

EAST LOTHIAN HOUSING ASSOCIATION

A virtual meeting of the **Management Committee** was held on Thursday 25 February 2021 at 7.00pm, using Microsoft Teams

The Chair welcomed Eric Stoddart, as this was his first meeting, since taking over the role of Executive Support Officer on 14 December 2020.

Present:	Peter Hayman	(3/3)	David Rose	(3/3)
	Jim Curran	(3/3)	Joyce Bolan	(3/3)
	Peter Ewart	(3/3)	Iain Atkinson	(3/3)
	Brian Logan	(3/3)	Alan Forsyth	(3/3)
	Shirley Evans	(2/3)	Eileen Shand	(2/3)

In attendance: Paula Oliver, Director of Finance
 Martin Pollhammer, Chief Executive
 Duncan Mackay, Director of Asset Management
 Karen Barry, Director of Housing
 Eric Stoddart, Executive Support Officer (Minutes)

1.0 GENERAL

1.1 Apologies

There were no apologies.

1.2 Declarations of Interest by Management Committee Members

There were no Declarations of Interest.

1.3 Minutes of Meeting 26 November 2020

The Minutes were **approved** by the Management Committee. They were proposed by David Rose and seconded by Peter Hayman.

1.4 Action List

The Management Committee noted the report.

1.5 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

2.0 GOVERNANCE

2.1 Secretary's Report

The Management Committee **approved** the use of the Seal for Homologation.

2.2 **Key Performance Indicators 2020/21**

The Chief Executive advised that there was nothing of concern in the report. It had been noted at the Audit & Assurance Committee meeting on 23 February 2021 that performance across the service specific Performance Indicators was also very good, illustrating how well staff had managed to keep service standards high during the pandemic. Rent Arrears performance was excellent, and the Universal Credit position thought to be better than any other landlord working at any scale with Universal Credit in the UK.

Shirley Evans queried the Unit Reactive Maintenance Costs of £793. The Chief Executive confirmed that this is the cost, and is what will be reported in the ARC to the Scottish Housing Regulator. However, in explaining the variance, the adjustments referred to in the report are attributable to the pandemic, and without this performance would be around the expected level.

The Management Committee noted the Report for Information.

2.3 **Use of the Association's Contractors and Suppliers Procedure**

The Chief Executive provided a brief background, indicating that the original procedure had been drawn up by the Association's solicitors, Anderson Strathern. However, in practical use, confusion had arisen between what was simply an interest that should be declared, and what required approval. Some slight changes have therefore been made to try and help clarify how and when staff and Management Committee members need to make a Declaration, along with a revised process for using R3 Direct for Larger Jobs, which does require approval.

Peter Hayman requested that the forms be added to the Management Committee area of the ELHA website, including the List of Suppliers. The Chief Executive confirmed this would be done once the Procedure is approved.

It was also highlighted that reference to staff / governing body member engaging with a contractor (Paragraph 1, Bullet Point 2) would not be feasible, if using R3, as there will be a known relationship. The Chief Executive agreed to look at this point again, and make an appropriate adjustment.

The Management Committee **approved** the amendments to the Use of the Association's Contractors / Suppliers Procedure, subject to the amendments required.

3.0 **PRIORITY ITEMS**

3.1 **Care & Repair Budget 2021/22**

The Management Committee noted the report for Information.

4.0 POLICIES

4.1 These Homes Policy

The Director of Housing provided background to the report, and advised that the full review of the Allocations Policy had been previously postponed pending the release of Scottish Government Guidance 'Social Housing Allocations in Scotland: A Practice Guide'. It was then further delayed due to the development of the new digital lettings service, These Homes, which now has an expected 'Go Live' date of 22 March 2021.

It was also highlighted that, given the overall number of changes to the Policy, and the fact that this is such an important policy for the Association, it is proposed that following approval, the policy is re-written to ensure it is clear and in Plain English for applicants and tenants.

Shirley Evans highlighted that in connection with a Scottish Secure Tenancy (Page 9, last Paragraph), that the wording should be amended to reflect the tenant's 'right to appeal' the decision.

Also, that on Page 5 of the Report (Section 4.1, 3rd Paragraph) this should be clarified to show that the discretionary power relates to the length of the suspension, and proposed replacing 'Timescales' with 'Length of'.

In terms of properties designed to wheelchair standard (Page 9, 3rd Bullet Point), it was thought there are restrictions around offering short term lets that would prevent the proposed approach from being taken. It was agreed that the Director of Housing would check and report back on this point. It is likely that this section will now be removed from the Policy.

Eileen Shand raised the 'Pets Issue' (Page 10) and suggested that the wording reflect 'we do not normally allow dogs in flats'. The Chief Executive recommended adding a further note that the word 'normally' also meant 'subject to approval', and this was agreed. The Director of Housing will make the appropriate amendments.

It was also proposed that, there might be merit in using a different example (Page 12, last Paragraph) to illustrate the point about drug use. This was agreed.

The Management Committee also discussed what would be the most appropriate name for the Policy, and it was agreed it should be titled 'These Homes (Allocations)' Policy.

The Management Committee **approved** the proposed changes to the Allocations Policy, and the adoption of the (revised) title 'These Homes (Allocation)', subject to the amendments highlighted.

4.2 Comments and Complaints Policy Review

The Management Committee noted the amendments to the policy.

The Management Committee **approved** the amendments to the Comments and Complaints Policy.

4.3 **Communication Strategy**

Peter Ewart asked if further consideration could be given on how to report on social media interaction to include reach / impressions made. The Chief Executive agreed to look further at this with the Customer Information Officer.

The Management Committee **approved** the Communications Strategy

5.0 **BUSINESS MANAGEMENT**

There were no reports for this section.

6.0 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 25 March 2021 at ELHA Head Office, Haddington at 7.00pm.

**ADOPTION OF THESE MINUTES APPROVED AT THE MEETING ON
25 MARCH 2021**

Signed *Signature* (Chair)