

**WELLHOUSE HOUSING ASSOCIATION
MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON
24th June 2021 at 11 am - VIA ZOOM**

1. Welcome, Sederunt & Apologies.

Present:

Darron Brown	Chair
Maureen Morris	Vice-Chair
Clare Monteith	Committee Member
Carol Torrie	Committee Member
Sarah Morris	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
Laura Reilly	Income Advice Officer (Item 6 only)

Apologies:

Jane Heppenstall	Committee Member
Michelle Harrow	Committee Member
Shona McKenna	Committee Member

The Chair welcomed Laura Reilly, Income Advice Officer, to the meeting.

2. Jargon Buster

Noted for information.

3. Declarations of Interest.

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Minutes of the Committee Meeting of 25 May 2021.

Resolution:

The minutes of the Committee Meeting of 25 May 2021 were proposed by Maureen Morris and seconded by Sarah Morris as an accurate record of the proceedings.

5. Matters arising and actions from the minute report.

The Director advised that the business plan would not be presented at this meeting due to ongoing work on the operational plan. He sought committee approval to present the report at the next meeting. He

proposed that the business plan be pushed back by a year/possibly two; to take account of the impact of Covid 19.

Committee approved that the business plan update be presented to the August committee meeting.

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

6. Covid 19 – Impact on Tenants.

Laura provided an overview of funding and assistance that had been put in place to help our tenants during the Covid 19 pandemic. She asked committee to note that she had assisted 219 tenants with 799 benefit issues during the period. Financial gains for the period were £571,00.00. She stated that there had been 139 crisis support queries during the period; in the main due to additional expenditure on fuel and food provisions. She noted that initial referrals had been made to Connect Community Trust as they had had access to white goods and food parcels. Laura had then applied to the STV children's' appeal emergencies trust and we were kindly awarded £2,000. £1,600 had been awarded to 40 fuel top ups and the additional funds allocated to over 20 food parcels which were made up by Laura and the Estate Wardens, and distributed to those in need.

She had then identified people who did not have access to Wi-Fi and those that could not access their universal credit etc. due to lack of access to local internet facilities. The support community fund provided £9,700 which had been used to purchase 30 tablets that were lent to tenants within the community. The tablets came with 6MB of data which provided free internet access from August of last year. Internet access had now ceased due to no further funding however, the funds that had not been utilised will be allocated to a few people requiring mobile phones. 41 people have benefit from this service to date.

Laura highlighted that in addition to the above she had applied to the STV children's fund and had identified 10 families who were experiencing difficulties. 13 children had been awarded £100 over the winter period. The Wee Gee fund had been used to purchase sweets for children and boxes of biscuits for pensioners within the community. The EHRA group had also awarded £1,000 which had been used to help 31 families experiencing fuel poverty.

£400 remains in the Ruchazie Pantry fund, 10 awards have been provided to date. Laura noted a reluctance from people to access the fund.

The Glasgow City Council Emergency Fuel Fund awarded through the EHRA group still has £2,400 left available in the fund. 21 awards have been made to date.

Laura noted that fuel poverty has increased within the area. She had signed up to the Home Energy Portals to make referrals especially for people who have capped meters etc. She suggested inviting Home Energy Scotland for face-to-face meetings with tenants when the office re-opens to provide further advise.

She stated that accessing funds and grants had been very time consuming. She suggested that when the office re-opens that consideration be given to a funding raising committee being established to assist in the applications processes.

She asked if committee had any questions.

Maureen Morris stated that a recent article in the Scottish Housing News had indicated that the Scottish Government would make funds available to those people in rent arrears. Laura confirmed this. However, details were not available at this time. She highlighted that the tenant hardship fund that had previously been set up that had been difficult for some tenants to access due to a poor credit rating and affordability issues.

The Director thanked Laura for all her work. He acknowledged that she was one of the most talented income advisors he had ever worked with. The Chair reiterated these thoughts and thanked Laura on behalf of the community for everything she has done and the financial gains she has accessed for the people of Wellhouse.

Laura left the meeting at this time.

7. 30 Year Financial Projections incorporating Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) Five Year Financial Projections (FYFP)

The Finance & Corporate Services Manager presented the report to provide committee members with detail of the projected financial position of the Association over the medium and long term.

He highlighted that the setting of the long-term projections' forms part of the annual business planning cycle which reflects the Associations current business/operational and longer-term plans. The Financial Projections will include the 5-year annual projections and will be reported and submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator by 30th June 2021 and will also be sent to our lenders to comply with financial covenant requirements. He noted that our external Auditors, Azets, had been commissioned during the absence of a Finance Manager being in place and these figures reflect their projections. He highlighted those various scenarios that had been stress tested. All scenarios had concluded with a positive cash flow and surplus projection.

Year 1 is based upon the approved 21/22 budget, and reflect the figures included in the annual budget formally adopted by the committee at its meeting in November 2020. Proposed development activity has not been included in the long term as it would not be considered appropriated at this time to include these projections.

He noted a strong financial position with surpluses being generated annually over the 30-year period. The cash position starts at just over £1.7M. There are surpluses made each year as the cash balance rises steadily until year 9 when capital repayment on an RBS loan commences. He highlighted that between years 15 and 23 that there were a few cash deficits however these are the years when there is expected to be considerable investment in stock with a large amount being spent on replacement components.

He led the committee through the Assumptions and Cash Flow over the period and outlined variances

Major repair costs increase in year 1 and 2 which reflect works delayed due to Covid restrictions. Major repairs costs increase by an additional 5% resulting in cash reducing by more than £100K.

He asked if there were any questions relating to the assumptions within the report.

The Director sought confirmation that pages 19 – 21 of the report would be reflected in the annual return to the Regulator. The Finance & Corporate Services Manager confirmed this. He noted that the print out included within the report may not have captured the information as required. The Director informed

committee that in future years the completed template as submitted to the Regulator will be presented on screen for committee consideration

Resolution:

Committee noted and approved the 30-year projections.

Maureen Morris proposed and Clare Monteith seconded the 30-year projections.

Committee granted authority for the Finance Manager to electronically submit the approved figures to the SHR in their 5-year financial projections format.

8. Rent arrears update report

The Housing Manager asked committee to note that since the last committee update, gross current rent arrears had increased by £14,537 at 31 May 2021 to £350,631 – 10.44% of annual income, which was in the main due to the delay in the end of month payments due on the holiday weekend. Similarly, other tenants who normally make payments at the end of the month were not included and will be reflected in next month's accounts. In addition, housing benefit is paid every 4 weeks by GCC and the cut-off date was 9th May therefore housing benefits payments from that date are not reflected in account balances.

She asked committee to note that whilst every effort is being made by the housing officers to tackle arrears; their efforts are being adversely impacted by those tenants in the legal system who continue to take advantage of the temporary legislation and are refusing to engage or pay. She asked committee to note the housing officer activity as outlined at appendix 1 of the report. The value of evening and weekend working continues to be monitored.

Committee noted the contents of the report.

9. Annual Complaints Report

The Housing & Customer Services Manager provided an overview of the complaints and compliments for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. 23 complaints had been received during the year. With the exception of 3 complaints all were responded to within the required timescales, which was in the main due to the 3 complaints being received on the last 2 days of the year and were not responded to in time to be included in the ARC return. 5 complaints were investigated out with the 5-day timescale which were in the main due to rechargeable repair queries. The average resolution time was 3.73 days against an SPSO target of 5 working days. 16 of the stage 1 complaints had been resolved and 6 not upheld. She noted that the majority of the complaints had been in relation to policies and procedures and lack of communication to tenants. 6 compliments had been received during the course of the year.

Committee noted the contents of the report.

10. Development Ambitions/Surface Water Management

The Director presented the report to update on progress with development plans. He drew committees' attention to pages 35 – 40 of the report noting our Strategic Development Funding Plan which had been formally resubmitted to Glasgow Council outlining our development ambitions. Since time of writing the Director had received a project plan from our development agent, Simon Metcalfe,

which looks at proposed development and time lines for each development. The Director suggested that a development subcommittee be convened next year to take account of the whole development programme and expenditure required.

An article had been included in the newsletter highlighting the works proposed by Scottish Water to mitigate flooding issues. Representatives from Scottish Water will carry out a site visit next week to look at the proposed sites for rain water gardens.

Clare Monteith sought clarification as to who would maintain the rain water gardens. The Director considered that it would be the responsibility of the local authority and Scottish Water. He noted that the rain gardens require very little maintenance however further discussion would be required with the local authority should they indicate they were unable to maintain them.

Resolution

Committee;

**Noted the updated and instructed the Director to bring future progress reports;
Approved further exploration of flood prevention work, including a demonstration rain water garden at the Hub.**

Clare Monteith proposed and Sarah Morris seconded further exploration of flood prevention works including a demonstration rain water garden at the Hub.

11. Allocation Consultation Discussion

The Housing & Customer Services Manager presented the report to provide suggested categories and proposals for the Allocation Policy review and consultation process. She noted the Housing Scotland Act 2014 set out 3 categories of applicants who should be given reasonable preference in the allocation policy, these being homeless persons, people living under unsatisfactory housing condition and under occupying social housing tenants. She asked committee to note that we currently have 481 applicants on our waiting list, noting that 61 were transfer applicants and 31 from households within our community. 8 tenancies had been offered to Wellhouse transfer and waiting list applicants over the last 2 years.

Committee were invited to discuss the suggestions by staff that might be considered in the review of the policy as set out at appendix 1.

A lengthy discussion ensued regards maximising opportunities for our tenants in line with legislative requirements and ways in which to communicate the % of applicants who were actual Wellhouse residents.

Resolution:

Committee noted and approved proposals to be consulted on for inclusion within the policy review.

Maureen Morris proposed and Clare Monteith proposed the suggestions to be consulted upon.

12. Anti-Social Behaviour Policy

The Housing & Customer Services Manager reiterated agreement from Committee to remove the antisocial behaviour element from the neighbourhood management policy and to create a stand-alone policy. The policy had been updated to reflect partnership working and in line with references to legislation and governance. The policy had been published on the website inviting service users to provide comments. No comments were provided via the website.

Resolution:

Committee;

Noted the outcome of the consultation on the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy

Approved the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy

Maureen Morris proposed and Clare Monteith seconded adoption of the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy

13. Operational Update:

Director

Covid 19.

The Director stated that current guidance from the Scottish Government anticipates that we move to level 0 with a potential return to work date of 9th August 2021 although still support home working in the interim period. A more detailed report will be brought to the August Committee meeting. He discussed back up plans to consider another remote AGM this year.

Newhills Road.

The Director proposed commissioning an agent to market the property at Newhills Road. Most of the interested parties have now indicated that the unit may be too big and requires too much of a fit out. Getting change of use permission is also proving difficult for potential tenants due to the inability to access the correct staff at the local authority. He will update as the need arises.

Fly-Tipping.

The Director updated on a meeting with Glasgow City Council who have now confirmed that bulk uplift is free of charge however they will only uplift it if it requested via an app or internet by a tenant. He informed of the potential to report bulk uplift to a local Cllr. who would report on behalf of the constituency.

Housing & Customer Services Manager

There were no additional items that had not been reported on in subsequent agenda items

Assets & Maintenance Manager

Adaptations.

The Assets & Maintenance Manager informed that we had had the grant funding for adaptations extended to £25,000. We currently have 8 adaptations, 7 have been issued with 6 completed. 1 is waiting on a joint visit with the OT and will be progressed as soon as possible.

Windows & Doors

It is hoped that an open day will be organised for tenants to meet with the contractor and view samples of the proposed windows and doors. A site start has been proposed in for the start of September.

Discussion ensued with the regards the one-off household bulk uplift provided by the estates team which had gone well. Bulk remains a major issue and has impacted on the estates team capacity.

14. AOCB

The Director stated that due to current changes in Covid restrictions, East End Flat Pack meals are proposing to open up in the Hub café fairly soon. The Director will email committee with confirmation of when this will happen.

There was no other business. Meeting closed: 1pm
Next meeting: 26th August at 6pm

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

Signed (Chair)

Date:.....