

**THE RIVERSIDE GROUP LIMITED**

**IRVINE HOUSING ASSOCIATION**

Special Meeting of the Board held at 5.30 p.m. on Thursday 21 October 2021  
by MS Teams video-conference

**Minutes**

Present: Mr J. Strang (In the Chair), Mrs M. Burgess, Mrs M. Crearie, Mr G. Darroch, Ms F. Fox (From Item 2), Mrs J. Galbraith, Mr R. Hill (From Item 2), Mr T. McInnes and Mrs S. Petrie.

In attendance: Mrs M. Hutchinson and Mrs D. Boyle.

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr S. Easton, Ms C. McGuinness and Mr S. Stewart.

2. **Declarations of Interests**

None.

3. **Annual Assurance Statement**

Mrs M. Hutchinson advised that the Annual Assurance Statement required to be approved and submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator by 31 October 2021. Mrs Hutchinson highlighted that the Audit & Risk Committee had discussed in detail the findings of the Association's compliance assessment presented and audit of this process at its meeting earlier in the month.

Mr J. Strang commented that he had been impressed by the comprehensive bank of evidence that the Association had gathered in

order to demonstrate compliance with the Scottish Housing Regulator's regulatory requirements and standards.

Mrs Hutchinson advised that this had been the third year that the Association had carried out the regulatory compliance assessment since the SHR's new Regulatory Framework was introduced in 2019. The compliance assessment process had again been audited by Group's Internal Audit Team who had reported good cross-referencing between the requirements and supporting evidence and a tight linkage between the requirements and the demonstration of compliance. Mrs Hutchinson highlighted that the Assurance Statement to be submitted to the SHR was a Board-owned document and, subject to Board agreeing its content, would be signed by the Chair on the Board's behalf.

Mr R. Hill and Ms F. Fox joined the meeting.

Mrs Hutchinson stated that the draft Assurance Statement reported that EESSH compliance was an area of non-compliance, albeit, the Board had previously agreed that this was not considered to be material non-compliance, given there was a clear plan in place for achieving compliance by 2023/24. The Board had, however, previously concurred that it was appropriate to highlight this matter in the Assurance Statement.

The Board commented on the detailed nature of the report and the supplementary evidence bank. The Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee advised that following the matter being discussed in detail at the recent Audit & Risk Committee meeting, some amendments and additional evidence had been incorporated into the report and document folder made available to the Board. The Internal Auditor's Report which had also been considered at this meeting, gave Board and Committee Members additional comfort that the process carried out and report presented was sound. Board Members who had sector experience of the SHR's regulatory framework, were pleased with the content of the report and evidence presented, commenting that the process followed was a very comprehensive piece of work by all those involved.

Following a query from the Board on the format of the Assurance Statement, the Chair advised that there were varying approaches to the content of these Statements. The Board noted that the Assurance Statements of all Scottish housing associations were available to view from their websites.

Further to consideration of:

- a) The Scottish Housing Regulator's Statutory Guidance on Annual Assurance Statements.
- b) The outcomes of the management self-assessment process set out in the Regulatory Compliance Assessment Report, the Covid-19 Actions Report and the related evidence.

the Board approved the content of the Annual Assurance Statement for signature by the Chair and its subsequent submission to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

4. **Grounds Maintenance Tender Award**

Mrs M. Hutchinson advised that the tender for the Grounds Maintenance Contract in Scotland had been carried out as part of a Group-wide tendering exercise. The timescales for the contract approval had been due to there being a long lead-in time for the set-up of the contract. The proposed length of the contract was for 3 years, plus option of a further 2 years.

The Board enquired if the contract amount proposed was in line with budget provision. Mrs Hutchinson confirmed that the contract amount was slightly higher than budgeted for, however, there were additional day-to-day ad hoc works included in the contract, which had previously sat outside the contract and had been an additional cost to the Association. Having these works incorporated within the contract, meant there was more certainty around costs moving forward.

[REDACTED]

In response to a query from Board, Mrs Hutchinson advised that she understood that officers were content in general terms with the service currently provided by ID Verdi. The Chair also commented on his recent experience of the rigor of the procurement process and the focus on contractor performance as part of the evaluation.

The Board thereafter approved the award of the Grounds Maintenance Contract for Riverside Scotland's housing stock to ID Verdi [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

5. **Any Other Business**

**Dinner of Thanks**

The Chair advised that unfortunately, due to personal circumstances, Mr D. McEachran and Mrs J. Murray were unable to accept the invitation to dinner. A discussion took place on an alternative appropriate way to convey the Association's thanks for their years of service to the Board

and it was agreed that the Chair would write personally to thank them and advise on the arrangements for making a charitable donation on their behalf.

The Board also discussed and agreed that the Board's dinner of thanks to Mr P. Hillard should be confirmed for Thursday 28 October 2021 and appropriate arrangements made.

6. **Date of Next Meeting**

Board Meeting – 5.30 p.m. on Thursday 2 December 2021, 44-46 Bank Street, Irvine and via MS Teams.

M. HUTCHINSON  
Interim Secretary  
22 October 2021  
MH/db

.....