



Minutes of the Management Board meeting held on Tuesday 25 January 2022 at 6.00pm using ZOOM Video Communications.

Ag3

Present: David O'Hara (Chair)
Joan McFarlane
Elspeth Kerr
David Riddell
Josephine Barnshaw
Helen Eakin
Vincent Ogar
Andrew Loen

In attendance: Pauline Burke, Director
Jacqueline McGoran, Senior Finance Officer
Marisa McCarthy, Senior Housing Officer

In light of the current coronavirus situation and Government guidelines, Board and staff agreed that the meeting would be via Zoom video communication.

1. Apologies

1.1 Apologies were received from T Harvey, K Watt and M Bowie.

2. Declaration of interest

2.1 A Loen declared interests at Items 6.3 and 8.1.

3. Minute of the previous meeting

3.1 The minute of the meeting on 30 November 2021 was proposed by A Loen and seconded by E Kerr. These minutes will be signed at the first available date due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Action – J McGoran

3.2 The minute of the confidential meeting on 30 November 2021 was proposed by E Kerr and seconded by A Loen.

4. Matters arising

- 4.1 P Burke informed the Board that Health & Safety responsibilities have been signed off by both Board and staff.
- 4.2 P Burke requested volunteers from Board to join the working group to review volume of board papers. J McFarlane, Josephine Barnshaw and H Eakin agreed to become part of working group.
- 4.3 J McGoran updated Board that despite several attempts Men Matter Scotland have not provided bank details and therefore approved donation cannot be made at present. E Kerr advised she would contact Men Matters Scotland.
- 4.4 J McGoran updated Board that tenants and staff will be unable to use the allotment we have as part of Growchapel until the group has the relevant insurance in place.

5. Director's Report

5.1 Equality & Human Rights Quarterly Report

- 5.1.1 P Burke presented the Co-operative's Equality & Human Rights quarterly report referring to the Equality Action Plan at 5.1(i) showing progress to date.
- 5.1.2 Board noted the quarterly report and were pleased with progress to date.

5.2 Corporate Value for Money Statement – Progress Report

- 5.2.1 P Burke presented progress report on Value for Money Statement and discussed the action points.
- 5.2.2 The Board noted the progress report.

6. Housing and Technical Report

6.1 Rent Review 2022/2023

- 6.1.1 M McCarthy presented the outcome of the rent consultation 2022/23 with tenants.
- 6.1.2 Fifty consultation responses were received representing 10.46% of tenancies. Votes were as follows:
 - 2.1% 38 votes

- 3.1% 8 votes
- 3.45% 4 votes

6.1.3 P Burke reminded Board that North Star Consulting and Research are about to commence the rent restructure exercise having previously carried out the rent affordability study. P Burke also advised Board that our business plan indicates that rent increases will be based on October CPI (4.2% -Oct 21).

6.1.4 Board discussed the rent consultation results and the challenges of keeping rent affordable for tenants with both inflation and cost of living costs on the rise whilst still ensuring the Co-operative's financial viability. D O'Hara asked the difference in income between 2.1% and 3.1% rent increase which was calculated at approximately £22k. J McGoran advised the Board that the three rent increase scenarios had all been run through the 30-year plan showing no cash flow issues or breach to covenants. However, due to increased operating costs i.e., increase in labour and material costs the Co-operative would have to fund the difference between income and costs from reserves. Financially, the Co-operative could not continue to fund this in forthcoming years.

6.1.5 Further discussion took place with Board finally agreeing on 2.1% rental increase for 2022/23, on the basis that the figures had been run through the 30-year plan indicating no breaches of covenant or cashflow issues and that the lower increase would be more affordable for tenants whilst also continuing to align our rents more in line with our peers. Board agreed however that although their aim is to keep rent increases as low as possible, future years rent increases will likely need to reflect October CPI as per Business Plan and therefore the organisation needs to prepare tenants in advance of this.

6.1.6 Board approved the rent increase for 2022/23 as 2.1%.

6.2 Performance Report Quarter 3

6.2.1 M McCarthy presented performance report to 31 December 2021.

6.2.2 Gross arrears were highlighted as they have reduced from 3.8% at start of financial year to 3.65%. Members were advised of the various sources of funding housing services staff have obtained or are currently exploring for grant funding to enable tenants to prioritise their rent.

6.2.3 Emergency and non-emergency repairs have seen completion times increase in the third quarter. Members were advised this was due to staff shortages being experienced by contractors due to the impact of Omicron variant and the self-isolation rules. Members were advised that maintenance team are trying to negate the impact of this by utilising the full list of contractors available on the framework.

6.2.4 Board noted performance to 31 December 2021.

A Loen left meeting

6.3 Bad Debt Write Off Quarter 3

6.3.1 M McCarthy presented the bad debt write off report for quarter 3.

6.3.2 Board approved the bad debt write off for quarter 3 totalling £4,045.68.

A Leon returned to meeting

6.4 Fire Safety Compliance Report

6.4.1 P Burke presented the Fire Safety Compliance report.

6.4.2 Board were advised that installation of smoke detection systems to all the Co-operative's stock was complete ahead of the deadline of 1 February 2022, thus ensuring all stock meets the tolerable standards that were amended by the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 (Tolerable Standard) (Extension of Criterion) Order 2019.

6.4.3 The Board noted Fire Safety Compliance report and the completion of smoke detection systems to comply with new legislation.

7. Policy review

7.1 Policy Review report

7.1.1 The Board noted and approved the Customer Services Standards policy.

8. Governance

A Loen Left Meeting

8.1 Membership Report

8.1.1 There were 34 prospective members on the membership report for approval. Members were advised that a spelling error was discovered in the name of one of the prospective members who was approved at October's Board meeting. The member has been included in the January list with correct spelling for clarity. Seven Share Certificates were included in the report for approval by the Board.

- 8.1.2 Board approved 34 prospective members and seven share certificates and noted the inclusion of the correct spelling of the prospective member approved at October's meeting.

A Loen returned to meeting

8.2 Ethical Conduct and Notifiable Events

- 8.2.1 There were no notifiable events to report to the Board. Board noted that the Director will still bring report to Board meeting even if there is nothing to report to ensure good governance.

9. Audit, Risk and Staffing sub-Committee

- 9.1 There were no sub-Committee meetings to report

10. Any Other Competent Business

- 10.1 P Burke informed the Board that Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) has issued a survey to all Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) on Tenant Health and Safety. The survey will be assessed as part of SHR risk assessment of RSLs to determine their engagement with them for 2022/2023. P Burke advised that DHCL's survey had been completed and returned with no issues to highlight.
- 10.2 J McGoran advised Board that Bank of Scotland one-year fixed rate deposit matures 4 February 2022. Due to very low interest rates on offer with Bank of Scotland it was recommended that the deposit on maturity alongside accrued interest be paid back into working capital. Staff would monitor interest rates in the meantime with the view to investing in Spring, the hope being that interest rates will have increased slightly therefore providing a higher investment return.
- 10.3 Board approved the return of the deposit to working capital in the meantime.

Due to staffing matters of a confidential nature, Marisa McCarthy and Jackie McGoran left meeting at 6.40pm.

- 10.3 Please refer to the confidential minute.

11. Date of next meeting

- 11.1 The next Board meeting will take place on Tuesday 1 March 2022 at 6.00pm using ZOOM Video Communications. The meeting closed at 7.00pm.