

West Whitlawburn Housing Co-operative
Management Committee Meeting of Monday 9th January 2023 at 6.30pm
Meeting held in Whitlawburn Community Resource Centre

In attendance:

Committee:

S Anderson – Chairperson (SA)	E Kerr (EK)
P Welsh (PW) – Vice Chairperson (PW)	K Stubbs-Gorman (KSG)
A Duffin (AD) – Secretary (AD)	A Anderson (AA)
B McNicol (BMcN)	

WWHC Staff:

G Clayton – Deputy Director (DD)
R Hosie – Corporate Services Officer (CSO) - Minutes

Apologies:

Apologies received from D Murphy (DM)

Meeting is quorate. No declarations of interest were raised at this meeting.

Budget and Rents 2023/24 – Update Report

The DD thanked Committee for attending the meeting and for agreeing to bring the date forward due to the Scottish Government’s announcement on 21st December 2022. Committee members agreed that the sooner a decision was made regarding rent increase proposals the sooner tenant consultation and notification could take place.

The DD reminded committee of the actions from the previous meeting in November 2022 and further reported that extensive lobbying exercises carried out by SFHA and GWSF was successful in changing the Scottish Governments position on the Cost of Living (Tenant Protection) (Scotland) Act, particularly for the social rented sector. A positive outcome has been reported sector wide.

The DD confirmed that there will be no form of rent control applied to the social housing sector after 31st March 2023.

The DD referred to section 2 of the report. Tenant Scrutiny Panel (TSP) members and tenants who responded to the 2022/23 rent consultation were invited to meet with Committee and Staff to be presented with rent and budgetary information. Fourteen members were invited however, there was no attendance. Information was also posted on the WWHC website ‘Rent Consultation 2023/24’ and no feedback has been received so far. A full consultation will be published and delivered to tenants once a proposed rent increase figure has been agreed by the Management Committee.

A draft rent consultation leaflet was tabled and presented by the DD. BMcN proposed that benchmarking information be added to the consultation to inform tenants further of what other RSL's are proposing and what services they offer or are reducing. SFHA annual benchmarking information has been included also. The DD requested that Committee consider the content and feedback any comments by 12pm on 10/01/2023.

The DD referred to section 5 of the report and confirmed that East Whitlawburn New Build properties' rents will be increased in line with all other WWHC in 2023/24. As noted in the November 2022 report to Management Committee, existing 5-apartment rents will be held for 2023/24. A review of the rent policy and consideration of rent harmonisation exercise will take place as part of the pending Business Plan update.

The DD referred to section 6 of the report. Stock Condition Surveys are currently ongoing with inspections of kitchens and bathrooms in MSF's and Low Rise properties. This information will feed into the Business Plan and all assumptions will be updated in line with inspection results.

The DD referred to section 7 of the report. The SFHA Affordability tool has been used with a proposed rent increase of 5% shown as of affordability for single people in 3 apartment properties across average rents with MSF's high.

The DD referred to section 8 of report detailing updated draft budget and commentary. WWHC's insurance broker has recommended that a 20% increase be applied to insurances. Allowances for arrears and void loss has been maintained at 3% and 1.2% respectively.

The rent increase will be applied to Lock Ups owned by WWHC.

The DD presented the average rent increase information and explained that option B (5%) is recommended as this results in a small surplus for the year. Once a decision is made and consulted on, WWHC's Engagement Plan Lead Officer at the SHR will be notified and updated on a regular basis.

The DD opened up the proposal for further discussion and for Committee members to raise questions.

The topic of inflation was discussed and the DD reported that economists believe this is expected to reduce in the next year but further noted that this could change at any time. Long term contracts have been secured by staff providing further stability for the organisation.

Various committee members agreed that services and amenities offered by WWHC and through WCRC are beneficial.

Management Committee agreed the recommendation to consult on a 5% rent increase for 2023/24.
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The DD advised committee that EVH's annual conference has recommenced and places will be booked first come first served and subject to training / conference budget allowance – PW requested to attend.

Meeting closed at 19:04.