

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.

THE RIVERSIDE GROUP LIMITED
IRVINE HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

Two Hundred and Fiftieth Meeting of the Board held at 5.30 p.m. on
Thursday 18 August 2022 at the Gales Hotel, Marine Drive, Irvine.

Minutes

Present:

Mr J. Strang (In the Chair), Mrs M. Burgess, Mrs M. Crearie,
Mr G. Darroch, Mrs. J Galbraith, Mr R. Hill, Mr T. McInnes,
Mr P. New, Mrs S. Petrie and Mr S. Stewart.

In attendance were: Mrs D. MacLean, Mrs H. Anderson, Mrs
D. Boyle and Mrs M. Hutchinson.

Apologies for Absence

Nil.

Declarations of Interests

Nil.

1. **Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no interests to declare.

3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting – 249th Board Meeting held on 30 June 2022 and the Special Board Meeting held on 25 July 2022**

The minutes of the 249th Board Meeting held on 30 June 2022 were APPROVED as an accurate record and the Special Board Meeting held on 25 July 2022 were APPROVED as an accurate record, subject to the

inclusion of the Board's agreement that in future years, authority should be delegated to the senior staff team to approve any required non-material changes to the annual accounts after Board's approval of such.

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

The Board noted the new reporting format for matters arising actions and the actions which remained in progress or were completed.

Amended Financial Statements 2021/22

Mrs M. Hutchinson advised that the external auditors were yet to sign off the annual accounts and continued to raise further queries. The Board expressed concerns given the imminent timescales for the issue of Annual General Meeting paperwork and the submission of regulatory returns.

The Board requested that their concern was communicated to Group and the external auditor.

5. **Corporate Plan Delivery Plan Update**

Mrs D. MacLean advised that the Leadership Team had further reviewed and updated the Delivery Plan to reflect what could realistically be achieved by March 2023 with the current resourcing levels. The Board noted that a new Corporate Plan and Delivery Plan would be developed for implementation in the new financial year.

The Board discussed the content of the report and Delivery Plan noting the regulatory risk in relation to customer service and the mitigating action of carrying out the Big Conversation with customers - the outcomes of which would feed into the development of the new target operating model and the new Delivery Plan.

The Board discussed and agreed that the Introduction of Service Standards action should be changed to reflect the development of service standards for all areas was not on hold, rather this action had stopped completely.

Mr P. New, referring to the co-ordinated approach to tackle climate change action, suggested that the Association seek to link in with the development of Group's new strategy in April / May 2023. Mrs MacLean concurred with this approach and confirmed that the outcomes of the previous work with the G8 in this regard had been forwarded to Group's Head of Health, Safety and Environment for consideration as part of the overall Strategy development.

The Board thereafter NOTED the updated version of the Corporate Delivery Plan Highlight Report which was updated in August 2022.

6. **Regulatory Compliance Assessment**

Mrs D. MacLean referred to the proposed timeline and milestones for the regulatory compliance assessment for 2021-22 and advised that the Senior Management Team had met the previous day to review and update the compliance assessment report, an example format of which was included in the paper.

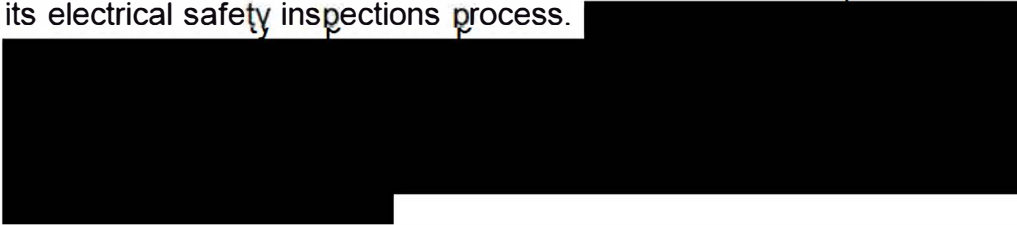
Mrs MacLean advised that following the Scottish Housing Regulator publishing the results of their review of good practice, and a review of peers' approach to the compliance assessment process, proposals for the revised 2022-23 process included moving to a cyclical approach to compliance assessment which was Board-led. The Board welcomed the proposed staged assessment process.

Mr P. New referred to the sample template for the compliance assessment and commented that the layout would be easier to read if the evidence against that assessment of compliance were not on separate pages and suggested using the reporting format used by Group for compliance assessment. Mrs MacLean advised that the reporting toolkit had been developed by the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations with the Scottish Housing Regulator. The Board concurred that the Association should align with the reporting format expected by its regulator. Mrs MacLean suggested that moving forward, rather than multiple reports being presented, that this information could be condensed within one report and the layout altered slightly to make it more user-friendly.

Following its review of the proposals for the regulatory compliance assessment, the Board AGREED that the proposed new approach would provide them with the necessary level of comfort to enable them to provide an Annual Assurance Statement and Improvement Plan to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

7. **ARC Return Corrections**

Mrs D. MacLean advised on the circumstances which prompted the Association to review the information provided in its ARC submission in relation to SHQS compliance, which then led on to an in-depth review of its electrical safety inspections process.



The findings of this review had determined that service improvements were required in relation to the collation of ARC data and also electrical safety inspection programmes.

[REDACTED]

Mrs MacLean updated the Board that in order to address this issue, the current electrical safety programme had been extended [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] It was currently envisaged that all Association properties would have a valid EICR in place by May 2023, hopefully earlier.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The Board discussed the timescales for the completion programme and noted the nature of this time-consuming work and also the availability of contractors to carry out these works, given current demand in the sector.

[REDACTED]

The Board agreed to carrying out a lessons learned exercise with a view to implementing service improvements in relation to EICR testing and compliance and welcomed the separate proposed action that ARC data

quality be subject to an internal audit and the increased networking activity by Officers to ensure that sector issues were flagged in a timely manner.

The Board thereafter:

- a) NOTED the reasons for the required correction to the Riverside Scotland Annual Return on the Charter 2021/22 relating to SHQS compliance.
- b) NOTED the situation regarding out of date EICRs and the actions to be implemented to ensure compliance and accuracy of performance and compliance information and REQUESTED to be regularly updated on progress against improvement actions.
- c) NOTED the Chair's decision under Chair's Action Procedure to approve the data correction to the ARC Return and its submission to the Scottish Housing Regulator.
- d) NOTED that following a meeting of the Notifiable Events Group [REDACTED] agreed that this should be recorded as a Notifiable Event in the Notifiable Event Register and the Scottish Housing Regulator should be advised accordingly.

8. **Policies Review**

Mrs H. Anderson advised on the key features for policies presented for consideration, confirming that Riverside Scotland staff had been involved in the review of the Group Income Collection Policy and the Health, Safety and Environment Policy which were proposed for adoption.

Mr R. Hill highlighted that the references to Irvine Housing Association throughout the Health, Safety and Environment Policy required updating to reflect the Riverside Scotland branding.

Following a question from Mrs M. Burgess, Mrs Anderson confirmed that an element of flexibility had been built into the Rechargeable Repairs Policy which took account of a tenant's ability to pay. The Board also requested that the reference to "repairing a toilet flush" be replaced by another example at the Standard Recharges section.

Mr G. Darroch expressed concerns regarding the Income Collection Policy referring to English legislation and queried whether a separate Policy should be implemented. Mrs Anderson confirmed that the policy contained references to both English and Scottish legislation and that the Housing Service Manager had worked closely with Income

Collection Team to develop the processes and scripts to ensure the Association's customers were provided with the correct advice.

Mrs Anderson also highlighted recent changes in legal guidance which meant that being able to continue or list arrears cases in court was no longer possible. This change would mean an increased focus on early intervention action and meaningful engagement with customers which would have a resource implication.

Subject to the proposed changes to the Riverside Health, Safety and Environment Policy and the Riverside Scotland Rechargeable Repairs Policy being made, the Board:

- a) ADOPTED the Riverside Income Collection Policy
- b) ADOPTED the Riverside Health, Safety and Environment Policy
- c) ADOPTED the Riverside Health, Safety and Environment Statement
- d) APPROVED the Riverside Scotland Rechargeable Repairs Policy.

9. **Rule 67 Statement by the Secretary**

Mrs D. Boyle highlighted the detail of the Statement by the Secretary with regard to compliance with Rules 62 to 66.

The Board NOTED the Secretary's formal statement in relation to Rule 67.

10. **Board Member Nominations**

Mrs D. Boyle advised that Steven Easton had resigned as a co-optee of the Board the previous month and Board Nomination paperwork had thereafter been submitted for the consideration of Steven Easton's proposed nomination to stand for election at the Annual General Meeting.

The Board AGREED the proposed nomination of Steven Easton to stand for election to the Board at the Annual General Meeting and NOTED that given the proposed nomination for election and the proposed re-election of Board Members did not exceed the number of Board vacancies at the AGM, then a vote on this matter would not be required at the Meeting.

11. **Quarterly Performance Report – Q1**

Mrs D. MacLean highlighted that, given recent discussions, tenant safety indicators would be added to the future reporting template.

The Board noted the slight decline in overall customer satisfaction and agreed that the results of the Big Conversation would provide valuable

insight into the key drivers of dissatisfaction in order to address these areas. The improvement in keeping tenants informed indicator was a likely consequence of staff speaking to tenants as part of the Big Conversation survey.

Mrs MacLean reported on a decline in overall repairs and maintenance satisfaction. IT mobilisation issues between the Association and the new contractor and availability of tradesmen in the sector were discussed and Board's disappointment that IT issues continued was noted.

The Board were pleased to note an increase in satisfaction with the management of neighbourhood lived in and queried if the staff turnover rate was causing a concern. The Board were updated on the sector-wide resourcing issue, noting that many housing associations were currently recruiting. The Association had recently been successful in its recruitment exercise for housing and technical services staff and looked forward to welcoming the new staff in early September. The Board requested that their thanks be passed on the staff teams who had continued to deliver the service and contribute to the Big Conversation survey when resources were low.

The Board highlighted a possible anomaly at the total amount of rent collected and gross rent arrears figures and queried the target for the total amount of rent collected. Mrs MacLean undertook to check the data and request that the target of 100% be included in the report.

The Board NOTED the contents of the Quarter 1, Quarterly Performance Report.

12. **Health and Safety Report**

Mrs H. Anderson highlighted that the highest area of incidents and accidents reported in the year had been Covid-related at the start of the year. Since then, the next highest area had been threatening and challenging behaviour towards staff and appropriate de-escalation and trauma informed practice training was being rolled out to all front-line staff.

Mrs Anderson advised that in response to an increase in customer related anti-social behaviour incidents via social media platforms, appropriate guidance for dealing with this type of behaviour was being developed with Group.

The Board thereafter NOTED the health and safety update for the business covering the first quarter of 2022.

13. **Finance Performance Report**

Mrs M. Hutchinson highlighted the key variances between the budget and the Quarter 1 Forecast [REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

Mrs Hutchinson advised that the increase in bad debts and the poor quality of voids were areas of concern and would be closely monitored in the coming months. Following a query from Board, Mrs Hutchinson confirmed that demand, condition of property and customers transferring to a North Ayrshire Council new build estate had all contributed to the increase in voids. Mrs H. Anderson advised that certain properties at Caley House, Kilwinning were proving difficult to let and there was also low demand in the Dumfries and Dronagan areas which officers were keeping a watching brief on.

[REDACTED] It was agreed that long term demand for the Association's stock and the cost of living crisis would be discussed in detail at the October Board Strategy Day.

The Board thereafter NOTED the contents of the Quarter 1 Forecast and the Financial Information for 2022-23.

14. **Progress Report on Developments**

Mrs D. MacLean reported on the 3 new build developments currently on site as follows:

- Tarryholme 2 – was progressing well, with the first units due to be handed over for allocation in the next few weeks.
- Monkton – in progress.
- Dundonald – progressing well, with all modules on site and some units shortly due to be handed over for allocation. The site was receiving good pr exposure and this was generating significant interest within the sector.

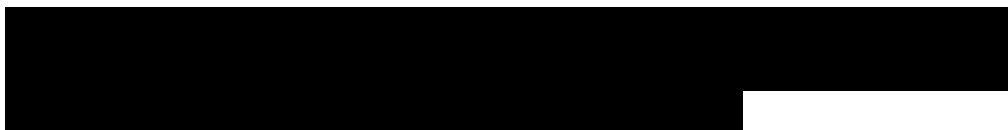
Mrs MacLean updated the Board on the discussion with East Ayrshire Council and the Scottish Government regarding the Association's decision not to proceed with the proposed developments in Kilmarnock, who had been disappointed but understanding of the Association's position.

The Board thereafter NOTED the Progress Reports on Development Projects for August 2022.

15. **Managing Director's Appraisal and Objectives**

Mrs H. Anderson and Mrs M. Hutchinson left the meeting.

Mr J. Strang reported on his appraisal discussion with Mrs D. MacLean confirming that a separate discussion had also taken place between Mrs MacLean and Mr P. New, as the direct report within Group. Mr Strang acknowledged that the proposed objectives were challenging, however, he was confident that they were achievable by Mrs MacLean. Mr New concurred with this view.



The Board thereafter NOTED the report on the Managing Director's appraisal by the Chair and also the proposed objectives for 2022/23. The Board commented that they had been pleased to observe the vigour and clarity that Mrs MacLean had brought to the role to date.

16. **Managing Director's Report**

Mrs H. Anderson and Mrs M. Hutchinson joined the meeting.

a) **The Big Conversation**

Mrs D. MacLean reported on the statistics around the customer contacts made and the next phase of the process to hold 4 externally facilitated focus group meetings. She paid tribute to the full staff team who had contributed to the process, particularly Mrs A. Paxton and Miss L. MacLaughlin, who had carried out the majority of the customer surveys and advised that the team lunch was being organised to thank all staff for their efforts.

Mrs MacLean advised of the plans to present the results of the survey at the Special Board Meeting in September and for this to be discussed in detail at the Board Strategy Day in October.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

c) Pennyburn Regeneration

Mrs MacLean highlighted the challenge of seeking to facilitate a rent increase of less than CPI in 2023/24 and the impact this would have on budgets. This would mean difficult spending decisions would have to be made including plans for the Pennyburn regeneration.

The Board expressed disappointment that plans for the regeneration of Pennyburn may require to be limited, given the high level of investment required in this area. It was agreed that future plans for this area would be discussed further at the Board Strategy Day in October.

d) Scottish Housing Regulator – Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) Reporting

Mrs MacLean highlighted the planned audit of 10 ARC indicators during November to give Board an appropriate level of assurance, the results of which, including any recommended improvement actions would be presented to the Audit & Risk Committee in January 2023.

e) Office Refurbishment

The Board noted it was currently envisaged that the November Board Meeting could be held in the newly refurbished offices and a celebration of the opening between Board and Staff would be organised immediately prior to the Board Meeting.

f) Public Relations Activity

The Board were pleased with the current level of promotion of Riverside Scotland and agreed to consider the re-tweet of information communicated in order to promote the brand far and wide.

The Board thereafter NOTED the current issues and activities across the business detailed in the Managing Director's Report.

17. **Minutes / Updates**

The Board NOTED the:

- a) Confirmed Joint Customer Experience and Care & Support Committee Minutes – 28 April 2022.
- b) Confirmed Group Customer Experience Committee Minutes – 28 April 2022.
- c) Unconfirmed Audit & Risk Committee Minutes – 13 June 2022.
- d) Group Core Briefs – May and July 2022.

18. **Any Other Business**

a) **Board Masterclasses**

Mr J. Strang highlighted the programme for Board Masterclasses for the year and encouraged the Board to attend the sessions or play back the recording. Mr Strang requested if the back catalogue of masterclasses could be made available for Board Members to access.

b) **2023/24 Board Meeting Schedule**

The Board noted the tabled meeting schedule for the 2023/24 and agreed to the following date changes:

- Board Meeting on 23 March 2023 to 30 March 2023, with Board Strategy Day on 31 March 2023
- Board Meeting on 26 October 2023 to 27 October 2023, with Board Strategy Day on 28 October 2023

19. **Date of Next Meeting**

Annual General Meeting 5.30 p.m. - Wednesday 21 September 2022 at the Gailles Hotel, Marine Drive, Irvine
Special Board Meeting 6.00 p.m. – Wednesday 21 September 2022 at the Gailles Hotel, Marine Drive, Irvine

D MacLean
Secretary
19 August 2022
DMcL/db

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Date: