

**MINUTE OF GWAH MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 23 JANUARY 2024
AT 6:00 PM, MEETING VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE¹ AND IN GWAH OFFICES, 5 ROYAL CRESCENT, GLASGOW**

PRESENT:

Rowan Evenstar
Issie Gracie (Chairperson)
Nina MacNeill
Joginder Makar
Amy Robertson
Billy Robertson
Yushin Toda
Ekpe Ukpe
Debbie van Pomeran Reilly

ATTENDING:

Elaine Travers, Chief Executive²
Jen Barrow, Services Director
Daniel Wedge, Technical Director²

APOLOGIES:

Nicola Adams
Anila Ali

LEAVE OF ABSENCE:

OBSERVERS:

0.0 Dover St Mural options – Jo/Nick (QXHA)

WELCOME

- 1.0** The Chairperson noted apologies, introduced and welcomed MCMs to the meeting, and confirmed the order of business. The general interests of Tenant Members, and GWEn service users, along with the specific interests of E Travers as a GWEn Board Director were noted. The Chairperson reminded Members of the Code of Conduct and meeting etiquette, specifically that questions are directed through the Chair; that discussions are professional and constructive; and that decisions are taken in the best interests of tenants and service users. Members were mindful of their responsibilities as Trustees, and accordingly the Secretary confirmed it was appropriate that Members did not withdraw from the meeting. At 7.45pm, and in line with Rule 36, MCMs agreed unanimously to continue the meeting beyond 8.00pm to facilitate discussion of all business.

CORPORATE

2.0 Minutes

2.1 Management Committee Meeting: 5 December 2023

2.1.1 Adoption of Minute

The minute of the meeting was unanimously accepted as a correct record, without amendment; proposed by J Makar and seconded by A Robertson.

2.1.2 Matters Arising

2.1.2.1 Item 3.5.2 MC Appraisals Plan

Report 1a was presented, with thanks to MCMs for the prompt response to meeting requests, and with an appeal for the return of the appraisal paperwork at the earliest opportunity.

2.1.2.2 Pre-MC training: Estates/Technical – rescheduled date options

Report No.1b was presented, with MCMs agreeing to defer the session to the 2024/25 committee cycle, mindful of the pending structure review; the ongoing reporting on investment projects; and the agreed timeline for the Estates Services review.

¹ Adverse weather report

² Office

2.2 MC Action Plan Compliance

2.2.1 MC 07/11/23 Item 2.2.1 Tenant and Resident Safety: RAAC

Members considered Report No.2a, welcoming the positive report of “no RAAC identified” in the surveyed blocks (22 of 40), with note to the imminent timescale for completion of the remaining surveys.

2.2.2 MC 16/05/23 Item 3.6 Dover Street opening

Report No 2b was considered, with ongoing slow progress towards the target work completion date of end February; and with formal handover thereafter subject to receipt of validation/completion certificates. MCMs agreed a provisional opening day on Wednesday, 27/03/24 to be kept under review.

3.0 Governance

3.1 Execution Of Documents

There were none

3.2 Membership Applications

There were none

3.3 Contingency Planning: Festive Close Review

MCMs considered Report No. 4, noting compliance and trends; prompt follow-up with residents and contractors on EM call-outs; and a review of the contractor’s assessment of repairs underway. Concierge service provision and supporting guard patrol services were as intended (pending the Estates Services review), and there were no material emergency situations reported over the festive period. With assurances over the robustness of the contingency procedures, and with the availability of staff to respond to major incidents, MCMs approved the festive close arrangements for 2024 subject to exigencies at the time.

3.4 Registers: Compliance Reporting

Report No. 5 was acknowledged and recent recording in the NE Register noted. MCMs welcomed the considerable progress towards addressing the H&S risks in NE 1004349, with target completion mid-March 2024³ and internal decoration and finishes to follow immediately thereafter. In terms of the 4-week delay (primarily weather related) it was confirmed in response to a MCM query that notwithstanding the impact of the weather, which could constitute a “relevant event” for which reasonable additional cost may be considered, there had been no contractual claim or intimation of a claim for an extension of time. On the recent meeting with the SHR, MCMs appreciated the Regulation Manager’s acknowledgement of the complexity of the project, and likewise the positive and constructive dialogue around measures for closing the NE. To assist MC governance assurance in this respect, MCMs agreed the reappointment of the ACS Risk Group to report to the MC on the project’s mitigation of the previously identified H&S risks (target: February); and thereafter to participate in a MC review of the project to capture learning (target: September). Notwithstanding the target timescales, MCMs were mindful that Local Authority resource pressures may impact the issue of a completion certificate for the project, and in turn the regulatory engagement plan for 2024/25.

The progress report on NE 30399 was then considered, in conjunction with a verbal update that the chimneys in question had been inspected and remained intact (pending full repair), following the recent adverse weather conditions. MCMs welcomed SHR notification (22/01/24) closing the NE based on the 05/12/23 MC report; with future updates through routine MC performance reporting.

With regards the recent NE 30790, MCMs noted from GW inspection 12/01/24 no evidence of any potentially contributing H&S risks or hazards; and, with limited information currently available on this

³ amended from report typo 2023

incident, there was an expectation of further reporting via the MC(S) meetings to closure.

In line with revised governance reporting agreed 22/08/23, the next update on NEs was confirmed as MC meeting 02/04/24; with the exception of NE 1004349 to the MC 27/02/24, and reporting of new NEs and/or material developments in existing NEs. Data breaches and entries in the EPB, SAR, FOI and EIR⁴ Registers are scheduled for reporting to the MC(C) 27/02/24, and H&S reporting is as previously agreed.

SERVICES

4.0 Services

4.1 ATC⁵ evaluation/Rent consultation

Report No.6 was considered with MCMs alert to a particularly lively event, with evidence of frustrations and discontent from some tenants, and with MC agreement that community events, introduced by senior staff, would be helpful for facilitating tenant engagement and response to concerns at a local level.

The extensive staff and tenant evaluations were then discussed, learning for future events was acknowledged (primarily logistical issues), and the generally positive feedback on the event and on the consultation topics was appreciated:

- 93% of attendees were satisfied with the conference subjects and 81% understood the purpose of the consultation;
- 44% were interested in attending the Committee Training Forum and/or in MC membership; and
- 78% were in agreement with the Corporate Strategy (vision, mission, values and priorities);

Support varied for the proposals around newsletters (93%), office opening hours (57%) and the management of housing applications (54%), with agreement that further information would be provided for service users prior to launching the latter two; and with confirmation that the proposed change to the management of housing applications was also subject to legal advice and regulatory compliance. Possible measures for increasing digital participation in the ATC was queried, with confirmation that general data on tenant internet connectivity was available from the Future Services Survey and that ICT training opportunities for tenants would be noted as a potential initiative for further exploring via the Corporate Plan.

Progressing to the rent review consultation (Table 1), MCMs welcomed the 35% increase in the number of responses this year; with 37 responses (10%) from ATC Attendees, and the remaining 90% from the pre-ATC consultation PI (performance indicator) to proactively contact a minimum 15% of tenants.

Table 1	Total Responses		In Agreement		Not in Agreement		Abstention /Indifferent	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Pre-ATC	315	90	144	45	164	52	7	3
ATC – In person	32	9	4	12	28	88	-	-
ATC – Remote	5	1	3	60	2	40		
Total 2024:	352	100	151	43	194	55	7	2
Total 2023:	261			33		64		3

MCMs commented on the significance of the 55% opposition, whilst also observing that 43% support could be interpreted as a positive position in the circumstances. Of the respondents not in favour of

⁴ Entitlements, Payments and Benefits; Subject Access Requests; Freedom of Information; Environmental Information Regulations

⁵ Annual Tenants Conference

the proposal, the majority opposition was from ATC Attendees (85%) citing similar concerns to last year around affordability and dissatisfaction with the repairs service and investment programme; and additionally this year, environmental issues. On these points MCMs noted strong rent affordability levels (c99% based on the SFHA definition), albeit recognising the subjectivity of affordability, and referencing the risk mitigation measures in the form of a rent freeze for one apartment properties, the ongoing suspension of the rent restructuring programme, and the supporting tenancy sustainment measures. The decisive action to replace the previous repairs contractor (and pending reprocurement) was highlighted in response to the repairs service concerns, and likewise the concerted efforts to accelerate the investment programme and to proactively engage with stakeholders to address refuse and vermin issues across the City; all the while managing (sector-wide) resource constraints.

In the discussions that followed, MCMs reinforced the Corporate Plan priority focus aligned to tenant feedback and future service aspirations, whilst also mindful of the challenges of achieving an optimum balance between the rent policy factors (affordability, comparability and cost) when there are ongoing pressures on household incomes, and on GW budgets, from external market influences (including fluctuating CPI), and from new and emerging regulatory requirements. In terms of sector-wide rent consultation underway at this time, MCMs were advised of proposals ranging from c4%-8% (averaging c5-6%)⁶; and were also conscious of the previous forewarning for GW tenants that the below-inflation increases of the last 3-years were not sustainable for the business plan. Additionally, and consistent with MC meeting 07/11/23, tenants had been advised throughout the consultation process that there was no scope for paring back the proposed increase this year, without there being a corresponding longer-term impact on the business plan.

Whilst aware that any level of increase would be unwelcome in these difficult times, on balance of considerations, MCMs maintained their previous position on a rent increase of 6.7%, to be implemented alongside the mitigation measures: suspension of the rent restructuring programme, a rent-freeze for one apartment properties; an ongoing focus on efficiencies; and tenancy sustainment initiatives including access to the inhouse confidential welfare benefits service. Separately there was acknowledgment of the current reconciliation of service costs with early indications that increases would be in the region of 20%, reflective of the continued escalation in costs experienced by the environmental and common close cleaning contractors, which would be subject to a retender exercise within the upcoming year.

In closing the review, MCMs recorded their appreciation for the tenants who took the time to contribute to the consultation, agreeing advance notice of the decision via the website and social media channels; and formal notification of the rent and service charges effective from 28/03/24 through the review letters issued in February.

4.2 Service Engagement Strategy – Plan 2024-25

MCMs considered Report No. 7, commending the strong performance against the 2023-24 plan and welcoming the relaunch of onsite drop-in surgeries at Blythswood Court. The 2024-25 plan was approved with the addition of the local community events, as agreed with tenants at the ATC, and with flexibility to reflect emerging service issues.

4.3 SSHC 2: Communication [c/f from ARC mid-year performance]

MCMs considered Report No. 8, noting progress against initiatives, and PI performance affected by software errors/limitations which had been reported to the ICT provider for resolution in advance of year-end reporting. The decline in newly arising contractor complaints was agreed to be reassuring, albeit complaints about historic interactions with the former repairs contractor were continuing to impact performance. The outcome of the three SPSO referrals “no further action” were taken as an indicator of the robust complaints procedures in place.

⁶ GWSF survey

4.4 Repairs call-handling

Report No. 9 was presented: proposed repairs call handling for tenants and residents through the current repairs contractor, for a pilot period of 6-months (from 01/02/24), as a risk mitigation measure pending recruitment and training for the front line services team.

The importance of the repairs service for tenants, and the association's obligation to respond to repairs in fulfilment of the terms of the tenancy, underpinned the discussion that followed. In response to MCM queries, it was reported that the contractor already provided the proposed service for other RSLs with positive feedback; also that direct reporting would have potential benefits in freeing up GW Officer time for contract management (including additional pre/post inspections) as well as enabling tenants to report repairs by telephone/email and make access arrangements directly with the contractor's scheduling team. Access to the contractor's live portal to check on the status of repairs, regular meetings and performance reporting, and positive relationships built thus far, were all offered as mitigation for MCM legitimate concerns (based on the poor performance of the previous contractor) that the association would potentially lose control of service delivery.

MCM hesitation over the proposed arrangement was fully acknowledged, however, on balance of risk, notably GW current resource pressures and recruitment timeline, the proposal was cautiously supported with consensus to proceed as outlined. In terms of implementation, it was confirmed that notifications would be issued imminently to tenants and residents, and that the service and contract conditions would be very closely monitored to inform the pending reprocurement of the response repairs service.

5.0 Technical

5.1 Response Repairs >24/25 Procurement Strategy

MCMs considered Report No. 10 acknowledging progress through the Project Delivery framework for repairs and void services 2024+. The SWOT⁷ analysis was reviewed alongside the procurement options appraisal, with MCMs agreeing to further explore traditional framework "call-off" and dynamic purchasing system (framework) as the optimum options for GW at this time. In response to a MCM query it was confirmed that the Procurement for Housing (PfH) framework was due to launch March 2024, and that there was no proposal for the MC at the moment insofar as the duration for either the PfH or Scottish Procurement Alliance (SPA) frameworks. The next stage was Exec / Management Team evaluation in line with the Delivery plan Framework.

5.2 Major Works and Investment Update

MCMs considered the major works and investment updates as summarised in Report No.11, agreeing appropriate progress across the priority 1 and 2 projects and noting in particular:

- a) cyclical close painter-work completed in 23 GW closes; and ongoing engagement with factored owners to encourage participation in the next phase of the project;
- b) kitchen/bathroom replacement project on site and progressing well;
- c) tenant communication and contract award Q1 priority for 640 Argyle St pilot retrofit project; with correction to report to note potential mural project carry forward to 2024/25 plan;
- d) mixed works projects at Blythswood Court and St Vincent Terrace paced with net-zero feasibility studies, due February 2024; with priority project subject to options review and resident engagement.

5.3 LCC Phase 2: stock condition survey validation T: 23/01/24

MCMs noted that the project is ongoing, with L&H consultants currently spot-checking stock condition surveys to independently validate GW assessments and ensure alignment with the LCC validation carried out last year. Further reporting to MC is expected in due course to inform business planning.

⁷ Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

6.0 Regeneration

6.1 Dover Street: commercial unit

MCMs considered the proposal outlined in Report No 13, confirming approval to progress negotiations with the proposed lessee, delegating authority to the Chief Executive to conclude lease terms with advice from Savills and TC Young solicitors.

OTHER BUSINESS

7.0 Any Other Urgent Business

There was none.

8.0 Items For Future Agendas

EWI Options Appraisal : (TBC)

9.0 Date Of Next Meeting

MC Corporate 27/02/24

CLOSE