

MINUTES OF MEETING NO.685
QUEENS CROSS HOUSING ASSOCIATION BOARD OF MANAGEMENT
HELD ON TUESDAY 23 JANUARY 2024 AT 5.30 P.M. on ZOOM

Andrew Burns, Ian Elrick, Margaret Glass, David Horner, John McIntyre, Matthew Millar,

Shona Stephen (Chief Executive), Donalda Hogg (Depute 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) Alison McKay (Governance Advisor – Minutes).

ACTION

1.0 Welcome and Apologies

1.1 Andrew welcomed everyone to tonight's meeting. Apologies were noted from Sadie Gordon, Anne Ramsey, and Bronwyn Wyper.

2.0 Declarations of Interest

2.1 There were no new declarations.

3.0 2024/2025 Rent Increase for approval

3.1 The purpose of this special meeting was to consider the feedback from the rent consultation, consider and the recommendation to approve a 5% rent increase for tenancies to be applied from 1st April 2024 and a 6.3% rent increase for leases and lockups. This report was presented by Elizabeth Hood, Depute Director of Neighbourhood Services.

3.2 Elizabeth thanked everyone for attending this special meeting which was convened to meet the Glasgow City Council deadline of 26 January 2024 to ensure that housing benefit can be processed in time for the rent increase 1 April.

3.3 Elizabeth presented the results from the rent consultation for 2024/2025.

The board noted that:

The implementation of the rent increase follows strict timescales starting with this special board meeting to consider the recommendation of an increase of 5%. The deadline for return of rent data (so that housing benefit entitlement can be calculated) to GCC is 26 January, the rent letter and booklet is set to the printer on 9 February and the mailout to tenants on 29 February and the rent increase taking effect on 1 April.

The rent consultation has been very successful. The consultation period ran for 4 weeks from 1st December 2023 – 5 January 2024. Every tenant received a postal survey which was also available online. Text messages were sent at regular intervals and spikes in survey returns were noted after each text reminder. In total 913 (21%) responses were received compared to 462 (10%) responses received last year.

A summary of tenant feedback was provided noting:

- 84% of respondents opted to keep rents low as necessary to continue services and home improvements.
- 6% preferred a higher rent increase to support more improvements.
- 50% of respondents felt that they get value for money from their rent.
- 33% of respondents felt that they did not get value for money.
- 66% of respondents felt that their current rent is affordable.
- 29% of respondents felt that their current rent was not affordable.

- 59% of respondents pay full or part rent.

Tenants also provided additional comments and information which will be taken on board for future planning.

Tenants understood the need for a rent increase, but affordability was an issue for many. It was clear from the feedback that people are increasingly struggling with living costs. As with previous years a good responsive repairs service and investment in homes were noted as a high priority for tenants.

Elizabeth showed a comparison table from the GWSF which showed that our proposed increase is at the lower end in the comparative increase table for other member Housing Associations. It was noted that some Associations who had a lower rent increase last year are increasing by a higher percentage this year.

3.4 Neil Manley, Director of Finance, and Corporate Support presented budget information based on a 5% increase. It was noted that the current planned investment programme will have to be revised if a 5% increase is approved. The budget will be considered the Board meeting on 30 January.

3.5 The meeting was opened to any questions or comments from the Board. The Chair noted comments received from board members Anne Ramsey and Sadie Gordon who were both absent from the meeting.

3.6 After discussion the Board approved a 5% rent increase for tenancies to be applied from 1st April 2024 and approve a 6.3% rent increase for leases and lockups.

4.0 AOB

4.1 None

5.0 Date and Time of Next Meeting

The meeting concluded at 6:12pm. The next meeting is scheduled to take place on: Tuesday 30 January 2024 at 6.00pm

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

Chair: **Date:**