

**WELLHOUSE HOUSING ASSOCIATION
MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD
ON 24 August 2022 AT 6PM – The Hub and Zoom**

1. Welcome, Sederunt & Apologies

Present:

Maureen Morris	Chair
Gordon Kerr	Co-opted Member
Darron Brown	Committee Member
Helen Lafferty	Co-opted Member
Shona McKenna	Committee Member
Jane Heppenstall	Committee Member

In Attendance:

Bill Black	Interim Director
Carol Hamilton	Housing & Customer Services Manager
Robert Murray	Corporate & Finance Manager
Alex Hogg	Interim Assets & Maintenance Manager
Linda Logan	Minute Taker

Apologies:

Michelle Harrow	Committee Member
Sarah Morris	Committee Member

The Chair welcomed Shona McKenna back to committee meetings following her leave of absence.

2. Jargon Buster

Noted for information.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of Interest.

4. Minutes of the Committee Meeting of 26 May 2022

The minutes of the committee meeting of 29 June 2022 were proposed by Darron Brown and seconded by Gordon Kerr as an accurate record of the proceedings.

5. Matters arising from the minutes report.

The Housing and Customer Services Manager informed committee that we would not proceed with the CCTV options proposals due to budget constraints.

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

6. Tenant Participation Strategy Review

The Housing and Customer Services Manager provided an overview of the proposed draft Tenant participation Strategy and the Tenants Participation Action Plan for consultation purposes.

She provided background information on the funding granted to be involved in the Next Steps Programme with the assistance of TPAS. The programme had been postponed due to Covid 19.

She noted that efforts during a recent tenant consultation events had resulted in 6 tenants joining the Customer Opinion Panel. An initial meeting had been arranged for August and September where the draft strategy and action plan will be discussed and available on the website for customers to comment.

An update and approval will be sought at the next meeting.

Shona McKenna expressed her thanks to the housing team for their efforts in encouraging tenants to join Customer Opinion Panel.

Resolution:

Committee approved that the draft of the Tenant Participation Strategy and Tenant Participation plan be shared with customers for consultation purposes.

7. Policy Review

The Housing and Customer Services Manager/Interim Director provided committee with a draft of the reviews Assignations, sub-letting, ledger, joint tenancy and mutual exchange policy and 2 new polices in relation to Fire Safety and Electrical for approval.

The Housing Manager noted a minor change required in the Assignation policy in relation to the updated address for the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. There was no further amendment to the policy during review.

The Interim Director stated that the Fire Safety and Electrical policies had been reviewed to ensure they met current legislation and good practice prior to the introduction of changes to Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 amendments and the regulations covering fire safety and electrical test as per the references within the polices.

Resolution:

Committee approved the Assignation, sub-letting, lodgers, joint tenancy and mutual exchange, fire safety and electrical policies.

Darron Brown proposed and Jane Heppenstall seconded approval of the above policies.

8. Equalities and Diversity Policy

The Housing Manager stated that Dr Stewart Montgomery had been commissioned jointly by Wellhouse HA and Blairtummock HA to develop the Equalities and Diversity Policy, equalities action plan, equalities impact assessment and harassment policy and the appropriate training for staff and committee members. The comprehensive policy and action plan were attached as appendices for information.

She noted that the SHR promotes equality impact assessments through the regulatory requirement to have assurance and evidenced that each social landlord considers equality and human rights issues properly when making decision in the review of internal and external policies and the day to day service delivery. She asked committee to note that unfortunately Dr Montgomery had taken ill and will not return to work until 2023. Another provider, Stuart Eglington has indicated that he is willing to provide the training.

Jane Heppenstall asked if Stuart Eglington would work through the action plan and implementation with staff and committee members during training. The Housing Manager confirmed this.

Resolution:

Committee approved the Equalities and Diversity Policy and the Equalities Action Plan

Jane Heppenstall proposed and Shona McKenna seconded the Equalities and Diversity Policy and Action Plan.

9. Complaints and Compliments 22/23 update

The Housing Manager reported that 4 Stage 1 complaints were received during the period 1 April to 30 June 2022. All stage 1 complaints were responded to within quarter 1 however only 3 were handled within timescales. The average resolution time was 3 days against an SPSO target of 5 working days. There were 3 stage 2 complaints received during the period. 1 stage 2 complaint was responded to within quarter 1, the other was not due a reply until July 2022. She provided a brief overview on the outcome of the complaints.

Committee noted the complaints and compliment update for the period 1 April to 30 June 2022.

