

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the **ONCHAN DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS** held in the Boardroom, Hawthorn Villa, 79 Main Road, Onchan, on Monday 22nd January 2024 at 7:03 pm

Present: Miss Z Lewin (Chair)
 Miss K Williams (Vice Chair)
 Mr D Crellin
 Ms F Logan (Lead Member for Finance and General Purposes)
 Mr R Turton (Lead Member for Housing)
 Mr D Quirk (Lead Member for Environmental and Technical Services)

Apologies: Mr A Allen

In attendance: Mr R Phillips (Chief Executive/Clerk)

C24/01/03/01

TO CHOOSE A PERSON TO PRESIDE IF THE CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR BE ABSENT

None.

C24/01/03/02

BUSINESS REQUIRED TO BE DEALT WITH BY STATUTE BEFORE ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

C24/01/03/03

MINUTES

1. Ordinary Meeting held on Monday 8th January 2024

The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on Monday 8th January 2024, copies of which having previously been circulated were considered.

After a discussion, it was proposed by Mr Crellin and seconded by Miss Williams and **RESOLVED** that the minutes be agreed as a correct record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

For: Miss Williams, Ms Logan and Mr Crellin

Against: Mr Quirk

Miss Lewin and Mr Turton did not cast a vote as they were not present at the meeting.

2. Staff Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on Monday 8th January 2024

To be considered In Committee.

3. Minutes of the Extra Ordinary Meeting held on Monday 15th January 2024

To be considered In Committee.

C24/01/03/04**TO DISPOSE OF ANY BUSINESS ARISING FROM SUCH MINUTES****1. Ordinary Meeting held on Monday 8th January 2024**

Mr Crellin requested that thanks be given for the time and resources invested in producing the comprehensive Live Streaming Report and Data Impact Assessment that allowed the Members to fully consider the proposal.

Mr Quirk noted that it is still proposed that an alternative method of attendance be sought to allow access for those who are unable to physically attend meetings of the Authority.

A discussion between Mr Crellin and Mr Quirk took place regarding live streaming, General Data Protection Regulations, and governance of Board meetings.

Miss Williams intervened and highlighted that the discussion held and the resolution resolved at the previous meeting concluded the matter.

Miss Lewin concluded the discussion and asked that the Members progress the remaining agenda items due for consideration.

C24/01/03/05**TO DISPOSE OF ANY BUSINESS ADJOURNED FROM A PREVIOUS MEETING**

None.

C24/01/03/06**TO DEAL WITH ANY BUSINESS EXPRESSLY REQUIRED BY STATUTE TO BE DONE**

None.

C24/01/03/07**PLANNING DECISIONS/COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING COMMITTEE****(i) PA 23/01474/B Mr K Harding - 19 Fairfield Avenue**

Members were advised that the application is for the removal of the existing garage door and replaced with UPVC windows and blockwork whose exterior finish will match the existing front of the house.

In answer to questions, the Chief Executive/Clerk advised that:

- No comments had been received from neighbouring properties; and
- The return date for the application is the 2nd February 2024.

After a discussion, it was proposed by Mr Quirk and seconded by Mr Crellin and **RESOLVED** that **planning application PA 23/01474/B – 19 Fairfield Avenue be recommended for refusal on the grounds that insufficient information had been provided.**

For: Miss Lewin, Miss Williams, , Mr Crellin, Mr Turton and Mr Quirk

Against: Ms Logan

- (ii) **PA 23/01484/D Mr P Underhill - King Edward Bay House, King Edward Road**
- Members were advised that the application is for the erection of 2 externally LED illuminated wall-mounted Utmost International signs 3860mm x 1110 mm x 75 mm and 1 Utmost International fascia sign over the main entrance door 1190 mm x 350 mm.
- In answer to questions, the Chief Executive/Clerk advised that:
- No comments had been received from neighbouring properties; and
 - The return date for the application is the 2nd February 2024.
- After a discussion, it was proposed by Mr Quirk and seconded by Mr Turton and unanimously **RESOLVED that planning application PA 23/01484/D – King Edward Bay House, King Edward Road be recommended for approval.**
- (iii) **PA 23/00640/B Mr & Mrs D Carroll - Riverside Barn, King Edward Road**
- Members were advised that the application is for the erection of a building for the storage of items associated with the maintenance of the site (amended plans/details).
- In answer to questions, the Chief Executive/Clerk advised that:
- Comments had been received from neighbouring properties; and
 - The return date for the application is the 2nd February 2024.
- After a discussion, it was proposed by Mr Quirk and seconded by Ms Logan and **RESOLVED that planning application PA 23/00640/B – Riverside Barn, King Edward Road be recommended for approval.**
- For: Miss Lewin, Miss Williams, Ms Logan, Mr Crellin and Mr Quirk**
Against: Mr Turton
- (v) **PA 23/01511/REM Mr G Halton - Howstrake, King Edward Road**
- Members were advised that the reserved matters application is for alterations to the design of the main house and smaller ancillary house. Main House amendment is to incorporate a basement level and incorporate new façade glazing to level 3; amendment to include level 4 (principal suite); change the entrance to the property and the repositioning of the garage block. The Ancillary Property to incorporate a basement level with a sub-structure.
- In answer to questions, the Chief Executive/Clerk advised that:
- No comments had been received from neighbouring properties; and
 - The return date for the application is the 9th February 2024.
- After a discussion, it was proposed by Mr Quirk and seconded Ms Logan and unanimously **RESOLVED that the reserved matters application PA 23/01511/REM – Howstrake, King Edward Road be recommended for approval.**

(vi) PA 24/00017/B Mr M J Spencer – 4 Birch Hill Avenue

Members were advised that the application is for the alteration of vehicular access serving the dwelling.

In answer to questions, the Chief Executive/Clerk advised that:

- No comments had been received from neighbouring properties; and
- The return date for the application is the 9th February 2024.

After a discussion, it was proposed by Mr Quirk and seconded by Mr Turton and unanimously **RESOLVED** that **planning application PA 24/00017/B – 4 Birch Hill Avenue be recommended for approval.**

C24/01/03/08**FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES****1. 2024/25 Budget Considerations**

To be considered In Committee.

C24/01/03/09**REPORT FROM THE CLERK OR OTHER OFFICER****1. Disposal of the Authority's Vehicle HMN-117-Y**

The report of the Property Maintenance Manager dated 10th January 2024, copies having previously been circulated was considered.

The Chief Executive/Clerk provided the Board with an overview in relation to the new replacement vehicle purchased during 2023 and the valuation that had been obtained relating to HMN-117-Y.

Following a discussion, it was proposed by Mr Quirk and seconded by Mr Turton and unanimously **RESOLVED** that **approval be given to dispose of HMN-117-Y by public auction under the provision of Authority's Standing Order 39 for the Making of Contracts.**

2. Social Housings Projects to be funded from the Authority's Housing Reserves

The report of the Property Maintenance Manager dated 15th January 2024, copies having previously been circulated was considered.

2.1 Springfield Court Phase 1 – Windows and Doors

The Chief Executive/Clerk provided the Board with an overview in relation to the 30 properties affected and what issues are being encountered by tenants.

Following a discussion, it was proposed by Mr Turton and seconded by Mr Quirk and unanimously **RESOLVED** that **£145,058 be taken from the Authority's Social Housing Maintenance Reserve to fund the installation of replacement windows to 30 properties at Springfield Court Phase 1 sheltered housing complex.**

2.2 General Housing Stock – Thermostats

The Chief Executive/Clerk provided the Board with an overview in relation to the 406 properties affected and what issues are being encountered by tenants.

Following a discussion, it was proposed by Mr Turton and seconded by Mr Quirk and **RESOLVED that £85,711 be taken from the Authority's Social Housing Maintenance Reserve to fund the installation of central heating thermostats to 406 properties that form the Authority's general housing stock.**

Miss Williams declared an interest and did not cast a vote.

3. Consultation – Proposed changes to the Town & Country Planning (Development Procedure Order and the Town & Country Planning (Application & Appeal) Fees Order

The report of the District Surveyor dated 18th January 2024, copies of which having previously been circulated was considered.

The Chief Executive/Clerk provided the Board with an overview in relation to the consultation.

It was noted that thanks were given to the Authority's District Surveyor for his report. It was further noted that no comments or supplementary information had been provided by the Members.

It was agreed that the proposed answers in relation to the consultation be submitted to the Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture on behalf of the Authority.

4. Springfield Court Refurbishment – Project Update

The report of the District Surveyor dated 17th January 2024, copies of which having previously been circulated was considered.

The Chief Executive/Clerk provided the Board with an overview in relation to the project.

A discussion between the Chief Executive/Clerk and Members took place regarding:

- The business case which had been submitted to the Department of Infrastructure ("the DOI") in 2021;
- Issues which had been encountered during the design development stages;
- The request from the DOI for further information in relation to the thermal efficiency of the existing building;
- The building fabric enhancement analysis provided by March Consulting Limited on behalf of the Authority; and
- The effect of the delays to the project programme;
- That the planning application associated with the proposed works is due for publication imminently.

Mr Turton noted that the nominated design team have highlighted that due to the time elapsed since the submission of the Business Case to the DOI, costs will have increased above the original project budget of £2,999,000, which will be to the detriment of the Authority.

The Board requested that the Chief Executive/Clerk contact the DOI to request that no further unnecessary delays are encountered when the Authority is progressing projects and petitions through their capital procedures.

5. Heywood Park Social Housing Structural Report Professional Fees

To be considered In Committee.

C24/01/03/10**CONSIDERATION OF ANY RELEVANT CORRESPONDENCE****1. President of Tynwald – Manx National Week**

A copy of the letter received from the President of Tynwald dated 4th January 2024, copies of which having previously been circulated was noted.

2. 2024/25 Public Sector Rents and Allowances

A copy of the press release received from the DOI in relation to the 2024 Public Sector Rents and Allowances, copies of which having previously been circulated was considered.

Following a discussion, it was noted that:

- The Authority's recommendation to not increase rents for 2024/25 was not reflected in the DOI press release;
- Unnecessary financial burden and stress to tenants when the Authority's stock is in a fit condition;
- The Authority currently has a Housing Maintenance Reserve available to fund works without the need for implementing rent increases; and
- Potentially Officers within the Authority will have an increased administration workload to resolve debt management due to the increased rent affecting more tenants.

C24/01/03/11**TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER STANDING ORDER 34**

None.

C24/01/03/12**TO CONSIDER ANY MOTIONS**

None.

C24/01/03/13**ENVIRONMENTAL AND TECHNICAL SERVICES****C24/01/03/14****HOUSING MATTERS**

None.

C24/01/03/15**CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS****1. Chair's Attendances**

Miss Lewin advised the Board that she had not attended any events on behalf of the Board.

2. Dates for the Diary

Date	Organisation	Event	Time
15 th January 2024	Onchan District Commissioners	(P) Extra Ordinary Board Meeting	7:00 pm
19 th January 2024	St Peter's Church	Film Evening	7:00 pm
22 nd January 2024	Onchan District Commissioners	Board Meeting	7:00 pm

5 th February 2024	Onchan District Commissioners	Board Meeting	7:00 pm
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C24/01/03/16

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

The public session of the Meeting ended at 8:04 pm.

C24/01/03/17

MINUTES

1. Staff Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on Monday 8th January 2024

The Staff Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on Monday 8th January 2024, copies of which having previously been circulated were considered.

After a discussion, it was proposed by Ms Logan and seconded by Mr Crellin and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the minutes be agreed as a correct record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

Miss Lewin and Mr Turton did not cast a vote as they were not present at the meeting.

2. Minutes of the Extra Ordinary Meeting held on Monday 15th January 2024

The Minutes of the Extra Ordinary Meeting held on Monday 15th January 2024, copies of which having previously been circulated were considered.

After a discussion, it was proposed by Mr Quirk and seconded by Ms Logan and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the minutes be agreed as a correct record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

C24/01/03/18

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES

1. 2024/25 Budget Considerations

It was agreed that the 2024/25 financial year budget considerations be deferred to the end of the meeting.

C24/01/03/19

CONSIDERATION OF ANY REPORTS FROM THE CLERK OR OTHER OFFICER

1. Heywood Park – Social Housing Structural Report Professional Fees

The following was considered In Committee and transferred to the public domain.

The report of the District Surveyor dated 11th January 2024, copies having previously been circulated was considered.

A discussion took place between the Chief Executive/Clerk and all Members in relation to:

- The age of the properties and the date of the cavity-fill insulation installation work completed as part of a Government Framework Agreement;
- MacOwan Collett Consulting Engineers Limited structural report findings regarding interstitial condensation; and
- The blockwork manufacturing defects that had recently been identified that are potentially linked to excessive muscovite mica minerals contained within the blocks used in the construction of the properties;

- Further investigation of the blocks is required before progressing with the Authority's external refurbishment scheme, the business case for which was approved by the DOI in 2021.

It was proposed by Mr Turton and seconded by Ms Logan and unanimously **RESOLVED** that:

- **Under the provision of the Authority's Standing Order 21 (f) for the Making of Contracts (Exemptions and Tendering Requirements) the Authority appoints Curtins Engineers Limited to undertake structural investigatory and reporting works to Heywood Park social housing properties as outlined in the District Surveyors report dated 11th January 2024; and**
- **The required expenditure be funded from the Authority's current housing maintenance budget.**

C24/01/03/20

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES

1. 2024/25 Budget Considerations

The following was considered In Committee and transferred to the public domain.

Consideration was given to the Local Government Act 1985 Part VI Sections 42, 43 and 44.

The report of the Chief Finance Officer, copies having previously been circulated was considered.

A discussion took place between the Chief Executive/Clerk and all Members in relation to:

- An overview of the Authority's District Rate during the previous 10 years;
- An overview of projects and items that had been progressed and funded during the previous 10 years;
- The Reserves of £1,204,398 held by the Authority as per the 2022/23 financial year-end audited accounts and the budgeted deficit for the 2023/24 financial year leaving a budgeted Reserve of £1,056,489;
- The projects that are due to be undertaken during the 2024/25 financial year and that are to be funded by the Authority's Reserves as per the resolutions resolved during the Ordinary Meeting of the Board held on 15th January 2024, namely:
 - Governors Road Street Lighting Scheme – £164,000 to replace the existing assets and install additional assets to comply with the recommendations contained within the British Standards BS 5489-1-2020 and BS EN 13201-2:2013;
 - The Hub sports hall repairs – £15,000;
 - Commercial garage portfolio replacement doors – £10,000.
- The projects and items that are due to be undertaken during the 2024/25 financial year and that are to be funded by increasing the Authority's Rate as per the resolutions resolved during the Ordinary Meeting of the Board held on 15th January 2024, namely:
 - Elm Tree House commercial property external refurbishment – £200,000 contract budget with loan repayments made over 30 years to undertake works to the flat roof, asbestos removal, window repairs, masonry repairs, concrete structural repairs and cladding;
 - Harvey Briggs Onchan Library – £10,000 additional book budget.

- Income reductions, increases and potential new income options including:
 - Increase to the Authority's Housing Administration allowance to off-set some of the Authority's rate administration expenditure due to the Department of Infrastructure's imposed social housing rent increase (7.5%);
 - Reduction in property searches;
 - Reduction in submission of Building Control applications and commencement of works, including the 80-bed residential care home on King Edward Road no longer progressing equating to a loss of Building Control application and inspection fees;
 - Increase to The Hub usage, but noted that the complex is still underutilised;
 - Reduction of commercial refuse collection custom;
 - Continuation of the Port St. Mary Commissioners' refuse collection contract;
 - Increase of commercial property rent. Noted that currently all properties are fully let and some periodic rent increases are due throughout the year;
 - Option considered to offset the Authority's expenditure by obtaining Santon Parish Commissioners' refuse collection service that is currently being tendered by the Authority. A decision regarding the tender will not be known until February/March 2024;
 - Noted that 2 new properties were constructed and completed within the District during 2023 in addition to a number of small extensions to provide an increase to the rateable income of the District. Further noted that except for the 80-bed residential care home and the former Howstrake Holiday camp on Kind Edward Road, there are no other known large sites due for development within the District to increase rateable income.
- Staffing including:
 - Allowance for a predicted inflationary staffing pay award as dictated by the Public Service Commission and the National Joint Council following collective negotiating and bargaining by unions. Noted that the two previous financial years have seen higher awards administered that have had a detrimental impact on the Authority's budgets when not accounted for;
 - Consideration of employing directly employed staff to undertake grass cutting to the District instead of contractors concluded that a heavier burden on the Rate will be required so the proposal will not be implemented.
- Policy and Finance increases including:
 - Electric unit cost increases relating to Hawthorn Villa. Noted that the building is inefficient and that schemes to improve efficiency are to be considered in addition to the long-term use or redevelopment of the building and site;
 - External audit fee increase of 37% administered by Treasury as previously considered by the Board during 2023;
 - Fixed-price insurance policies have ended and the renewal costs have increased;
 - Payment card terminal administration costs and usage of card payments have increased. Noted that during 2023 less than 20% of the Authority's non-social housing income was received via cash and cheque;
 - License fee increase for Laserfiche software adopted by the Authority during 2013/14 for document retention and archiving, and production of automated processes.
- Leisure and Amenities increases including:
 - Increase to the cleaning contract to public toilets, and grass cutting contract to public open spaces following the tender processes;
 - Gas and electric unit costs relating to public toilets and the Parks Department Depot.

- Library increases including:
 - Gas and electric unit costs;
 - The additional £10,000 library book budget funding was resolved by the Board at the Ordinary Meeting held on 15/01/24.
- Works and Cleansing increases including:
 - Energy from Waste Plant disposal gate fee increase of 8.08%;
 - Increased interest payments relating to loans taken against refuse collection wagon purchase in 2019, and the 2023 purchase of a new tipper truck;
 - Eastern Civic Amenity site costs relating to loan charges against the new site, administration fee, and the recently tendered site operation contractor fee;
- Commercial property portfolio increases including:
 - Allowance made for Elm Tree House external refurbishment scheme loan repayments over 30 years.
- Expenditure reductions including:
 - New public street lighting contractor was appointed following the tender process and the implementation of the new street lighting policy providing reduced maintenance costs;
 - Deferred projects and items including Birch Hill play area equipment, Centenary Park infrastructure improvements, Harvey Briggs Onchan Library installation of closed circuit Television (CCTV), War Memorial gilding works, Onchan Pleasure Park Manx Utilities infrastructure upgrade, Onchan Pleasure Park regeneration scheme, Main Road public toilets time-controlled external door to replace roller shutter door, high-level access equipment, Mural Festival, and kerbside recycling;
 - Party in the Park and Night of Light events to not take place considered but agreed to retain the budget to allow the events to be held due to their popularity.
- Rate payment discount including:
 - The Authority currently offers a discount of 4% for early payment before the end of June. Douglas City Council currently offers a discount of 3%, Braddan Parish Commissioners offers 2.25%, and Treasury on behalf of all of the other Authorities offers 5%;
 - During 2023 approximately 75% of Onchan Rate payers took advantage of the discount. This equates to an approximate £87,000 loss of potential income;
 - Discount reduction was considered but agreed that no reduction is to be made.

After discussion, it was proposed by Ms Logan and seconded by Mr Turton and unanimously **RESOLVED that:**

- **£32,257 be taken from the Authority's Reserves to reduce the increase to the District Rate for the 2024/25 financial year; and**
- **The Authority's District Rate for the 2024/25 financial year be increased by 38 pence to 411 pence in the pound which is equivalent to a 10.19% increase.**

C24/01/03/21

ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

1. **Joint Political Meeting**

The Members requested that the Chief Executive/Clerk make arrangements for the Board to meet with the four Members of the House of Keys for Onchan to discuss the District.

There being no further business the meeting was declared closed at 21:21 pm.