

**WELLHOUSE HOUSING ASSOCIATION  
MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD  
ON 31 January 2024 AT 6PM – via Teams**

**1. Welcome, Sederunt & Apologies**

**Present:**

Maureen Morris	Chair
Gordon Kerr	Committee Member
Anna Dukova	Committee Member
Jane Heppenstall	Committee Member
Darron Brown	Vice Chair
Helen Lafferty	Committee Member

**In Attendance:**

Martin Wilkie-McFarlane	Director
Bill Black	Assets and Maintenance Manager
James Wilson	Housing and Customer Services Manager
Linda Logan	Minutes
David Gebbie	Observer
Lauren Herd	Observer

**Apologies:**

Leeann Brown	Committee Member
Michelle Harrow	Committee Member

**2. Jardon Buster**

Noted for information.

**3. Declarations of interest.**

There were no declarations of interest.

**4. Minutes of the Committee Meeting of 29 November 2023.**

Committee approved the minutes of the committee meeting of 29 November 2023 as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

**Darron Brown proposed and Jane Heppenstall seconded the minutes of 29 November 2023.**

**5. Matters arising and actions from the minutes report.**

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

## 6. Management Accounts to December 2023

The Director presented the report to provide members with a comparison of the budget and actual financial position to 31 December 2023. The budget surplus for the nine-month period to 31 December was £207,553 however the actual results for the period show a surplus of £528,025 and an overall favourable variance of £320,472 arising from;

Operational activities – favourable variance of £366,472

Net interest and other activities – adverse variance of £46,118

### **Expenditure:**

He advised an overspend of £169,525 against budget mainly due to additional utility charges as contracts were only available for charges higher than anticipated and £28,290 for repair costs to the drainage at the Hub. It is hoped that this cost can be reclaimed through grant funding from the Baillieston Infrastructure Fund. The cost of development was £155,864 of which we received grant funding from GCC of £130,683 for the costs mentioned.

The Statement of Financial position showed that our loans had been reduced by £189,665 due to the monthly contributions being paid towards this liability. Reserves had increased by £528K to over £8.6M in line with the surplus made for the period. There were no covenant compliance issues. Cash had decreased by £91,981 due to works being completed and reinvestment in our homes.

### **Resolution:**

**Committee approved the management accounts to 31 December 2023.**

**Jane Heppenstall proposed and Gordon Kerr seconded the management account to 31 December 2023.**

## 7. 24/25 Draft Budget – Version 2

The Director noted the budget based on the recommended rent increase following the rent consultation and information for 24/25 budget. Detailed discussions were held between the Finance, Housing and Maintenance Manager to ensure costs were a realistic reflection of the anticipated cost for the coming year. He highlighted that the Housing Manager would report under separate cover in relation to the proposed rental increase.

He provided an executive summary of changes between draft1 and draft2 of the budget in relation to the proposed rental increases, an additional £9K budget added for Estates Housing Officers for additional estates work and improvements to customer services. VAT of £115K had now been added to components. This had not been included in the 1<sup>st</sup> draft budget which had also had a slight knock on effect of £6K additional depreciations. Additional savings of £23K were made on gutter cleaning and £7K on external painting. He asked committee noted the expected main changes in draft3 of the budget in relation to insurance renewal quotes which it is hoped will be known at that time. The housing stock valuations spreadsheet had been complete by the housing team and sent to our insurance broker.

Gordon Kerr noted the interest cover on loan covenants was quite tight and will require to be monitored.

Jane Heppenstall sought clarification on the difference in housing properties depreciation between 23/24. Gordon Kerr compared depreciation within the management accounts and suspected that a net figure had been reported. The Director will discuss with the finance team.

## 8. Policy Review Report.

The Governance Officer asked committee to approve the reviewed recruitment and selection, toil, overtime and flexi, shared parental leave, adverse weather condition, training and development and the privacy policies. The policies had been posted to the library in BoardEffect in December for committee review. There were no changes required.

### **Resolution:**

**Committee noted and approved all of the aforementioned policies.**

**Darron Brown proposed and Anna Dukova seconded the aforementioned policies for a further 3/5 years.**

## 9. Rent Arrears update.

The Housing Manager presented the report to update on the arrears position. Since the last committee update gross current tenant rent arrears had increased by £13,831 to £319,600 (8.95%). It noted an ARC indicator of 9.67% for the same period last year. During the same period net current arrears increased by £11,485 to £27,587 and former tenant arrears had increased by £3,662. He asked committee to note that universal Credit is now claimed by 282 WHA households and Universal Credit arrears account for 58.26% of the total gross current rent arrears.

He asked committee to note the stats at page 43 of the report, where a performance column had now been incorporated to provide committee with current performance percentages and provide a clearer picture on performance. He reported changes in the housing teams' approach to rent arrears, anti-social behaviour, estate allocations and lets, moving to a more specialised role.

Gordon Kerr asked if the housing team was moving away from housing officers working in specific patches. The Housing Manager confirmed that one housing officer would be working solely on arrears management. Gordon also sought clarification on whether 9.67% performance averages included gross rent arrears and former tenant arrears. The Housing Manager stated that the ARC indicator required that current gross rent arrears, former tenant arrears and write-offs be included.

Darron Brown asked if the level Universal Credit arrears was due to tenant's receiving the money and not paying it directly to the Association. The Housing Manager explained the process of money management and giving tenants the opportunity to pay their rent. He noted that some tenants may be 4-5 weeks in arrears before the Association can request that Universal Credit be paid directly to us.

The Director asked when tenants are on Universal Credit and if rent coming directly to us from the UC account, if it was paid in arrears. The Housing Manager confirmed this.

**Committee noted the rent arrears update.**

## 10 KPI Report

The Housing Manager presented the report to bring to the attention of committee, the KPI's for the period April-December 2023.

He noted rent arrears performance had been reported earlier. The % of tenancy offers refused increased to 42.9% for the year to date remaining above our internal target of 30%. He provided a breakdown of the reasons where offers had not proceeded and complications with section 5 referrals, where we had not been informed that the referral had already been housed when our offer was made. Re-let time had increased slightly to an average to 32 days. Property conditions and metering issues continue to impact on our performance.

He noted comments from the tenant satisfaction survey, certainly in relation to communal spaces, relate to spaces managed by Glasgow City Council. He stated that we had reestablished our relationship with Nicola from GCC who is now on the customer opinion panel, including the police, fire brigade and Andy from ERA.

The Maintenance Manager noted that the total cost for adaptations had been fully committed. A further request for £30K had been submitted, these adaptations had been front funded. We are still waiting for a response from Glasgow City Council.

**Committee noted the KPI report for the period April-December 2023.**

## 11. Complaints and Compliments 23/24

The Housing Manager presented the report in line with the SPSO and the Associations regulatory requirements covering the period 1 October 2023 to 31 December 2023.

He noted a decrease in the number of complaints received. He advised committee that several tenants had gone through their MP to raise a complaint, rather than approaching the Association to resolve the complaint. These are required to be raised as an elected member enquiry and are not recorded as a complaint.

Discussion ensued with regards to the increase in elected members enquiries and the reasons thereof, and the increase in the use of social media.

**Action:** The Director proposed that a benchmarking exercise be carried out with colleagues with EHRA and further afield to ascertain if they are experiencing the same enquiries and report back to the committee.

**Committee noted the Complaints and Compliments Report.**

## 12. Operational Update Report

**Director:**

The Director reported under separate cover.

**Housing Manager:**

The Housing Manager reiterated the housing services improvement plan where staff roles had changed to more specialised roles rather than a generic approach for the period 22 January until 31 March 2024

He thanked committee for approving temporary reception cover due to some staff shortages. Rachel has settled in well, covering reception duties and assisting the team with administration work.

He provided a brief overview of a report issued by Glasgow City Council outlining the potential impact on the Home Offices plans to make around 2,500 Asylum decision in Glasgow by the end of 2023. The Council is taking steps to prepare for the increased number of Asylum seekers by increasing the capacity of its homelessness services and working with partners to identify additional options. We have had no further information from the Council at this time with regard to the 2,500 decisions.

He asked committee to note the income advice update and the highlighted case studies.

He advised that feedback from the Development Consultation held last week had been very positive. The Boards are still in the reception areas and customer opinion is being captured.

### **Assets & Maintenance Manager:**

The Maintenance Manager advised that the joint procurement with Calvey on ECIR, DTD and void contracts was well underway as is our own gas contract for serving and maintenance.

GCC have been contacted regarding additional funding for adaptations. No response had been received to date and we will continue front fund these as requests are received.

Open Reach and City Fiber are currently surveying the flats to install broadband and renewing older cabling along with some new infrastructure.

He asked committee to note that 50 fences had been damaged for fallen down during the recent storms. He advised that the insurance excess per fence was £1,000 plus a depreciation of 10% for every year. The Association will be required to pay for these repairs and it is hoped the contractors will start on site next week. Committee discussed at length the negative reviews on social media and the requirement for staff to be more proactive in communicating with our tenants.

### **Finance & Corporate Services Manager:**

The Director asked committee to note the finance update. Gordon Kerr sought clarification on the final closure of the IT service and the Director advised that it related to the removal of the physical server from the Hub.

### **Community Activities:**

Committee noted the update report from Easthall Residents Association on activities within the Hub. There was no other business. Meeting closed 8:00PM

## **13. Preparing Scotland Resilience Testing.**

The Director provided committee with an overview of the Scottish Government's document that sets out how organisations should prepare for emergencies which was a good guide when Covid restrictions were implements. We responded well and were able to operate during a short notice period with the support of our

IT provider. We are assured that we would be able to respond at short notice should the need arise in the future.

**14. AOBC**

There was no further business.

Meeting closed: 8pm. Next meeting 28 February 2024.