

**MINUTES OF MEETING NO.674**  
**QUEENS CROSS HOUSING ASSOCIATION BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**  
**HELD ON WEDNESDAY 18 JANUARY 2022 AT 5.30 P.M. via ZOOM**

Ian Elrick, Margaret Glass, Sadie Gordon, David Horner, Matthew Millar, Anne Ramsey, Bronwyn Wyper.

Shona Stephen (Chief Executive), Rona Anderson (Director of Property, Enterprise and Regeneration) Elizabeth Hood (Depute Director of Neighbourhood Services), Louise Smith (Director of Neighbourhood Services), Neil Manley (Director of Finance and Corporate Support) Fiona Smith (Executive Office Manager – Minutes).

**ACTION**

**1.0 Welcome and Apologies**

- 1.1 In the Chair's absence, Anne Ramsey, Vice Chair had been asked to chair the meeting. Anne welcomed everyone and thanked members for making themselves available to attend this special meeting which was taking place out with the approved meeting schedule. Apologies received from Andrew Burns, John McIntyre and Donalda Hogg

**2.0 Declarations of Interest**

- 2.1 There were no new declarations.

**3.0 2023/2024 Rent Increase for approval**

- 3.1 The purpose of this special meeting was to consider the feedback from the tenant consultation exercise and agree the rent increase to be applied from 1 April 2023. The decision had been scheduled to be discussed at the board meeting on 31 January meeting. This date was too late to allow housing benefit data to be provided to Glasgow City Council by the deadline of 27 January 2023 and it is a legal requirement, that tenants must be notified of the new rent by 28 February 2023. The rent increase is an integral part of the 2023/24 budget planning, and the agreed rent increase will be incorporated into the draft budget presented to the board, by the Director of Finance and Corporate Support at the board meeting on 31 January.

- 3.2 The report had been issued to the board members in advance of the meeting and the following 4 documents had been e mailed to provide background and context to the decision- making process. These will be uploaded to the portal.

1. Rent Options 23/24 'Have your Say '
2. Rent consultation survey
3. Rent consultation comments
4. Final survey responses

- 3.3 The Depute Director summarised the following key points from the report. The board noted that SFHA and GWSF have indicated that their members are consulting on an **average** rent increase of 6.1%. The Association's Rent & Service Charge setting policy states that the September rate of the Consumer Price Index – Housing (CIPH) will be used as the basis for the inflationary increase, in September 2022 the CIP(H) was 8.8%. The board was not surprised to read that a significant number of comments indicate that tenants are struggling financially during the Cost-of-Living crisis. Members were surprised to note that only 16% of respondents had asked for advice that may help them to pay their rent and other household costs such as energy bills and that 35% of respondents had opted for a 9% increase. The board agreed that this may be because tenants have made the link between the rent increase approved by the board, and the financial capacity of the Association to deliver services and investment and repairs to tenant's homes (page 5 of document 1)

- 3.4 The board was pleased to note that 73% of respondents think they get value for money, however it was noted that the majority of comments made, were in relation to

dissatisfaction with the repairs service and the need for investment in properties. Some tenants noted a positive experience, but many comments expressed dissatisfaction and frustration with these services. The board noted that the procurement of a repairs service is underway, and members were optimistic that performance will improve under the new contract. It was clear that the feedback clearly highlights the importance of the repairs service to tenants.

3.5 The board discussed rental income being the Association’s largest source of income and how it underpins our ability to deliver services and meet financial obligations. The board was very clear that the decision about the level of change to be applied to rents and service charges is a significant element of the business planning and annual budget setting process. There was a discussion about the information in the table at section 6.2 of the report which showed the 30- year cash outturn for each rent increase option, all other assumptions in the budget model remaining the same. It was noted that choosing the 6.1% option would reduce the Association’s financial capacity and risk contingency to a point that the outturn cash level would be barely above our minimum requirement. The 7% or 9% options will allow more flexibility on these rent and savings requirements, and it was noted that the pay award for 23/24 has already been negotiated and settled.

3.6 The board noted that despite the emergency legislation, there remained a statutory obligation to consult with tenants on proposed changes to rents and service charges for 2023/24. The consultation process normally takes place in October/November to avoid the Christmas period, when response is generally not good. However, due to the uncertainty around the Cost-of-Living legislation, the consultation was delayed until waiting on an update from the Scottish Government on whether rent capping would extend beyond March 2023 and there was a further delay due to postal strikes. After the Christmas break, only 70 responses had been received so the board was pleased that efforts were stepped up to encourage tenants to reply. The level of returns increased to 462 (a 10% response rate) which was similar to last year’s response rate. The board noted it is planned to revert back to the usual consultation timetable next year. Board members were pleased with the effort that had been put in to make sure as many tenants as possible were engaged in the consultation process and were impressed with the content of the Have Your say Leaflet. The board had discussion on all 3 options and discounted 9% as being unaffordable for tenants and likely to be above the sector average. Having considered the remaining options and others, the board agreed that an increase of around 7% would generate sufficient income to mitigate additional costs, did not put the 30 year financial model at risk, whilst balancing the affordability of our rents to tenants on low incomes of options.

3.7 The Board having considered all of the information presented to it:  
a) Agreed the percentage increase of 7% to be applied to rents and service charges for all Scottish Secure, Scottish Short Secure Tenancies and Leased properties to take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023.

**4.0 AOB**

4.1 None

**5.0 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The meeting concluded at 6:10pm. The next meeting is scheduled to take place on: Tuesday 31 January 2023 at 5.00pm

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

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