

**WELLHOUSE HOUSING ASSOCIATION  
MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON  
29 April 2021 at 11AM - VIA ZOOM**

**1. Welcome, Sederunt & Apologies.**

**Present:**

Darron Brown	Chair
Maureen Morris	Vice-Chair
Jane Heppenstall	Committee Member
Carol Torrie	Committee Member
Clare Monteith	Committee Member

**In Attendance:**

Martin Wilkie-McFarlane	Director
Carol Hamilton	Housing & Customer Services Manager
Bill Black	Assets & Maintenance Manager
Robert Murray	Finance & Corporate Services Manager
Linda Logan	Minute taker
Anna Ellis	Calvary Housing Association (Committee Member)

**Apologies:**

Michelle Harrow	Committee Member
Shona McKenna	Committee Member
Sarah Morris	Committee Member

The Chair welcomed Anna Ellis (Calvary HA) who would shadow tonight's meeting and Robert Murray to his first meeting as the Finance & Corporate Services Manager.

**2. Jargon Buster**

Noted for information.

**3. Declarations of Interest.**

There were no declarations of interest.

**4. Minutes of the Committee Meeting of 25 February 2021.**

**Resolution:**

**The minutes of the Committee Meeting of 25 February 2021 were proposed by Carol Torrie and seconded by Jane Heppenstall as an accurate record of the proceedings.**

The Director noted an amendment to the minute – recruitment – which should read had not been successful and will be amended accordingly.

## 5. **Matters arising and actions from the minute report.**

There were no matters arising that were not covered in subsequent agenda items.

## 6. **Procurement – Internal Audit**

The Director reiterated that as discussed at the last committee meeting, internal audit services were due for retendering this year. He informed committee that Wellhouse, Gardeen, Calvay and Provanhall HA's, who have the same auditor/expiry date are exploring a joint tender exercise, which we believe could achieve efficiencies and cost savings, with the ability for each partner to determine their own subject for audits. The exercise will be led by Provanhall HA. An initial meeting had taken place on 23 April 2021 which had been attended by the Finance Manager on the Director's behalf.

The Finance Manager provided a brief overview of discussion from the meeting of 23 April, where it had been suggested that rather than going to a formal tender process, that names of potential auditors be gathered to seek interest, to mention that it was several housing associations with the hope that it would provide more buying power and efficiencies with costings. He noted that it had been made clear that each partner would have their own engagement process. The Director will provide further updates as required.

### **Resolution:**

**Committee approved progressing with a joint tender programme with colleagues in EHRA.**

**Maureen Morris proposed and Jane Heppenstall seconded progressing with a joint tender programme with colleagues in EHRA.**

## 7. **Insurance Tender – 1 year extension**

The Director presented the results from the recent insurance review undertaken by the Association for all non-property related insurance. He noted that the housing and Hub insurance was procured and approved by committee in February.

He stated that due to the ongoing lockdown process the full tender process could not be implemented in time through the Public Contracts Scotland tendering portal and our broker, Bruce Stevenson, has recommended a one-year extension with our existing insurers and that a full tender exercise will take place later in 20/21. The Director asked committee to note the review provided by Bruce Stevenson at appendix 1 and summarised costs at page 18 of the report.

He sought ratification from committee on the process and the recommendation from Bruce Stevenson to the one-year extension with our current provider.

### **Resolution:**

**Committee confirmed the placement of insurances as outlined in the report from our Broker based on the pricing over analysis and quality scoring at a cost of £22,859.82.**

**Clare Monteith proposed and Maureen Morris seconded the proposal.**

**Action: The Corporate and Governance Officer will include Insurance Tender on the committee scheduling programme for quarter 3 of this year.**

## **8. Development Ambitions**

The Director presented the report as a direct update from previous committee papers and to report on progress with development plans.

He noted that after receipt of the CCTV survey of the drainage system in Wellhouse, we are able to develop subject to flood mitigation measures. A workshop, attended by Alex Hogg, Maintenance Officer on behalf of the Director, to discuss flood mitigation issues and notes received thereafter had indicated that the main issues at this time remain the drain in Wellhouse Crescent, which is fully block with mortar and needs to be replaced. It is owned by City Property. Nick Dangerfield, Calway HA had also been invited to the meeting. It was noted that works on Wellhouse Crescent will be very disruptive to the Hub and the Nursery. There are also two manhole covers owned by the Archdiocese of Glasgow that will require investigation. A manhole cover which had been covered over in the allotment area has now been resolved.

Scottish Water and Glasgow City Council have indicated that they would be content with flood water being diverted to the Camlachie Burn which runs under Wellhouse Crescent, subject to normal SuDs work. The Director took committee through the SWM Opportunities Workshop slides which highlighted measures that could be implemented and to identify the benefit or issues that would need to be considered. Alex Hogg had suggested that we run a pilot that would be attached to the Hub rather than someone's home. The Director discussed further options that were being considered as outlined within the report and possible learning opportunities for the children at the Nursery. The Director will report further at the next meeting.

Discussion ensued with regards grant options and the possibility of Scottish Water funding the pilot option. Simon Metcalf, our development agent will open up further soft dialogue with the Archdiocese of Glasgow with regards site investigations and the purchase of the property.

In addition, the Director and Finance Manager will meet to discuss budgets and will require meetings with our lenders in relation to these plans. Following a press release, we had had a proactive approach from CAF bank.

Committee considered that positive progress was being made.

### **Resolution:**

**Committee noted the update and instructed the Director to bring future progress reports.  
Approved the further exploration of flood prevention work.**

## **9. KPI's 21/22**

The Housing Manager presented the report to bring to the attention of committee, performance targets for the financial year 21/22 considered realistic by the management team and to reflect priorities set from the 21/22 operational plan. Committee were asked to discuss the proposed targets, consider any influencing factors and suggest responsive actions.

She noted that we had performed well against our set targets for the last year. Recent surveys had highlighted 4 areas of concern in relation to gross rent arrears, rent collected during the year, adaptations and relets times, the latter being a result of covid restrictions. She asked committee to discuss whether they wanted to change any proposed targets for the year.

Committee discussed at length manageable targets, preventing rent arrears and the Associations performance. Discussion ensued with regards communication and the responsibility of tenants to increase their standing orders each year and various methods of payment. It was agreed that direct debit payments would be encouraged and the option communicated to tenants.

**Resolution:**

**Committee agreed:**

**To keep set KPI targets at 8%**

**To encourage and advise tenants of direct debit options.**

**Maureen Morris proposed and Jane Heppenstall seconded KPI targets at 8%.**

**Carol Torrie left the meeting at this time. Quorum was confirmed.**

**10. Window Tender Return.**

The Maintenance Manager presented the report to update committee on the awarded contract to Sidey Solutions Ltd for the window and door replacement programme; through the Scottish Procurement Alliance and to seek approval to progress. He asked committee to note that the expenditure figure within the recommendations should read £735,684.80 and not 755,631.55. The works will be scheduled over two years 20/21 and 22/23; each having 180 days for acceptance.

Discussion ensued with regards possible cost increases in Phase 2 and contingencies that have been put in place.

**Resolution:**

**Committee noted the recommendations in the report and tender return and approved the expenditure of £735,684.80 + VAT to be awarded to Sidey Solutions Ltd.**

**Maureen Morris proposed and Jane Heppenstall seconded the expenditure of £735,684.80 + VAT and that the contract being awarded to Sidey Solutions Ltd.**

**11. Rent arrears update.**

The Housing Manager asked committee to note that since the last committee update, gross current rent arrears had increased to £355,352 by the end of February. Since then; they have reduced by £18,658. She stated that the reported reduction in arrears would have been significantly higher had it not been for an increase of £9,460 in former tenant arrears, which was in the main due to an abandoned tenancy with a debt of £4,377 and another tenancy ending with a debt of £5,730. A comprehensive list had been passed to our debt recovery agent and a sum is being prepared for write-offs which are considered uneconomical to pursue. 26% of all tenants are now in receipt of universal credit.

She updated committee on progress of recently approved actions and team structure changes as outlined at page 2 of the report. She hoped that that our new tougher approach and adopting a suitable tenant incentive scheme as outlined at appendix 2 would contribute to a continuing reduction in rent arrears.

The Director reassured that we would continue to pursue former tenants' arrears as it was a debt owed to the Association. He considered that a clear message must be given to those tenants who abandon or leave a tenancy, that we will continue to pursue this debt.

Committee noted the contents of the report.

## **12. Allocations.**

The Housing Manager stated that WHA have operated a Common Register Allocation Policy. Impending changes to the online application process and associated costs with progressing online application are not conducive to the implementation of HomeMaster and to allow our EHRA colleagues to progress with their own processes there was a requirement for Wellhouse to exit the partnership at the end of April 2021. We will write to our applicants to inform them of such.

She noted that we will continue to use the policy and application process until a stand-alone Allocations Policy is adopted which better reflects our requirements. A recent review of the demand and outcomes indicated that only 10 tenants from Wellhouse have benefited in the last 3 years in the CHR and consideration should be given to maximise their housing opportunities in line with legislation, statutory guidance and the needs of our community. She proposed to present the Allocations Policy to committee in June.

She indicated that GCC had written to ask that we aim to allocate 60% of our lets to section 5 applicants with a review in September 2021. She suggested that our response would be as it was last year, in that we would allocate as many as we could, where appropriate.

The Housing Manager highlighted that given we will be operating out of the CHR, that it was our intention to adopt a similar Allocations Letting Plan for this year, where the % of lets to homelessness will increase to 40% where appropriate and the % of group 4, unsatisfactory housing will reduce by 5%. There were no other proposed changes from the previous Letting Plan.

Committee discussed at length the requirements of tenants from Wellhouse and the Associations statutory responsibilities and doing the right thing. Jane Heppenstall requested that when the Allocations policy comes to committee for approval that consideration be given to the risks around coming out of the Common Housing Register.

### **Resolution:**

### **Committee;**

**Noted the impending changes to the current CHR Allocations Policy;**

**Approved the draft stand-alone Allocations Policy;**

**Agreed to continue to maximise lets to homeless applicants where appropriate;**

**Approved the Lettings Plan for 21/22.**

**Clare Monteith proposed and Maureen Morris seconded the above recommendations.**

### **13. Operational update report.**

**Director:**

#### **North Star Effective Questioning Training.**

The Director informed committee that the quotes received from North Star for the suggested Effective Questioning Training had been received and all parties participating in the governance and assurance project, considered that we could source less expensive options. Committee will be updated in due course.

**Housing Manager:**

The Housing Manager updated on a case where a distressed tenant had contacted a committee member for assistance with her current housing situation. She confirmed that the tenant was receiving support, that the Housing Officer had contacted EHRA colleagues as well as other housing providers who have thus far been unable to offer suitable accommodation. The tenant does not want to be considered for a property in Wellhouse.

She noted that efforts to engage with tenants in the Next Steps project has been disappointing.

The Housing Manager highlighted appendices 2 and 3 which chart the results of our continuous monitoring of satisfaction results. The Global chart for all quarters of 2021 show that we compare favourably with our peer group and all indicators are on or above average in that sphere and comparison to Scottish Landlords shows that we consistently perform above average.

**Maintenance Manager:**

The Maintenance Manager confirmed that works on the Newhills Road shop unit has now been completed. The Director stated that have had interest from 3 potential tenants who have been asked to submit a draft business plan and informed to speak to GCC for a change of use.

He advised that veranda works had restarted on 1<sup>st</sup> March and the work is now complete. He asked committee to note that two more verandas have been identified that have issues with water penetration. Costs are being discussed with the contractor for the worst unit and the possibility of looking at the other dependent on costs.

### **14. AOCB**

The Director sought committee approval to change the May committee meeting from 27<sup>th</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup> to take account of the end of May long weekend.

**Committee approved changing the committee meeting to 25<sup>th</sup> May 2021.**

The Chair offered is thanks to the Corporate & Governance for her support and the Housing Staff for their continued hard work during this difficult time.

There was no other business. Meeting closed: 1pm  
Next meeting: 25<sup>th</sup> May 2021 at 6pm.

I certify that the above minute has been approved as a true and accurate reflection of the proceedings:

Signed (Chair) .....

Date:.....