

PARAGON HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED
Minutes of Management Committee meeting
Online Video Conference Meeting
20 January 2021

Present: J Anderson
E Campbell
K Menzies
R Murray
E McNie
M Richards
F Speirs
F Wallace
S Young

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

GOVERNANCE / MINUTES ETC

1. APOLOGIES

M Hesketh
S Robertson (SLA)

2. COMPOSITION OF COMMITTEE

Following L Hesketh's resignation from the management committee, in line with procedures the SHR portal has been updated and our lenders notified. As previously discussed L Hesketh is co-opted onto the audit sub committee.

3. MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE CALENDAR

No changes

4. GOVERNANCE ITEMS

There was no Covid- 19 return due to the SHR in December.

Rule 55 Decision Register - discussion at last meeting about closing extra days at Christmas holidays due to the extra days the Scottish Government had advised of relaxation to household mixing. M Torrance had discussed

with the Chair. The agreement was for staff to use 2 days holidays. The majority of staff took leave and some decided to work. As this was an operational matter the Chair determined no resolution was required.

4a. Minutes of Previous Meeting 9th December 2020

There were no amendments to the minutes.

Proposed: R Murray
Seconded: S Young

Minutes Approved

4b. Matters Arising

Kickstart Programme – await further information from Falkirk Council.

Connecting Scotland – delay in delivery of equipment due to lockdown but expecting soon.

TIS Digital Pledge was signed.

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

5a. PHA Route Map Progress

A letter was issued to all tenants after we received guidance on the latest restrictions. A copy of the letter is on our website and advertised on our Facebook page.

Covid – 19 Risk assessment continues to be updated in light on any changes

Emergency and urgent repairs only being undertaken.

Investment work is offsite with the exception of Painterwork as this is external work (weather permitting) and open space maintenance.

Estate management inspections are being carried out on a priority basis.

Allocations are ongoing.

The number of staff and frequency of staff accessing the office has been reduced. H&S inspections continue to be carried out in the office and cleaners attending on a reduced basis.

5b. Rent Increase 2021/22

Consultation was carried out with tenants on options for the rent increase.

Taking all feedback from tenants and business risk factors into account the management team are making a recommendation not to increase the rents for 2021/22.

E Mathershaw provided a report on consultation undertaken. She advised that as well as a paper survey, Knowledge Partnership also undertook phone surveys and emailed the survey to a number of tenants.

E Mathershaw provided an overview of response rates and feedback. It was noted some tenants are struggling with Covid -19 impact and the financial implications and would welcome no increase but appreciate the pressure on the Association.

A rent focus group meeting was held to discuss the rent consultation.

P Milne went through the finance figures of what was consulted on, to explain the variance of rent increase options on annual rent income. W Baxter advised of the underspend due to contracts not being done and that this will impact into next year and future years.

There was discussion on the feedback received from tenants and the current financial pressures facing tenants due to Covid -19 and the impact on the Association. The business impact and risks were carefully considered

Committee members approved a 0% rent increase for 2021/22.

Lock ups – proposed 0% increase for 2021/22. ***Committee members agreed***

Service Charges – as outlined in the paper. ***Committee members agreed***

Tenant Allowances – no increase. ***Committee members agree.***

5c. Treasury Management Strategy

P Milne advised that further to committee agreeing at the previous meeting to put £3m in for the 30 days notice account she has asked lenders for rates and received the forms. P Milne to look further into and provide an update at the February meeting.

5d. RBS Loan Facility

P Milne advised she has been in correspondence with solicitors on moving the date to December 2021. The work could not be done before Christmas to amend the full agreement therefore an extension letter was done to allow until the end of January to complete the paperwork and agree all the points. A resolution will have to be agreed at this meeting. A meeting is being held with our solicitors tomorrow on actual full loan agreement. They are changing the rate of interest from libor to sonia rate as libor being withdrawn.

Covenant Relaxation – the covenant relaxation for 2020/21 is 50% of spend on Fire and Carbon Monoxide detectors, but given lockdown restrictions it will not be possible to spend an additional amount this financial year. RBS know the situation faced by RSLs so they are going to and are willing to consider some flexibility. They will consider the covid impact and stock condition survey findings with a view to relaxing covenant going forward possibly for a number of years. This is subject to negotiation.

Committee members agreed the resolution.

Amendment to main facility – P Milne advised that the proposals will be reviewed with advice from our solicitors. She will go through the restated facility to ensure that the terms are no more onerous from the original agreement. As discussions progress there may need to have another meeting with committee or approve under rule 55 as the deadline is the 31 January.

5e. Development Update

Possible development site previously discussed is ongoing.

Alva – post contract discussions are ongoing.

5f. JRW Repairs / Gas Maintenance Contract

Gas Maintenance Contract

W Baxter went through the paper providing information on current contract

There was discussion on some of the key points noted in the paper.

This paper considers the potential options and senior staff are recommending option B3 - a 2 year extension through to March 2023.

Committee members agree with the recommendation of option B3.

JRW Maintenance Contract

W Baxter presented a presentation to members showing the 2018 tendered rates and applied BMI uplifts year on year.

Current performance of contractor was discussed.

The Management Team had discussed how quality can be improved and suggests employing a Grade 7 Repairs Quality Standards Officer to oversee the contract and tenant satisfaction around what is being delivered. There was discussion on the costs of this and the job description. Members favoured the proposal

There was discussion on the length of contract for the post and it was thought a 2 year contract would be best, subject to checking employment contract terms. ***Committee members agreed for M Torrance to take forward and move towards recruitment if TMG reappointed.***

Committee members would like feedback from the current contractor on improving performance and for the contractor to be made aware they are concerned at the level of satisfaction and current staff's time that is taken up with managing issues relating to the contract

Committee members agreed that the management team should open negotiations with the contractor on a 1 or 2 year extension. The management team to report back to committee at the February meeting for a decision to be made

5g. KPIs Q3 2020/21

The management team provided commentary to the KPI report. There was discussion on performance and noted the impact of Covid-19 on performance.

6. FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES

6a. Finance & General Purposes

Programme of future meetings to be arranged to tie with the production of management accounts.

6b. Quarterly F&GP Reports Q3

Report for noting. Figures covered in KPIs. Sickness figures still to be updated in report.

6c. Pensions Update

P Milne advised that the working group met on the 10th January.

P Milne is looking to arrange training for the working group and can open up to others who are interested. P Milne will arrange for the end of January / beginning of February. E Campbell would like to attend.

7. HOUSING MANAGEMENT & INVESTMENT

7a. Housing Management & Investment

The HM&I sub committee met on 19th January.

7b. Arrears/Voids/Repairs

E Mathershaw advised that the report was covered in detail at the HM&I sub committee on 19th January. The figures were also covered under agenda item 5g.

E Mathershaw advised that as discussed with the HM&I sub committee reports will be uploaded to the sharepoint site monthly. Reports are produced monthly however the HM&I sub committee normally meet every second month.

7c. Eviction Reports

None

7d. Programme Report

W Baxter advised that the programme report was covered in detail at the HM&I sub committee meeting on 19th January, therefore he did not intend to go through in detail unless there were any questions. Committee members agreed to this.

8. COST PLAN / TENDERS

8a. Painterwork Gutter Cleaning 2020/21

W Baxter advised that in line with the Schedule of Authorities the HM&I sub committee approved this tender at their meeting on 19th January. Committee members noted.

9. AUDIT COMMITTEE

9a. Audit Committee

The last meeting was on 10 November.

The audit committee have a forward plan and will arrange dates as required.

9b. Internal Audit

It was noted that the table at the front of the report shows outstanding actions.

9c. Internal Audit

The Internal Auditor is currently onsite (virtually) carrying out an audit on KPIs.

Verbal feedback has been received on the Tenant Participation audit and we await the draft report.

The Gas audit will be carried out in February.

It was noted tenants are not being asked to sign a CP12 or being left with a copy of the certificate under the current restrictions. The Association received an electronic copy of the CP12. There was discussion on possibly emailing the CP12 to tenant.

9d. Quarterly Risk Report Q3 2020/21

Already covered under other subjects.

Continue to look at risks and update the report.

10. HEALTH & SAFETY

10a. Health & Safety Update

The next meeting is due to be held in February – a date will be arranged.

There has been updated guidance on working from home which will be reviewed.

M Torrance advised that we are employing a consultant on to undertake a health & wellbeing project over the 12 months with staff. It may be possible to carry out a similar project with committee members.

10b. Healthy Working Lives

M Torrance advised that she has received an email advising that the HWL programme is being reviewed. Therefore M Torrance is currently unsure of the future of the programme but hopes to have a report for the February meeting.

11. REGULATORY ISSUES

11a. None at this time

12. POLICY ISSUES

12a. Policy Monitor

To note

12b. Draft Risk Management Policy

To be presented at the February meeting.

12c. Draft Management Committee Training & Development Policy

One of the main proposed change to the policy is that currently committee need to decide if a committee member can attend a course or conference. However it was noted that this is not always practical and suggested changing this to Director / Depute Director giving approval in line with budgets and report to committee on course/conferences booked. Committee members agreed to this change. M Torrance will update the policy and bring to the February meeting for approval.

SPSO Model Policy

E Mathershaw advised that the SPSO new model complaint sprocudures for social landlords have to be adopted by the 1st April 2021. The new model introduces a new category to the outcome of the complaint which is resolved. The draft policy has been uploaded to the Information Papers Folder on the Management Committee Sharepoint page. It was discussed also identifying and recording positive compliments. The policy will be discussed with the tenant scrutiny group and published on our website and staff will receive training on the new model over the next couple of months.

13 STRATEGY, POLICY, RESEARCH DEVELOPMENTS

13a. Grangemouth Housing Masterplan

Ongoing - following first session a date to be arranged for next meeting.

14 TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

14a. Annual Appraisal Report & Training Plans

Outstanding appraisals to be arranged.

14b. Conference & Training Schedule

R Murray expressed an interest in attending SHARE's Questions to ask - Development session. To be booked.

15 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Due to current circumstances it was suggested putting an announcement on our website and Facebook page on the rent increase decision. The rent increase is usually first notified to tenants in the letter issued at the end of February. It was also suggested putting an article in the local papers. Committee members agreed to the suggestions.

16 DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

The next scheduled meeting is on Wednesday 10th February 2021.

Signed: Chairperson	
Date:	