

GLEN HOUSING ASSOCIATION

MINUTE OF BOARD OF MANAGEMENT MEETING (HYBRID)

WEDNESDAY 23rd MARCH 2022

PRESENT:

- H Murray (HM)
- G Ross (GR)
- J McArthur (JMc)
- A Crook (AC)
- I Muirhead (IM)
- S Garrioch (SG)
- P Milne (PM)
- B Miller (BM)
- T Newman (TN)

IN ATTENDANCE:

- T Thomson (TT), Thomson Cooper
- A Dickie (AD)
- K Milne (KM)
- I Byers (IB)

1. APOLOGIES & DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies:

- J Smith (JS)
- J Souter (JSS)
- B Allan (BA)
- R Melville (RM)
- J McCartney (JMCC)

Declarations of Interest: None

2. MINUTES

2.1 Minute of Board of Management Meeting 23/02/2022

The above Minute was proposed by SG, seconded by JMc and approved as a true record of the meeting with the following amendment:

EC and TT were in attendance for the duration of the meeting.

2.2 Matters Arising from the above Minute

No matters arising.

3. FINANCE AND STAFFING MATTERS

3.1 Financial Report for the year to 28/02/2022

TT presented this item and referred Members to the detailed report accompanying the accounts. The accounts as presented were **approved**.

3.2 Arrears Report to 28/02/2022

IB presented this report which was **approved**.

3.2.1 BA (by email to AD) commended the efforts of staff – members present concurred.

3.3 Letter of Engagement & Pre-Audit Planning Memo

AD presented this report, referring members to the Letter of Engagement at Page 21 and the Pre-Audit Planning Memo at Page 37. Board members present confirmed that they were satisfied with the scope of the external audit, as well as accepting of theirs and the auditors' responsibilities. BA had also commented by email that he was content to approve.

AD referred to Page 39 of the Pre-Audit Planning Memo and confirmed that the dates presented were in line with our schedule for the year.

Board **approved** the Pre-Audit Planning Memo as presented - GR to sign the Letter of Engagement.

3.4 Tenant Support Funding 2021/22

AD presented this report which was **approved** as follows:

- Board recognises the huge impact on staff resources in managing these funds and are appreciative of the additional efforts being extoled for those tenants in need.
- Board also acknowledges there will be an additional impact on resources when Moira McMinn, Senior Housing Officer retires in July, taking with her a wealth of corporate intelligence and expertise in welfare benefits – the knock-on effect of assisting tenants financially is trying to identify and address the issues that are causing difficulties to alleviate where possible, a dependency on sustaining tenancies based on funding.

- Discussion around the requirement for Association's own Discretionary Fund – agreed that it is a topic for further discussion at the Business Strategy event. Whilst most cases can meet the criteria of the various grants available, it was deemed appropriate to maintain some type of discretionary fund for those that can't.
- Item 5 Summary of Resources Available – AD acknowledged that this should include reference to the Discretionary Fund.

3.5 Inflation Sensitivity Analysis – 22/23 Budget

AD presented this report which was **approved** as follows:

- Consensus on the importance of the monthly monitoring of management accounts by Staff and Board – ability to respond quickly to events as required.
- Concerns raised by AC that the anticipated cost issues for the Planned Maintenance Programme (PMP) had not been included in any of these sensitivity analysis graphs. AD explained the main reason for this is that IB is working with old, unsupported, planned maintenance software which makes scenario planning quite difficult – implementation of new software is imminent.

Other factors for consideration in terms of PMP scenarios: -

- Planned stock condition survey by Changeworks in April/May during which, the energy efficiency of the building as well as the fabric will be surveyed. The outcome of this will determine what needs to be done first to assist in the EESSH2 which may redefine our PMP.
- Tender for Gas Contract is out – only 3 returned tenders so far – closing mid-May - will mainly give an indication of maintenance costs.
- Tender for Bathroom replacements due out in May – indication of material and labour costs.
- AD meeting with Fife Housing Association Alliance (FHAA) next week – will find out from the partners, their recent experiences.
- IB confirmed there had not been any worrying increases in day-to-day repairs costs e.g., £50 increase in boiler replacements which is sustainable. What is more prevalent is peaks and troughs in prices of various materials – some of the bigger Associations with multiyear contracts are finding contractors unable to keep to the agreed price for the duration of the contract.

4 GOVERNANCE

4.1 Business Strategy 21/22 Review/Plan for 2022 Onwards

AD presented this report which was discussed in detail with the outcomes as follows:

- 4.1.1 Board Member preference to have a separate review event from Staff – AD to organise an informal dinner with guest speaker/facilitator. Staff will also have their own review event and the culmination will be a joint event to bring the Strategy document together. AD to liaise with HM and GR in terms of dates and venues for the actual Strategy event – likely to be a Saturday.
- 4.1.2 Agreed to review everything in view of the dramatic events over the past couple of years as well as those unfolding, albeit a review/refresher on the Mission, Vision and Values and more focus on topical issues to form the ‘meat’ of the review.
- 4.1.3 Ideally, Board priorities will align with Staff priorities and be integral in the final Strategy event.
- 4.1.4 Action Plan – Pages 56 – 64

JMc referred to the slippages in timescales and asked if there was more benefit to be had from the new IT system that could free up staff time. AD explained that the main reason for best use not being made was due to the impact Covid had on the implementation of the project and the subsequent training – quite a feat for IB, KM and MMc to get it to the current state. IB concurred, however intimated that his hope now is that the next couple of years will see much more use of the reporting facility and easier tenant contact.

HM said she was heartened by how much had actually been achieved given the events of the past couple of years. AD agreed in the main, however commented on how disappointed she was in the lack of action in the Net Zero matter.

Page 58

Track tenant experience/satisfaction..... – AD and IB attending a CX – Feedback demo on 24/03 – will report back to next meeting.

Page 61

Implement effective succession planning – HM confirmed that this was on track with GR taking advantage of a number of relative training events.

Page 62

Reflect principles of Fair Work Convention..... - AD confirmed that she envisages the employee engagement survey being rolled over to the next Plan.

Pages 63 & 64

Support tenants and partners to improve health and wellbeing..... and; *Actively explore opportunities for new joint ventures.....* - AD stressed that the failure to meet this timescale does not reflect on the level of engagement we have with tenants in the Levenmouth area – more the inability to maintain links with community groups that is the issue. JMc suggested approaching Fife Council to draw their attention to this struggle, despite our best efforts. AD confirmed she has been chatting with Céline on how we take Community Engagement forward, building on what we already do but having some clear focus from Board on what they want – issue for consideration at the strategy event.

5. POLICY REVIEWS

5.1 Rent Policy

AD presented this reviewed policy, highlighting the following additions and confirming there were no fundamental changes.

5.1.1 Reference to the Social Housing Charter at Item 1.4.

5.1.2 Addition of a Risk statement at Item 2.7.

5.1.3 Additional bullet point at Item 3.1 stating the rent affordability tool supplied by SFHA will be used to review proposed rents as part of the rent setting process.

5.1.4 Rent Setting Mechanism – Item 4

As requested by JMc - form of words to be included in Item 4.2 to reflect the business being more efficient in the rent setting mechanism employed i.e.

“The Association has taken all necessary action to ensure this rent setting mechanism is efficient, at the same time as being fair, consistent and transparent....”

5.1.5 Service Charges

Item 5.1 – change the wording from “**will** be passed on” to “**may** be passed on”.

The reviewed policy was **approved**.

5.2 Financial Regulations

AD presented this extensively reviewed Policy, highlighting a number of changes and additions, particularly in relation to Board Member responsibilities.

The policy as presented was **approved** with one small typo to be amended – two items numbered 15.2.

6. MEMBERSHIP

No applications for Membership received.

7. USE OF SEAL

No requirement for Use of Seal.

8. AOCB

8.1 Pay Negotiations 2022

EVH Negotiating Committee has put an offer to the Union which it considers to be at the maximum end of what they feel is realistic. UNITE were due to provide a response to this by Monday 14th March, however at 23/03 there is still no agreement. EVH have asked for a formal response within the next few days.

8.2 AD advised that although Compliant, the SHR will be engaging with the Association about stock quality over the course of 2022/23. This is because our last stock condition survey was due and planned for November 2020 but was delayed due to the impact of Covid-19. What the Association must do now is provide regular updates as it progresses the stock condition survey and report the outcomes of the survey to them.

8.3 Covid-19/Workplace update

AD confirmed she is looking at fully re-opening the office to all staff from w/c 25/04 and commencing the weekly diary meetings for staff each Monday. Restrictions such as screens, social distancing and ventilation will be maintained, and staff will be asked to continue to wear a mask when moving about the office. Whilst the office has had a 'soft opening' to the public since January, a Newsletter will be going out to all tenants to advise them that we have reverted to "business as usual" – all, of course, in line with up to date Government legislation and guidance.

Regardless of regulations, staff who test positive will be asked not to return to the office until they have 2 consecutive, negative lateral flow tests (current regs). Staff will still be permitted to work from home on an adhoc basis.

In preparation for flow tests becoming chargeable items, the office will be stocked with a free supply.

HM asked if staff had been surveyed on this decision – AD confirmed, not recently, however her intention is to email all staff over the next couple of weeks to glean feedback.

- 8.4 AD referred to the Ukrainian refugee situation and asked for an in principal agreement to enter into dialogue with tenants should any come forward saying they wish to offer rooms to refugees. Within that, we will need to ensure certain elements are brought to their attention e.g. suitability of property, responsibility for other people in their home, vulnerabilities of tenants/refugees, the requirement for a Disclosure Certificate etc.

HM confirmed that having spoken with SFHA and Cllr David Ross, she would suggest that any approach to this is taken forward through the Fife Housing Association Alliance – SFHA are expecting Local Authorities to take the lead on the situation. AD advised that she has a meeting with FFAA soon and it this will inevitably be discussed.

HM asked if Board were minded for the Association to donate through a Disaster Relief Charity. After much discussion, the consensus was not to as this could set a precedent for having to donate to all other humanitarian crises.

The meeting concluded at 8.15pm