

**Minute of the Management Committee meeting
held on Tuesday 29 October 2019 in the offices of
Blochairn Housing Association, 1 Blochairn Road, Glasgow**

Present: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

In Attendance: Michael Carberry (Director).

1) Apologies

Apologies were received from [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

2) Adoption of the Previous Minute

The minute of **24 September** was adopted by [REDACTED] and seconded by [REDACTED].

3) Matters Arising from the Previous Minute of 24 September

- a) **Previous Item 3(a)** - [REDACTED]. The Director advised that the [REDACTED] case has been concluded [REDACTED]
- b) **Previous Item 3(b) – IT Review.** The Director recommended that the upgrading of all IT should proceed. Estimated cost is just under £[REDACTED], including providing [REDACTED] iPads for Committee members and moving to a ‘cloud based’ server. In response to a question he confirmed that this was all IT, both software and hardware. The Committee agreed with this proposal
- c) **Previous Item 14 – Housing Services Report.** It was agreed that Committee will consider at the next meeting whether to set up a separate sub committee
- d) **Previous Item 14(1)(2) – Play Area Blochairn Place.** The Director advised that he is trying to establish who owns the Glasgow street CCTV system. All services delivered by Community Safety Glasgow will transfer to Glasgow City Council on the 17 February under the management of the Executive Director of Neighbourhoods and Sustainability
- e) **Previous Item 14(1)(3) – Landscape Maintenance.** The Director advised that [REDACTED] on 31 October. [REDACTED] the squad for Royston, including [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. This will be monitored over coming months
- f) **Previous Item 15(a) – New Close Doors** – The Director advised that discussions are still ongoing about whether the specification was appropriate

4) Management Accounts to 30 September

The Director presented the accounts issued with the agenda as the Finance Agent was unable to attend. He highlighted variances from the budget and advised that the Net Current Assets were a sign of financial health. He confirmed that the covenants with [REDACTED] Bank are being comfortably met. In response to a question on staffing costs he advised that a decision had not been made on employing a fifth staff member. The structure review will consider the position of individual staff members and the staffing structure overall. The Committee will consider how to proceed.

5) Management Committee Appraisal

The Director reminded Committee members to return the ‘Chair 360 Appraisal’ Forms to EVH. He will contact Committee members to set up individual member’s appraisal meetings.

6) Employers in Voluntary Housing (EVH)

The Director advised that Staff have Job Evaluation forms to return by 31 October. These will be considered by EVH before interviewing each staff member. A report to Committee, with recommendations, will follow, early in the New Year.

7) Health & Safety

The Director advised that due to the full agenda he would deliver this report at the next meeting.

8) Scottish Government/Scottish Housing Regulator

a) Annual Assurance Statement (AAS)

The Director presented the papers issued with the agenda. There followed a lengthy question & answer session on the issues that Committee members wished to focus on. Tenders have been sought for an Internal Auditor and returns will be considered at the meeting on 26 November. In response to a question it was agreed that it was not possible for an organisation of Blochairn's size and structure to have an 'in house' Internal Audit function.

The Assurance Statement was considered and agreed. A summary of future actions was also considered and agreed. These were

1. Report the AAS to tenants in newsletter; on Facebook and on web site
2. Add Standing Agenda Items a) Annual Assurance Statement b) Declarations of Interest and c) Notifiable Events and create a register of Notifiable Events if one occurs
3. Create an Internal Audit programme from 1 January 2020 (to include ARC validation for 2020)
4. Refer to legislation when reviewing policies and/or refer policies for legal advice, where appropriate, e.g. allocations policy (consider recent guidance, taking into account government initiatives of Housing 1st and Rapid Rehousing)
5. Clarify new requirements on smoke alarms, etc. which come into force in February 2021 and implement work programme through existing contractors)
6. Liaise with the Scottish Housing Regulator and with Scotland's Housing Network on how to give assurance on meeting every legal and regulatory requirement and monitor the creation of a list of relevant laws and regulations
7. Promote/publish Engagement Plans; Landlord Reports; how to report Significant Performance Failures; comparison with other landlords reports for Committee and or residents and information on complaints (in a 'you said, we did' format)
8. Provide a more detailed report to Committee on Complaints
9. Consider how to monitor performance on Human Rights & Equalities and how to use impact assessments. Monitor developments in advice and guidance and continue to collect data
10. Continue to develop and populate the web site (NB Include a Guide to Information that reflects the Model Publication Scheme published by the Scottish Information Commissioner (SIC) on the web site. Use web site as major tool in administering Freedom of Information (i.e. **make information readily available**)
11. Review the Committee Role Description and Person Specification
12. Emphasise the option of a 'buddy'/mentor for new Committee members
13. Try to define Affordability and Value for Money

14. Check the Finance Policy to ensure fit with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code on treasury management
15. Review the Scottish Housing Regulator's recommended practice advice on business planning
16. Review the Internal Management Plan (and consider an 'Away Day'?)
17. Tender for External Financial Audit services from 2020/2021
18. Ensure Codes of Conduct feature in future staff and committee appraisal
19. Report Register of Interests to Committee and report changes (see 2 above)
20. Report to Committee on training and provide feedback from training sessions/conferences

b) Letter of 22 October

The Committee considered the letter received from the SHR. The Director suggested that it had been hurriedly issued due to issues at [REDACTED], particularly involving the Health & Safety Executive. He reported on

- **Tenant and Resident Safety.** Measures are in place for gas and electrical safety and asbestos. Legionnaires is not a risk as there is no stored water in Blochairn properties
- **Cyber Security.** The IT review currently underway will deal with any potential security issues
- **Brexit.** The impact of Brexit is difficult to predict. There may be new legislation, for example, but immediate risks are low. Interest rate changes have always been a possibility. The impact of the currency strength, supply chain issues and tax changes should all be minimal on Blochairn. Impact on tenants' ability to pay their rent might be an issue, if there were job losses, for example. Rent arrears are very low so next year's budget might assume a slight rise. Blochairn has a strong cash position so there would be time for reaction and adjustment if serious issues arise

c) Freedom of Information

The Association will come under the FOI legislation on 11 November and there are a number of actions required. The Director advised that, in his view, the relatively straightforward concept of openness and transparency through FOI had been unnecessarily complicated. He had hoped to adopt a recording process similar to that of the complaints process. However, he had concluded that the Association should adopt the web based process developed by 'Kiswebs', who developed Blochairn's web site, and he outlined the system. In consultation with senior colleagues in other associations he had learned that other small associations were appointing an external Data Protection Officer as, again, the bureaucracy had become overwhelming and there was concern that the Association would, inadvertently, fall foul of the law. After discussion the Committee agreed to these proposals

9) Tenant Bonus Scheme

The Director advised that the usual arrangements had not been made due to staff sick leave. There will be a double draw at the next meeting.

10) National Accommodation Strategy for Sex Offenders (NASSO)

The Director advised that the NASSO Awareness Group (NAG) will write to Ash Denham MSP, Minister for Community Safety, to ask her to reconsider her response.

11) Royston Strategy Group

The Director advised that he had attended the most recent meeting on 25 October with [REDACTED].

- a) **Roystonhill Masterplan.** Discussions are ongoing. City Council Planners wanting to retain the Millburn Centre and DRS (Development & Regeneration Services) favour demolition because it would be a cheaper option. Community consultation with Blochairn residents identified a misunderstanding about rents. Higher costs in retaining the building might mean higher rents for tenants of the new houses but some existing tenants thought that their rent might increase. There will be further consultation later. Architects are considering the option of retaining the façade of the building
- b) **Bus Services.** Councillor Allan Casey advised that there will be a public meeting on at 18.30 Wednesday 30 October in St Philomena's with First Bus following the cancelation of the 19A route
- c) **Planning Application.** Councillor Allan Casey advised that the proposed new shop on Royston Road, near to the Rosemount Lifelong Learning building, has applied for a licence to sell alcohol. It was agreed that efforts should be made to gauge residents' opinions on whether to object to this

12) Staffing Sub Committee

The Committee noted that the Sub Committee are considering ongoing staffing issues.

13) Policy

a) Register of Interests

The Director presented the papers issued with the agenda, including the policy on Entitlements, Payments and Benefits and Declarations of interest by Committee and Staff. Declarations of Interest are:

- Andy Duffus is a member of Parkhead Housing Association
- Lazarous Chisela is Honorary President of the Scotland Zambia Partnership
- Ewa Wojcik is a member of the Polish Prayer Group at St Simon's Church in Glasgow
- Michael Carberry is the Chairperson of Royston Youth Action and his son in law is Robert McDonald of D & R Decorators

The Director's Declaration of Interest in [REDACTED] was considered by Committee on 16 August 2016. The Committee Minute reads:

'The Director referred to the papers issued with the agenda and summarised the Declaration of Interest required due to his connection to [REDACTED]

In 2000, Blochairn employed Maintenance Manager, [REDACTED] and he recommended a number of contractors he knew from working in the [REDACTED], including [REDACTED], renamed [REDACTED] in 2007. [REDACTED] was a [REDACTED] year old apprentice employee with [REDACTED]. Since then he has worked on several major contracts at Blochairn and, in recent years, has been the Job Foreman. He was also Job Foreman on several major contracts including schools, supermarkets and hospitals. He regularly worked on contracts all over Scotland and north of England.

In 2000, [REDACTED]
The Director became aware of [REDACTED] but was unaware that [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] was an [REDACTED] with [REDACTED].

In October 2015 a [REDACTED]

In November 2015, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] registered as self-employed and created [REDACTED]. During 2016 they have worked for various property companies and were added to the approved contractors list for [REDACTED]. In 2016, Blochairn added [REDACTED] Ltd to the approved Contractors List as a multi trade company. When [REDACTED] Ltd was given a [REDACTED] job it was sub contracted to [REDACTED].

When [REDACTED] was a [REDACTED] employee there was no Declaration of Interest required. However, if [REDACTED] carry out work as a sub-contractor it is less clear whether a Declaration is required.

The Director thought it appropriate to advise the Management Committee in any case. In addition, it might be more beneficial to deal directly with [REDACTED] if this was properly recorded, managed and monitored.

As a [REDACTED] employee, [REDACTED] carried out many jobs at Blochairn and supervised major works. As [REDACTED], he and [REDACTED] are building a good portfolio of clients and developing their reputation.

The Committee considered whether [REDACTED] can be included on the Association's Approved Contractors List and/or whether the company can be used as a sub-contractor by another company on the approved list.

The Committee considered the relevant documents, including the Staff Code of Conduct and the Entitlements, Payments & Benefits Policy. The Director emphasised that, if [REDACTED] are to be included it should be noted that, in an organisation as small as Blochairn, it is difficult for the Director to be completely removed from any aspect of work. However, routine maintenance work is allocated by the Housing Services Officer or Housing Services Assistant. He recommended that the 3 monthly Committee Reports should include a specific report on [REDACTED] to include performance, number of jobs and value of jobs. In addition, the position should be reviewed every 6 months.

The Director left the room to allow further discussion.

The Committee decided that [REDACTED] could be included on the Association's Approved Contractors List. Through quarterly reports the Committee will monitor the number and value of jobs given to [REDACTED] and the position will be kept under review'.

The Director provided an update on [REDACTED] involvement with Blochairn:

1. [REDACTED] initially given minor jobs, e.g. insurance work or vandalism/graffiti repair:
 - 2016/2017 - 12 jobs, value £ [REDACTED], average £ [REDACTED]
 - 2017/2018 - 14 jobs, value £ [REDACTED], average £ [REDACTED]
 - 2018/2019 - 16 jobs, value £ [REDACTED], average £ [REDACTED]

- 2019/2020 - 26 jobs, value £ [REDACTED], average £ [REDACTED]
2. Planned/cyclical decoration was on hold until a Major Repairs Programme was agreed. [REDACTED] for several years and were in very poor condition
 3. Major Repairs were completed in May 2019. By then, [REDACTED] had established a good working relationship with Blochairn staff and had delivered a good standard of work
 4. [REDACTED] were instructed to [REDACTED] and a Clerk of Works was engaged to monitor the work. By August, 13 reports had been received. The CoW reported a high standard of work
 5. In 2019 [REDACTED] HA tendered for decorators. The hourly rates, including VAT, were £ [REDACTED] (lowest) and £ [REDACTED] (highest). [REDACTED] charge £ [REDACTED] per hour [REDACTED]
 6. Like Blochairn's other tradesmen [REDACTED] know the area and the housing stock and have a good rapport with tenants
 7. Like Blochairn's other tradesmen they are very accommodating and flexible and respond well to urgent requests
 8. Blochairn may well be unique in that we do not directly employ technical staff. We rely on establishing and preserving good working relationships with our contractors. Just as, for example, our Finance Agent, will advise on technical issues, tradesmen advise our staff. This system has worked well for Blochairn for the past 25 years
 9. [REDACTED] are being added to the Approved Contractors List for [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. The reference given by Blochairn's Housing Services Officer described [REDACTED] as 'excellent' in all categories and commented on the good working relationship

The Director left the room to allow the Committee to consider whether [REDACTED] could remain on the Approved Contractors List. The Committee concluded that [REDACTED] Decorators could remain on the list and that this was in Blochairn's best interests

14) Training

The Director advised that he would join [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] at the EVH Annual Conference in St Andrews on 22/24 November and he asked other Committee members to consider attending.

15) Items for Future Agendas

Committee members were reminded to advise the Chairperson or Director of issues they might want to discuss under future agendas. It is proposed that more direct engagement with young people in the community is added to the agenda for November.

16) Any Other Competent Business

- a) **Joan Reuston.** A presentation was made to Joan Reuston to mark her 20 years' service as a Committee member. She was elected on 3 August 1999. Joan was presented with a framed painting showing a 'George Square' scene.

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