

Please note – these Minutes have been edited to remove any commercially sensitive or confidential discussions

ITEM 2

MELVILLE HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

Minute of the Board Meeting held on Wednesday 11 December 2024
at 6.00 pm Hybrid Meeting - Office and Zoom Video Conference Call

PRESENT:

Donna Bogdanovic	Rebecca McLean
David Bond	Caron Quinn
Paul Cameron	Bill Takhar
John Dalley	Gayle Templeton
Clare Marshall	Brian Wilkie

IN ATTENDANCE: Kirsten Dean, Depute Chief Executive
Jane Burnett, Head of Housing Services
Rich Murdoch, Head of Asset Management
Dan Hughes, Communications & Corporate Services Manager
(minute)

D BOGDANOVIC IN THE CHAIR

	Agenda Item Details	Action Required
1a.	<p>CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS</p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, the last of what has been a busy year.</p>	
1b.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p><u>Noted</u> that there was no other competent business.</p>	Note
1c.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p><u>Noted</u> that declarations from Ironmills Directors were duly noted.</p>	Note
1d.	<p>APOLOGIES</p> <p><u>Noted</u> that apologies were received from Cathy Hanlan and Tom Mallatratt.</p>	Note

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2.	MINUTES OF PREVIOUS BOARD MEETING 13 NOVEMBER 2024	
2.1	Noted that the Chair invited the Depute Chief Executive to lead on the minutes on behalf of the Secretary.	Note
2.2	Noted that members agreed that these were a true and accurate minute of the meeting. The minutes were approved by Donna Bogdanovic and seconded by Paul Cameron.	Note/ Approved
3.	MATTERS ARISING AND OUTSTANDING ITEMS	
3.1	Noted that the Depute Chief Executive gave an update on matters arising and outstanding items, requesting permission to remove following completed items: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ details of enhanced energy measures at Melville's Oak Place development 	Note
3.2	Noted that there was a request to send the log in details for the Board Effect (replacement for VBR) training.	Action
3.3	Noted that training for Board Effect to be circulated for those who could not attend the online seminar.	Action
3.4	The Board noted the contents of this report and approved the removal of completed items from the register.	Note/ Approved
4.0	ANNUAL COMMUNICATIONS AND COMPLAINTS REPORT	
4.1	Noted that the Communications and Corporate Services Manager gave a brief overview of the year's activity, highlights of which included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stopping posting Voice out to all tenants following comms survey (265 forms returned – 88% in favour) ▪ New enhanced digital version ▪ Option of still receiving paper version – 50 or so opted in ▪ Still posting out tenant diary and handbook following tenant rep and staff feedback ▪ Positive media coverage throughout year including on front page of Midlothian Advertiser ▪ Continued effective use of digital communications 	Note

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4.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 500 tenants now signed up to tenant zone portal ▪ Plans to replace current portal with Rubixx version ▪ LinkedIn now added to social media mix ▪ Strong customer satisfaction for the year (88% compared to 83% previous year) ▪ Complaints down to 134 (from 192 previously) ▪ Good complaints reporting performance, all well within timescales <p>Noted that priorities for the coming year include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Comprehensive tenant satisfaction survey to be carried out in Jan/Feb. An independent company will speak to 700 tenants to get their views on a wide range of issues ▪ Celebrating Melville’s 30 years delivering services for our communities ▪ The delivery of a new Melville website ▪ The introduction of a new tenant portal as part of the new Rubixx system ▪ A new tenant participation strategy ▪ An overhaul of Melville’s online Tenant handbook 	Note
4.3	<p>Noted that a brief discussion took place surrounding complaints. There was no obvious answer as to why the number of Stage 2 complaints had risen, although one explanation offered was that signposting had improved. Neither were there any clear themes behind the (Redacted information) although Board was assured that SMT analysed all complaints data and would act where necessary.</p>	Note
4.4	<p>Noted that there was a brief discussion around sustainability and the tenant diary/handbook. Some members felt it was pointless to continue posting out things like the tenant diary when Voice was no longer sent to all tenants. Others felt that while the move to predominantly digital was correct, continuing to post some things (particularly ones with a human touch) meant a continued level of service for the digitally isolated and that Melville should continue to respond to the needs of its customers. It was also explained that the information in an annual diary/handbook had the</p>	Note

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4.5	<p>additional benefit that it would never be significantly out of date.</p> <p>Noted that there were several suggestions to improve social media output. It was recommended that Melville use Facebook to promote some of the information in the Tenant Diary. It was also suggested that Melville develop a social media strategy for 2025 and also make better use of LinkedIn (including giving Board members permission to post). In addition, there was the suggestion that Melville consider using WhatsApp Communities, although there was also feedback that some organisations have security concerns around WhatsApp.</p>	Note
4.6	<p>Noted that there was a suggestion that tenants who need it be given training on signing up for and using the new Rubixx tenant portal.</p>	Note
4.7	<p>Noted that there was a discussion about including equalities monitoring questions in the rent consultation. While there was agreement that this could have benefits, there was also the view that equalities questions need to be handled carefully and should not be asked without a clear reason for doing so.</p>	Note
4.8	<p>The Board noted the contents of this report and welcomed the positive findings, particularly in relation to tenant satisfaction, asking that their thanks be passed on to all involved.</p>	Note
5.0	<p>HOUSING MID YEAR REPORT</p>	
5.1	<p>Noted that the Head of Housing gave a summary of the main highlights from the past six months, summing up by saying that performance has been excellent across the board and on every level above the national average. She specifically highlighted strong performance on arrears, void relet times and void rent loss.</p>	Note
5.2	<p>Noted that members were asked to note that the graph at 1.1 is wrong. Financial gains should be:</p>	Note

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	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>LACER</td> <td>£16,774</td> <td>115 tenants</td> </tr> <tr> <td>HACT</td> <td>£2891</td> <td>52 tenants</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fuelbank</td> <td>£2706</td> <td>83 tenants</td> </tr> <tr> <td>WB</td> <td>£609,041</td> <td>222 tenants</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td>£631,412</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	LACER	£16,774	115 tenants	HACT	£2891	52 tenants	Fuelbank	£2706	83 tenants	WB	£609,041	222 tenants	TOTAL	£631,412		
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5.3	<p>Noted that Board was informed that Melville will be making its lettings initiative permanent (it was previously temporary) as refusals from some property types remain high. This means for certain properties we will now automatically let to those with children on access or who will be under occupying. Despite the rise in cases like these, we are still performing well on relets.</p>	Note															
5.4	<p>Noted that the head of housing then gave an update on recent developments with the Midlothian House Project (MHP) which was set up to help young people transition into independent living. As part of the scheme Melville has been approached to provide accommodation for young asylum seekers who have ended up in Midlothian, some following trafficking. There are currently 12 in Midlothian just now, but the Council is in crisis and turning applicants away. All are young adults over the age of 16, displaced from their families and from a mix of nationalities. The programme provides a dedicated support person and full wraparound care including education and trauma support etc. Board was informed that Melville are likely to make a couple of properties available to support this valuable work.</p>	Note															
5.5	<p>Noted that a discussion took place around the MHP work and implications for the waiting list. It was stressed that this was a bigger picture project which has already proved successful, providing additional help to already supported kids (comment redacted). It was suggested that hard-to-let properties could be considered, however it was stressed that properties must suit the needs of the young people and would also be dependent on availability at the time.</p>	Note															

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5.6	The Board noted the contents of this report, the lettings initiative for hard-to-let properties and the additional case studies.	Note
6.0	RENT CONSULTATION UPDATE	
6.1	Noted that the Depute Chief Executive gave the update saying that there has been a good response to the consultation so far which has been running for around 10 days, and which would close in early January. She said that around 300 responses were likely.	Note
6.2	Noted that early findings showed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Roughly equal number of responses from those on benefits and those who pay their rent themselves ▪ Most find rents affordable currently ▪ Highest support is for none of the options, however of those tabled the lowest (4.5%) has most support ▪ Reasonable satisfaction levels for overall service and value-for-money 	Note
6.3	Noted that the Depute Chief Executive was asked why the rent increase figures out for consultation were higher than those discussed at the previous Board meeting. It was explained that these were the figures proposed and agreed on by Board members at the Board away day (which not everyone could attend). It was also explained that across the sector other organisations were typically consulting on figures from between 4% and 8%.	Note
6.4	The Board noted the contents of this report.	Note
7	REGISTERS	
7.1	Noted that since the Registers were last presented to the Board the following entries have been made: <p>Declarations of Interest - 0 entries in this register (annual updates for Board members).</p>	Note

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	<p>Entitlements, Payments and Benefits - 0 entries - details are available in the register.</p> <p>Noted that there were no entries in the following registers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bribery & Corruption ▪ Fraud ▪ Seal 	Note
7.2	<p>Noted that the Chair signed the registers at the end of the meeting and members were reminded that these registers are available for review at any time.</p>	Note
8.0	ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS	
8.1	Noted that there was no other competent business raised.	Note
8.2	All staff left the meeting at this point expect the Depute CEO.	Information
9.0	CONFIDENTIAL ITEM	
9.1	The People Committee Chair gave an overview on the (item redacted) .	Information
9.2	It was reported that the full report would be shared with the Board in the New Year.	Action
10.0	DATE OF NEXT MEETING	
10.1	Noted that the next (hybrid) meeting of the Board is Wednesday 29 January 2025 at 6pm.	Note
10.2	Meeting closed at 19.30	

Minutes Approved By: Donna Bogdanovic

Signature: _____

29 January 2025