

**MINUTES OF MEETING NO.654**  
**QUEENS CROSS HOUSING ASSOCIATION BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**  
**HELD ON TUESDAY 30 MARCH 2021 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), Donald Hogg (Head of Business Services), Elizabeth Hood (Depute Director), Louise Smith (Head of Housing & Housing Support), Fiona Smith (Executive Office Manager), Adele Drennan (Governance Officer).

Margaret Brannan (Business Strategy Manager) – item 5 only.

**ACTION**

**1.0 Welcome and Apologies**

1.1 Marilyn welcomed everyone to the meeting.

There were no apologies.

**2.0 Declarations of Interest**

2.1 There were no new declarations.

**3.0 QCHA Final Budget Report 2021/22**

3.1 The purpose of this report was to present the final budget for the 2021/22 financial year with the associated 30-year financial plan for approval.

3.2 The Director of Finance and Corporate Support advised that a meeting with Unite had taken place the previous day in relation to the 2021/22 salary increase and a final offer of 0.7% plus a £500 (taxable) one-off cash sum was made..

3.3 The Board noted that despite anticipating a significant rise in insurance costs for 2021/22 due to our recent claims history, the insurance cost has only increased by £20k. As the Murano Street roof collapse claim was made in the 2019/20 financial year, this could not be included due to the rate stabilisation clause built into the policy. The £100k saving in this area will cover the cost of the £500 (taxable) lump sum agreed as part of the 2021/22 salary increase.

3.4 The component budget has had to be re-phased slightly as a result on the increased costs and greater covenant limitations in year 1-3 with £200k moved beyond year 5 of the plan. The impact of Covid has meant we need to review our component investment plan now to ensure the lost year of investment and procurement from Covid can be reworked into a future programme. The forward plan also needs to be drafted to reflect a more challenging procurement market. This work will be calculated within the parameters of the current financial covenant limitations and should allow for great performance variation, and a greater margin. If investment or procurement needs are such, we may need to discuss the impact of covid on our investment with lenders with a possible aim of adjusting the covenant target.

3.5 After a discussion, the Board:

- a) Noted the key changes arising from the draft position in January.
- b) Noted the risk areas within the budget and mitigations in place.
- c) Noted that all covenant targets have been met.
- d) Approved the 5-year financial forecast.
- e) Approved the 2021/22 Budget.

## 4.0 KPI's for 2021/22

- 4.1 The purpose of this report was to present the 2021/22 KPI's to the Board for approval.
- 4.2 Overall, identified KPIs and targets for 2021/22 remain similar to the previous year, although there has been a reduction from 21 KPIs in 20/21 to 19 KPIs in 21/22 as the following were changed from KPI's to PI's:
- **BST1: FOI requests responded to within timescale.** This will be included in our quarterly operational reporting to the Leadership Team.
  - **INV3: Defects at Completion.** Whilst recognising the importance of monitoring this, it was agreed that this should be reported quarterly as part of the Investment Monitoring Report.
- 4.3 A discussion took place in relation to the target set for tenant satisfaction with the repairs service (MT5). This is currently set at 95%, however as we haven't achieved this target for a number of years, the Board considered reducing this to 92% to make this more realistic and achievable for staff. A 92% target was still considered to be very high and one that would motivate and incentivise the team to achieve this target.
- 4.4 The Board:
- a) Agreed to reduce the MT5 KPI from 95% to 92%
  - b) Approved the KPI's for 2021/22.

Rona

## 5.0 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Report

- 5.1 The purpose of this report and presentation was to outline the Association's approach to developing and new 2021 – 2025 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and agree a Board EDI Champion.
- 5.2 The Business Strategy Manager advised that whilst the Association must meet its legislative and regulatory responsibilities, our ambition is to be an outstanding contributor to EDI in the housing sector and beyond. Our aim is to deliver diverse and accessible activities, expand our excellent rated wellbeing service, tackle social isolation, take a local democracy approach, and increase diversity across staff and volunteer roles.
- 5.3 The Board noted our current accreditations and memberships which reflects where we are at the moment and outlined what actions we will take to develop our EDI Strategy including the implementation of an internal EDI Working Group.
- 5.4 The Board were then invited to participate in small breakout groups to discuss and provide their feedback on progress made to date.
- 5.5 Feedback from discussion groups included:
- Ensuring that we are making the most out of our existing resources and relevant memberships.
  - Having the right communication strategies in place which demonstrates our commitment to EDI.
  - Ensuring that our existing policies provide a strong backbone for the organisation.
  - The need to imbed EDI into the day-to-day job and ensuring that this isn't simply a box ticking exercise.
  - Consider how we define success and how this will be monitored and reported.
  - Making a commitment to recruitment in order to attract a more diverse workforce.
  - The need to invest in making homes more accessible.
  - Ensuring that the proposed Board Champion role becomes a reality.

- 5.6 The Chief Executive thanked the Board for their feedback and agreed to consider these points before reporting back to the Board.
- 5.7 The Board discussed the proposal of appointing a Board Champion and noted that there is still work required to define the role. There is also a need to demonstrate that EDI is important to the Association and, as Shona Stephen, Chief Executive and Poverty and Inequality Commissioner, is the EDI Champion for the Executive Team, it was agreed that it would be appropriate for the Chair to become the EDI Champion for the Board. As it will take some time to develop the role, and with our current Chair retiring from the Board in 2021, it was agreed that Andrew Burns, Vice Chair, would take on the role of EDI Champion until our new Chair is formally appointed at the AGM in September.

**Shona**

## **6.0 SHR Covid-19 Monthly Return**

- 6.1 The Chief Executive presented the Covid-19 monthly return for February 2021 for information and confirmed her intention to provide the Board with a further report in April summarising the impact of the last year on the Association. This will also include the end of year report from SHR and allow the Board to do a comparison on information gathered from other RSL's.

## **7.0 Tenancy Sustainment Strategy**

- 7.1 The Director of Neighbourhood Services advised that following the reshaping of housing teams to incorporate a Tenancy Sustainment Team, a strategy had been drawn up in 2020 as part of the new Business Plan. The strategy and action plan was drafted and circulated to the Board for comments/feedback in December and the updated Strategy was uploaded to the Board Portal prior to this meeting.

- 7.2 The Board:

- a) Approved the Tenancy Sustainment Strategy
- b) Agreed that a progress report should be brought back to the Board in 2023.

**Louise**

## **8.0 Rent Arrears Policy**

- 8.1 The Depute Director advised that the Rent Arrears Policy was due for its 3-year review. This had been reviewed in line with good practice and only some minor changes had been made to the wording. A copy of the Policy was made available to Board Members via the portal in advance of the meeting. Focus remains on prevention and early intervention to support tenants and reduce arrears which appears to be working well as our performance has improved over the last 12 months.

- 8.2 The Board approved the reviewed Rent Arrears Policy.

## **9.0 2020 Rule Change**

- 9.1 The purpose of this report was for the Board to consider and agree whether to instruct lawyers to prepare a report outlining the benefits and risks attached to each proposed Rule change, allowing time for discussion and agreement before calling a Special General Meeting.

- 8.2 At a meeting on 31 August 2020 the Board agreed not to hold an SGM to adopt the 2020 model rules until Spring 2021 (19 April was subsequently agreed as a provisional date), by which time we had hoped the restrictions would permit us to hold a physical meeting and allow the Board take time to consider further amendments to the Rules in addition to the standard amendments. Unfortunately, due to tighter restrictions being put in place it had not been possible to arrange a physical SGM for 19 April, not had it been possible to hold a physical meeting of the Board to allow members to fully consider and discuss any additional amendments.

- 8.3 If the Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020 is not extended then we will be unable to hold a virtual or blended SGM / AGM and would technically be in breach of our constitution. SHR have confirmed that they will take the impact of the virus into account for Association's who are unable to hold an AGM.
- 8.4 The Board considered the information provided and noted that the intention is not to hold the SGM immediately prior to the AGM in 2021 for reasons which were set out at section 2.3 of the report.
- 8.5 The Executive Office Manager advised that as restrictions ease and given that the expectation from SHR is that the 2020 rules should be adopted as soon as practical but ideally no later than the end of 2021, we now plan on holding a physical SGM by no later than 13 September and members would be encouraged to make use of proxy votes to allow them to participate. This would also limit the number of attendees at the meeting in line with relevant Government guidance.
- 8.6 Following a discussion, the Board:
- a) Agreed to instruct our lawyers to begin work on new rules in preparation for an SGM which can be held as soon as the SG guidance allows but hopefully no later than immediately prior to the AGM on Monday 13 September.
  - b) Agreed to defer consideration of any additional amendments to 2022 when the board will hopefully have the opportunity to discuss these and any other amendments at a physical meeting.

## **10.0 Health and Safety**

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. The Director of Property, Enterprise and Regeneration provided the Board with a verbal update on two outstanding health and safety matters.

## **11.0 New Membership Applications**

- 11.1 Two new Membership Applications were considered by the Board. Eligibility had been checked and both tenants were interested in joining the Board / CIG's which will be followed up by the Governance Officer.

**Adele**

The Board approved the Membership Applications.

## **12.0 Minute of Meeting No. 653**

- 12.1 The Minutes of meeting no. 653 which took place on 23 February 2021 were agreed as an accurate account, proposed by Anne Ramsey and seconded by Andrew Burns.

## **13.0 Action Tracker**

- 13.1 The Board agreed to remove action AT: 2020 /2021: 02 as this will be reviewed when the SFHA membership is due for renewal in January 2022.

- 13.2 One new item (AT: 2020 / 2021: 03) was added to the tracker.

**Rona**

## **14.0 A.O.B**

- 14.1 The Board Representative on the Young People's Panel advised that the Panel is expected to hold its first meeting in the coming weeks and will provide the Board with an update at the April Board Meeting or Planning Day in June.

**15.0 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The meeting concluded at 8.05pm

The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 27 April 2021 at 6pm.

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

**Chair:** ..... **Date:** .....