

MINUTES OF THE 535TH MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING OF WILLIAMSBURGH HOUSING ASSOCIATION, HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 25TH JANUARY 2023 AT 6.00PM AT RALSTON HOUSE AND OVER TEAMS.

PRESENT:

J. Scott	Chairperson
M. Symons	
C. Henry	
D. Eadie	
T. Thomson	
E. McDermott	
A. Ballantine	
Cllr. M. MacLaren	

IN ATTENDANCE:

J. Grant	Chief Executive Officer
L. Ramsay	Head of Finance & Corporate Services
L. Reynolds	Head of Property Services
G. Scott	Head of Development
L. Ferrie	Head of Housing Services
L. Fleeting	HR & Corporate Services Supervisor
██████████	Investors in People Assessor

OBSERVER:

██████████

1. (a) Apologies

Apologies were received from J. Kerr (Committee member).

(b) Declarations of Interest

Cllr. M. MacLaren noted an interest in Item 10, Development Report relating to the potential sale of land from Renfrewshire Council to W.H.A, and would not take part in this item.

2. (a) Minutes of Management Committee Meeting: 30.11.22 (No.534)

The minutes of the Management Committee meeting held on Wednesday, 30th November 2022 (No.534) were proposed correct, on a motion proposed by D. Eadie, seconded by T. Thomson.

(b) Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

3. Rent Setting and Tenant Consultation Results 2023/24

L. Ferrie presented the report, noting the record level of responses from tenants to the consultation at 29%. She explained that the results were in favour of a 5.5% increase, which also aligned with the business plan assumption.

L. Ferrie noted that the proposed increase in service charges was based on actual costs, with no surplus generated. The notification of costs by Scottish Power (SP) had been severely delayed, with final costs only being provided by SP in mid-January.

A member thanked L. Ferrie and was pleased to see the large number of tenants who had voted this year. While the cost-of-living crisis was making life tough for tenants, the 5.5% was a fair balance and should be adopted.

A member noted previous years of below inflation rent increases, including a rent freeze in 2021, so was in support of the 5.5% increase.

A member thanked the team for the comprehensive report and felt that it was important to keep investing in tenants' homes.

A member noted the difficulties in receiving the energy costs and thanked staff for their efforts in persisting. If costs reduce during the year, could this be passed on to tenants?

L. Ramsay advised that the intention would be to charge at cost, so if prices dropped, then W.H.A. would aim to adjust to reflect this change.

The recommendations were approved, proposed by M. Symons, seconded by C. Henry.

4. Pay Award 2023/24

J. Grant presented the report, outlining the EVH recommendation and noting that Committee were free to determine an alternative award, if desired.

A member asked if there had been Union consultation in agreeing the pay award recommendation.

J. Grant advised that Unions are involved in the bargaining with EVH, on a collective basis, rather than individually with each association.

The recommendation was approved, proposed by T. Thomson, seconded by E. McDermott.

5. CEO Report

J. Grant presented the report, highlighting that the indicative cost for the reception and customer service alterations to Ralston House was above assumed budget. Due to the health and safety benefits of the construction works, it was recommended that tenders are sought anyway. He further advised that the Management Committee's strategic planning event was proposed to be held on the 17th March, later than normal to accommodate maximum attendance. The agenda would be expanded to cover strategic objectives, risks, assurance/compliance, and a session on the new Asset Management Strategy.

A member noted that costs were rising in construction, so this was not unexpected.

A member agreed that the health and safety benefits of the office investment were needed, so the project should proceed.

The recommendations were approved, proposed by M. Symons, seconded by D. Eadie.

L. Ramsay outlined the proposed response to TPT pension provider.

The response was approved, proposed by E. McDermott, seconded by J. Scott.

J. Grant advised that ██████ had resigned from the Management Committee, for personal reasons. The Committee expressed their thanks for the excellent contribution made and wished ██████ well in the future.

6. Policy Review Programme

L. Fleeting presented the report, noting the proposed revised expenses policy which had been amended in line with EVH model benchmarks. She outlined the new Grading Assessment Policy, noting that it had been through several staff consultation exercises and aligns with EVH and ACAS recommended practice. The purpose is to move over time, to EVH grades and to ensure staff are correctly paid for the job tasks they perform.

L. Ramsay advised that adopting the new Grading Assessment Policy would require delegated authority to be granted to the CEO and Senior Management Team members.

The recommendations were approved, proposed by M. MacLaren, seconded by A. Ballantine.

7. Minutes of the Operations and Performance Sub-Committee Meeting (19.10.22)

L. Ferrie advised that the minutes are approved at the O&P Sub Committee and are presented for information and discussion only.

The Committee noted the minute.

8. Investors in People Re-Assessment Report

██████████ provided a presentation on the IIP re-assessment final report, noting many positive areas had been identified, along with areas to continue to improve. ██████ noted many changes made recently would need time to bed in, but highlighted that the increased resources in HR, training and staff involvement were starting to show benefits.

L. Fleeting advised that the recommendations would be incorporated into the HR delivery plan, with updates provided through the Finance, Audit and Corporate Services Sub Committee.

A member welcomed the report and noted that it showed positive green shoots in many areas.

A member felt that changes had been needed and was pleased with the overall assessment. The extra focus on HR through the new Sub Committee would also be beneficial.

A member noted that it had been a difficult time for staff over the past few years and it was good to see a high level of commitment and engagement from staff to the Association's purpose and objectives.

The Committee thanked ██████████ for the report and noted the findings.

9. Business Plan Q3

J. Grant presented the report, noting good progress achieved against the Business Plan Objectives and continuing strong performance in service delivery. Key highlights included new build programme progress at Albert Road, stock condition surveys completed, award of the asset management strategy contract, governance and corporate services improvements, significant progress in the policy review programme, good progress on the review of the future of W.P.S., community regeneration and equalities compliance progress.

9. Business Plan Q3 Contd.

A member asked if there were any surprises in the new stock condition survey report? L. Reynolds advised that the survey had been assuring overall, with some buildings in better condition than had been anticipated. One building had been identified as requiring works and the mixed tenure nature would make it a challenge to complete. However, the 30-year investment plan is now likely to have some extra capacity because of the positive survey findings.

The Committee noted the report and thanked staff for their work.

10. Development Report Q3

G. Scott presented the report, noting continuing good progress on the Albert Road development with all properties now expected to be handed over in February. He noted that the tender for Cartha Crescent has been delayed while the contractor reviews costs. As a result of this delay, the purchase of the site from Renfrewshire Council has not yet progressed. G Scott also outlined a proposal to implement a pilot “buy-back” project, supported by grant funding, to acquire tenement properties directly from current owners. This would help to consolidate W.H.A.’s ownership which, in turn, would assist in completing common works.

A member noted that the progress of the new build programme had been excellent, and the accommodation provided was first class.

A member felt that the purchase of properties on the open market was sensible, at a time when costs for new build were increasing.

J. Grant advised that it was proposed to cover the future strategy for new build and/or acquisitions, at the strategic planning day. This was due to rising costs and new obligations to improve the current housing stock, for example ESSH2.

A member welcomed the opportunity to discuss and felt it may be sensible to pause the new build programme to focus resources on the current stock.

A member felt that it would be preferable to do new build and investment, but only if resources permitted and rents could be kept affordable.

The Committee approved the recommendation, proposed by M. Symons, seconded by M. MacLaren.

11. Assurance Statement Q3

J. Grant presented the report, noting that good progress continues to be made in the two areas where material non-compliance was found; delays to the completion of the EICR programme and the delays to the completion of the smoke detector programme. Both remain on track to be completed in March 2023. There were a small number of other areas identified where improvements are required but these are not considered to be material areas of non-compliance. Good progress has also been made in these areas, for example the completion of the new Tenant Engagement Strategy and the revised Management Committee Succession Policy, with further work to be completed in 2023/24.

A member thanked the team for the progress in completing the EICR and smoke detector programmes, noting the benefits of prioritising this work.

12 Health and Safety Annual Report

L. Reynolds presented the report, noting significant priority given to H&S over the year, which has resulted in many improvements. This included 7 policy reviews, staff and Committee training, external audit of systems and processes, and an independent assessment of office fire safety.

A member welcomed the improvements and asked if near-misses were managed, in terms of learning lessons? L. Reynolds advised that near-misses were now being systematically recorded and reported to the O&P Sub Committee. In addition, case reviews to learn lessons from near-misses were also now being completed.

The Committee welcomed the improvements to H&S and noted the report.

13. Any Other Business

- (a) J. Grant advised that the Standing Orders permitted a consensus or a proposer/seconder approach, to enable the formal agreement by the Committee to a recommendation. Following a discussion, it was agreed that the current method would be retained, proposed by M. Symons, seconded by E. McDermott.
- (b) J. Grant noted that W.H.A. has been approached by Unite the Union to seek a voluntary recognition agreement. This will be followed up with the likely involvement of ACAS to facilitate a mutually agreed outcome. Committee will be asked to approve any draft agreement that is created before it can be implemented.

14. Date and Time of Next Meeting

J. Scott thanked everyone for their attendance and advised that the next scheduled meeting of Williamsburgh Housing Association's Management Committee would be held on **Wednesday, 29th March 2023 at 6pm.**

CHAIRPERSON:

DATE: