

Homes for Life Housing Partnership

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors of Homes for Life Housing Partnership held at The Maitlandfield House Hotel, Ante Room In Haddington on Wednesday 28th August 2019

Present	
Alan Brown (Chair)	Graeme MacGregor
Luke Bullock	David Rose
Jamila Greig	Carol Widdowson
Olga Krasteva	Brenda Tonner
Gordon Leitch	

In Attendance	
George Russell	Business Manager
Hilary Mark	Customer Services Manager - Left after Item 4.1.5
Alison Gorrie	Corporate Services Officer
Dave Roberts	Chiene & Tait - Left after Item 3.1.3

1.0 **Attendance**

1.1/2 Welcome & Apologies

The meeting started 7.15pm

Alan Brown welcomed all to the meeting including Dave Roberts from our Finance Agents, Chiene & Tait.

Apologies received from, Donna Wight.

1.3 Attendance Sheet

The meeting noted the Attendance Sheet.

The Attendance Sheet was agreed by the meeting.

Action: AG to update the Attendance Sheet

1.4 Declaration of interest

None raised.

1.5 AOCB Requests

None raised.

2.0 **Items for Consideration & Approval of Recommendations**

2.1 Minutes

2.1.1 Board Meeting 26th June 2019

The Minute was proposed by David Rose, seconded by Gordon Leitch and agreed by the meeting.

Action: AG to ensure Minute signed by Chair

2.2 Finance

2.2.1 Recommendation for approval from 31st July Audit & Risk Committee

The meeting was asked if there were any questions - none raised.

2.2.1.1 HFL Letter of Representation to External Auditor - to be signed and returned to auditor

2.2.1.2 External Auditor's Report: April 18 - March 19

2.2.1.3 Audited Financial Statements: April 18 - March 19

2.2.1.4 Recommendation for Re-appointment of Scott Moncrieff as External Auditor

2.2.1.5 Unaudited Financial Statements: HFL Developments April 18 - March 19.

Items 2.2.2.1 - 2.2.2.5 were proposed by David Rose, seconded by Brenda Tonner and agreed by the meeting.

2.2.2 Proposed Annual Financial Return to SHR

Dave Roberts advised the meeting that the AFS is completed through the SHR Portal and is populated with the data extracted from the Financial Statements however, in a different format.

The meeting was asked for delegated authority for the Business Manager and Corporate Services Officer to submit the AFS - proposed by Jamila Greig, seconded by Gordon Leitch and agreed by the meeting.

2.2.3 1st Quarter Management Accounts

Dave was introduced to the meeting.

This is the 1st quarter of new financial year. HFL are currently outperforming the budget with a positive variance of £42k. There were 2 areas with negative variance these are 'Void Maintenance' with expenditure exceeding budget by £11k and 'Temporary Services' Grants with expenditure exceeding £16k.

We are loan covenant compliant, comfortably exceeding both Interest and Security cover indicators.

The projected outturn is a deficit of £109k (budgeted deficit of £135k), a favourable variance of £26k.

Income & Expenditure Account

The surplus for the period is £122k compared to budgeted £80k, a favourable variance of £42k.

Larger positive variances include:

- Management Expenses - £10k variance relates budget for additional staff not utilised. Temporary Maintenance Officer is costed against Temporary Services.
- Planned Maintenance - £16k due to the timing of works being carried out - works expected to be carried out in quarters 2 & 3.

Balance Sheet

The meeting was advised that there were £27k worth of component replacements this quarter.

Debtors increased slightly to £29k (March 2019: £26k).

Cash at bank and in hand balance is £2.130k - a decrease of £50k (March 2019: £2.180k) principally due to the decrease in creditors as accrued costs of components of £185k last year were paid during this quarter. Reserves total as at 31 March 2019 £3,950k (March 2019: £3,829k).

The meeting noted continued good performance against all key ratios, including both loan covenants.

The meeting was asked if there were any questions.

The Chair asked about our financial position with regards Brexit especially with components such as boilers - Dave advised that these items are capitalised and if they do increase in price costs will 'hit' the cashflow rather than the Income & Expenditure Account.

1st Quarterly Management Accounts were proposed by Brenda Tonner, seconded by Olga Krasteva and agreed by the meeting.

2.2.4 Treasury Management - Update on Investments

The Corporate Services Officer reported that £1.2k was currently invested. The Royal Bank of Scotland's 9-month Treasury Account this was due to mature at the end of August and Clydesdale Bank Fixed Term investment maturing November 2019.

The Board were asked to note the report and that the maturing funds from the RBoS be returned to the SIBA Account and we will review available rates for future investments. The forthcoming Clydesdale Bank investment it is proposed to reinvest £300k for a further 1-year term.

2.3 Governance

2.3.1 Policies

The meeting was advised that updated policies were taken from EVH Model policies and updates.

- Updated Attendance Management Policy - a few typos were found within the document. Sickness monitoring arrangements were queried and clarified.
- Updated Lone Working Policy - Update from EVH
- Updated Stress Management Policy - Update from EVH

Subject to amendments policies were proposed by David Rose, seconded by Gordon Leitch and agreed by the meeting.

Action: AG to update the Policy Register & to circulate to staff

David Rose left the meeting.

2.4 Customer Services

2.4.1 Draft Annual Customer Report

The Customer Services Manager advised that the copy circulated was a draft. We are waiting for the Regulator statistics (for all RSLs) to become available, when they do there maybe one or two amendments. Figures for Scottish Average have been made available to SHN members only - the columns where figures are highlighted within the report may change but not significantly.

A few other comments were raised regards the colour scheme; the meeting was asked if there was any other feedback to contact the office.

Subject to amendments the printing of the Annual Customer Report was proposed by Brenda Tonner, seconded by Graeme MacGregor and agree by the meeting.

David Rose returned to the meeting.

2.4.2 Policies

- Unacceptable Actions Policy - no material changes required.
- Compensation for Improvement - no material changes required.
- Debt Recovery Policy - Revised - numbering of items to be amended.

Subject to amendments these policies were proposed by Luke Bullock, seconded by Gordon Leitch and agreed by the meeting.

Action: AG to update the Policy List

2.4.3 Respite Unit: Prestonpans

The Business Manager requested delegated authority to complete negotiations with Aberlour. The new contract will be different from that with ELC, any spare bed spaces/units could be used by other agencies - this is currently underutilised.

Delegated authority to complete negotiations was proposed by David Rose, seconded by Olga Krasteva and agreed by the meeting.

2.5 Membership Applications

- [REDACTED] Haddington

The Membership Applications was proposed by Jamila Greig, seconded by Carol Widdowson and agreed by the meeting.

3.0 Items for consideration Only

3.1 Governance

3.1.1 Minutes of AGM held 12th September 2018

The minutes of the 20th AGM were noted, there were a few typos that required addressing:

- Page 1: reads 'Kevin Gray' should read 'Kevin Greig'
- Page 5: reads ...'External Auditors for 2018/18' should read ...'External Auditors for 2018/19'
- Page 6: reads ...'to a short SSST' should read ...'to a short SST'
- Page 7: reads ...'Hilary was tanked' should read ...'Hilary was thanked'
- Page 7: reads ...'What does it effect' should read ...'What does it effect'
- Page 7: reads ...'He informed that the' should read ...'He informed the'

Subject to the amendments, the meeting recommended they be taken to the AGM.

3.1.2 Directors requiring to stand down

The requisite letters had been sent out to the retiring Directors, these were David Rose, Gordon Leitch and Carol Widdowson.

3.1.3 Chairpersons Report to Director Appraisals

The Chair provided a report regarding his findings after the most recent Director Appraisals. A total of nine directors were appraised. Feedback was sought from directors through questionnaire and then a one to one interview was carried out by the Chair.

It was found to be a fruitful/ useful process.

Dave Roberts was thanked for his time. He left the meeting.

4.0 For Noting Only

4.1 Customer Services

4.1.1 Quarterly Report

The Customer Services Manager asked the meeting if there were any questions. This was the first quarter performance report, she added that there were no material concerns. Performance is benchmarked against average Scottish RSL performance and 2018/19 Annual Return of the Charter. HFL's performance is favourable with the exception of Completed Right First Time and Satisfaction with Repairs

- Estate Walkabout
Excellent overall response of 56 forms returned - directors picked up on some of the issues raised with regards to parking, landscaping and gutter cleaning. The meeting was advised that currently landscaping is an issue and we are currently liaising with Tivoli our contractor.
- Tenant Summer Newsletter
Copy circulated for non-tenant directors.

4.1.2 HMO: Kennedy Court Update

The meeting was advised that we are currently working through the process of renewing the HMO Licence which expired on 8th March 2019. We are anticipating receiving all the paperwork regards to the audits next week and these will be sent through to the Licensing Officer.

4.1.3 Allocations - Verbal Update

Homes for Life 'piggyback' on Castle Rock's allocations service (Homehunt) and have since September/October 2018. We will be reviewing the agreement in order to sign. However, there are GDPR issues that require addressing prior to signing the agreement.

4.1.4 Reactive Repairs Update

The meeting was advised that a meeting had been held with Novus regarding their service and performance.

During the meeting a number of issues were raised regarding call handling; time to attend appointments; and overstretched staffing.

During discussions Novus had advised that the contract was not in fact working for them as they attend so few reactive repairs over a large geographical distance which meant that they lose money. They added that they may not wish to continue the service.

The Business Manager advised that he'd keep the Board informed on the situation.

4.1.5 Planned Maintenance

The meeting noted the following plans for the remainder of the financial year:

- Kitchen & Bathrooms: 2 developments in North Berwick
- Electrical Checks to be carried out in the 3rd quarter by Quigley Electrical
- Painter work still in negotiations with Presdec and Novus to make the works achievable.

The Business Manager added the he will keep the Board updated on progress.

Customer Services Manager left the meeting.

4.2 Health & Safety Update

- Auditor ACS deferred site visits to 2nd September
The audits were deferred by ACS. The audit reports will be presented to the next H&S Committee prior to the end October Board.
- Director Vehicle Insurance Update
The Corporate Services Officer had liaised with EVH regarding this issue - the results of which will be forwarded to all directors for information and action as necessary.
- Asbestos - Prestonkirk House
The Business Manager advised the meeting, he is currently liaising with the ELC Asbestos Manager regards results of the Asbestos Management Surveys carried out at Prestonkirk House and Smiddy Wynd - the original refurbishment contract between 1999 - 2002 was badly managed.
He added that there are currently no tenants at risk however, all have been advised that attic areas are out of bounds. It is important now that we manage what is found.

Action: AG to forward insurance information to all Directors

4.3 Governance

4.3.1 Internal Audit - Audit Plan

The meeting was advised that on page 2 of the Summary of Internal Audit Input another day was added for Staff Succession Planning for the year 2020/21.

4.3.2 Regulation

- i. SHR Verification queries on FYFP answered
No further queries raised.
- ii. Assurance Statement
Copies of the Statutory Guidance and the SHN Governance Self-Assessment tool was circulated prior to the meeting.
The Business Manager advised that this statement is to be submitted annually, providing assurance that HFL complies with the relevant requirements. If a landlord does not fully comply then it should set out in the Statement how and when it will make the necessary improvements to ensure compliance.
The meeting agreed that a further meeting be arranged in order to review the statement.

The Business Manager advised that we had no feedback from the Regulator regards our Engagement Plan.

Due to time constraints the meeting noted and agreed that items 4.3.3 – 4.3.7 will be deferred to the next meeting.

- 4.3.3 Risk Register - Update
- 4.3.4 Review of Articles
- 4.3.5 Freedom of Information
- 4.3.6 Partnering Update
- 4.3.7 Lothian Pension Fund

All staff excluding the Business Manager were asked to leave the meeting at this point.

- 4.3.8 Retirement of Customer Services Manager from 8th November 2019
The Board noted that Hilary Mark will retire on 8th November. With around 21 years' service, Hilary is HFL's longest serving staff member. Most tenants and all directors will have had contact with her over the years. The Board recorded their thanks for her significant contribution to developing HFL's service over that time. It was agreed that the Chair would acknowledge the retirement and give a vote of thanks at the AGM and that there would also be a presentation at the last Board meeting she will attend at the end of October.

The Business Manager sought and received approval to broaden the scope of the post, as part of succession planning to include Deputy CEO duties, including for line management of other staff. The Board agreed that the post could be regraded accordingly and advertised with remuneration to be set on an appropriate four increment banding across Grade 8 (current post) and the first four increments Grade 9 - dependent on qualifications and experience.

- 4.4 Publications
None circulated.

5.0 Next Meeting - The meeting closed at 9.05pm

- Next Meeting will be held on Wednesday 30th October 2019 - potential for reschedule to meet Assurance Statement deadline.

ADOPTION OF THESE MINUTES PROPOSED, SECONDED AND THEREAFTER APPROVED BY THE DIRECTORS PRESENT AT A MEETING OF A BOARD OF DIRECTORS HELD ON 30TH OCTOBER 2019 TO BE AGREED	
Proposed By: Name of Director	<i>Carol Widdowson</i>
Seconded By: Name of Director	<i>Gordon Leitch</i>
Signed: Chairperson or Vice Chairperson	<i>Alan Brown (Chair)</i>
Date Signed:	<i>30th October 2019</i>