

**Minute of the Board of Management Meeting of Muirhouse Housing Association on 8 November 2021, held via Video Call**

<b>Present</b>	Iain Strachan (Chair)	Drew Moore
	Martin Thoronka	Julie Smith
	Roy Douglas	

<b>In Attendance</b>	Barry Allan – ICE (Interim Chief Executive)
	Mike Gourlay – AMO (Asset Management Officer)
	Susan Bell – GCM (Governance & Compliance Manager)
	Stephanie Sedstrem – HSTL (Acting Housing Services Team Leader)
	Lisa Murray – FCSA (Finance and Corporate Services Assistant) - Minute

The meeting started at 18:32

Ref.	Item	Action
	<b>GOVERNANCE</b>	
1.	<b>CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS</b>  The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. MHA Board agreed to take confidential items 5 & 7 at the end of the meeting and staff will leave before the items are covered.	
2.	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS</b>  Roy & Martin – MH4	
3.	<b>APOLOGIES</b>  Eric, Pascale, Willie, Grace	
	<b>REPORTS AND MINUTES (FOR APPROVAL)</b>	
4.	<b>MINUTES FROM MEETING 16 AUGUST 2021 &amp; 27 SEPTEMBER 2021</b>  The MHA Board approved the minutes from 16 <sup>th</sup> August Meeting Roy proposed and Drew seconded.  The MHA Board approved the minutes from 27 <sup>th</sup> September Meeting Martin proposed and Roy seconded.	<b>Approved</b>  <b>Approved</b>



Ref.	Item	Action
6.	<p><b>MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE</b></p> <p>ICE spoke to the MHA Board to confirm the loan refinancing exercise was completed on 31 August 2021 and confirmed that the covenants have been updated in the management accounts.</p> <p>ICE addressed the comment for the lessons learned from the Staffing Survey – these will be picked up at the next SSC meeting (date to be confirmed), once the options appraisal has been completed. The ICE will arrange a date with the MHA Chair and Chair of SSC.</p> <p>GCM updated the MHA Board that the information has been sent to the FCA to register the 2020 model rules but no response has been received as yet.</p> <p>ICE spoke to the comment made on Convene by a Board Member regarding concerns that the remedial works out at Macgill Drive may invalid the guarantee with Springfield. [REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>The MHA Board noted the Matters Arising Schedule from 27th September 2021.</p>	<p><b>ICE</b></p> <p><b>GCM</b></p> <p><b>ICE</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p>
8.	<p><b>QUARTERLY STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE REVIEW</b></p> <p>The ICE told the MHA Board that some dates have been revised due to best use of staff resources and prioritising other work. The rent setting policy has been put back to Dec 21, which is still in line with the policy review schedule. The rent setting report will come to Board on 23 November 2021. The tenants action plan hasn't been completed yet and staff will be arranging face-to-face tenant gathering at a time when staff and tenants are able to gather together to ensure we have tenant input on this matter. The ICE told the Board that we are still in an information gathering stage for EESH 2, similar to many other HAs, and the strengthening of governance has been completed or on target. ICE told the Board that the ARCHIE group is still meeting regularly.</p>	



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	<p>A Board Member asked if ARCHIE meetings are taking place virtually or face to face, ICE confirmed meetings take place over TEAMS. A Board Member commented that local community centres have been risk assessed and they are being used for group meetings and action plans are in place at these venues. Could we invite tenants by street or in blocks? ICE responded to say that we would consider this but we also have to consider how staff feel. Staff haven't been in the same room as one group for 19 months, office staff continue to work in 2 separate teams. Staff will look to arrange events in early 2022. The ICE also informed the Board that our winter newsletter will be issued early December and we will be utilising CX Feedback for the rent consultation survey. The introduction of CX Feedback earlier this year has resulted in an improved response rate with previous surveys.</p> <p>A Board Member asked if the office is manned every day? ICE confirmed that it is and staff remain in 2 teams working one week in the office and one week at home. The office is not open to the general public but tenants can be seen on an appointment basis only.</p> <p>A Board Member asked that about the conclusion point 5.1 of the cover report – review of strategic objectives when was that from? ICE confirmed that staff provided Board with a quarterly performance review in August 2021 and that covered Q1 Apr – Jun 2021. The ICE noted that he will update the cover report to be clearer.</p> <p>A Board Member asked that since our current Business Plan was only set out for a year when are we going to plan to do another one? ICE responded to say that once the Board has made a decision on the options appraisal and staffing review a new Business Plan will be set out with a view to having it signed off by the March meeting.</p> <p>A Board Member asked when it comes to the review of BP – can I request agenda items give priority items to strategy objectives, have one or two items so we have had a more in-depth conversation about these, for example community engagement.</p> <p>The Chair commented that the upcoming Health &amp; Safety training on 6<sup>th</sup> December that it is important that we all attend this.</p>	<p><b>ICE</b></p> <p><b>ICE</b></p> <p><b>Agreed</b></p>



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	The MHA Board reviewed the document and considered the narrative included in the recommendations.	<b>Noted</b>
9.	<p><b>QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT</b></p> <p>ICE updated the Board to say that HSTL, GCM, AMO and ICE met with T.B. MacKay last Tuesday regarding repairs, completion times &amp; invoicing. The meeting went well; they communicate well with us and if there are any issues it is resolved quickly. I believe good relationships have been made between the organisations. There were just a few teething problems due to both staff members who dealt with them primarily who are no longer here. We need to progress the IT interface over the next few weeks. AMO spoke to the Board to give them an insight from a site point of view, the lines of communication, quality, and relationships – they are performing well. A Board Member asked what needs done to progress the IT issue, ICE needs to liaise with T.B. MacKay to get these resolved. We need to work out cost and who is responsible for what.</p> <p>A Board Member asked if the tenant satisfaction survey is this still being sent out after a repair? ICE noted that staff are having discussions about the method to use and what would be most convenient for tenants and provide the level of response that we are looking for. T.B. Mackay may be tasked to do this but we have asked also CX Feedback to look into this. It is very important that we get this feedback from our tenants. HSTL informed the Board that we are still sending the surveys by text message which are automatically sent by the system.</p> <p>The GCM informed the Board that we have updated the peer group from medium urban to a more local group. A Board Member commented it is helpful to RAG these items and it is a helpful diagram to have. Well done to the team, helpful report.</p> <p>A Board Member asked what the SHQS fails are – GCM told the Board they weren't major fails. 1 was identified 2 years ago and 2 from last year during the stock survey. One was for a kitchen cupboard to be included as there wasn't enough cupboard space, but the tenant had refused the works. A Board member commented that the failure relating to the tenant refusal can be removed from fails and noted as an abeyance. The GCM will keep the Board up to date on this matter.</p>	<b>GCM</b>



Ref.	Item	Action
	The MHA Board reviewed and noted the quarterly performance 1 July to 30 September 2021.	<b>Noted</b>
10.	<p><b>QUARTERLY FINANCE REPORT INC MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS &amp; REVISED BUDGET</b></p> <p>ICE asked the Board to look at item 4.5 of the cover report which explains the breakage costs and that's why we are now reporting a loss this year. We must note the benefits in that section reduced future loan interest, cashflow savings, increased level of unencumbered stock, and reduced the refinancing risk therefore a number of benefits to this despite the projected loss this year. ICE told the Board he will speak to the external auditors RSM to ask how best to record this so we can record it in a way that it doesn't show such a loss.</p> <p>ICE told the Board that the graphs are currently in the same format and we will look to change this in line with the management accounts. There is other income coming from insurance claims from tenants who were decanted earlier this year due to flooding.</p> <p>A Board Member asked if the balance sheet with the pension liability be validated for the end of the financial year, ICE confirmed it will be, information is usually provided in May.</p> <p>The Board approved the MHA Quarterly Management Accounts to 30 September 2021.</p> <p>The Board noted the MHA Quarterly Treasury Management Review to 30 September 2021.</p> <p>The Board approved the MHA Revised Budget for 2021-22.</p> <p>The Board noted the MH4 Quarterly Management Accounts to 30 September 2021.</p> <p>The Board noted the MH4 Revised Budget for 2021-22.</p>	<p><b>ICE</b></p> <p><b>ICE</b></p> <p><b>Approved</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Approved</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p>
11.	<p><b>RENT CONSULTATION PROPOSAL 2022-23</b></p> <p>ICE spoke to the report and informed the Board that these are the three options we are proposing for the consultation with tenants for rent increases. According to Business Plan last year which was extended in to 2022 – we assumed 0.5% inflation for 2022-23, which is way below current inflation and not feasible for this year. The rent increase options being proposed are 1.5%, 2% or 3.1% - 3.1% is the current CPI</p>	





