

THE RIVERSIDE GROUP LIMITED
IRVINE HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

Two Hundred and Fifty Sixth Meeting of the Board held at 5.30 p.m. on
Thursday 24 August 2023 at 44-46 Bank Street, Irvine and via MS Teams.

Minutes

Present:

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

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

Apologies for Absence

Mrs. J Galbraith and Mr S. Stewart

Declarations of Interests

Nil.

1. **Preliminaries**

Mr J. Strang welcomed everyone to the meeting. He thanked the Board for participating in the recent Board Member appraisal process and undertook to issue all record of discussions for agreement within the week.

Mr Strang then highlighted that the Managing Director and himself were due to give a presentation spotlighting Riverside Scotland at the next Group Customer Experience Committee Meeting on 21 September 2023.

2. **Apologies for Absence**

Mrs J. Galbraith and Mr S. Stewart.

3. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no interests to declare.

4. **Minutes of Previous Meeting – 255th Board Meeting held on 6 July 2023**

The minutes of the 255th Board Meeting held on 6 July 2023 were APPROVED as an accurate record, subject to Item 16.e) being amended to reflect the Chair only being contacted regarding the Housing Minister's visit.

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

a) **Car Allowance Criteria**

Mrs D. MacLean suggested that this action was closed down, given it was not an Association action. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The Board agreed to the removal of the action.

b) **Delivery of Disabled Adaptations**

Mr G. Darroch enquired on the timing of the report on disabled adaptation funding being presented to Board. Mrs D. MacLean advised that officers proposed to present a report towards the end of the year when there was more clarity about the financial contribution required [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Mrs MacLean stated that due to budgets being extremely tight in the current year, it was more prudent to review the Association's budget position towards the end of the year to establish the feasible options available.

[REDACTED]

6. **Annual Assurance Statement Review**

Mrs M. Hutchinson highlighted that following the updated assessment process being agreed at the previous Board Meeting, the questionnaire had been issued to the Board and the results presented, the key points of which were:

- The Board was comfortable with the compliance assessment process in place.
- Regular training should be considered to ensure obligations were understood.

The Board thereafter NOTED the update report and the results of the Board Questionnaire on the Annual Assurance Process.

7. **Policy Schedule Update**

Mrs M. Hutchinson advised that the Project and Planning Analysts were seeking to align the Association's Policy Schedule with that of Group's, working towards harmonising the majority of policies with Group's, unless a separate Riverside Scotland policy was required to ensure the Association complied with Scottish legislation / regulation.

Mrs Hutchinson highlighted the policies which were due for review / were yet to be brought to the Board for adoption and advised that these policies would be presented to Board as they were worked through. The risk of these policies not being presented to date was limited, given there had been no legislative changes impacting the policies in question.

Following a query from Mr R. Hill regarding the approval process for the HR and IT policies, Mrs D. MacLean advised that approval of these policies by the Senior Management Team was in line with the Association's scheme of delegation. HR policies relating to staff terms and conditions, salaries and redundancy should, however, be brought to the Board for approval and the Policy Framework would be updated to reflect this. Mrs MacLean also undertook to provide an update to Board in her MD Report on any policies which were approved by the Senior Management Team in line with the Framework and make the policies available in the document library of Convene for the Board to view.

Mr P. New highlighted that there appeared to be 2 Complaints Policies contained in the Policy Schedule which should be reduced to one to avoid confusion. Mrs MacLean advised that the Association would require to have its own Complaints Policy rather than adopting Group's in this instance, given the statutory requirement for it to adhere to the timescales set out in the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman's Model Complaints Handling Procedures.

The Board thereafter APPROVED the updated Policy Review Process and the Policy Framework, subject to the agreed changes.

8. **Board Member Nominations**

After consideration, the Board APPROVED the proposed nomination of Peter Lynn to the Board.

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

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

10. **MD Appraisal**

Mrs D. Boyle and Mrs M. Hutchinson left the Meeting for discussion of this item.

Following discussion, the Board:

- a) NOTED the update on the MD's objectives for 2022/23.
- b) AGREED the outcome of the discussion with the MD detailed in the report.
- c) AGREED the MD's objectives for 2023/24.

Mrs Boyle and Mrs Hutchinson re-joined the Meeting.

11. **Responsive Repairs Service Position**

Mrs D. MacLean advised that the current Asset & Compliance Manager had resigned from post and his employment was due to end on 8 September 2023. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

After full discussion, it was agreed that the role would be advertised in the usual way, however, if there were difficulties in recruiting to this role, that the matter should be brought before the Board for further consideration.

[REDACTED]

The Board remained concerned about the potential impact on contractor performance and customer satisfaction levels due to the staffing changes, however, acknowledged that the Senior Management Team would concentrate resources as appropriate to avoid any negative impact.

The Board thereafter NOTED the progress in the repairs service delivery since February 2023 and AGREED to monitor contractor performance for a further 6 months.

12. **Quarterly Performance Report – Q1 2023**

Mrs D. MacLean advised that customer satisfaction had increased very slightly. An analysis of complaints had been carried out and themes around historic repairs and previous commitments regarding works contracts given by former employees had been identified.

Mrs MacLean stated that the new Customer and Community Engagement Officer was making good progress connecting with communities. The Association had recently taken the decision to withdraw from attending the Pennyburn Tenants and Residents

Association meetings since adopting the model of setting up pop-up scrutiny groups to look at areas which were of concern to customers – the first of which was considering the fly-tipping issue in the Pennyburn estate which all customers in the area had been invited to.

Mrs MacLean also reported an improvement in repairs and maintenance satisfaction. A voids task-force had been set up to review processes with the aim of achieving a 10% reduction in void costs. It was hoped that void turnaround times could also be improved now that all new build developments allocations were complete.

Following a query from Mr R. Hill regarding EICR compliance performance, Mrs MacLean advised that performance in this area would increase and decrease within the year on a trend basis, depending on the timing of when abeyances from the previous year were added into the annual programme.

Mr Hill enquired on the outstanding fire risk assessment actions and Mrs MacLean advised that the 23 outstanding actions related to low level works which were currently being progressed.

Mr P. New enquired on the colour coding methodology in the report. On further discussion it was agreed that reports should compare the quarter's results with the same quarter the previous year and also the previous quarter and that a narrative should be included in the report which made this clear.

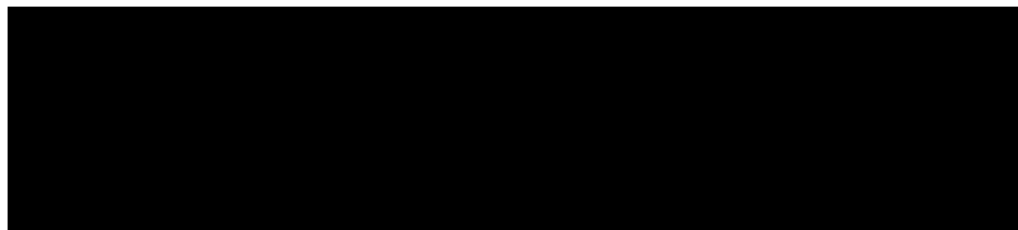
Mr G. Darroch suggested that indicator 9, "Average length of time to complete non-emergency repairs" was split out to provide information on both urgent and routine repairs. This was agreed.

Mrs M. Hutchinson undertook to have the agreed updates incorporated within the next report.

The Board thereafter NOTED the content of the operational performance position as at Q1 2023.

13. **Financial Performance Report**

Mrs M. Hutchinson highlighted that the report included both the Quarter 1 forecast and also the year to date performance for the first 4 months of 2023/24.



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The Board expressed its thanks to budget holders for identifying the savings in Quarter 1 to seek to bring the Association back within the budget for the year.

[REDACTED]

The Board thereafter NOTED the Quarter 1 Forecast and the financial performance for the first 4 months of the financial year 2023/24.

14. **Managing Director's Report**

a) Energy Adviser Funding

Mrs D. MacLean highlighted the positive results of collaborative working with the Eydent partners, to be able to provide energy advice to assist customers.

b) SHR Discussion Paper

Mrs MacLean advised that the Chair had been involved in the discussions to develop the Association's response to the SHR's Discussion Paper on the Regulatory Framework. It was currently envisaged that requirements in relation to health and safety and damp and mould would be included in the revised Framework. The Board noted that representations on the fair comparison of customer satisfaction results had been included in the Association's response.

c) Pennyburn



The Board noted the Senior Management Team's decision to make an offer to purchase 2 properties in the Pennyburn area which would tip the Association's ownership of the block into majority ownership. Funding to purchase the properties had been confirmed by North Ayrshire Council, however, the Association would require to front-fund the purchase of the properties, if successful.

d) Ministerial Visit

Mrs D. MacLean advised that the reduction of disabled adaptation funding had been raised with the Minister for Housing at his recent visit. Mr R. Hill suggested that this matter be followed up formally with a letter.

Mrs MacLean advised that the Minister had been interested in the Association's work with veterans and was keen to be involved in any

future events. Mrs M. Burgess suggested that the Minister for Veterans should also be invited to any future events.

e) PR and Marketing Activity

Mrs Burgess enquired on a recent article regarding providing skills training to customers through Bells and the Ayrshire College. Mrs MacLean undertook to forward information on this article to the Board for information.

f) Development Progress Update

Mr J. Strang commented on the recently completed developments he had visited as part of the stock tour that week. A discussion followed on the level of input the Association had for the design of properties purchased “off the shelf”. The Board noted that the Association had recently been approached regarding the purchase of new build properties but had declined this offer.

g) Electrical Safety

Mrs MacLean advised on the recent guidance which had been issued from the Scottish Federation of Housing Association’s in relation to forcing access to carry out electrical safety works. A detailed discussion followed, and the Board agreed that the Association should commence with this action in line with the guidance with effect from 1 September 2023, and suggested that correspondence to customers in this regard, advise that the Association was acting on guidance provided by the SFHA.

15. **Minutes / Updates**

The Board NOTED the:

- a) Confirmed Customer Experience Committee Meeting Minutes – 29 June 2023.
- b) Group Board Highlights – 13 July 2023.

16. **Any Other Business**

a) Meeting Dates for 2024/25

The proposed meeting dates for 2024/25 were tabled and agreed.

b) Future Meetings

Mrs D. MacLean advised that the Annual General Meeting and Special Board Meeting would be held in the Fullarton Connexions Community Centre in Irvine. It was intended moving forward that the Association would utilise community facilities where practical for outside of the office meeting requirements and suggested that a future Board Meeting in Dumfries be arranged to include a stock tour of the area as part of the day. This was agreed.

16. **Date of Next Meetings**

Annual General Meeting - 5.30 p.m. and Special Board Meeting – 6.30 p.m. - both meetings on Wednesday 20 September 2023 at Fullarton Connexions Community Centre, Church Street, Irvine.

D MacLean
Secretary
25 August 2023
DMcL/db

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Date: