

MINUTES OF MEETING NO.707
QUEENS CROSS HOUSING ASSOCIATION BOARD OF MANAGEMENT
HELD ON 27 JANUARY 2026 AT 6.00 P.M.

Andrew Burns, John Dunn, Chibuzo Ehieze, Sadie Gordon, David Horner, Matthew Millar, Anne Ramsey.

Shona Stephen (Chief Executive), Heather Anderson (Director of Neighbourhood Services), Phil Daws (Director of Property & Placemaking), Elizabeth Hood (Depute Director), Neil Manley (Director of Finance & Corporate Support), Fiona Smith (Head of Customer First), Alison McKay (Governance Advisor) – minutes.

ACTION

1.0 Housekeeping

1.1 Noted

2.0 Welcome and Apologies

2.1 Andrew welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted from Margaret Glass and John McIntyre.

3.0 Declarations of Interest

3.1 John Dunn declared an interest in item 6, Dundasvale car park.

4.0 2026/2027 Budget & Finance Model

4.1 The purpose of this report was for the Board to review the draft 2026/27 budget and forward financial forecast, noting the underlying assumptions. The Board was also invited to note any issues or raise questions that may identify further work required before the final budget is approved. This report was presented by Neil Manley, Director of Finance and Corporate Support.

4.2 Neil shared a PowerPoint presentation setting out the draft 2026/27 budget, the associated assumptions, and risks, and includes a sensitivity analysis assessing the impact of key variables.

4.3 The Board noted on slide three demonstrates the savings achieved over the last financial year, specifically through the TUPE transfer of staff to contractors and the voluntary severance programme, which have delivered over £600k of recurring cost savings on a like-for-like basis.

4.4 At its meeting on 20 January 2026 the Board agreed a 6% rent increase, this is CPI(H) plus 1.9%.

4.5 The pay award for 2026/27 has been agreed with Unite at 5.1%. This mirrors the figure agreed for EVH full members as part of the three year deal in place.

4.6 Small reduction in overall repair budget even after incorporating contractual inflationary increases. This is a positive development and may reflect the greater budgetary control of these costs within neighbourhood services. The board noted that there has been a request to increase the cyclical and compliance budget due to increased EICR work requirements which has changed from 10 yearly to 5 yearly, legionella and water pump compliance needs.

4.7 Positives highlighted to the Board are savings on rent and utilities. Less positive are the revenue pressures on the capacity for the 30 year budget to be increased.

- 4.8 Further work is required on the cyclical programme to reduce costs, insurance procurement, other revenue cost reductions, identifying any other emerging cost pressures and to ensure car park income stream starts again to support the social regeneration programme.
- 4.9 After discussion, the Board noted the draft 2026/2027 draft budget and the progress to date. The finalised budget incorporating any changes will be presented at the March Board for approval.

5.0 Eco-Pod Communal Heating System review

- 5.1 The purpose of this report was for the Board to note progress and next steps for the Eco Pod communal heating system review. This report was presented by Heather Anderson, Director of Neighbourhood Services.
- 5.2 A report was shared with the Board in August 2025 which outlined the issues with the Eco Pod system over the past few years resulting in accrual of debt by some tenants, lack of system efficiency, and challenges regarding billing arrangements. Progress by the project group since this report in August 2025, were set out on page one of the report. The board noted that the reasons for customer debt accrued since April 2024 are non-engagement/non-payment from customers, system problems such as blank screens which cannot show level of credit or usage, and the ongoing issue with the system failing to shut off when the account goes into debt. The next steps for the project were laid out on page two of the report. Phil Daws, Director of Property and Placemaking advised the Board specialist consultants will be visiting next week, this has taken time going through the tender process to find consultants with expertise in this area. The Board discussed the payment terms for arrears, communication with tenants, contingency for debt which is set at £15 and whether the system is working to give tenants affordable heating. The Board noted that a survey showed the Eco pods to be a good system however part of the consultant's work will be to review how this can be more efficient.
- 5.3 The board noted that an update report will be brought to board in May outlining the confirmed roll out of the slam shut valves, detail of any wider efficiency measures needed, an update on debt levels and recommendation relating to outsourcing billing and debt management.

Heather

6.0 Dundasvale Car Park

- 6.1 The purpose of this report was for the Board to note the update on the position of the Dundasvale car park lease. This report was presented by Phil Daws, Director of Property and Placemaking. The Board noted that there is a separate project also which relates to concrete works.
- 6.2 In 2003, QCHA leased Dundasvale Car park to GCC on a 10-year term. Upon expiry in 2013, GCC remained in occupation on an annual basis. Under this arrangement, GCC assumed responsibility for all repairs and maintenance. The financial structure comprised:
- a fixed annual rent
 - a profit share payable to QCHA on net operating surpluses.

Between 2011 and 2021, QCHA received an average annual combined payment. Following the pandemic, parking demand in the city centre fell sharply, and GCC's operating position deteriorated. Since 2021, GCC has incurred an average annual loss, while QCHA has continued to receive the minimum base rent.

- 6.3 In February 2025, GCC formally gave notice of its intention to exit the lease. QCHA confirmed that, under the lease, GCC must fulfil its repair and maintenance obligations prior to vacating. Under the lease, QCHA may either accept a financial settlement or require the tenant to complete the works. QCHA exercised its right for GCC to undertake the repairs and discussions are ongoing.
- 6.4 The tender for a new operator for the car park is currently live, with returns due on 9 January QCHA has engaged a range of commercial carpark operators. Interest has been strong, with operators noting that the site's location is compelling and that performance issues stem from condition rather than demand. Several operators expect occupancy to recover rapidly post-refurbishment. Following appointment of an operator, QCHA will review the existing permit structure to ensure it meets residents' needs while reducing long-term vehicle storage.
- 6.5 The Board discussed current permit allocations, staff permits permit costs, electric changing points and bike storage.

7.0 Good Governance Matters

- 7.1 The purpose of this report was for the Board to note governance updates on succession planning for the QC Group, learning and development, recruitment and two new QC Group strategies. This report was presented by Fiona Smith, Head of Customer First.
- 7.2 The report set out the reasons and regulatory requirements for succession planning. Members are being encouraged to plan ahead to help with recruitment of board members and to office bearer roles to ensure this is done in a planned and managed way with a smooth transition. Succession should be discussed routinely with annual performance reviews being a good place for these discussions to take place. Section two of the report set out the current Office Bearer positions for each board within the QC Group. Members are asked to contact Alison to discuss interest any interest in Office Bearer roles in the future and training can be arranged.
- 7.3 Section three of the report notes upcoming training sessions planned for boards is charity law, equality diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and trauma informed practice, dates to be circulated shortly.
- 7.4 An online, skills -based information session was held on 14 January for recruitment of board members with finance knowledge. One attendee has indicated they would like to progress to the next stage. An online tenant recruitment session is planned for 26 February with an in- person event planned for April if required.
- 7.5 The Board noted two new QC Group strategies, Customer Service and Digital Business which were attached as appendices 1 and 2. It was noted that John Dunn is the champion for the customer service strategy.

8.0 Business Plan 2025-30 Succession Planning

- 8.1 This report was presented by Shona Stephen, Chief Executive Officer. The board noted that the Depute Director of Neighbourhood Services will retire and took the opportunity to thank her for the significant contribution she has made to the success of QCHA over the last eight years. Elizabeth was commended for her recent work to improve the repairs service, and it was noted that the housing and maintenance teams will be left in a strong position. Shona informed the Board, Niall McKinnon, Head of Development will also retire this year, and it is expected that there will be more members of the leadership team who will retire over the coming years and there are arrangements in place to have discussions with members of the leadership team in March on succession planning. The Board were reassured that steps are being taken

to ensure a smooth transition. It is anticipated that several board members are also likely to step down over the next few years and members are invited to come to their annual performance reviews prepared to talk about their plans for the next 3-5 years if possible. The board agreed to the development of a succession plan for both senior staff and board members that will ensure a smooth transition over the next few years and support the successful delivery of the 2025-30 Business Plan objectives. It was agreed to take time to discuss the succession plan at the Board Meeting on the 28 April.

9.0 Health and Safety

9.1 Tenant Health and Safety Update

The purpose of this report was for the Board to note the current position in relation to tenant health and safety, the recent progress made and the plan to progress the areas where further improvement is required.

9.1.1 It was noted in the QCHA annual assurance statement that an update on tenant and resident safety will be brought to board every six months. This report is the first of these reports and goes through each aspect of the “big six” component of tenant health and safety which relate to:

- Electrical safety
- Lift safety
- Water safety
- Asbestos Safety
- Gas Safety
- Fire Safety.

The board noted that tenant safety is a high- risk area and regulatory oversight and legal compliance have been considerably increased in recent years.

9.1.2 The board was assured to note that progress is being made, and the resources of the Cyclical and Compliance team were reviewed at the beginning of 2025. Recruitment has now been completed with specialist officers each responsible for two areas each of the big six.

9.1.3 The Board noted the contents of the report and felt reassured that a number of historical issues have been addressed.

9.1.4 The Board noted discussions are taking place on arrangements currently in place or required in relation to Condensation, Damp and Mould including the introduction of Awaab’s Law, which is set to be in place in October 2026 and a comprehensive report will be brought to a future meeting.

9.2 Serious Incident – Fire at 187 Westercommon Road

9.2.1 The purpose of this report was for the Board to note the serious incident which occurred at 187 Westercommon Road on Friday 16 January 2026 and the response from QCHA staff. This report was presented by Shona Stephen, Chief Executive Officer.

9.2.2 A report had been circulated via email to Board Members advising of this incident. The Regulator had also been informed as a Notifiable Event .On 16 January, a fire was deliberately started on the floor 15 at 187 Westercommon Road. An individual was subsequently arrested, appeared in court on 19 January and was bailed. The individual is currently being supported by homeless services and has indicated they do not wish to return to the area. The flat affected is secure.

- 9.2.3 The Board noted that it is reassuring that there was no damage to any of the properties on the landing other than the one set alight and we can reassure tenants of the fire safety measures in place.
- 9.2.4 Senior staff have been in regular contact with front line staff to offer support and respond to matters arising as well as co-ordinate review meetings and health and safety reporting. Staff have been in regular contact with tenants either face to face, by phone or using CX (text and e mail) communication. Shona has communicated with individual staff directly with feedback that they all felt supported.
- 9.2.5 The Board discussed the continued support for tenants noting Housing Officers are in continued contact with tenants and liaising with Police Scotland and Scottish Fire & Rescue Service to provide safety information sessions explaining why processes are in place. Heather Anderson, Director of Neighbourhood Services will take this incident as a case study to the Health & Safety partnership.

10.0 New Membership Applications

- 10.1 Alison McKay, Governance Advisor requested approval of one new membership application. This applicant is a tenant of QCHA, relevant checks have been completed and it is recommended that this application is approved.
- 10.2 The Board approved one new membership application.

11.0 Minute of Meeting No. 704, 705 and 706

- 11.1 The minutes of meeting no 704 held on Tuesday 25 November 2025 were reviewed for accuracy and matters arising. The minute was proposed by Matt Millar and seconded by Anne Ramsey.
- 11.2 The minutes of meeting no 705 held on Friday 28 November 2025 were reviewed for accuracy and matters arising. The minute was proposed by Anne Ramsey and seconded by John Dunn.
- 11.3 The minute of meeting on 706 held on Tuesday 20 January 2026 were reviewed for accuracy and matters arising. The minute was proposed by John Dunn and Chibuzo Ehieze.

12.0 Action Tracker

- 12.1 Review of internal audit guide will move to March 2026.

13.0 AOB

- 13.1 The Board questioned if a discussion on Hamiltonhill was required. Phil advised a report will be presented to the board in February.

14.0 Date and Time of Next Meeting

The meeting concluded at 8.00pm.

The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 24 February 2026.

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

Chair: **Date:**