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	<p>inflation rate at October. As agreed by Board earlier this year we are issuing the consultation in November rather than over the Christmas period.</p> <p>The rent consultation will be sent out using CX Feedback. ICE told the Board that in his discussions with other housing associations they are looking at increases between 2.5% and 4.5%. We are keen to maintain the balance of offering affordable rents and we do not want the tenants to suffer financially with the increase, as well as increasing energy prices, and food/costs. However, we have to be mindful of the business needs of the Association in particular the rising costs related to the upkeep of the stock and other services.</p> <p>A Board Member told the Board that the MH4 Board discussed this at the last meeting comparing to rents in the area. As we don't yet know the level of increase to the Council Tax or next year, it was frozen for 2020/21, we need to consider those on fixed income, especially the elderly. We don't want to cause financial hardship for them. A Board Member agreed that we are now seeing other challenges such as fuel increases, energy prices increased</p> <p>A Board Member commented that we need to review in-house savings before we start raising rents. The ICE agreed and staff will be reviewing budgeted expenditure over the next few months as part of the budget and business planning process.</p> <p>A Board Member asked are we doing anything different this year to consult with tenants to improve the number of responses? ICE confirmed we are using CX Feedback we have used survey monkey before as well as paper copies but that hasn't given a large response. We are hoping to have a significant increase in response, judging by the increased level of response from surveys carried out earlier this year.</p> <p>A Board Member commented with regards to tenant participation we need to look at the amount of people who are older who do not have the skills to use the technology used to engage most of our tenants. We must consider how we are engaging with them as many groups are shutting down. ICE agreed that we aren't looking to disengage with any tenants and will try to include everyone.</p> <p>HSTL commented that what we have supported tenants using CX Feedback i.e., we have some tenants with vision impairments who cannot read the survey. We ask those tenants, and any other tenants that have difficulties, that if you</p>	





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	<p>get a text from us just give the office a call and staff have specific link for every individual tenant and we can conduct survey over the phone or we can visit them to complete this. In the surveys carried out so far, we have had responses from tenants who wouldn't normally engage with us.</p> <p>A Board Member commented tenants might feel intimidated by asking over the phone what you want the rent increase to be. The HSTL noted that staff have long-term relationships with many tenants and the tenants mainly feel comfortable in providing their views.</p> <p>A Board Member commented people are struggling with growing inequality with those who are on UC or pension compared to others in the public sector which will get an increase to their wages and noted their own concerns in making a decision about the level of rent increase.</p> <p>A Board Member asked if we are consulting on the service charges, ICE responded to say we don't usually consider a consultation on the service charge and the appendix on page 109 highlights that we currently have a shortfall. We are proposing a 2.75% increase for next year and a 3% increase to expenditure for next year.</p> <p>A Board Member commented that contractors will be looking for an increased RPI on contracts due to the increase cost of materials. We need to be able to deliver what we have planned to do. The ICE agreed with the comment.</p> <p>A Board Member asked if the majority of tenants suggested a 0% how would that be looked on? ICE we aren't fixing ourselves to any of these options so would consider suggestions and it would be up to the Board to decide if we can deliver on the Business Plan with a rent increase lower than 1.5%. ICE told the Board that staff would inform them of the tenant responses. ICE told Board there will be a space for tenants to make their own suggestions.</p> <p>A Board Member asked how big a risk is 0% is it to the other organisation? The ICE commented that we would likely have a higher increase in the following years and we would prefer to have a gradual increase for tenants. Most organisations that have rent freezes end up with higher increases of around 4 or 5% in the future. We need to look at reducing our costs but still deliver the upgrades to stock compared to what we have previously budgeted.</p>	



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	<p>A Board Member commented on Convene that they would not be supportive of the 1.5% increase for MH4 if this was to put us out the running with our competitors. Another Board Member commented, I would challenge this as we are a non-profit organisation the previous budgets we looked at show we are still in good shape going forward. A Board Member commented that the Board of MH4 have looked at it and there is concern over other MMR properties which are coming forward in the area but content to approve.</p> <p>The Board approved the rent increase proposal(s) for 2022-23 to be included in the rent consultation.</p> <p>The Board noted the extract from the rent consultation letter providing examples of average rent comparison to other Edinburgh-based landlords.</p> <p>The Board noted the information regarding the Rent Affordability examples, utilising the SFHA/Housemark Rent Affordability Tool.</p> <p>The Board approved the rent increase of 1.5% for MH4 as recommended by the MH4 Board.</p>	<p><b>Approved</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Approved</b></p>
<p><b>12.</b></p>	<p><b>GOVERNANCE REPORT &amp; POLICIES</b></p> <p>A Board Member commented on Convene on the IT Policy asking about security and patch reporting. GCM suggested revising the policy to make some changes around section 15 monitoring and returning it to Board at a later date. Staff still need to clarify what information and level of reporting Resource can provide us.</p> <p>A Board Member asked why do we need child protection policy? HSTL responded to say that we deal with a lot of vulnerable people, so it is important that staff have guidance.</p> <p>A Board Member commented that the IT Security audit report was a good report and there is some learning there for the future. A Board Member commented that tenant satisfaction also had a decent amount of reassurance and some things to work on going forward.</p> <p>GCM spoke to the Board about the use of personal email addresses for all Board members as recommendation from the auditors that using MHA email only for Board business. GCM &amp; FCSA are here to help and support with the transition.</p>	<p><b>GCM</b></p>





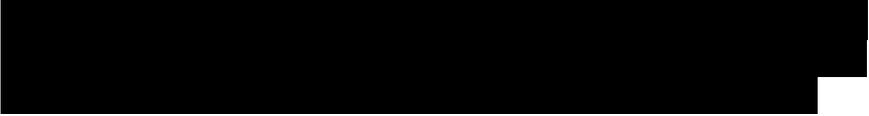
Ref.	Item	Action
	<p>approved by the ICE as under £1,000. We aren't supporting a trip the panto event this year as couldn't get tickets but looking to get this for next year.</p> <p>The Board approved and delegated powers to ICE to approve emergency donations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect Your Life donation £2,500</li> <li>• Reading event donation £750 - £1,000</li> <li>• Christmas/emergency donations £1,000 - £2,500</li> </ul>	<p><b>Approved</b></p> <p><b>Approved</b></p> <p><b>Approved</b></p>
14.	<p><b>QUARTERLY COVID REPORT</b></p> <p>The ICE asked the Chair and Board if they still require a full report (information is duplicated throughout the papers) or happy with this new quarterly report? A Board member commented that we thought about not having it but agreed we didn't need it monthly but take it quarterly. A Board Member commented that I think if there are any changes to what is in the report just let the Board know for example getting staff back into the office.</p> <p>The Board noted the quarterly Covid report</p>	<p><b>Agreed</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p>
15.	<p><b>MINUTES OF MH4 MEETING 27<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2021</b></p> <p>The Board noted the minutes of MH4 Meeting 27th October 2021</p>	<p><b>Noted</b></p>
16.	<p><b>MINUTES OF AUDIT &amp; RISK COMMITTEE MEETING 1<sup>ST</sup> NOVEMBER 2021</b></p> <p>The Board noted the Audit &amp; Risk Committee meeting 1<sup>st</sup> November 2021.</p>	<p><b>Noted</b></p>
17.	<p><b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b></p> <p>ICE spoke to the Board to inform them that there are still 40 smoke/heat detectors to finalise in line with the smoke detector legislation and AMO has been looking at quotes the request for tender was sent out to 3 companies in October. Only one written response the other 2 said they wouldn't be carrying out the work, [REDACTED] ARCHIE has given some other firms, but we haven't had those responses. [REDACTED]</p>	<p>[REDACTED]</p>



Ref.	Item	Action
	<p>The Board asked for more quotations for these works. It was agreed that Board members will approve via email. ICE told the Board we have until 1<sup>st</sup> February to get these works carried out.</p> <p>A Board Member asked if there were any costs for this work within the current contract, AMO to check current contract if they have a cost in their reactive costs.</p> <p>The Board approved delegated authority for the Chair and a fellow Board member with asset management experience.</p> <p>A Board Member asked about the rent setting review, some of the questions that were asked, and how these impact on how future rents would be calculated and size of property? A Board Member said we cannot as a Housing Association change any lease without consultation.</p> <p>ICE responded to say no tenant has raised concerns regarding these kinds of questions to the Housing Team, or other members of staff, and we would encourage tenants who have concerns to speak privately to their Housing Officer. Staff are looking to have a rent structure in place that is open and transparent and not looking to increase based on additional bathrooms or outdoor space.</p> <p>A Board Member asked if members could get the copy of the text survey.</p> <p>A Board Member asked if the same questions on the survey are used to ask tenants by phone and how are comments recorded. HSTL confirmed the same questions are asked as per the text survey and staff have recorded both negative and positive comments as per the tenants' response.</p> <p>ICE, HSTL, GCM, AMO &amp; FCSA left the meeting</p>	<p><b>ICE Agreed</b></p> <p><b>AMO</b></p> <p><b>Approved</b></p> <p><b>GCM</b></p>
5.	<p><b>CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF MEETING 8 SEPTEMBER 2021</b></p> <p>The Chair noted that this is not the correct version of the minute and the ICE will provide the correct minute of this meeting to the December meeting of the Board.</p>	<p><b>ICE</b></p>
7.	<p><b>CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE</b></p>	<p>[REDACTED]</p>



**Muirhouse  
Housing  
Association**

Ref.	Item	Action
		
17.	<b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b>  13 December 2021	

The meeting closed at 20:41



16 December 2021 | 2:04 PM GMT

DRAFT