

HILLHEAD HOUSING ASSOCIATION 2000

Minutes of the Management Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 6th February 2019 at 6.30 pm in the Association's offices at 2 Meiklehill Road

Present:

C Taylor (Chairperson)	L Scott
S Niven	Cllr S Murray
Cllr J Jamieson	D Wilson
R Smith	Cllr S MacDonald

In Attendance:

- S Macintyre, Director
- E. Sharkey, Housing Manager
- K Tait, Finance & Corporate Services Assistant
- M. Escreet, Welfare Rights Officer
- F. McDonald, FMD Financial Services (Agenda Item 6)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from M. Docherty and C. McKay McCann.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DEFERRED ITEMS

There were no declarations of interest and no deferred items.

3. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Management Committee Meeting held on 5 December 2018

Page 1: Paragraph 3 Draft Questionnaire

L Scott highlighted that she had not seen the draft questionnaire therefore had been unable to give any input to this. S Macintyre advised the survey was now underway and apologised for the oversight. It was noted that the survey questionnaire included the necessary sets of questions required for the annual ARC return to the Regulator.

Page 2 Item 3 Data Retention

E. Sharkey confirmed that she had spoken with the Association's solicitors and Allpay with whom the Direct Debit mandates are completed and was advised that the Association should not retain paper copies of direct debit mandates as it could cause a data protection issue.

Page 4: Item 4iii Paragraph 3 Technical arrears

E Sharkey explained that technical arrears were traditionally something that occurred with Housing Benefit. She advised that she was not aware of anyone ever being refused a transfer due to arrears of Universal Credit and if there are then they should be highlighted to her.

The minutes were subsequently approved by L Scott and seconded by S Niven

4. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

1. Glasgow & West of Scotland Forum

S Macintyre highlighted that 3 further reports were attached to his report for information which Members noted.

2. Services to other Housing Associations

S Macintyre confirmed that the Association has been invited to an interview with Abronhill Housing Association to give a presentation regarding the provision of part time Director Services. It was noted that Abronhill had asked that a couple of Committee Members attend the interview with the Director. L Scott and C Taylor volunteered. It was noted that the interview would take place at Castlecary Hotel on 27th February 2019.

S Macintyre agreed to circulate a copy the proposal to C Taylor and L Scott and would arrange a time to meet before 27 February 2019.

Welfare Rights Service – The Committee noted that there has been a bit of a reduction in demand from Caledonia tenants and they have requested statistics from the service. It was noted that the take up of the service may decline further to the reduction in staff resources at Caledonia's Kirkintilloch office. S Macintyre highlighted that the Association are currently providing a welfare rights service to Arklet Housing Association one day per week on a short term basis. It was noted that this service provision is initially until the end of March with an option to continue to October 2019.

3. E. Sharkey Retirement

Committee was asked to approve a half day closure on Wednesday 13th March for a lunch and a presentation. This was approved.

S Macintyre advised Committee were also invited to attend her Long Service Award presentation by EVH on 6th March at 5.30pm, prior to the committee meeting.

4. Rent Off The Shelf Scheme (ROTS)

Committee referred to the details within the report regarding the grant funding available for this scheme from the Scottish Government and noted that 6 properties were being acquired with 50% grant support. It was noted that a financial assessment had been carried out and that there was no adverse financial impact to the Association in the medium to long term. It was further noted that some improvement works would be necessary across all six properties and the anticipated cost of these would be approximately £40,000 inc VAT. S Macintyre confirmed that a provision of this would therefore be included in the Budget for 2019/20. It was noted that the grant only covers acquisition costs and does not cover the improvements and legal fees. The Committee confirmed its decision to proceed with the programme.

5. CALA development sites

It was noted that further discussion with East Dunbartonshire Council and CALA Homes would be required regarding the tenure split across both sites.

6. Blackdyke Rd

It was agreed that the Association would now proceed with the enhanced environmental improvements that were included in the Options Appraisal. Committee noted that further details would be included in the Property Services Report at the next committee meeting.

7. Badenheath Farm- new development opportunity

S Macintyre referred to the previously distributed report and asked for views on whether it the Committee wished to pursue this development opportunity any further given the number of risks and unknown factors about which more detailed due diligence would be required. Following discussion the Committee felt there was too much risk associated with the development and that they would prefer to seek out development opportunities closer to Kirkintilloch where they can demonstrate they would be meeting local housing need.

8. Annual Performance Report

S Macintyre spoke about the details in the report. He also advised that the Association should have more comprehensive views from tenants once the Tenant Satisfaction Survey is complete. It was noted that the Report would be presented to the Committee in April/May.

9. Business Continuity Plan

Details of the Plan were noted and approved. S Macintyre advised that he planned to arrange a mock disaster to test the plan and would seek advice on this. D Wilson and S Niven advised that they both had some experience in this area and agreed to liaise further with S Macintyre.

Cllr Jamieson asked what contingencies were in place should there be a huge loss of staff at one time. S Macintyre confirmed that assistance would be sought from EVH in the interim.

10. Procurement

In relation to the Canal Cycle Path, S Tait reported that 14 Tenders had been received and asked that 2 Committee Members meet with him at 10am tomorrow morning to participate in the Tender assessment process. L Scott and C Taylor agreed to attend.

S Macintyre asked if anyone else wanted to be involved in any future procurements, and D Wilson expressed an interest.

It was noted that the Environmental Improvement Works Project was running later than originally planned and it would now be May 2019 before any works would commence. Cllr Jamieson asked for clarification of what work was involved and S Macintyre confirmed it would include fencing and back court improvements.

D Wilson asked whether this work was being phased and this was confirmed, with costs being spread over two financial years.

S Niven enquired as to the Association's commitment to the cycle path project. S Macintyre advised that the Association would not be in a position to accept any Tender until the final statutory consent from Historic Environment Scotland (HES) has been received and associated funding implications have been agreed by the funding partners.

4(i) Internal Management Plan

S Macintyre referred to the previously distributed Report and Committee noted progress across the year's business objectives. S Macintyre advised that he has met with a potential new committee member who currently works in the private house building sector. It was noted that following his meeting with the Director he had agreed to come to the next meeting in an attending capacity. It was noted that his background would strengthen the Committee's skills and knowledge in the Procurement/Development area.

(ii) Organisational Review

S Macintyre presented the previously distributed Report and the amendments to the original proposals were noted, as well as the recruitment for 3 posts. S Macintyre advised that Linthouse Housing Association had contacted him to suggest sharing a system support post with them. Committee unanimously agreed this was not a good idea.

F MacDonald of FDM suggested that an in house finance post was actually needed as the Association would benefit from a single focussed person either with practical or academic experience. Some discussion took place around which level was required and it was noted that having a dedicated member of staff in this role meant less reliance on FMD. It was agreed to go ahead with this post at Assistant level for now, with the person being developed within role.

S Niven asked for some clarity on costs of the new positions and there followed some discussion on the remit and value of the system support officer post. S Macintyre agreed to prepare a role profile for the post and bring it back to a future meeting. It was therefore agreed that recruitment for Depute Director/Housing Manager, Property Services Officer and Finance Assistant would go ahead with the System Support post being deferred for the time being.

It was noted that the Committee Away Day would be delayed until the reorganisation process had been completed.

5 FINANCE REPORT

(i) Management Accounts to 31 December 2018

F MacDonald referred to the previously distributed report and presented the Management Accounts for the period to 31 December 2018. The Committee noted the details contained in the summary narrative page and the explanations provided for any variances, the main one being the lower level of operating costs which was attributable to the delayed environmental improvement works.

Following some discussion and clarification on items, the Management Accounts to 31 December were subsequently approved.

(ii) Treasury Management Policy – Revisions

F MacDonald referred to the revised policy which had been previously distributed to the Committee. Cllr Jamièson referred to paragraph 5.3.3 and asked for confirmation of the maximum borrowing that is permitted. F MacDonald confirmed the limit is set at £100 million which is stated in subsequent paragraph.

Cllr MacDonald asked why the Royal Bank of Scotland and Scottish Widows (paragraph 5.6) were not included as approved investing organisations. F McDonald advised that neither of these organisations meet the highest ranking levels for investments.

The policy was subsequently approved by committee. C Taylor thanked F MacDonald for his time and he left the meeting.

6. HOUSING MANAGEMENT REPORTS

(i) Housing Manager's Report

E Sharkey referred to the report and explained a spike in rent arrears due to problems with the timing of the receipt of Universal Credit schedules. It was noted that Former Tenant arrears were continuing on a downward trend.

It was noted that the Christmas period had caused a slight rise in void figures but that performance remained in line with target.

Committee noted that the recent allocation review was reflected in the lower number of applicant figures on the list. E Sharkey advised that the new allocations process appeared to be working well.

M Escreet answered some general questions about Universal Credit. D Wilson enquired as to the rent increase notification process and M Escreet confirmed that so far the DWP are still sticking to the position that it is the tenant's responsibility to notify the DWP of the increase through their individual journals. It was noted that this requirement had been included in the rent increase letter sent to tenants.

(ii) Rent Consultation Report

E Sharkey discussed the options open to the Association as outlined in the report. She advised that F MacDonald from FDM had expressed no concerns about any of the options available.

E Sharkey also proposed that the Committee may wish to consider a fourth option which would see a general increase of 2.5% plus or minus 1% as determined by the ongoing rent harmonisation process.

Committee were asked for their views on which option was preferred.

S Niven expressed a concern about making such decision without detail on any increase in costs as a consequence of the recent review. S Macintyre advised that additional costs which are not significant had been factored in by F McDonald and that he was happy with the staff related costs being affordable within the context of the Business Plan. S Macintyre agreed to make additional information on these costs available to committee at the forthcoming Budget Workshop.

Following discussion and after careful review of responses it was agreed that Option 4 be implemented.

Eviction approval

Approval was sought to carry out an eviction where decree has been granted. A summary of the case was presented and the Committee considered the notes surrounding this tenant and the individual's situation. After discussion it was agreed to for staff to make arrangements for the Eviction to take place, albeit the Committee expressed a hope that the tenant would now take action to resolve the issue even at this late date.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

S Macintyre confirmed that Utilita had been appointed by the Energy Regulator to take over the supplier of energy for Our Power customers. He confirmed that the Association had no liability for any of the organisation's debt. R Smith expressed disappointment that Our Power had failed as it had intended to support some community activities and now this help would no longer be available.

R Smith praised the tenancy support service and noted that the service has been very supportive to many individuals in the community.

Discussion around the timing of future committee meetings was deferred until the next meeting.

8. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 6th March 2019

Minuted by: M Escreet, Welfare Rights Officer
20 February 2019

Chairperson's Signature: 

Date: 30/7/19