

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, 25th February 2025 6:30 pm

Hybrid meeting held at the BOILER HOUSE at 146 Drip Road Stirling and Via Microsoft Teams | Management Committee

Attendees

<p>Present</p> <p>Andrea Finkel-Gates (AFG) - <i>Chair</i> Ann Dickson (AD) – <i>Joint Vice Chair</i> Kenny Hutton (KH) - <i>Joint Vice Chair</i></p> <p>Andrea Mina (AM) Callum Wynd (CW) Hazel Robertson (HR)</p> <p>John Jenkins (JJ) Kerray Dawson (KD)</p> <p>By Teams</p> <p>Abira Sarwar (AS)** Elaine Rosie (ER) Jillian Fearnside (JF) Priscilla Maramba (PM) Cllr David Wilson (DW)</p>	<p>In attendance</p> <p>Sharon Brady-Wardrope (SBW)** - <i>Director</i> Garry Savage (GS)**** – <i>Head of Housing Services</i> Paul Fraser (PF)**** - <i>Senior Property Services Officer</i> Shona MacLeod (SM)**** - <i>Finance Officer</i> Samantha Buggy (SB)*** - <i>Head of Corporate Services</i></p> <p>Callum MacDougall (CM)** – <i>Minutes</i></p> <p>By Teams</p>
<p>Apologies</p>	<p>*Comment made on Decision Time (DT) **Excluded from item 7.5 only ***Excluded from items 7.5 and 9.1 ****Excluded from items 7.5, 9.1 & 9.3</p>

1. Chair's Statement

Purpose - For Information

The Chair welcomed all the committee and staff to the meeting.

2. Apologies

Purpose - For Information

None.

3. Declaration of Interest

Purpose - For Information

There was a declaration of interest from KD regarding the KPI paper where relet performance was being discussed as there is some connections with Stirling Council (SC), even though it may be a different department that KD works in, there is still that connection to SC and worth noting.

There was also a declaration of interest from AS regarding the agenda item 7.5 - Employers Ballot (Pay Negotiations) which was noted by the committee.

4.1 Draft Management Committee - 26th November 2024

Purpose - For Approval

A number of minor corrections to the minutes were noted on Decision Time (DT) and with the changes made from the notes by Committee members on DT, these minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

Decision: Approved

4.2 Unconfirmed Audit & Risk Sub Committee - 11th February 2025

Purpose - For Information

A minor correction to the minute was noted on Decision Time (DT) and the change was made accordingly.

These minutes were for information only and will be presented at the next Audit & Risk Sub Committee (ARSC) meeting for approval. The MC noted these unconfirmed minutes.

Decision: Noted

4.3 Unconfirmed Development Sub Committee - 21st January 2025

Purpose - For Information

These minutes were for information only and will be presented at the next Development Sub

Committee (DSC) meeting for approval. The MC noted these unconfirmed minutes.

Decision: Noted

5.1 Referrals from Audit & Risk Sub Committee

5.1.1 A&R - 6.1 Internal Audit Report

Purpose - For Information

The Chair highlighted that comments had been made and responded to on DT regarding this referral and asked the committee if anyone had anything further to add.

*HR asked if all the tenant feedback results, including planned maintenance surveys, which are reported back to the Senior Management Team (SMT) will include results from post completion surveys with tenants in new developments. SB indicated that yes, we will include new tenant surveys.

As there was no further questions at this time, the MC noted the referral from the ARSC regarding the Internal Audit Report as this referral was for information only.

Decision: Noted

5.1.3 A&R - 8.1 Q3 Performance Report

Purpose - For Information

The Chair highlighted that no comments had been made on DT regarding this referral and asked the committee if anyone had anything further to add.

SBW drew attention to the last referral within the Internal Audit report, noting that there was really good feedback about including an additional gas audit that could be done later in the year. SBW added that we will be putting this in place following the improvement.

SBW mentioned the refusals, which is within the performance report, regarding our ongoing work with Stirling Council (SC) in trying to improve some of the background information to do with the nominations to make sure that people know exactly what they are getting offered before any acceptance or refusal is made. SBW also noted that we are working with SC on the development that had a high number of refusals based on location to see if there can be any type of wider action taken to help make this location more appealing to people who will be offered this area in the future. GS added that he has been in contact with SC and will be following this up in the coming weeks.

As there was no further questions at this time, the MC noted the referral from the ARSC regarding the Q3 Performance Report as this referral was for information only.

Decision: Noted

5.1.4 A&R - 9.1 Q3 Management Accounts

Purpose - For Approval

The Chair highlighted that no comments had been made on DT regarding this referral and asked the committee if anyone had anything further to add.

KH asked if there is a maximum threshold on gearing that we should be careful of or at least keep an eye on. SM explained that the budget is 89.88 and we are actually sitting lower at 82 but it should be closer to 89.13 by the estimated to date. SM added that this is included in the 30-year budget and that it is projected positively over the next 30 years.

SBW mentioned that we have also tried to look at the trend of the ratios and gearing to allow us to see any indication of where it's heading. That process will also get refined over the course of the next year but right now there doesn't seem any cause for concern but there is a maximum.

As there was no further questions at this time, the MC approved the referral from the ARSC regarding the Q3 Management Accounts as this referral was for approval.

Decision: Approved

5.1.5 A&R - 9.4 Final Budget

Purpose - For Approval

The Chair highlighted that a comment had been made and responded to on DT regarding this referral and asked the committee if anyone had anything further to add.

JJ had suggested the potential introduction of a "spend now, to save in the future" fund. AFG asked if this is similar or the same as setting up a contingency fund rather than only looking at planned works which would most likely come out of the stock condition survey results. SBW highlighted the importance of how we should be presenting our savings in different areas of the business to show that we have been making changes that will positively affect our finances going forward and how we record this will help us be able to plan how we utilise these savings in the future.

AM added that, in relation to IT/ Software systems, have we looked at our annual cost and figures for migrating Housing Management Software systems. SM explained that we should be hitting even for what we are paying at the moment but switching to one system that can facilitate everything we need rather than having three separate systems to work from, even though it won't save us any money right now, the efficiency and staff time will be greatly improved on.

AM suggested it would be worth doing a cost to benefit analysis, which SBW agreed would take place and is also something that would be brought to MC for reviewing.

As there was no further questions at this time, the MC approved the referral from the ARSC regarding the Final Budget as this referral was for approval.

Decision: Approved

~ PM joined the meeting at this point ~

5.2 Referrals from Development Sub Committee

5.2.1 DEV - 6.2 Q3 Performance Report

Purpose - For Information

The Chair highlighted that no comments had been made on DT regarding this referral and asked the committee if anyone had anything further to add.

KH gave a brief overview of this report to MC to help explain some of the main points.

[REDACTED – CONFIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL SENSITIVE INFORMATION]

AD asked how the Pirnhall project is coming along and if we are on track. KH explained that a completion date for the affordable units has been given for April/ May 2025, so this is positive news for us. SBW also added that we had been given grant allocation from the 1st of April, as there was no funding prior to this year, however we have been informed by the investment team to say that it's now going to be Alia Funding and our grant offer has been withdrawn. This means that we will now get all the money upfront instead.

As there was no further questions at this time, the MC noted the referral from the DSC regarding the Q3 Performance Report as this referral was for information only.

Decision: Noted

6. Operations

None.

7.1 Close Cleaning Tender - DEFFERED TO MARCH MC

Purpose - For Approval

7.2 External Audit Plan - Verbal Update

Purpose - For Information

SM provided this verbal report which was to inform the MC that the Interim Audit took place yesterday and today and all went well. The full Audit will commence the week beginning the 7th of July and all the final financial statements should be completed by the 31st of July for the Audit & Risk Sub Committee (ARSC) meeting in August and Alexander Sloans have confirmed their attendance for the ARSC, MC and the Annual General Meeting (AGM) for this year.

SM also noted that the Audit Plan came back this afternoon and will be shared with MC shortly.

As there was no further questions at this time, the MC noted this verbal report as this was for

information only.

Decision: Noted

7.3 Insurance Quotes - Verbal Update

Purpose - For Information

SB provided this verbal report which informed the MC that the insurance quotes are still not back yet but will hopefully be back in time for the next MC meeting at the end of March.

There was a brief discussion around the market conditions by MC and noted that we await the results from the brokers at this time.

As there was no further questions at this time, the MC noted this verbal report as this was for information only.

Decision: Noted

7.4 Treasury Management Update

Purpose - For Approval

SM covered this report which presented the information to allow MC to homologate the Office Bearers decision to deposit £500k with Nationwide Building Society.

SM added that due to the pressure of time, approval was sought from Office Bearers for the Association in line with our policy, to invest £500k with Nationwide Building Society via the Flag-stone Deposit portal at an indicative rate of 3.75% for 12 months which now requires the full committee to homologate the decision. To enable the spread of deposits among different banks, we are also seeking approval for the use of HSBC and Santander for short-term deposits on the Flag-stone Platform.

There was one minor typo noted on DT relating to this report which was noted and will be amended.

As there was no further questions at this time, the MC approved this report as this was for approval and approved Santander and HSBC for potential future investments.

Decision: Approved

7.5 Employers Ballot – Pay negotiations *CONFIDENTIAL*

Purpose - For Approval

~ This item was agreed to be taken at the end of the meeting as it was confidential and allowed for the flow of the meeting to continue ~

All staff & DW had left the meeting at this point before this item was discussed

- CONFIDENTIAL MINUTE TAKEN -

SBW outlined this report to the Committee before leaving the room for the MC to discuss it further.

The Committee confirmed their response to the Employers Ballot (Pay Negotiations) after discussions had taken place.

Decision: Approved

7.6 Rent Review 2025-26

Purpose - For Approval

SBW covered this report which was presented to the MC to seek approval for the agreed rent increase of 5.1% for 2025/26.

SBW highlighted some of the main points within the report, one of which was that our return rate was just shy of 30%, which is really good and is one of the highest returns across the sector. SBW praised the team for all their hard work and effort that had been put into achieving this result.

SBW noted that there has been discussions previously around Consumer Price Index (CPI) being a useful indicator when it comes to the increase and that is correct but the reality is that it should also be based on what our actual costs are as a business because suppliers are not putting things up by CPI or CPIH. We are seeing the increases vary from 5% right up to 8% in some instances, so we really need to be looking at our costs and assuring ourselves that we are being as efficient as possible, making savings where we can and that we have the right framework in our business plan so that we are able to deliver our services.

AFG noted that it's very important that we make sure that tenants know why we are putting up the rent and what it is we are providing because of it.

DW gave a brief summary of Stirling Council's (SC) rent situation to help provide a little extra background/ context to some of the figures provided about SC in the report and other Local Authorities (LA). Having a comparison between ourselves and SC would be useful to see and have if that could be provided, which SBW noted we can provide after tonight's meeting.

KH praised the work of the Income Maximisation team and how crucial the work they do is and the amount of support they provide tenants with is amazing.

As there was no further questions at this time, the MC approved this report as this was for approval.

Decision: Approved

8.1 Policy Review

8.1.1 Procurement Policy

Purpose - For Approval

PF covered this report which was presented to the MC to update and seek approval on the

revised Procurement Policy, which has been approved already by the ARSC but our Development Consultant has proposed minor amendments, hence why it is recommended that the committee note the amendments made and approve this as the final version.

As there was no further questions at this time, the MC approved this report as this was for approval.

Decision: Approved

9.1 Notifiable Events *CONFIDENTIAL*

Purpose - For Information

~ This item was agreed to be taken at the end of the meeting as it was confidential and allowed for the flow of the meeting to continue ~

All staff & DW except SBW and CM had left the meeting at this point before this item was discussed

- CONFIDENTIAL MINUTE TAKEN -

SBW outlined this report to the Committee.

The Committee gave approval of the Notifiable Events update.

Decision: Approved

9.2 Directors Report - IF REQUIRED

Purpose - For Information

Not Required.

9.3 Business Strategy Update

Purpose - For Approval

~ Item 9.4 was taken before this item ~

All staff & DW except SBW, SB, and CM left the meeting at this point before this item was discussed

SBW covered this report which was presented to the MC that highlighted the Business Planning Day had by MC and Staff feedback reports that were collated by Alison Smith from Allanpark consultants. Also, presented for approval is the Draft Strategic Map which has been drafted as a result of the planning day discussions.

SBW mentioned that the approach for Forth now is to present a fresh modern approach to our business strategy and the Strategic Map. There is no separate vision statement. The vision (or ambition) is set out within the first sentence beneath each strategic goal. Our values remain the same but we would benefit from some further explanation which is why SBW has asked MC to

take part in an exercise related to this topic and agenda item.

~ At this point, the MC completed a values exercise that was based around trying to tease out what's important to us as an organisation/ governing body and what's important to each individual as a committee member for what the values, ethics and ethos of the business should be. ~

As there was no further questions at this time, the MC approved this report as this was for approval.

Decision: Approved

9.4 Annual Risk Register - Red Risks Only

Purpose - For Approval

~ This item was taken before item 9.3 ~

SBW covered this report which was presented to the MC to update on our current top rated red risks and to give assurance that all appropriate actions are taken to reduce the financial and reputational risk to the organisation.

SBW mentioned that some comments had been made from the ARSC which have been added and amended as part of this report. The report highlights that we are in a good position due to the small number of red risks presented. There will be a full refresh of the risk register that will come along with the business strategy near the end of April/ May as well.

AFG highlighted that there are 3 areas shown within the report that are actually risks we have limited control over in that they are external cyber risks, which tends to be a common theme for the few remaining red risks that are normally left over.

DW asked why we haven't flagged Ransomware within our risks, as it can be a big risk to an organisation if it's not in place. DW gave an example of when this happened to another business and explained how they had significant damage due to it. This should be done through your cyber essentials and DW noted that if we do need any support around this then he would be more than happy to help. SB thanked DW for this unput and mentioned that we will be reaching out to our IT company to confirm this is in place.

*****Post meeting note – this is in place*****

As there was no further questions at this time, the MC approved this report as this was for approval.

Decision: Approved

10. Membership - None.

11. Correspondence

Purpose - For Information

SBW noted that we've have had a request from the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) on behalf of the Scottish Government (SG) to collect some additional data in regard to long term voids which is to be submitted by the 28th of March. This will be provided as per the request.

12. AOCB

13. Date of Next Meeting - 25th March 2025

The date for the next Management Committee meeting on Tuesday the 25th of March 2025 was approved. The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance this evening.