

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.

THE RIVERSIDE GROUP LIMITED
IRVINE HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

Two Hundred and Fifty Fifth Meeting of the Board held at 5.30 p.m. on Thursday 6 July 2023 at 44-46 Bank Street, Irvine and via MS Teams.

Minutes

Present:

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

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

Apologies for Absence

Mr G. Darroch, Mr S. Easton and Mr P. Lynn

Declarations of Interests

Nil.

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Mr G. Darroch, Mr S. Easton, Mr P. Lynn.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

Mrs M. Burgess and Mrs J. Galbraith declared interests as Directors of Thistle Housing Services.

3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting – 254th Board Meeting held on 25 May 2023**

The minutes of the 254th Board Meeting held on 25 May 2023 were APPROVED as an accurate record.

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

The Board commented they were pleased to see the progression and completion of action items and thereafter NOTED the updates on the actions identified from previous Board Meetings.

Referring to the letter issued by the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) at the MD Report – SHR action, the Chair expressed his thanks to the staff team involved in the collation of information requested by the SHR, for producing the quality Board and Committee reports and to the Board and Committee for providing the appropriate level of challenge at its meetings.

5. **Corporate Delivery Plan 2023/26**

Mrs D. MacLean reported that the content of discussions at the Board Strategy Day in March had been reflected within the proposed Delivery Plan. Mrs MacLean advised on the need for the Plan to remain agile, given the ever-changing operating environment and the lessons learned from the previous Plan, developed prior to the Covid pandemic. Mrs MacLean advised that the integration of the One Housing Group would be the main priority for Group in this period [REDACTED]

Mrs MacLean drew attention to the Key Themes – Plan on a Page document which set out the key messages for colleagues to work on to deliver the objectives set out in the Plan. Mr P. New agreed that the Key Themes document would be well used. He suggested that given the current focus on improving the repairs and maintenance service, that a narrative under the Trusted Customer Service objective should be included within the document.

The Chair enquired on the reporting of progress against objectives to Group Board. Mrs MacLean stated that 9 strategies sat below Group's Corporate Plan and the Association's proposed objectives would feed into these strategies, the progress of which would be reported to Group Board on a 6 monthly basis.

The Board thereafter APPROVED the Corporate Delivery Plan 2023/26 and AGREED that some text regarding the improvement of the repairs and maintenance service should be included in the Key Themes – Plan on a Page document.

6. Draft Financial Statements

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

7. **Membership Applications**

The Board APPROVED Peter Lynn’s Membership Application and AUTHORISED the Managing Director / Secretary to enter Peter Lynn’s details in the Membership Register and issue him with a share certificate and a copy of the Rules of the Association.

8. **Succession Planning – AGM Election Schedule**

Mrs D. Boyle advised that, in line with the Rules, a third of the Board were required to stand down at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and also any co-optees to the Board. The Board Members to stand down were usually those who had served longest on the Board since their last election, which would be the Board Members previously elected or re-elected in 2020 and 2021.

The Chair reported that following his recent discussion with Peter Lynn, it was his intention to stand for formal election at the AGM in September.

Mrs D. MacLean advised that the AGM would be held at Fullerton Connexions Community Centre in Irvine this year.

After discussion, the Board:

- a) NOTED that 3 Board Members were required to stand down at the AGM.
- b) AGREED, should there be no voluntary stand-downs, that Jane Galbraith, Tony McInnes and Sohini Petrie would be the 3 Board Members to stand down at the AGM and were eligible to stand for re-election without nomination.
- c) NOTED that, as a co-optee, Peter Lynn, was also required to stand down at the AGM.

POST MEETING NOTE: Tony McInnes, Margaret Burgess and Gerry Darroch would stand down at the AGM and had submitted the required re-election to Board forms.

9. **Code of Conduct**

Mrs D. MacLean advised that the changes to the Code of Conduct made by Group to comply with the National Housing Federation's Code had been reviewed and amended by the Association's solicitors TC Young to ensure the Code complied with the Scottish regulatory environment. The Association's Regulation Manager had also reviewed the revised Code and had no comments or queries on the draft.

Mrs D. Boyle highlighted that the majority of changes proposed by Group had been incorporated within the draft, with the exception of specific references to the National Housing Federation's Code. Amendments had also been made to section 1.8 to bring this line with the Association's Entitlements, Payments and Benefits Policy.

The Board thereafter APPROVED the Association's revised Board and Committee Member Code of Conduct.

It was noted that Mrs D. Boyle would issue the new Code of Conduct for electronic signature by Board Members in due course.

10. **Delivery of Disabled Adaptations**

Mrs D. MacLean referred to previous discussions at Board Meetings regarding disabled adaptations and that the Board had approved the budget for the year, without additional provision for these works, given full funding allocation had been expected in line with previous years. Mrs MacLean reported on peers having differing approaches to disabled adaptation funding, with some part funding disabled adaptations and others not.

Mrs MacLean advised that the purpose of the paper was to decide if a provision should be made within future budgets for these works,

[REDACTED]

Mrs MacLean reported that given the Association had only received 46% of the funding applied for this year, all referrals were being RAG rated in order to prioritise the works to be carried out, with the those presenting a health and safety issue or having a severe impact on a customer's quality of life having the highest priority. The Association also had opportunity to bid for further funding in February, however, it was now unclear if any further funding would be forthcoming.

The Board discussed the concern they had for the impact this would have on customers' quality of life and also customer satisfaction levels. They were disappointed with the government's decision to significantly reduce the funding provided for these works and agreed that future provision should be made for these works within budgets.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The Board discussed making representations directly to the Scottish Government as well as through the Scottish Federation of Housing Association's (SFHA) on the impact this decision would have on customers' quality of lives and also housing associations financial position, especially given they had applied low rent increases this year at a time when operating costs had increased significantly. Mrs MacLean confirmed that this matter would be raised at the SFHA's CE Forum meeting.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Mrs M. Burgess suggested that the representations were made to SFHA, particularly given their involvement and negotiations with the Scottish Government regarding housing associations agreeing to hold rent increases below 6% this year. It was particularly disappointing that the Scottish government had now cut funding when housing associations had agreed their rent increases knowing their costs would be significantly higher than rent increases this year.

[REDACTED]

The Board thereafter:

- a) INSTRUCTED the Managing Director to bring a further paper for consideration on the options of changes which could be made within the current year's budget in order to fund disabled adaptations.
- b) AGREED that provision be made in future year's budgets in order to fund required disabled adaption works beyond the funding allowance provided by the Scottish Government.

11. **Performance Targets 2023/24**

Mrs M. Hutchinson highlighted that the proposed targets had been discussed and proposed by both the Leadership Team and the Senior Management Team. Generally speaking, the customer satisfaction

performance was being targeted at 70%, repairs and maintenance performance at 80% and compliance performance at 100%.

Following a query from Mr T. McInnes, Mrs Hutchinson confirmed that the gross rent arrears target of 5.7% was in line with what had been agreed as part of the Income Collection Improvement Plan agreed at the Audit & Risk Committee meeting.



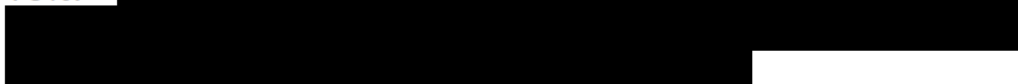
Mr R. Hill commented that targets 2 and 7 were lower than the previous year's targets which was not ideal, however, he understood the logic. Mrs MacLean agreed and advised that the target had been based on the previous quarter target of 64.8%.



Mr P. New understood the 70% target for customer satisfaction, however suggested tracking the planned direction of travel for the 3 year vision of the Corporate Plan. Mrs MacLean confirmed that this had been incorporated in the Delivery Plan which tracked further increases in customer satisfaction year on year in the Plan, projecting 80% by year 3.



Mr P. New referred to the satisfaction with quality of home target and commented that, given the focus on pausing development to focus on planned improvement works to existing properties, he wondered why the target would be set at a lower level than the previous year. After discussion, it was agreed that this target would be changed from 70% to 73%.



Following review of the proposed targets, the Board AGREED the performance framework, subject to target 7 being changed from 70% to 73%.

12. **Regulatory Compliance Assessment**

Mrs M. Hutchinson advised that given new members of staff would now be working on the regulatory compliance assessment process, they had taken the opportunity to review and amend the process presented. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The Board thereafter:

- a) APPROVED the Annual Assurance Statement Review Process Cycle – Proposed timeline and key milestones
- b) AGREED to the distribution of the Board questionnaire.
- c) AGREED they were content to wait until the annual cycle in October to identify areas of further investigation for next year's assessment.

13. **Operational Performance Report**

Mrs D. MacLean reported on the current performance issues with the repairs and maintenance contactor, [REDACTED] and how this was being managed by the team. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Mrs MacLean then updated on progress towards resolving the IT interfacing issues [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] It was currently projected that this work would be complete by mid-July, however, once complete, other issues could become apparent which may require additional resource to resolve. The Board were disappointed by the further delays, given the impact these issues were having on the Association's ability to manage the repairs contract effectively, and ultimately the impact on customer satisfaction levels.

[REDACTED] Mrs MacLean advised that officers were managing the contractor as best they could and updated on the actions being taken to ensure that the contractor remained focused on providing the service in accordance with the main contract.

[REDACTED]

In response to a query from the Board regarding the Association's gas contract, Mrs MacLean advised that the gas contractor, Frews were currently performing well. There did, however, continue to be some IT and data issues to resolve.

The Board thereafter NOTED the operational performance position as at the end of P2 2023.

14. **Financial Performance Report**

Mrs M. Hutchinson reported that period 2 performance had been disappointing, however, it had been an improvement on period 1 and period 3 was currently seeing further improvement. Officers were now working on the first quarterly forecast and detailed reviews with budget holders were currently being worked on at a transactional level to try to find savings to improve budget performance later in the year.

[REDACTED]

The Board thereafter NOTED the financial performance report for the first two months of the financial year 2023/24.

15. **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan 2022-23**

Mrs M. Hutchinson reported that the majority of actions had now been completed, with the remaining actions in progress. Officers were working jointly with Group on a review of the website and an additional action had been added to organise quarterly training for staff on the protected characteristics.

The Board thereafter NOTED the update provided on the 2022-23 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan.

16. **Managing Director's Report**

a) **Launch of our new Corporate Plan**

Mrs D. MacLean reported that the visit by Carol Matthews, Group's Chief Executive and Tony Blows, Chief Information Officer, to Irvine for the Corporate Plan Roadshow had been well received by staff. Carol had since been invited back to the Irvine office and planned to visit with The One Housing Group's new Chief Executive, Jehan Weerasinghe in September.

b) **Housing First Study**

Mrs MacLean advised on the Association's Housing First for Families service being evaluated by Dr Joanna Miller of Napier University. This service had been funded by the Scottish Government and it was hoped that the positive findings of this study would assist to mainstream this valuable service. It was intended that Dr Miller would be invited to speak on the findings of the survey once complete.

c) **Whistleblowing Policy**

Mrs MacLean highlighted the Whistleblowing Policy attached to the paper which had recently been updated to align One Housing Group's policy with that of the Group's policy. Mrs MacLean reported that minor changes had been made to the Policy which was attached for information and adoption. The Board thereafter adopted the Whistleblowing Policy.

d) **Board Training**

The Chair reported on the quality of the Finance Training Session which had recently been provided by Mrs M. Hutchinson, which

covered a complex subject area and was delivered in an easy to understand format. Mrs MacLean encouraged Board Members to utilise the training sessions being organised, as well as, the Group Board Masterclasses. The Chair reported that Mrs D. Boyle would make recordings of training sessions available on the Board Member's Sharepoint site.

e) Ministerial Visit to Tarryholme

Mrs MacLean reported that Paul McLennan, Minister for Housing, would be visiting the Tarryholme development on 2 August 2023. The Board suggested that this may be a good opportunity to discuss current issues such as disabled adaptations funding [REDACTED] Mrs MacLean undertook to liaise with the Chair regarding the detail of the visit once known.

17. **Minutes / Updates**

The Board NOTED the:

- a) Unconfirmed Audit & Risk Committee Meeting Minutes – 15 June 2023.
- b) Confirmed Customer Experience Committee Meeting Minutes – 27 April 2023.
- c) Group Board Highlights – 11 and 18 May 2023.

18. **Any Other Business**

Staff

The Chair requested that the Board's thanks be passed on to all staff for their efforts in their day-to-day roles which was valued by Board in the current challenging times.

Following a query from Board, Mrs D. MacLean commented on the challenging operating environment and that officers were seeking to arrange a social event and also appropriate well-being and resilience training for staff. A discussion followed on other staff support options, to be considered as part of the development of a staff well-being plan.

16. **Date of Next Meetings**

256th Board Meeting - 5.30 p.m. on Thursday 24 August 2023 at Riverside Scotland's Offices, 44-46 Bank Street, Irvine and via MS Teams.

D MacLean
Secretary
8 July 2023
DMcL/db

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Date: