

RUTHERGLEN & CAMBUSLANG HOUSING ASSOCIATION

**Minutes of Management Committee Meeting
held on
Tuesday 24th October 2023
at 5.45pm in the Association's Office**

Present:

Edward Harkins – Chair
Robert McLeary
Maryellen McKeown
Karen McCartney
Natalie Kirk

In Attendance:

Elaine Lister – Director
Jim Kerr – Assistant Director
Joe Dewar – JWD Asset Services Ltd
Dougie Gold – Gold Consultancy Ltd
James Ross – Observer

The Chair explained to the members that Mr James Ross was interested in joining the Management Committee and was attending as an observer pending the Committee's acceptance of his application.

He invited everyone present to introduce themselves and state their role on the Committee or position in the Association.

AGENDA ITEM 1.0 – APOLOGIES

Apologies noted: Karen Kirk, Gary Gow

Elaine advised that Frances Cuninghame had requested a leave of absence for the month of October following a family bereavement.

AGENDA ITEM 2.0 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Elaine advised Mr Ross that his application for membership and for joining the Management Committee was on the agenda and he would be required to leave the meeting for the duration of that discussion.

There were no other declarations of interest.

AGENDA ITEM 3.0 – MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING : 20th June 2023

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 20th June 2023 were noted as a true record.

Proposed : Maryellen McKeown

Seconded : Robert McLeary

AGENDA ITEM 3.1 MATTERS ARISING

3.1.1 Development at New Road

Elaine gave members an update on the progress on the Association withdrawing from the project and, in particular, the negotiations with Realm Homes on the final settlement figure.

Members discussed the options considered and agreed that the final settlement figure was the best outcome for the Association.

3.1.2 Aspire Lets

It was noted that the meeting with the letting agent to review the rent for the units, standard terms etc was ongoing and that the Assistant Director would be taking the lead on this.

3.1.3 Committee Survey

Edward advised members that Lorna Ravell from EVH would be carrying out the next stage of the Committee Appraisal process before providing a full report. The intention was that the feedback from the survey he had issued to members on the use of tablets, the portal etc would be considered along with the final appraisal report.

Committee noted

AGENDA ITEM 4.0 – DRAFT MINUTES OF PREVIOUS SUB-COMMITTEE MEETINGS

4.1.1 Minutes of Finance, Audit & Risk Sub-Committee - 8th August 2023

Committee noted the minutes that would be presented for approval at the next meeting of the Finance, Audit & Risk Sub-Committee.

4.1.2 Minutes of Maintenance Sub-Committee - 29th August 2023

Committee noted the minutes that would be presented for approval at the next meeting of the Maintenance Sub-Committee.

4.1.3 Minutes of Housing Management Sub-Committee – 26th September 2023

Committee noted the minutes that would be presented for approval at the next meeting of the Housing Management Sub-Committee.

AGENDA ITEM 5.0 – TENANT & RESIDENTS SAFETY COMPLIANCE REVIEW

Joe Dewar gave a brief outline of the background to the work he was doing for the Association, noting the ongoing focus of the Scottish Housing Regulator on this area of activity.

He gave an update on the review plan and noted that a number of the actions were now completed with others nearing completion.

Members noted the policies that had been approved and discussed the priorities going forward, specifically, the need to ensure that the systems were fit for purpose to ensure ongoing evidence of compliance. Members also discussed how they would get the level of assurance needed that the Association was meeting all of its legal and regulatory requirements. Joe explained that improved systems and reporting schedules would make it easier for the maintenance team to produce the quality of reports members needed. He also pointed out that getting effective systems for recording and producing reports would allow the maintenance team to work more efficiently, thereby supporting value for money.

Committee noted the progress with the action plan and agreed the priorities for Joe would be developing policies on some of the key activities as well as ensuring effective systems were in place to allow improved reporting.

AGENDA ITEM – ASSET MANAGEMENT REVIEW

Edward introduced Dougie and explained that he had been commissioned to carry out a high level, strategic review of the asset management activities, including planned and cyclical maintenance, stock information and procurement.

Dougie advised members that he had only recently started the work and had only carried out an initial look at the procedures and systems that were in place. He highlighted a number of key areas that he had identified as needing updated, reviewed and/or developed and would be working with the maintenance team to prioritise these.

There was a discussion on the changes in the requirements that had been introduced over the years on areas such as procurement, quality standards etc and the impact of COVID and the cost-of-living crisis on the planned maintenance programme. Dougie advised that one of his priorities was to work closely with the Association's financial services provider (FMD) to review the programme and the associated budgets. He advised that he had started working on the brief for procuring a comprehensive, updated stock condition survey.

In response to a question from a Committee member, Dougie explained what was involved in a stock condition survey and the importance of having good quality, up-dated information.

Edward noted that between the two pieces of work, the Association was almost restructuring the way it operated and although it would be a demanding exercise, it would ensure the Association was getting things done the right way and was best placed to continue to grow and improve. Robert noted that getting independent reviews highlighted areas that may need to be revisited or addressed and, as such, were an essential part of good governance.

Members noted the initial findings from Dougie.

Dougie and Joe left the meeting

AGENDA ITEM 7.0 – ANNUAL DECLARATIONS

The members present completed their Code of Conduct, Declarations of interests and the Declaration of Eligibility to be a Committee Member.

AGENDA ITEM 8.0 – ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS AND SUB-COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Committee Membership

James Ross and Jim Kerr left the meeting due to the conflict of interest.

Edward advised that James Ross had expressed an interest in joining the Management Committee and had qualifications in community development and experience of committees.

Elaine explained the options for bringing James on to the Committee – as a co-optee or as an appointee and outlined the differences in each route. Members considered the impact on the Association's scope for bringing on new members, counting towards a quorum and what roles could be taken on under each option.

Edward noted that James' experience and qualifications would be an advantage on the Committee when considering ways to improving its ways to engage with residents etc.

It was unanimously agreed that James should be invited to join the Management Committee as an appointee until the end of September 2024 when he could be nominated for election.

Jim Kerr and James Ross rejoined the meeting.

Edward formally invited James to join the Management Committee as an appointee for a 12-month period. He explained to James he could then seek election at the next AGM. James thanked members for their consideration and accepted the invitation. In line with the Association's Rules, James signed the Code of Conduct and declarations required.

Election of Office Bearers

Elaine explained the two ways office bearers can be appointed and Maryellen proposed that the status quo should be maintained to allow continuity and stability for the coming year. The proposal was seconded by Karen McCartney and unanimously approved by the Committee members.

Both Edward and Robert confirmed they would continue to serve as Chair and Secretary respectively.

Election of Sub-Committees

Karen expressed the view that it would be beneficial if other members sat on one or more of the sub-committees. Edward stated this was something that should be considered but proposed that the discussion should be postponed until the next meeting to allow the newer members to consider what areas of interest they wished to develop. He noted that this might be identified as part of the appraisal process and therefore could be looked at in conjunction with the final appraisal report.

Members agreed to postpone the selection of members of the sub-committees until the next meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 9.0 – ANNUAL ASSURANCE STATEMENT 2023

Elaine explained the regulatory requirement for registered social landlords (RSLs) to submit an Annual Assurance Statement to the Scottish Housing Regulator by the end of October. The statement was from the Management Committee that members were assured the Association was compliant with all of the regulatory standards, statutory and legal requirements and the standards and outcomes of the Charter or identify areas on non-compliance with an indication of these will be addressed.

The evidence bank had been independently reviewed and had highlighted areas where further assurance can be provided and these have been included in this year's statement.

Edward distributed an amendment he was proposing to the draft statement that emphasised the review work being done within the maintenance function.

After discussion, Karen McCartney proposed approving the draft statement with the amendment. Robert McLeary seconded the proposal.

Committee members approved the proposed amendment and, with that addition, approved the annual assurance statement for signing by the Chair on the Committee's behalf and for the amended statement to be submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator and uploaded on to the Association's website.

AGENDA ITEM 10.0 – POLICY WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

Edward reminded members that the Working Group was a 'pilot' to try and support the full Management Committee have the time to look at some of the higher-level strategic work that was required. He stressed that the working group would only make recommendation and all policies would be brought back to the full Committee for final discussion and approval.

He further advised that the meetings were 'open' and the time and date of them was flexible to accommodate members' availability and/or particular interests.

Members discussed the format of reporting back the recommendations of the working group and the opportunities to feed into the decision-making process and agreed that both were acceptable.

Elaine advised that the Policy Working Group had considered the 4 policies that had been issued to all members of the Committee for comment ahead of the working group meeting.

After considering the amendments recommended, the Committee approved adopting the;

- Business Continuity Policy & Plan
- Equalities and Human Rights Policy
- Management Committee Induction Policy
- Membership Policy

AGENDA ITEM 11.0 – COMMITTEE APPRAISAL REPORT

Members discussed the key themes that came out of the collective part of the appraisal process and noted that, overall, responses were positive for;

- Strategy and direction
- Teamwork and decision-making
- Governance and risk
- Accountability and involvement

It was noted that, in general, it was felt that Committee and the senior management team worked well and that members discussed the key points and issues before taking a collective decision.

Edward reminded members that the individual appraisals were the next part of the process and asked members to ensure they made an appointment with Lorna from EVH for their interview.

AGENDA ITEM 12.0 – SHR’S HEADLINE NATIONAL ANALYSIS ON THE CHARTER

Members discussed the key findings from the report, in particular the impact of below-inflation rent increases over the past few years. Members expressed concerns on the Association’s ability to maintain the quality of the stock and services while also supporting residents through the cost-of-living crisis. Members noted that the Association had already made difficult decisions such as postponing some of the component replacement programmes as well as withdrawing from the development project at New Road. However, continually postponing investment in the stock could not be sustained long term and there was still the aspiration and commitment to build more high quality, affordable housing.

Elaine advised that over the next few months, there would need to be a full review of the Association’s business plan that would take into account the above points, the reviewed planned maintenance programme and the financial projections.

It was also noted that there had been a general decrease in the levels of satisfaction in many of the key standards and outcomes across the sector. Members considered the potential reasons for this and the options for addressing the trend for both the Association and the sector on general.

Members noted the report and the review of the business plan.

AGENDA ITEM 13.0 – COMMITTEE DIGEST

13.1 Leave of Absence

Members approved the request for a leave of absence from Frances Cunningham.

13.2 Applications for Membership

Members approved the following applications for membership;

- Mr James Ross
- Mrs Margaret Lynch Paterson
- Ms Heather Ross

13.3 Bank Mandates

Edward commented on the level of personal verifications that was required by the banks for members becoming authorised signatories.

Members approved the proposed changes to the authorised signatories for each of the accounts held by the Association.

13.4 Committee Attendance

Members noted attendance at meetings for the period April – September 2023.

AGENDA ITEM 14.0 – CORRESPONDENCE

Members noted the items of correspondence received.

AGENDA ITEM 15.0 – AOCB

15.1 Rutherglen's 900th Anniversary

Robert advised that he had been approached regarding a representative from the Association sitting on the 'top table' for the celebrations to mark Rutherglen's 900th anniversary in 2026.

Any member interested should contact either him or Elaine for more details.

AGENDA ITEM 14.0 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 21st November 2023.

As there were no other items of business the meeting closed at 7.45pm.