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THESE MINUTES OR ANY OTHER  
COMMITTEE RELATED MATTER,  
PLEASE CONTACT YOUR  
CHAIRPERSON,

LORNA BROWN ON **REDACTED**

## **West Granton Housing Co-operative Limited**

### **Committee of Management**

#### **Minutes of Meeting – 14<sup>th</sup> August 2019**

**Present:** Lorna Brown (Chairperson), Marilyn Dickson (Treasurer), Jim Hemphill (Vice Chair) Jim Moir, Marlyn Sinclair, Fiona Marshall, Elizabeth Robertson, Joe Moir

**In attendance:** Larke Adger (CEO), Alan McKee (Depute CEO), Lynne Bell (Finance Manager from Prospect Housing Association) for Agenda Item 5 only.

#### **1) APOLOGIES**

Jon Douglas, Donna Anderson

#### **2) MINUTES OF MEETING 12<sup>th</sup> June 2019**

**Minutes approved.**

#### **3) MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

**None.**

#### **4) DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**None.**

## 5) FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

### 5a) Presentation of 1<sup>st</sup> Quarterly Financial Performance Report

Lynne Bell advised Committee that they should always refer to the Headline Results Report on Page 1 of each quarterly report. LB advised that any figures in brackets should be questioned and be concerned about and the same for big numbers.

Member MD asked why the table on Page 1 showed the Net Operating Income. LB gave apologies and advised that it should be Net Operating Surplus and referred all members to the Statement of Comprehensive Income on page 5. LB advised that she would amend this error.

**Arrears:** LB advised arrears slightly higher than last year for the same period but still very low.

**Interest Cover:** LB explained that we have a very healthy interest cover ratio as we have small loans and high surplus.

AMCK asked about amortised grant. LB explained this was an accounting term. She advised that you have to depreciate or amortise the grant of the houses. Amortise because it is income and not a cost. Explained this is not a cash amount. The cash transaction happened when the houses were bought.

**Operating Costs variance:** Two areas of planned maintenance programmes – external paintwork and replacement of entryphone systems. Looking for this underspend to carry throughout the year as these works are not taking place until 2021.

**Statement of Financial Position:** Capital Expenditure – Page 3 of the quarterly report. Costs for these items go on balance sheet and are depreciated over time. Timing issue with windows and doors – due to be completed in 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter. Office equipment slightly over budget explained by having to upgrade from Windows 7 to Windows 10.

**Decrease in Cash:** Almost £500k has gone out to Component Replacement Programme.

**Covenants:** Page 4 – explanation about interest cover as noted above. Other covenant is that we submit quarterly reports within 28 days of the end of the last quarter, to our lenders, Nationwide Building Society. LB explained that the last report didn't go within time due to holidays but that was covered by explanation to the lender and they are satisfied with the explanation.

**KPIs:** Actual performance better than benchmark; apart from Gross Arrears which was only slightly above.

**Report format:** LB advised that the reports format is new and can be changed and welcome suggestions for changes. Also advised the three main financial statements were appended. Member MD asked about a glossary of terms and asked what PSD meant. LB explained this was the past service deficit relating to pensions. LB explained that instead of a glossary she would provide full text

alongside any abbreviations in future reports. No questions further questions were raised.

**Committee noted the report.**

#### **5b) Appointment of External Auditor**

**Re-appointment of Alexander Sloan at the AGM:** Committee were advised that Alexander Sloan had carried out WGHC's financial audit over the past 6 years and that good practice states the external auditor should be replaced every 7 years. The CEO advised that WGHC should tender for a new external auditor next year, but meanwhile, Alexander Sloan should be re-appointed for the 2020 Audit at the AGM.

**Committee approved Alexander Sloan should be re-appointed for the 2020 Audit at the AGM.**

#### **5c) Annual Statement of Impairment and Carrying Value of Fixed Assets**

Committee were advised by the CEO in her statement that there was no evidence of impairments of the value of WGHC's housing stock. and that the total carrying value of fixed assets as at 31.03.19 was £18,380,467. LB confirmed the definition of impairment and carrying value of fixed assets, as explained in the reports.

**Committee agreed there is no evidence of impairment of the value of the housing stock and approved the carrying value of assets.**

#### **5d) Fraud Register and Financial Controls**

The CEO confirmed she was not aware of any frauds or attempted frauds and that during the year there were no significant cash handling errors. In addition, Committee were advised the internal control systems of benchmarks, targets and budgets appear sound and the reporting system is effective.

**Committee noted the report on the system of internal financial controls authorised the Treasurer to sign the Fraud Register.**

#### **5e) Update: Cash in the Bank and Our Mortgages**

Committee were advised that WGHC has £1,526,552 (million) in the bank and was given the break down between the working accounts with RBS, Santander (95 day notice account) and the Bank of Scotland (32 day notice account). Committee were further advised that WGHC has 5 mortgages with Nationwide Building Society with two mortgages being on a variable rate. The rate has just dropped to 1.129% from July to September 2019 (it was previously 1.190%).

**Committee noted the report**

## 5f) Amendments to the Five-Year Financial Projections Return

Committee were advised that the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) contacted the CEO asking for confirmation of certain figures submitted in the June return.

The CEO made contact with LB (Finance Manager) at Prospect Housing Association and it was confirmed some amendments were required. The amendments were not significant in that they did not affect the financial projection figures (including the Income & Expenditure, the Balance Sheet or Cashflow). The amendments were made to the assumptions only and the SHR were advised accordingly.

**Committee noted the report.**

## 5g) SCOTTISH HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS PENSION SCHEME (SHAPS)

### WGHC's Annual Financial Assessment.

Committee were advised that The Pensions Regulator requires that SHAPS regularly monitor and assess the financial strength, or 'covenant', of the employers participating in the Scottish Housing Associations' Pension Scheme (SHAPS).

It was reported the CEO had completed the online assessment for WGHC using the last 3 years audited financial statements.

The outcome of the assessment was that WGHC's current risk category is low. Committee were provided with a screen shot from the online assessment confirming the risk category.

**Committee noted the report.**

## 5h) Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS)

It was reported that PCI DSS is the worldwide Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard that was set up to help businesses process card payments securely and reduce card fraud.

The payment standard has 12 high level requirements.

WGHC use card payment machines in the office to receive rent payments. WGHC must therefore, every year, complete an assessment to ensure that it meets the data security standards.

The company, Worldpay, provides the card terminals for WGHC. In addition, WGHC subscribe to Worldpay's Safer Payments Plus programme which ensures that our annual assessment is completed correctly.

Due to the small size of the organisation and the total monetary value of card payments taken each year, WGHC is required to be Level 4 Compliant.

The CEO can confirm that WGHC completed their annual PCI DSS assessment with Worldpay on 30.07.19 and that WGHC is fully compliant.

The next assessment for our compliance check is due on 30.07.2020

**Committee noted the report.**

## 5i) Appointment of an Internal Auditor for WGHC

It was reported that West Granton Housing Co-op joined with fellow ARCHIE member Hunters Hall Housing Co-operative to procure an Internal Audit service. The contract is for a period of 2 years with the option of a 1 year extension.

Together, West Granton and Hunters Hall are following the SFHA (Scottish Federation of Housing Association's) guidance on Internal Audit published in March 2018. West Granton Housing Co-op is looking to purchase 9 days a year worth of Internal Audit service from an experienced auditing firm.

Committee were advised the subject focus of the audit in its first year would be:

- Review and assessment of WGHC's evidence in meeting the Scottish Housing Regulator's New Regulatory Standard 1 and Regulatory Standard 3
- Review and assessment of WGHC's Key Performance Indicators (including the evidence being used is robust, reliable, accurate and validated)
- Review and assessment of Arrears and Allocations Management (policy, procedural and in accordance with the best practice documents: a) Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and 2010 Guidance for Social Landlords on Pre-Action Requirements and Seeking Repossession of Social Housing June 2012 and b) Social housing allocations in Scotland: practice guide (Feb 2019).

It was further reported that the tender was issued on Public Contracts Scotland on 04.06.19.

There were 5 expressions of interest and just 1 tender submitted.

The tender that was submitted was from the firm Wylie and Bisset. This is a very experienced firm providing internal audit service for 34 other social landlords in Scotland.

An assessment of the quality aspect of the tender was completed by Larke Adger, Chief Executive, West Granton Housing Co-op, Geraldine Connolly (Director of Hunters Hall Housing Co-op) and Stuart Orr (Business Support Officer). A mean average of the scores assessed the tender at 77.4% for quality.

Overall, the assessment panel found the submission to be close to a very good rating overall.

The price tender document was witnessed by Laura McLachlan, Hunters Hall Housing Co-op's Treasurer on 31.07.19 in the presence of Stuart Orr. The price tendered including VAT was £4,049.85 each for Hunters Hall and West Granton.

The tendered price was within budget for both Co-ops.

Rates shall not increase during the course of the tender.

In view of the satisfactory position on both quality and price, it was recommended that Wylie and Bisset be appointed as West Granton Housing Co-op's Internal Auditors for 2 years.

Member MD questioned how long external audits lasts and wanted to compare their costs against what was being presented for the internal audit. The CEO gave a full explanation.

**After further discussion, Committee approved Wylie & Bisset be appointed WGHC's Internal Auditor at the cost of £4,049.85 for 9 days audit per year.**

## 5j) Appointment of a Data Protection Officer (DPO)

It was reported that the CEO procured the services of a DPO for WGHC.

It was explained that it is a legislative requirement for WGHC to have a Data Protection Officer (DPO) in place by 11<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

It was further explained that had ARCHIE approached two solicitors in April 2019 asking each for a quote in regard to providing DPO Services. To date, neither Solicitors had been able to provide a quote.

Given the timescales, the CEO was keen to pursue the procurement of DPO services.

Four companies were approached:

1. Company 1- based in Glasgow

Their DPO essentials service package is £375 + VAT per month. This service is delivered remotely by email and telephone.

2. RGDP based in Edinburgh

For 12 half day visits per year RGDP quoted £375 + VAT + travelling costs.

In addition to the onsite visit this fee Includes 30 minutes of free email/telephone advice each month. Further time will result in £100 hourly charge but if one month reaches 4 hours the rate is reduced to £375. Free referrals for training by the DPO, legal advice with BTO Solicitors and cyber security experts. This quote was a discounted quote specific for ARCHIE members.

3. Company 3- based in Glenrothes

For their basic DPO Assist providing DPO support to staff they are charging £750 + VAT per month.

4. Company 4- based in Edinburgh

Quote requested but never received and no contact made with WGHC.

Based on the above, the CEO decided that RGDP would offer the best DPO service to WGHC as they will be provided with their own dedicated DPO who will work on site and with staff on a face to face basis. In addition, RGDP are based in Edinburgh and it makes good business sense to have such a specialised service provider based in the same city as WGHC. RGDP can also offer staff free training if carried out during the scheduled on site visit and have a partnership with BTO solicitors who have a specialised DP Solicitor Team which again could prove to be beneficial to WGHC if legal advice were ever required.

ARCHIE partner landlords Lister Housing Co-op and WGHC met with RGDP to discuss specific requirements. Following the meeting ensuring compliance the WGHC Financial Regulations below, the CEO decided that RGDP should be appointed.

The CEO confirmed to Committee that the following were complied with:

1. WGHC Financial Regulations (Section 6.14) state that:

*“Any partnership agreement, term contract or rolling works order to provide utilities, works or services over a period of time will be valued at the cost over three years in relation to procurement authority.....”*

The RGDP contract is valued at £4.5k per year x 3 = £13.5 k.

The CEO confirms that she has the authority to approve this contract as it is under £25k and a minimum of 2 quotes were received (3 received as detailed) from suppliers who were not on the approved list. The 4.5k per year is well under the £6.3k budget set for this cost.

2. WGHC Financial Regulations (Section 7.1) state that:

*“ If two written quotations are required they should be entered in the tender book. The entry should be signed by at least two members of staff, one of whom must be the CEO”.*

It was declared to Committee that RGDP have been appointed to provide Data Protection Officer Services to WGHC for the 12 month period July 2019 to July 2020.

Member MD asked if a WGHC staff member could perform the role of DPO. The CEO explained that with WGHC being so small and all staff members being data processors this would be quite difficult to achieve. It was further explained that the role of DPO is very specialist and guidance from the Information Commissioners Office states that the DPO must be “independent, an expert in data protection, adequately resourced, and report to the highest management level.” Given all these requirements it makes a strong business case for WGHC to outsource this role.

Member FM asked if this was an SHR requirement. The CEO explained it was a requirement under the General Data Protection Regulations and Freedom of Information Act since registered social landlords are now to be considered public bodies.

**Committee noted the report and agreed the appointment was the best course of action for WGHC.**

## 6) GOVERNANCE

### 6a) Secretary's Annual Report to Committee

Rule 64 of the WGHC Rules states that:

*"At the last Committee Meeting before the AGM, the Secretary must confirm in writing to the Committee that Rules 58 to 63 have been followed or, if they have not been followed, the reasons for this. The Secretary's confirmation or report must be recorded in the minutes of the Committee Meeting."*

Rules 58 to 63 cover keeping proper minutes, registers and the execution of documents and the WGHC seal.

Rules 64 to 69 cover the requirements for financial accounts.

The CEO is the company secretary and confirms that:

- the requirements of rules 58 to 63
  - and rules 64 to 69
- have been followed during the financial year 2018-19 and to the date of this meeting

**Committee noted the report.**

### 6b) Committee Membership and Performance Reviews

The following was reported:

The AGM is to be held on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> September.

RSL Committees can have up to 15 members.

If numbers fall to 7 or below we must inform the Scottish Housing Regulator and the future of the Co-operative comes into doubt. WGHC currently has 12 full members and 1 co-opted member.

In accordance with rule Rules 35.1 and 35.2, the three longest serving members since the date of their last election must retire this year. They can either retire at the end of the AGM or can retire beforehand and stand for re-election.

In light of the above the following must happen this year:

1. As a co-opted member, Patricia Cordiner serves until the AGM and must therefore retire (rule 38.1). Patricia must be nominated if she wishes to stand for election. Nominations will be sent out in the post and completed nomination forms must be received back *before* Monday 26<sup>th</sup> August 2019 (at least 7 days before the AGM).
2. In accordance with rule Rules 35.1 and 35.2, the three longest serving members since the date of their last election must retire this year. They can either retire at the end of the AGM or can retire beforehand and stand for re-election.

The three longest serving members since their last election in 2016 and who therefore must retire and can stand for re-election are:

- George Nicol
- Fiona Marshall
- Elizabeth Robertson

The three retirees can either retire at the end of the AGM or can stand for re-election. If they choose to stand, they do not need to be nominated (Rule 35.4).

3. In addition, one of the members last elected in 2017 must also retire and may stand again for re-election:

If there is no agreement on who will retire, lots may be drawn.

4. Rule 33.6 states that the Committee must satisfy itself that any Committee Member seeking re-election after serving a 9 year or more continuous period, can demonstrate his/her continued effectiveness as a serving member. The Committee has 4 members who have served 9 years or more in a continuous period. They are: Joe Moir, Marilyn Dickson, George Thompson and Lorna Brown. Having carried out their individual performance reviews and asking them each to complete an additional assessment form relevant to having served 9 years or more, the Chairperson declared to Committee she is satisfied these members (with exception of herself) have all demonstrated their continued effectiveness as serving members. For all remaining Committee Members, the Chairperson reports she is satisfied that all members have demonstrated their effectiveness and values their incredible levels of commitment and efforts in being part of the WGHC Committee of Management. She further believes that the Committee is fulfilling its duties very well in monitoring the performance and directing the strategy of the Co-operative.

5. The Office Bearers (Vice Chair Jim Hemphill and Treasurer Marilyn Dickson) in the presence of the CEO, carried out the individual performance review of the Chairperson, Lorna Brown in July 2019. In addition, to her self-assessment forms, Lorna was also asked to complete a form in relation to her having served more than 9 years continuously on the Committee. The Office Bearers declared to Committee that they are satisfied Lorna Brown has demonstrated continued effectiveness. In addition, to her own self-assessment, the Committee members were asked to complete feedback forms about the Chairperson's Performance.

All forms received evidenced that Lorna Brown is an effective Chairperson and runs meetings well. The only comment raised, was that some felt frustration when members speak over one another. The Chairperson discussed these comments with each member and agreed with them that she will employ the use of a gavel at all future meetings and remind members that they should speak through her, everyone should be allowed to have their say and only one member should speak at any one time. The Office Bearers and Committee Members have all confirmed that they believe the Chairperson is highly competent, effective and fulfils her duties as expected. All Committee Members have confidence in the abilities of the Chair.

The Chair thanked all members for their comments and ongoing contribution to the Committee.

6. Patricia Cordiner, co-opted member from June 2019 did not have a performance review owing to the fact she was only recently co-opted and will have to retire before the AGM in September. As there are no Committee Meetings in July, it means that Patricia Cordiner will have only attended 1 meeting as a fully co-opted member. The Chairperson and CEO discussed and agreed that it was therefore not required to have Patricia Cordiner undergo a performance review at this time. However, if she is nominated as a full member on to the Committee at the AGM then she will undergo a full performance review with the rest of the Committee next year.

Member Marlyn Sinclair had pointed out that her name had been spelt incorrectly in the report. The CEO apologised for the error and advised this had been minuted.

Member Patricia Cordiner advised Committee that she preferred to be formerly referred to as Pat. The CEO and Committee took note and the CEO advised this had been minuted.

Committee agreed:

- **The 4<sup>th</sup> retiring member will be Marilyn Dickson and she will stand for re-election;**

- 2 retiring members Fiona Marshall and Elizabeth Robertson confirmed they wish to stand for re-election. The CEO is to confirm with George Nicol if he wishes to stand for re-election and will advise the Chair and all Committee Members in writing before the AGM;
- The 4 members who have served on the Committee for 9 continuous years or more have demonstrated their effectiveness as continued serving members
- Agreed the remaining 8 members have demonstrated their effectiveness and will continue on the Committee
- Noted that Patricia Cordiner must retire before the September AGM but can be nominated at the AGM as a full Committee Member if there is a vacancy.

#### **6c) AGM Arrangements**

Arrangements for this year's AGM were discussed.

**Committee agreed:**

- The AGM will take place in the local Prentice Community Centre at 7pm on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2019
- The use of proxy forms is to be encouraged if members cannot attend that this year there should not be a prize draw for proxies received this year.
- The meeting should start off with a short game of bingo with a £40 voucher shopping to be given as a prize for 1 line and an £80 shopping voucher to be given as a prize for a full house.
- The main prize draw with free raffle ticket is to be a £250 shopping voucher.
- That each Committee Member should bring along one other first named member to the AGM.

#### **6d) Membership Changes**

Committee noted that 5 new memberships had commenced report and 6 memberships ended since the last reports.

## 6e) Staffing Update

Committee were given an update in regard to staffing levels in the office.

Committee were also asked to consider a request from the Tenancy Manager. Following her accident, the Tenancy Manager has asked to temporarily change her working hours from 35 to 29 hours per week from 1<sup>st</sup> September to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020. Following advice from EVH, the CEO recommended this be approved.

### **Committee noted the report**

Committee noted staffing levels and approved the Tenancy Manager's request to reduce her working hours from 35 hours to 29 hours per week from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020. This arrangement is to be reviewed before 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020.

## 6f) Assurance Statement & Other WGHC Priorities

An update was given to Committee regarding the ongoing work towards WGHC's Assurance Statement.

Committee were advised that work would be presented to them at the September Committee. Both evidence and an interim statement will be presented for their consideration and approval.

The final Assurance Statement will be presented to Committee at the October meeting. The submission is due to the Scottish Housing Regulator by end of October 2019 and then annually thereafter.

The CEO advised Committee that the work undertaken to date had not highlighted any compliance concerns. A further update will be presented at the September Committee.

In addition, the Committee were notified of the CEO's priorities over the next 3, 6 and 12 months.

### **Committee noted the report.**

## 6g) Changes to the approved contractors list

A request to remove a factoring agent who no longer provided services to WGHC and a request to add 9 new contractors/consultants was presented to Committee.

**Committee approved the removal of Your Place;**

**Committee approved the following additions:**

- **RGDP**
- **F3 Chartered Building Surveyors**
- **Smith Emsley Partnership Ltd**
- **Lyreco (Scottish Government Procurement Framework)**
- **Scotland Excel**
- **Element**
- **Citrus Energy**
- **Scottish Hydro**
- **Form and Function Co-op**

## 6h) HEALTH & SAFETY: MONTHLY REPORT

Committee were advised that there had been no accidents or incidents since the last Committee Meeting.

**Committee noted the report.**

## 6i) 1<sup>st</sup> Quarterly Performance Reports (appendix 2)

Committee were presented with the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarterly Performance Report for 2019-20. It was noted that gross arrears at 1.10% was well below the benchmark of 1.30%, but still higher than the 0.9% reported for the same period last year. It was reported that WGHC has only 9 tenants in receipt of Universal Credit and 6 of the 9 cases have rent arrears equivalent to at least one month's rent. There were no other concerns reported in regard to WGHC's Performance during the period.

**Committee noted the report.**

## 6j) Health & Safety Assessment - Update

Committee were given an update report on WGHC's improvement plan following the Health & Safety Audit carried out by ACS in April 2019.

Committee were reminded that there were no serious concerns that arose out of the Audit.

Actions completed since the Audit Recommendation Report received are:

- All new staff are now being issued with the EVH Health & Safety handbook
- The contents of the First Aid Box have been updated
- WGHC now has a body fluid spills kit
- 1 of the 2 annual fire drills have now been carried out
- All open element heaters within the office have been removed and replaced with oil filled radiators and are available for staff to use

Actions still to be completed are:

- A risk assessment sheet must be completed for all cleaning products on the premises (Members were reminded that WGHC did not have a sheet for a bottle of Mr Muscle Unblocker). This product has now been removed from the office
- The procedure on how to deal if a staff member goes missing or is uncontactable still needs to be revised.

**Committee noted the report.**

#### **6k) Leave of Absence – updated Request**

Member Joe Moir had previously put in a request to have his leave of absence extended. However, he managed to attend the August meeting and the Chair agreed with JM that his request was no longer needed. It was further agreed that if JM did need another leave of absence he would submit another formal written request.

**Committee agreed with the Chairperson's decision.**

#### **6L) Scottish Housing Regulator – Appointment System**

It was reported that WGHC submitted its Annual Report on the Charter (ARC) to the Scottish Housing Regulator at the end of May 2019.

One of the questions asked of landlords is if they have an appointments system in place for repairs. WGHC has always answered "No".

When the Scottish Housing Regulator came to visit WGHC earlier in the year, a discussion took place between the CEO and the SHR about the definition of an appointments system.

In June 2019, the Scottish Housing Regulator wrote to the CEO to advise that they regard WGHC as definitely having an appointments system in place as our Contractors contact tenants directly to make access arrangements for appointments to carry out repairs.

The SHR has now instructed WGHC:

1. To put a monitoring system in place to assess the performance of the contractor's in keeping their appointments with our tenants

and

2. WGHC must publicly state in its Annual Report on the Charter to its Tenants in October 2019 why it declared to the Regulator it does not have an appointment system in place, when the Regulator believes that it does. The Regulator also wants to see a copy of our Report after it has been approved by Committee.

The CEO explained that WGHC had been going through various options with the suppliers of our maintenance software and our IT support. In addition, the CEO had met with the Maintenance Manager on a number of occasions to discuss feasible options.

Member FM asked if we could encourage tenants to return their "tear off" slips at the bottom of each repair record advising if the contractor had kept the appointment. The CEO explained that it would be very difficult to ensure that all slips were returned and that WGHC needed to have a fullproof system in place for accurate monitoring.

The CEO advised Committee that she had advised the Regulator that WGHC would have a monitoring system in place by 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019 and an update would be provided at the September Committee Meeting.

**Committee noted the report.**

### **6M) Scottish of Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA)**

On 7<sup>th</sup> August 2019, the CEO met with the CEO of the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, Sally Thomas. The main purpose of the meeting was that the SFHA wanted to know how they could improve their services to WGHC. Since the meeting had happened the day after the Committee Reports had been sent out, the Chairperson advised she was happy for the CEO to give a verbal report back to Committee.

WGHC pays SFHA an annual membership fee of £4k.

Member MD asked what the SFHA actually provide to WGHC in return for the £4k per year membership fee.

The CEO explained that the SFHA offers membership to housing associations and housing co-operatives in Scotland. They provide guidance across the board in relation to best practice and legislative requirements. In addition they also have working relationships with the Scottish Government and the Scottish Housing Regulator and try to represent their members various issues, concerns and successes with both these bodies.

The CEO explained that she did feel that whilst the SFHA did a thorough job in offering practical guidance there were two specific areas which could be improved upon for WGHC:

1. Increased representation and support for smaller social landlords, and in particular, housing co-operatives and
2. Look at the possibility of offering more training for Boards/Senior Staff in Edinburgh as there was certainly a demand in the sector east side of the Country.

Sally Thomas said she agreed both were two areas she would be happy to take back with her and see just what and how this could be achieved.

**Committee noted the report.**

## **7) ASSET MANAGEMENT & MAINTENANCE**

### **a) Updates on Doors & Windows**

These works had expected to be completed by the end of August 2019. There has been a small number of tenants who we have had to chase for access which has extended the project past the 10 week timeline. Contact has now been made with all of these tenants and appointments for surveys and installation made.

Also, it was picked up by our Maintenance Manager that Sidey had failed to fill the space under a number of window sills with silicone. They have agreed to go back and check every property to ensure this has been carried out across the board.

A formal tenant satisfaction survey will be carried out at the end of the project and the results will be fed back to Committee and help to inform future procurement decisions. Verbal reports received from tenants so far have been extremely positive and all have reported an improvement in efficiency of heating their homes and they look and design of the new windows and doors.

**Committee noted the report.**

## b) Stock Condition Survey Update

The Stock Condition Survey will be carried out by F3 Chartered Building Surveyors in September 2019. The results of the survey will help inform our Planned Maintenance Programmes.

A report of the outcomes will be feedback to Committee in due course.

**Committee noted the report.**

## 8) HOUSING MANAGMENT

### a) Consultation report on the revision of WGHC Allocations Policy

In order to comply with the provisions of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014, WGHC carried out a review of its Housing Allocation Policy in February 2019. We consulted with tenants by post and through an open consultation session in our office. As a partner in Edinburgh's Common Housing Register, we closely follow a shared assessment system through Key to Choice and EdIndex carried out a separate consultation with applicants.

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 requires us to publish a report on this Consultation process. A copy of the Consultation Report was given to each Committee Member.

WGHC 63 replies to the postal survey – a 17% response rate.

6 tenants attended the open consultation in the Office.

The main findings of the survey were:

The majority of tenants:

- Were in favour of WGHC keeping its own internal transfer list
- Preferred that WGHC continues to offer its own tenants empty properties first, before offering them out to Edindex applicants
- WGHC should continue to allow tenants without housing need to move (i.e. those with aspirational desire to move to a different street, property type, etc)
- That WGHC should offer different levels of priority on our internal transfer list depending on the number of extra bedrooms an applicant has
- Were in favour of WGHC offering an incentive scheme to encourage tenants to downsize to a smaller property

The above feedback was noted and taken into account when the WGHC Allocations Policy was revised. Committee were advised that the report, once approved, was to be published on the WGHC website.

**Committee approved the report.**

**b) Draft Allocations Policy**

The WGHC Allocations Policy was due for revision in 2017-18.

However, like all other social landlords, WGHC had been waiting for the Scottish Government Guidance to be published before we could proceed with the revision.

The Guidance has now been published, WGHC has completed its consultation with tenants and the revised Policy was put to Committee for their approval.

The main changes is that the draft Policy now reflects the new category of preference groups who should be considered for housing, as detailed by the Scottish Government.

These are as follows:

- homeless persons and persons threatened with homelessness and who have unmet housing needs;
- people who are living under unsatisfactory housing conditions and who have unmet housing needs; and
- tenants of houses which are held by a social landlord, which the social landlord selecting its tenants considers to be under-occupied.

The draft policy also takes into account the feedback received from the WGHC Tenant Consultation. The main changes refer to the internal transfer priority banding system which can be found on Page 21 of the policy.

In addition, the policy now states that it “allows WGHC to introduce an incentive scheme, to encourage tenants to downsize, subject to Committee approval”

Where changes have been made in the draft policy, the Section Headers have been written in red font. This should help Members identify the relevant areas which have been changed and should be given their attention.

Members sought assurance from the CEO that the draft version took into account consultation results whilst still remaining compliant with the new legislation. The CEO assured this was the case. The CEO also reminded members that the policy is a public document so will be made available on our website and also a copy will be sent to the City of Edinburgh Council, as our local authority and administrator

of Edindex.

## **Committee approved the draft Allocations Policy**

**9) This number was omitted from the Committee Reports and the numbers went from 8 to 10). There was no section 9.**

### **10) DONATIONS and SPONSORSHIP**

Committee were presented with a proposal from a local Welfare Rights Agency to finance the provision of a welfare rights advisor in the local community centre at the cost of £11.2k.

WGHC had been funding this position for the previous 12 months, subject to 6 monthly reviews.

The most recent proposal was to provide an advisor to the public for 1 day per week and the remaining 2 days would be used for admin and paperwork.

In the previous 12 months whilst WGHC were sponsoring this service, only 8 WGHC tenants used the service. The local Agency did not wish to deal with new claims for Universal Credit so this was picked up by WGHC staff members. The Agency was not able to specifically advise WGHC the reason or outcome of our 8 tenants accessing the service.

Committee were asked to consider the figures in the report and the proposal itself.

Members JM and MD looked specifically at the costs and asked more questions about how things had been for the previous 12 months. The CEO advised again that we had not been given specific figures for WGHC tenants, but overall the amount of £80,376 in disability benefits had been gained for 258 local residents. This works out at approximately £318 per person.

Previously the local advice agency had asked WGHC to sponsor their advisor 6 months at a time at the costs of £1,820 per 6 month period.

Having the proposal and analysing the figures presented to them, Committee found it difficult to justify a jump in cost from £1,820 to £11.2k.

Members were of the opinion that:

- with the increasing rollout of Universal Credit affecting WGHC tenants
- together with the fact that Universal Credit is a risk to WGHC's rental income
- and that the local advice agency was only 800 yards down the road from the local community centre (from where the sponsored advisor was proposing to hold a surgery)

that WGHC should not continue to sponsor this post at the moment but rather try and put more resources to directly assisting both WGHC tenants and staff deal with welfare reform changes. The CEO advised that Committee would be presented with WGHC's Universal Credit Mitigation Strategy at the next meeting which, when fully implemented, should help identify areas where these resources could be targeted.

**Committee agreed not to go ahead with the proposal for the reasons noted above.**

## 11) AOCB

- a) Member MD advised she was no longer available to make it to the West Granton Community Trust Meetings at the Prentice Centre and asked if another Committee Member would like to attend in her place. Meetings are held Monday lunchtime. Member FM said she would be the WGHC representative. MD reminded FM and Committee that WGHC are only affiliated representatives and have no voting rights. Furthermore that FM must have regard to confidentiality and not discuss any WGHC Committee Business at the Meetings. Committee approved FM – general information noted. Confidentiality noted. Company Secretary will still be the

**Committee approved that FM would be the new WGHC representative at the West Granton Community Trust Meetings.**

- b) Some members raised concerns about the increase of bike theft in the area. The CEO advised that she would raise this with the local Community Police.

**Committee noted the report.**

## 12 ) DATE OF NEXT MEETING – WEDNESDAY 11<sup>th</sup> September 2019

**Committee Approved the next meeting would be Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2019**

Signed [redacted] this has been redacted because it contains personal data [redacted]

Date.....

**Chairperson**