

MINUTE OF THE BLENDED MC MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 08.02.22

PRESENT

Mr A Scott
Mrs R Tinney*
Mrs M Anderson*
Mr N Halls*
Mrs A Jenkins *
Mr J O'Donnell*
Mrs C Mcguire
Mrs M Smith*
Mrs J Donachy
Mr A Young

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr A Benson (Director)
Mrs L Sichi (Depute Director)
Miss C Anderson (CS Manager) *
Mrs T Toner (HS Manager) * - Item 5a
Mr J Scott (B/Relations Manager) * - Item 5f
Mrs E Conway (Observer)

**Online attendance via Microsoft Teams*

1a. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were tendered on behalf of Mrs M Hutchison.

1b. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There was none.

1c. RELEVANT BUSINESS ITEMS TO BE ADDED TO AGENDA

There was none.

2. ADOPTION OF MINUTES – 18 JANUARY 2022

The above minutes were proposed for approval by Mr N Halls, seconded by Mrs R Tinney and unanimously agreed by the MC.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING – 18 JANUARY 2022

There was none.

4. USE OF SEAL

The above report was proposed for approval by Mr A Young, seconded by Mrs C McGuire and unanimously agreed by the MC.

5. GOVERNANCE ISSUES

- a) Feedback from the Rent Consultation – The HS Manager referred to the previously circulated report which details the feedback received from the recent rent consultation and it forms part of the overall decision making for the Rent Strategy and the 2022/23 Budget. The HS Manager presented the report in full, and the following matters were discussed:

- 1) A Member queried why some of the reporting figures refer to 'weekly' rent charges, when MHA's rent is charged monthly. The HS Manager explained the monthly figures included within the report is what the MC should pay attention to. The weekly figures have been included for illustrative purposes as they are relevant for benchmarking reports. The MC were assured that any information circulated to tenants will relate to monthly rent figures only.

- 2) With regards to the use of the SFHA Affordability Tool to calculate how much percentage of income a tenant would spend on rent each week, a member commented that the figures would appear acceptable for those who are charged an average rent. However, for those whose rent charge is above or below average, this proposed increase is substantial. It was explained that further information on how the proposed increase would impact upon those who are lower, above or charged an average rent, will be presented to the Special MC Meeting on 22.02.22. Furthermore, the MC were reminded that any tenant whose rent is currently higher than the Scottish average (tier 4) will not receive a rent increase this year.
- 3) Referring to the comments received during the recent rent consultation process, a member wished to highlight comment 10; the tenant does not believe the rent they are charged demonstrates VFM as they pay £685 per year, more, than MHA's average rent charge for a 3 apartment. The HS Manager advised that this tenant is in tier 4 and will not receive a rent increase this year. Furthermore, the Rent Harmonisation exercise aims to address the disparities within MHA's rent charges.

To conclude the discussion, the Director stressed that this year, more than ever, any decision surrounding a rent increase must be regarded as part of a wider context and the bigger economic impacts such as: Increase in fuel charges, Tax/NI, cost of living etc. must be considered. Furthermore, the paper presented to the MC on 22.02.22 should consider the level of disposable income a tenant has after paying rent. It should be evidenced that the MC have made an informed decision on the rent increase based on the above matters being considered. The HS Manager acknowledged this.

The HS Manager left the meeting at this point.

- b) SHR Engagement – Confidential minute
- c) Model Rules Update – Confidential minute
- d) Review Code of Governance – Confidential minute
- e) GWSF Research on Committees – The Director referred to the report titled "*Governance within CBHA's: Ready for the future?*" and confirmed that 29 HAs were interviewed to seek their views on the current position with Governing Bodies; namely the issues MC Members were facing, how they have responded to challenges in the last few years and what they felt the future prospects were for the CBHA sector. The Director highlighted that the report concludes around 75% of MC Members from HA's represented by GWSF, reside within the Communities they serve; this is alarming as the ethos of CBHA's is to have 100% Community control.

Members considered the report, at length, and following discussion, agreed for the Director to provide feedback to GWSF, covering the undernoted concerns that were raised in relation to some of the trends noted within the research as follows:

- 1) Some further analysis is required on the reasons behind the perceived difficulty in attracting new MC Members.
 - 2) Stress the need to remember that CBHA's own the Assets within their communities and that the concept of Community ownership needs to be highlighted forcibly.
 - 3) Highlight the importance of MC Members being involved in operational matters (as they are recipients of the HA's service) as well as strategic matters, as the research appears to suggest that it's inappropriate for MC to consider operational matters at meetings.
 - 4) The idea of paid MC Members causes concern, as the longstanding success of CBHA's is rooted in folk volunteering to represent their community for the greater good.
 - 5) Query if any wider research is planned or a further analysis on the composition of MC across the forum's Membership, rather than merely reviewing the snapshot of information received from 29 Organisations, as this is not deemed to be a true reflection of the position across the sector.
- f) SA Service Update – The BR Manager referred to the previously circulated report and advised that the uncertainty of the future of this service continues. MHA have been advised by the Homeless Alliance Director that it is “business as usual” as far as we are concerned and we're awaiting feedback from a report the Homeless Alliance is scheduled to publish at the end of June/July 2022 regarding the future of the Alliance model.

Our options appraisal, on the future of the SA service was undertaken which narrowed the options available to two options. It was noted that, in the meantime, changes have been made to the way in which the operational side of the service is delivered (e.g., staff working day shifts to focus on the Service Users). Agency staff are continuing to cover backshifts and nightshifts when required. The BR Manager assured the MC that he provides the staff with regular updates on matters relating to the Alliance, when received. He has also, in the past, informed them of the MC genuine concerns and sympathy which was comforting for the staff.

The MC stated if the Homeless Alliance fail to provide answers or engage prior to June 2022, the MC will be left with no other option that to make this decision themselves. The MC wish to meet with the Alliance Director, to have their questions answered, prior to the Away Day to ensure a detailed discussion can be held, with an informed decision reached on the day, regarding the future of the project. Consequently, it was agreed to contact the Alliance Director and request that he meets the MC, to seek clarification on MHA's future position.

The Rehousing of Sex Offenders – Following previous discussions regarding the above, the Director advised that he wrote a letter to Jim McBride, 'Head of Homelessness and Complex Needs' to query if GCC have changed their procedures for handling the rehoming of Sex Offenders. A response is yet to be received. However, as the MC are aware, MHA have never signed the Information Sharing Protocol and have no intention to rehome Registered Sex Offenders (RSO). Although, GCC are of the view that not being a party to the ISP does not prohibit GCC from seeking to

rehouse a homeless RSO through Section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act and therefore shared information with MHA recently to facilitate the resettlement of an RSO, which the HS Manager declined. The MC will be informed of GCC's response once received. In the meantime, the MC wished to stress that their position remains the same; MHA will not agree to re-house RSO's as they have little to no confidence in the procedures for handling them once placed within the Community. Furthermore, MHA's properties and the composition of the Community is not appropriate for RSO's. This decision was proposed for approval by Mr N Halls, seconded by Mr J O'Donnell and unanimously agreed by the MC.

The Business Relations Manager left the meeting at this point.

- g) KPI's 2021/22, Committee Meeting Schedule 2022, SHR Compliance Update, GDPR, FOI, NE, Complaints & Compliments were noted.

6. A.O.C.B

- a) Alexandra Court Care Home, Edinburgh Road – The MC were informed that a controversial planning bid to transform the derelict care home into 58 serviced apartments has caused conflict with residents. The Director advised that as the building is near MHA's stock, he thought it was worthwhile to bring this matter to the MCs attention. A Member advised to date; 155 letters of objection were submitted.
- b) Great Eastern Development – With regards to the vacant ground to the south of the above, the Director advised that 'Dawn Developments Ltd' have a 175-year long-term lease from GCC to develop the vacant land that stretches from High Street to Melbourne Street. In view of this, a Residents Association has been established, which Dawn are part of, to determine, in partnership with the residents, what they can do to make best use of the land and eradicate the ongoing Anti-Social Behaviour issues (e.g., prostitution, fly-tipping). The residents have asked for admin related support from MHA and a venue to host meetings. The MC will be duly informed of any updates.
- c) Birkenshaw Street Development – 'Scotia Capital Partners' have submitted a planning application to GCC to build 36 flats on the land between Birkenshaw Street and Cumbernauld Road to deliver a mix of one and two-bedroom flats over two adjoining blocks. The larger building would front Cumbernauld Road with a block with 8 units at Birkenshaw Street. There have been concerns raised from local people surrounding the density and scale of the block of flats, combined with the lack of open space, which may result in over-development of the site. The lack of car parking facilities has also been highlighted.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

Tuesday, 8 March at 7.00pm.



Chair

08.03.22