

MINUTES OF MEETING NO.665
QUEENS CROSS HOUSING ASSOCIATION BOARD OF MANAGEMENT
HELD ON TUESDAY 29 MARCH 2022 AT 6.00 P.M.
MACKINTOSH ROOM, 45 FIRHILL ROAD

Andrew Burns (AB), Ian Elrick (IE), Sadie Gordon (SG), David Horner (DH - virtual attendance), John McIntyre (JM), Matthew Millar (MM), Anne Ramsey (AR), Bronwyn Wyper (BW).

Shona Stephen (SS - Chief Executive), Neil Manley (NM - Director of Finance & Corporate Support), Rona Anderson (RA - Director of Property, Enterprise & Regeneration), Elizabeth Hood (EH - Depute Director of Neighbourhood Services), Louise Smith (LS - Director of Neighbourhood Services), Fiona Smith (FS - Executive Office Manager), Adele Drennan (AD - Governance Officer).

ACTION

1.0 Housekeeping

1.1 Noted

2.0 Welcome and Apologies

2.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies received from Margaret Glass and Donalda Hogg (Head of Business Services)

3.0 Declarations of Interest

3.1 None.

4.0 Budget 2022/23 for approval

4.1 The purpose of this report was for the Board to agree the 2022/23 final budget, note the continuing areas of uncertainty and risk within the budget, and agree the proposed approach to them as set out in the report.

4.2 The report provided an update following on from the draft position presented to the Board in January and evidenced that the key financial objectives for the Association in maintaining its financial viability and meeting its loan covenant obligations can be met by the forecast. The 30-year forecast demonstrates viability thorough ensuring the organisation can meet all its service and investment obligations whilst servicing and repaying its loan debt within the 30-year period.

4.3 NM advised that the staff pay award was the main unknown factor in the overall budget for 2022/23 and that negotiations were ongoing. Following a discussion, it was agreed that a further report be brought back to the Board in April to update on the position and to agree the final salary offer.

4.4 Finally, in response to some questions asked in advance of the meeting by MM, the Director of Finance and Corporate Support explained that there had been a reduction in the CEO's Exec Budget which was kept for when we need to consider restructures etc. The Exec Office non-pay also increased due to additional cleaning of our office and facilities, and higher mailing costs as we kept tenants informed of changes to our services during Covid.

4.5 Following a lengthy discussion, the Board:
a) Agreed the finalised budget figures for 2022/23.

- b) Agreed that a further report be brought back to the Board in April to update on the outcome of the negotiations between Unite and EVH, and to agree the final salary offer for QCHA staff.
- c) Noted that, once the final offer is agreed we will review the expenditure proposals and agree reductions to accommodate the pay offer.

5.0 KPI's for 2022/23

- 5.1 The purpose of this report was for the Board to review and approve the proposed KPIs for 2022/2023.
- 5.2 NM explained that, following the earlier discussion regarding the budget, performance management will be key in making sure that we remain on track in the year ahead. The KPI schedule which was attached as Appendix 1 sets out the previous years' targets, the proposed targets for 2022/23 and an explanation and some narrative against each one. An updated schedule which had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting included an additional column showing the actual performance up to the end of Q3 for context. The board discussed targets HR1 and HSG1 .
- 5.3 IE queried why void loss for the Workspace differed to that of void rent loss for our properties as he felt that the Workspace target of +/- 5% was difficult to understand. RA explained that the KPI had been changed to reflect what was being measured this year as previously, what was being measured differed to how this was being described. This should now be clearer in our performance reporting going forward.
- 5.4 After a short discussion, the Board:
 - a) Approved the KPI's for 2022/23
 - b) Noted that updates on KPI's will continue be brought to the Board as part of our quarterly performance reporting.

6.0 Novation of Repairs & Maintenance Contract

- 6.1 The purpose of this report was for the Board to consider and approve the novation of the current maintenance contract from P&D Scotland Limited to Bell Decorating Group Limited and agree to delegate authority to the Chief Executive to sign the Novation Agreement.
- 6.2 Following a discussion with our legal consultant, it was agreed that a formal Novation Agreement should be undertaken to ensure no detriment to the Association. A summary of the clauses of the Novation Agreement were set out at section 3.3 of the report.
- 6.3 The Board:
 - a) Approved the Novation of the current Repairs and Maintenance contract from P&D Scotland Limited to Bell Decorating Group Limited.
 - b) Delegated Authority to Chief Executive to sign the Novation Agreement.

7.0 Zero Carbon Strategy

- 7.1 The CEO delivered a presentation setting out the proposed direction of travel for the Association in relation to our zero-carbon strategy. In considering our approach, climate change, SG net-zero targets, the rising cost of living and fuel poverty all have to be taken into consideration.
- 7.2 The Board noted that the main causes of fuel poverty are inefficient housing, high cost of energy, low incomes and how energy is used in the home. Our last Getting to Know You Survey in 2019/20 told us that 40% of our tenants had not used heating due to the costs and 22% of tenants had missed meals due to fuel costs. Since then, energy prices have risen by approx. 60% and so the levels of poverty in our neighbourhoods will have substantially increased. Our response is to have a 3-pronged strategy whereby we can

improve the energy efficiency of tenants' homes, support our tenants with their energy bills and energy use, and develop a net zero plan for the organisation.

7.3 The Board noted the steps that the Association had taken so far to improve tenants' homes, how we are currently supporting tenants with their fuel costs, how we are supporting tenants and the community in terms of green neighbourhoods, travel, and the circular economy, and the progress we have made so far in becoming a net zero organisation. Examples of how QCHA will be a net-zero organisation includes:

- Minimising our carbon footprint and maximising the net zero contribution of our built assets.
- Further investment in renewables, uptake zero emissions heat solutions.
- Replacing our petrol and diesel car and van fleet with electric vehicles by 2025.
- Installing more vehicle charging points at our offices and community premises
- Reducing travel by prioritising digital communication and video conferencing and prioritisation of active travel.
- Measuring and reporting the impacts of our staff home to work travel.
- Influencing and improving current procurement systems to have a greater impact on reducing our carbon footprint. Increase our focus on circular economy in procurement.
- Eliminating single-use plastic

7.4 RA advised that she had recently met with The Minister for Zero Carbon Buildings, Active Travel and Tenants' Rights to explain what Queens Cross is doing to address fuel poverty and the challenges faced in relation to meeting the net-zero targets set by the Scottish Government. The Minister appeared to understand the need to look at rent affordability along with affordability of running costs and could see the benefits in investing in the social housing sector as this generates value for money and has the potential to increase desire from owner-occupiers if they can see that their neighbours are living in affordable and comfortable homes. The main issue for the Scottish Government is where these resources will come from.

7.5 Our next steps are to appoint a Sustainability Consultant jointly with NW Partners to informal and support retrofit and new builds, broaden support to tenants and communities in raising awareness and developing solutions via SG Investing in Communities Fund, and identify a strategy to be a net-zero organisation by 2035 and a budget to facilitate this.

8.0 Ukrainian Crisis

8.1 The purpose of this report was for the Board note and approve our response to the unfolding crisis in Ukraine.

8.2 Many people in the UK are keen to assist with support and rehousing and a Homes for Ukraine website has been set up by the Home Office to encourage individuals to offer homes and rooms to accommodate those arriving here. The CEO advised that some individuals have approached QCHA about the potential to participate in this scheme. As there is currently no official rehousing programme established to connect with housing providers as there was, for example, with Syrian refugees, this makes it difficult for QCHA to engage pro-actively as a landlord with the offer of housing.

8.3 The Board considered the proposed response which was set out in the report and agreed:

- a) A clear statement of intent that QCHA aims to provide support to all refugees to reach out to the "new citizens" of Glasgow living in its homes with the aims of integrating them into its services and listening to their voices.
- b) That QCHA will participate in any Scottish or UK Government schemes set up to house refugees from Ukraine or other parts of the world. Initially, we would aim to make 10 – 12 properties available to meet any such demand.

- c) That QCHA would request any tenants wishing to house refugees and their families to formally request permission to do so. We would consider each request on its merits before granting permission. Anyone doing so without permission would, however, be in breach of their tenancy agreement.
- d) That we would communicate QCHA's support for refugees and the requirement for tenants to seek approval before offering rooms in their homes.

9.0 Private and confidential commercially sensitive report

10. 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 RA advised that, in line with the changes in the Scottish Government guidance, a review of our current Covid protocols had now taken place. Given the current cases of Covid in Scotland at present, and as we are still trying to manage covid in the workplace, we have agreed to continue with the existing protocols. A further review will take place at the end of April.

11.0 New Membership Applications

- 11.1 There were no new membership applications to be considered.

12.0 Minute of Meeting No. 665

- 12.1 Minutes of meeting no. 665 held on 22 February were reviewed for accuracy and matters arising.
- 12.2 The minutes were agreed as an accurate account, proposed by AR and seconded by MM.

13.0 Action Tracker

- 13.1 AT 2021/22: 05 – A discussion on properties for mid-market rent would take place at the April Board Meeting.

14.0 AOB

- 14.1 Tour of Stock
RA advised that a tour of our investment and development sites is being arranged for the afternoon of 26 April in advance of the Board Meeting. The tour will commence at 3:30pm from 45 Firhill Road and all Board Members are welcome to attend.
- 14.2 New date for Board Planning Day
The CEO advised that the Board Planning Day will now take place on Wednesday 8 June. We are exploring availability at some other social enterprise venues however the Courtyard can be used if required.
- 14.3 Update on Young Persons Panel
BW advised that it has been difficult to encourage young people to engage with QC, and as lots of young people do not know much about the work that goes on across the organisation, the panel is an opportunity to feed back to them on the services that we provide. At the meeting on 22 February, young members spoke about why they wanted to participate on the panel and at the meeting on 15 March they discussed how the panel can be promoted and used to expand their skills. The next meeting is scheduled to take place in May and will focus on what members would like to get out of being on the panel

and how they can influence decisions. The panel will also be looking at a code of conduct, how future meetings can be recorded, and the Tenancy Sustainment and Homeless Prevention Manager will be attending to talk about the new CBL system.

14.4 Update on Napiershall St Acquisition

RA advised that we were unsuccessful in our bid as it was not considered to be the best option. City Property have confirmed that another developer is taking the site forward.

14.5 Grant Approval for Hamiltonhill

RA advised that we had received a grant offer of £22,800,000 which will allow us to proceed on to site and move this forward.

14.6 Making Places Bid

RA advised that we were also successful in our bid to Sustrans for the Making Places proposal for £1.7m this week.

14.7 QC Group Boards Recruitment

FS advised that we had now made contact with those who registered to attend our recruitment event on 24 February and invited them to attend short online follow-up sessions on 5 and 12 April. Those interested will then be invited to submit applications and there will be an opportunity for them to observe the four organisation's Board Meetings in May. Interviews will take place around June/July.

15.0 **Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The meeting concluded at 8.10pm.

The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 26 April 2022 at 6pm.

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

Chair: Date: