



Minute of Board meeting Thursday 18 August 2016 held at Govanhill HA

Present: Peter Howden (Chair), John Sweeney, Hugh Cameron, Helen Moore, Jim Whiston, Claire Taylor, Adele Fraser, Bill Brown, Linda Sichi

In attendance: David Bookbinder, Colleen Rowan

1 Apologies

There were no apologies as all current Board members were present. It was noted that John Buchanan had decided to step down from the Board of Parkhead HA for health reasons, and so he would no longer be able to serve on GWSF's Board. The Board wished to convey their warm thanks and best wishes to John, who had been a valued member of the GWSF Board.

2 Approval of the minutes 9 June 2016

2.1 The minutes were approved with no amendments.

3 Matters arising from the minutes

Joint meeting between GWSF Board and Lead Members

3.1 It was noted that staff were looking into venue options with a half-day session in the autumn in mind. The suggestion of holding the event at the Schoenstatt 'retreat' in the Campsies was being followed up, with our Administrator Eleanor due to visit the venue shortly.

Reclassification of HAs as public bodies

3.2 It was reported that a decision from the Office of National Statistics was now expected in early September [note: this is now expected to be end of September]. The issue would be the subject of the Open Meeting that night (18 August), when Scottish Housing Regulator Michael Cameron would focus on the potential impact of deregulatory measures likely to be taken by the Scottish Government in an attempt to get the expected reclassification decision reversed.

GWSF Campaign Group activity

3.3 It was reported that a successful meeting of the Group had been held on 16 August, with welfare rights expert Lynn Law of the Poverty Alliance. This had been helpful in enabling the Group to consider its current priorities and on which issues the Group could lend support to

other bodies' campaign work. The Group had also confirmed its keenness to progress work on encouraging GWSF members to adopt a Poverty Charter along the lines of that adopted by three CCHAs in north west Glasgow. The Group was also looking forward to the 'away day' session with the GWSF Board and Lead Members.

Arrangements for the AGM and Board nominations

3.4 It was reported that six nominations had been received for the six vacancies, with one being from a CCHA staff member and five from committee/board members.

3.5 Adele Fraser and Helen Moore would therefore be continuing on the Board after standing down, and new members welcomed onto the Board would be:

- Claire Taylor, Hillhead HA (who had been a co-opted member since May 2016)
- Jim Brown, Williamsburgh HA
- Susan McKeown, Parkhead HA
- Graham Piggott, Atrium Homes

3.6 The new Board would be subject to approval of the AGM later that evening.

4 GWSF meeting with new Housing Minister, 13 July 2016

4.1 A successful meeting had been held with new Local Government and housing Minister Kevin Stewart on 13 July, at Queens Cross HA's office. GWSF reps present were Peter Howden and Adele Fraser from the Board, and Lead Members Shona Stephen and Chris Cunningham, along with David Bookbinder.

4.2 The meeting was largely introductory, but the Forum did of course take the opportunity to talk through some of our key Manifesto asks, including on new build investment, tenements and the People and Communities Fund.

4.3 On the PCF, we were disappointed to hear that there would not be a three-year fund from April 2017, as the entire Scottish budget could only be for a further one year period now that it was known that the UK Government had shelved plans for a three year budget in the wake of the Brexit vote.

4.4 In the discussion on tenemental acquisition and improvement, the Minister seemed very clear that this activity lay outwith the 50,000 new supply target, saying that this related solely to new build. [Note: the Forum subsequently queried this with officials, who confirmed that acquisitions which brought private housing into use as social/affordable housing would count as part of the 50,000 target.]

4.5 On the provisions of the Community Empowerment Act, the Minister had said that wise local authorities would move quickly in relation to the transfer of assets, or else they risked being hit by a large number of participation requests.

4.6 On the reclassification issue the Minister confirmed the Scottish Government's intention to act quickly to reverse the likely decision from ONS.

4.7 The Board noted that the Forum and Minister had agreed to meet again in around six months' time and, thereafter, around twice a year.

5 GWSF research work on succession planning for CCHA staff and committee members

5.1 The Board discussed Colleen's paper on the Forum's plans to undertake research, through survey and interviews, on members' views on and plans to tackle issues arising from the need to refresh committees/boards and also to replace the many senior staff likely to be retiring in the next few years.

5.2 A wide-ranging discussion ensued, in which the following points were made:

- The research was felt to be very timely as this was a burning issue for the movement
- Improvement in stock sometimes made it more difficult to attract committee members, and so too, it was felt, had the rules relating to, for example, the need to attend a minimum number of meetings etc.
- Some Board members felt that the 5-year rule for Chairs and 9-year rule for other board members should be revisited as they did not sufficiently recognise the importance of committee members needing time to grow into their roles
- It was suggested that the research should seek out any correlation between the frequency of meetings and sub-committee meetings and the difficulty of attracting/retaining members – i.e. could it be the case that reducing the demands on committee members helped with retention
- It was agreed that the committee/board member issue was very much tied up with the challenges of maximising membership: one suggestion was that the rules on cancelling the membership of people who did not attend/give apologies for AGMs should be revisited
- On staff issues, it was agreed that the research should look at the sensitive issues around 'slotting in' someone who had been groomed to be the next senior officer, as opposed to the more desirable practice of developing staff so that they might be in a position to apply for posts anywhere

5.3 The Board looked forward to hearing updates on how the work was progressing over the coming months.

6 Openness and transparency – proposed GWSF/SFHA model publication framework

6.1 This paper gave the board a final opportunity to comment on the draft Model Publication Framework which GWSF and SFHA had jointly been working on in consultation with their respective members.

6.2 It was noted that GWSF and SFHA had held a constructive meeting with the Information Commissioner for Scotland, who had made some helpful comments on the draft Framework. A meeting would also be held shortly with the Scottish Housing Regulator, who would soon be publishing their thematic study into openness and transparency.

6.3 The Board had no further, specific comments on the draft and noted that the Framework was due to be published in mid-September.

7 Draft GWSF response to the Scottish Social Housing Charter

7.1 The Board considered the draft response which had been prepared to the Scottish Government's Charter consultation. The Board welcomed the overall message that the Charter had been generally successful and that major changes should be avoided at this relatively early stage.

7.2 The Board was especially keen to see GWSF argue that the Charter's accompanying narrative should put greater emphasis on the fact that certain outcomes, such as on tackling anti-social behaviour, were not the sole responsibility of social landlords and that tenants expectations of what could be achieved by landlords alone should not be unduly raised.

7.3 The Board approved the draft response, which would be finalised and submitted ahead of the 24 August deadline.

8 AOCB

8.1 A member requested that the Forum consider holding a session on development/new supply for associations outside Glasgow, as in some areas CCHAs felt they were being overlooked by the local authority. Staff agreed to look into this, and would assess the value of such an event against looking at the problem specifically with members in those areas most affected: a session which sought to attract local authority reps from several areas may be difficult to achieve

9 Date of next meeting

9.1 The next meeting was scheduled for 15 September but it was noted that a number of Board members would not be able to make this date, so alternative arrangements may prove necessary and members would be advised shortly.