

HILLHEAD HOUSING ASSOCIATION 2000

Minutes of the Management Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 5 April 2017 at 6.30 pm in the Association's offices at 2 Meiklehill Road

Present: C Taylor
Cllr S MacDonald
Cllr J Jamieson

L Scott
D Wilson

In Attendance: S Macintyre, Director
M White, Corporate Services Manager
S Tait, Property Services Coordinator

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from J Shovlin, M Docherty and R Smith.

There followed some discussion on committee attendance and the need to attract additional Committee Members. It was agreed that increasing committee membership is a priority for the Association. It was agreed that following the Council elections on 4 May 2017 the Director will write to the Chief Executive requesting that the new Council appoint 2 Members onto the Management Committee in line with Rule 37.2.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DEFERRED ITEMS

Cllr McDonald declared an interest regarding discussions in relation to Antonine Housing Association.

3. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Management Committee Meeting 1 March 2017

Page 1: Universal Credit Payments

It was noted that the proposed regulations on direct payments were still out for consultation.

Page 2: Brae O'Yetts

C Taylor enquired as to the progress with this development, and S Tait advised that following the recent meeting with Barratts, confirmation regarding costs were due to be submitted to Ian Thomson within the next couple of weeks. It was noted that planning permission had been obtained from the Council, and that the tender offer had been accepted subject to some clarification points.

Page 2: Antonine Housing Association

S Macintyre advised that he had recently met with John Mulholland and Mags Lightbody and that, following completion of the Options Appraisal exercise, it had been concluded that although Antonine Housing Association could continue financially, there remained serious governance and maintenance concerns.

It was noted that Antonine Housing Association's Management Committee would be meeting later in the month and that the recommendation to them would be for interested parties to be invited to submit an initial expression of interest and a subsequent proposal on how to take the Association forward. S Macintyre advised that Mags Lightbody had agreed to inform him of when such an advertisement would be placed. He also advised that it would be up to potential partners to decide on what form the proposal would take, for example a full time transfer of engagements or some form of constitutional partnership.

There followed some discussion on whether to pursue the submission of a proposal, and the importance of identifying any risks to Hillhead Housing Association was recognised. Further discussion took place on the risks as well as the benefits of the 2 housing associations working closer together.

S Macintyre advised that the Association would require external assistance in putting together a proposal, due to limited resources in this regard.

Following some further discussion, Committee agreed to the Association submitting an expression of interest, and that initial enquiries should be made by the Director regarding the commission of relevant consultants to progress a proposal.

S Macintyre agreed to present a more detailed report to the May meeting when we would be in possession of a Prospectus from Antonine HA.

Page 3: Special Management Committee Meeting 15 February 2017

S Macintyre advised that he had yet to contact EVH regarding monitoring of Drug and Alcohol policies.

Page 3: Universal Credit / Benefit Cap

S Macintyre advised that the arrears figure at the end of March stood at 3.38%, however it was noted this figure also included cases not affected by Universal Credit.

Page 4: Allocations

Cllr Jamieson referred to the Council's development of a bespoke IT system which would possibly enable a successful common housing register, and it was noted there was no further update on this. There followed some discussion on common housing registers and Cllr McDonald advised he would make enquiries with the Council regarding their procurement of the IT system.

Page 6: Eviction Case No. 110

L Scott enquired as to the arrangement in relation to this case and it was noted there were no further concerns at present.

The minutes of the meeting were approved by L Scott and seconded by M Doherty.

Human Resources Sub Committee 1 March 2017

Page 1: Position of Estate Caretaker Assistant

It was noted that the recruitment of this post would be discussed by the Management Team, and the recruitment progressed. It was agreed to highlight previous applicants need not apply in the advertisement, as well as the inclusion of a probationary period.

The Minutes of the meeting were approved by L Scott and seconded by C Taylor.

4. FINANCE REPORT

RBS Facilities Agreement 15 December 2016 - Side Letter

S Macintyre referred to the previously distributed report and copy of the above letter which the Bank was requiring to be signed. It was noted that the recently signed agreement dated 15 December 2016 included a clause that the Association would be in default should its liabilities on the balance sheet be higher than the assets. S Macintyre highlighted that, given this was in fact the case and would be for the next few years, there was a need for this side letter to acknowledge that this was missed from the Facilities Agreement but had now been rectified in order to avoid the Association from being placed in default.

S Macintyre advised that F MacDonald had discussed this with the Bank and was satisfied with the request. Committee subsequently gave approval for S Macintyre to sign the Letter on their behalf.

5 DIRECTOR'S REPORT

1) Affiliation to External Bodies

Committee approved the renewal of the Association's annual membership with TPAS, SHARE and Energy Action Scotland at costs of £190, £4180 and £96 respectively.

Committee noted the recent correspondence from SFHA asking the Association to reconsider joining again. S Macintyre highlighted the annual cost would likely be in the region of £10,000 and that no such provision had been allowed in the budget. It was also noted that SFHA were currently recruiting for a replacement Chief Executive. Following brief discussion, Committee agreed to defer further considering of this affiliation until next year by which time a new Chief Executive should be in place.

2) Wider Role Strategy: People and Communities Fund – Applications for Funding to March 2018 - Tenancy Support Service

It was noted that the Association's funding application had been submitted on 24 March to allow the service to continue for a further 12 months. Committee also noted that a revised Stage 1 application had been submitted to the Big Lottery in February with the Association being the lead applicant.

3) East Dunbartonshire Joint Integration Health & Social Care Board

Committee noted that S Macintyre had taken the decision to resign from the Strategic Planning Group as a result of housing appearing to have a low priority within the partnership, with it never being discussed at meetings. It was noted that any issues which had been discussed were almost solely concerned with primary health care and therefore S Macintyre's position on the Group as a Housing Representative was proving to be pointless.

S Macintyre advised that following his indication to the Strategy Planning Group that he intended to resign, he had been invited to attend a meeting with Fiona McCulloch next week along with Karen Finlayson to discuss the matter further.

There followed some discussion on the structure of the joint board, and Cllr MacDonald suggested Cllr Rhondda Geekie be informed of the situation. S Macintyre agreed to email her.

4) Scottish Housing Regulator - Regulation Plan 2017/18

S Macintyre advised that the Association had been placed on Low Engagement for 2017/18, and Committee expressed their satisfaction with this assessment.

5) Committee Strategy Day

There followed some discussion on potential venues and themes for the above Strategy Day, and it was agreed it would take place over a full day in early May. Some possible ideas for discussion included value for money, governance issues and digital inclusion strategies.

S Macintyre agreed to progress this further.

6) Committee Training

It was noted that C Taylor and L Scott had attended a Glasgow & West of Scotland Forum meeting on 16 March, the topic at which had been about Regulator intervention and how associations are supported and managed out of intervention. L Scott advised that they had made enquiries regarding the position of Committee during such interventions, however had not received a clear response in this regard.

7) Health & Safety

Committee noted that, following the recent Health & Safety Audit, risk assessments had now been carried out, including ones for Fire Safety and Legionella. S Macintyre advised that a meeting of the health and safety sub committee would take place once C Douglas returns from leave.

8) Aspiring Communities Fund - Part Time Fixed Term Community Development Officer

Committee noted that the Association had been approached by East Dunbartonshire with the offer of support to make an application for funding to enable the provision of the above post. S Macintyre referred to the draft remit of the post and highlighted that the fund was restricted to applications from non statutory organisations and offers funding for projects up to 31 December 2018. He further advised that, as the deadline for applications was 7 April 2017, he was seeking an in principle decision from Committee to support the initial application as the Association would be the lead applicant.

Committee subsequently gave approval in this regard. There followed some discussion on the recent dissolution of the Community Forum, and it was noted that its assets were currently being held until any decision has been made on their allocation.

5(i) INTERNAL MANAGEMENT PLAN: BUSINESS OBJECTIVES 2016-2017

Committee referred to the progress made against targets set for the organisation with regard to the business objectives for 2016-2017. It was noted that the only target not met was number 8 in relation to maintaining rent arrears below 3.25%. S Macintyre highlighted that the arrears figure stood at 3.38% as at the end of March.

In relation to objective 12 and the setting up of a Service Improvement Panel, it was noted that a further meeting had been arranged for 3 May and that the Panel hoped to visit with another RSL's scrutiny panel with a view to seeing their void properties for comparability purposes.

S Macintyre referred to the objective on the development of a digital inclusion strategy and advised he was attending a training event in this regard at the end of the month. It was agreed to carry forward this objective for 2017/2018.

5(ii) INTERNAL MANAGEMENT PLAN: DRAFT BUSINESS OBJECTIVES 2017-2018

Committee referred to the draft business objectives for the year ahead and discussion took place as follows.

It was agreed to include objectives in relation to governance and/or the appointment of an additional 2 committee members with specific experience. It was also agreed to include an objective in relation to value for money, and the development of a succession planning strategy.

D Wilson referred to Objective 10 – to maintain rent arrears below 4.0% and suggested this target be reduced. Following discussion, it was agreed to reduce this to 3.75%.

In relation to Objective 12 and the securing of additional benefits income, it was agreed to increase this figure from £350,000 to £500,000.

5(iii) RISK MANAGEMENT REPORT /

5(iv) DRAFT RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY

Committee referred to the previously distributed report and the new updated Risk Management Policy. S Macintyre highlighted that the new policy ensured compliance with the relevant Regulator Standards pertaining to Governance and Financial Management. He also referred to the current risk register and advised this would be separated into 4 sections: Strategic, Finance & Corporate Services, Housing Management and Property Services.

Following some discussion on risk management, Committee approved the adoption of the new Policy, and agreed that staff should continue to develop the risk matrices in line with the policy. S Macintyre advised that he would now revise the existing risk register and would transfer the risks onto the new template for presentation at the Management Committee meeting in May.

5(v) COMPLAINTS

Committee referred to the report detailing the complaints received during the period 1 October to 31 December 2016, and noted the contents therein.

5(vi) BRIEFING PAPER ON HOUSING COSTS UNDER UNIVERSAL CREDIT FOR 18-21 YEAR OLDS

Committee noted previous discussion on the recent announcement by the UK Government regarding its intention to cease entitlement to housing costs being paid as part of Universal Credit from April 2017, to those under 22 except in certain circumstances.

S Macintyre highlighted the information in the report advising of the Government's announcement on 27 March, indicating that they would be extending the funding of the Scottish Welfare Fund on an interim basis, from April 2017, to allow for housing costs to be covered for those under 22 who would otherwise be affected by the changes.

It was noted that Committee would be advised accordingly should this situation change.

6. PROPERTY SERVICES REPORT

S Tait referred Committee to the previously distributed report and the following discussion took place.

i) Feasibility Study - Newdyke Road

S Tait highlighted that following completion of the above feasibility study, the results had been submitted to EDC for consideration, with indicative costs indicating that the creation of in-curtilage parking would be in the region of £97,000. It was further noted that a radar survey was currently underway in order to determine the position of existing services and was due to complete at the end of the month, and that in the

event that existing services require diversion, the costs would increase accordingly. It was noted that the Council had confirmed by e-mail on 15 March 2017 that they were willing to fund just under £41,000, thus requiring the Association to fund the balance of approximately £56,000. S Tait highlighted that the costs at this stage were provisional, subject to identifying the position re existing services and the actual works cost being established following receipt of tenders.

Committee noted that the Association had responded to the Council advising their level of contribution was not sufficient.

There followed discussion amongst Committee regarding the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) which was due to come into force on 21 April, and the reasons behind this being necessary. Committee noted the school merger and consequential parking issues had resulted in the TRO being necessary.

Cllr MacDonald raised concern at the letter from the Association regarding the Council's offer and the fact that there had been no counter offer proposed. He also expressed the benefit to tenants by the creation of parking spaces.

Some concern was expressed by Committee however, that the Association was being expected to fund such a sizeable balance as the matter primarily related to a roads issue, which was not within the Association's jurisdiction. It was also noted that parking continued to be an issue throughout other areas of the Association's stock. Furthermore, S Macintyre highlighted that initial conversations with the Council had indicated that a funding contribution could be offered as there were funds set aside in this regard. He also stressed the Association's requirement to minimise spend and maximise contributions.

There followed some discussion on the TRO, and Cllr MacDonald advised that the enforcement of this could be delayed.

Some further lengthy discussion on the issues raised took place, and it was agreed that the Council be advised that the Association was not prepared to fund any more than a maximum of £56,000 towards the proposals and subsequent scheme costs.

S Tait again highlighted that the costs at this stage were provisional and should the project progress, the contract would require to be advertised on Public Contracts Scotland (PCS) website taking account of the Association's Procurement Policy.

ii) Cycle Path

Committee noted that a fairly positive meeting had taken place with Sustrans following the Association's application for funding, with the only issue raised being in relation to match funding. S Tait highlighted that, as previously reported, the maximum Sustrans could fund was 50% of the overall cost. It was noted that the updated cost plan indicated an overall figure of just under £615,000.

S Tait referred Committee to the information within the report in relation to an email received from Sustrans raising the issue of works being carried out at the marina, south of Hillhead Road by either Scottish Canals or the Council. It was noted that despite attempts made by the Association, any further information on these works had not been obtained.

It was noted that following the meeting with Sustrans, the Association had looked to identify other funders and had approached LEADER, a European Community Initiative who had advised the Association to request funding in the sum of £153,000. S Tait confirmed that, in the event that Sustrans approved 50% of project costs and LEADER £153,000, this would leave a balance in the region of £154,500 per the feasibility study costs.

There followed some discussion on the works being carried out at the marina, and whether this could be related to an upgrade of the Basin.

Committee discussed the potential benefits of the cycle path and agreed it would encourage fit and healthy lifestyles, as well as creating an access point. S Macintyre also highlighted that there were resources within the budget for environmental works. However, Committee also felt that the level of contribution required by the Association was too substantial.

It was agreed that the Association continue to pursue funding from Sustrans and LEADER and that the Association was not against a contribution “in principle” but not at the level currently being indicated.

7. COMMITTEE TRAINING

Committee referred to the previously distributed report and noted the details of training attended and forthcoming events. S Macintyre asked that members contact the office should they wish to attend any of the courses.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

3 May 2017 (Housing Management).

Minuted by: M White, Corporate Services Manager
11 April 2017

Chairperson’s Signature:

Date: