

MINUTES OF THE **VIRTUAL** MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT OF WHITEINCH AND SCOTSTOUN HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD HELD AT 6.15PM ON WEDNESDAY 24th FEBRUARY 2021

Present : C Watson (Chairperson) – for part of meeting
C Ennemoser
L Stevenson
B MacDonald
R Hunter
R Carrigan
L Mimmagh

In attendance : I Morrison Chief Executive
K Szulc HR & Support Services Officer (Minutes)
A Reid Financial Services Manager
J Gordon Property Services Manager
K McQueen Deputy Chief Executive
J Calderwood Housing Manager

1. **APOLOGIES**

C Watson (attended part of meeting), A Bruce, D Keaveney, and S Leighton who is on a leave of absence.

2. **CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS/COMMITTEE – STAFF NEWS**

C Ennemoser chaired the meeting in the Chairperson's absence. Pepe Miguez celebrated a milestone birthday recently. Andrew Reid celebrates 25 years of employment with WSHA. Congratulations to both.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

L Mimmagh, as an owner, noted she should not be part of the Bulk Waste voting later in the meeting. C Ennemoser declared an interest in Item 10, as a staff member of a Registered Social Landlord.

4. **MINUTES OF MEETING OF 16th DECEMBER 2020**

The minutes of the meeting of 16th December 2020 were approved by R Hunter and seconded by L Stevenson.

5. **MATTERS ARISING**

None.

6. **MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

None.

7. **CORONAVIRUS/COVID 19: COMMITTEE UPDATE**

Ian Morrison said he is keeping an eye on government statements and the potential easing of restrictions over the coming months. A Committee Member noted the staff wellbeing element of the information provided and suggested that as well as the Share Wellbeing programme, that it may help staff to receive a letter from Committee. The Deputy Chief Executive (DCE) said that in addition to the Christmas gift that was given to staff, a follow up letter might be a good idea. Ian Morrison said that it would be the anniversary of the lockdown in a few weeks, so could be timed with that. In response to a Committee Member's question, it was confirmed that staff absence had not increased

during lockdown.

8. **FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO 31st DECEMBER 2020**

The Financial Services Manager (FSM) said that income is down as expected and highlighted that the balance sheet showed cash of £6m+, with no real spend on KBR. The reserves show £1m at 31/12/20, which is not a real surplus. There were no questions, but a Committee Member highlighted an error in date on page 12 where date showed 30/3/20. The FSM said that some items would be capitalised towards the end of March and should then show £1.5m surplus at year-end. The position with the pension fund is unknown. The costs would be light for the first 6 months of 2021/22, with a view to being able to generate real expenditure around August/September. The KBR project would be extended out. L Mimmagh approved the accounts and L Stevenson seconded them. The loan is currently sitting at £1.5m with deposits of £3m earning no interest. We are complying with covenants at 31/12/20 with these figures ready to be sent to the Clydesdale Bank. R Carrigan and C Ennemoser approved and seconded these.

9. **BULK UPLIFT**

The Housing Manager (HM) had reported previously that GCC had suspended the current bulk uplift service in March 2020, starting it up again in November/December 2020. They are stopping the existing service and are offering an appointment system – the resident books and advises what will be included in the uplift up to a maximum of ten items. GCC will then pick up only those items listed, within 28 days. From December 2020 to March 2021 this is a free service, thereafter at a cost of £35 per booking. The HM said that it is not considered a practical position for our stock or us. It was questioned if people would pay £35 for each uplift, would other residents add to their bulk, the backcourts would be a mess with H&S implications such as vermin and increased fly-tipping in the area. Following discussions with WSES to see how viable it would be to provide a bulk uplift service weekly, the service charge for this is outlined in the report and seems to be the better option for estate management, H&S and the local environment. The Property Services Manager (PSM) said that they had looked at the options and resource implications and with the unpaid help that WSES have provided, the backcourts look good just now. An issue with the GCC option is that any bulk waste could potentially sit for 28 days and this would be a continual problem. WSES could provide this service by increasing their resources with two full time staff members and one cage tipper van, the cost being around £78k per annum. This would allow WSES to do a weekly pickup in five areas per week, thus ensuring minimum build up in backcourts. This would equate to approximately £43.30 per annum service charge for tenants and owners, compared to an each time cost of £35 per uplift via GCC. The cost would be included with rent for tenants, but owners would be charged an additional £43.30. The fly-tipping would also be collected. A Committee Member said that she did not agree with this. It was clarified that bulk is not included in council tax, that GCC would charge £35 per uplift, whereas we would charge £43.30 per annum for a weekly uplift. The same Committee Member said that she did not agree with the £43.30 annual uplift to rent, equating to £3.61 per week for rent increase. Ian Morrison reminded Committee that there was no rent increase this year, that the service provided through GCC could mean that the bulk waste sits for up to 28 days compared to our 5 days. The alternative would be H&S issues and potential chaos with the new GCC system. The DCE clarified that tenants would not be charged twice and the Committee Member acknowledged this, but she just did not agree with this being added to rent. The HM said that the WSES model offered a more manageable service as opposed to the probable GCC mess, vermin and time limits. The same Committee Member said that there were couches and bed sitting behind the offices at 1 Northinch Court, that it was a mess, and that no one from WSHA had done anything about it. The HM said that the WSES proposed service was not in place yet, that they aren't checking everywhere at

the moment, just helping out as required, but that he would make them aware of this issue. Another Committee Member said that bulk waste is left randomly without anyone knowing and WSES have worked hard doing a favour clearing it up. The PSM said that when the GCC paid for system starts, the backlash would be massive, so something needs to be put in place now. A Committee Member said that the bins are not done properly by GCC, so there is no confidence that they can provide the bulk uplift service either. She was aware that she could not vote, but wanted to give her opinion. A Committee Member asked if WSES would definitely need two full time members of staff recruited to meet the service requirements. The DCE said that because they had been providing the ad hoc service over the last period due to there being no close cleaning or ground works, that WSES knew that it would take two full time staff members to provide this service. A Committee Member asked how these staff would be recruited. The DCE said that these posts were normally advertised through Indeed. She said that previously they had advertised locally including via the Job Club, but that the Job Club was not currently running. We try to recruit locally and some staff members are local, some are not. The PSM said that WSHA do not have the majority to go ahead and make decision on this service, that owners needed to be consulted. If a majority of owners vote no, then the service would be restricted to specific areas, but hopefully they would see the benefit, but we need to see the consultation results. A Committee Member said that GCC have now changed the green bin uplifts to three weekly and that she would definitely be in favour. On a vote, the proposal was carried with four members agreeing with the recommendation.

10. **2021 SALARY NEGOTIATIONS**

The DCE said that EVH had requested that the Committee respond to the latest ballot. She had informed them previously that the Committee preferred the previous agreement but EVH's intention is to go to the union and employers with 0.8% this year, 1% the following year. She asked what the Committee wanted to do. C Ennemoser stepped back from this, as she would have a declaration of interest in working for another HA. The remaining Members indicated that they were happy to accept this.

11. **BUSINESS OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

Ian Morrison said that this is an exercise that should be carried out based on the age profile of the Executive Team. It is expected when a Senior Officer leaves, but it is good practice to do it in advance. He was unsure what his plans for the future are, but looking at the age profile of the whole team, it would be better to start the process sooner than later. It allows us to make decisions such as whether to replace like-for-like, or implement other changes like merging, or sharing services and so on. And it is something that is required by the Regulator. It could cost up to £15k using an external consultant who would demonstrate an independent view. A Committee Member asked how long a Business Options Appraisal outcome would be viable. Ian Morrison said that he thought it would be valid for at least a couple of years and that in terms of his situation, his departure would likely be within this. Another Committee Member said that he would not want to start the process too early and rush into it, but thinking about it now would allow the Committee to set the agenda, so that when Ian Morrison decides to retire, this would be in accordance with the Regulator's thinking. Another Member said that she had previously highlighted this. Asked to join a short-term working group on this, R Hunter and C Ennemoser volunteered. The Committee were happy to proceed with the proposal. The DCE confirmed that as the process moved forward, all Committee Members would be involved and have a voice.

12. **NEIGHBOURHOOD & COMMUNITIES SLA RENEWAL**

The HM said that GCC who provide the Neighbourhood & Sustainability service had proposed to increase the annual fee for 2021/2022 Service Level Agreement (SLA) by

3.5%. This was challenged and they came back with a final proposed increase of 2%. During lockdown, the Community Relations Officers had poor access to their systems which severely hampered their ability to provide their normal level of service. It has improved recently and the hope is that going forward they will return to their previous standards. The recommendation for Committee is to approve the renewal of the SLA for next year based on 2% increase. A Committee Member expressed her concern that we did not get the correct level of service during lockdown, but acknowledged that she has had a lot of dealings with them and generally they do a good job. The HM agreed the Community Relations Officers who lead the service are good and knowledgeable and did their best throughout the pandemic and that the service issue was more about the lack of IT support available for GCC. The Committee agreed to the renewal of the SLA with GCC Neighbourhoods & Sustainability for 2021/2022 on the basis of the 2% increase in fee.

13. **RENT RESTRUCTURE EXERCISE: TENANT SURVEY**

The HM reminded the Committee that they had agreed to a rent restructure exercise in December 2019. WSHA currently have 391 rents over 1,300 properties and many of these rents do not reflect our and ex-GHA properties. Northstar Consultants were appointed. The restructure exercise was initially planned for June last year with implementation at 28/3/21, however with lockdown, this was disrupted. The decision was made to delay the rent restructure implementation until March 2022, whilst continuing the work with the consultant in the meantime. The rent model is now set and has been provisionally approved by the Executive Team with the view being that it is a workable and appropriate model. It will be shared with the Officers for their feedback, as they know the properties with a view to putting to tenant consultation around April/May time. The feedback from the tenant consultation will be discussed with the Executive Team and the Consultant and will be presented to the Committee mid-June for Members' approval, ready for implementation in March 2022. Committee noted and approved continuation of process. Tenant Committee Members were asked to participate in the consultation.

14. **RECRUITMENT AND STAFFING REPORT**

The DCE confirmed that David McCormack and Kevin McGhee had commenced employment with WSHA as Projects Officer and Senior Repairs Officer respectively. Jim Calderwood would be retiring from his post as Housing Manager in the summer. There will be a recruitment plan for his replacement agreed with the Staffing Sub-Committee. The DCE highlighted that as many potential replacements may be on a 12-week notice period, it may take longer to recruit. Craig McGarry, temporary Housing Officer has been offered a contract extension, focussing on lettings. A Committee Member asked about lettings and the DCE explained that lettings were suspended because of lockdown and the staff have worked on a procedure to enable lettings to recommence in March – a much slower process. The Committee Member also asked about the situation of voids being given to Section 5 referrals. The HM said that some properties had been offered to some Section 5 referrals, but as we only started letting two weeks ago, it has taken time to get more. There has only been one sign-up so far, with the next being March-time. From then, it will primarily be Section 5 referrals, but that is dependent on how well the cases can be referred to us and GCC may not be up to scratch with qualified referrals. In October, three per week were let, but we need to wait and see with safety being priority, and the quality of referrals of course. There were 70 voids. As long as we offer 90% to referrals, we can then default to the housing list, but until this is accurate, it can be difficult. Taking section 5 referrals could get the voids down. Not everyone in that category has support needs, but we have told GCC that we need to know those who do have support needs. It was noted we were previously allocating 40% to section 5, 40% to waiting list and 20% to transfer list, but just before

Covid, they were wanting section 5 upped to 50%. The HM said that compared to other RSL's in the west area we are behind, but going forward all are going to section 5. The Chair asked if it was as simple as making an offer to section 5, then if it is declined, does it still tick the percentage box. The HM said that priority is getting the housing list up to date, medical forms etc. and its not an easy fix, but once it is up to date, then a section 5 would be offered and if it is a reasonable offer and refused by a section 5, it could then go to the normal list. Transfers would also be priority if needed rather than aspirational.

15. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The DCE said that the Audit Subcommittee would need to meet in April in relation to internal audit. She also said that L Mimmagh and L Stevenson should expect papers tomorrow regarding a quick turnaround for WSES. The FSM said that RSM would be providing the audit plan for the coming year and paperwork should follow.

16. **DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Ian Morrison said that the Budget Meeting needed to take place before the end of March and the date for this was agreed as 31st March 2021 as full Committee Meeting.