

**WELLHOUSE HOUSING ASSOCIATION
MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD
ON 28 February 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
Helen Lafferty	Committee Member
David Gebbie	Co-optee
Lauren Herd	Co-optee

In Attendance:

Martin Wilkie-McFarlane	Director
Bill Black	Assets and Maintenance Manager
James Wilson	Housing and Customer Services Manager
Linda Logan	Minutes
Mary Cawley	Observer
Felix Lynn	Observer

Apologies:

Darron Brown	Committee Member
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 31 January 2024.

Committee approved the minutes of the committee meeting of 31 January 2024 as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

Helen Lafferty proposed and Jane Heppenstall seconded the minutes of 31 January 2024.

5. Matters arising and actions from the minutes report.

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

6. Rent arrears update

The Housing Manager presented the report to update committee on the arrears position. He noted a slight increase in gross current rent arrears of £981.07 however based on ARC calculations during the same period current arrears had reduced by £9,143.99. Former tenant arrears had increased by £3,662 and 102 tenants owe more than £1,000 which was 7 less than reported at the last committee meeting. Universal Credit (UC) is claimed by 291 households and UC arrears accounts for 51% of total gross current rent arrears. The collection rate is 97.73%.

He asked committee to note that the current housing staff structure as agreed at the last meeting has had a positive impact on the arrears position. In agreement with the Chair, he informed committee that recruitment of the the part time housing officer post had been unsuccessful. He asked committee to consider an internal promotion and to agree to Lorraine Ramsey being a ½ time housing assistant/ ½ time housing officer. The Director asked that committee note that this would be an interim arrangement until the end of March. It was noted that this arrangement may be extended until formalised.

Jane Heppenstall sought clarification on the on whether the 15 reported court cases within the system had increased or had they remained static. The housing manager confirmed that it was a decrease from the previous report where 18 had been reported.

Recommendations:

That the current housing assistant be offered the ½ time housing assistant/ ½ housing officer role to the end of March with a possible extension until formalised.

Committee agreed to the proposal.

Anna Dukova proposed and Gordon Kerr seconded that Lorraine Ramsey be offered the ½ housing assistant role / ½ housing officer role until the end of March with, a possible extension until formalised.

Committee noted the update in the rent arrears report.

7. SHR Regulatory Framework

The Housing Manager presented the reported and provided an overview of the newly implemented Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) Regulatory Framework and its potential impact. He outlined key changes in relation to a focus on tenants, transparency on information, tenant safety, strengthened assurance, the annual return on charter review, notifiable events and the annual assurance statement, their potential implications and the recommended actions for committee to consider. He assured committee members of our ability to evidence the requirements as outlined within the Framework asking that the committee to ensure that they understand the changes, assess the risks and to develop action plans. He noted that engagement was crucial in navigating the transition successfully. The Chair asked and the Governance Officer confirmed that the attachments had been uploaded to the BoardEffect library for committee consideration.

Recommendations:

Committee were asked to note of the changes highlighted in this report and their potential impact on Wellhouse's operations and governance.

Committee were asked to consider action plans to address the changes and ensure compliance with the new framework.

Committee were asked to consider further research and engagement with the SHR and stakeholders to clarify specific aspects of the framework.

The Director asked that his thanks be recorded to the Housing Manager for completing the report.

Committee noted the update on the SHR Regulatory Framework and the required actions.

8. Neighbourhood Management Policy

The Housing Manager provided a note of the change to the Neighbourhood Management Policy for consideration and comment. He highlighted the change at section 8 of the policy heading, which added a paragraph stating, "An allocated budget will be issued to Housing Officers annually to address issues highlighted within the common areas of the Associations common areas of the community in line with the policy". The budget will be reviewed annually.

Jane Heppenstall noted and volunteered to provide updates/review to the Housing Manager of a couple of legislation items she considered to be out of date. The Housing Manager thanked Jane for her input and comments.

Recommendations:

Committee were asked to note the change as highlighted within the report and to approve the reviewed policy.

Resolution:

Committee approved the reviewed Neighbourhood Management Policy

The Neighbourhood Management Policy was proposed by Helen Lafferty and seconded Jane Heppenstall.

9. Assets and Maintenance Update

The Maintenance Manager presented the report to provide an overview of the assets and maintenance activity. He noted that we were currently procuring several contracts for Day to Day and void repairs with returns due by 27 February 2024 for those who had been successful in reaching Stage 2 of the tender. 5-year periodic electrical inspection and gas servicing and maintenance closed on 19th February and 9th February respectively.

He informed that the next major procurement would be for kitchen and bathroom planned replacements and adaptation contracts.

ECIRs access has been good and we are on course for 100% access. Planned boiler installs are now 100% complete.

He asked committee to note that due to the existing workload our contractors had be unable to start right away on the fences that were damaged during the recent storm damage. The work has now been split between two contractors to progress as quickly as possible.

He asked committee to note that report which will be developed over the coming months to provide further updates.

Committee noted the report.

10 Operational Update.

Director:

The Director reported in closed session.

Housing Manager

Glasgow Citywide Housing Transfer Incentive Scheme.

The Housing Manager informed committee of the Citywide Housing Transfer Incentive Scheme being led by GCC which was being introduced to address homelessness, make use of existing housing, supporting downsizing and financial benefits. He highlighted the aims of the scheme; incentives being offered to tenants who downsize and the potential benefits of the scheme.

He provided information from a recent report by the Homes for Scotland which revealed that more than a quarter of Scottish households face one or more forms of housing need. He took committee through the key findings from the report as outlined within the report to the committee.

Jane Heppenstall asked if there was further information available on how the Housing Transfer Incentive Scheme was being funded. The Housing Manager stated that it would be funded by GCC and would investigate further and forward the information to Jane.

Felix Lynn asked if Wellhouse has any other type of tenure other than social rented housing. He acknowledged the housing crisis and asked if the committee considered other alternatives to try and mitigate housing need for example mid-market rent, shared ownership etc. The Director stated that there had been some shared ownership in the last development completed around 10 years ago. He noted that all of these options were being considered for proposed developments, however, where we rely on Housing Association Grant, which is processed by the local authority, they would want to work us with them to address social housing need.

Policy work update.

The Housing Manager asked committee to note that draft policies in relation to Decants and Leased properties were currently being working and would be brought to committee for comment and approval once completed.

Income Advice update:

The Housing Manager provided an update on the SFHA Social Fuel Fund which had to date supported 293 households with fuel payments and informed that the DWP's managed migration process for Universal Credit has now started in this area for single people claiming Tax Credits. He provided an overview of 4 case studies of tenants supported by the Income Advice Officer and the financial gains for each case study. He asked committee to note that the Income Advice service from April 2023 to February 2024 had assisted 225 tenants with benefit relation enquiries with financial gains to date be £916,436.54.

Maintenance Manager:

The Maintenance Manager advised that we had arranged for the removal of asbestos rope in the close junction boxes and once completed there would be no asbestos in our common areas.

He asked committee to note that there were several consultations out from both the Scottish and UK Government on EESH 2, EPCs and Net Zero. He had attended several forums, will respond to the consultation and once we have more clarity on what is being asked of us, the potential timescales and impact he will report to the committee.

The Director advised that there was a consultation event being held at the Scottish Parliament tomorrow which would be attended by Bill Black and David Gebbie where some of the issues and indecisiveness surrounding Net Zero etc. may be raised.

The Estate Wardens are continuing to carry out their winter work in the back courts and open areas as well as voids clearance. We are still experiencing dumping issues due to Queenslie being closed and having to travel to other recycling centers.

Community Activities:

The Director asked committee to note progress, new target activities and the successful funding bids, and support for activities within the Hub which have all been positive and welcomed within the community.

11. AOB

There was no further business.

Meeting closed: 8pm. Next meeting 24 April 2024.