

West Whitlawburn Housing Co-operative
Management Committee Meeting of Monday 28th November 2022 at 6.30pm
Meeting held in Whitlawburn Community Resource Centre

In attendance:

Committee:

S Anderson (SA) – Chairperson	A Duffin – Secretary (AD)
P Welsh (PW) – Vice Chairperson	M Alcorn (MA)
R Alexis (RA)	E Kerr (EK)
B McNicol (BMcN)	D Murphy (DM)
K Stubbs-Gorman (KSG)	A Anderson (AA)

WWHC Staff:

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

Other:

Lorna Ravell of EVH, HR Support Manager (LR)
Lindsey Dinnen of EVH, Senior HR Advisor (LD)

E Nowak, Tenant member of WWHC (EN) – Observing

Meeting is quorate.

1. Apologies

None.

2. Confidentiality

The Chairperson reminded all members present about the importance of confidentiality.

3. Declaration of Interests

The Dir, DD, CSO, LR and LD declared an interest under agenda item 10.a). All parties will leave the room during discussions.

SA, AA and EK declared an interest under agenda item 19.b). Members will not take part in discussion.

4. Equalities and Human Rights

No issues raised at this meeting.

5. Lorna Ravell (EVH) – Committee Appraisal Process

LR introduced herself to members who were not present at the October 2022 meeting and thanked committee and staff members for completing the Collective Appraisal forms. LR reported a good response rate of 87%.

LR reminded committee of the Collective Appraisals purpose. There were 10 areas of strength and 10 areas of improvement noted by committee.

Areas of strength include reflecting community aspirations, HR management, organisational development, KPI and target monitoring, relationship management, service user involvement, external representation, internal governance and policy development.

Areas noted for development include IT and social media, networking, business planning and financial management & audit.

LR confirmed the individual appraisal meetings arranged can address any personal requirements.

The Chairperson thanked LR for the presentation.

6. Previous Minutes

a) Management Committee meeting of Monday 24th October 2022

AD requested an amendment be made under agenda item 18b on the previous minutes. MA sought confirmation that the configuration of temporary road between Benmore and Kintore Tower will change with more car park spaces available where the old lock up site used to be.

The previous minutes were proposed by EK and seconded by BMcN and noted as an accurate record.

b) Signing of Minutes

The Chairperson will pass the updated signed minutes to the Dir for filing.

7. Matters arising from Previous Minutes

Actions arising from Previous Minutes Report

AD thanked staff for all their efforts on the pension short life working group and complimented the group's effectiveness.

Whitcomm Committee Members requested a meeting with WWHC representatives to review the future of the service. AD and PW will meet with the Dir and DD to discuss WWHC position.

The Director's appraisal was rescheduled from 14th November to 28th November. Item now complete.

EK requested an update on the defibrillator. The Dir explained that due to staff changes/absences investigation is still on hold.

Committee noted the update.

8. Sub Committee Minutes and Referrals

a) Performance, Assurance and Risk (PAR) Sub Committee of 22nd August 2022

22/08/2022 minutes approved at the PA&R Sub Committee noted for information.

b) Rent Collection Policy

The Policy was approved at the PA&R Sub Committee on 21st November 2022.

Management Committee ratified the decision to approve the updated policy for implementation.

c) Legionella Management Policy

The policy was approved at the PA&R Sub Committee on 21st November 2022.

Management Committee ratified the decision to approve the updated policy for implementation.

9. Correspondence

a) Information

b) Decision

No items.

10. Delegates Reports an Affiliated Organisation Information

a) Employers in Voluntary Housing (EVH)

Wage Ballot

The Dir, DD, CSO, LR and LD left the room as requested by the Chairperson.

The ballot was completed by the Chairperson on behalf of the Committee and passed to EVH present at the meeting.

b) Glasgow West of Scotland Forum of Housing Associations (GWSF)

AD and the DD attended the GWSF conference at the end of October 2022. Patrick Harvey MSP was in attendance and AD commented that the minister acknowledged the differences between the private and social rented sectors.

AD referred to an email sent by GWSF noting consideration of a Scottish average increase to rents proposed. Committee members agreed that a set average increase poses similar restrictions to a rent cap.

The Dir noted more developments:

- The SFHA have drafted a statement on principles to be presented to the Scottish Government for consideration.
- The UK Government have set a rent cap of 7%.
- The Scottish Government will confirm the decision taken on 14th January 2023.

AD referred to the 'Transfer of Engagements' proposed by Reidvale Housing Association and GWSF's response to the situation which has been circulated to Committee for information.

MA explained that others have raised concerns over the motivations of external board members appointed by the SHR. DM agreed and added that tenants who live in social housing should make the decisions.

Committee noted the update.

c) Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA)

The Dir referred to the member briefing from SFHA in the papers that highlights the draft principles of agreement and further requests feedback on the Scottish Government rent freeze. More to follow from SFHA.

Committee noted the update.

11. Governance and Assurance

a) Schedule of External Submissions 2022/23

All items up to date. Management Accounts and Covenant Outcome report completed by 25/11/2022. In-year loan portfolio return to SHR completed by 21/11/2022.

Committee noted the update.

b) Management Committee Training Plan

New plan following External Appraisal process.

c) Governance, Recruitment and Succession Planning

Item remains ongoing and topics will be identified as a result of External Appraisal process.

d) Director Appraisal

Completed on 28th November 2022 by the Chairperson and Secretary.

12. Regulation

a) SHR Landlord Group

SHR's Landlord Group proposal received 70 responses. WWHC was not selected.

b) National Panel of Tenants and Services Users

The SHR are recruiting new members to join the panel. Information has been published on WWHC's website.

c) Notifiable Events Register

Disposal of land and assets Notifiable Event submitted after the loan funding drawdown – closed status.

13. Director Report and Targets

Committee noted the staffing update.

There are now 14 properties with alarms that sound in the properties but do not relay back to Concierge. Concierge and Property staff are all aware of the properties and check in regularly.

14. Property services

a) AMP Contract Extension

The DD confirmed the previous discussion between WWHC and AMP, and advised that AMP proposed a five-year extension of the agreement to continue the fuel supply, boiler maintenance and commence the flat internals, HIU maintenance and repairs.

The DD explained that the price of woodchip has increased however, AMP have removed any callout fees from the agreement. KPI's have been reviewed and the 4 hour callout time has been adhered to consistently.

Committee approved the five-year contract extension.

15. Tenancy services

The Dir presented a request submitted by SLC for WWHC to provide a property for refugee resettlement. The SLC Resettlement team will provide support.

Committee approved the request from SLC.

16. Corporate services

a) DC pension rates

As agreed, staff will transition from Defined Benefit (DB) to Defined Contribution (DC) pension schemes. The Pension Trust were contacted to implement who advised that the minimum combined contribution must equal to 9% and therefore, the pension option DC1 requires an adjustment. It is recommended that the employee's contribution is adjusted to 3% and the employer remains at 6%. AD noted that option DC1 was initially proposed to encourage uptake in lower earners.

Committee agreed the adjustment proposed.

17. Budget and Rents 2023/24

Introductory report to consider position while awaiting Scottish Government decision on possible rent freeze of cap. The Dir provided a summary of the current financial climate and reminded committee of the emergency legislation put in place by the Scottish Government. In 2021/22 committee agreed to amend the Rent Policy to link to an inflation factor based on CPI (previously RPI).

Appendix 1 - GWSF survey on other Housing Associations (HA's)/Co-operatives rent increase levels for consultation.

Appendix 2 - Rent benchmarking with HA's/Co-ops who have MSF stock. The Dir highlighted that no other organisation has a stock mix of 67% MSFs with

associated maintenance and running costs. WWHC is also a smaller organisation in terms of overall stock numbers in comparison. There is also information on service provision for the rents charged by other RSL's where available.

Appendix 3 - details the current rent structure for 2022/23. The Dir noted that a rent harmonisation across stock will be proposed in the future. WWHC current 5 apartment rents are 28.6% higher than the Scottish average and it is proposed that the existing five 5 apartment rents do not increase in 2023/24.

Appendix 4- models a variety of proposed rent increases using the SFHA affordability tool. The Dir advised that most proposed rent increases are considered within the margins of affordability for a single person living in a 2/3 apartment and high in MSFs with a 5% increase. Committee agreed this is an area of concern. The Dir explained the business plan will be updated to reflect this with the process commencing in January 2023. Context will be provided to tenants to explain what their rent covers and that service reductions may be required.

Appendix 5 - details the draft budget for the year. Overall, a 13.3% increase in costs is anticipated.

There is currently a temporary staff structure in place. This will be kept under and we will not fill permanent office staff vacancies where possible. It is anticipated that there will be further efficiencies through the introduction of a new Housing Management Software system. The pension scheme past service deficit payments have reduced significantly but there is a risk they may increase depending on the outcome of future valuations.

Management Committee have considered financial modelling of a rent freeze where WWHC remain viable only until 2034 without very significant mitigations.

WWHC are also scheduled to tender for reactive maintenance. We are investigating carrying this out in partnership with East Kilbride Housing Association (EKHA). Office overheads remain the same and the Welfare Benefits Advisor post has been budgeted for up to 31/03/2024 – funding applications to support this further are ongoing.

Committee noted the full report commentary.

Appendix 6 - projects WWHC income showing various proposed increase levels and other income and includes the 60 East Whitlawburn units. An interest rate rise is projected and an increase in interest received as a result of actions taken from the Treasury Management policy.

Appendix 7 – draft rent consultation 2023/24 letter for tenants showing 3%, 5% with the context of inflation at 11.1%

AD queried the percentage of single tenants who reside at WWHC to determine the scale of those who will be impacted the most. The Dir will confirm the percentage of single person households and report back to committee.

EK suggested consultation on a 4.5 - 5% increase to avoid WWHC consulting on a rent increase that results in an overall deficit. A lower increase would result in further savings and service cuts. Tenant's views on possible service reductions will be requested in consultation.

Committee noted the budget and rents information provided, with more to follow from the Scottish Government in January 2023. Committee will consider any tenant feedback from the initial consultation as part of overall decision making.

18. East Whitlawburn

a) Loan Finance

The DD advised that the loan finance has been finalised as confirmed by TC Young on 28th November 2022.

b) Progress report

WWHC Phase 1 property handovers are scheduled for 12th December 2022. The DD invited committee out to site on this day to view the new properties before tenants move in. BMcN suggested that pictures be taken to publish in the spring newsletter.

Committee noted the update.

19. Policy Reviews

a) Career Break Policy

This policy has been reviewed in line with the normal review cycle and is based on the EVH model policy. The review period has been changed from 3 years to 5 years or earlier if required by legislation.

Committee approved the updated Career Break Policy for implementation.

b) Whitcomm Minute of Agreement

SA, EK and AA did not participate in discussion.

No changes are proposed to the Minute of Agreement.

Committee approved the Whitcomm Minute of Agreement for signing.

20. Scottish Social Housing Charter and EESSH2

The Dir informed committee that the Scottish Government published an updated Scottish Social Housing Charter which took effect from 1st November 2022. There are no major changes to the charter and interim guidance is included for EESSH2 as produced by the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR).

The Dir and DD are to meet with the Energy Savings Trust to consider future measures and conduct a cost benefit analysis of the organisation. A date for further insulation works to be carried out is to be confirmed.

Committee noted the updates from the SHR and the Dir.

21. AOCB

a) Management Accounts 2022/23 Quarter 2 and covenant report

The DD presented the Management Accounts and covenant report and summary for the period to 30th September 2022.

LD left the meeting at 8.19pm.

b) Loan Portfolio Return

Submitted to the SHR on 18/11/2022 as required due to the new loan facility. The Committee were updated via email on 22/11/2022.

c) Standing Orders Review

The Internal Audit Report was presented to the PA&R subcommittee on 21/11/2022.

To take account of the recommendations, the remit and terms of reference of the PA&R Sub Committee has been reviewed with changes proposed:

Internal audit reports may be presented direct to Management Committee depending on the timing of meetings to prevent unnecessary delay.

Number of sub committee members to increase the maximum number on the Sub-committee to ten.

Management Committee approved the updated PA&R sub committee terms of reference.
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Delegated Authority

The schedule detailing Approval of Commitment to Spend was approved by Management Committee on 27th September 2022 at 26.4 of the Financial Regulations.

Committee approved the inclusion of the schedule in Standing Orders.
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d) Tenant Notification DHN charge increase

Draft notification to advise of the increase of District Heating Network (DHN) charges as a result of rising costs. The DHN charges will be changed from 1st February 2023 to ensure that staff are available to respond to any emergencies should they occur and the amendments can be made by the metering contractor.

The letter will be delivered alongside the newsletter w/c 12th December 2022.

BMcN commented that the letter was timely and informative.

Committee noted the update.

e) Over 65's vouchers or foodbank donation

The Dir presented the Donations Schedule to the Committee and proposed either £10 food vouchers for over 65's or a £1000 donation to the Food Bank.

Committee agreed £10 vouchers to be gifted to over 65's tenants

22. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Monday 30th January 2023 at 6.30pm

Meeting closed at 8.30pm.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

None.