

Readers may note that some information within these documents have been omitted / redacted.

Some information has been omitted / redacted as disclosure may prejudice the commercial interests of Irvine Housing Association trading as Riverside Scotland.

We recognise that the commercial sensitivity of information may decline over time and the harm arising from disclosure may be outweighed by the public interest in openness and transparency. We commit to review the redaction of any such information from time to time.

Some information has been redacted as it contains personal data which identifies an individual. Disclosure of this information would place Irvine Housing Association t/a Riverside Scotland in breach of the Data Protection Act 2018.

HIGHLIGHTS OF IHA'S BOARD MEETING HELD ON 25 MARCH 2021

RECRUITMENT OF CHAIR

The Board accepted the recruitment panel's recommendation to invite Mr J. Strang to join the Board and be formally elected as Chair following the AGM. The Board thereafter approved Mr Strang's Membership Application and approved his appointment to the Board, filling a casual vacancy, until the AGM.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC UPDATE

The Board considered the Covid-19 Pandemic report, noting in particular:

- The planned switch on of the Association's repairs service, subject to restrictions easing as envisaged towards the end of April.
- That MPS would deliver the responsive repairs service in all areas of operation. Additional services for customers were to be included.
- Customer satisfaction levels suggested frustration regarding the limited repairs service, due to lock-down restrictions.

CORPORATE PLAN 2020/23

The Board noted the Corporate Delivery Plan reports updating on progress 6 months into the current Plan.

The Board also noted the content of the Corporate Risk Schedule which had recently been updated by the Audit & Risk Committee.

RE-BRANDING

The Board approved the adoption of the name Riverside Scotland as a "trading" or "known as" name for the Association, subject to appropriate customer consultation being carried out via the Association's customer involvement panel. The Board also considered the proposed Implementation Plan.

POLICIES

The Board agreed to adopt Group's Anti-Bribery & Corruption and Donations Policies and also approved the revised Property Factoring, Void Management, Repairs & Maintenance, Rent Setting and Dumfries & Galloway Common Allocations Policies.

PROGRESS REPORT ON DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

The Board noted the current progress report on the proposed developments projects.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2021/22

The Board noted the proposed capital investment programme for 2021-2022 and approved the associated expenditure.

REPAIRS OPTIONS APPRAISAL

The Board noted the outcome of the second stage repairs and maintenance options appraisal process and the recommended future service delivery model.

CHAIR'S ACTION PROCEDURE

The Board noted the Chair's decision in line with the Chair's Action Procedure to award MPS Housing the Responsive Repairs and Voids Servicing contract for the Dumfries stock.

SUCCESSION PLANNING

The Board noted the succession planning report and the suggested specific skills / knowledge that the Association should seek to recruit to the Board.

The Board thereafter instructed the Managing Director to progress the recruitment of Board Members as appropriate with MrGregor Bond and agreed the proposed Recruitment Panel.

PERFORMANCE REPORTS

The Board considered the operational and financial performance reports, noting in particular:

- That the increase in arrears was largely attributable to the increase in Universal Credit applications and the associated payment delays.
- The increase in overall customer satisfaction and also complaints handling satisfaction levels.
- The Association was on target to meet all its covenants at year end.

COLLEAGUE ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

The Board noted the Colleague Engagement Survey results report.

MD'S REPORT

The Board noted the MD's Report which contained updates in relation to current matters which required no formal decisions.

THE RIVERSIDE GROUP LIMITED

IRVINE HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Two Hundred and Forty First Meeting of the Board held at 5.30 p.m. on
25 March 2021 by MS Teams video-conference.

Minutes

Present:

Mr D. McEachran (In the Chair), Mrs M. Burgess, Mrs M. Crearie,
Mr G. Darroch, Mrs J. Galbraith, Mr R. Hill, Ms C. McGuinness,
Mrs J Murray and Mr J. Strang (from minute 6)

In attendance were: Mr P. Hillard, Mrs H. Anderson, Mrs D.
Boyle and Mrs M. Hutchinson.

Apologies for Absence

Nil.

Declarations of Interests

No Declarations were made.

1. **Preliminaries**

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.

2. **Recruitment of Chair**

Mr R. Hill elaborated on the process that the Recruitment Panel had gone through, supported by consultants McGregor Bond, which had resulted in the Panel's proposal to recommend Mr J. Strang as the next Chair of the Association.

After consideration, the Board:

- a) accepted the recommendation of the Recruitment Panel that Mr J. Strang be invited to join the Board and be formally elected as Chair following the next AGM.
- b) approved Mr Strang's Membership Application.
- c) subject to the approval of Mr Strang's Membership Application, authorised the Managing Director / Secretary to enter his details in the Membership Register and issue him with a share certificate and a copy of the Rules of the Association.
- d) approved Mr Strang's appointment to the Board, filling a casual vacancy until the 2021 Annual General Meeting, in line with Rule 41 of the Association's Rules.
- e) noted the approval process of TRGL in relation to the appointment of the Association's Chair.

3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting – 240th Board Meeting held on 29 January 2021**

The minutes of the 240th Board Meeting held on 29 January 2021 were **APPROVED** as an accurate record.

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

240th Board Meeting

No updates were reported.

5. **Covid 19 Pandemic Update**

Mr P. Hillard reported that Officers were currently planning to be able to deliver the full repairs service from 26 April 2021 when it was expected that most of Scotland would revert back to the Tier levels in place prior to the current lock-down. It was intended that, for the first week that services re-commence, the backlog of follow-up works required after the emergency repairs works done during lockdown, would be prioritised. The Association would thereafter "switch-on" the repairs and maintenance services from 4 May 2021.

The Board noted that the responsive repairs service would be delivered in all operational areas by MPS moving forward. Service delivery would involve the use of the MCM software system which would provide additional services to customers including receiving text messages to confirm appointments, being able to track and chat on-line with their operative and also reschedule appointments if required.

Mr Hillard highlighted that customer satisfaction feedback was suggesting a current frustration at the Association currently not being able to deliver the full repairs service.

The Board thereafter noted the contents of the Covid-19 Pandemic Report.

Mr J. Strang joined the Meeting. The Chair welcomed Mr Strang to the Meeting.

6. **Corporate Plan 2020/23**

Mr P. Hillard advised that the Corporate Delivery Plan reports gave an update on progress 6 months into the Plan. He highlighted some slippage in the progress of some items, which was primarily related to the pandemic restrictions preventing the required face to face interactions. The Management Team were content with the current situation and were confident that these items could be delivered when restrictions allowed for them to be progressed.

Mr Hillard highlighted the Corporate Risk Schedule which had recently been updated by the Audit & Risk Committee to reduce the Political and Regulatory Uncertainty risk score to reflect the BREXIT trade deal being agreed. The Board noted that this risk may increase again in due course when the results of the Scottish Government elections were known.

Mr Hillard reported that the Staffing risk had also been altered to reflect that the risk areas were less about staff engagement and more about the mental health and wellbeing of staff now. In response to a query from Board, Mr Hillard confirmed that isolation was a factor when people were working from home during the pandemic. Planning the new ways of working post-pandemic would take into consideration these matters. It was intended there would be a blended model which would involve home-working and staff regularly coming together in the new office space.

In response to a query from Board, Mrs H. Anderson advised that a new KPI was being used which captured information on the ease that customers had accessed the service to have their issue resolved which then gave a score. It was intended that this would assist to drive forward improvements around first person resolutions.

The Board enquired if the LD2 installation programme was achievable by the November target. Mr Hillard advised that there were currently circa. 100 properties outstanding. Officers were projecting that if works re-commenced in May, then the contract could be completed by the end of the summer.

The Board thereafter noted:

- a) The contents of the Corporate Delivery Plan Highlight and Milestone Reports.
- b) The contents of the Corporate Risk Schedule.

7. **Re-branding**

Mr P. Hillard advised on the outline timescales for implementing the proposed re-branding of the Association. Mr Hillard highlighted that the recommendation of the adoption of the name Riverside Scotland as a “trading” or “known as” name, was subject to the Association’s lawyers confirming there would be no trademarking issues with this name.

The Board noted the proposed implementation date of 1 July 2021 and associated communication strategy for implementing the change. Further to a query from the Board on customer consultation, a discussion followed on the best format to facilitate any consultation in order to avoid any confusion and ensure that the clear messages were communicated i.e. the re-branding was of the name only, the Association would remain their landlord and that there would be no changes to our services / operations. It was agreed that this would be best delivered through the existing digital customer involvement panel.

The Board, referring to the proposed Implementation Plan, highlighted the importance of ensuring that the key audience messages were consistent and were not misconstrued by any particular stakeholder group. Mr Hillard confirmed that the same clear messages would be cascaded within the Association to ensure consistent communication outwith the organisation.

The Board also discussed the format of the proposed Riverside Scotland branding examples and, on balance, agreed the examples proposed.

The Board thereafter:

- a) approved the adoption of the name Riverside Scotland as a “trading” or “known as” name for the Association, subject to appropriate customer consultation being carried out via the Association’s customer involvement panel.
- b) noted the proposed Implementation Plan.

8. **Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy**

Mrs M. Hutchinson advised that Group were in the process of the setting up a new policy review system, which she was part of a working group to progress. The new IT system would highlight which companies within Group required to be consulted on each policy prior to approval which would ensure that moving forward, no omissions to the consultation

process and also that the policy would be approved through all appropriate governance structures at the same time.

The Board discussed and suggested that future wording in Group-wide policies adopted included wording which made it clear that whilst the Association's Board had adopted the policy, the contents were approved and owned by the Association's Board. Mr Hillard advised that this would be factored into the new policy review process being implemented

The Board thereafter agreed to adopt Group's Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy.

9. **Donations Policy**

Mr P. Hillard advised that, although not featured in the Policy Framework as a group-wide policy, it was considered sensible to have a consistent approach to donations across the Group.

Mr Hillard advised that following Board's request, the policy had now been reviewed and amended to incorporate changes to take account of Scottish legislation.

The Board noted that there was now a requirement in the Association's Rules to have a Donations Policy in place and to report to members on any donations made. Mr Hillard advised that it was intended to give this report at the Association's Annual General Meeting.

The Board agreed to adopt Group's Donations Policy.

10. **Factoring Policy**

Mrs H. Anderson highlighted the key changes to the policy which included:

- The issue of future invoices would now contain information on the outstanding balance, as well as, the quarterly charge.
- The Written Statement of Services issued to each owner, would now include information on how essential health & safety communal repairs and maintenance would be addressed and any additional works beyond the core factoring services.

Mrs Anderson also advised of the intention that a new standard recovery process for arrears would be implemented and delivered by the Income Collection Team.

The Board advised that the Homeowner Housing Panel referred to in section 2 had now been replaced by the First-tier Tribunal for Scotland

Housing and Property Chamber. Mrs Anderson undertook to make this amendment to the policy.

The Board thereafter approved the Association's revised Factoring Policy, subject to the agreed amendment.

11. **Policy Review Updates**

Mrs H. Anderson highlighted the minor changes which had been made to the policies. Mrs Anderson highlighted that Dumfries and Galloway Council were due to commence a full review of its Common Allocations Policy which the Association would be involved in. Once finalised, the policy would be presented to Board for approval. Further to a query from Board, Mrs Anderson advised that the Association's Empty Homes Standard was also being reviewed. Obtaining customer feedback through a mystery shopping exercise would be considered as part of this process.

The Board then noted and approved the review which had been carried out on the following policies:

- Void Management
- Repairs and Maintenance
- Rent Setting
- Dumfries and Galloway Common Allocations

12. **Progress Report on Development Projects**

Mr Hillard gave an update on the Association's current development projects highlighting in particular:

- Tarryholme 1 and Homelea – that both projects were reaching the end of their defects liability periods.
- Kilmarnock Road – that the contract with the Wee House Company had now been signed and commenced on 8 March 2021. The Association had received positive feedback from the press release promoting the development.
- Tarryholme 2 – the pre-works contract for soil removal from the site had been signed and was due to commence at the end of March.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The Board then noted the progress report on the Association's current development projects.

13. **Capital Investment Programme 2021/22**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The Board thereafter:

- a) noted the proposed capital investment programme for 2021-2022
- b) approved the associated planned capital and responsive repairs and maintenance expenditure as set out in the Proposed Capital Programme Report.

14. **Repairs Options Appraisal**

Mrs H. Anderson elaborated on the two aspects of the options appraisal which had initially covered the interim solution for service delivery during 2021/22 and then the second aspect which had looked at the long term position. Key factors considered as part of the options appraisal was

stakeholder consultation, stability of service provision and delivery of increased customer satisfaction levels.

[Redacted text block]

- [Redacted bullet point]
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- [Redacted bullet point]
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The Board thereafter noted the outcome of the second stage repairs and maintenance options appraisal process, and the recommended future service delivery model.

15. **Chair's Action Procedure**

The Board noted the Chair's decision in line with the Chair's Action Procedure to award MPS Housing the Responsive Repairs and Voids Servicing contract for the Dumfries stock [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

16. **Succession Planning**

Mr P. Hillard stated that following the conclusion of the Chair recruitment process, it was now appropriate to take forward a Board Member recruitment exercise. Mr Hillard highlighted the vacancies the Association would have at the Annual General Meeting and the suggested skills / knowledge that the Association should seek to bring on to the Board.

Mr Hillard advised on the proposed timetable for the recruitment of Board Members and for them being formally elected to the Board. After discussion, the Board agreed that a flexible approach as to when proposals were brought to Board would be required, given that different recruitment methods would be utilised and the timing of when successful applicants could formally join the Board.

The Board thereafter:

- a) noted the contents of the Board Member Succession Schedule.
- b) noted the suggested specific skills / knowledge that the Association should seek to recruit to the Board.
- c) instructed the Managing Director to progress the recruitment of Board Members as appropriate with MrGregor Bond.
- d) agreed that the Recruitment Panel would comprise of the Chair, Mr D. McEachran, Mr J. Strang and Mrs M. Burgess.

17. **Operational Performance Report**

Mrs H. Anderson advised that some actions in the previously reported Customer Plan had not been progressed due to the pandemic restrictions. The Plan presented had, therefore, been updated to re-set

some timescales and also add in some additional actions which had been identified during the year.

Mrs Anderson referring to the Performance Dashboards advised that arrears had increased in line with seasonal trends and were currently sitting at 4.1%. This increase on previous years was due to a significant increase in tenants moving to Universal Credit payments and the delays in direct payments being received due to the Association being on a different payment schedule from Group which resulted in “skip cycles”.

[REDACTED]

Mrs Anderson advised that 114 properties had been let during the year to homeless and priority need applicants. The additional time required for deep cleans in void properties had impacted on the void turnaround times.

The Board noted that customer satisfaction had decreased slightly following the recent increase. Mrs Anderson was hopeful that satisfaction levels would increase again when lock down restrictions were eased and as actions identified in the Customer Plan were implemented.

Mrs Anderson reported that following a slight dip during the year, all properties were back to being 100% gas safety compliant.

The Board thereafter noted the Operational Performance Report and updated Customer Plan and commented that the results presented demonstrated a great staff effort considering the challenging circumstances of the past year.

18. **Financial Performance Report**

[REDACTED]

Officers continued work with contractors to ensure that as much repairs and maintenance and adaptations works were completed by year end as possible. Mrs Hutchinson expected that the year-end spend would be close to the forecast. The Board noted that the Association was on target to meet all its covenants at year end.

The Board noted the Financial Performance Report.

19. **Colleague Engagement Survey**

Mr P. Hillard commented that he was pleased to report that staff engagement levels appeared to be back to previous levels, following a dip in recent years due to the Association going through the organisational design process. He highlighted that mental health and wellbeing had, however, scored low in the survey which was indicative of the current working arrangements driven by lockdown restrictions. The Association continued to engage with staff and the findings from the survey would be factored into the People Plan which was currently being developed.

Mr Hillard advised that a wider HR report would be presented to the May Board Meeting which would feature year end indicators, an update on the proposed terms and conditions harmonisation with Group and the staff engagement plan post-lock down.

The Board noted the content of the Colleague Engagement Survey Results.

20. **Managing Director's Report**

Mr P Hillard updated on the following points within the Managing Director's Report:

a) [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

b) **Board Strategy Sessions**
It was proposed to include the Scottish Government's Strategy Housing to 2040 as a further session. The Board agreed and confirmed that it was content with the suggested subject areas and proposed format for the sessions.

- c) Convene – governance software platform
A brief overview of the software functions was given and its compatibility with devices. The Board noted that invites would be issued to appropriate training in this regard in early May.

The Board thereafter noted the contents of the Managing Director’s Report.

21. **Minutes/Updates**

The Board noted the minutes from the:

- a) Unconfirmed Audit & Risk Committee Meeting held on 8 March 2021,
- b) Confirmed Neighbourhood Services Committee meeting held on 7 January 2021 and, also
- c) Group Board Highlights Report covering January 2021.

22. **Any Other Business**

New Chair

Ms C. McGuinness confirmed that the Group’s Governance and Remuneration Committee had approved the recommendation of Mr J. Strang as the new Chair of the Association, following the 2021 Annual General Meeting.

Mr P. Hillard advised that a press release would be issued the next day confirming Mr Strang’s appointment.

23. **Date of Next Meeting**

Board Meeting - 5.30 p.m. on Thursday 20 May 2021, by MS Teams video-conferencing

P. Hillard
Secretary
26 March 2021
PH/db

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