

**PROSPECT COMMUNITY HOUSING  
COMMITTEE MEETING - FEBRUARY 2020**

Wednesday 26 February 2020, 7:00 PM — 9:00 PM GMT

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<b>Present:</b>	Milind Kolhatkar Mary MacRaild Peter Matthews Alan Gee Jolly Oluka Amanda Miller Simon Campbell Mo Connolly Naomi MacKenzie Brendan Fowler Lynne Bell Catherine Louch Neil Munro Julie Thynne	Chairperson Committee Member Committee Member Committee Member Committee Member Committee Member Committee Member Secretary Treasurer Director Finance Manager Housing Manager Property Services Manager Corporate Services Officer
<b>Apologies:</b>	Chuks Ododo Kaydee Moyo Shulah Allan Sheila Bunt	Committee Member Committee Member Committee Member Vice-Chair

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**1 Welcome and Apologies**

Milind Kolhatkar welcomed all attendees to the meeting and noted the above apologies.

**2 Declaration of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 29 January 2020 were proposed by Alan Gee, seconded by Naomi MacKenzie and approved by all members present.

**4 Matters Arising Report**

There were no matters arising.

**5 Register of Undertakings**

The register of undertakings report was noted.

**6 Policy Review**

Five policies were presented for review under the three year cycle.

Catherine Louch presented the HOU04 Mutual Exchange policy. A discussion took place and it was agreed to include a reference to the allocations policy. Catherine Louch advised options were discussed with tenants on a case by case basis. It was noted the statutory checks were covered as part of the procedure.

CL presented the COR15 Communications policy and advised a customer charter had been developed with input from the tenant's forum and staff, this had been included in the policy. The customer charter would be incorporated into staff appraisals and publicised through the newsletter and website.

Brendan Fowler presented the COR06 Committee Members Training & Development policy. It was noted equality and diversity training had not been included, however it was agreed this should be added to the induction process. Online training to be made available to new Committee members and existing Committee members to be given the option to carry out the training if required.

Brendan Fowler presented the PER01 Recruitment & Selection policy. It was agreed to include a statement that all members of interview panels must have completed equality and diversity training.

Lynne Bell presented the FIN10 Preventing Bribery & Fraud policy and no concerns were raised.

The above policies were proposed by Mo Connolly, seconded by Peter Matthews and approved by all members present, subject to the amendments indicated above.

## **7 Management Team Report**

Brendan Fowler advised he had attended a couple of events to discuss the Housing to 2040 Consultation. He advised there had been discussion around the lack of certainty of development funding after 2021 and ESSH2, energy efficiency and decarbonisation. He advised the Committee would discuss ESSH2 as part of the Strategy day in September. It was noted there was consultation on the Edinburgh local city plan out at the moment so it would be relevant to include this for discussion at the Strategy day.

Neil Munro highlighted an error in his report and advised the completed electrical testing was 80 properties. He also advised the newly recruited modern apprentice would be starting on 2 March.

Catherine Louch advised of the "Let's Plan Wester Hailes" community conference taking place on 29 February.

## **8 Arrears Management Update Report**

Catherine Louch provided an overview of the report and highlighted the general trend indicated Prospect's trend was in line with the trend in other organisations. A discussion took place and it was acknowledged tenant engagement was a key factor to reduce arrears. Catherine Louch advised there was a delay in receiving Universal Credit payments at the start of the claim and sometimes there could be a miscommunication if claimants choose to have payment of the housing element direct to us (Scottish Choices). The payment from the Department for Work and Pensions is delayed.

Catherine Louch advised she was reviewing Cx reports to help provide more information and there were several actions the Housing Management team were working on.

Amanda Miller commented the arrears trend and challenges experienced by Prospect were similar to those experienced by Eildon Housing Association.

## **9 Debt Write Offs**

Catherine Louch presented the former tenant arrears and credits report. The net write off was £19,082.36, compared to the budgeted level of £40,000.

The net former tenant arrears debt write off of £19,082.36 was proposed by Mary MacRaild, seconded by Alan Gee and approved by all members present.

Lynne Bell presented the non-rent write offs and provisions report. The breakdown consisted of £22,772 written off and a provision of £2840. This would result in a total charge to the Statement of Comprehensive Income of £25,618 in 2019/20, compared to the budgeted level of £15,000.

The net non-rent write off of £25,618 was proposed by Mo Connolly, seconded by Alan Gee and approved by all members present.

It was noted the write offs were an annual accounting exercise required by the auditors and all debts would continue to be pursued where possible.

## **10 Risk Management Quarterly Review - Reputation Category**

Brendan Fowler provided an overview of Prospect's approach to risk management. He advised all red risks and a selection of other relevant risks were reviewed by Committee in categories each quarter. Three risks for the Reputation category were presented:

- Lack of consultation and participation leading to ill informed decisions
- Failure to keep to published planned programmes resulting in increased complaints and/or poor perception of Prospect
- Lenders view Prospect as a high risk to lend to.

No changes were recommended.

The Reputation risk category was proposed by Mary MacRaild, seconded by Jolly Oluka and approved by all members present.

## **11 Quarterly Key Performance Indicators to 31 December 2019**

Management Team provided an overview of the report. The figures at item 3.5 were queried and Neil Munro advised he would provide an update in the Matters Arising report at the next meeting.

## **12 Quarterly Health & Safety Report to 31 December 2019**

Neil Munro provided an overview of the report.

## **13 Tenant Survey Report and Action Plan**

Catherine Louch provided an overview following the survey results presented last month. She advised the previous three year action plan had been updated and closed. The new draft action plan, based on the results of the recent survey, was presented. Catherine Louch advised the analysis of questions by equalities strands had been interesting and would be helpful in decision making to improve services. She advised the Equalities Working Group would look at this information in more detail.

Catherine Louch advised the action plan would be discussed with the tenant scrutiny group to identify themes for scrutiny.

It was noted the response to the question on sexual orientation was poor and it was suggested the way in which this question was asked could be reviewed to improve the response.

It was agreed an additional action on rent affordability should be included.

The Tenant Survey Action Plan was proposed by Mary MacRaild, seconded by Naomi MacKenzie and approved by all members present, subject to the inclusion of an additional action as described above.

#### **14 Treasury Management Update**

Lynne Bell provided an overview of the report provided by ATFS on the lending options available. She highlighted the current treasury management policy target of 50% of loans to be fixed would be breached in years 2022, 2023 and 2024. Lynne Bell advised the revolving credit facility would be a variable rate for duration of the arrangement, however it could be moved to a fixed rate in the future. This situation would be managed and reported on regularly. It was agreed the Treasury Management policy would be reviewed to take account of a revolving credit facility, this would be brought to a future meeting for approval.

Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) were recommended as the preferred funder, if approved by Committee, the actual funding arrangements would be negotiated.

The recommendation to appoint RBS as the preferred funder was proposed by Naomi MacKenzie, seconded by Jolly Oluka and approved by all members present.

#### **15 Annual Cost of Living Award**

Brendan Fowler presented the annual report and provided an update on the 2020 pay award with comparisons to other organisations and the wider national context. He noted we were in year two of a three year deal negotiated by EVH.

A discussion took place and it was noted there were some EVH members who still provided staff with defined contribution pensions and this could have an impact on the pay award. It was agreed this would be reviewed and information included in the report to Committee next year.

#### **16 Information Only Items**

The Annual Report on Staff Training and Development was circulated for information.

#### **17 AOCB**

There were no items to discuss.

#### **18 Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 25 March 2020 at 7pm**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_