

PARAGON HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

Minutes of Management Committee meeting

Online Video Conference Meeting

9 December 2020

Present: E Campbell
M Hesketh
R Murray
M Richards
F Speirs
F Wallace
S Young

Staff: M Torrance
P Milne
E Mathershaw
W Baxter
M Binnie

GOVERNANCE / MINUTES ETC

1. APOLOGIES

J Anderson
K Menzies
E McNie (SLA)
S Robertson (SLA)

2. COMPOSITION OF COMMITTEE

M Torrance advised that she had received notice of resignation from L Hesketh who is unable to commit to being on the committee due to work commitments. L Hesketh may still be able to be involved in the audit sub committee. ***Committee members agreed to co-opt L Hesketh onto the audit sub committee.***

3. MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE CALENDAR

An online calendar has been set up on the management committee Sharepoint site.

4. GOVERNANCE ITEMS

Register of Interests – Its was noted that M Richards is now Chair of the Grangemouth Community Pantry.

Noted committee approval of below under rule 55.

- Approval of extension of drawdown period of £4m drawdown facility with RBS to Dec 2021.
- Approval of boiler renewal and replacement contract.

The Annual Assurance Statement was submitted on time to the SHR.

4a. Minutes of Previous Meeting 18th November 2020

There were no amendments to the minutes.

Proposed: M Richards

Seconded: M Hesketh

Minutes Approved

4b. Matters Arising

Further information has been requested from a contractor on a safety matter. This does not affect tenants.

EVH Salaries – negotiations underway due to the rate of CPI being below the threshold.

M Torrance awaits an update on the Kickstart programme placement.

Connecting Scotland Grants – the agreements have been signed and we have been awarded 16 devices - 8 for Stirling, 3 for Clacks and 5 for Falkirk. We expect delivery will be a mix of chrome books, ipads, mifi. Project participant being identified.

Following the Scottish Government's announcement to relax the period for household mixing over the Christmas holidays staff were asked if they would be interested in the office closing these extra days. There has been mixed interest from staff on this. The McDougall Group would cover call outs if we were closed the extra days. M Torrance pursue.

Note – R Murray joined the meeting.

The Health Working Lives (HWL) annual assurance assessment for our Silver award should have been due. However due to Covid the NHS staff who cover this have been seconded to other roles. We have been advised that they are suspending assessments for this period and we should receive an email to confirm this.

Note – F Speirs joined the meeting.

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

5a. PHA Route Map Progress

The office remains closed and services are continuing remotely and an update on status was provided.

Stirling is moving down to Tier 3 therefore we will reinstate non urgent repairs from next week.

A postcard was issued to tenants and factoring owners with an update on services.

Note – S Young joined the meeting.

5b. Finance Paper

Mid-Year Review

Committee members noted there are no changes required to the original budget approved in April 2020.

Covenant Negotiation Progress

RBS are willing to look at the relaxation of the Interest covenant. We will wait until we have reviewed the business plan before deciding.

FCM £500k worth

Spent £1m (£500k 2019/20 and £500k 2020/21)

Had to push back £1m investment

Committee members note the current situation regarding the relaxation of the covenant for forthcoming years and that discussions are ongoing.

FRS102 covenant amendment – just a change to accounting policy.

Treasury Management Policy & Procedures

The current policy and procedures comply with the regulations and the CIPFA code.

There was discussion around the Management Committee's responsibilities for treasury management.

The current Treasury position is that there is currently a large cash balance held in the corporate money market account earning approximately 0.01% interest.

Members are aware that interest rates are currently very low were asked to consider taking action to maximise interest in the last quarter of the year while ensuring compliance with Treasury Management Policy and Procedures.

Members were asked to approve the investment of £2m of this money into a 35 day notice account with the RBS at an interest rate of 0.1%. The 35 day notice account will allow access to funds in a reasonable time if required. **Committee members approved this.**

5c. Rent Increase 2021/22 Consultation Plan

The management team presented possible options to be considered for consultation with tenants. It was noted that the committee are only required to make a decision on what to consult on with tenants at the moment. The final decision on the level of Rent increase will be agreed by the Management Committee at their meeting on 20th January 2021.

There was discussion on the different options and the implications in short and longer term. Current uncertainties were highlighted.

It was agreed to consult on a range of increase option explaining the consequences of each. These were 0% / CPI only/RPI only. The CPI & RPI figure as at November will be used.

5d. Development Update

There is a potential development in the Falkirk area to be progressed in partnership with Link on a design and build project. Discussions are ongoing.

Alva Development (14 units) –There has been post contractual issues with the contract and this was discussed. A paper will be brought to committee on the matter in due course.

Note – F Speirs left the meeting.

6. FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES

6a. Finance & General Purposes

Minutes for last meeting held on 12th November previously issued.

6b. Pensions Update

The working group are meeting on Friday and training for the working group will be held in January with Chiene & Tait providing the training

7. HOUSING MANAGEMENT & INVESTMENT

7a. Housing Management & Investment

The last meeting was held on 17th November. Minutes were issued.

7b. Arrears/Voids/Repairs

Commentary was provided on the report and the following noted.

Arrears figures are steady and there has been a positive impact of UC payments.

Repairs – continue to work on issues options paper for review of contract arrangements

5 decrees granted – but Association unable to implement due to covid restrictions

TIS have commissioned a Thematic Study onto the involvement of young people in Tenant Participation and Scrutiny.

A session will be held on the 9th February to review the SHN annual performance report. Tenant Scrutiny panel members will be invited to attend and Knowledge Partnership to do presentation on results from surveys.

7c. Eviction Reports

None

7d. Programme Report

W Baxter provided an updated as per the report and advised that we are catching up with contracts rolled over due to the impact from Covid.

8. COST PLAN / TENDERS

None

9. AUDIT COMMITTEE

9a. Audit Committee

No meetings held in the period but noted workplan

9b. Internal Audit

The Internal Audit programme is ongoing and a programme is in place to the year end.

9c. Internal Audit

Tenant Participation audit was recently carried out.

A Tenant Scrutiny meeting was held to look at the initial feedback. F Wallace, M Hesketh and M Richards attended this meeting.

Initial feedback is the level of engagement and the strategy is good and is suggested putting timescales on the action plan. Draft report awaited=

10. HEALTH & SAFETY

10a. Health & Safety Update

The last meeting was held on 13th November.

The office H&S audit has been postponed until January.

Work is ongoing on updating Risk Assessments.

The next meeting is due to be held in February.

10b. Healthy Working Lives

Covered under agenda item 4b.

11. REGULATORY ISSUES

11a. Annual Assurance Statement – Action Plan

Action plans have been uploaded to the management committee sharepoint site and it was noted some actions are already completed

12. POLICY ISSUES

12a. Policy Monitor

The policy monitor has been updated. Noted correction required.

12b. Draft Risk Management Policy

The draft policy was issued for feedback which will be considered and the policy will then be brought back to committee for consideration. There were comments that a visual representation would be useful and discussion around how to reach a decision on level of risk.

12c. Draft Management Committee Training & Development Policy

The draft policy was issued for feedback which will be considered and the policy will then be brought back to committee for consideration.

13 STRATEGY, POLICY, RESEARCH DEVELOPMENTS

13a. Grangemouth Housing Masterplan

Falkirk Council and other partners are meeting on Monday to discuss.

14 TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

14a. Annual Appraisal Report & Training Plans

Appraisals – some are complete and dates have been arranged for the others to be done.

14b. Conference & Training Schedule

EVH Leadership Programme – information has been provided to committee members on this. E Campbell to be booked onto the programme.
Office 365 Training – in the process of arranging a date with SHARE to run a training remotely with committee members.

15 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

TIS Digital Pledge – information was presented to the committee on the pledge and it was noted that this is a good tie in with the Connecting Scotland programme. ***Committee members agreed to sign up to the TIS Digital Pledge.***

16 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled meeting is on Wednesday 20th January 2021.

Signed: Chairperson	
Date:	

