

**THE RIVERSIDE GROUP LIMITED**

**IRVINE HOUSING ASSOCIATION**

Two Hundred and Seventeenth Meeting of the Board held at 5.30p.m. on  
Tuesday 23 May 2017 at 44-46 Bank Street, Irvine

**Minutes**

Present: Mr D. McEachran (In the Chair), Mr C. Bell, Mrs M. Burgess, Mr G. Darroch, Mrs F. Garven, Miss J. Meek, Mrs J. Murray, and Mr J. Wood.

In attendance were Mr P. Hillard, Mrs D. Boyle, Mrs A. Fox-Smith and Mrs M. Hutchinson.

Apologies for Absence  
Mrs A. Robertson.

Declarations of Interests  
None.

1. **Minutes of the Previous Meetings held on 22 February and 25 March 2017**

The minutes of the meetings held on 22 February and 25 March 2017 were approved and signed. The Board also agreed that the meeting on 25 March 2017 was a confidential minute.

2. **Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes**

**22 February 2017 Minutes**

a) **Tarryholme Phase 1 – New Build Development Project (Min. 4)**

Mr P. Hillard confirmed that he had accepted the tender of McTaggart Construction within the agreed budget. He undertook to update further on this development at the next Board Meeting.

The Board discussed and agreed that, given level of spend involved in this project and its impact on the Business Plan, all updates on this development should be reported to Board rather than the Operations Committee.

b) Disposal of 28-30 Queen Street, Dumfries (Min. 5)

Mr Hillard advised that the Queen Street properties had been sold for [REDACTED] at auction which was over the valuation amount. He confirmed that all regulatory approvals had been received prior to sale.

**25 March 2017 Minutes**

a) Closure of the Strathclyde Pension Fund (Min. 2)

In response to a query from Board, Mr Hillard confirmed that some staff had taken up the offer of the contribution towards financial advice and there had been an acknowledgement from staff that this had been a Board decision.

[REDACTED]

3. Corporate Plan 2017-20

Mrs A. Fox-Smith stated that the Corporate Plan presented was in line with the draft which had previously been sent to Board, subject to some minor changes. The Association's staff and the Scrutiny Panel had also contributed to the content of the Plan.

Mr P. Hillard stated that staff would now work on the development of a Year 1 Operational Plan. Update reports would then be given to Board in relation to the achievement of the objectives identified.

In response to a query from the Board, Mrs Fox-Smith confirmed that summary versions of the Corporate Plan would be produced and made available to customers and stakeholders following approval by Board. These summary versions would also be promoted on the Association's website and through social media.

The Board thereafter approved the Corporate Plan 2017-20.

#### 4. **Annual Return on the Charter**

The Board queried why the statistics at C8.5.1 and C10.6 in relation to Section 5 referrals appeared to be contradictory. Mrs A. Fox-Smith undertook to check the guidance for these sections and report back further, however, she suspected that it was because the Association's allocations were made through the common allocation register and some of the lets may be classed as homeless but were not referred through the official section 5 referral channel by the local authority because they had already been picked up through the common allocation register.

The Board, referring to pages 51 and 52 queried if the number of tenants who were dissatisfied with the quality of their home was related to the void turn-around time. Mrs Fox-Smith stated that it was possible that the new Safe, Clean and Clear and Property MOT Initiatives had had an impact on satisfaction levels. These Initiatives were working for the majority of customers, however, the Association had to understand the reasons for the dissatisfaction. The Board were keen that these issues be addressed, especially given that customers being dissatisfied with their new properties could affect their relationship with the Association from the start. The Board stated that it was important to get down to the nature of the dissatisfaction in order to take steps to make improvements to the service. Mr P. Hillard accepted that research required to be undertaken with a view to improving the satisfaction levels.

The Board commented on the Equality and Diversity information supplied by Board and Staff and suggested that there be a campaign in the coming year to encourage an improved response rate.

The Board commented on the statistics on page 78 and in relation to medical adaptations approved when compared to the number of adaptations completed. Mrs Fox-Smith elaborated on the nature of the funding process for carrying out the adaptations. The Board suggested that it may be time for the Association to consider that it also had to fund some of the adaptations rather than being completely reliant on external funding.

The Board reviewed the content of the ARC and the Global Validation Report and thereafter approved the ARC for submission to the SHR and authorised the Managing Director to approve and submit the return on behalf of the Association.

5. **Return on the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing**

The Board referred to Indicator C34 and highlighted that the Association had brought 67, less than what it had estimated, properties up to EESSH during the year. There also did not appear to be any plan to address this shortfall in the coming year's estimations. Mr P. Hillard stated that previous estimations had been based on a component replacement approach to asset management. This meant that components were replaced at the end of their estimated shelf-life rather than when they needed replaced. This approach also had a significant impact on the Business Plan. It had therefore been agreed that the Association would have a stock condition survey carried out, based on 20% of its stock, with a view to informing its future capital investment plans moving forward. It was anticipated that this approach would allow the Association to spread the capital investment costs out more over the life of the business plan.

The Board commented that it understood the Scottish Government was currently reviewing the EESSH.

Following its review of the content of the EESSH Return and the Global Validation Report, the Board thereafter approved the EESSH Return for submission to the SHR and authorised the Managing Director to approve and submit the return on behalf of the Association.

6. **Performance Report**



Mrs Hutchinson advised that the external auditors had been auditing the Association's annual accounts this week and no changes had been proposed as yet. The Board enquired if it was clear in the accounts, the reasons for the loss. Mrs Hutchinson stated that the narrative in the accounts made it clear that the reasons for the loss had been in order to safeguard the Association's future and that the Scottish Housing Regulator had been advised of this notifiable event.

The Board noted the excellent result of the staff achieving all of its targets at year end, especially during a time when morale was low.

The Board thereafter noted the content of the Performance Report presented.

7. **Managing Director's Report**

a) **Organisational Development Process / Target Operating Model**

Mr P. Hillard advised on the methods which were being used in order to identify potential applicants for the post of Head of Services. The Board were pleased to note that Mr D. Thompson had extended his contract with the Association until September.

The Board noted the new staffing structure for the Association - once the restructuring process had been completed and that there would be one less post following the restructure, when compared with the existing structure.

b) **Trade Union**

Mr Hillard highlighted that as Group currently had a recognition agreement in place with UNITE, the relationship between the Association and UNISON would be defined through a partnership agreement.

c) **Office Accommodation**

Mr Hillard advised that early indications were that it was likely that the Association would continue to operate from its current office accommodation.

The Board thereafter noted the content of the Managing Director's Report.

8. **Regulatory Risk Assessment 2017/18**

The Board discussed the methodology used for the determination of engagement levels by the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) and then noted the content of the letter received from the SHR confirming that the Association's level of engagement had been assessed as low.

9. **De Minimus Payments and Benefits Log**

The Board noted the "De Minimus" Payments and Benefits Log and the fact that no Board or Staff Member had exceeded the "De Minimus" monetary equivalent of £300 per annum for the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017.

10. **Committee Minutes**

Governance and Staffing Committee Meeting – 7 March 2017

Mr Hillard advised that due to the recent difficulties in recruiting new Board Members, the Governance and Staffing Committee had agreed and instructed him to appoint consultants to deliver board recruitment services. Four companies were therefore requested to provide proposals with costing for delivering this service. Altair Ltd had since been engaged to identify appropriate candidates with specific Finance, Audit and Development / Construction experience.

A discussion then followed on options for seeking to engage with the younger community, with a view to them potentially participating on the Board at some point. It was suggested that this could potentially be explored further as some sort of consortium approach with peers. It was agreed that this should be discussed further at the next Governance and Staffing Committee Meeting.

11. **Any Other Business**

Audit & Risk Committee

Mr P. Hillard highlighted that following Mr A. West's resignation from the Board, the Audit & Risk Committee currently had two members. Given the Association's annual accounts were due to be considered by the Committee in June, whilst the Association's Chairman did not usually participate on this Committee, it was recommended that the Chairman become part of this Committee, given his financial knowledge, until such times when further financial knowledge and experience could be recruited to the Board. After discussion, the Board approved the Chairman's membership of the Audit & Risk Committee. It was noted that the Chairman would not Chair this Committee in line with the Terms of Reference for the Audit & Risk Committee.

12. **Date of Next Meeting**

Board Meeting – 5.30 p.m. Tuesday 20 June 2017, 44-46 Bank Street, Irvine.

P. Hillard  
Secretary  
30 May 2017  
PH/db

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This section of text will be subject to redaction prior to the publication of minutes on the website.