



Minutes of the Management Board meeting held on Tuesday 19 October 2021 at 6.00pm using ZOOM Video Communications.

Ag3

Present: David O'Hara (Chair)
Joan McFarlane
Elspeth Kerr
David Riddell
Josephine Barnshaw
Helen Eakin
Vincent Ogar
Kayleigh Watt

In attendance: Pauline Burke, Director
Duncan McKnight, Technical Manager
Stephen Watt, Corporate Services Assistant
Stuart Eglinton, SE Training – observer

In light of the current coronavirus situation and Government guidelines, Board and staff agreed that the meeting would be via Zoom video communication.

The Chair invited the Board to welcome S Eglinton from SE Training who will be observing D O'Hara in his capacity as Chair.

1. Apologies

1.1 Apologies were received from T Harvey, A Loen, M Bowie, J Devine and staff member J McGoran.

2. Declaration of interest

2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minute of the previous meeting

- 3.1 The minute of the meeting on 7 September 2021 was proposed by H Eakin and seconded by E Kerr. These minutes will be signed at the first available date due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Action – S Watt

- 3.2 The minute of the confidential meeting on 7 September 2021 was proposed by E Kerr and seconded by J McFarlane.

4. Matters arising

- 4.1 P Burke informed the Board that J McFarlane has requested a special leave of absence for personal reasons, up to three months. This request was approved by the Board.

5. Director's report

5.1 Scottish Housing Regulator – Landlord report 2020/2021

- 5.1.1 P Burke presented the Co-operative's performance results for 2020/2021 on the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) website in comparison to the Scottish average.

- 5.1.2 It was agreed that the results in the performance table were positive and reflected well on the Co-operative. Two areas identified below the Scottish average (i) Rent Collected and (ii) Reactive Repairs right first time were widely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic but in the case of the former, had fared better than anticipated.

- 5.1.3 P Burke referred the Board to the Affordability Assessment undertaken in March 2021 as the first steps towards bringing rent affordability in line with the Scottish average.

- 5.1.4 The Board noted the SHR Landlord Performance report.

5.2 Payments and benefits – mid-year report

- 5.2.1 P Burke presented a mid-year report on Entitlements, Payments and Benefits advising that there have been no entries in the register for the period April to September 2021.

- 5.2.2 The Board noted the mid-year report.

5.3 Quarterly Assurance update – quarter 2

5.3.1 P Burke updated the Board with the quarterly Assurance update. The assurance provided from the approved finance papers from April to August 2021 was discussed at the Assurance meeting held on 18 August, and the indexing in relation to the Regulatory Standards evidence bank.

5.3.2 There were no queries on the approach to assurance and the update was noted by the Board.

5.4 Equality and Human Rights report

5.4.1 P Burke presented the i) Equality Action Plan and ii) Equality Impact Assessment to members. These appendices have been created as a result of the Equalities Working Group facilitated by Stuart Eglinton of SE Training.

5.4.2 The Board approved the action plan and equality impact assessment. The action plan will be progressed by staff with an annual update provided to the Board.

D Riddell joined the meeting at 6.12pm.

5.5 Board Induction – new members’ progress report

5.5.1 P Burke informed the Board that Part 1 of the Induction training for the three new Board members had taken place on Wednesday 13 October 2021. Part 2 is scheduled for Wednesday 3 November 2021.

5.5.2 Board noted the update on the progress of the induction programme.

5.6 Tenants Annual report on the Charter 2020/2021

5.6.1 P Burke advised the Board that all Registered Social Landlords are required to report their performance against the Charter outcomes and regulatory standards to tenants and other service users by the end of October each year.

5.6.2 S Watt presented the draft Tenant Report Card at Appendix 1 which has been prepared by staff, in consultation with Tenant Panel members, for consideration and approval from the Board.

5.6.3 Following a few grammatical amendments which are to be made, the Board approved the Tenant Report Card for distribution to tenants and service users.

5.7 Annual Assurance Statement 2021/2022

- 5.7.1 P Burke presented the draft Annual Assurance Statement for 2021/22 and sought confirmation from the Board that they were sufficiently assured that the Co-operative ensure compliance with all relevant requirements in the Regulatory Framework; all relevant standards and outcomes in the Scottish Social Housing Charter; all relevant legislative duties including temporary changes to legislation; and the Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management.
- 5.7.2 P Burke highlighted that Action 6 of the Improvement Action Plan should be white, and not green, and will be edited accordingly following approval.
- 5.7.3 Following a detailed discussion, the Board approved the draft Annual Assurance Statement and action plan. It was also agreed to delegate authority to the Director to submit to the SHR by 31 October 2021 on the Co-operative's behalf.

5.8 Credit Card – Additional Card Holder

- 5.8.1 P Burke advised Board that consultation with FMD consultants had been undertaken and advice provided concerning proposed arrangements for additional credit card holders with individual credit limits to be reviewed. If this is agreed, a further change to the existing delegated authority authorisation levels would be sought.
- 5.8.2 Board approved the additional card holders and the changes to existing delegated authority authorisation levels. It was further approved for the Financial Procedures and Financial Regulations to both be updated to reflect the agreed changes.

6. Technical Manager's report

6.1 Performance Report – Quarter 2

- 6.1.1 D McKnight presented to Board the quarterly performance report for Quarter 2. This highlights positive and negative trends for the first half of the year, from April to September 2021. Appendix 1 provides the Arrears Banding report and Appendix 2 provides the Citizens Advice Bureau Quarterly Monitoring report.
- 6.1.2 The key points to note were discussed and noted by the Board:
- Increase in rent arrears
 - Increase in void loss and relet times
 - Reduction in the percentage of lets made to Section 5 referrals to homeless applicants

- 6.1.3 D McKnight highlighted to members rent arrears have increased as a result of some tenants who have failed to make rent payments and have failed to engage with housing officers, in these cases we will continue with our Rent Arrears Procedure whilst adhering to the Scottish Government guidelines and the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020.
- 6.1.4 D McKnight advised that the performance had fallen for void rent loss in the first half of the year due to the number of days taken to relet properties. A number of contributing factors impacted on average relet times increasing and processes will be reviewed to learn from this experience.
- 6.1.5 Board were informed that allocation of properties to Section 5 Referrals was currently below target, although 100% of homeless referrals had been rehoused. Liaison will continue with GCC's Homeless Persons team to seek appropriate referrals and assist lets to homeless persons, where possible.
- 6.1.6 The Board noted the quarterly performance report update.

6.2 Scottish Housing Regulator guidance – Gas Safety

- 6.2.1 D McKnight referred the Board to a letter received from the Regulator in relation to the importance of effective gas safety management systems. The letter was attached and drew attention to the critical role played by call handlers at the initial reporting stage and ensuring that calls are triaged correctly to maintain the safety of tenants, residents and members of the public. It included guidance to ensure that staff, including those employed by a third-party to handle initial contact from tenants have appropriate understanding, instruction and training.
- 6.2.2 It was confirmed that discussions had taken place with City Building's Gas Team to jointly review existing management arrangements. This would ensure that call handling guidance and procedures are fully incorporated within both organisations, and staff obtain the same instruction, knowledge and understanding.
- 6.2.3 Considerable discussion took place and the Board noted the SHR gas safety guidance.

6.3 Fire safety compliance report

- 6.3.1 D McKnight provided an update to Board on the progression of the upgrade of the smoke detection systems.

6.3.2 Board were informed that 99% of properties (417) originally identified as requiring smoke detector upgrades were now complete, with only 3 properties still to be addressed.

6.3.3 It was subsequently identified that a further 62 properties required a partial upgrade (smoke alarms installed in living room spaces) and this element of the project is 55% complete, with 28 properties still to be addressed.

6.3.4 It was confirmed that a target date for completion of the project had been set for 10 December 2021, to ensure compliance prior to new regulations coming into force on 1 February 2022 and that forced access arrangements will be implemented where 'no access' issues prevail, to ensure tenants safety.

6.3.5 Board noted the fire safety report update.

6.4 Void comparison report

6.4.1 As requested at the meeting on 7 September, D McKnight presented a report on void performance, comparing Quarter 1 void performance with the two previous years. Comparisons included:

- No of voids
- Average days to let
- Average spend per void
- Void loss
- Void loss as % of rental income
- % of tenancy offers refused

6.4.2 D McKnight discussed key considerations and the impact of Covid-19 on performance. An exceptional void in Quarter 2 was also highlighted as a learning point, due to the impact that it had on average relet times.

6.4.3 The Board noted the void comparison report.

6.5 Stock condition survey

6.5.1 D McKnight advised Board that the last stock condition survey was carried out in March 2019 by David Adamson Group Ltd, however procurement had been delayed by the uncertainty arising from the Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions.

6.5.2 The importance of stock condition surveys was discussed the opportunity that current existed due to the absence of restrictions.

6.5.3 In accordance with the recommendation, Board agreed to engage David Adamson & Partners Ltd to carry out a further 20% stock condition survey to help inform SHQS compliance, investment programmes and life cycle costs.

6.6 Facia and soffit replacement

6.6.1 D McKnight informed the Board that a revised assessment of facias and soffits had taken place. This identified that work was not required to a considerable number of properties and localised repairs should be carried out to selective homes with only a limited number requiring full replacement.

6.6.2 Board noted that the works would be procured via mini-competition through the Drummog Reactive Maintenance Framework 2021-2125. Delegated authority was granted to the Director to accept the lowest priced bid/bids, provided they were within the established budget.

6.6.3 It was agreed that feedback would be provided to Board at the next meeting.

Action – D McKnight

6.7 Bad debt write-off report – quarter 2

6.7.1 D McKnight presented the report and invited the Board to approve writing off former tenant rent arrears totalling £5,853.60 for Quarter 2.

6.7.2 Board questioned the circumstances of write offs in circumstances where a long-term prisoner is involved. D McKnight advised the Board that where a lengthy sentence is awarded, the tenancy will end. The Board were satisfied with this response.

6.7.3 The Board approved the recommendation to write off the former tenant rent arrears totalling £5,853.60.

7. Policy review

7.1 Policy Review report

The Board noted the three policies for review this month.

7.1(i) Complaints Handling Procedures

7.1.1 Board approved the Complaints Handling procedures.

7.1(ii) Shared Parental Leave Policy

7.1.2 Board approved the Shared Parental Leave policy.

7.1(iii) Reserved Forces Policy

7.1.3 Board approved the Reserved Forces policy.

8. Governance

8.1 Membership Report

8.1.1 There were 28 prospective members brought to this meeting and 6 Share Certificates which were approved by the Board.

V Ogar left the meeting at 7.00pm.

8.2 Ethical Conduct and Notifiable Events

8.2.1 The notifiable events report was presented to the Board.

8.2.2 There was one new notifiable event submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator on 8 September 2021. This regarded the amendment to the 2020 Model Rules which had been approved by tenant members at the Special General Meeting held on 25 August 2021.

8.2.3 The Board noted the notifiable events update.

9. Audit, Risk and Staffing sub-Committee

9.1 There were no sub-Committee meetings to report

10. Any Other Competent Business

10.1 P Burke informed the Board that the Rent Consultation process for 2022-23 will commence at the next Board meeting. At present, CPI is 3.1% at September 2021 and it is forecast as 2.9% in October 2021. Board requested that consideration is given by staff to presenting the following approach CPI, CPI less 50% and 0% rent increase at the Board meeting in November. For example: i. 0%, ii. 1.5% and iii. 2.9% based on the forecast of 2.9% CPI for October 2021.

Action – J McGoran

10.2 Board were informed that mandates to the Bank of Scotland, Nationwide and Shawbrook Bank have been submitted to reflect new signatories for the year, as approved at the Board meeting after the Annual General Meeting 2021.

10.3 P Burke advised Board that a Scottish Housing Regulator publication regarding regulatory Statutory powers has been received. The link to this publication will be sent by S Watt to all Board members.

Action – S Watt

10.4 P Burke informed the Board that Jacqueline Norwood of Full Circle Solving has accepted the commission to start the review of staff roles prior to the staff restructure. An initial meeting with Board will take place November 2021.

10.5 Board were asked to note that the meeting on 30 November 2021 will be hybrid to give members the opportunity to come to the office or continue using Zoom Video Conferencing. S Watt will contact Board members closer to the time to enquire everyone's preference.

Action – S Watt

10.6 A discussion ensued concerning the re-opening of the office. It was requested that the Board delegate authority to the Director with a view to staff returning to office working prior to the next Board meeting in late-November.

K Watt left the meeting at 7.16pm.

10.7 It was noted by the Director that the volume of Board papers continues to be excessive, and it was proposed that a short-term working group is formed early in 2022 to discuss methods of reducing the paper load.

Action – P Burke

10.8 E Kerr sought Board members and staff to make her aware of excessive rubbish caused as a result of events around 5th November, or to use the MyGlasgow app to have this removed.

10.9 P Burke wished to extend her thanks to all Board members for their efforts and attendance recently at training, induction meetings, and DRUMCOG events.

11. Date of next meeting

11.1 The next Board meeting will take place on Tuesday 30 November 2021 at 6.00pm using ZOOM Video Communications.

The meeting closed at 7.35pm.