10. KPI's

The Housing Manager presented the report to bring to the attention of Committee the performance in relation to KPI's for the period April – June 2022. She noted appendix 1 of the report which detailed results for the first quarter against targets set for 22/23 which also reflect areas included in the ARC. She highlighted the following results for information;

Rent collected of total rent due was 91.73% at the end the quarter, which was lower than normal due to the impact of technical arrears. Gross rent arrears have reduced to 8.73% although still remain an area of concern. The percentage of tenancy offers refused were within target although relet times had increased to 6.9. day. Covid restrictions and metering issued had an impact on performance.

The Interim Maintenance Manager reported that with the move to HomeMaster two KPIs could not be reported on. One in relation to urgent repair times and the extract from the system does not allow this to be accurately calculated and will require assistance from HomeMaster to resolve.

Committee noted the KPI's for the period April – June 2022.

11. Rent Arrears update

The Housing Manager reported that since the last committee update, gross current rent arrears had decreased by £14,404 to £279,259. For the same period net current arrears had increased by £26,629. She noted that 13 new tenants had accrued arrears of £9,210 as they are awaiting the outcome of benefit claims. In addition, there were direct debits to the value of £5,653 which were not included in the July figures as they were collected on 1st August due date falling within the weekend.

Former Tenant Arrears reduced by £1,997. Universal Credit arrears accounts for £166,178 of the total gross current rent arrear. She noted that there were still some issues with the calculation of technical arrears on Homemaster which is being resolved via additional data input.

Housing Officer continue to focus on reducing the UC debt by ensuring that affordable arrangements are made which more tenants contacting Housing Officers to rearrange their arrears payments due to the rise in the cost of living and utility bills. This is expected to become a more frequent occurrence.

She noted we continue to benchmark with EHRA colleagues to compare how we process the rental receipts from GGC and DWP. The Finance Manager explained that Wellhouse HA have traditionally not recognised DWP receipts until they have cleared through the bank. It is proposed, that like our colleagues in EHRA, that when the remittance advice is received from GCC/DWP rather than wait until the funds clear the following month, we would process it on the date and treat them as outstanding lodgements in the bank account.

Committee sought assurance that appropriate checks would be made to ensure that GCC/DWP funds clear through the bank account. The Finance Manager affirmed this.

Committee noted the update on the arrears position.

12. Management Accounts – 30 June 2022

The Finance & Corporate Services Manager presented the report to provide committee members with a comparison of the estimated and actual financial position to 30 June 2022.

He provided a brief overview of the Statement of Comprehensive Income and variances. The budgeted surplus for the 3 months to 20 June 2022 was £152,279. The actual results for the period show a surplus of £141,049, a adverse variance for the period of £11,229.

The overall variance arises from:

Operational activities £14,069 – adverse variance
Net interest and other activities £2,838 – favourable variance

The Finance & Corporate Services Manager highlighted that rental income was close to budget with a slight positive variance of £1,479 in the main due additional checks when moving to HomeMaster. Void losses were higher than the budgeted figure in the main due to the works required within the properties and resolving issues with resetting electrical meters.

He asked committee to note the underspend in salaries of £12,762 in the main due staff being recruited at a lower pay scale. Repairs and Maintenance shows an underspend of £22,901 against budget over all areas for the quarter. He provided a detailed explanation of some of the over and underspend in relation to reactive maintenance, cyclical maintenance and major repairs/planned renewals as highlighted within the report

Cash flow showed the transactions for the year to date using the receipts and payments method as opposed to the accruals method. The report showed a cash outflow of £389,949 as opposed to a surplus of £141,049 in SOCI.

He reported no covenant compliance issues and a gearing result of 18.07%

He noted the cash position had reduced and in a reasonably healthy position finishing the period at over £2.7M. The reduction in the main due to the investment in replacement windows and doors.

Gordon Kerr sought clarification on the commercial unit's rental income. The Finance Manager confirmed that the property will be let from 1 September 2022 and lease agreements completed by the solicitors.

The Chair sought clarification if Easthall Residents would provide a report on the spend and activities on the funds that the Association has paid to them. The Finance Manager affirmed this.

Resolution:

Committee approved the management accounts for the period to date.

Gordon Kerr proposed and Darron Brown seconded the management accounts to 30 June 2022.

13. Operational update.

Interim Director:

The Interim Director reported in closed session.

Housing & Customer Services Manager:

The Housing and Customer Services Manager reported that the Housing Officer would be reverting to their generic roles from September. Policies are being reviewed with emphasis being given to the Allocations Policy as well as the Tenant Participation Strategy in October. She noted that the team was working through the impact assessment and that all policies would require review to take account equalities and diversity as outlined by Stuart Montgomery.

