

MINUTES OF MEETING NO.646
QUEENS CROSS HOUSING ASSOCIATION BOARD OF MANAGEMENT
HELD ON TUESDAY 18 AUGUST 2020 AT 6.00 P.M. VIA ZOOM

Andrew Burns, Marilyn Clewes, Ian Elrick, Margaret Glass, Sadie Gordon, David Horner, John McIntyre, Anne Ramsey, Robert Takenzire, Bronwyn Wyper.

Shona Stephen (Chief Executive), Neil Manley (Director of Finance and Corporate Support), Rona Anderson (Director of Property, Enterprise and Regeneration), Donalda Hogg (Head of Business Services), Elizabeth Hood (Depute Director), Fiona Smith (Executive Office Manager), Adele Drennan (Governance Officer).

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1.0 Welcome and Apologies

1.1 Marilyn Clewes welcomed everyone to the meeting and then handed over to Shona Stephen, Chief Executive, to chair the meeting. Apologies received from Louise Smith (Director of Neighbourhood Services).

2.0 Declarations of Interest

2.1 There were no new declarations.

3.0 Homelessness Presentation

3.1 The Depute Director delivered a presentation which outlined the impact that Covid-19 has had on homelessness. It also detailed the local and national response to homelessness and the potential impact that this has on QCHA.

3.2 The Board noted that:

- The Chief Executive was a member of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) which had been set up to make recommendations to Scottish Government Ministers on how to eradicate rough sleeping and ensure that recommendations are implemented to secure rapid change and improvement towards the Government's goals. 70 recommendations were initially made with a further 105 when they reconvened in June 2020 in response to Covid-19.
- 1750 homelessness applications have been made since March with over 300 refugee status applications expected.
- Nine homeless lets were made in Glasgow during Q1 which is well below Glasgow City Council's target of 1000 due allocations being paused during lockdown.
- From April to July 2020 QCHA has made 13 Section 5 (homeless) lets, leased 21 properties to Glasgow City Council for use as Temporary Furnished Flats, set up a temporary shelter for asylum seekers at the Talbot building and we have 36 current referrals awaiting offer. These stats are changing daily.
- RSL's have been requested to let 90% of properties to homeless applicants in 2020/21 (net of transfers).
- The potential impact means that QCHA will require to manage the expectations from other applicants and ensure that we are communicating with clear and consistent messages. There may be increased void costs due to a higher number of transfers, a possible diversion of funding and Board Members will be advised of any impact that this has on the new Allocations Policy when it is brought to the Board in October 2020.

3.3 The Board engaged in extensive discussions and the Depute Director provided reassurance that QCHA are working closely with Glasgow City Council and other agencies to build relationships and instil confidence in Housing Officers when dealing

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with any issues as they arise to ensure that appropriate support is being provided to those who need it.

- 3.4 The Board also discussed the implications of the Scottish Government's emergency legislation which includes a six-month ban on evictions and the likelihood of this being extended until March 2021.

4.0 Governance Update

4.1 QC Group Governance Regulations

- 4.1.1 The purpose of this report was to provide the fifth and final tranche in a series of reports to present changes to the Housing Association's Governance Regulations to establish Governance Regulations that can be applied consistently across the QC Group. The aim is to have a fully formatted set of QC Group Governance Regulations that can be formally adopted by the subsidiaries in the Autumn.

- 4.1.2 The Executive Office Manager drew the Board's attention to the new Learning and Development Policy for Governing Body Members which demonstrates our commitment to ensure that learning and development is made sufficiently flexible to enable our Board members to undertake the training and development sessions they need when they need it. This will include increased use of online platforms as well as tailored and personal training plans.

- 4.1.3 The Board noted that the Entitlements, Payments and Benefits (EPB) Policy (previously known as Schedule 7 of the Housing Act) has been slightly amended to ensure that there is no public perception of our Board members in any way benefiting inappropriately from their position.

After discussion the Board approved the recommendations set out in the report.

4.2 Good Governance Matters – Priorities and actions following Board Annual Performance Reviews

- 4.2.1 The purpose of this report was to highlight the key points from the Association Board Annual Performance Reviews, Board attendance for 2019/20, learning and development opportunities and succession planning. The Annual Performance Reviews were held online as virtual meetings via Zoom this year for the first time and were very successful

The Board noted:

- a) The priorities and actions resulting from the Annual Performance Reviews and that learning and development opportunities for all QC Boards will now be co-ordinated by the Executive Office Governance Team and an invite will be extended to all QC Board members to participate in relevant training.
- b) That we are continuing to work closely with the Customer Engagement Officer to help to identify potential new Board Members.

4.3 Good Governance Matters – AGM, Elections & Succession Plan and Election of Vice Chair

- 4.3.1 The purpose of this report was to present for approval information to evidence compliance with SHR Regulatory Standard 6. This includes compliance with the constitution and priorities and actions resulting from the annual Association Board appraisals.

- 4.3.2 Following discussions, the Board:

- a) Noted that we are currently preparing to hold two AGM's; the Workspace AGM will take place on Thursday 3 September with the Association's AGM on 7

September. Both meetings will be held as virtual events for the first time via Zoom.

- b) Noted that we have three Board Members, Marilyn Clewes, Margaret Glass and Sadie Gordon, who have now served on the Board for more than 9 years and the Board confirmed their full support for all three members to stand for re-election at the AGM.
- c) In response to a call for nominations for the position of Vice Chair one nomination was received from Andrew Burns. The Board confirmed their unanimous support for Andrew and this appointment will be formalised at the Board meeting immediately following the AGM.
- d) Noted that our Ambassador role will be reviewed and developed during 2020/21.
- e) Considered and agreed all recommendations as set out in Section 1 of the report.

4.4 Governance of Garscube Community Foundation

4.4.1 The purpose of this report was for the Board to consider the change of name from the Garscube Community Foundation to the Queens Cross Community Foundation, and give consideration to undertake a review of the governance documents (Members Agreement and Memorandum and Articles of Association) to make improvements and update these to suit the current focus and activities.

4.4.2 After discussion the Board:

- a) Noted that there are only two members of the Garscube Community Foundation (Queens Cross Housing Association and Queens Cross Workspace) and both members need to agree the name change.
- b) Noted that the Garscube Community Foundation met on 26 June and agreed that the name change would help to promote them being part of the QC Group and the Workspace agreed the name change at their meeting on 13 August.
- c) Agreed the name change from Garscube Community Foundation to the Queens Cross community Foundation.
- d) Agreed that this is a good time and opportunity to review the governance documents for the Garscube.

5.0 Covid-19 Update

5.1 The purpose of this report was for the Board to note and discuss the additional actions taken by the Executive Team in response to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic since the last update on 23 June.

5.2 The Chief Executive reassured the Board that this topic remains top of the agenda and that the Executive Team are continuing to hold separate weekly meetings to focus solely on this. A copy of the QC Route Map was attached at Appendix 1 demonstrating our careful approach to the reintroduction of our services as we move through each phase of lockdown.

5.3 The Board noted that two surveys have been carried out; a Covid-19 Tenant Survey (Appendix 2 of the report) and a staff Workbuzz Survey (Appendix 3 of the report). Both of these were to assess how well QCHA is responding to the crisis and to gather information which will inform our future planning. The results of our tenant survey will be fed back at the AGM and so far the results have been very positive.

5.4 After discussion, the Board:

- a) Noted all actions taken by the Executive Team as set out at Section 2 of the report.
- b) Noted that the mental health of staff continues to be a priority and our Healthy Working Lives group have been arranging online activities for our staff to participate in. Good communication is important and staff have access to a free confidential counselling service if required.

- c) Felt that the online classes have been very beneficial to ensuring good mental health for our younger Wellbeing tenants and this has been greatly appreciated by our service users.
- d) Noted that our investment programme has recommenced with work being undertaken in Springbank Street to install new kitchens, bathrooms and rewiring with appropriate safety measures in place to protect our tenants and contractors.

6.0 Note of Board Business Planning Day – 19 June

- 6.1 The Board agreed the Note of the Board Business Planning Day which took place on 19 June via Zoom as a true and accurate account.

7.0 Arrangements for Board Business Planning Day – 27 November

- 7.1 The Chief Executive advised that the next Business Planning Day will take place on 27 November and the Board were invited to agree the location of this meeting.
- 7.2 The general feeling was that Board members were keen to attend at the Hilton Glasgow Grosvenor where possible, providing that adequate safety measures were in place, however Plan B would be to attend virtually again via Zoom if necessary. The Governance Officer will contact the Hilton Grosvenor to establish whether they have the appropriate technology and equipment available to allow for a potential “blended” meeting.

8.0 Health and Safety

- 8.1 This is an opportunity to report on safety performance, funding requirements, safety failures and any other H&S related issues, to allow the board to give all such issues due consideration.
- 8.2 The Director of Property, Enterprise and Regeneration reassured Board members that the Health and Safety continue to meet regularly to progress with the busy programme for this year. Covid-19 is and will continue to be a priority and work is being carried out to ensure that we have up to date Risk Assessments completed for all staff.

9.0 New Membership Applications

- 9.1 There were no new QCHA Membership Applications to be considered.
- 9.2 The Chief Executive advised that the decision was taken to renew our SFHA Membership for 2020/21 particularly as they have been providing an excellent service over the past 5 months. This will be reviewed again in January 2021.

10. Previous Minutes

- 10.1 The Minutes of meeting no. 644 held on 19 May were agreed as an accurate account, proposed by Margaret Glass and seconded by Andrew Burns.
- 10.2 The Minutes of meeting no. 645 held on 23 June were agreed as an accurate account, proposed by Anne Ramsey and seconded by Bronwyn Wyper.

11.0 Action Tracker

- 11.1 It was agreed to add the Review of SFHA affiliation fee back on to the Action Tracker for consideration in January 2021.
- 11.2 AT: 2018 / 2019: 02 – It was agreed that the Impact Assessment Template for Social Regeneration Activities would be brought to the Board in January 2021. This has been

delayed due to the impact of Covid-19 and lockdown as the staff who were not furloughed were focussing their attention on delivering essential services to our tenants and customers.

13.0 Date and Time of Next Meeting

The meeting concluded at 7.45pm.

The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Monday 31 August 2020 at 6pm via Zoom.

I certify that the above minute has been approved as a true and accurate record of proceedings:

Chair: **Date:**