
MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF WISHAW AND DISTRICT HOUSING ASSOCIATION WHICH WAS HELD IN THE ASSOCIATION'S OFFICES AT 55 KIRK ROAD, WISHAW ML2 7BL ON TUESDAY 22nd MARCH 2011 AT 6.00PM

Present:	Eddie Mullen Kash Arshad Cath Brown Jean Fagan Bill Graham Charles Keeper Irene Love Liam McCabe Helen Russell	Chairperson
Attending:	Anne Cooper Elaine Lister Andrew Whitehead John Stevenson Terry McKenna	Chief Executive Assistant Chief Executive Finance Manager (items 1.0 – 2.0 only) Housing Operations Manager (items 1.0 - 8.0 only) Maintenance Manager (items 1.0 – 4.0 only)
Apologies:	Cllr John Pentland	(Co-opted - NLC Representative)
Absent:	None	
Special Leave:	John Forbes	
Personal Interest Declared:	The staff declared an evident interest in agenda item 9.0 – ‘Annual Salaries and Cost of Living Review’.	

0.1 Resignations

Prior to the start of the meeting, the Chairman reported the resignation of two Board Members, these being Margaret McNeil and Jean Watson. He advised that Margaret was unwell, and felt that she would not be able to continue to give the Association the commitment it deserved, and Jean, who was a new member, and having attended her first meetings, did not feel that the role of Association Board Member was one that suited her interests.

0.2 Interim Secretary

The Chairman also reported that John Forbes hoped to return to the Board, but in the interim he was not fit enough to discharge his duties as Secretary. He proposed, and Charles Keeper seconded, the appointment of an interim Secretary, this being Helen Russell. Helen Russell accepted the nomination. The Board agreed unanimously.

1.0 BOARD OF DIRECTORS – 23 FEBRUARY 2011

1.1 Minutes

Proposed: Cath Brown
Seconded: Liam McCabe

1.2 Matters Arising

1.2.1 *Personal Injuries Action – Court of Session (Minute Item 1.2.1)*

The Chief Executive advised the Board that a date had been received when this case would call in court, this being 12 March 2013, with eight days being scheduled for the case to be heard. The Board expressed disappointment at this two year delay but acknowledged that there was nothing that could be done to bring it forward.

The Board also reiterated their continuing and unequivocal endorsement of all actions taken originally in connection with this former employee's performance and absence, and the approach taken since, and confirmed their continuing intention to strongly defend this action.

[Chief Executive to report on further events](#)

1.2.2 *Future of Shared Ownership Tenure and Open Market Purchase (Minute Item 1.2.4)*

The Board noted the report on progress.

[Assistant Chief Executive to advise on progress.](#)

1.2.3 *Corporate Plan (Minute Item 4.0)*

The Board noted the circulation of the revised Corporate Plan.

2.0 FINAL BUDGET PROPOSALS (includes decision on AFTAR)

The Finance Manager presented the Final Budget proposals for 2011/12. He stated that generally the figures were as approved by the Board at the draft stage in November. He then explained the variances from the draft budget as detailed in the report. The main areas of variance being - rent receivable, service charges and net property receipts.

The Finance Manager then gave details of two areas of expenditure which needed to be increased as result of recent new information. These were Wider Action Expenditure and Block Insurance costs. He stated that the Wider Action Budget should be increased by £3,000, subject to the Board's approval of continued membership of AFTAR (the Advice For Tenants And Residents project), and that Block Insurance costs should be increased by £10,000. The increase in insurance costs is an estimate based on the tender submissions received on 18 March. The successful tenderer has not yet been selected as further analysis of the submissions is required.

The Housing Operations Manager was asked to comment on the potential increase to the Wider Action Budget. He updated the Board on negotiations to continue both the Older Person's Advice Service (OPAS) and the AFTAR Project with the Citizens Advice Bureau. LinkWide have managed to secure Financial Inclusion Funding for OPAS so this would continue meaning the Association will be able to access the service in the future at no financial cost. However, although the Scottish Government were supportive of the project, and were willing to continue to award funding, given the fact that the total Wider Role budget had reduced from £10M to £6M, they were only willing to fund the project at their more usual 50% rate.

The Housing Operations Manager confirmed that with 50% match funding of the project, the financial contribution from the Association would increase to approximately £9,000, which was an increase from the estimate in the draft budget of £6,000. Three of the current partners had agreed to fund their increased contribution but one was still considering their continued participation.

To date the project had cost the Association approximately £4,400, but had brought in approximately £150,000 for residents within our housing.

The Chair stated that the project had delivered very good results for our residents and represented good value for money. After discussion the Board agreed to fund the project at the indicated level.

Having obtained approval from the Board to increase the level of funding for the AFTAR project, the Finance Manager continued with his presentation. The Board sought clarification that the budgeted surplus took into account increasing salaries by 1%. The Finance Manager said that this was the case and emphasised that it also assumed a surplus would be made on the sale of part of the Main Street, Wishaw site. It was agreed that each of these assumptions could potentially change.

There being no other questions, the Board approved the 2011/12 budget.

3.0 REVIEW OF FRAMEWORK FOR MAINTENANCE CONTRACTORS

The Board approved the updated list of framework contractors.

The Board advised that contractors who were not to be included in the framework should be advised as to why not.

[Maintenance Manager to update framework of maintenance contractors](#)

4.0 REVIEW OF EMERGENCY CALL OUT SERVICES

The Board approved the increase of rates and stand-by costs requested by the emergency contractor Ranley Contracts.

They also agreed that a special payment be made to Ranley Contracts to reflect the high amount of calls received and dealt with during the recent bad weather in December and January. The Maintenance Manager advised the Board that Ranley had taken up to 165 calls per week during this period most of which were dealt with over the phone at no expense to the Association, when the procurement of a contractor could have been very expensive for the Association. However Ranley incurred charges for each call as they provided and paid for the Freephone number.

After some discussion on the level of payment to be made to Ranley it was agreed to make a special payment of £1000 in acknowledgement of the extraordinarily conscientious service that had been provided.

[Maintenance Manager to put into effect revised rates and additional payment](#)

5.0 DRAFT REVISED RISK MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The Board approved the revised risk management framework, and also noted the Current Risk Profile.

It was noted that although the risk profile would be formally reviewed quarterly it could be reviewed on an ad hoc basis at any time in the sense that any significant risk identified by staff, or by Board Members, perhaps during discussion of a report, would, once identified, need to be added to the Profile.

6.0 DRAFT REVISED REMIT OF COMMITTEE CONVENORS AND VICE CONVENORS

The Board approved this revised remit.

7.0 DRAFT REVISED RECRUITMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The Board discussed this revised policy and procedure document.

In the section on exit interviews, and regarding the item that indicates a member of staff who is leaving may request an interview with the Principal Officers, the Board agreed that the Principal Officers should also be able to themselves request this interview.

A lengthy discussion took place on how the Association ensured selection of employees was on merit, and on the value of references, and that there was no discrimination, including any illegal positive discrimination, and it was agreed that the Association had taken all reasonable steps to ensure that it acted with probity and fairly.

It was noted that the equalities strategy was due for review in connection with the Equalities Act 2010.

The Board approved the Recruitment Policy and Procedures.

Chief Executive to review Equalities Procedures at appropriate time

8.0 PROMPT PAYMENT SCHEME REVIEW

The Housing Operations Manager presented proposals to amend the Association's Prompt Payment Scheme, following a recent review. The proposals were based on an earlier decision at the Board on 23rd November 2010, and discussions with the Principal Officers.

The Housing Operations Manager spoke to the report, highlighting the following points:

- The existing 'reward' payment is £5 per month. It is proposed to increase this by 5% to £5.25 (for 2 apartment houses)
- It was proposed to introduce a payment proportional to house size, to reflect the differing rental payments attaching to house size. These would range from £5.25 per month for 2 Apt accommodation to £6.00 per month for 5 Apt accommodation
- It was proposed to amend the qualification period to four months to make it easier for tenants/sharing owners to qualify for payments and to encourage tenants/sharing owners to maintain a clear account by rewarding them more often
- It was proposed to allow access to the scheme to tenants/sharing owners who are in arrears to encourage them to agree and maintain a repayment arrangement. It was recommended that this be restricted to cases owing less than £100 and who maintain a repayment arrangement each month. It was further proposed that the 'reward' be reduced to £3 per month in these cases
- It was not proposed to allow tenants/sharing owners who are in receipt of partial or full Housing benefit access to the scheme at this stage, as there are complications in the administration of this, and the staff were keen to ensure that errors were not made

The report generated a lot of discussion on what was the best way to implement, in stages, changes to the scheme. Particular points raised included:

- Was it fair that those tenants/sharing owners with an arrear on their rental account were included before those paying their way but on partial Housing Benefit, could this be adequately justified
- Should tenants/sharing owners with an arrear be included at all
- Should include those on partial benefit instead of those in arrears, but there were fears of administrative complications
- Was the proposed proportional payment enough to reflect rental differences
- Is it possible to include both those on partial benefit and some arrears cases
- Would it be in the spirit of the scheme, the spirit being that we wish to help people get out of arrears for life, if we included all arrears cases i.e. set no upper arrears limit, where they were they were keeping to a payment arrangement

- Should we be changing the scheme before we have had an outcome assessment / report on the impact of the current scheme

The Vice Chair proposed that we pay an increased cashback to tenants/sharing owners who made the payment into their Credit Union account, to complement our aim of increasing the number of tenants who have credit union accounts, and that the increased amount be 10%. This caused further debate. The Board asked if it was right to give more to people who paid their cashback into credit union accounts, rather than into any other bank account, as which bank account people had was personal choice and the Association has no right to reward or penalise them for making this personal choice one way or the other as there may be good reasons why an ordinary bank account suits someone better than a credit union account. The suggestion was not approved.

After further discussion it was agreed that the Association would introduce payments proportional to house size based on the figures contain in the report, that the qualification period would be reduced to 4 months and payments altered accordingly. This would be effective from 1 April.

The Housing Operations Manager was asked to further consider how all appropriate groups could be included in a progressive manner, and to bring back for further consideration, proposals and timescales.

[Housing Operations Manager to report further as described](#)

9.0 ANNUAL SALARIES COST OF LIVING REVIEW 2011

The Board noted the report and agreed to delegate the formulation of an appropriate offer to the Principal Officers, in liaison with the Chief Executive, and with budgetary advice as required from the Finance Manager.

[The Principal Officers to consider and make recommendations on the level of uplift for salaries 2011/12.](#)

10.0 STANDING ITEMS

10.1 Membership Issues

10.1.1 *New Membership Applications*

The Board noted that the following persons had applied for membership:

- June Boughey (Tenant)
- Adam Boughey (Tenant)
- John Carr (Tenant)

The Board approved the above applications for membership in accordance with the policy on membership.

10.1.2 Cancelled Memberships

The Board noted that there were no memberships to be cancelled.

10.2 Register Inclusions

The Board noted that there were no register inclusions.

10.3 Risk Management

The Board noted that the current risk profile had been discussed under item 5.0 of this meeting.

10.4 Knowledge Enhancement

There was no business under this item.

10.5 Lanarkshire Voluntary Housing Forum

The Board noted the minute of the most recent meeting.

Comments were made in connection with the amount of work associated with the CHR and its cumbersome nature, and it was agreed that at an appropriate point in the future, when the CHR had been in operation for a year or so, an assessment of its cost:benefit would be carried out.

[Assistant Chief Executive / Housing Operations Manager to carry out a cost:benefit analysis of the CHR at an appropriate time](#)

10.6 Publicity

There was no business under this item.

10.7 Correspondence

The Board noted the Housing Hustings event on 7 April and agreed to notify the Chief Executive if they planned to attend.

11.0 ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

There was no other business.

The meeting closed at 8.25 pm with a vote of thanks to the Chair.