

PAISLEY HOUSING ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 29th JANUARY 2024 AT 6.30PM

This meeting was a hybrid meeting via Teams

Present in office: Karen McMillan & Elaine Templeton.

Present via Teams: Emmanuel Dufegha, Sandra Loney, Tina Russell, Neil McCall & Laura Clark

In Attendance in Office: Kathleen McCutcheon, Duncan McKnight & Sandra Marshall

In Attendance via Teams: Alan Graham & Lorna Colville

1a) APOLOGIES

Apologies received from Ian Johnstone, Tracy Fraser & Craig Reid.

Special Leave: Michelle Hart & Mairi Maclean (requested 29.1.24)

b) RECORD ON ANY POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

none

2a) MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 27/11/23

Minutes of meeting agreed. Proposed Karen McMillan and seconded by Tina Russell

b) MATTERS ARISING

We had correspondence from the Regulator, who upon reading our minutes for our Nov 23 meeting, felt it was unclear whether the Strategic Options Appraisal Agenda Item has been approved. It did not actually state this on the minutes. So it is now confirmed that the Board approved for Paisley HA to stay as an Independent Entity.

We will highlight to those actioning the minutes the importance of confirming whether an agenda item has been approved or noted as per the Agenda.

The regulator has asked for several pieces of information and had mentioned that a couple of the redacted minutes could be viewed on line. This issue has now been resolved and all further information has been provided to them.

Board Approved Strategic Options Appraisal Agenda Item on the Nov 23 minutes.

3) Energy Survey

Advice & Projects Manager provided a brief description of the Energy Survey carried out recently. We received 145 responses, which we felt was quite good response

rate, the survey did show that a high number of tenants were struggling with their energy bills. As part of the survey we asked if tenants wanted to be contacted for advice, we have been working through contacting these tenants to offer advice, prioritising those who have energy debt.

A question was asked regarding the types of meters, the Advice & Projects Manager explained the difference between Credit and Pre-payment meters.

This was on Agenda saying to be Approved, but should have said to be Noted as no decisions had to be made.

Board Noted.

4) Draft Rent & Service Charge Report

CE explained the process and also that we now had further information about Bulk / Bin Uplift and Garden Maintenance service charges, now the relevant tenders are completed. Ranges for changes to Garden Maintenance were provided as the changes varied and were specific to an individual garden or close. It was noted we will also have a major review of our rent setting policy in 24/25 to determine the structure going forward. The consultation process for rents and service charges for 24/25 will start tomorrow and we have found that more people respond when we use digital / online methods. CE then detailed the updated costs. It was also mentioned that some HA's who had lower increases in the last year or so are finding that not sustainable and have had to have much higher increases pencilled in for this year. One board member stated the PHA rents were very favourable in comparison with the private sector rents but also with very well-maintained buildings, which you don't always have with other landlords. CE also reminded board that tenants also have access to energy and welfare advice at PHA. Another board member questioned what happens if someone cannot afford the increase. Our Advice & Projects Manager explained that the National Living Wage is increasing (9.8%), as well as increased rent. UC (by 6.4%) and HB should also increase. There will be assistance/ advice on hand to help anyone who is struggling. The very last resort is eviction, but this is not an occurrence which happens regularly or lightly. We also have a Tenancy Sustainment Officer who help to prevent people becoming homeless.

Board Approved the proposed rent & service charges for 2024/25 for tenant consultation.

Advice & Projects Manager left the meeting at 7.20

5) Draft Planned & Cyclical Maintenance Report

Asset Manager explained some of the issues most HA's have experienced recently, high inflation, high costs for both materials and staffing. Asset Manager explained that we are looking to commence early procurement in Feb/Mar. Using frameworks

including iFLAIR and PFH which provides access to good reputable contractors. Board member asked what works are planned for newbuild at Broomlands St. Asset Manger will get back to them direct.

Board Approved year one (2024-2025) of the draft planned maintenance and cyclical programme for 2024-2029 for tenant consultation.

Tina R left the meeting 19.26

Asset Manager left meeting 19.30

6) Draft 5 year Financial Plan

Head of Finance and IT briefly went over the draft 5 year plan which is based on assumption of 5.5% rent increase and draft planned maintenance programme, both approved tonight. It was noted 5% has been assumed for salary increases , but we have now been informed EVH are consulting employers on 5.5% to be discussed at the next Board Meeting. It was also noted we cannot assume that we will continue to get Stage 3 grant funding in future. Board member questioned if PHA funding towards Orchard Street was all being paid by using PHA money and is there a plan B to borrow money if required. Head of Finance and IT confirmed that we have a plan B, an in-principle agreement with CAF bank to borrow £2m if required.

It was noted the final draft will be presented in March following the rent, service charges and planned maintenance programme agreement in February.

Board Approved the draft 5 year financial plans and the assumptions therein.

7) Annual Signing of H & S Responsibilities 2024

Corporate Services Officer explained that these responsibilities had been sent out to all board members and we are only waiting on 2 replies. All others have confirmed agreement with the H & S Responsibilities.

Board Approved.

8) Update on Assurance Statement

CE explained that SHR contacted PHA early December looking for more assurance on Tenant Safety even after SHR visit in May 23. CE drew attention to App 1 which lists all the tenant safety activities we have completed. CE confirmed that we should provide more details on our Assurance statement in future. The Board are aware of the extra information provided.

Board Approved.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Board Approved.

10) 64 Espedair Street – Offer of Purchase

CE confirmed that we had received an informal offer to purchase our old office at 64 Espedair Street. CE explained that we are still going through the due diligence process. If it becomes a formal offer, CE recommends accepting it.

The Board Approved accepting the offer for the sale of the property and the sale of the property proceeds under the guidance of TC young.

11) AOCB

a) Properties to Purchase report

CE provided brief description of ROTS (Rent of The Shelf) – purchasing properties on the open market. We have 1 or 2 in the pipeline and will get a grant for each purchase.

Board Approved delegated authority from the Board to the Head of Asset Management to spend up to £210k to proceed with the purchase & associated works for three properties, purchases to be completed before 31st March 2024 to maximize the availability of the ROTS funding.

b) Mairi Maclean – request for 2 months special leave for Jan & Feb.

Board Approved

c) Drew Mason has resigned from the Board. With his young family, he is finding it difficult to commit to all meetings. The Board thank Drew for his input into the meetings and wish him well for the future.

Board Noted

d) We have a new website server and so all board members will receive a new password to access the portal on the website.

12) DONM

The next meeting will be 19th February 2024. Reminder that reports will be sent out on Friday 16th February 2024.

Meeting finished 8.15pm

