

## **PAISLEY HOUSING ASSOCIATION**

### **MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 22 FEBRUARY 2021 AT 6.30PM**

**Due to the Corona Virus, we are unable to have face to face meetings. This meeting was a virtual meeting.**

Present: Jim Weir, Ian Johnstone, Karen McMillan, Eileen Graham, Saroj Bains, Mairi Maclean, Michelle Hart, Sandra Loney, Beth Arthur & Scott Tsuru.

In Attendance: Kathleen McCutcheon, Lorna Colville, Lorna Gilroy, Elaine Thomson and Sandra Marshall.

#### **1a) APOLOGIES**

Apologies received from Lisa-Jane Dock – special leave requested.

#### **b) RECORD ON ANY POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Item 8 - Pensions

#### **2a) MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 18.1.2021**

Proposed by Jim Weir seconded by Karen McMillan

#### **b) MATTERS ARISING**

Head of Finance provided update on the CAF loan. This was drawn down on Monday and we will look to invest this money within the CAF portal.

#### **3) CONSULTATION FEEDBACK FOR RENT & SERVICE CHARGES**

Head of Housing provided breakdown of responses and feedback from the rent consultation. There were 6 more responses after the report had been completed, bringing total to 88. Of these, 5 agreed and 1 disagreed.

Regarding service charges, we had initially noted a worst case scenario which was a potential increase of 20% for garden maintenance, but after receiving the tenders, we are delighted that there will be a 0% increase.

Chief Exec also confirmed that during the pandemic, where people did not receive a service, we refunded the charge for the service. Due to government guidelines, we have been unable to complete our planned maintenance programme this year.

**Board Approved the proposed rent & service charge increases for 2021.22.**

#### **4) CONSULTATION FEEDBACK FOR PLANNED & CYCLICAL MAINTENANCE**

Head of Technical confirmed there were fewer responses for the Planned & Cyclical maintenance proposal but majority agreed with programme. This has been a difficult

year due to the pandemic and doing spot checks has proven to be difficult. Tenants are also concerned about Covid and letting contractors into their homes.

Question was asked about when stock condition survey is due and although this is due to be completed, we have to follow government guidelines as to when we will be allowed into people's homes.

One Board member had been flooded and although electrician and plumber had been called out was querying the next stage. Head of Technical confirmed that our Technical Officer will contact the Board member direct.

### **Board Approved the planned maintenance programme**

Head of Technical left the meeting at 19.00

### **5) ANNUAL REVIEW OF BUYING AND SELLING STRATEGY**

Head of Housing confirmed that there had been no purchases or sales during the pandemic. Looking forward we would continue with the same principals within our Buying and Selling strategy.

**Board Approved.**

### **6) SCOTTISH REFUGEE COUNCIL PROPOSAL**

Head of Housing confirmed that a similar report was being presented to other FLAIR members and we believe the FLAIR body as a partnership can make a positive impact. Refugees quite often need specialist support and this partnership would be a positive step to receiving support which in turn will assist with tenancy sustainment. Question was asked if this was in addition to our usual homelessness agreement and it is in addition. Head of Housing did say that refugees can apply for housing directly and be rehoused through this route too. Several board members commented that they felt this was a very good and positive proposal.

**Board Approved.**

### **7) MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS Q3 – DEC 2020**

Head of Finance and IT confirmed performance to quarter end was better than budget, mainly due to delayed spend and grant funding. No further questions

**Board Approved.**

### **8) PENSIONS UPDATE REPORT**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**Board approved the new pension option offered by PHA as noted in report from July 2021.**

**9) UPDATE ON CORONAVIRUS REPORT**

Chief Exec confirmed that the level of sickness has reduced during the pandemic and the staff member who had covid is now back at work.

Head of Housing notified the Board on award of funding under the Communities Recovery Fund which will provide

- a) Easter activity boxes for 12 – 15 year olds
- b) Supermarket vouchers for a family meal
- c) Funding to extend Welfare Benefits Assistant contract

**Board Noted.**

Head of Finance and IT left the meeting 19.27

## **10) UPDATE ON ASSURANCE HOUSE**

Chief Exec confirmed that we are making a gradual move to Assurance House. Our IT, server and phone system have moved over and we now have a faster system. We had contingency measures in place and initial issues are now resolved. New desks will be arriving this week. We will use Assurance House as our office from April. A 'To Let/May Sell' sign will be going up at 64 Espedair Street late February. Tenants will be informed of the move. There has been some vandalism at the Lawn Street entrance at Assurance House which when you consider how long the building has been empty for, we have potentially been lucky not to have had more.

**Board Noted.**

## **11) PLAN FOR HEAD OF HOUSING RETIREMENT**

Chief Exec confirmed that our Head of Housing will be retiring at the end of May. The HR Sub discussed this at their meeting in January. It has been agreed not to recruit immediately but to take a bit of time to see what will happen because of the pandemic. Also we have very capable staff we can utilise and develop meantime. Housing Manager will take on the full housing section. Our Factoring Assistant will take on all factoring and development with a temp upgrade. Our Welfare Benefit Officer will take on all funding applications and will also have Welfare Benefits Assistant and the Digital Assistant answer to him. He will receive a responsibility allowance. We did have EVH complete a job evaluation to ensure we were being fair with what was on offer. Chief Exec has spoken to all concerned and they are happy with updated roles. Formal letters will be sent out to them this week or next.

There was a brief discussion around our Business Plan which was scheduled for March 2021, but because of pandemic and Head of Housing Retirement, it was agreed that this should be delayed. We will review this in November with a view to doing Business Plan 22/23. Chief Exec will contact Alison Smith who was due to assist us with our Business Plan to let her know it is delayed.

**Board Approved**

## **12) BOARD APPRAISAL AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

Chief Exec confirmed this updated policy better reflects what we currently do.

**Board Approved.**

## **13) GWSF MAINIFESTO FOR SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS**

No comments or feedback to GWSF.

**Board Noted.**

#### **14) EVH PAY DEAL BALLOT PAPER**

Pay deal agreed by Board. Chief Exec will complete ballot paper and return it.

**Board Approved.**

#### **15) HR SUB MINUTES FOR OCT 2020**

**Board Noted.**

#### **16) AOCB**

- Alison McKeown has handed in her resignation from the Board and thanked everyone for making her feel welcome.

**Board Noted.**

- Lisa-Jane Dock has requested Special Leave potentially until June, with the understanding that should she be able to attend any meetings before then, she will do so.

**Board Approved.**

- Head of Housing confirmed that the Board members have completed a digital survey to confirm skills and confidence levels to participate in Board meetings virtually. There are varying levels of skill and confidence which reflects how diverse our Board members are. Some Board members are not too confident and it is a big ask for them. We are trying to assist with giving guidance and support. Our Digital Assistant has started to make up a library of guidelines on how to action certain tasks which can be shared individually or as a group.

Chief Exec said that we will be moving to Microsoft Teams and we want to make it as easy / comfortable as we can for everyone involved.

**Board Noted.**

#### **17) DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Next Board meeting will be on Monday 29<sup>TH</sup> March 2021.

Meeting finished at 8.00pm