

HILLHEAD HOUSING ASSOCIATION 2000

Minutes of the Special Management Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 27 January 2021 at 5.00 pm via Zoom

Present: C Taylor (Chairperson)
S Niven
Cllr S Murray
Cllr J Jamieson
D Wilson
W Hassan

In Attendance: C McKiernan, Depute Director/Housing Manager
M White, Head of Corporate Services
S Tait, Head of Development & Property Services

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from L Scott and G Jackson. It was noted that M Docherty was on continued leave of absence.

M White advised Committee of the comments submitted by L Scott in relation to items on the agenda.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Staff members declared an interest in Agenda Item 4.

3. RENT REVIEW 2021/22

C McKiernan presented the previously distributed report which focussed on the recent rent consultation on the proposed increase of 0.7%, based on the CPI at October 2020.

C McKiernan referred to the range of engagement methods and ways in which to respond to the rent consultation exercise, including phone calls from Corporate Services staff to tenants asking for their views. She advised that this particular method had worked exceptionally well. It was noted that subsequently, the consultation had generated more responses than in previous years. C McKiernan advised that the figure of responses received at Item 4.4 should read 95 and not 97.

Committee noted that, of the responses received, 60 were in agreement with the increase and 35 disagreed. C McKiernan highlighted the analysis of these responses in relation to self payers and those on benefits.

C McKiernan referred Committee to the comments made during the consultation process and confirmed that where respondents had raised concerns or queries in

relation to repairs, maintenance or environmental works, these had been followed up by Property Services staff.

It was noted that L Scott's previously submitted comment expressed concerns in relation to tenants who may be struggling financially as a result of the pandemic. Cllr Murray advised that she had similar concerns, and questioned the possibility of the savings made by the Association during the year covering the proposed rent increase. She also highlighted her recognition that, if this increase did not occur, it would have a knock on effect on rental income in future years. She agreed that although this was a difficult decision due to the current climate, it was the practical approach and therefore she supported the increase.

Cllr Jamieson enquired as to how the 0.7% increase would affect an average rent. C McKiernan advised that the increase would add £26,500 to the rent roll next year over the 830 tenancies. She further advised that in individual terms this would result, on average, an extra 0.60p per week rent charge.

D Wilson enquired as to whether the Rent Affordability toolkit developed by SFHA had been used in the process, and C McKiernan confirmed this had been looked at in December and had concluded that the biggest affordability concerns were in relation to single people. There followed some discussion on how affordability is assessed using this toolkit.

S Niven expressed agreement with Cllr Murray's earlier comments in relation to the knock on effect in future year of no increase. He also highlighted that in terms of savings made this year, this mostly reflected areas in which the Association had not been able to spend the money yet, and the expenditure was still to be incurred.

W Hassan and C Taylor also gave comments re-iterating concerns over tenants who may be struggling but also realising the potential impact on the Association if an increase is not applied.

D Wilson referred to the Association's reserves existing for emergency situations and highlighted some organisations had decided on rent freezes. S Niven acknowledged the comment in relation to the reserves however pointed out that the Association was in a different situation than other organisations, in that it has only been in the past year that a positive figure has been shown in this regard. D Wilson enquired what the Association's reserves currently stood at, and S Niven advised that it had been budgeted to end the year with net reserves of just under £580,000, however due to the expenditure which had not yet been able to take place, this would now likely be around £1.3M. He also added that the pension valuation had come out positively last year and it was likely that that it could go the other way this year, thus impacting on the reserves.

The rent increase of 0.7% was subsequently approved by all members.

4. STAFF APPRAISAL REPORT

Appraisal Feedback

M White presented the previously distributed report and it was noted that all appraisals for staff had been carried out virtually during December 2020. She highlighted that a common theme throughout staff was related to the challenges experienced as a result of the pandemic and how everyone has adapted to a new way of working. She also advised that staff had expressed their ongoing gratitude and appreciation of the support received from respective managers and the Association as a whole.

Committee noted the reference in the report to the flexibility shown by staff during the ongoing pandemic along with the exceptional work they have continued to carry out, and there followed some discussion on how such efforts could be recognised. It was agreed that the Management Team would discuss this further and report back to Committee in March.

Training Requests

Committee approved the 2 staff training requests which had been discussed during appraisal process.

Finance & Corporate Services Section

Committee noted the change in duties and structure of the section and agreed with the proposed recommendations.

4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business to discuss.

5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 3 February 2021 at 5.00 pm
(Draft Budget, Q3 Management Accounts, Q3 Performance Report)

Minutes taken by: Mandy White, Head of Corporate Services
3 February 2021

Chairpersons Signature:

Date:

Copies of the above reports are available on request.