

Prospect Community Housing
Committee Meeting – April 2025
30 April 2025, 7:00 PM — 9:00 PM BST

Present:

Naomi MacKenzie	Chairperson
Mo Connolly	Vice Chair
Nikki Ross	Treasurer
Chuks Ododo	Committee Member
Jeremy Hewer	Committee Member
Simon Campbell	Committee Member
Cheryl Mabon	Committee Member
Sylwia Bogusz	Committee Member
Amanda Miller	Committee Member
Brendan Fowler	Director
Colin James	Finance Manager
Neil Munro	Property Services Manager
Marianne Wilson	Corporate Services Officer
Caroline Richards	Community Projects Officer (left after agenda item 4)
Cameron Boyd	TIAA Auditors (left after agenda item 3)

Apologies:

Jolly Oluka	Secretary
Milind Kolhatkar	Committee Member
Alan Gee	Committee Member
Sharon-Lee Bow	Committee Member
Catherine Louch	Housing Manager

1	Welcome and Apologies	
	Naomi welcomed all attendees to the meeting and apologies were noted for Milind Kolhatkar, Alan Gee, Jolly Oluka, Sharon-Lee Bow and Catherine Louch.	
2	Declaration of Interest	
	There were no declarations of interest.	
3	Internal Audit Plan 2025-26 and 2026-27	
	<p>Naomi welcomed Cameron Boyd from TIAA to the meeting.</p> <p>Cameron ran through the next 2 years Audit plan, referred to in appendix A and specifically outlined the 25-26 plan as per appendix B;</p> <p>In year 1, the following will be covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tenant Engagement Reactive Repairs Development Follow Up <p>In total 14 days are planned for, which includes audit planning, reporting and management.</p>	

	<p>Brendan added that we are looking ahead for 2 years rather than 3 due to the extension of our contract with TIAA for 2 years. Brendan also noted that Development audit had previously been delayed due to not having any new developments to audit. It is now scheduled, as we are in the process of completing our Clovenstone Close development.</p> <p>A question was asked whether anyone else external is involved in our development process that may affect our audit. Brendan advised we no longer work with the development team at Harbour Homes; we now have a development consultant that works with us once a week. We do, however, buy in Clerk of Works services from Harbour Homes.</p> <p>The decision to approve the Audit plan was proposed by Mo Connolly, seconded by Sylwia Bogusz, and approved by all members present.</p> <p>Cameron Boyd left the meeting at this point.</p>	
4	<p>Six Monthly Review of Community Projects</p> <p>Review of HOU10 Community Action Strategy</p>	
	<p>Caroline presented her review of Community Projects over the past 6 months, which included the Link up project with Craig at WHALE, the Air Fryer Project and the Fun Run. Caroline also spoke about new tenant support and advised that she is looking to source funding to run a new pilot project focused on purchasing items for new tenants that are less supported by welfare rights grants. A committee member offered help and advice on how to secure good secondhand furniture which Caroline will follow up on.</p> <p>Caroline also spoke about the Regenerative Future Fund, which is a new 10 year community fund for Edinburgh aiming to support transformative work and approaches that tackle poverty, racism and climate change. Caroline noted that the Fund will support organisations and collectives over 10 years to enable long term change. Caroline advised there has been quite a long period of preparation for this fund, but there is now an application process that is currently at the eligibility stage.</p> <p>Caroline went on to review the HOU10 Community Action Strategy and noted that the statistics are the main updates to this policy/strategy review. The strategy also includes the current agencies we are working with.</p> <p>A question was asked why Active Travel had been removed from the current projects update in the Community Action Strategy and Caroline advised that this was because the Trust was leading on this now.</p> <p>The decision to accept the HOU10 Community Action Strategy was proposed by Nikki Ross, seconded by Amanda Miller and approved by all members present.</p> <p>Caroline left the meeting at this point.</p>	
5	<p>Minutes of Meeting held on 26 March 2025</p>	
	<p>Simon noted that he was at the March meeting, however not listed under attendees, Marianne will amend this.</p>	

	The minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2025 were proposed by Mo Connolly, seconded by Cheryl Mabon, and approved by all members present.	
6	Matters Arising Report	
	The Matters Arising report was noted.	
7	Register of Undertakings	
	The Register of Undertakings were noted.	
8	Policy Review	
	<p>Brendan presented the COR25 social media Policy and Guidelines and advised it was a re-write of this policy. Brendan wanted to note that this policy applies to staff and committee members.</p> <p>Brendan presented the PER06 Maternity, Paternity, Adoption, Shared Parental, Neonatal Leave policy and advised that the significant change is that Neonatal Leave has been added in due to new legislation.</p> <p>A question was asked around the section under Maternity pay and the statement “The staff member will also be required to sign a declaration stating that they will return to work after their leave for at least 3 months” and if we state in the procedure or elsewhere what we do if the staff member does not return to work after maternity leave. Marianne will check this and we will bring back to committee under matters arising next month.</p> <p>Brendan presented the PER19 Retirement policy and noted a few minor changes which are outlined in the policy review covering paper.</p> <p>The decision to accept the above policies was proposed by Cheryl Mabon, seconded by Sylwia Bogusz, and approved by all members present.</p>	
9	Management Team Report	
	<p>Brendan highlighted from his report the potential to purchase an additional 7 properties within Clovenstone Close. If possible, this will come to the committee in May or June for a decision. It was asked if Ukrainian families will get the option for these properties, Brendan advised that we may be able to encourage current tenants to downsize again to allow the larger properties to become available for Ukrainian families. Brendan spoke about the EdIndex meeting he attended yesterday which covered the local connection issue. Currently someone who is homeless can present to any local authority, this has raised concerns over Edinburgh’s demand for accommodation, and it was confirmed there had been a 24% increase in cases in Edinburgh now from people with no connection to Edinburgh. Brendan advised that the Housing Minister is expected to visit our new development at Clovenstone Close around mid-May.</p> <p>Neil provided update on component and planned maintenance programmes.</p> <p>Brendan asked if there were any questions on Catherine’s section of the report. A question was asked around arrears and how does the 10% compare, Brendan advised he will bring this back in matters arising report next month.</p>	

	Colin advised that himself, Brendan and Naomi are due to interview in early June for new external auditors, with the view to bringing the recommendation to Committee in June.	
10	Quarterly Management Accounts to 31 March	
	<p>Colin advised this quarter to end of March is effectively a draft version of year end position for statutory accounts and will be subject to refinement, which is already taking place.</p> <p>Colin highlighted the headline results, which are a surplus of £1.4m which is around £100k less than the original budget forecast, however very close to the revised year end forecast which went to committee in January. Colin noted the key variances which leave us in this position, mainly planned maintenance showing £184k over, service costs over by £42k amongst some other overspends in reactive maintenance due to heavier void repair costs. Colin noted that against these overspends we've also saved in some areas, the most notable of which is bad debt where the amounts written off in February were entirely offset by a reduction in the future provision due to improved arrears performance.</p> <p>Colin highlighted that the Current Tenant Arrears have fallen to 4.3%, which is the best Colin has seen achieved in his 4 years with Prospect. This ties in with the bad debt outturn.</p> <p>Colin advised our cash figure is up significantly due to the issue with the timing of the grant received from CEC, as they gave us £2.4m of grant for the 15 CC flats on the very last day of the financial year.</p> <p>A question was asked around the bad debt provision and write off figure, including what the committee approved to write off at the February committee meeting. Brendan and Colin responded that there are two parts to this calculation – one is the write offs that are approved in February, and the other is the provision figure that looks at the difference in arrears from March last year to March this year. As arrears have gone down, this resulted in a credit being made to the bad debt figure.</p>	
11	External Audit 24/25 Plan	
	<p>Colin confirmed this is a standard report which comes to the Committee each April in preparation for the external audit of our statutory year end accounts which will take place next month. He explained that the engagement letters 11.1 and 11.2 need to be signed tonight by a committee member. Nikki Ross, as Treasurer, has kindly agreed to do so.</p> <p>Colin advised item 11.4 is the draft Management Committee report which reviews business and performance, however, still has some blanks which will be filled in as the accounts are completed. Committee are asked to approve this in draft today.</p> <p>A question was asked around the wording of all members undergo recruitment and induction and Colin confirmed this should state management committee members, not all Prospect members.</p>	

	Approval of the draft management committee report and the related statement on internal control (item 11.5) was proposed by Simon Campbell, seconded by Jeremy Hewer, and approved by all members present.	
12	Annual Review of Progress towards Strategic Objectives	
	Brendan provided an overview of the progress towards Strategic Objectives. There were no questions on this report.	
13	Amendment of RBS Officer Certificate	
	<p>Colin advised when we borrowed money in March, as it was the first time we had done this in years, it meant our only valid signatory on the certificate was Brendan Fowler. Colin is proposing Catherine and himself be added to this list of signatories and the bank has requested we produce this certificate to comply.</p> <p>The decision to approve the Amendment of the RBS Officer Certificate was proposed by Nikki Ross, seconded by Cheryl Mabon, and approved by all members present.</p> <p>To complete the necessary formalities the Bank also required the following extract to form a part of the minutes of the meeting:</p> <p>BANKING FACILITIES WITH THE ROYAL BANK OF SCOTLAND PLC</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Finance Manager confirmed that an updated officer's certificate was required to deal with the administration of loans under the Facilities Agreement. 2. The updated officer's certificate recognised the following as authorised signatories: Brendan Fowler Colin James Catherine Louch 3. The Committee of Management RESOLVED THAT: The officer's certificate be amended to reflect the above signatories. 	
14	Post completion report for Clovenstone Close Phase 1	
	<p>Brendan presented the report, advising Committee that this was for the first phase of the development and a further report will be taken to Committee on completion of our next phase.</p> <p>It was asked if Prospect carry out a survey to tenants post new developments. Neil advised he is currently working on the procedure; however we are looking to do at the 12-month mark. Brendan advised we have been speaking to tenants informally, there has been a post review meeting of phase 1 with staff which incorporated feedback from the new tenants via housing management team.</p>	
15	Information Only Items	
	The following reports were noted:	

	- Development Update	
16	AOCB	
	Naomi MacKenzie thanked everyone for attending the meeting.	
17	Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 28 May 2025 at 19:00	

Signed:

Date: