

West Whitlawburn Housing Co-operative
Management Committee Meeting of Monday 24th October 2022
Meeting held in Whitlawburn Community Resource Centre

In attendance:

Committee:

S Anderson – Chairperson (SA)

M Alcorn (MA)

E Kerr (EK)

K Stubbs-Gorman (KSG)

B McNicol (BMcN)

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)

1. Apologies

A Duffin (AD), P Welsh (PW), A Anderson (AA), R Alexis (RA), D Murphy (DM)

2. Confidentiality

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

3. Declaration of Interests

The Dir, DD and CSO declared an interest under agenda item 20.

The Dir highlighted that agenda item 19c will be presented at the next committee meeting on 28th November 2022 for a decision as there is no quorum for that item.

4. Equalities and Human Rights

No issues raised.

5. Lorna Ravell of EVH – Committee Appraisal Process

LR introduced herself to the Management Committee and gave a brief summary of her role and previous experience. Each committee member then introduced themselves to LR.

LR explained the rationale behind the appraisal process and that it contributes to good governance of an organisation. In cases where organisations have received bad press, it is often questioned what the Board were doing / not doing to prevent

severe incidents from happening. LR explained that it is important that Board Members know the importance of challenging decisions and being able to ask questions. The *Charity Governance Code* was presented by LR noting that it was developed by charities for charities. The code demonstrates 7 principles and good practice which lead to good governance in charitable organisations. LR linked the appraisal process to the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) and the regulatory standards. The 9 year rule was highlighted and the requirement for committee members to demonstrate their continued effectiveness.

The external appraisal process:

1. The committee will complete a collective assessment of the overall effectiveness of the Committee. Some members of Senior Staff will also be asked to complete this.
2. LR will present a report of this feedback on 28th November 2022.
3. After this there is a 2 step appraisal process; the Chair's appraisal and individual appraisals.
4. Each committee member, excluding the Chairperson, will be asked to complete a survey on the Chairperson.
5. Each committee member will also complete a self-appraisal prior to their individual meeting to help form the basis of the meeting.
6. Any training and development needs will be pulled out of these meetings and used to create a training plan.
7. A final report is due at the January 2023 meeting to conclude the appraisal and create further discussion.

LR distributed collective appraisal forms to all Committee members present for completion at this meeting. Those who were not present will receive these via email or paper copy.

LR left the meeting at 7.05pm.

6. Previous Minutes

a) Management Committee meeting of 27th September 2022

No amendments. The previous minutes were proposed by KSG and seconded by EK and noted as an accurate record.

b) Signing of Minutes

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

7. Matters arising from Previous Minutes

Actions arising from Previous Minutes Report

The Dir updated the Committee on items:

9b-Clare Haughey MSP is visiting WWHC on 7/11/2022 at 2pm to view the work of the Co-operative. A short presentation will be prepared and a discussion on the proposed rent controls. All committee members are invited to attend.

10d-The Director's appraisal is scheduled for 14/11/2022 at 5.45pm before the PA&R sub-committee meeting.

12a-The Annual report 2021/2022 is complete and due to be delivered to tenants homes by 31/10/2022. This will be also be delivered to tenants by email/text using CX Feedback. A short survey is also available for tenants/members to provide feedback.

EK sought clarification regarding the position on fencing at Iona Place and Tiree Way. The DD advised Property Services staff are checking paperwork and will continue to ensure that WWHC specifications are met by those wishing to put up fencing.

Committee noted the update on previous actions.

8. Sub Committee Minutes and Referrals

No items.

9. Correspondence

a) Information

b) Decision

No items.

10. Delegates Reports an Affiliated Organisation Information

a) Employers in Voluntary Housing (EVH)

MA reported that EVH talks of wage negotiations were "lengthy and spirited". Members have stressed that employers are looking for a decision ASAP due to rent consultation requirements.

The Dir explained that WWHC have heard nothing from EVH regarding a proposed figure as yet.

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

The Dir presented the consultation from GWSF regarding annual fees. The proposed amount is only an increase of £18 for WWHC. Committee agreed that the information received from GWSF is valuable and the fee is good value for money.

c) Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA)

The Dir updated Committee on recent news received after the papers were delivered to Committee from SFHA regarding the Cost of Living Bill. It has been confirmed that by the 14th January 2023 the Scottish Government must confirm their stance on the rent cap proposals. They have confirmed that the moratorium on evictions does not apply to anti-social or criminal activity, where a tenant has over £2,250 rent arrears or when the landlord requires a tenant to leave the property to allow for significant improvement works or demolition and alternative accommodation will be provided.

Committee noted the updated SFHA briefing paper.

11. Governance and Assurance

a) Schedule of External Submissions

All items are up to date. The Annual Report 2021/22 will be distributed to tenants during the week of 24th October 2022.

b) Management Committee Training Plan

The training plan will be reset after the external appraisal process. Refresher training for some topics is to be scheduled. KSG and RA inductions have progressed – KSG agreed the induction was a success.

c) Governance, Recruitment and Succession Planning

Committee confirmed this item will be looked at after the external appraisal process is complete.

d) Director Appraisal

Date set and confirmed with Chairperson and Secretary.

12. Regulation

a) SHR Landlord Group

Letter received from SHR Chairperson to note interest in participating in a forum of senior people from RSL's to discuss important issues in Social Housing. WWHC have submitted their interest and awaiting more information – 12 spaces are available.

b) SHR Letter on Rents

Letter received from SHR advising on the latest rent controls legislation. The Dir summarised that the advice is to proceed with rent consultations, notify the Engagement Plan Lead Officer of any rent increase proposal, any material changes to the Co-operative's Assurance Statement should be brought to the SHR's attention and to keep finance figures in the Business Plan up to date as much as possible.

Committee noted the recommendations from the SHR.

c) Assurance Report

The DD presented the report to provide Committee with an updated assessment on WWHC's compliance with the SHR Governance and Financial Management Standards (Regulatory Standards) and to seek approval for the Annual Assurance Statement confirming compliance. The information builds on the information presented at the Management Committee meeting on 27th September 2022.

Mulholland Housing Consultancy were engaged to carry out an assessment of our progress for maintaining compliance with the Regulatory Standards. A copy of their report is included in the papers.

The governance internal audit has recently been completed giving a substantial level of assurance with two recommendations for improvement, which the Co-operative are currently addressing. The full report will be presented to Committee by the Internal Auditor.

The overall assessment is that currently West Whitlawburn Housing Co-operative is compliant with the Regulatory Standards.

Management Committee considered the reports and:

Approved the self-assessment outcome for up to October 2022.

Agreed that self-assessment against the Scottish Housing Regulator's Regulatory Standards is conducted annually going forward.

Approved the continuation of a Governance and Financial Management Improvement Plan and note that this will be presented for review annually as part of the business planning process.

Agreed that self-assessment against the Regulatory Standards is conducted annually going forward and that WWHC will appoint a consultant to provide external assurance in 2023.

d) Annual Assurance Statement

Since the September draft, the number of properties without an EICR noted in the Assurance Statement has reduced from 18 to 14. There is a statement on the recent rent controls with the situation still under review from the Government.

Management Committee agreed that the Committee has had sufficient assurance to give it confidence to sign the 2022 Annual Assurance Statement confirming full compliance on the date of this meeting and authorised the Chairperson to sign the letter to the SHR confirming this decision.

13. Director Report and Targets

The Dir highlighted the following:

[REDACTED]

Confidential staffing item.

Item 8: A draft report has been received following the Governance Internal Audit. There are 2 recommendations at present. The DD highlighted there are no serious recommendations and the points for improvement are being considered. The Auditor will present their findings at the Performance, Assurance and Risk (PA&R) subcommittee.

Item 10: A review of the Business Plan has commenced, along with a review of the stock condition survey and performance information. The financial information will be updated in due course.

Committee noted the update to the Director's report and targets.

14. Property services

a) Electrical Works

Following an electrical inspection in the Resource Centre, urgent remedial works have been identified. The main board and many of the main switchgear components need to be replaced. Works are essential to ensure safety compliance.

The DD referred to WWHC's procurement policy and highlighted that in emergency circumstances it is acceptable not to carry out a procurement exercise. A quote was received from ECG with the works taking one week to complete.

Committee approved the quote received from ECG for the remedial works to commence and an overspend within the office maintenance budget.

b) Gas Safety Policy

The DD explained this review took place under the normal review cycle. No material changes have been proposed and the agreed equalities statement has been included.

Committee approved the updated policy for implementation.

15. Tenancy services

a) Arrears monitoring – PA&R Sub Committee

Assistant Director (TS) will present this report on 14th November 2022 Sub Committee meeting.

16. Corporate services

a) Digital Boost Fund

The DD reminded committee of previous reports on Digital Boost Funding and explained that approval for overspend is sought. In March 2022, it was anticipated that 12 remaining PC's could have the software upgraded to

Windows 10. However, this is not possible due to the age and condition of the existing hardware.

Committee approved the overspend proposed for the ICT/Computer budget for the year 2022/23.

b) Committee Expenses Policy

The Dir presented the above policy to highlight to Committee. Committee noted the contents of the Committee Expenses Policy.

c) Tenant Satisfaction Surveys

Committee agreed that WWHC would carry out an independent TSS using an external consultant.

A Quick Quote was published to Public Contracts Scotland and one tender response was received. Knowledge Partnership (KP) submitted a return and provided a quotation.

The DD further comment that although only one response was received it was a comprehensive return. Other RSL's, who have engaged with KP in previous year, were contacted to confirm the scope of the quote received was similar. Other reviews confirmed that KP had an excellent reputation. KP also confirmed they are able to complete the work early December 2022.

Committee approved to appoint Knowledge Partnership to carry out the TSS, subject to satisfactory reference responses.

17. Budget and Rents 2022/23

a) Financial Projections

The Dir explained that in the current financial climate, the financial projections are updated more frequently. Figures presented have been modelled based on:

Year 2 CPI assumption 13% with 6.5% rent increase with no remedial action taken (considered at Management Committee meeting of 27th September).

Year 2 CPI assumption 10% with rent freeze, 6% interest rate and no remedial action.

The Dir further noted that with this, there would be a significant drop in available cash without mitigation by reducing costs and postponing improvement work.

b) Tenant Consultations

The overall recommendation for all RSL's is to proceed with tenant rent increase consultations and commence these as early as possible.

The Dir and DD are looking at future budgets and modelling various rent increase scenarios, the CSO is also running proposed weekly rents through the SFHA's affordability tool.

Committee understand that no other HA/c has a 67% Multi Storey Stock proportion. HA's that have MSF stock have higher overall stock numbers and a lower proportion of this stock type.

Further discussion took place regarding budgets, the ongoing energy crisis and possible rent increases.

KSG enquired about the possibility of Solar Panels. The DD advised the capital investment required is challenging, however funding investigation is worthwhile. We are working with Energy Saving Trust Home Analytics to examine what further energy efficiency measures may be possible. The DD confirmed WWHC's current stock is energy efficient and reports from tenants regarding insulation upgrades are positive.

EK queried an increase in electricity costs for landlord supplies. WWHC have a fixed contract in place until March 2025. We are however reviewing District Heating System cost increases.

SA suggested that WWHC should publish information to tenants on what their rent covers and what is jeopardised if rents do not increase. The Dir and DD noted this as part of tenant consultations.

c) Scottish Government – Letter and MSP Visit

The Dir presented the letter received from the Scottish Government. In summary it recognises that consultations with tenants on rent increases must proceed and the Scottish Government will have a decision on the Cost of Living (Tenant Protection) (Scotland Bill) by 14th January 2023.

Committee noted the contents and recommendations within the letter.

18. East Whitlawburn

a) Loan Finance

The Dir advised the paperwork is nearing completion with one item to be confirmed. [REDACTED] are the authorised signatories.

b) Progress Report

The Chair queried if tenants have moved in to WWHC's properties in East Whitlawburn (EW) – The Dir and DD confirmed no one has moved in yet. MA sought confirmation that the temporary road between Benmore and Kintore Tower – The DD advised the configuration will change with more car park spaces available soon where the old lock up site used to be. An article has been placed in the Autumn newsletter asking tenants etc. not to park in emergency vehicle areas.

EK questioned who is responsible for any snagging and defects in the EW properties and raised concern over previous construction projects where insulation was not up to standard. The DD confirmed CCG are responsible for snagging however, WWHC staff will carry out spot checks.

Committee noted the update.

19. Policy Reviews

The Dir informed committee that all reviews have been carried out according to the normal review cycle.

a) Sustainability Policy

Committee approved the Sustainability Policy

b) Tenant Participation Policy

The CSO confirmed that tenant consultation is required for a full review therefore, the policy has only been updated to reflect organisational changes that have been previously agreed by Management Committee. The CSO added that a full consultation will take place in due course.

The updates to the policy include:

- Independent consultant conducting tenant satisfaction survey on WWHC's behalf.
- The use of CX Feedback and the introduction of the PA&R Sub Committee.
- Information on the Tenant Scrutiny Panel (TSP) has been made clearer regarding meeting times and location and how to join the TSP and points to consider when joining.
- A statement of good practice has been including that confirms WWHC will account for other factors (e.g. Social and Technological) in regards to tenant participation.

Committee approved the Tenant Participation policy (subject to further consultation).

c) Whitcomm SLA

Continued.

d) Fraud and Anti Bribery

Committee approved the Fraud and Anti Bribery Policy.

e) Freedom of Information and Environmental Regulations

Committee approved the Freedom of Information and Environmental Regulations

f) Alcohol and Substance Misuse

This policy is based on the EVH model policy and no material changes are proposed. Committee approved the Alcohol and Substance Misuse Policy.

g) Smoke Free Policy

This policy is based on the EVH model policy and no material changes are proposed. Committee approved the Smoke Free Policy

20. Pension Consultation Staff Responses

The Dir, DD and CSO all declared an interest under this item.

Prior to the meeting the Dir advised Eamonn Connelly, EVH Director, that Committee would be requested to consider the feedback within the overall financial environment and the 2023/24 budget and rent setting information presented at the meeting.

The responses from 12 staff were provided in full.

All are in favour of moving from the Defined Benefit (DB) scheme to the Defined Contribution (DC) scheme. It was noted by staff that the contribution rates for the proposed DC scheme are more generous than the existing DC scheme.

Comments were received regarding the proposed transitional relief and overall, staff appreciated but were not in favour of this offer. Staff recognised that they benefit from this relief period however that WWHC is facing a challenging few years ahead with the cost of living and energy crisis.

Positive feedback was also received from staff about the 1-2-1 sessions arranged with Chiene and Tait.

In summary, staff noted an overall generous proposal and recognised the good Terms & Conditions they operate under, adding that WWHC is a good employer.

Committee noted the feedback provided by staff but did not propose any change.

21. AOCB

Ground maintenance – EK expressed dissatisfaction on the services received from the contractor. The DD advised that a report will be presented by the Property Manager at the PA&R meeting on 14th November 2022 and WWHC have accepted the reduced rates offered by the contractor.

Estate cleanliness – BMcN requested more information regarding window cleaning dates. The DD advised WWHC are discussing this with contractors. Panel cleaning was also queried by Committee members. The DD reminded

committee this would commence after EW project completion due to the dust and mess associated with construction.

Concierge – BMcN reported MSF foyer cleaning seems to have deteriorated over time. The Dir explained this will be highlighted to Concierge staff. The Chairperson suggested that, due to recent staff changes, shift patterns should be available to tenants to familiarise themselves with new staff and name badges with team numbers could help with this.

The meeting closed at 8.30p.m.

22. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Monday 28th November 2022 at 6.30pm

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

None.