

Management Committee Meeting

Monday, 30th October 2023 6:30 pm

Boiler House | Management Committee

Attendees

<p>Present</p> <p>Andrea Finkel-Gates (AFG) Kenny Hutton (KH) John Jenkins (JJ) Lyndsay Moffat (LM) Callum Wynd (CW)</p> <p>By Teams</p> <p>Priscilla Maramba** (PM) Abira Sarwar (AS)</p>	<p>In attendance</p> <p>Sharon Brady-Wardrope (SBW) Anna Drever* (AD) Paul Fraser* (PF) Lesley Lennon* (LL) Shona MacLeod* (SM) Alison Smith, Allanpark Consults – Observing as part of Committee Appraisal process</p>
<p>Apologies</p> <p>James Bryce Ann Dickson Alistair Hutton Gerry McGarvey Kirsty Morrison</p>	<p>*Excluding item 5.3 **Items 5-13 only</p>

Meeting Information

1 Chair's Statement

Purpose - For Information

Minute by Anna Drever

In the Chair's absence, Andrea Finkel-Gates (AFG), Joint Vice Chair, chaired this meeting. The Vice Chair welcomed all committee and staff to the meeting.

2 Apologies

Purpose - For Information

Minute by Anna Drever

Apologies were given from

James Bryce
Ann Dickson
Alistair Hutton
Cllr Gerry McGarvey
Kirsty Morrison

Sharon Brady-Wardrope (SBW) advised that due to personal reasons Heather Arthur had resigned from the Committee and that Alistair Hutton had also advised that due to personal and work commitments that he too would need to resign. SBW said that she would speak with both and noted that their contribution to the committee over the years has been very much appreciated.

AFG stated that it will be necessary to recruit more members in due course. SBW added that recruiting more tenants to the committee was already a target for January. SBW also noted that many housing associations are struggling to recruit tenant members to their committees at the moment. A recruitment drive will be planned in response.

3 Declaration of Interest

Purpose - For Information

Minute by Anna Drever

None declared.

4 Previous Minutes

Purpose - For Approval

Minute by Anna Drever

AFG praised the Committee's level of interaction with Decision Time (DT) and thanked everyone for the comments which had been left ahead of the meeting. SBW added that the Committee's engagement with Decision Time was much appreciated and it allowed staff to follow up with a response either before or at the meeting.

4.1 Draft Minute Management Committee Meeting 26

September 2023

Purpose - For Approval

Minute by Anna Drever

A number of corrections to the minutes were noted on DT and agreed.

With changes made from the notes by Committee members on Decision Time, these minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

Decision: Approved

4.2 Unconfirmed Minute Development Sub Committee Meeting 2nd October 2023

Purpose - For Information

Minute by Anna Drever

A number of corrections to the minutes were noted on DT and agreed.

These minutes were noted.

Decision: Noted

4.3 Unconfirmed Minute of Staffing Sub Committee Meeting 9th October 2023

Purpose - For Information

Minute by Anna Drever

There was a number of corrections noted on Decision Time which were agreed.

Lyndsay Moffat (LM) noted that there were 2 items under AOCB – an allowance for staff on H&S Committee approved and to be reviewed in one year and was for Christmas Allowance for potential out-of-hours calls out for 2023 also approved.

SBW – noted that this was correct and the confidential minute for these items will include these.

POST MEETING NOTE – these items were added to the confidential minute which was not finalized for the meeting but will be presented to the next Staffing Sub Committee meeting for approval.

With the corrections agreed these minutes were noted.

Decision: Noted

5 Matters Arising

Purpose - For Information

5.1 Committee Actions Register

Purpose - For Information

Minute by Anna Drever

*PM joined the meeting

AFG outlined that the Committee Actions Register is stored in the Resources library in Decision Time and is kept up to date by staff. SBW shared her screen to allow the Committee to demonstrate where they could access the register. SBW stated that there were a couple of actions from the Staffing Sub-Committee meeting which were yet to be added, but that this update will be done shortly.

Decision: Noted

5.2 Referrals from Development Sub Committee 2nd October 2023

Purpose - For Approval

Minute by Anna Drever

There were no referrals.

5.3 Referrals from Staffing Sub Committee Meeting 9th October 2023 – Confidential Item

Minute by Anna Drever/Sharon Brady-Wardrope

This matter was considered confidential and all staff (AD, LL, PF & SM) left the meeting with only SBW remaining.

SBW outlined this confidential report to the committee which gave an update on the Recruitment.

A separate confidential minute has been produced separately for this item however the proposal to complete the recruitment to corporate services and the interim arrangements to support the housing management.

Decision: Approved

5.4 Referrals from Audit and Risk Sub Committee 23rd October 2023

Purpose - For Approval

Minute by Anna Drever

5.4.1 Internal Audit Report

Purpose - For Information

AFG stated that the first point of this item was for information purposes. This was an update on the Internal Audit Register, and reports from the Equality, Health & Safety, and internal audit.

SBW reported that we had a good audit outcome on the budget setting process.

The committee noted that the format of the report provided a strong oversight along with good management responses to audits carried out over the period.

Decision: Committee noted the good performance on completing the recommendations from the internal audits.

5.4.2 Quarterly ARC Report - Q2

Purpose - For Information

AFG raised there were good outcomes of the quarterly ARC report.

Abira Sarwar's (AS) asked a question regarding Notice of Proceedings (NOP) on cases over £1000, it was clarified that that this was stage 4 of the process rather than being a matter of the amount.

AS also questioned item 8.12 of the Tenant Performance Report, as 2 cases appeared to be unresolved despite 29 out of 29 cases being listed as resolved. SBW clarified that this indicator can be misleading, as some cases are carried forward. Whilst all cases from a given quarter may be resolved, there may have been cases carried over from a different quarter.

Lyndsay Moffat (LM) suggested if Whatsapp could be used more to assist with committee attendance e.g. papers on DT, any apologies for the meeting tonight etc. Sharon Brady-

Wardrope (SBW) agreed that with this and that we can also add a second email address for information emails to go out to notify members if they wish, some had already opted for this.

LM asked if there is an amount at which NOP is served e.g. arrears over £1000. I checked the policy but I don't think a limit is set. SBW advised that there is no exact figure and that the NOP is based on Stage 4 of the procedures and is when there is an arrear and there has been no response to contact attempts and no arrangement in place

AS asked on DT if the layout of page3 be fixed and similar to last 2 pages (makes it a bit easier to read) this was agreed and the additional information posted onto DT.

AS noted that the Documents have different agenda items number, SBW advised that this is a referral from the Audit and Risk Sub Committee (A&R) so the paper numbers are the A&R references.

Decision: Committee noted the performance on Q2 ARC report

5.4.3 Rechargeable Repairs Report

Purpose - For Information

Decision: Committee noted the performance on our debt management for recharge repairs

6 Operations

6.1 Stock Condition Survey Report

Minute by Anna Drever

Some questions were raised and responded to on DT prior to the meeting as below:

John Jenkins (JJ) asked what percentage of our houses have now been surveyed and results entered on the Hub. SWB advised that we have approximately 67% surveyed but just over 3% still to be validated before being uploaded to the HUB. We are aiming for a total of 80% by the end of March 2023. Then looking at a cycle of 100% over a 5yr period.

AFG asked if the software also used so we understand when EICR and gas safety checks are due? SBW advised that we **use** SDM for this as the HUB is for condition information. SDM manages the scheduling and reporting for the cyclical works.

JJ noted that it was great to see this result following the hard work by all concerned. Can we share this with the Regulator asap, given this was an area of concern for them? SBW agreed with this and advised that we will forward this information as part of our final update along with

the Development 5yr Investment and the Notifiable events.

JJ asked if component replacement is something we should be seeking tenants' views on? Perhaps annually, on a one/ two/ three year forward projection? I'd be keen to hear the thoughts of tenant members on the governing body. SBW advised that we ask tenants for their priorities as part of our Asset Management Strategy and as part of our Tenant Satisfaction Survey

Paul Fraser (PF) introduced the paper and stated that Stock Condition Surveys are being carried out digitally, with the paper and spreadsheets provided to the committee demonstrating the progress made. PF demonstrated the robustness of the data and reported that staff found this process very easy to use. AFG praised the team for their work and stated that this was a worthwhile investment.

SBW added that 67% of stock had been surveyed, but 3% had yet to be validated. SBW reported that PF sense checks the data provided by surveyors, giving an element of internal auditing before it goes into the system, and ensuring that anything irregular can be investigated promptly. SBW predicts that by the end of March 2024, 80% will be complete, and stated that although we are entering the later stages of this process, we were mindful that it was important to ensure that we have covered a wide range of stock types.

Decision: Committee noted the output from our Stock condition information assessment and the progress with our surveys and were pleased with the progress to date and assured that our financial information which was based on the SDM info is reflective of what we are now finding with our surveys.

7 Finance

Purpose -

7.1 FCA (Verbal Update)

Purpose - For Information

Minute by Anna Drever

Shona MacLeod (SM) advised that the annual return to FCA was completed at start of month.

Decision: Committee noted this and appreciated the confirmation

7.2 SHR – In year loan return (verbal)

Purpose - For Information

Minute by Anna Drever

SM stated that following finalisation of the CAF Bank loan, the end of year loan was submitted to housing regulator to confirm. AFG asked whether this was available for the Committee in the Resources section of Decision Time, and SM confirmed that the Annual Assurance Statement was.

Decision: Committee noted this and appreciated the confirmation

8 Policy/Strategy

Purpose - For Information and Approval

8.1 Tenant Handbook – Verbal Update

Purpose - For Information

Minute by Anna Drever

SBW announced that refreshed data had been prepared to go into the Tenant Handbook. Some minor edits will be needed before it is sent to be printed. Tenants feedback confirms that hardcopy handbooks are appreciated. SBW noted that there might not be a huge number as printing the handbook was very costly, but a small stock to cover new tenants would be likely. SBW added, however, that the information included has been kept generic enough to futureproof the current version to reduce the likelihood of frequent reprints being required. This information would also be made available to tenants via the FHA website.

AFG advised that some printers offer reprints on demand, allowing for small batches of publications to be provided on a more ad hoc basis, and added that this may be worth considering if any small updates are required.

Decision: Committee noted the update on the progress with the tenant handbook

8.2 Performance Report to Tenants

Purpose - For Information

A number of corrections and amendments were proposed and agreed on DT prior to the meeting.

Minute by Anna Drever

SBW outlined that this report pulled together data for tenants to enable them to see FHA's performance, identified where improvements could be made, and how our performance compared to other housing associations and the Council. SBW stated that the strong outcomes which we are able to provide to tenants was a result of the hard work of our staff, and that

despite challenging economic and social conditions, performance and satisfaction levels were able to remain high.

SBW also feedback that following a strategic option appraisal with Paul McNeil, it was found that rents will need to be increased, with difficult decisions ahead. Early indicators would be coming next month with a rise of CPI +1% being possible, with inflation currently standing at 6.4%. SBW stated further that this matter would require significant research and deliberation before any action would be taken.

JJ stated that the information available at present regarding stock condition allowed for a greater degree of certainty than would have been available at this time last year, with AFG adding that attempting to predict the impact of the cost of living crisis also made costings more difficult for the previous year.

Kenny Hutton (KH) praised the Performance Report, and the work staff had put into it. AFG added that it was very readable and accessible to people of all literacy levels. SBW said that moving forward, it was hoped that more tenant feedback could be included to ensure that the information being given wasn't too technical. KH agreed that more qualitative data would be a positive addition.

AS asked whether a rent consultation was planned or in progress. SBW responded that this would be discussed at the next Management Committee meeting in November, as we are currently working through our mid-year budget review. In November, a restatement of the current year's budget along with a draft budget for 2024 would be discussed, as both would inform any consultation on rent. AS agreed that careful consideration of tenants' requirements and business needs were both important.

Decision: Committee noted the annual report to tenants and welcomed the positive performance

8.3 Policy Reviews – Shared Ownership Buy Back & Financial Regulations

Purpose - For Approval

Minute by Anna Drever

AFG stated that there were two parts to this policy; the Shared Ownership Buy Back and the Financial Regulations Policies. SBW outlined that the changes made to the Shared Ownership Buy Back policy were part of a scheduled review with the changes made including language changes and updates to the template. SBW added that with the exception of an improvement in clarity regarding owner death, there were no significant changes to the policy. KH stated that the document was very clear.

Decision: Committee approved the revised Shared Ownership Buy Back Policy.

SM presented on the Financial Regulations policy and stated that adaptations had been made around changes to authorisation levels and associated monetary limits for different staff. AFG deferred to AS for financial insight. AS confirmed that the details appeared to be in order. PM confirmed that the changes looked good to her.

The committee approved the changes made.

9 Governance

9.1 Annual Assurance Statement 2023

Purpose - For Approval

Some corrections and suggestions for alternative wording was received on DT and agreed.

Minute by Anna Drever

SBW outlined that the Annual Assurance Statement presented was the culmination of what has been brought to the Committee over the past 6 months.

The supporting evidence is presented in the Resource library under AAS 2023 and a folder for each of the standards is there.

AFG said that she found this approach really helpful and clear.

SBW reported that Forth Housing Association (FHA) and Rural Housing Association (RHA) tenants have been collaborating on a Joint Scrutiny Panel which has been supported by the Tenant Information Service (TIS). Three meetings have been conducted, with good feedback being provided by tenants about what would be most appreciated with regards to their HA's performance. One of the recommendations was a change to the Assurance Statement to make evidence and actions around compliance clearer. These have been updated accordingly.

SBW explained that the statement referred to the evidence bank, scrutiny group, and strategic option appraisal to support what was outlined, adding that these are the key elements that the regulator is looking for to show that we are meeting regulations regarding tenant health and safety. SBW also reassured the Committee that PF carried out an investigation into whether any of our stock had been built with Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (also known as RAAC) but confirmed that none was found in any of our properties.

The whole process will be continued ahead of next year's Assurance Statement. The Committee was in agreement that this was a big improvement and made the processes much easier.

Decision: Committee approved the Annual Assurance Statement

9.2 Development 5 year Programme

Purpose - For Approval

Minute by Anna Drever

SBW explained that as a part of the engagement plan from the regulator, we had been asked for a 5 year programme at the same time as the Annual Assurance Statement. We have been asking for Stirling Council to present information about the SHIP, which was done at the last Development Sub-Committee meeting, with revised 2024 SHIP plans being presented to a council committee in mid-November.

SBW stated that whilst there haven't been big changes, Raploch 6 has been taken out for the next 5 years as the issues with Raploch 8 and 9 have yet to be resolved. The only development which has progressed is Cowiehall which was discussed at Management Committee before the Development Sub-Committee had been established. It was deemed to be desirable for Cowiehall to be brought into the 5 year plan, as it helps to fill in the gaps were Raploch 6 would have been.

KH stated that the starting point would be evidence provided by the SHIP, and asked about how much of the forthcoming stock would be Section 75 and how much would be acquisition? SBW responded that rapid changes to regulatory frameworks may cause issues but underlined that if planned development deals didn't financially contribute to the business, then we would not proceed with them.

KH added that it was unfortunate not to see progress on the Raploch development but accepted that the decisions taken were realistic given the current situation. JJ checked up on the dates for units, with SBW stating that they were ambitious, but that some offsite builds were CCG and fast to construct.

Decision: Committee approved the Development 5 Year Plan for submission to the SHR

9.3 December Strategy Day Planning – Verbal Update

Purpose - For Information

Minute by Anna Drever

SBW outlined that the December Strategy Day would be facilitated by Alison Smith on 8th December, and that it was very desirable to maximise attendance. The goal of last year's event was to refresh objectives and take stock of our current position. This year's goal would be to have a blank canvas and a different and more wholistic approach. SBW proposed that as part of the tenant engagement strategy, it would be a good idea to invite tenants to meet the committee members at the end of the day over a mince pie. LM added that this would also provide a great opportunity for tenants to find out more about the committee as a way to increase tenant participation and membership.

Decision: Committee noted the December Strategy Day plans

9.4 Notifiable Events

Purpose - For Approval

Minute by Anna Drever

SBW reported that we had been made aware of a tenant death at home. No third party is suspected and the death was not a result of service delivery, but we are awaiting confirmation about the cause of death from the police.

SBW stated that structural cracking at site 9 in Raploch had been the topic of a request from the Stirling Observer, but that they had not yet approached us directly. It has been approximately one year since a statement on this matter was given, but if any further or potential press activity is made known to us, then we will let the regulator know.

There have been no solutions found as of yet but revised programmes are being discussed and a separate programme for two occupied properties are coming in mid-November. According to Robertsons, much of what has emerged from meetings and investigations around solutions has, however, been positive. We have managed to allocate another house to an applicant to was waiting to be housed in site 9, with another still left for Billy Bremner Way. We have ensured that if this is refused, it will not be counted towards the applicant limit on refusals. This particular applicant has very specific needs, and it has been communicated that it is likely to continue into next year. JJ stated that it was important that this had been communicated well and clearly.

SBW added that changes to the Allocation Policy around access to children had improved things for many applicants.

SBW stated that the information in this item is for informational purposes rather than approval as these events are all on-going.

Decision: Committee approved the update on the notifiable events

10 Membership

Purpose - For Information

Minute by Anna Drever

None

11 Correspondence

Purpose - For Information

11.1 EVH October Update

Purpose - For Information

Minute by Anna Drever

SBW confirmed that this is a regular update from EVH

11.2 Letter from Paul McLennan MPS - Programme for Government 2023-2024: Equality, Opportunity, Community

11.3 SHR Update - Consultation on regulation of social housing in Scotland

Minute by Anna Drever

SBW explained that this correspondence related to consultation and had information about several events.

11.4 SHR Letter - Reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) - request for information

Minute by Anna Drever

This letter was requesting a response from all organisations. PF has checked and reviewed the FHA stock and concluded that we have satisfied the requirements. KH and JJ agreed that it was a relief that no RAAC had been found. PF outlined the evidence which had been checked over as part of this investigation to the Committee.

12 AOCB

Purpose - For Information

Minute by Anna Drever

SM proposed as new gas contract for the FHA office. Our previous contract had been procured through a broker and was with a fairly new supplier which has subsequently fallen through. SM has gone back to the broker, and been told that the new, proposed contract will cost an extra £1600. SM added that as gas prices change daily, she would like to request approval for the Committee to give SBW permission to sign off on a new contract. The reason for the additional cost is due to a previous fixed price deal which was agreed in 2019 having protected the organisation from the worst of the energy price increases of recent years. SBW added that whilst a fixed 2 year contract would cost more than a fixed 3 year contract, she believes that the

cost of energy may fall before the conclusion of a 3 year deal. SM informed the committee that this would be included in our mid-year budget review. AS agreed with SBW that a 3 year fixed term contract could lock us into higher prices unnecessarily, particularly if CPI is going down, which could suggest gas prices may come down too. SM added that the existing contract expired in July and that we are currently paying extra over the odds as the contract we were expecting didn't transpire. AS enquired whether the new contract would give a better per unit price. SM responded that it was 8.9 now, that a 3 year fixed term contract would be 6.69, and that a 1 year fixed term contract would be 7.19, so even on a flexible contract, we would be saving money. PM asked about whether it would be possible to exit the contract early if we were to find that a 3 year fixed term contract did not end up being the most economical option in years to come, as energy suppliers are not permitted to block customers from exiting a contract. SM added that whilst it is usually possible to exit a contract, that it could be very costly. SBW added that it would be a good idea to see if there was a breakout clause to see if we would put together some data on a few different options. KH added that the uncertainties around gas prices at present were complex, and that he didn't foresee a stabilisation in gas prices. As such KH stated that a 3 year fixed term contract may be the best deal, but that this would be speculative. AFG stated that whichever rate we decided on, the cost of gas would change the following day, and reasserted and clarified that SM was asking for the decision making powers on this matter to be given to SBW. SM confirmed that due to the rapidly changing nature of gas prices, it was impossible to bring any reliable prices to the Committee.

The Committee approved giving decision-making powers regarding a new gas contract for the FHA offices to SBW.

AFG added a Chair's Provision to ask the Committee whether they were satisfied with the process of sub-committee minutes.

The Committee confirmed that they were happy with the process.

Decision: The Committee approved delegating authority to SBW for decision-making powers regarding a new gas contract for the FHA offices.

13 Date of next meeting – Monday 27th November 2023 at 6:30pm

Purpose - For Information

Minute by Anna Drever

The date of the next Management Committee meeting on Monday 27th November 2023 was approved. The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions.