of the changes. With 'neighbours' East Lothian Council was considered unique, and therefore of limited benefit for comparison. Although Places for People could be considered a bit of an outlier, being a national association, they are also locally based. Berwickshire is a 'new' neighbour, but is a good match, whilst Manor and Melville were previously in the group.

In respect of 'peers', the only element of continuity is with Eildon, but the other ones selected all have similar characteristics, around stock and geography, and are all within around 1,000 homes in management of ELHA. Osprey are based in Aberdeen, and cover North East Scotland, with stock dispersed, and are a good comparison. Waverley are geographically closer, and have a slightly smaller number of units than the rest of the peer group, but overall this selection should provide a better comparison group going forward.

It was also noted that although 2021/22 therefore represents a new base for ELHA's performance benchmarking; the inclusion of data for each landlord over the last three years should help to support a consideration of trends, even although the comparisons themselves are new.

Tenant Satisfaction

The performance reported is based on Tenant Satisfaction Surveys (TSS) carried out since 2019 by all landlords, although some satisfaction information is more recent / up-to-date than others because of the different timescales and frequencies adopted by the various landlords, however Linda Ewart noted that some landlords are moving to annual rolling programmes.

ELHA's overall satisfaction is 6.5% above the Scottish average. ELHA also out-performs against the Scottish, peer group and neighbours' averages and ELC, when compared against the three satisfaction indicators ('Quality of service overall', 'Good at keeping informed about service & outcome' and 'Satisfied with opportunities to participate in decision making').

It was acknowledged that the increased margins against neighbours are largely attributable to the relatively poorer performance of Berwickshire in comparison to the other neighbours.

It was also recognised that the next TSS, which will be reflected in the 2023 benchmarking report, will be significant in identifying whether ELHA's strong performance has been maintained during the recent and unprecedented uncertainty, when ELHA has continued to drive forward change.

For clarity, the Chief Executive highlighted that the Tenant Satisfaction Survey is completed under a three year cycle by Housing Associations, although not all do this at the same point, so some figures are more recent than others but all apply to the current reporting year.

Quality and Maintenance

In previous years, ELHA recorded a higher level of SHQS compliance than average (97.2% compared to the Scottish average of 91%). This has significantly reversed in 2022 with compliance falling to 43.6%, although this is recognised as entirely attributable to the pandemic and ELHA's decision to not seek entry to properties to carry out electrical safety checks. The properties affected are identified as 'being in abeyance' under SHQS criteria, pending the renewal of the safety certificates and ELHA is working to ensure all outstanding certificates are renewed by 31 March 2023. The Director of Asset Management confirmed that work remains on track to have all EICR certificates in place by 31 March 2023. This would restore the previous compliance figure.

Emergency repairs times performance has improved for ELHA compared to last year, and is now better than 2020 (i.e. pre-pandemic). ELHA's performance remains significantly better than the Scottish average (1.1 hours compared to 4.2 hours).

ELHA's non-emergency repairs response times have increased more significantly (from 5.7 days to 7.6 days) but this is mirrored by the increase in the national average (from 6.7 days to 8.9 days), so remains better than the Scottish average.

The Director of Asset Management also highlighted that as reported under the Key Performance Indicators for Quarter 2 (see Agenda Item 2.3 - Appendix 1) the 'average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs' has fallen to under 4 days (3.94 days).

ELHA's performance in completing repairs 'right first time' has also improved slightly on 2021 (now 91.5%) and is now better than the Scottish average (at 88.3%).

Overall, therefore, there is reason to be satisfied with these results, and with the relative comparison on performance against peer and neighbour groups.

ASB / Neighbourhoods

ELHA has achieved a very substantial improvement in resolving ASB cases since 2018, and ELHA's performance is better than the current Scottish average, and much better than East Lothian Council.

Value for Money Comparison

ELHA's performance is better against most indicators compared to each of the comparison groups, with ELHA re-let times being significantly better than the other comparisons.

The Chief Executive highlighted that the better performance in re-let times is probably due to ELHA continuing to re-let properties during the pandemic, whilst it appears other organisations just stopped this activity.

Complaints

ELHA can be considered better than or equal to all peers in respect of Stage 1 complaints, achieving a target of 100% of these being responded to in full, which is also ahead of the national average of 97% for Stage 1 complaints response. This can also be seen as a sustained improvement over the last three to four years by ELHA.

Conclusion

The benchmarking comparison shows that ELHA's performance has, by and large, been maintained and / or improved in most areas and, in some significant areas, exceeds the comparisons, notably repairs response and re-let times. The ELHA Performance Review can therefore be considered a good news story, and the new selection of comparison landlords will provide a good basis for ongoing performance monitoring.

The Management Committee noted the report.

4.0 POLICIES

4.1 Joint Policy on Registering Tenants' Organisations Review

The Director of Housing indicated that there was nothing to add to the report as tabled.

The Management Committee **approved** the Joint Policy on Registering Tenants' Organisations Review.

4.2 Tenant Participation Strategy Review

The Director of Housing advised that the document has been mainly updated to reflect the work that has been carried out during the last three years.

Peter Ewart highlighted that there was an error on Page 9 (sixth bullet point) and 'evey' should read as 'every'.

There also followed a discussion over certain aspects of the wording and layout of the Review.

Firstly, it was felt that consideration should be given as to where best to highlight 'recent' successes, particularly since the document is only updated every three years. Also, it was queried how best to then link these into the strategy.

Secondly, it was considered that the language used in terms of 'printed tenants' should be reviewed. It was recognised that 'Paper-Free' had now become the norm, representing the vast majority of tenants, so did not need to be identified. However, some term was required for tenants that required information in printed format, so that staff could easily identify the additional support required, but it was agreed that some further thought would be given as to how best to describe the remaining tenants.

Subject to this amendment, and these considerations, the Management Committee **approved** the Tenant Participation Strategy Review.

5.0 BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

There were no items for discussion under Business Management.

6.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no further items to be raised, so the meeting was closed.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 23 February 2023 at 7.00pm at ELHA Conference Room, Haddington.

**ADOPTION OF THESE MINUTES APPROVED AT THE MEETING ON
23 FEBRUARY 2023**

Signed _____ (Chair)