

MINUTES OF THE 536TH MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING OF WILLIAMSBURGH HOUSING ASSOCIATION, HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 1ST MARCH 2023 AT 6.00PM ON TEAMS.

PRESENT:	D. Eadie M. Symons C. Henry T. Thomson E. McDermott Cllr. M. MacLaren	Acting Chairperson
IN ATTENDANCE:	J. Grant L. Ramsay L. Reynolds L. Ferrie	Chief Executive Officer Head of Finance & Corporate Services Head of Property Services Head of Housing Services
OBSERVER:	██████████	

Election of Chairperson for the meeting

Due to the absence of the Chairperson, the Committee elected D. Eadie (Vice Chair) to act as chairperson for this meeting, proposed by T. Thomson, seconded by Cllr. M. MacLaren.

1. (a) Apologies

Apologies were received from J. Scott and A. Ballantine (Committee members).

(b) Declarations of Interest

██████████ and ██████████ declared an interest in Item 8 and would leave the meeting for that item.

2. (a) Minutes of Management Committee Meeting: 25.01.23 (No.535)

The minutes of the Management Committee meeting held on Wednesday, 25th January 2023 (No.535) were proposed correct, on a motion proposed by T. Thomson, seconded by E. McDermott.

(b) Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

3. Transfer of Subsidiary Company W.P.S. to W.H.A.

L. Ramsay provided a summary of the due diligence work carried out by SMT and external advisors over the last year regarding changes to the Group Structure by transferring the trading activities of the W.P.S. subsidiary to W.H.A. She advised that our legal advisors will prepare Board minutes for W.H.A. and W.P.S. to sign, in relation to the termination of contracts and, in the case of W.P.S., the wind up and strike off of as a company with Companies House. She advised that this is proposed to occur at the next W.P.S. Board meeting, with the W.H.A. Management Committee to review at its next meeting.

Following the transfer, the factoring service will become the sole responsibility of the Management Committee of W.H.A. Scrutiny of service performance, setting charges and financial performance/forecasts would be made via delegated authority to the relevant Sub-Committees. She further advised that work is well underway to incorporate the factoring service into this new process.

A member thanked staff for the comprehensive report and the helpful summary of the process to date.

A member welcomed the external due diligence work completed and asked whether there was expected to be any legal risks?

L. Ramsay advised that advice received from Harper Macleod indicated that the transfer is considered routine because W.P.S. does not hold any assets, employs no staff and has no third-party contracts.

The committee were asked to approve the following recommendations:

1. Approve the transfer of Williamsburgh Property Services (W.P.S.) to Williamsburgh Housing Association (W.H.A.) – effective 1/4/23 and
2. Approve W.H.A. to enter into the transfer agreement with W.P.S. (as prepared by Harper Macleod).
3. Approve for Azets to complete VAT work with HMRC:
 - a. Apply ESC3.18 Statutory concession.
 - b. De-register group vat status.
 - c. De-register for VAT.
4. Note the next steps required detailed on the report.

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

4. Factoring Statement of Service & Debt Recovery Procedure

L. Ramsay presented the report, explaining the requirement to revise the formal documentation for the factoring service to recognise the transfer from W.P.S. to W.H.A. The amendments are minor and will not change the customer experience of the current service.

A member asked how the service will be impacted by the change from W.P.S. to W.H.A. – do we have sufficient staff resources in place and the necessary skills?

L. Ferrie advised that the factoring service will continue largely unchanged, with dedicated staff resources already in place. This has also included new development opportunities for staff as part of the new approach to staff development and training.

The recommendations were approved, proposed by D. Eadie, seconded by T. Thomson.

5. Factored Owners Charges 2023-24

L. Ramsay presented the report, highlighting the proposed annual increase in the factoring fee and other charges. It was highlighted that the fee remains at the lower end of our peer group comparison. The increase in electricity charges was highlighted as a frustration, with our energy supplier's poor performance in billing W.H.A. in 2022/23, creating additional challenges.

A member thanked staff for the report and welcomed the efforts made to keep charges affordable, while dealing with inflationary rises.

A member asked if anticipated energy price movements in 2023 had been considered in the proposals?

L. Ramsay advised that this was the case and we would be aiming to adjust charges to reflect what W.H.A. is charged.

The recommendations were approved, proposed by C. Henry, seconded by E. McDermott.

6. Ralston House: Health & Safety Expenditure

L. Reynolds presented the report, noting the results of the most recent fire risk assessment for Ralston House, the recommendation to upgrade internal fire doors to the latest standard and the cost of the works.

A member welcomed the continuing focus on health and safety improvements and supported the proposal to act immediately to complete the work.

A member asked if the immediate reception area would be covered by this proposed work, or will it wait until the planned refurbishment?

L. Reynolds advised that the reception area redesign will include this work.

A member welcomed the health and safety improvements and the inspection of the office by external fire assessors. Are they appropriately qualified to undertake the remedial work?

L. Reynolds advised that the qualifications are in order, and she would send them to the member.

The recommendations were approved, proposed by T. Thomson, seconded by D. Eadie.

7. Policy Review Programme: Entitlements, Payments and Benefits

J. Grant presented the report, highlighting that the policy describes the entitlements, payments or benefits that Committee members and staff can receive. It also describes what is not permitted and the arrangements that we have in place to ensure that the requirements of this policy are observed. The purpose is to ensure that none of our people benefit improperly or inappropriately from their involvement with us, but also that they are not unfairly disadvantaged because of their relationship to W.H.A. He reminded Committee of the need to be alert to changes in their, and their close associates', circumstances and to update conflict of interest information accordingly.

A member asked if it would be appropriate for a Committee member to receive a gift, for example by winning a customer raffle?

J. Grant advised that the policy outlines the circumstances in which gifts can be received by Committee members. The aim is to not unfairly disadvantage Committee members on account of their role, whilst ensuring conflicts are properly recorded and managed. This specific example could create a perception of conflict and the risk would be avoided if Committee members did not participate.

7. Policy Review Programme: Entitlements, Payments and Benefits Contd.

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

8. Allocation: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and [REDACTED] left the meeting for this item.

L. Ferrie presented the report, noting that the allocation was within the scope of the Entitlements, Payments and Benefits policy and confirming that the correct process had been followed. She explained that the allocation is in accordance with the published allocation policy, that neither the applicant or any close associates had been involved in the decision making and three separate staff members had individually checked the application and process. The applicant has also completed the necessary conflict of interest declaration on the original housing application. She further noted that two other applicants with higher priority had already refused the property.

A member asked how housing priority is determined?

L. Ferrie explained that W.H.A. is part of the Renfrewshire Common Allocations Policy. This follows legislation and good practice on housing priority. Applicants are all assessed in the same way against the same criteria and then placed on the housing list.

A member asked how this benefit would be recorded?

L. Ferrie explained that the register will be updated and evidence attached, including the minute of this meeting, once approved.

A member asked why the property had been refused twice?

L. Ferrie explained that refusal reasons were due to the location, with the higher priority applicants not wishing to move to Renfrew.

The recommendations were approved, proposed by E McDermott, seconded by D. Eadie.

9. Any Other Business

J. Grant reminded Committee that the Strategic Planning Away Day is to be held on the 17th March, at the Glynhill Hotel.

J. Grant advised Committee that [REDACTED] would attend the next Management Committee meeting, as an observer.

10. Date and Time of Next Meeting

D. Eadie 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 (Hybrid)**.

CHAIRPERSON:

DATE: