

RUTHERGLEN & CAMBUSLANG HOUSING ASSOCIATION

**Minutes of Management Committee Meeting
held on
Tuesday 9th January 2024
at 5.45pm in the Association's Office**

Present:

Edward Harkins – Chair
Robert McLeary
Mary Ellen McKeown
Natalie Kirk
Karen Kirk
Gary Gow
James Ross

In Attendance:

Elaine Lister – Director
Jim Kerr – Assistant Director
Douglas Gold – Gold Consultancy Ltd

AGENDA ITEM 1.0 – APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Karen McCartney

Frances Cunningham is on Leave of Absence

AGENDA ITEM 2.0 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Elane advised that Dougie Gold had an interest in Agenda Item 5.1

AGENDA ITEM 3.0 – MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: 21st November 2024

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 21st November 2024 were noted as a true record.

Proposed: Gary Gow

Seconded: James Ross

Agenda Item 3.1 - Matters Arising

3.1.1 Aspire Lets (Previous Agenda Item 3.1.1)

Committee noted that;

- the meeting with DM Hall to standardise the rent setting and legal documentation was scheduled for January
- the lease and deposit agreement for Unit 10 has been forwarded to the prospective tenant with a date of entry of 5th January 2024
- one tenant in the Aspire building was in arrears with the rent and that, if attempts to get the balance cleared fail, further action via the solicitor may be required

3.1.2 Committee Appraisal Reports (previous agenda item 3.1.4)

Members noted that all individual appraisals had been carried out and a final report would be presented to the Management Committee at the next meeting.

3.1.3 Rutherglen's 900th Anniversary (Previous agenda item 3.1.5)

Elaine advised that the Chair had asked for the request for use of the Committee room to be submitted as a formal request from Councillor Brown as Chair of the planning and that this has been conveyed to Geraldine.

It was noted that no further communication had been received to date.

3.1.4 Annual Assurance Evidence Bank Review (previous agenda item 8.0)

Members noted that the next section of the evidence bank has now been reviewed by Angela and this and a draft action plan for improving the supporting evidence would be presented to the Management Committee at the next meeting.

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

4.1.1 Minutes of Maintenance Sub-Committee – 31st October 2023

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

4.1.2 Minutes of Housing Management Sub-Committee – 28th November 2023

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

4.1.3 Minutes of Finance, Audit & Risk Sub-Committee – 16th November 2023

Committee noted the minutes that would be presented for information at the next meeting of the management committee.

AGENDA ITEM 5.0 – ASSET MANAGEMENT REVIEW

The Chair requested that agenda item 5.1 be discussed after Dougie had presented his report due to the potential conflict of interest.

5.2 Repairs & Maintenance & Voids Framework

Dougie presented his report on the Repairs & Maintenance & Voids Framework and provided information to the Management Committee in connection with the proposed joint procurement framework in conjunction with East Kilbride Housing Association (EKHA) and West Whitlawburn Housing Co-operative (WWHC) for Repairs, Maintenance and Voids Framework (Unranked) Procurement.

Dougie highlighted the advantages of entering into this framework including;

1. A fully inclusive process that doesn't disadvantage our current supply network.
2. A process that allows flexibility for RCHA to use new contractors when existing contractors are unable to meet the priority timescales.
3. Restriction on Lots to ensure that no one large contractor can win all the works.
4. Provides a fully compliant route for all R&M and Voids works, the framework is for a 4-year period.
5. The ability to have flexible and alternative contractors available to provide quicker responsive attendance and completion for the tenants.
6. Simple process to manage internally as the framework will operate very similarly as to how RCHA currently operates R&M and Voids.
7. Allows for some ad-hoc cyclical and capital works if desired.
8. Includes formal KPIs to ensure monitoring and control of quality and performance.
9. The framework is unranked to allow RCHA to direct award for works on any Lot to any bidder who is selected to be a part of the Lot.
10. RCHA will be free to choose the contractor to offer works too. The intention is to have a flexible framework and offer works to contractors based on, VfM, availability, capacity, skillset, capability, location (proximity to live work orders), KPI performance and resident satisfaction results.
11. We will also reserve the right to run mini competitions within Lots and across other Lots to ensure competitive bidding for larger jobs.
12. The framework includes Community Benefit (CB) clauses for all contractors on the framework used by RCHA based on spend.

Members expressed concern that the framework would lead to the smaller, local contractors that the Association had worked with for a number of years being excluded.

Dougie explained that, by establishing smaller 'lots' and maximising the number of 'lots' a company could bid for, this had been shown to dissuade some of the much larger, multi trade companies from bidding, leaving plenty of opportunities for smaller contractors.

Members asked if this would ensure the Association met all of its statutory and regulatory requirements pertaining to procurement and contract management. Dougie assured members that this would and, once in place, would provide more efficiencies and value for money for the Association.

After discussion on the potential benefits and impacts on the Association, members approved the proposed Repairs & Maintenance & Void Framework.

5.3 Procurement

Dougie presented the report on procurement and explained

- the requirements under current procurement legislation in the UK and Scotland.
- the specific thresholds for contract values that determined the route of procurement that had to be followed
- the definitions used within procurement and how they applied to the types of contracts issued by the Association

Members sought clarification on what was classed as works and services.

Dougie outlined the procurement process and procedures that he was proposing to follow going forward in order to ensure the Association was not only meeting legislation and regulatory requirements but also good practice. These would also demonstrate all contracts were procured in an open and transparent way.

He also suggested that the appropriate members of staff within the maintenance department would benefit from some formal training on procurement.

Management Committee approved the proposed procurement route and procedure as set out in the paper.

5.4 REINFORCED AUTOCLAVED AERATED CONCRETE (RAAC)

Dougie presented the report and provided information to the Management Committee on the recent correspondence and request for information from SHR in connection with RAAC.

He advised that the Association had undertaken a desktop exercise but, due to an absence of a key member of the maintenance department, could only provide high level initial findings to the SHR by the date requested. However, that exercise had shown that, as of 31 October 23, the Association had 516 properties built between 1919-1944 and post 1983, and this had been submitted to the SHR.

He further explained that since then a more detailed report had been extracted from the data held on the system that had identified 64 properties that had to be checked to establish if further surveys are required or if the Association can advise the Scottish Housing Regulator that it has no properties with RAAC present.

Members discussed the risk of RAAC in residential properties and the potential impact on the Association in the event any was found within any of the identified stock. Dougie expressed the view that he was confident that none of them would contain RAAC but will update the members accordingly.

Members noted the information contained within the report.

The Chair thanked Dougie for his presentation of the reports and Dougie left the meeting.

The Chair then asked for agenda item 5.1 to be considered.

5.1 Amended Proposals

Jim presented amended proposals and costs from Dougie Gold. Following completion of the initial assessment phase of the Asset management Review, Dougie has assessed that there is a great deal more that has been identified that requires to be reviewed.

A revised assessment of time and costs based on realistic assumptions as at December 2023 concludes that the original estimates required to be increased.

Committee members discussed the importance of the Asset Management Review in ensuring that the Association is fully compliant with all the tenant & resident health & safety legislative and regulatory requirements.

Members approved the revised time and costs and requested that these are monitored closely to ensure that they are adhered to.

AGENDA ITEM 6.0 – TENANT & RESIDENT SAFETY – FINAL HANDOVER REPORT

Elaine presented the report from Joe Dewar and confirmed that Joe had completed the work on the tenant and resident safety review to the point agreed by the Committee at the meeting in November. She advised that the policies completed by Joe would be presented to the Maintenance Sub-Committee at its meeting in January and that the remaining policies would be drafted internally by staff. These were the Void Management, Estate Management and Medical Adaptations policies.

Elaine further explained that the initial commission had included compliance checks for properties to ensure each had all the necessary documentation and certificates but that this had not been possible within the timeframe allowed. However, work had started to electronically collate the certificates within the property files so that the Association could quickly and easily check and demonstrate compliance as advised by Joe.

Committee noted the report and the work that had been completed to ensure compliance.

AGENDA ITEM 7.0 – DRAFT BUDGET 2024/25 FOR APPROVAL

Jim explained that the draft budget 2024/25 had been presented to the Finance, Audit and Risk sub-committee meeting on the 16th November 2023 and had been recommended for approval by the Management Committee.

He highlighted a number of key points for noting including;

- tenants being consulted on a rent increase of either 5% or 5.6%
- assumed above inflation rent increases to year 8 only which may be alleviated by the smoothing of planned maintenance costs
- the refinancing of loan bullet repayments rather than paying the full bullet repayments at one time.
- a fully costed planned maintenance programme being developed

Members of the Finance, Audit & Risk Sub-Committee outlined the points that had been discussed at the Sub meeting when considering the budget.

After a full discussion and clarification on a number of points, members approved the Draft Budget for 2024/25.

AGENDA ITEM 8.0 – FINANCIAL REGULATIONS FOR APPROVAL

Jim explained that the reviewed Financial Regulations had been considered at the Finance, Audit & Risk Sub-Committee meeting on the 16th November 2023 and recommended for approval by the Management Committee.

He highlighted the slight change to the expenditure authorisation levels to give the Housing and Factoring Officers the ability to authorise any costs in their respective areas up to £1,500 rather than just legal fees up to this limit. The Depute Director has also been added to the maintenance spend approval section to allow for business continuity in the absence of the Senior Maintenance Officer.

Members approved the updated Financial Regulations.

AGENDA ITEM 9.0 – PRESENTATION ON PROGRESS TO DATE

Elaine gave a brief presentation progress to date with current ongoing work including the annual assurance evidence bank review, the tenant and resident safety review and the Business Plan update. She also highlighted the work that had been carried out to support governance as well as to strengthen tenancy sustainment and support tenants.

AGENDA ITEM 10.0 – COMMITTEE DIGEST

10.1 EVH Membership Renewal

Members noted that the Association was due to renew its membership with Employers in Voluntary Housing (EVH) for 2024 at a cost of £4,665 (subscription fee for organisations with 10-19 members of staff). This is an increase of 4.5% which is slightly below current inflation rates.

Members discussed the benefits of membership of EVH and the services it could offer to support the Association and felt that the membership of EVH was still worthwhile and offered good support to the Association.

After discussion, members approved the renewal of the Association's membership of EVH for 2024.

10.2 Data Protection Officer Services

Jim advised that the Data Protection Officer Service (DPO) currently provided by Information Law Solutions is due for renewal. The service provided includes;

- Day-to-day responsibility for data protection compliance.
- Advice and guidance on General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), Freedom of Information (FOI) and Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations (EIS).
- Assistance with Equalities Data Collection.
- Professional, expert advice and practical assistance on reporting breaches of GDPR.
- Management of data access and FOI request.
- A 'health-check' of data systems, policies and procedures and compliance audit
- A helpline service for emergency enquiries.
- Updates on changes to legislation and advice on their implications for the organisation.

He further advised that the service is being offered at the same costs as last year for a 12 month period with an option to renew the contract for either a 2 or 3 year period. The extended period would be at the same annual costs, thereby fixing the expenditure for the Association.

Elaine advised members that the Association was legally bound to have a Data Protection Officer and that this had previously been covered in-house. However, with the increasing focus on equalities and data collection, the work was growing in complexity and was really out with the skills and knowledge of any staff member.

In recognition of the need for expertise in the area of equalities, GDPR, etc, members approved the renewal of the Data Protection Officer Service for a further period of two years up to December 2025.

10.3 Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA) Affiliation Renewal

Members noted that the Association's affiliation fees to SFHA for 2024/2025 were due at a cost of £10,270 (+VAT), which is an increase of 5% on last year's fees.

Members discussed the affiliation renewal and the benefits of membership of SFHA for the Association, including updated guidance on key areas and activities. It was also noted that a number of members had attended various conferences and events through SFHA which they felt had helped them as Committee members through networking, training etc.

After discussion, members approved the renewal of the Association's affiliation with the SFHA.

10.4 Calendar of Meetings 2024

Elaine explained that it had been suggested that the night meetings of the Management Committee were held be changed as some members found the current arrangements difficult due to other commitments. She was therefore looking to clarify what nights would be the most suitable for members to support them attend and, potentially, sit on one or more of the sub-committees.

Due to the time constraints and other matters the Chair wished to discuss under AOCB, the Chair proposed deferring this discussion to another meeting. This was unanimously agreed by the other members.

AGENDA ITEM 11.0 – NOTIFIABLE EVENTS

There were no notifiable events to report.

AGENDA ITEM 12.0 – CORRESPONDENCE

There was no recent correspondence.

AGENDA ITEM 13.0 – AOCB

13.1 Postponement of Meeting in December

Elaine acknowledged that the scheduled meeting of the Management Committee in December had been postponed due to a delay in getting the hard copies of the papers out to members, although they had been issued via email. She advised that a timetable for the production, collation and issuing of papers had been drawn up to avoid such delays in the future.

13.2 Chair's Resignation

Edward advised members that he was standing down from his position of Chair and resigning from the Management Committee.

AGENDA ITEM 14.0 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 23rd January 2024.

As there were no other items of business the meeting closed at 7.15pm.