

**West of Scotland Housing Association
Minutes of the Board Meeting
Hybrid Meeting via Microsoft Teams and Camlachie Boardroom
Wednesday 25th October 2023**

<p>Present: Kelly Adams (Chair), Karen Merz, Michael Sozansky, Ann Reid, Nick Farrell, Barbara McGarrie, Paul McCandlish, Paul MacNeil, George Kpodo, Elaine Davidson, Alison Calder</p> <p>In Attendance: Brian Gannon (CEO), Jennifer Cairns (Director of Corporate Services), Donna Paton (Director of Finance), Robert Campbell (Director of Housing & Community Support Services), Andrew Kubski (Director of Development & Asset Management), Susan Speirs (Senior Corporate Services Assistant)</p> <p>The CEO advised that Jim Williamson was attending the board as an observer.</p> <p>Apologies: Kenneth Fee, Nicola Wason</p>	
<p>Disclosure of Interests There were none</p>	
<p>1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a true and accurate record. They were proposed by Nick Farrell and seconded by Michael Sozansky.</p>	Approved
<p>2. Matters Arising The report on the management responses to the actions raised by the scrutiny group in their report was not included in the October board brief but will be included in the November board brief. The board noted the other matters arising.</p>	Action
<p>3. Signing Off Assurance Statement The Director of Corporate Services gave a background to the Assurance Statement. The draft assurance statement had been emailed to the board at the beginning of October asking for any comments. Any changes have been incorporated into the final assurance statement. A governance improvement plan has also been drawn up which shows the actions that have to be carried out. The board will be updated on a six monthly basis on the progress of the improvement plan.</p> <p>The board approved the Assurance Statement to be signed off by the Chair on behalf of the Board and also approved the Governance Improvement Plan.</p> <p>The Assurance Statement will now be submitted to the Regulator before 31st October.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Approved</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Action</p>

4. Service Charge Review

The Director of Housing & Community Support Services advised that a recent review had been carried out of service charges. He advised that the Association has struggled with the administration of the service charges and there have also been issues with the recovery of the costs which are due to the recovery of costs in arrears, the increase in the cap, large increase in costs such as utility costs, and the non-recovery of Charing Cross service charges. In 2023 there was an under-recovery of over £300,000. He advised that we are now in a better place regarding the administration but that longer term a better IT solution/resource will be needed to manage service charges.

The Director of Housing & Community Support Services advised that the service charge increase cap cannot continue and we need to look at changing this. He recommended that the cap is removed for everyone with a monthly increase under £40. For those over £40 we should cap the increase to £40 plus 50% of the additional increase up to £60. For those with an increase greater than this, the Association will meet the additional amount.

With regard to the recovery of costs it is proposed that we move to a cost plus CPI inflation approach unless there is a fixed cost contract in place. This would help to recover most of our costs and would address the under-recovery issue.

Karen Merz asked if the maximum monthly increase would be £60. The Director of Housing & Community Support Services advised that it would actually be £50 i.e. £40 plus 50% of difference between £40-£60.

Nick Farrell asked why there was a big jump in the under-recovery costs in 2023. The Director of Housing & Community Services advised that this was due to increase in utility costs, CCHA costs, the cap and doing things retrospectively.

Nick Farrell asked if we look at services charge elements in building projects. The Director of Development & Asset Management advised that these are taken into consideration.

Karen Merz suggested we also need to look at reducing costs where possible to reduce the charge.

Alison Calder asked if we had standard service charges per close. The Director Of housing & Community Services advised that we use an average charge model.

Nick Farrell asked if we have the right resources to manage service charge administration, The CEO confirmed that the CMT are looking at this.

<p>The Board noted the contents of the report, approved the move to a cost plus CPI inflation approach to setting charges each year and approved the change to the existing service charge cap as outlined in the report.</p>	<p>Noted & Approved</p>
<p>5. Write Off Report The Director of Housing & Community Support Services advised that this report covers the six month period from 1 April to 30 September 2023. He advised that the Association has processes in place to recover outstanding debts or refund credit balances to former tenants and that balances in excess of £2,000 need write off approval from the Board whether it is an arrear or a credit balance. Attempts are made to try and trace tenants and recover the debt but this is not always possible. In the Write Off Policy the wording of one the reasons for write off currently reads “the individual has been referred to a debt recovery agent and no trace has been found of the debtor”. The word “debtor” needs to be changed to “individual”.</p> <p>Michael Sozansky queried the terminology of a “credit write-off”. It was agreed that this is really a “Write-on”.</p> <p>The Board approved the write offs over £2k and approved the change in wording of the Write Off Policy as detailed in the report.</p>	<p>Noted & Approved</p>
<p>6. Review of Scheme of Delegation The Director of Corporate Services explained that the Scheme of Delegation outlines where delegated authority lies within the Association. The scheme was last reviewed in June 2020 and a review has been carried out against the SFHA Model Scheme of Delegation and the proposed changes to our Scheme of Delegation are outlined in this report.</p> <p>Michael Sozansky advised that on page 2 there should be an “s” after Committee so that the sentence reads “All Sub-Committees”.</p> <p>All references to the DISC Sub-Committee need to be changed to DAMSC.</p> <p>The Board approved the revised Scheme of Delegation with the changes above.</p>	<p>Approved</p>
<p>7. Review of Compensation Policy The Director of Development & Asset Management explained that in some situations tenants may be able to claim compensation due to the action, inaction or maladministration of the Association.</p> <p>This policy has been reviewed and there have been a couple of changes to it. A time limit of six months has been included in</p>	

<p>which a tenant must make a claim although there remains a degree of manager's discretion to do so.</p> <p>More detail has also been included on the statutory right to compensation where a tenant has carried out an improvement in Appendix 2.</p> <p>The Director of Development & Asset Management advised that this policy has been to the TAG meeting and they are happy with the changes.</p> <p>The Board approved the amended compensation policy and noted that some formatting improvements needed to be addressed in the policy.</p>	<p>Action Approved</p>
<p>8. Review of Board Expenses Policy</p> <p>The Director of Corporate Services advised that this policy was last reviewed in October 2020 and is now due for review. She advised that changes have been made to post titles in line with current posts and has also been updated in respect of the EVH subsistence allowances.</p> <p>We will also be collecting drivers documents annually for those Board members who use their own vehicles for Board activity.</p> <p>The Director of Corporate Services advised that this will also be covered in the Board induction for the new Board members.</p> <p>The Board approved the revised Board Expenses Policy.</p>	<p>Approved</p>
<p>9. Board Brief</p> <p><u>Void Management Policy</u></p> <p>The Director of Housing & Community Support Services advised that there were some minor amendments to the Void Management Policy to bring it in line with the recently reviewed Electrical Safety Policy. These changes are related to the gifting of portable and fixed appliances to ensure that they have been PAT or FAT tested first.</p> <p>The Board approved the changes to the policy.</p> <p><u>Broomhouse Rent & Service Charge Review</u></p> <p>The above review is currently underway and will finish in the middle of November. The proposed rent increase from 1 January is</p>	<p>Approved</p>

<p>9.09%. Due to time constraints it is proposed that a report is circulated to Board Members immediately after the consultation is finished using the 7 day rule.</p> <p>The Board approved this approach and agreed the rent increase.</p> <p>Karen Merz agreed to become a member of the Staffing Sub-Committee.</p> <p>As Irene McFarlane has now left the board the position of Vice-Chair is now vacant. Alison Calder agreed to take on this role.</p> <p>The Board noted the rest of the board brief.</p>	<p>Approved</p> <p>Approved</p> <p>Approved</p> <p>Noted</p>
<p>10. Efficiencies Review Update</p> <p>The Director of Finance advised that we are continually trying to identify areas where we can make savings. The CMT have looked at the 2023/2024 budget and have identified seven areas where savings can be made. It is anticipated that £94k of savings can be made and these savings will be included in the 2024/2025 budget. In addition, another £155.6k savings may also be achievable but these are subject to further analysis and confirmation.</p> <p>The Board will be given further updates as and when information on these savings is available.</p> <p>The Board noted the contents of this report.</p>	<p>Noted</p>
<p>11. Progress with 2023/24 Key Business Objectives & Action Plan</p> <p>The CEO gave an update on where we are with regard to the KBOs. He advised that 62% of the actions within the action plan have been completed and 38% are underway or have still to be completed.</p> <p>The Board noted the progress with the Corporate Business Plan KBOs and the association actions.</p>	<p>Noted</p>
<p>12. Resolutions</p> <p>The Director of Corporate Services advised that there will be a disposal of a property at St Vincent Place for which is over £120,000 therefore will be a Notifiable Event to the SHR. She advised that disposal of the property is in line with our Consolidation Strategy as previously approved by the Board. The sale is due to settle on 27th October 2023 and we will raise the notifiable event thereafter.</p>	<p>Noted</p>
<p>13. Notifiable Events</p> <p>The Board noted the contents of this report.</p>	<p>Noted</p>

14. Group Information The Board noted the minutes of the Westscot Living Board Meeting and also the Staff Consultation Group minutes.	Noted
15. AOCB The Board approved the three new shareholding membership applications.	Approved
Review of Meeting The Board agreed that the meeting has gone very well.	
Date of next meeting – 29th November 2023	