

**WELLHOUSE HOUSING ASSOCIATION
MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD
ON 28th February 2023 AT 6PM – via Teams and in house**

1. Welcome, Sederunt & Apologies

Present:

Maureen Morris	Chair
Gordon Kerr	Committee Member
Helen Lafferty	Committee Member
Graeme Wetherill	Co-opted Member
Darron Brown	Committee Member
Leeann Brown	Co-opted Member
Jane Heppenstall	Committee Member

In Attendance:

Martin Wilkie-McFarlane	Director
Bill Black	Assets & Maintenance Manager
James Wilson	Housing & Customer Services Manager
Robert Murray	Finance & Corporate Services Manager
Linda Logan	Minutes
Anna Dukova	Observer

Absent:

Michelle Harrow	Committee Member
-----------------	------------------

The Chair welcomed Anna Dukova who would be observing tonight's meeting. Introductions were made.

2. Jargon Buster

Noted for information.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of Interest.

4. Minutes of the Committee Meeting of 30 November 2022

The minutes of the committee meeting of 25 January 2023 were proposed by Helen Lafferty and seconded by Gordon Kerr as an accurate record of the proceedings.

5. Matters arising from the minutes report.

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

6. Draft 3 – 23/24 final budget assumptions

The Finance Manager presented the budget as a final version for 23/24.

He asked committee to note that a further update of the budget would be distributed to committee by Friday which would incorporate additional costs of approximately £15,000 for recruitment and a handover period, reflect discussion from the Audit & Risk Committee to transfer monies into various term deposits, £1.5M for a 1year period and an additional £0.5M for a 3month rolling period, however may be subject to change, to reflect costs intimated for development following Curb's presentation.

He noted the detailed draft 2 version of the budget and provided the committee with an overview of recommendations following discussion with the senior management team as recommended by the Auditors.

Gordon Kerr sought clarification that approval of budget was being sought subject to additional spend discussed being included within the final budget. The Finance Manager confirmed that additional spend would be included and distributed to the committee by Friday for information.

Resolution:

Committee noted the current levels of Consumer Price Index (CPI), Retail Price Index (RPI) and Consumer Price Index with Housing costs (CPIH) are higher than the current rental increase of 3.0% and that this may present challenges in the future with regards to meeting the requirements of having a budget that services the housing stock to a satisfactory level and leaves sufficient surplus to meet the loan commitments and component replacements.

Instructed the Finance Manager to adopt the budget as the final version to be used for budget setting and report to the Regulator in the 30-year business plans.

Darron Brown proposed and Gordon Kerr seconded 23/24 final budget assumptions subject to additional spend being included.

7. Rent arrears update report.

The Director presented, on behalf of the Housing Manager, the report to update committee on the arrears position. He noted that as a social landlord the rent arrears position was still an area of concern however the position had improved quite significantly over the last year. He stated that gross rent arrears were at 11% last year and had fallen to below 9% with net arrears below 8% from the 10% reported. He thanked the team for their hard work. He noted that the new Housing Manager had made a superb start in the post.

He informed of a slight upturn in gross current rent arrears for the period, however noted that this was to be expected following the Christmas period. He asked the committee to note that 97 tenants owe more than £1,000 and those over more than £2,000 remains at 48. The Director has asked the Housing Manager to prepare a strategy and action plan to focus on this group of tenants and report to the committee at the next meeting.

The Chair noted and commented on the graph on page 30 of the report which highlighted 407 tenants in arrears and the work required by the housing team to follow up on these arrears.

Darron Brown requested that the Housing Manager report to the committee the number of tenants of the 407 reported who were in one full month's arrears at the next meeting.

Committee noted the update on the arrears position.

8. KPI Report

The Maintenance Manager presented the report to inform committee of Key Performance Indicators for the period April – December 2022. He noted the majority of KPI's within target and highlighted areas that remain of concern in relation to rent arrears and the percentage of tenants satisfied with the overall service provided by their landlord and at their landlords' contribution to the management of the neighbourhood they live in. He asked committee to note that a lot of work is being done with Glasgow City Council to improve neighbourhood management and that some staff had been going out in their own time to do litter picks to help improve the area.

The Director noted the % of tenancy offers refused and the reasons thereof which will be monitored and reported to committee. He advised that colleagues had confirmed that they were experiencing similar decreases in satisfaction rates.

Gordon Kerr sought clarification on the high level of re-let times. The Maintenance Manager advised that void condition and metering issues continue to cause delays.

Graeme Wetherill reported similar refusal rates within his own work sector which he believes reflects the impacts of a wider range of financial pressures and tenants not wanting to face eviction at a later date if the property became unaffordable.

Committee noted the KPI report.

9. Complaints and Compliments reports

The Director asked committee to note a slight reduction in response times however for the year to date average performance were within target response times.

Committee noted the update to the complaints and compliments report.

10. Voids refusals update

The Director presented the report to update committee on the void refusal position up to the end of the 3rd quarter – 31 December 2022. He echoed Graeme's comments that people who are coming through the homelessness referrals service are either refusing or not attending appointments and the Council not offering the person their area of choice. He asked the committee to note the bar-chart at page 45 which reflects the reasons for refusals and the area.

Committee noted the void refusals update.

Jane Heppenstall joined the meeting at this time.

11. Policy Review Report

Dignity at Work Policy

The Corporate & Governance Officer presented the report. There were no further changes to the Dignity at Work Policy, which had been reviewed in line with EVH's model policies.

Repairs & Maintenance Policy

The Maintenance Manager presented the report. The policy had been amended to reflect changes as outlined at point 4.2 within the report. They complied with the Scottish Social Housing Charter requirements relating to the provision of a reactive and planned maintenance service.

Resolution:

Committee noted and approved the reviewed Dignity at Work and the Repairs & Maintenance Policies and three yearly thereafter.

Jane Heppenstall proposed and Gordon Kerr seconded the reviewed Dignity at Work and the Repairs & Maintenance Policies.

12. Operational update

Director:

Development.

The Director updated on a constructive meeting with CAF bank to discuss lending for future development which will allow us to benchmark with our existing lending. CAF will attend a future SMT meeting and a committee meeting thereafter.

EHRA

EHRA minutes and papers were circulated separately. He noted a planning day that took place on 8 February to set the framework for refreshing the vision and mission for EHRA. The Chair encouraged another member to join the EHRA committee should they have the capacity to do so.

All other items were reported in closed session.

Housing Manager

The Director advised further funding had been received in a joint bid with East Hall Park Housing Co-operative for the SFHA winter hardship fund to the value of £25,000. The fund requires a targeted approach and will identify and support tenants experiencing high levels of food insecurity. He thanked Laura Reilly, Income and Advice Officer, who led on the application submission, for the exceptional support/advice and financial gains that she provides for our tenants.

Maintenance Manager:

The Maintenance Manager advised that the estate warden vacancy had been readvertised with a closing date of 3rd March. He will update at the next meeting.

He had attended the first EHRA Maintenance Meeting on 21st February. The meeting had gone well, with agreement to do joint procurement for smaller items at the moment.

He noted an increase in tenants reporting condensation and dampness. Several staff have attended a training course run by ALCHO/SFHA in relation to these issues. He asked committee to note the attached update on the Tenant and Resident Safety Survey from the SHR.

Finance Manager:

The Finance Manager informed committee that internal audits on Factoring Services and the review of the recommendations from previous audits will be presented by the auditors at the May, Audit and Risk committee meeting.

Following an initial planning meeting for the external audit, Azets will commence the audit 1st March with the final audit being scheduled for week commencing 24 July 2023.

He advised that although not presented at this meeting the management accounts to 31 January 2023 had been prepared; key headline figures indicate a surplus of £72K more than budget at £584K, Voids £12K above budget in the main due to the time being taken for meter resets and staff costs at £34K under budget due to a vacant post for most of the year. Cyclical maintenance had a £150K underspend due to the timing of some annual contracts. A healthy bank balance of £3.1M was reported.

Gordon Kerr, Chair, Audit and Risk Committee provided a verbal update on matters discussed and agreements reached at its meeting of 23 February 2023.

13. AOCB

The Chair advised that she had planned to seek approval at the meeting of 22nd February 2023, for rent increase letters to be hand delivered by staff however due to the meeting not being quorate and rescheduled to this evening, she was unable to do so. She advised all rent increase letters had been hand delivered by staff on Monday morning. The Director advised that due to current legislation on the rent freeze, ending, and in consultation with our solicitors, rent increase letters could not be delivered before 26th February 2022. It was a requirement that letters be sent via recorded delivery or hand delivered.

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

Next Meeting 26 April 2023 at 6PM via Teams and in house