She noted an increase in anti-social behaviour and estate management complaints. In addition, there has been an increase in applications for housing from private sector tenants due to landlords selling their properties.

The Income Advice Office continues to provide benefit advice and providing UC early intervention support for new claims. She updated on the UK government cost of living payment that will be automatically paid to those who are eligible.

Assets & Maintenance Manager:

The Interim Assets & Maintenance Manager reported that the window and door contract was off site with no issues to report. There are currently 10 voids in repairs and Housing Officers will re-start pre term visits. He noted that we complete our voids to a very high standards.

All smoke detector upgrades have been completed and ECIR testing underway. 3 adaptation had been completed in the 1st quarter. He updated on the town house decant major works to long term water leaks, with costs being looked at as they are considerably higher than expected

Finance & Corporate Services Manager:

The Finance Manager noted that the external audit was currently ongoing with no significant issues being raised.

He reported that the new HomeMaster system was being used in the first quarter to draw the financial records for the report. No major issues were experienced however the team will continue to work with Homemaster to try and build the reporting module within the system.

Due to sickness two internal audit reports were not available for the Audit and Risk committee and have been deferred to the management committee meeting being held on 1st September 2022.

He noted that a monthly working group for the Homemaster system has been established for each department to discuss ongoing teething issues with the system and any adjustments or improvements to be made by HomeMaster.

The treasury management report should have been presented to this committee meeting however due to changing interest rates, the Finance Manager had contacted our lenders to get a breakdown on the impact of the changes and some options such as making additional capital payments. He has yet to receive the requested information

14. Election to Committee arrangements

The Corporate & Governance Officer presented the report to outline procedures for the election to committee meeting following the AGM. She reminded committee that if there were further nominations the deadline for submission was 2 September 2022.

She stated that under Rule 38.2 of the Rules at least one third of the longest serving committee members since the date of their last election must retire. These were Maureen Morris, Jane Heppenstall and Shona McKenna. She sought confirmation that they will stand for re-election. They did not require nomination. Maureen, Jane and Shone confirmed they would seek re-election.

Gordon Kerr and Helen Lafferty, co-optees will stand for election at the AGM. They do not require nomination..

It was proposed that the Director continue as the Secretary. He does not require nomination.

Under Rule 58.10 the Chairperson can be re-elected. Maureen Morris had indicated that she was willing to stand for re-election as Chair. If there were no further nominations received she was asked to confirm this. Maureen confirmed her willingness and welcomed nominations should another member wish to stand for the position of Chair.

The current Vice Chair, Clare Monteith had indicated she was willing to stand for re-election. Due to Clare's apologies for this meeting and if there were no further nominations, she will be asked to confirm this at the meeting following the AGM.

She noted that committee had indicated that they consider the office bearers role of Treasurer as necessary. It was noted that the current role was vacant and she sought volunteers to the role. Darron Brown volunteered to stand for election to the role of Treasurer.

The Corporate & Governance Officer sought confirmation from the audit and risk committee that they were happy to continue as serving members. These were Clare Monteith, Maureen Morris, Sarah Morris, Michelle Harrow and Jane Heppenstall. Carol Torrie the previous Chair of the Audit and Risk has resigned from committee. The Audit and Risk were asked to consider who would be willing to serve as Chair at the next Audit and Risk Committee meeting.

She sought confirmation from the Staffing Committee that they were happy to continue as serving members. These were Clare Monteith (Chair), Michelle Harrow and Sarah Morris. Clare Monteith has confirmed that

she was willing to continue as Chair however due to apologies submitted for this meeting she will be asked to confirm this at the meeting following the AGM.

The Chair sought confirmation from committee members if there were any further nominations which they would prefer to submit at this meeting.

AGM arrangements were discussed and it was confirmed to restrict the business of the AGM to those allowed by the Rules.

Resolution:

Committee noted the update and confirmed those members that would seek re-election.

15. Membership

The Corporate & Governance Officer presented and sought committee approval for a new membership application from Calum Campbell which would be recorded in the Register of Members

Resolution:

Committee approved the membership application of Calum Campbell.

Darron Brown proposed and Shona McKenna seconded the membership application of Calum Campbell and the recording of such in the Register of Members.

16. AOCB

The Housing Manager asked committee to email Linda Logan with availability for the equalities training and which evening would suit them best.

There was no other business. Meeting closed 8:00PM

Next Meeting 1st September 2022 at 6PM via Zoom and in house