

YORKHILL HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD

Minutes of Management Committee hybrid meeting held on 8 February 2024 at 18:00 in The Association's Office and via Zoom

Present: Y Alexis (Chair), W Docherty (Secretary), M Green, D de Croy, J Wilson (Zoom), N McPherson (Zoom), B Hanley (Zoom)

Apologies: M Ralph, M MacKintosh, C Armstrong, P Braat

In Attendance: T Mallaghan (Chief Executive), S Pattison (Compliance Manager), G Watson (Finance Manager), G Kennedy (Housing Services Manager), C Davidson (Governance Assistant, mins), A Thomson (Wylie and Bissett via Zoom – Agenda Item 3), L Ewart (Governance Consultant – Agenda Item 4)

		Action
1.	<u>Welcome and Apologies</u> The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, and apologies were noted. Meeting began at 18:00	
2.	<u>Declarations of Interest</u> There were no declarations of interest to be made.	
3.	<u>Wylie and Bissett – Internal Audit Reports</u> <u>YHA Procurement Internal Audit</u> Procurement audit and internal audit follow-up on YHA presented by Wylie and Bissett. Wylie and Bissett recapping on the Procurement report presented to Committee. He reminded members that its purpose was to review the Association's Procurement arrangements. The outcome of this audit was that the grade of 'substantial' was achieved – the second highest grade possible – and the auditors were satisfied with YHA's compliance with relevant regulations. 3 recommendations were made for improvement (1 medium priority, 2 low priority). The medium priority recommendation was concerned with YHA's	

contracts register. It was found that there was no specific method for monitoring live contracts in detail, although there is a tender monitor which tracks which company wins a contract. Wylie and Bissett noted that YHA accepted this recommendation, and work had begun to rectify this.

The first of the low priority recommendations was for YHA to adopt good sector practice of producing an annual report detailing overall Procurement performance over the year. Wylie and Bissett again acknowledged that YHA accepted this recommendation, and work had begun to rectify this.

The second low priority recommendation was for YHA to update their Procurement Policy to reflect the approved changes to Procurement thresholds and procedures. Thereafter, staff involved in this field should undertake refresher training. Wylie and Bissett noted that this recommendation had been both accepted and resolved.

One observation was also listed in this report, whereby 2 of 3 samples to test Procurement exercises undertaken for the £1k - £12k threshold only received 2 written quotes instead of the required 3. However, this was because only 2 written quotes were submitted.

There were no further questions on this report.

YHA Internal Audit Follow Up Review

The purpose of this review was to provide YHA Governance and Finance Sub-Committee with assurance that prior year audit recommendations had been implemented within expected timescales. The overall conclusion was that the grade of 'substantial' was achieved.

Wylie and Bissett informed members that of the 7 recommendations made, YHA have now fully implemented 3 of them and partially implemented 4 of them.

The 4 partially implemented recommendations were concerned with:

- Updating the YHA voids Policy to document the new void turnaround target of 10 working days.
- A Governance Review take place to establish reporting arrangements for voids to avoid duplication.
- No Access Procedure formally documented in the Electrical Safety Policy.
- Water sampling and risk assessment be conducted on attic water storage tanks within YHA housing stock.

Within the report, each recommendation has a response from management on these recommendations.

The Chair noted the comprehensiveness of these reports.

There were no further questions on this report.

4. Strategic Review Overview and Observing Meeting

Discussion between the Consultant and members on how she plans to conduct the Governance Review of the organisation.

The Consultant began by thanking the Association for appointing her for this task and hoped for a worthwhile outcome. She informed members that her attendance at this evening's meeting was a chance for members to ask any questions they may have around the planned review, given that they have already seen the proposal. She informed the meeting that she wishes to work alongside the organisation.

She explained that during her review, she intended to look at the current Governance structures and processes, how management and the various Committees work, how they interact with one another, and how they receive information (reporting styles, meeting minutes etc.). She mentioned that some of the review would take the form of a 'desktop exercise' but in-person actions such as attendance at the upcoming YHA strategy day would also be beneficial and allow members to reflect with her on how ideal Governance matches up with Governance at YHA.

It was also highlighted that she will conduct the annual Committee appraisals this year as part of this review.

While members agreed that they already have confidence in the standards of YHA Governance, there can be benefit in having an independent review for assurance purposes.

The Chief Executive added that he was particularly keen to have some external evaluation on the information presented to Committee. He felt that agendas can be too big at times but would like clarification on which reports should remain operational, and are not required, without causing Committee to have any loss of oversight. A member agreed that more separate items on an agenda means less time to discuss each individual item. The Consultant added that she may make some recommendations that could streamline the time commitments for members ahead of meetings, although she emphasised that decisions

made by Committee must be as informed as possible, so an aim of the review is to analyse how information is cascaded to members.

No further questions or comments. Approved.

5. Minutes of last meeting on 14 December 2023

5.1 – Amendments

There were no amendments to be made.

5.2 – Approval

The minutes were unanimously accepted and approved.

5.3 – Matters Arising

Item 4 – Report Procurement Policy Update

The Chief Executive advised members that he is considering direct appointment and has raised this with the Property Services Manager to see if this can be done. The Chief Executive advised that, while there is no concrete answer at this moment, members can expect one in due course.

Action by
Chief Ex

Item 6 – Rent Increase 2024-25

The Chief Executive confirmed to members that comparison results will be made available to tenants in the next newsletter, for them to reflect upon rent charges.

Item 8 – Reports from Sub-Committee

The Chief Executive wished to remind members that their request for the use of acronyms to be avoided in reports has been acknowledged, and staff will keep this in mind when producing future reports.

Item 12 – Acquisitions Update

The Chief Executive was able to update and confirm to members that the Association has secured [REDACTED] from Glasgow City Council for the acquisition of [REDACTED] properties. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The Chair wished to place on record that the Chief Executive and staff involved should be congratulated for this.

6.	<u>Committee/Sub-Committee Meeting Schedule</u> Document proposing meeting timetables for Management Committee meetings plus the Sub-Committees for April through August 2024. There were no questions or comments from members, and the proposed schedules were approved. This confirms that the Management Committee will continue to meet monthly (with a break in July), and Sub-Committees will meet quarterly. All meetings will continue to be held on Thursdays at 18:00.	
7.	<u>Summary Reports from Sub-Committees</u> <u>7.1 – Governance and Finance Sub-Committee from 25 January 2024</u> <u>Matters Arising – FOI/EiRs Training</u> Following discussion at the Sub-Committee meeting, the Compliance Manager informed members that 2 potential dates had been suggested by Information Law Solutions for a training session on this topic for members. It was highlighted that the session, while also a Thursday at 18:00, would not coincide with a committee meeting. The dates will be put to members in due course to decide which is preferred. <u>Item 7 – Staffing Update</u> The Chief Executive advised members on the staffing update, which was approved subject to the Chief Executive achieving a successful outcome in his consultation. He informed members that this consultation process was now underway, and an update will be brought to the Management Committee in March once the process has concluded. Upon a member seeking clarification on the date the staffing changes are due to be implemented, it was confirmed that the changes are to take effect from 4 April 2024 – the day the Association’s Compliance Manager retires.	Action by Chief Ex
8.	<u>Risk Registers</u> <u>8.1 – Freedom of Information/GDPR</u> Prepared by the Compliance Manager Members noted the contents and were advised by the Compliance	

Manager that there had been no changes to the risks within the register. The main material change to the narrative was that Information Law Solutions would fully assume the capacity of Data Protection Officer following the Compliance Manager's retirement in April.

No further questions or comments.

8.2 – Health and Safety

Prepared by the Compliance Manager

No changes to the risks within the register.

No questions or comments.

9. Factoring Service Charges and Commercial Rent

Prepared by the Factoring Manager

Report asking Committee to consider and review factoring charges and commercial rents for 2024-25.

The report provided 3 options on where to set these charges for the coming year, and recommended committee approve the increase of Factoring Management Fees as detailed in Option 1. This would see owners' management costs rising by CPI +1% (5.6%), in line with proposed rent increases, from 1 April 2024.

The report also recommended increases to factoring service charges and administrative fees, and an increase in commercial rent by CPI +1% (5.6%) from 1 April 2024.

The Chief Executive pointed out to members that these charge increases are in line with inflation.

He also highlighted the significance of increasing the charge for fire alarm testing at Argyle Street and Lymburn Street. These tests are now again required to be carried out weekly rather than fortnightly – as was the arrangement during the COVID pandemic. This is a regulation requirement, and therefore the charges must necessarily increase.

A member also expressed confidence that these proposals and figures were benchmarked against other housing associations to ensure the increased charges are in line with the wider sector.

No further questions or comments. Report approved.

10. Overnewton Centre Consultation Demand Analysis and Heads of Terms

The Chair briefly introduced the topic for the Consultant for context, advising her that the Association have been working to turn the Overnewton Centre into something more prominent within the local community.

The Finance Manager informed the meeting that a questionnaire looking for ways in which local residents would like to see the centre utilised was put to all Yorkhill Housing Association tenants and owners and surrounding residents near the end of 2023, and the data gathered was analysed by Community Links Scotland.

Some suggestions that recurred in the analysis included food stalls, parent/toddler clubs and sports clubs. The Finance Manager reminded members that a few sports clubs are already making use of the centre.

The report also included extracts of comments written by respondents, and the Finance Manager was encouraged by the fact that some of the comments related to the wider community/area as well as the centre itself, and that there appeared to be an interest in volunteering for initiatives that may be implemented. A member highlighted that volunteering would be essential and would help ensure that initiatives have people willing to staff them and ensure they can be delivered at minimal financial cost.

A member pointed out that there seemed to be several comments regarding issues such as pavements and lighting. The Chief Executive confirmed to them that these are not issues the Association has control over, although they can certainly raise it with the relevant bodies.

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The member added that they were encouraged to see suggestions about exercise initiatives for the elderly.

Members noted the Draft Heads of Terms for the centre, which gave legal information on where the Association and the Council stands on this.

The Chief Executive informed members that the Association currently occupies the centre on a reduced rent agreement of [REDACTED] for 3 years, and the intention is replacing this agreement with a long-term lease or purchase/transfer in future if alternative funding can be secured.

The Chair also reminded members that the initiative regarding artwork and murals outside the building can go ahead subject to planning

	approval.	
	No further questions or comments. Approved.	
11.	<u>Pay Negotiations Proposal (Wages Ballot)</u> Letter from EVH recommending that Associations accept the proposal of a 5.5% wage increase on all salary points (with points PA1 – PA6 rising to £12:00 per hour in line with the Living Wage). The Chief Executive informed members that he required approval or otherwise tonight on EVH's proposed wage increases, as he is required to notify EVH on the Association's stance. All members were satisfied with the proposal, and approval was obtained. The Chief Executive notified members that EVH had been under the impression that the Unite union had accepted the increase but were then informed that the union were recommending a rejection to their members. The Chief Executive advised that EVH are seeking clarification, but for now the offer being presented (5.5%) is the true offer being made. When asked by members, he confirmed he will update when full clarification is obtained. No further questions or comments. Approved.	Action by Chief Ex
12.	<u>Arrangements for Decant Leases</u> The Chief Executive advised members that the Association currently has the options of guest rooms at Overnewton Court or paying for hotel accommodation in the event something occurs to make a flat temporarily uninhabitable for tenants, such as fire or flooding. He explained that he had dialogue with other Chief Executives across the sector to see if they would be willing to enter into a reciprocal agreement whereby appropriate voids can be used as decanted accommodation. In the event this is necessary, the intention is for the Chief Executive to ask Associations partnered with YHA in this scheme if there is availability for potential decants, and then for tenants to be approached if this is the case. If a tenant were to move into a decant in Yorkhill, they would pay rent to YHA as normal while YHA will pay the lease costs to the other Association. Any necessary adjustments to the flat such as carpeting can be made at a cost to the Association. He added that he cannot predict how likely or often this scheme will be	

used but it is a good additional option to have. Furthermore, it would also likely be cheaper to the Association than paying for prolonged hotel accommodation.

Members welcomed the idea. There were no further questions or comments. Approved.

13. Rent Arrears Court Cases (Eviction Authorisation)

Report prepared by the Housing Services Manager containing notes on YHA rent arrears cases at Glasgow Sheriff Court. The report recommends Management Committee note the information for each case and authorise eviction in the event a Decree is granted at court for each case.

The Chief Executive began by informing members that he was very keen to open this topic up for discussion at Committee to agree on the Association's actions on this issue.

The Housing Services Manager highlighted that none of the cases within the report urgently require eviction approval, but suggested in future it could be a good idea to seek approval from Committee at the point the Association takes an arrears case to court. He also informed members that the report was a draft to verify whether they like the format of how the information is displayed.

A member mentioned that while the formatting is useful, the information within already comes to the Housing Management Services Sub-Committee every quarter, so he is already aware of any arrears proceeding through court.

The member advised that he would prefer to be kept up to date with arrears cases in the usual way, and that he would rather that committee see a full individual report for each eviction instead of a block table of arrears cases.

There was an agreement by all that eviction should be a last resort action to take.

After being asked by another member if this report amounted to requesting delegated authority to serve Notices of Proceedings at the relevant stage, the Housing Services Manager clarified that the proposal is part of a process to develop a way for Committee to approve evictions.

The member added that Notices of Proceedings should only be served if YHA is taking a tenant to court, and YHA should only be going to

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	court for the purpose of seeking eviction. The Housing Services Manager replied that rather than a report on Notice of Proceedings being served, this report is for cases that are going to court, and that he is aiming to streamline the information given to members while still ensuring they are adequately informed. The Chief Executive added that the last thing he wants is for Committee to be caught by surprise regarding an eviction taking place without their knowledge and suggested that YHA staff contact Committee office-bearers (preferably by email) before proceeding with cases in future. Members were satisfied with this, and there were no further questions or comments.	
14.	<u>SFHA Update</u> The Chief Executive reported that the SFHA had produced a report based on a survey around digital health within housing associations. The Finance Manager added that it is important for YHA to keep abreast with digital developments and best practice – training, threat awareness and technology awareness can all be of benefit to the organisation. The Chief Executive also updated members that the Scottish Government have been facing increased calls and lobbying following extensive cuts made to the Scottish Housing Budget, as there are many concerns around adverse effects resulting from cuts.	Action by Chief Ex
15.	<u>GWSF Update</u> The Chief Executive obtained approval from members for the Association to renew its GWSF membership, with the fee going up by [REDACTED].	
16.	<u>EVH Update</u> Following some discussion on a survey from EVH on how useful people are finding the 2024 diaries they issued, it was agreed that the Finance Manager would feed back to EVH that the diaries are indeed beneficial, however he would ask simply that they send a smaller amount going forward. 2 members who attended the EVH course in January – ‘Making Sense of Finance for Governing Body Members’ – mentioned that they appreciated a few reminders at the course, but generally found the	Action Chief Ex

	content a little too basic.	
17.	<u>AOCB</u> The Housing Services Manager informed members that a new customer/tenant portal is coming soon to HomeMaster, although YHA have held off going live with this until more testing has been done to verify how effectively it works or identify any problems. A full report will be submitted to Committee in due course, and the Housing Services Manager also hopes to put on a demonstration of how the system will work. The Chair pointed out that the first name of Wylie and Bisset's staff member needed corrected on the agenda. The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and input at the meeting. Meeting Closed at 19:25	Action Chief Ex
18.	Date and Time of Next Meeting: 14 March 2024 at 18:00.	

Signed as a Correct Document Chairperson