



**Minutes of Management Committee Meeting
held on Tuesday 10th December 2024 at 6.30pm
The meeting was at Knowes Housing Association's Office**

Present: Lynsey Chrystal
Katie Devaney
Steve Rolfe
Billy Stevenson
Cllr Lawrence O'Neill
Leanne Keegan
Chukwuebuka Tim Ugwu
Hilary Edgar

In Attendance: Erica Davidson CEO
Peter French Head of Property Services
Martin Harvey Head of Housing
Amy Sweeney Corporate Services / Compliance Officer

Observing: Patricia Broadfoot (Did not take part in voting or discussions)

Please note that the Management Committee are provided with a copy of papers one week prior to the meeting.

Agenda Item		To Be Actioned
1.	<p>Apologies</p> <p>The following people submitted their apologies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter Fennessey • Richard McLean <div style="background-color: black; width: 100%; height: 15px; margin-top: 5px;"></div>	
2.	<p>Declaration of Interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leanne Keegan declared an interest under item 3 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lynsey Chrystal declared an interest under item 6.1 • Billy Stevenson declared an interest under item 6.2 	
3.	<p>Correspondence</p> <p>A donation request was received from Faifley Art Group for their School Arts Competition that will take place after the New Year.</p> <p>Leanne Keegan declared an interest under this agenda item and refrained from discussions and voting.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to donate £200 to Faifley Art Group for the competition. Proposed by Billy Stevenson and seconded by Cllr Lawrence O'Neill.</p>	<p>Donation of £200 to be made to Faifley Art Group.</p>
4.	<p>Minutes of Management Committee on 12th November 2024</p> <p>Erica provided additional information on local suppliers as requested by the Committee at the previous meeting. Erica confirmed that 23% of Knowes HA's suppliers are local.</p> <p>There were no amendments and the minutes of the Management Committee meeting held on 12th November were agreed as an accurate record and approved. Proposed by Leanne Keegan and seconded by Cllr Lawrence O'Neill.</p>	<p>Amy to upload minutes to the website.</p>
5.	<p>Minutes of Sub Committee Meetings</p> <p>The minutes of the housing management sub committee meeting were included for information.</p>	
6.	<p>CEO Report</p> <p>Erica presented her report to the Committee. The report included the following information:</p> <p><u>Staff Updates</u></p> <p>Unfortunately, the preferred candidate selected for the Administrative Assistant post notified us that they were no longer taking up the post. The post was then offered to the second candidate in line who did not wish to take up the post. This was the second time out to recruitment. As an alternative to re-advertising again, we approached EVH who recommended a temporary candidate on their books. We interviewed the candidate</p>	

and they met the person specification for the post therefore they were appointed. The candidate started at Knowes HA on Tuesday 3rd December for a period of 6 months. During this time, the senior management team will carry out an in-depth review of the post to determine why it has been difficult to fill.

Update on Abbeylands Road

The demolition of the existing building commenced on Monday 25th November 2024 and is scheduled to take 4 weeks.

The tender documents for the appointment of the building contract will be sent out in the next week.

VAT Audit

The VAT audit went well and the HRMC auditor has advised that Knowes HA should be able to deregister for VAT. This process will be looked at again before the end of the financial year.

Wider Action and Charitable Donations Expenditure to end of November 2024

The wider action and charitable donations budgets and expenditure was provided to the Committee.

Knowes Christmas Closing Times

Knowes' office will be closed from Wednesday 25th December through to Thursday 2nd January inclusive.

West Dunbartonshire Council will provide emergency repairs cover during this time and senior staff will be available in case of emergencies.

Summary of Tasks

Erica provided the Committee with a summary of the tasks that she has been working on with the management team which included the following:-

- Business plan for 2025/26 – Business Objectives
- Governance review procurement process
- Mid-year staff PDRs for 2024/25
- Review of budgets and long-term plans/rent increase 2025/26

	<p><u>Sub Committee Meetings</u></p> <p>Erica provided the Committee with details of what will be covered at the upcoming finance, audit and housing management sub committee meetings.</p> <p>The next finance, audit and housing management sub committee meetings will be held on 28th January 2025.</p> <p><u>Procurement Results</u></p> <p>Lynsey Chrystal declared an interest under this agenda item and refrained from discussions and voting.</p> <p>The report on development services tender returns was provided to the Committee. The Association wishes to appoint a suitably qualified and experienced Development Consultant to provide day-to-day project management services to help deliver a one-off new build development of 27 properties for social rent in the Faifley.</p> <p>The contract will run for a period of 24 months from December 2024 to November 2026. Three tender returns were received [REDACTED]</p> <p>Each of the tenders were assessed on price and quality and upon completion of the tender assessment process, the tender submitted by Gill Montgomery Development (GMD) Services scored the highest in terms on quality and price.</p> <p>It is therefore recommended that the Committee appoints Gill Montgomery Development (GMD) Services. The Committee approved the recommendation, proposed by Billy Stevenson and seconded by Leanne Keegan.</p>	
6.1	<p><u>Rent Proposal Report 2025/26</u></p> <p>Billy Stevenson declared an interest under this agenda item as a tenant of the association.</p> <p>The proposal for the rent increase consultation was presented to the Committee. Erica advised that the report had been discussed at the recent finance sub, however CPI increased between the date of the finance sub and when the papers went out. Therefore, it was</p>	
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	<p>agreed that the report would be updated and brought to the full Committee for discussion.</p> <p>Erica advised that the CPI and CPIH year on year increases have risen since September, and October rates now sit at CPI 2.3% and CPIH 3.2%. CPIH includes the expenses associated with owning, maintaining and living in one's own home. To maintain consistency going forward, rent increases will be based on October CPI plus a percentage. It was advised that rent increases required will be greater than the Consumer Price Index for the foreseeable future due to a number of cost increases that are outwith the association's control within the economy. This includes the increases in Employer NI faced by organisations from 1st April 2025.</p> <p>The report included the SFHA rent survey which provided a summary of the proposed increases from other housing associations.</p> <p>The Committee were advised that a rent increase of 3.5% is recommended for 2025/26 with no other options being offered for consultation. Overall this means an average rent increase of £3.22 per week.</p> <p>A service charge increase of 10% to cover close cleaning is also recommended for 2025/26. Erica explained that Knowes HA only has one service charge for those tenement closes who have opted to part in the close cleaning service. Service charges have been increased by CPI only in previous years but unfortunately there has been higher than inflationary increases in the contract costs due to the introduction of the real living wage for all workers and other above inflation increases for the contractor. The management team are happy that this contract continue to provide value for money services for our tenants and owners. The increase represents an average additional cost of £2.45 per month to residents.</p> <p>A discussion took place regarding the proposal. Erica advised that last year tenants were provided with options but Knowes doesn't usually provide options. Erica advised that to offer viable choices we would have to consider significantly increasing the rent. If in the future the association wanted to look at introducing another business service, this would be a separate business proposal. The proposed rent increase for 2025/26 is based on continuing to provide the current</p>	<p>Tenants to be notified about proposed consultation on rent increase.</p>
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service as well as ensuring that we maintain our housing properties to the highest possible standard.

A question was raised on whether Knowes had benchmarked with other local HA's. Erica advised that the figures were benchmarked with the other RSLs who were participating in the SFHA proposed rent increase survey, however some of the local housing associations have not decided on an increase yet. Erica advised that tenants will be notified of the consultation on the proposed rent increase before the festive break.

The Committee approved the recommendation to consult the tenants on a rent increase of 3.5% in 2025/26

Service charges do not have to be consulted on and will require to be increased by 10% in 2025/26.

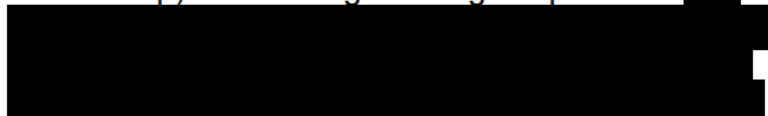
Proposed by Steve Rolfe and seconded by Lynsey Chrystal.

Governance Review

Following an independent investigation into a code of conduct complaint, the Management Committee are intending to appoint an external consultant with suitable experience of providing consultancy services to Scottish Social Landlords to carry out a governance review.

As agreed at the previous meeting, Erica prepared a report on the proposed remit and scope of the governance review for the Committee. She advised that once the project brief has been approved it is intended to tender for suitable independent consultants to carry out the governance review.

There are several consultants who have sufficient experience in this area and who have been recommended to Knowes by the CEOs of peer group RSLs who are currently carrying out governance reviews. These consultants include Linda Ewart, North Star, Arniel Johnston, Indigo House and David Tolson Partnership. It is intended to invite suitable consultants to tender via the Public Contracts Scotland website. Knowes Procurement Advisors (Ewing Somerville Partnership) will be sought during the process.



	<p>This has been factored into the revised budgets for 2024/25 and the remainder will be included in the budgets for 2025/26.</p> <p>The timescale of the review is 1 year, and the scope will also include coaching, training and support for the Management Committee and senior management team.</p> <p>Before setting down the remit in the invitation to tender document, the Scottish Housing Regulator and the Committee are invited to comment on the suggested remit and propose relevant amendments and additions as required. Erica advised that the report had already been shared with the Scottish Housing Regulator and she had received feedback from them that they were satisfied with the scope and remit of the review. Erica advised that Steve Rolfe and Peter Fennessey had prior to this meeting been invited to comment on the survey and had proposed changes which had been adopted in the report. Steve confirmed that he had asked that the consultant should be asked to look at ways in which the committee could work more collaboratively with the senior management team which was now included in the scope of the review.</p> <p>Following a discussion on the scope of the review, no further amendments were requested and the Committee approved the remit and scope of the review, proposed by Cllr Lawrence O'Neill and seconded by Hilary Edgar.</p>	
7.	<p>New Share Members</p> <p>The Committee were asked to approve share membership 629.</p> <p>The Committee approved the share membership, proposed by Lynsey Chrystal and seconded by Billy Stevenson.</p>	
8.	<p>Corporate Services and Health and Safety Reports</p> <p>There are no further updates since the previous meeting.</p>	
9.	<p>Property Services Reports</p> <p>Peter presented the repairs and maintenance reports.</p> <p>KPI Report</p>	

KPI results at November 2024.

- Average time taken to complete non-emergency repairs – 7 days.
- Average time taken to attend emergency repairs – 21 minutes.
- Average time taken to complete emergency repairs – 1hr 53 minutes.

There has been no statistically significant change in KPIs since 1st April 2024.

Capital Projects

- Windows & Door Project 2024-25 – This project is now complete.
- Kitchens Project 24-25 – MJM have completed kitchens in 11 addresses. Wright Kerr All Trades started on site on 10th June and have now completed the remaining kitchens.
- Tenemental Water Tank Removal – Report provided under this agenda item on proposal to award this contract to the Bell Group via Scotland Excel Framework.

Solar Panel Bird Netting

- Following further netting to solar panels this year we have completed 158 out of a total of 246 addresses which have solar panels. The end of the bird nesting season has seen a drop in requests therefore the remaining addresses will likely be carried out in the next financial year. However, in order to carry out this work we will need to have buy in from Voltair who manage the solar panels.

Maintenance and Service Projects

- Paint Project – This project is complete.
- Supply of Skips – Currently reviewing Scotland Excel framework for the tender for supply of Skips as part of the bulk uplift service.

- Gutter Cleaning Project – Contractors are on-site, and main door properties are now complete. Work has started on the tenemental properties.
- Landscape Maintenance Project – We are at the end of the summer maintenance cycle and now entering into the winter maintenance cycle, work to include moss control, winter prune and litter collection.

EICRs

- From April 2025 – December 2025, 85 addresses require an EICR, currently 10 of these addresses remain outstanding.
- Going forward this project will be tendered in 2025, with a view to delivering the approx. numbers below each year:

2025: 135 (Excluding 85 noted above)
 2026: 250
 2027: 250
 2028: 280
 2029: 55

The majority of the EICRs will be obtained on a 4 year cycle and this will allow adjustments to be made within the programme to accommodate tenants, staff and contractors when required.

Health and Safety

- EICRs in Common Areas – EICRs are being carried out in the common areas (common fuse boxes) as part of the delivery of the fire risk assessment outcomes. Any remedial work identified as a result of the EICRs will be carried out.

Medical Adaptations

- We have received a grant award of £20k from the Scottish Government for adaptations. This is down £5,000 from last year.

We have received 15 requests so far. Of these requests, 8 have been minor work for grab rails etc and have been completed, 6 requests require

major work e.g. level access showers, wet floor bathrooms etc. and we are arranging this work. We have estimated that we will be able to deliver 4 of these requests depending on costs and the remaining requests will be put on 25/26 programme.

Stock Condition Survey

- Hardies Property and Construction Services have started the stock condition surveys. Letters have been issued to approx. 250 tenants across the stock profile of addresses indicating that the survey programme will run from late October to January 2025.

Recommendation for Appointment of Alternative Contractor for the Water Tank Removal Contract

It is our proposal to remove the remaining water tanks in the loft spaces of our tenements to remove the risk of Legionella and avoid the need to carry out Legionella checks.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Ewing Somerville Partnership have advised that as this tender process is now complete the award of the contract to one of the other contractors was not possible with the options open being to repeat the tender process or directly award the contract in line with our Procurement Policy. Rather than re-tender, anticipating it would produce the same outcome, an alternative contractor was sought via an existing Procurement Framework.

	<p>The Bell Group have indicated that they would be willing to take on this contract. They are a member of the Scotland Excel Framework which allows their direct appointment for this contract.</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>The Committee were asked to approve the proposal to appoint The Bell Group on the basis of their price and their membership of the Scotland Excel Framework. The Committee approved the recommendation to appoint The Bell Group, proposed by Lynsey Chrystal and seconded by Steve Rolfe.</p>	
10.	<p>Policies for Approval</p> <p>The following policies were discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repairs Policy – Peter provided a summary of policy changes to the Committee, including changes to legislation, removal of schedule of rates and change of contractor. <p>A point was raised regarding section 10.2 - Contract Type. The Committee advised that it would be beneficial to include more information in this section on how future contracts may be tendered. Another point was raised about how Knowes is referenced throughout the policy, it was recommended that we use 'Knowes Housing Association Ltd' as standard throughout policies.</p> <p>There was no other comment or suggestions and the policy was approved, proposed by Steve Rolfe and seconded by Cllr Lawrence O'Neill.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business Continuity Plan – Erica provided a summary of policy changes to the Committee. There were no comments or queries and the policy was approved, proposed by Billy Stevenson and seconded by Leanne Keegan. 	<p>Relevant changes to be made to policy.</p> <p>Summary sheet to be included for policies going forward.</p>
11.	<p>EVH Report</p> <p>The EVH Report for November was provided to the Committee for their information.</p>	

12.	<p>Management Committee Attendance Register</p> <p>The attendance register was provided to the Committee for their information.</p>	
13.	<p>Notifiable Events</p> <p>A question was raised on whether the SHR had been in contact regarding the previous notifiable event. Erica advised that they had requested a copy of the minutes of the December meeting and would be monitoring the progress of the governance review.</p> <p>There had been no further notifiable events in the year to date.</p>	
14.	<p>Any Other Business and Apologies for Future Meetings</p> <p>No other business was discussed.</p>	
15.	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>The next committee meeting will take place on Tuesday 4th February 2025 at 6:30pm.</p>	