MINUTES OF THE 546TH MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING OF WILLIAMSBURGH HOUSING ASSOCIATION, HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 27TH MARCH 2024 AT 6PM (HYBRID)

PRESENT:	J. Scott	Chairperson
	E McDermott	
	D. Eadie	
	M. Symons	
	Cllr. M. MacLaren	
	T. Thomson	
	R. Coelho	
	A. Ballantine	
	C. Henry	
	J. Kerr	
OBSERVERS:	[redacted]	
IN ATTENDANCE:	J. Grant	Chief Executive Officer
	L. Ramsay	Head of Finance & Corporate Services
	L. Fleeting	HR Manager

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1. (a) Apologies

Apologies were received from [redacted] (Observer).

(b) Declarations of Interest

Cllr. M. MacLaren declared an interest in item 4, relating to Renfrewshire Council, and would not participate in the item.

2. (a) Minutes of Management Committee Meeting: 14.02.24 (No.545)

The minutes of the Management Committee meeting held on Wednesday, 14th February 2024 (No.545) were proposed correct, on a motion proposed by M. Symons, seconded by D. Eadie.

(b) Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

3. Write-offs and Write backs

L. Ramsay presented the report, explaining that the Association pursues debts rigorously but also must consider what debts are still recoverable and which should be considered as bad debts and, therefore, written off. In other cases where accounts are prepaid, then cases can occur where customers do not respond to requests to receive the refundable balance due. These sums are written back.

A member asked if write backs due to owners were returned if the owner made contact? L. Ramsay confirmed this was the case.

A member queried a legal fee related to recovery of a small arrear. L. Ramsay explained that the debt was comprised of the arrear and the legal fee together.

The recommendation was approved – to write off the balance of former tenant and owners' arrears and write back pre-paid balances for both former tenants and owners – proposed by C. Henry, seconded M. Symons.

4. Business Plan Strategic Objectives 2024-25

J. Grant presented the report, explaining the process of developing the strategic objectives following the Management Committee's Strategic Planning Day in January. This process has covered current requirements and more long-term obligations. It has also aimed to include actions to mitigate the key strategic risks that have been identified, including actions necessary to deliver continued assurance.

The outcome of the review supports the continuation of the 7 objectives, with supporting actions and projects, over the remaining 1-year period of the current Business Plan. Objectives include key areas of business and compliance development, tenant safety, financial strength, staff engagement, governance, new build programme, asset management and further improvements to services. Factors such as regulatory obligations, climate change standards and operational efficiency are included. Objectives spanning multiple years have been continued. One Objective planned for 2024/25 has been dropped – the review of the rent structure. This is a major piece of work and there is not enough capacity in the plan to start the project in 2024/25

4. Business Plan Strategic Objectives 2024-25 Contd.

Overall, good progress has been achieved against the 2023-24 objectives at the year end. Highlights include - completion of the Asset Management Strategy and associated refreshing of financial plans, transfer of WPS to WHA, HR strategy implementation, policy review programme, Cloud Hosting and ICT plan, pensions review. Further activity includes recruitment of new Committee members, purchase of properties on the open market, tenant engagement events and starting the review of energy efficiency data (EPC review).

A member noted the extent of projects delivered in 2023-24 and asked that thanks be passed to the staff teams.

A member noted that the new objectives reflected the Committee's priorities and covered the right areas.

The strategic objectives for 2024/25 were approved, proposed by D. Eadie, seconded by A. Ballantine.

5. Management Committee Annual Appraisal Policy and Process

J. Grant provided a presentation, outlining the purpose of the annual appraisal for Committee members and its importance for continuous improvement to governance. The review had been comprehensive and updated the policy, process and supporting self-assessment materials. It was also designed to support the Committee's succession plan, training plan and the nine-year rule processes.

The Committee welcomed the review and asked whether the appraisal interview assessment of the Chairperson could be conducted by a suitably experienced member of the Committee, along with the Vice Chairperson. The revised policy assumes this would be a convenor of a sub-committee but there may be circumstances where this would not be possible. J. Grant advised that the policy would be amended to allow for this flexibility.

The Committee welcomed the additional elements of the annual appraisal process covering member's views of the Committee's performance overall. A discussion ensued, covering areas where the Committee felt it was stronger and areas where it would like to develop further.

The Management Committee annual appraisal policy and process was approved - proposed by M. Symons, seconded by E. McDermott.

6. Chief Executive's Report

J. Grant presented the report, highlighting the positive results of the Scottish Housing Regulator's (SHR) annual risk assessment for WHA, which had resulted in no additional scrutiny being planned for 2024/25. He also updated on the pay award process through EVH and the issuing of a Notifiable Event to inform the SHR of the appointment of the Internal Auditor and progress on the office refurbishment works.

L. Ramsay advised that the accounting policy for life cycles was proposed to be amended. This followed the stock condition survey findings and would result in some cycles being extended and some new building element life-cycles being introduced.

A member asked whether the office reception would be opened for longer periods for walk-in customers after the works were completed. J. Grant advised that we will ask for some tenant feedback to assess demand for longer opening for walk-ins. The current focus is on appointments because demand was very low for walk-ins, but this may have changed over the last 12 months.

The accounting policy change for life cycle periods was approved – proposed by D, Eadie, seconded by T. Thomson.

7. Policy review programme

L. Ramsay presented the report, explaining that this was a new staff performance management policy that sets out the standards expected from both staff and managers in terms of identifying and supporting staff to correct performance issues. The focus of the policy is to ensure that where there is a performance concern, this is highlighted to the employee at the earliest opportunity and the line manager will work in support of the member of staff to establish how they can improve standards to an acceptable level for the post.

A member welcomed the continuing progress on modernising WHA's HR services and asked that thanks be passed to the team.

The performance management policy was approved, proposed by T. Thomson, seconded by J. Scott.

8. New SHR regulatory framework

J. Grant provided a presentation covering the most significant changes resulting for the SHR's recent review of its regulatory framework. This highlighted that while it was welcomed that the framework did not radically change, the changes proposed for the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) would introduce new performance measures. This would mean amendments to processes, including potentially with external contractors and with IT systems. Many of the other changes to the framework were already features of WHA's existing processes, for example the inclusion of additional information in the Annual Assurance Statement.

The Committee noted the report.

9. Minutes and annual report for sub-committees

M. Symons presented the annual report of the Finance, Audit and Corporate services (FAC) sub-committee. D. Eadie presented the annual report of the Operations and Performance (O&P) sub-committee.

Overall, both Convenors felt that their sub-committee was getting what was needed in terms of information, access to staff/staff support and they were able to carry out their role effectively. Both Convenors praised the improvements being made to policy, services and compliance levels. Both asked that thanks be passed to the staff team.

The Committee noted the reports and the minutes of both sub-committees.

10. Any Other Business

J. Grant advised of the indicative dates for the annual appraisals and that members confirm as soon as practicable. He also advised that two potential new committee members with a finance background had been identified and it was hoped that initial discussions could be had in April.

11. 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 May 2024 at 6:00 pm, and would be on TEAMS only** due to Ralston House being closed for refurbishment works.

CHAIRPERSON: **…….**

DATE: **…….**