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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 Eighth Meeting of the Board held at 5.30 p.m. on
Thursday 1 February 2024 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 (T), Mrs. J Galbraith, Mr T. McInnes, Mr P. New,
Mrs S. Petrie and Mr S. Stewart.

In attendance were: Mrs D. MacLean, Mrs H. Anderson
(Items 1-12), Mrs D. Boyle (Items 1-12), Ms H. Duff (Items 1-
12) and Mrs M. Hutchinson.

Apologies for Absence

Mr R. Hill and Mr P. Lynn

Declarations of Interests

Nil.

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Mr R. Hill and Mr P. Lynn.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no interests to declare.

3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting – 257th Board Meeting held on 29
November 2023**

The minutes of the 257th Board Meeting held on 29 November 2023 were
APPROVED as an accurate record.

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

Mrs M. Hutchinson advised that the Senior Management Team recommended that production of a Value for Money Statement was removed as a current action and this was worked on in time if there was a requirement to do so. The Board AGREED to removal of this item as a current action.

The Board thereafter NOTED the updates provided in the Matters Arising Action List.

5. **Budget 2024/25**

Mrs M. Hutchinson advised that the draft budget presented reflected the previous Board discussions at the October and November Board Meetings, with the exception of one change.

Mrs Hutchinson highlighted the budget was based on the recommended 6.7% rent increase, the lowest of the 3 rent increase options customers had been consulted on. The response rate to the consultation had been 9.74% and any other issues raised as part of consultation process had been referred on to the relevant team for follow-up action.

Mrs Hutchinson stated that the next financial year had 53 Mondays which meant there would be 49 rent charges applied in the year rather than the usual 48. The Board noted the impact this would have on those customers paying their rent monthly and those in receipt of Universal Credit. Following a query from the Chair, Mrs D. MacLean advised that the Association's Affordability Officer would be contacting those customers affected to provide early advice and support.

Mrs Hutchinson highlighted the following budget assumptions relating to income:

- the suspension of the rent harmonisation charges.
- factoring charges in line with service charges increase at 6.7%, however, factoring charges were variable and would reflect the actual costs incurred during the year.

• [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The Association had proposed the lowest of the 3 options consulted on which was in line with CPI. This allowed the Association to increase its capital programme budget in order to make a real difference to customers homes in line with their aspirations.

A discussion followed on the Association's cautious and prudent approach to setting rent increases in line with CPI in order to ensure it had a long term viable business, able to face future challenges and keep customers safe. Mrs MacLean advised that the proposed rent increase was lower than Group's proposed rent increase of 7.7% and other housing associations in the sector who were now applying high rent increases, given they had previously made decisions to freeze their rents.

[REDACTED]

The Chair commented that a prudent approach to budget planning was the right thing to do for customers. The Association was on a journey to improve its customer satisfaction levels and provide good quality homes. It was therefore important for the Association to strike the right balance in keeping rent levels as low as possible, yet still generating enough income to be able to carry out the level of capital investment works required to the Association's properties. Officers were very prudent in the management of budgets, continually striving to achieve savings where possible.



The Board enquired if the comments made as part of the rent consultation could be attributed to certain issues specific to communities. Mrs MacLean advised that this level of analysis could be carried out and had been identified as an objective in the Corporate Plan Delivery Plan. It was therefore intended that this piece of work would be taken forward once the new Head of Housing was in post.

After full consideration, the Board:

- a) APPROVED the rent increase of 6.7%.
- b) APPROVED the 2024/25 budget.
- c) APPROVED the suspension of rent harmonisation for 2024/25 and requested that a report was provided next year regarding proposals to address the remainder of the rent harmonisation process.

6. **Corporate Plan Delivery Plan Update**

The Board NOTED the update provided on work to progress the Corporate Plan Delivery Plan.

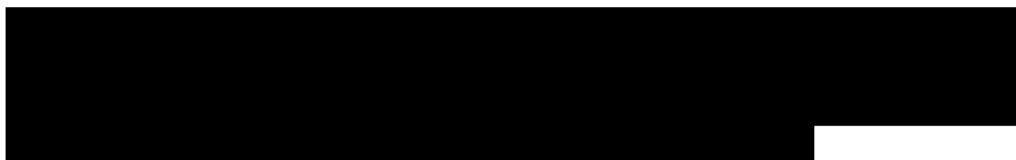
7. **Dumfries IWI Project Update**

The Board welcomed Ms H. Duff, Asset Investment & Programme Manager to the organisation.

Ms Duff gave an update on the internal wall insulation project in the Dumfries area which was nearing completion. The fully-funded contract had been delivered by Union Technical and involved the insertion of an internal wall insulation bead to the cavity of the Association's 294 sandstone properties in Stakeford. These properties had proved difficult to heat and there had previously been limited options to improve this due to the build type. Works had now been completed on 273 properties and the Tenant Partners were currently working with the Asset Team to ensure customers provided access to have the remaining works carried out to the outstanding properties.

Ms Duff advised that prior to the commencement of the works contract, Switchee devices were installed to properties to allow the monitoring of the difference in heat levels pre and post works. These devices also provided information on high humidity levels to assist with damp and mould identification and eradication, with monthly reports being issued to the Tenant Partners to action and work with the customer to resolve any issues identified.

Ms Duff reported on the positive feedback which had been received in relation to the installation works and also the contractor, with annual savings of up to c.£500 being reported. The Board noted that the Association would continue to seek further funding opportunities with a view to delivering similar works in other operating areas.



The Board were pleased to note the work carried out to date and the impact this had had on customers in Dumfries and suggested the appropriate promotion of the project outcomes in the Association's publications.

Mrs H. Anderson commented on the success of the project and how the learning from this process would be incorporated into the future whole house approach, including net zero works planned in 2024/25. Mrs Anderson advised on the quality of the customer service provided by the contractor, Union Technical, often going "above and beyond" to support vulnerable customers and also the collaborative working with the Housing and Asset Teams to successfully deliver the project. The Board requested that their appreciation was passed on to everyone involved in the project.

The Board thereafter NOTED the progress report on the completion of works to install Internal Wall Insulation to the Association's Dumfries properties.

8. **Repairs and Maintenance Position**

Mrs H. Anderson gave a report on the current position of the Association's repairs and maintenance service, highlighting the previous challenges experienced with IT, legacy covid issues, staffing changes and a general increase in the volume of repairs reported. The Board noted the actions carried out during the year to improve the service which had saw a steady improvement in customer satisfaction levels during the first 2 quarters.

Mrs Anderson then reported on the unfortunate decline in satisfaction levels since September, particularly on satisfaction with latest repair. It was noted that there had been further changes in the Association's Asset Team around this time. On appointment, Ms Duff had reviewed the current service and had worked with Mrs Anderson to develop the repairs and maintenance service improvement plan, focussing on the fundamental areas requiring improvement [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The Board were disappointed that customer satisfaction had not continued to improve and agreed the main area of focus [REDACTED]


[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



The Board thereafter NOTED the performance of the repairs service over the past 6 months and the actions to be implemented to improve the overall position. The Board requested that an update report on improvement actions and performance be provided in a further 6 months.

9. **Quarterly Performance Report**

Mrs H. Anderson reported on a dip in performance levels since the previous quarter for the majority of key performance indicators, particularly the customer satisfaction indicators. Given the repairs and maintenance service was a key driver for satisfaction, officers would be driving forward the improvement actions previously discussed to improve these indicators.

Mrs Anderson stated that it had been disappointing to note that customer engagement indicators had declined, given the work the Customer and Community Engagement Officer's recent work with the Pennyburn and Dumfries communities. It had been noted, however, that the Association could improve on its promotion and communication on social media platforms to ensure daily updates were provided on the Association's activities. The Board agreed on the importance of getting the good news stories out to communities.

Mrs Anderson advised that following the resolution of the IT interfacing issues and changes being made on the system to ensure CSC were only able allocate repairs appointments in line with the contractors scheduling system, an improvement in the repairs appointments being kept indicator was expected.

Referring to building safety compliance, Mrs Anderson reported on 99.1% EICR compliance at quarter end and advised she was confident of achieving full compliance by year end. Mrs Anderson advised that all building safety processes were being reviewed and updated to ensure they aligned closely with the policies in place. The Board enquired on legionella compliance performance, given this information was not included in the report. Mrs Anderson advised that there had been an issue with the data pulling from the system for the report, however, this information would be available for year end reporting. Ms Duff confirmed that the relevant inspections were being carried out and tracked, the data omission in the report was purely a system issue which was being worked on.

Mrs D. MacLean advised that overall satisfaction figures for January had been received and an increase in overall satisfaction levels from the previous month to 67.8% was pleasing to report.

The Board thereafter NOTED the content of the operational performance position as at Quarter 3 2023/24.

10. **Financial Performance Report**

Mrs M. Hutchinson reported on a strong financial performance to the end of December. Referring to the quarter 3 forecast, Mrs Hutchison advised that the Association was performing well, [REDACTED]

The Board thereafter NOTED the Quarter 3 Forecast and the financial performance report for the first 9 months of the financial year 2023/24.

11. **MD Report**

a) Affordability Officer

Mrs D. MacLean was pleased to report that Riverside Foundation funding had been confirmed for a further year to enable to the continued employment of the Affordability Officer post.

b) Board Recruitment

The Board noted the Association's plans to recruit Board Members in order to strengthen the Association's overall Board skills and also seek a new Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee, given Mr R. Hill's term as Committee Chair was due to end in September.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

d) Hive Survey Results

Mrs MacLean was pleased to report that the top line Hive Survey Results had been received and there had been a marked improvement to the employee net promoter score, a measure of whether you would recommend Riverside Scotland as an employer, to +21 from the previous score of -45. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The Board noted that due to the high response rate of the recent survey, this was an accurate measure of current staff feedback. Mrs MacLean commented on the quality of the staff team and how well they worked together and supported each other during the year. The Board acknowledged that it had been a difficult year and expressed its thanks to the Senior Management Team and the whole staff team in achieving the excellent result.

The Board thereafter NOTED the content of the MD's Report.

12. Minutes / Updates

The Board NOTED the:

- a) Unconfirmed Audit & Risk Committee Meeting Minutes – 11 January 2024.
- b) Unconfirmed Customer Experience Committee Meeting Minutes – 30 November 2023.
- c) Group Board Highlights – 20 November and 14 December 2023.

Mrs H. Anderson, Mrs D. Boyle and Ms Duff left the Meeting.

13. Any Other Business

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

14. **Date of Next Meetings**

259th Board Meeting – 5.30 p.m. on Thursday 21 March 2024 via MS Teams.

D MacLean
Secretary
2 February 2024
DMcL/db

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Date: