

MINUTES OF	:	Board of Management Meeting
TIME & DATE HELD	:	15th August 2023
DATE APPROVED	:	26th September 2023

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT	:	Hugh McIntosh, Brian Barclay, Rae Connelly and Eddie Robertson
APOLOGIES	:	Grace Barbour, Elizabeth Battersby and Gillian Johnston
STAFF PRESENT	:	Tony Teasdale, (CEO) Colette McKenna, (Director of Property Services) Ola Ajobiwe (Finance Manager) for Items 1- 8)
IN ATTENDANCE	:	James McBride (Azets External Auditor) - Item 8

1. **Apologies**

Noted as above.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

There were none.

3. **Minutes for Information:**

The draft minutes of the following meetings were noted:

3.1	Housing and Community Services Committee	: 20.06.23
3.2	Upkeep Board	: 08.08.23
3.3	East End Board	: 08.08.23

4. **Minutes for Approval**

4.1 Board Meeting: 27.06.23

The draft Minute of the Board meeting on 27th June 2023 was approved on a motion from Eddie Robertson, seconded by Rae Connelly.

5. **Matters Arising Schedule**

Members noted the content of the Matters Arising Schedule and in particular that:

- SHR had confirmed that a Notifiable Event was not required in relation to the recent departures from the Board.
- The revised organisational Values had now been launched. The colours had been amended on the graphic representation of these to reflect the Board decision in June.
- A paper is to be brought to the Board in September to propose principles to be applied in

deciding whether and when any financial or other inducements might be offered to encourage participation in Association consultative and other activities.

- In accordance with the approach to private property acquisitions with Council funding agreed at the June meeting the purchase of a flat at Eskbank Street is due to shortly conclude.

6. Compliance and Safety Update

Members noted the content of the Compliance & Safety Update Report which confirmed that:

- There had been no new Notifiable Events (NE) submitted since the last meeting date. The NE's regarding the loan covenant situation and compliance with electrical safety requirements remain open (in the latter case despite compliance now being at 97%).
- The Loan Portfolio Return (LPR) had been submitted to SHR. The Freedom of Information Return had been submitted to the ICO. The Management Accounts had been provided to RBS.
- There had been no significant health & safety incidents to report since the last meeting.

7. CEO Progress Report

Members noted the content of the report and in particular:

- *Decisions by the Office Bearers on behalf of the Board during the July recess:* The Board noted the details in relation to:
 - Approval for an offer of tenancy covered by the Payments and Benefits Policy.
 - Approval of two share-holding membership applications.
 - Approval to cancel the Housing & Community Services Committee meeting on 22nd August.
 - Issuing of thank you letters to Lesley Scoffield and Christine Thomson who had recently resigned from the Board.
- *Shettleston Gala - 5th August:* This had been very successful with nearly 700 people estimated to have been in attendance. Members spoke about the positive feedback they had received in the community regarding this. It was agreed that a formal thank you letter be issued on behalf of the Board to all at SCGP for their role in helping to make the day a success.
- *Staffing Update:* The vacant maintenance officer post had been successfully filled with Stevie Coyle due to join us in early September. In the meantime, the team is a little short staffed however the Director of Property Services (DPS) was able to confirm that other staff were stepping up to fill the gap temporarily and given that the summer was a quieter time for reactive repairs the situation would be manageable.

Consultation had taken place with staff regarding the findings of the staff satisfaction survey and action plan recommendations would be reported to the Audit and Corporate Committee meeting on 29.8.23.

The planned review of staffing within the CCS department was behind schedule but is to be taken forward as a priority by the CEO in the coming weeks. This would now involve a more in-depth look at the overall functioning of the department.

- *Tollcross/Shettleston Money Advice Project (TSMAP)*: the Board was pleased to note the recent award of £39,000 Grant per year (for the next two years) which would help of-set the Association's own contribution to the project.
- *Summer newsletter*: this had been issued in July. Comments on the format and content were invited.
- *Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)*: The update included the latest guidance from SHR regarding the preparation of this year's Annual Assurance Statement (AAS). All RSLs would be required this year to provide a clear statement that all duties are being met in relation to all aspects of tenants safety. It was noted that a comprehensive report on this would be provided to the Property Services Committee meeting on 5th September. There was a requirement to provide an update on progress in meeting requirements in relation to equalities and human rights.

8. Finance

8.1 2022/23 Group Accounts and re-appointment of Auditor

James McBride from Azets, the external auditors was introduced to the Board, thereafter he presented the Association's group accounts for financial year ending 31 March 2023.

He presented the Board with the sections of the financial report and summarised that the audit exercise was conducted satisfactorily, and it was their opinion that the financial statements give true and fair view of the financial situation of the Association for the year ending 31st March 2023. He also mentioned that the financial reports were prepared in accordance with applicable statutory and regulatory requirements.

James drew the Board's attention to the following areas of the reports:

- The total surplus for the year was £2M, this was higher than the prior year as a result increased turnover and lower cost in the year. Although, the total comprehensive income in the year under review was lower than prior year, James explained that this was because of pension valuation loss of £593K in 2022/23 which on the contrary was an actuarial gain in the prior year.
- The group's net assets as highlighted was £11.7M and the increase over the prior year was largely due to new builds and other investment in housing properties in the year under review.
- The auditor explained the significance of the audit findings report, pointing out that there were no control issues identified during the audit exercise. Area of significant risks of the business were given special attention and their conclusion was no matters to bring to the attention of the Board.

The Board thereafter,

- **Noted and approved the audit findings report from Azets, including the recommendations in relation to internal controls.**
- **Noted and approved the Board's Letter of Representation to the Auditors.**
- **Noted and approved the 2022/23 audited financial statements.**
- **The Board also agreed to recommend to the AGM the appointment of Azets as auditors for the 2022/23 Accounts.**

Mr McBride left the meeting at this point.

8.2 Management Accounts to 30th June 2023

An overview of the management accounts for the period starting from 1st April 2023 to 30th June 2023 was presented to the Board by the Finance Manager (FM).

The FM asked the Board to note a surplus of £472K made in the first 3 months of the year against a budget of £397K giving rise to a variance of £75K. It was also noted that net assets rose from £11.045M as of 31st March 2023 to £11.517M at the end of June 2023. The main points highlighted from the statement of comprehensive income are as follows:

- Adverse variances were recorded in bank charges, depreciation, staff expenses, compliance, and office repairs.
- Rates, heat, light and cleaning had an adverse variance £6.5K.
- Adverse variance of £67K in revenue major repairs was due to EICR works.
- Void maintenance also recorded adverse variance of £17K.

The Board noted the increased debtors balance of £448K in comparison to the balance at the end of last financial year. The cash balance also increased by £331K in comparison to balance as of 31st March 2023, similarly, total current liabilities increased by £448K in the period under review. It was brought to the attention of the Board that no loan was drawn down within the period.

All lenders' covenants were met, and the management accounts have been forwarded to the bank as required.

There was discussion about Bank charges which were reported as having increased:

- Based on the variance comment, a member asked if the Bank had given notice before charges were increased. The FM clarified that in fact the increase had been due to an increase in Allpay charges, since the budget was set, rather than Bank charges. It was agreed that the variance comments would be amended to more accurately reflect this.
- A Member then asked about the number of tenants making use of Allpay and the financial risk that might arise from any further increases in charges over which we don't have control. The FM confirmed a significant proportion of our tenants are using Allpay and that staff were already exploring the possible cost and other benefits of alternatives to Allpay.

The Board thereafter approved the contents of the management report for period ending 30th June 2023.

9. Annual Procurement Report and Strategy Review

The Director of Property Services (DPS) presented her report which covered:

- the Association's 2022/23 Annual Procurement Report to the Scottish Government, which included: information about regulated procurement activity during the year; an assessment of compliance with our Procurement Strategy; and a summary of anticipated regulated procurement over the next two years.
- Proposed revisions to the Association's Procurement Strategy
 - highlighting a series of updates to reflect changes within the organisation or our environment and

- Including updated tables of all significant procurement in 2022/23 and procurement planned in the next two years (2023/24 and 2024/25).
- Provided an update on progress with the Procurement Improvement Action Plan aimed at addressing issues raised through the internal audit of the Association's procurement activity.

Following discussion the Board:

- **Approved the proposed revisions to the Procurement Strategy.**
- **Approved the draft Annual Procurement Report & authorise submission to Scottish Ministers.**
- **Noted that the approved revised Strategy & Procurement Report will be published on the Association's website.**
- **Noted the progress with actions arising from the internal audit of procurement & new funding guidance.**

10. Tenant Satisfaction Survey: action plan

The CEO presented the report which provided an update on action taken since the initial presentation of the Tenant Satisfaction Survey findings to the Board in May. The Knowledge Partnership had organised two follow-up Focus Group meetings with small groups of tenant volunteers, at the end of June/early July. The report back and recommendations from these meetings was noted.

The report also proposed a detailed action plan aimed at addressing issues that had been raised through both the Survey itself and the follow-up Focus Group meetings.

Following discussion the Board approved the proposed action points across the various service headings, as follows, subject to further consultation with the Tenant Forum:

Housing Quality:

- To address dissatisfaction with void re-let condition:
 - Conclude the current review of the Void Letting Standard, in consultation with the Tenant Forum.
 - review the format of our ongoing survey of new tenant satisfaction and to aim to increase the currently low rate of participation in this survey.
 - Conclude the already planned development of a strategy to improve the prevention, identification and response to property condition issues at a much earlier stage in a tenancy. The aim being to reduce the likelihood of property condition issues only coming to light at void stage and help protect the budget for re-let repair work.
- To address views about the need for improvements to tenants homes:
 - Carry out further analysis of the survey feedback to assess whether there are any locational patterns to levels of dissatisfaction with current state of components (kitchens, bathrooms etc)
 - Identify whether existing investment plans can and should be amended in light of this.

Repairs service

- Work with Upkeep to improve the scheduling and earlier commencement of action on reactive repairs to ensure that any issues around e.g. additional works required; lacking parts in store or non-access are identified at an earlier stage after the repair is reported.
- Better publicise our repairs performance on an ongoing basis and celebrate successes where appropriate but also issue regular reminders of how folk can provide feedback when they are unhappy with the service received to increase participation in the ongoing repairs survey and then publicise action taken in response to such feedback.
- Ensure tenants have a clear understanding of the standards and performance that they can expect when they report a repair: review the information (written and electronic) that we provide to tenants at the start of the tenancy and on an ongoing basis thereafter.

Information, listening and engaging

- Continue to promote awareness of tenant engagement options_ including the Tenant Forum, and especially highlight where it has made a difference to service provision.
- Continue to promote awareness of opportunities to both join the Association and become a Board Member.
- Review how information is provided at start of tenancies and throughout tenancies about all options for engaging.
- To improve satisfaction with satisfaction with how responsive staff are to tenant queries:
 - Proceed with the already planned development of new Customer Service Standards
 - Agree a programme of customer service training across the staff team.

Contacting and access to services/information

- Proceed with the planned development of a communication strategy, to include:
 - Development of a “ digital portal” for future service delivery to address the preferences of a significant minority of particularly younger tenants and to prepare for a future where this becomes a more wide-spread preference.
 - At the same time review how we address the communication needs of the majority of tenants who are not being reached through social media etc and currently prefer to be kept informed and engage in more traditional ways.

Complaints

Look to address reported high levels of tenant dissatisfaction with how complaints have been dealt with by carrying out ongoing sample surveys of tenants who have complained with the aim of establishing level of satisfaction with how repair dealt with (in respect of e.g. ease of reporting, speed of response, whether they felt issues properly considered etc.) Proposed that this be carried out by a senior staff member who hasn't been involved in the complaint, such as the Corporate Services Manager who monitors, collates data and reports on the Complaints Handling system.

Neighbourhood management

- Neighbourhood management overall: Explore reasons for what appears to be a particularly high level of dissatisfaction with neighbourhood management in Springboig and identify any potential actions to improve this.
- With just over 10% of all tenants are saying they are unhappy with maintenance of common areas:
 - Conclude the review of the specification for caretaking services (in consultation with tenants)
 - Publicise this to ensure everyone has a clear idea of what they can expect.
 - Ensure that we have a robust system in place for responding to ongoing complaints about the quality of the service. (This to include the development of formal monitoring of complaints/responses regarding this service area).
- Explore the reasons for apparent high levels of dissatisfaction amongst tenants in Greenfield and Springboig with SHA's response to Anti-Social Behaviour and identify any potential actions to improve this.
- Address widespread concerns expressed regarding condition of area, particularly regarding dog fouling and dealing with litter, including through implementation of already planned action in relation to:
 - Development of a pilot project for a specific local area through which residents will be supported to improve local cleanliness / condition of area and identify areas for action by SHA.
 - Continue to work with partners to address school lunch-time littering issue at top of Shettleston Road.

Value for Money

- As part of forthcoming rent policy review and design of harmonised rent structure, further analyse the tenant survey feedback about rent as value for money by property type/size
- Further consideration be given to how we can introduce a rolling review of views on rent VFM rather than waiting every three years or so for an overall update.

11. Governance Issues

Members noted the content of the report from the CEO. This provided an update on arrangements for the AGM and also information about the Board recruitment campaign that had been run over the summer.

The report set out proposals from the Office Bearers that, in accordance with the recruitment criteria previously agreed, the Board co-opt three new Members:

Neil Devlin

It was noted that Mr Devlin works as *Team Leader – Capital, Voids and Repair* for East Renfrewshire Council. He would bring relevant property maintenance/construction knowledge and experience to the Board. He lives out-with the area and as such was proposed for co-option to the vacant designated space on the Board for people who do not have to live within the area.

Maureen Mulgrew

It was noted that Ms Mulgrew is a long-standing tenant, an active member of the Association and is involved with the Tenant Forum. She works in finance as a book-keeper and has previous governance experience as a Board member of a local charity.

Janice Saunders

It was noted that Ms Saunders is also an Association tenant who has also been involved with the Tenant Forum. She is retired and was previously a civil servant before working in retail. She has previous governance experience having served as Chair of school Parent Councils.

It was noted that both Ms Mulgrew and Ms Saunders were also standing for election to the Board at the AGM.

The Board agreed that all three candidates be approved for co-option to the Board.

12. Quarterly Performance report

Members noted the content of the report and in particular:

- Business Plan Delivery plan etc

13. Membership Applications

The Board noted the content of the report and approved the following application for share-holding membership of the Association:

- Ms Manal Al Fadli, [REDACTED]

The Board also noted the details of the following two applications for membership that had been approved by the Office Bearers during the summer recess, under authority delegated at the June Board meeting, as follows:

- Ms Linda Steen, [REDACTED]
- Ms Janice Saunders, [REDACTED]

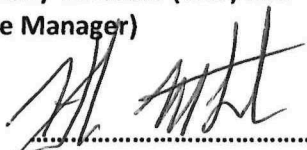
It was noted that all three are Association tenants.

13. Any Other Business

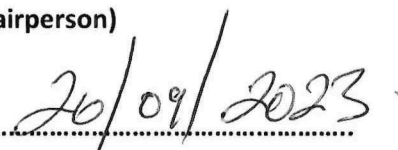
There was none.

Minute prepared by Tony Teasdale (CEO) and
Ola Ajobiewe (Finance Manager)

SIGNED:


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(Chairperson)

DATE:


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