

PARAGON HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

Minutes of Management Committee meeting

Paragon Office / Online

14th December 2022

Present: A Anderson
E Campbell
C Munro (co-optee)
R Murray (online)
M Richards
F Wallace

Staff: M Torrance
W Baxter
M Thompson (online)
C Syme (online)
M Binnie

GOVERNANCE / MINUTES ETC

1. APOLOGIES

J Anderson
B Lees
E McNie
K Menzies
F Speirs (SLA)
E Mathershaw (staff)

2. COMPOSITION OF COMMITTEE

Susan Robertson is interested in returning to join the management committee. ***Committee members agree to co-opt Susan onto the committee from next meeting.***

3. MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE CALENDAR

Previously circulated.

4. GOVERNANCE ITEMS

Register of Interests – noted M Richards is no longer on the board of TIS.

Notifiable Events – EICRs – we are regularly updating the SHR on progress. There are 13 properties remaining. The majority are where we have had had 3 no access attempts. We are working with other agencies where required around any other issues.

4a. Minutes of Previous Meeting – 9th November 2022

There were no other amendments to the minutes.

Proposed: E Campbell

Seconded: M Richards

Minutes Approved.

4b. Matters Arising

EVH Salary Ballot – EVH committee approved a 5.25% increase across all points from 1st April 2023. All staff will receive an additional £150 in January, February and March as a recognition of the cost of living.

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

5a. PHA Route Map Progress

The office is open Monday-Friday from 9am-5pm and we continue to monitor staff absences.

The winter newsletter is in production and the pdf will be uploaded to our website and facebook when available.

5b. Development Proposal

Paper not ready for consideration. However information was uploaded on the proposal. Paper to follow for consideration.

Note - M Richards left the meeting.

5c. Rent Increase 2022/23 & The Cost of Living (Tenant Protection) (Scotland) Act 2022 implications Anti-Poverty Strategy Update

M Thompson provided commentary to the rent increase options presentation.

Noted legal obligation to consult with tenants on the rent increase.

As at November 2022 RPI was 14% and CPI 10.7%.

Rent policy is based on RPI + 1% as a starting point.

Currently the Scottish Government has applied a rent freeze via legislation and possible forward Cap on rent but they will not make their decision known until 14th January. Meantime consultation with tenants required.

The SHR and the Scottish Governments guidance is for RSLs to carry on and consult with their tenants.

The Association 2021/22 increase was 0% and 2022/23 was 2.9% - both lower than inflation.

SFHA survey found average housing association increase proposed for 2023/24 is estimated at 6.1% individual HAs may be higher or lower.

Range of possible options were discussed and how these impact on rental Income and meeting cost including investment.

Risks & Considerations

- Scottish Government decision unknown
- Impact on tenants
- Rising costs
- Future roll up of costs in business plan

Lenders are aware of sector issues and are supportive.

The committee discussed various options along with the risks and consideration for each option.

Programme work costs forecasted increase going forward. Open space maintenance contractor advised in March 2022 of a potential increase in costs. These costs were received in November and our Quantity Surveyor is currently negotiating with the contractor.

H&S work is a priority and will come first in the programme.

Consultation materials/methods were discussed Noted that a rent briefing paper will be available on our website.

It was suggested that we should highlight to tenants that there was a 0% increase in 2021/22 and we should show the difference in income.

Committee members agree to consult on a proposed rent increase of 4%, 6% and 8%.

5d. SHAPS Pension Scheme – Consultation Options

M Thompson provided commentary to the paper.

The Association is a member of the below two SHAPS pension schemes

- Defined Benefit (final salary)
- Defined Contribution

The Defined Benefit (final salary) scheme is a 'last man standing' scheme which means each time a member leaves the scheme each remaining

members are liable for a larger share of the deficit.

Over the last year more organisations have withdrawn from the Defined Benefit scheme.

It will cost the Association to withdraw from the Defined Benefit scheme and the cost is not known until SHAPS advised of intention to withdraw.

There are currently 15 staff in the Defined Contribution scheme and 9 staff in the Defined Benefit scheme.

Committee will need to consider the impact on the employees who are currently members should we choose to move everyone to the current Defined Contribution Scheme or other option.

The Pensions Working Group looked at various options. M Thompson went through the discussion the pension working group had with regards to issues with both schemes and possible options. Salary sacrifice was discussed.

It was agreed that some further information / clarification required before a decision on consultation options agreed.

Note – M Richards re-joined the meeting

Gordon Birrell from Chiene & Tait can speak to committee members and staff to provide information.

F Wallace and M Thompson are both attending separate SHAPS sessions in January.

After F Wallace and M Thompson has attended the SHAPS session the committee can make a decision on what to consult on.

Committee members agree to taking forward consultation with the following areas to be considered

- **Consider offering a scheme over current basic Defined Contribution scheme**
- **Consider Salary sacrifice as a preferred route**
- **Look at issues around compensation**

Note – M Thompson left the meeting.

6. FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES SUB COMMITTEE

6a. Finance & General Sub Committee

EVH have added an additional public holiday on 8th May 2023 for King Charles III Coronation.

6b. SFHA Guidance Delegated Authorities

Noted issue of guidance. The F&GP sub committee will review against current practice.

7. HOUSING MANAGEMENT & INVESTMENT

7a. Housing Management & Investment

The last meeting was held on 11th October and the draft minutes were previously circulated.

7b. Arrears / Voids / Repairs

C Syme, SHO provided commentary to the report.

- Current Tenant Arrears have increased
- Former Tenant Arrears are below target
- There were no new arrears cases in November.
- Re-lets - Q3 total should be 21. During Q2 & Q3 there was a push on voids to get the work done for the property to be relet.
- Average re-let times - 86.4 days.
- Lock ups - Q2 figures not a true reflection because this included lock ups that were damaged due to storm damage.
- ASB – 42 cases reported year to date and a breakdown of these is in report.

7c. Eviction Reports

There were none for consideration.

7d. Damp & Condensation Briefing Paper

The paper was uploaded for info and the purpose of the report is to be proactive.

There was discussion on providing dehumidifiers and the running costs of these. There are also other devices called tiny tags we can use to monitor internal and external temperature and ventilation.

7e. Programme Report

W Baxter provided commentary to the report.

There was discussion on using Occupational Therapist for bathroom surveys for tenants with existing medical adapted bathrooms.

BBOOMs – we have acquired 8 new properties to date.

Gas Servicing – no failures

Medical Adaptations – breakdown of budget noted on report.

Following the recent freezing weather conditions the number of calls the contractor had received and jobs outstanding were noted. There was a high number of calls received for frozen condensate pipes and meters.

JRW Contract – contractor continues to work on voids and is up to date with ongoing day to day repairs. A review to reintroduce target response times in January 2023 will be considered. Everwarm are in the process of installing new SIMPRO package which will intergrate with PHA and will speed up, transfer of data including invoices. This will be worked on from January to March 2023 and we may look to align re-introduction of target time with this.

Note – W Baxter left the meeting.

8. COST PLAN / TENDER APPROVALS

None

9. AUDIT COMMITTEE

9a. Audit Committee

The last meeting was held on 27th September and the draft minutes were previously circulated.

9b. Internal Audit

Dates being agreed with Internal Auditor for the programme.

10. HEALTH & SAFETY

10a. Health & Safety Workplace Committee

Date to be arranged for the next meeting.

10b. Health & Safety Stock Sub Committee

As above

10c. STEPS Group Update

- NHS Keepwell health checks are ongoing with staff.
- Step on Stress course being held in January for staff.
- Stop smoking – NHS health promotion team are using our office for drop in session and we are promoting this.

Standing orders were suspended.

11. REGULATORY ISSUES

11a. SHR Annual Assurance Statement

Update on EICRs previously covered.

12. POLICY ISSUES

12a. Policy Monitor

To note

12b. Breach Notification Policy

The policy was reviewed and updated by our Data Protection Officer. The changes were highlighted on the policy and were wording and reference to Brexit.

Committee members agree to readopt the policy with the changes.

12c. Rent Harmonisation

The presentation was uploaded for members to read. Given current rent uncertainties, will require to put this on hold until the Scottish Governments announcement on rents in January.

13. STRATEGY, POLICY & RESEARCH DEVELOPMENTS

13a. Grangemouth Housing Masterplan

No update

13b. Clackmannanshire Wellbeing Economy Anchor Partnership

E Mathershaw has attended the LENS group.

14. TRAINING / INFORMATION / ADVICE

14a. Annual Appraisal Report & Training Plans

Various areas of training need highlighted .We will need to arrange for committee to do an options appraisal training session.

It was suggested following up on the areas we visited on the stock tour.

Members will be asked to feedback on best ways to deliver.

14b. Conference & Training Schedule

SHARE Annual Conference – F Wallace to attend full conference and C Munro to attend the Friday session.

EVH Annual Conference – F Wallace to attend.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 25th January 2023.

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| Signed: Chairperson | |
| Date: | |