***MINUTES OF MEETING NO.689***

***QUEENS CROSS HOUSING ASSOCIATION BOARD OF MANAGEMENT***

***HELD ON 23 APRIL 2024 AT 6.00 P.M.***

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

In attendance: Sharon Keenan – Observer, Chibuzo Ehieze – Observer, Josephine Abu Rurobi - Observer

Shona Stephen (Chief Executive Officer), Heather Anderson (Director of Neighbourhood Services), Donalda Hogg (Depute Director), Elizabeth Hood (Depute Director), Neil Manley (Director of Finance and Corporate Support), Alison McKay (Governance Advisor) – Minutes, Fiona Smith (Head of Customer First), Louise Smith (Director of Neighbourhood Services).

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|  |  | ACTION |
| **1.0** | Housekeeping |  |
| 1.1 | Housekeeping was noted. Fire alarm procedures and location of toilets were highlighted. |  |
| **2.0** | Welcome and Apologies |  |
| 2.1 | Andrew Welcomed everyone to welcome and extended welcome to Sharon and Chibuzo as observers following the QC Group Boards recruitment event on 22nd February. |  |
| **3.0** | Declarations of Interest |  |
| 3.1 | No Declarations of Interest were noted. |  |
| **4.0** | Annual Procurement Report |  |
| 4.1 | The purpose of this reportwas to detail our compliance with the Procurement Strategy 2024-25 which set out the Association’s four strategic aims for procurement activity and how we would achieve these. This report was present by Neil Manley, Director of Finance and Corporate Support. |  |
| 4.2 | Queens Cross Housing Association issued its Procurement Strategy, (required under Section 15 of the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014) in April 2024, for the period to 31 March 2025. The Strategy outlines all planned procurement activity, that would qualify as regulated procurement. In the period from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, the Association completed Burnbank Gardens construction works and Making Places phase 1. Item 6.1 summarised the Associations anticipated progress on procurements over the next two financial years. |  |
| 4.3 | The Board had no further questions on this report and it was noted. |  |
| **5.0** | 494 Great Western Road |  |
| 5.1 | The purpose of this report was to invite the Board to note the outcomes resulting from the lease of 494 Great Western Road to the Safe in Scotland project and potential for a new lease with Glasgow City Council. This report was presented by Louise Smith, Director of Neighbourhood Services. |  |
| 5.2 | The Association previously acquired and refurbished a number of large flats above shops on Great Western Road as a supported living scheme for homeless people. A support service for homeless people was commissioned by Glasgow City Council and the service was provided by the Talbot Association for many years until GCC decided to decommission the service in September 2019. |  |
| 5.3 | The Association was approached by Glasgow Night Shelter, a Glasgow based charity. QCHA Board agreed to let the building to GNS and the project opened to its first guests in October 2020 and the project ended at the end of December 2023. |  |
| 5.4 | In February 2024, Glasgow City Council declared a housing and homeless emergency and encouraged housing associations to help them look creatively at ways to provide accommodation. Safe In Scotland suggested a support project could be put in place funded through a rent charge (which would be eligible for housing benefit). Glasgow City Council have shown interest in the proposal and in taking a new lease on the building for up to 5 - 10 years.  The board noted;   1. the positive outcomes resulting from the lease of 494 Great Western Road to the Safe In Scotland project and 2. potential for a new lease with Glasgow City Council |  |
| **6.0** | **Allocation Outcomes & Letting Plan 2024/25 & Allocation Policy Review Update** |  |
| 6.1 | The purpose of this report was for the Board to Approve the Letting Plan for 2024/25 (noting Section 5 quota is now 50%), Approve the Hamiltonhill New Build Local Letting Initiative and Approve the Under-Occupation Incentive Scheme. Elizabeth Hood, Depute Director shared a presentation which summarised the reports included in item 6. |  |
| 6.2 | The board was provided with some context on these reports advising that to comply with legislation an allocations policy must be produced. It was noted that it has been well documented that there is a housing crisis within Glasgow. At the end of March Glasgow City Council requested their annual homeless quota of void lets which RSL’s must provide. Over the years, their request for letting quotas continues to increase. In 2017, they were requesting 40% - this year it has increased to 67%. |  |
| 6.3 | Slide 3 of the presentation noted that approval was being sought from the Board on the 2024/25 Lettings Plan, Hamiltonhill New Build Local Letting Initiative & the under-occupation incentive scheme. |  |
| 6.4 | The Board were provided with statistics for Find my Home and noted that over 1000 applicants are on the waiting list and that there are currently over 4000 properties within the Queens Cross stock making us one of the largest landlords in Glasgow. The Board were advised that in the last year 369 properties were allocated to those on the waiting list, and that the majority of these lets were for 1 bedroom properties which make up a majority of the QC stock, whilst the highest demand for those on the waiting list are cottage flats or larger properties which QC has less of. Properties are allocated via priority banding, the largest banding on the waiting list are those on a silver band. The charts on slide 8 showed that the majority of QC’s lets went to those on a gold banding which are homeless lets.  The board noted that the refusal rate of 41% appears to be high – however the Find my Home system is more transparent, and all refusals are being recorded. Work is being done to reduce the volume of refusals and discourage speculative bidding and inform applicants about the bidding process.  This year 55% of lets were Section 5; this is our highest number to date. The Board was advised that the reason we could not meet the 60% target was due to the lack of property sizes within our stock meeting the council criteria. |  |
| 6.5 | The Lettings plan for 2024/25 proposal is for 50% of our stock to be allocated to homeless lets, 40% to home seekers & 10% to home movers. Queens Cross take its responsibility towards homelessness seriously but there is concern that by increasing the percentage lets to homeless lets would in turn cause more homelessness for those currently on the waiting list under other bandings. It is our view that by offering 40% to Home Seekers we will be able to demonstrate homelessness prevention. |  |
| 6.6 | The Board were provided with the results of the survey carried out as part of our allocations review. Find my Home launched in September 2021 with a commitment made to carry out a review every 3 years. The next stage of the consultation process will be to carry out café conversation session in May which will be carried out by an independent facilitator. The consultation report will be published along with the revised allocations policy following approval from the Board. The Board was advised that it is a legal requirement to consult and publish results. |  |
| 6.7 | Maryhill Housing Association will be partnering with Queens Cross from June 2024 in using Find my Home which will increase the property pool for bidding. These properties will be provided on one website. The Board were advised of the Hamiltonhill Local Letting Initiative which aims to create a stable and balanced community. The priority of allocations will be provided to home movers. The board was advised that we have developed our own incentive scheme to encourage tenants to downsize. This will complement the scheme being run by Glasgow City Council. The aim is to assist tenants under occupying our larger properties to downsize by offering a financial incentive. There may be concern that tenants are being forced out of their properties therefore it should be made clear that this is a voluntary option, and each property will be assessed on a case by case basis. |  |
| 6.8 | The Board:   1. Approved the 2024/2025 Lettings Plan – 50% Section 5’s; 40% Home Seekers; 10% Home Movers. 2. Noted that Glasgow City Council requested 67% Section 5’s lets for 2024/25. And that the Council will be advised of the reason for this. 3. Approved the Hamiltonhill new build letting initiative. 4. Approved the under occupation incentive scheme |  |
| **7.0** | Treasury Management Assurance Report |  |
| 7.1 | In January 2023 the Board agreed to improve compliance with the SHR regulatory standards. For 2023/2024, 4 topics were agreed. The actions agreed by the Board at this session were set out on page 7 of this report. The purpose of this report was to present a report on the outcomes agreed at the Assurance session on 27 February 2024. This report was presented by Fiona Smith, Head of Customer First. The actions agreed by the Board at this session were set out on page 7 of this report. The report was noted and there were no further comments or questions. |  |
| **8.0** | SHR Engagement Plan - Shona |  |
| 8.1 | The purpose of this report was for the Board to note:  * the steps taken to address the issues highlighted in the 2023-24 Engagement Plan in relation to tenant health and safety compliance. * the completion of the outstanding 222 smoke alarms and   1 777 EICRs (electrical installation condition report)   * the contents of the 2024-25 Engagement Plan.   This report was presented by Shona Stephen, Chief Executive Officer. |  |
| 8.2 | The Scottish Housing Regulator is the body which regulates the guidance which measures Queens Cross against other RSL’s. The SHR assesses the information provided by RSL’s along with their annual engagement plans. Queens Cross Housing Associations 2023-2024 engagement plan requested regular updates on our Electrical Installation Condition Reports (EICRs), and update on the installation of smoke and heat alarms in tenants homes. The Board was advised that these updates are now completed and meet the SHRs requirements. The Engagement Plan issued by SHR for QCHA for 2024/25 refers only to the need for regular updates on our development plans. This is in line with any RSL which has a large- scale development activity. |  |
| **9.0** | Health & Safety |  |
| 9.1 | It was note that the Annual Health & Safety Report is due to the board at the meeting in May. There were no other matters to be reported. |  |
| **10.** | New Membership |  |
| 10.1 | There was one new membership application to be approved. The Board noted that all eligibility checks had been carried out and approved the application. |  |
| **11.0** | Minute of Meeting No. 688 |  |
| 11.1 | The minute of meeting no 688 held on Tuesday 26 March 2024 were reviewed for accuracy. These minutes were proposed by Margaret Glass and seconded by Matt Millar. |  |
| **12.0** | Action Tracker |  |
| 12.1 | There were no actions to be added to the tracker. |  |
| **13.0** | **AOB** |  |
| 13.1 | Andrew advised the Board annual performance will commence shortly and that this was an SHR Regulatory requirement. |  |
| **14.0** | Date and Time of Next Meeting The meeting concluded at 7.15pm. The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 28th May at 6pm |  |
|  | I certify that the above minute has been approved as a true and accurate record of proceedings:Chair: …………………………………. Date: …………………………………… |  |