

MINUTES OF MEETING NO.650
QUEENS CROSS HOUSING ASSOCIATION BOARD OF MANAGEMENT
HELD ON TUESDAY 27 OCTOBER 2020 AT 6.00 P.M. via ZOOM

Andrew Burns, Marilyn Clewes, Ian Elrick, Margaret Glass, Sadie Gordon, David Horner, John McIntyre, Matthew Millar, 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), Elizabeth Hood (Depute Director), Louise Smith (Head of Housing & Housing Support), Fiona Smith (Executive Office Manager), Adele Drennan (Governance Officer).

ACTION

1.0 Welcome and Apologies

1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies from Donalda Hogg, Head of Business Services.

2.0 Declarations of Interest

2.1 No new declarations were made.

3.0 Co-option of Community Board Member

3.1 Following a recruitment exercise earlier in the year, the Board were asked to consider and approve the co-option of a tenant, Matthew Millar, to the Board. The Board agreed the co-option and welcomed Matt to the meeting. Matt will now begin his induction programme and will meet with the Chair and Chief Executive at the end of this period to agree the next steps. In line with section 39.3 of the Rules, Matt will require to stand down at the AGM in 2021 and seek nomination for election.

4.0 Hamiltonhill Progress

4.1 Due to commercial sensitivity this report is not for publication.

5.0 Allocations Policy Review

5.1 The purpose of this report was for the Board to note the feedback received following the Allocations Consultation, approve the Allocation Policy (including adopting a choice based letting approach), and note the proposal for the procurement of software to support a choice based letting system.

5.2 A comprehensive consultation programme was carried out from June to September 2020. A range of stakeholders were consulted including housing list applicants, tenants, CIG and RTF members, staff and external stakeholders with a range of methods being used such as an on-line survey, telephone survey, focus groups for both applicants and staff, staff briefings and workshops. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 restrictions we were unable to carry out face to face interviews, meetings, or pop-up sessions within the community.

5.3 The Board noted that, despite the unprecedented circumstances, the consultation was very successful with a total of 232 responses, equivalent to 12% of the housing list. A full breakdown was detailed at section 4 of the report.

- 5.4 The Allocations Policy which was previously made available via the Board Portal has now been revised to take account of the consultation feedback and a copy of the new Policy was attached as Appendix 2.
- 5.5 The Board noted that moving to a choice based letting approach would require a new software system to support this and due to the specialist nature of the software we were required to utilise an EU compliant government procurement framework. There was only one supplier that met our specification requirements however they also provide services to another local Housing Association which would mean a smoother transition once this has been developed. We are in the early stages of negotiation but indicative costs remain in the region of £50k. Once the contract is agreed, the Chief Executive will approve this spend as this is within her delegated authority.
- 5.6 The Depute Director highlighted that whilst choice based letting allows the applicants control to choose properties, additional support will need to be provided to vulnerable applicants who may not understand or have access to the system. It was confirmed that staff within the Tenancy Sustainment Team will be able to provide assistance to those who require it.
- 5.7 Following discussion, the Board:
- a) Noted the feedback from the Allocations Consultation Report.
 - b) Approved the new Allocation Policy – including adopting a Choice Based Letting approach to be implemented in September 2021.
 - c) Noted the proposal for the procurement of software to support a Choice Based Letting system.

6.0 Quality Promise

- 6.1 The purpose of this report was for the board to consider and approve the Association's new Quality Promise (Appendix 1).
- 6.2 The Quality Promise originated from the Asset Management Strategy agreed in March 2019. This promise will confirm the standard of housing that tenants can expect from Queens Cross, including clear information on service provision on our Property Services standards and commitments.
- 6.3 The draft Quality Promise was approved for consultation by the Executive Team in December 2019 and underwent consultation with the Residents Task Force in February 2020.
- 6.4 The Board discussed the draft Quality Promise and fed back that the document was a bit vague in some areas. It was felt that statements in relation to the standard of services we provide should be backed up with further information such as timescales for emergency repairs etc. The document should also highlight that tenants can make contact with their Housing Officer to discuss any adaptations that may be required and information on how tenants can check to see when improvement works to their properties are scheduled to be carried out should also be included.
- 6.5 The Board also gave consideration to the proposal of including the Quality Promise alongside the promotion of the Business Plan as it was felt that one document could potentially overshadow the other. There is a need to ensure that both documents stand separately and that we do not "bombard" tenants with information.
- 6.7 The Board:
- a) Approved the Association's new Quality Promise subject to the inclusion of the additional information above.
 - b) Noted that the timing of the Quality Promise being issued will be reconsidered by the Executive Team.

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7.0 Annual Assurance Statement 2020

- 7.1 The purpose of this report was to present the second Annual Assurance Statement for consideration and approval by the Board.
- 7.2 The Board noted that the statement has been prepared following good practice guidance issued by the Scottish Housing Regulator in March 2020 and the updated statutory guidance on the Regulatory Framework issued on 31 August. Essentially the 2020 Annual Assurance Statement has been prepared in a similar way to the 2019 Statement, but with additional consideration to the effects of the ongoing public health emergency.
- 7.3 The Executive Officer Manager drew the Board's attention to sections 6.3 to 6.7 of the report which provides updates on assurance that has been carried out this year, particularly from our internal auditors.
- 7.4 The Board:
- a) Reviewed the summarised evidence (Appendix 2)
 - b) Reviewed the supplemental Covid-19 evidence (Appendix 3)
 - c) Agreed that the Chair signs off the Annual Assurance Statement (Appendix 1) confirming compliance, to be submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator before the deadline of 30 November 2020.

8.0 Meeting Schedule 2021 / 22

- 8.1 The purpose of this report was for the Board to consider and approve the 2021 / 2022 meeting schedule (Appendix 1).
- 8.2 The Board noted that the Governance Officer has worked with the Head of Business Services and the Director of Finance and Corporate Support to ensure that deadlines for QC Factoring and QC Workspace Board Meetings, as well as the QC Group Annual Accounts are achievable.
- 8.3 The Board:
- a) Approved the 2021 / 2022 meeting schedule.
 - b) Agreed that the September 2021 (Q1) Board meeting will be held on Tuesday 21 September.

9.0 Format of Board Planning Day

- 9.1 The Chief Executive confirmed that due to the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions the Hilton Glasgow Grosvenor are unable to host our Board Planning Day which was scheduled to take place on 27 November. The Governance Officer had been in touch with Board Members earlier in the week and it was confirmed that the preference was to hold two smaller virtual sessions via Zoom which will now take place on the evenings of 30 November and 1 December.

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10.0 Health and Safety

- 10.1 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.
- 10.2 There was nothing to report.

11.0 New Membership Applications

11.1 There were no Applications to be considered.

12.0 Minute of Meeting No. 649

12.1 The minutes of meeting no. 649 which took place on Tuesday 22 September 2020 were agreed as an accurate account, proposed by Margaret Glass and seconded by Andrew Burns.

13.0 Action Tracker

13.1 In relation to AT 2019 / 2020: 05, the Director of Finance and Corporate Support confirmed that to date, 13 Freedom of Information requests have been received however it is difficult to confirm the exact cost of these as some requests are more complex than others. The Board noted that an estimated cost of staff time taken to pull information together is in the region of £1k.

13.2 There were no new items added to the tracker.

14.0 A.O.B

14.1 The Board commented on the excellent coverage of the free broadband and digital service which has been provided to 50 Westercommon residents and wished to note their thanks to all involved as this is a fantastic project.

15.0 Date and Time of Next Meeting

The meeting concluded at 8pm.

The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 24 November 2020 at 6pm.

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

Chair: **Date:**