

<b>MINUTES OF</b>	:	Board of Management Meeting ( <b>Confidential</b> )
<b>TIME &amp; DATE HELD</b>	:	24th October 2023
<b>DATE APPROVED</b>	:	14th November 2023

<b>BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT</b>	:	Hugh McIntosh, Grace Barbour, Brian Barclay, Elizabeth Battersby, Rae Connelly, Neil Devlin, Gillian Johnston, Maureen Mulgrew, Eddie Robertson and Janice Saunders
<b>APOLOGIES</b>	:	None
<b>STAFF PRESENT</b>	:	Tony Teasdale, (CEO) Colette McKenna (Director of Property Services) Kirsty Brown (Director of Finance & Corporate Services)
<b>IN ATTENDANCE</b>	:	N/A

1. **Apologies**

There were none, with all members of the Board present.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

There were none. It was noted however, in relation to Item 10 (Rent Structure Review Update) that four members of the Board are Association tenants and will have an interest to be declared in due course when decisions are sought on this matter.

3. **Minutes for Information:**

There were none.

4. **Minutes for Approval**

**5.1 Board Meeting: 26.09.23**

The **draft Minute of the Board meeting on 26th September 2023** was approved on a motion from Gillian Johnston, seconded by Brian Barclay.

5. **Matters Arising Schedule**

There were none.

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 regarding the loan covenant situation remains open. The Board approved the revised proposal from RBS at the September Board meeting and the DFCS confirmed at the meeting that an Amendment Letter has now been drafted by the Bank's solicitor to reflect the changes. This will sit alongside the existing loan agreement. Once this is signed off by the Board, SHR will be updated and the NE will then be closed.

- The following statutory returns and submissions had been made:
  - The latest quarterly return to the Information Commissioners Office (ICO).
  - Data submitted for the Scottish Housing Network's 2023 Value for Money annual review of member RSLs.
- 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 updating on significant issues and developments not covered elsewhere on the agenda. In particular:

- Around 25% of tenants had taken part in the recent Energy Survey, commissioned from the Knowledge Partnership. Given the length of the survey form and the amount of information requested this was felt to be a good level of response.
- Enhanced support had continued to be provided to the Board of Shettleston Community Growing Project (SCGP). In particular the recruitment for the vacant Project Co-ordinator post was now underway.
- The assessment of the physical condition of Shettleston Health Centre had now been received from Graham and Sibbald Surveyors. This had been commissioned to help inform the ongoing assessment of the viability of the Centre (owned by the Council) being taken into community ownership. The report indicated a need for very significant levels of investment to repair and improve the fabric of the building. A meeting was to be held to discuss the Report and its implications with our partner FUSE and the Council. In response to a Member query the DPS provided further information about the findings of the report.
- The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) had written to all RSLs asking about the presence or otherwise of Re-inforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) in their housing stock. This followed national concerns about the safety implications of RAAC discovered in some public buildings dating back to the 1960's. The Property Services Team had already been investigating the issue and the required information would be submitted to SHR by the due date of 31/10/23.
- The Glasgow and West of Scotland Forum of HAs (GWSF) had recently published its annual report on the Charter Performance of GWSF members compared with national averages. This showed that community-based associations were continuing to perform well.
- It was also noted that GWSF was about to publicise the availability of a new service to any of its members experiencing difficulties. Advice and possible support would be offered, with a Support Panel of volunteer senior staff having been established. The CEO advised that he was a member of the Panel. The aim was to offer support so that problems might be tackled early and to reduce the likelihood of issues escalating to a stage where regulatory intervention was required. A Member commended this idea and the underlying principle of mutual support.

## **8. Annual Assurance Statement**

Members noted and considered the content of the report which:

- Provided a reminder of the requirements in relation to self-assessment against the various legal and Regulatory Standards and to annually submit an Assurance Statement to the Regulator.

- Directed Members to the detailed checklists of compliance against the legal requirements, Charter compliance and the Regulatory Standards respectively held on Decision Time, which had been updated since issued to all Members at the September meeting.
- Included as an appendix a proposed summary of compliance, including the identified action points for improvement which would form the basis for the proposed Assurance Improvement Action Plan for the year ahead.
- Also included a draft Assurance Statement.

Following discussion Members:

- **Noted and approved the final versions of the 2023 Annual Assurance review checklists.**
- **Noted the various areas identified as action points for improvement but noted that this year no issues of “material non-compliance” had been identified.**
- **Approved the content of the 2023 Annual Assurance Statement subject to correction of an error regarding the date of this meeting.**
- **Delegated authority to the Chairperson to sign-off the approved Statement for submission to the SHR by the 31st October deadline.**
- **Approved that the Statement be published on the SHA website and that it be highlighted to tenants and members in the next SHA newsletter.**

#### **9. Review of staffing needs in the Customer and Community Services Team (confidential)**

Members noted the content of the report from the CEO on the outcome of his review of staffing needs within the CCS team which had aimed to explore:

- Whether the staff structure remains adequate and best suited to deliver on the Association’s customer and community services objectives in the current environment.
- Whether a number of currently vacant posts should be maintained as is or subject to change in anyway.
- Whether best use is being made of resources.

A number of conclusions were reported in relation to the front-line staffing structure:

- The current overall capacity within the front-line housing team was felt to still be broadly adequate, with some potential to add to this through ongoing efficiencies and system reviews and by making greater use of the Customer Service Assistants who are based on the reception desk.
- The level of demand upon the welfare rights service no longer appeared to justify the retention of two full-time Grade 7 Welfare Rights Officer Posts although there was a need for greater capacity than would be provided for by just one.
- The forthcoming consultation with relevant tenants regarding the future of our Retirement Housing Service was likely to result in at least a very significant scaling back of that service going forward. That would remove a significant part of the role that has been played by the Tenancy Sustainment team since 2018 with a consequent loss of service charge income of up to £50,000 per year. At the same time, the role of the tenancy sustainment service in supporting vulnerable SHA tenants elsewhere in the stock, paid for largely through general rental income, was still felt to be important and worth retaining if possible.

- The current staffing complement in the Factoring Team continues to be adequate to deliver the service as it currently operates.

Other conclusions had been arrived at regarding the more general focus, organisation and management of the team:

- That in the current environment it is more important than ever that the Association is close to its tenants and that staff are empowered and supported to identify and respond to tenants needs and deliver best customer service.
- That there is scope for changes to the CCS management team to:
  - Improve the direct line management arrangements for the housing officers
  - Ensure that there is more clarity between the respective roles of the current three tiers of management.

On the basis of these conclusions the Board was asked to approve a number of proposals for change to the current arrangements, for consultation with staff.

There were some queries regarding the operation of current arrangements and discussion in particular regarding: the proposed detailed arrangements; the planned timescales for implementation; how the proposals would align with the Association's strategic objectives; the financial implications; other potential risk implications, particularly relating to possible disruption to the existing staff team.

Following that the Board gave in-principle approval to the following:

- That further work now be undertaken to re-design the role of the Customer Service Assistant posts, to further enhance the overall capacity and service responsiveness of the team.**
- That there be an increase in the housing officer complement from 7.2 to 7.66 FTE posts.**
- That the vacant Welfare Rights Officer post be removed from the structure but that a new additional Welfare Rights Assistant post be added (grade 4 envisaged).**
- That, subject to consultation with tenants regarding the future of the Retirement Housing Service, that the vacant Tenancy Sustainment officer post (0.8 FTE) be removed from the structure.**
- That the other Tenancy Sustainment Officer post be retained and subject to a review of the financial position by the end of March that this be increased in hours from 0.8 fte to full-time.**
- That whilst the review of the factoring service will be ongoing that no changes are made to the factoring staff complement and that in due course recruitment is undertaken to fill the vacant part-time factoring officer post (Grade 7, 0.6 fte).**
- That housing officer "patches" be reviewed to ensure that they are as concentrated on particular local areas as possible.**
- That the housing team is organised into two Area Teams, each covering roughly half the stock and with four housing officers.**
- That maintenance officer patches also be re-organised to align to these Areas.**

- j) **That the CCS management structure be amended:**
- **The Director of Customer and Community Services post (currently vacant) to be retained.**
  - **Two new Housing Team Leader posts (Grade 9) to be created.**
  - **The current Housing Manager and Senior Housing Officer posts to be removed from the structure.**

It was also proposed and agreed that **a three-week staff consultation process should be undertaken with the consultation responses and finalised proposals reported back for final decision to the Audit and Corporate Committee meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> November.** At the suggestion of the Chair it was also agreed that **the meeting be made open to all Board Members.**

## **10. Rent Structure Review Update**

Members noted the content of the report which provided background information about the current way in which Association rents are set and an update on ongoing work to explore the options for moving towards rent harmonisation.

Specific Information was provided about how rents have been calculated under the new rent structure that was agreed in 2015 and has been applied to new tenancies since that date. It was noted that Base rents are applied for different property sizes with add-ons or deductions then made to the Base rent depending on the individual property characteristics (e.g. if it's a flat or a house).

The Board was reminded of the potential advantages of using this structure (which now covers around half of all tenancies) as the basis for harmonising rents across the stock. Further work was required however to consider how some issues with that structure might be addressed.

It was noted that further information and proposals would be provided and Member feedback sought in November at the forthcoming Housing and Community Services Committee meeting and the Strategy day.

## **11. Governance Issues**

The Board noted the content of the report and:

### **11.1 Confirmed the memberships of the Sub-Committees, as follows;**

- *Audit and Corporate Committee:* Brian Barclay, Elizabeth Battersby, Rae Connelly, Maureen Mulgrew and Hugh McIntosh.
- *Housing and Community services Committee:* Grace Barbour, Elizabeth Battersby, Gillian Johnston, Hugh McIntosh, Maureen Mulgrew, Eddie Robertson and Janice Saunders.
- *Property Services Committee:* Grace Barbour, Brian Barclay, Elizabeth Battersby, Neil Devlin, Gillian Johnston, Hugh McIntosh, Eddie Robertson and Janice Saunders.

### **11.2 Approved the arrangements for the Strategy Day on 18<sup>th</sup> November, to include:**

- An independently facilitated, Member-only, discussion regarding the Association's future strategy.

- External speaker on “getting the balance right” between the strategic role of the Board and the operational role of senior staff, as a pre-amble to discussions in the coming months about streamlining the governance structure/meeting cycle.
- Discussion on issues around the proposed rent harmonisation.
- Feedback from the retro-fit pilot project that has been underway at Old Shettleston Road: where do we go from here?

**11.3 Approved proposals for how the Board Development Plan will be taken forward in the year ahead in respect of:**

- Board recruitment (with the aim of recruiting a minimum of two more members by 31.3.24).
- Recruitment targets in respect of skills, numbers of tenants and diversity.
- Recruitment strategy: with a focus on highlighting the potential employability benefits and removing potential obstacles to taking part.
- Succession planning in respect of vacant office bearer and sub-committee chair posts and also contingency planning in respect of future unanticipated retirements from key positions.
- Training priorities
- Mentoring and support arrangements for Members.
- Strengthening the Board’s strategic focus.
- Improving the quality of papers – through immediate Board feedback to the Chair at the end of each meeting.
- A further streamlining of governance arrangements to reduce the number of meetings and volume of papers.

**11.4 Received and approved the report from the Chair on his annual governance checks and noted the findings, with no significant action points identified.**

**12. Group Expenses Policy**

**12.1 Board and Staff Expenses Policy**

The Board noted and **approved the draft revised Group Board and Staff expenses Policy.**

**12.2 Other Payments**

The Board noted the report and **approved the proposed principles to apply going forward in respect of any payments or other inducements offered to participate in Association events, activities and consultation processes, as follows:**

- a) Regard should always be had to the Association’s Policy on Payments and Benefits which regulates payments to staff and Board Members and those “closely connected” to them, except where covered by the terms of the contract of employment or an agreed Expenses Policy.
- b) The Association is built on the input of volunteers – both Board Members and those regularly taking part in tenant participation and other community engagement activities. We want to encourage involvement by those who are personally motivated to help the development of our services and the wider development of the community. Payments will therefore not be made for time given in attending and preparing for meetings.

- c) However, out of pocket expenses will be paid to Board Members in accordance with the agreed Expenses Policy to remove potential obstacles to membership. The Board will decide from time to time if and when the Expenses Policy might also be applied to other regular participation groups e.g. the Tenant Forum.
- d) There will be circumstances where one-off payments may be made to those attending specific/ad hoc consultation or other events organised by the Association. The CEO will have authority to decide if and when these might be made, having regard to the following:
  - What the purpose of the meeting/event is and whether there is a need to offer anything more than the traditional tea/coffee and light refreshments.
  - Where it is felt appropriate to reward or thank attendees with a token gift then this will be of a maximum value of £10.
  - In exceptional circumstances where it is felt that it is in the Association's interest to get the views of a particular group of folk who are unlikely to otherwise participate then a higher value inducement may be offered. In such cases regard will be had to:
    - The value of any individual payment and whether this is proportionate and necessary and likely to represent value for money to the Association.
    - Any potential reputational issues arising from being seen to make such payments.
- e) The Board will be advised of any such payments or incentives that have been made in the period since the last meeting.

**13. Membership Applications**

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


- **Mr Michal Lipka**  
[REDACTED]

**14. Any Other Business**

There was none. However, in accordance with the Board Development Plan, the Board then took some time to share thoughts on the quality of reports received at that meeting, for feedback to staff. The staff left the meeting at this point and the Chair provided feedback to the CEO on this immediately following the meeting.

**Minute prepared by Tony Teasdale (CEO) and  
Kirsty Brown (Director of Finance & Corporate Services)**

**SIGNED:**

  
 .....  
**(Chairperson)**

**DATE:**

14/11/2023  
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