# Service Delivery Sub Committee

Wednesday, 15th May 2024 9:30 am

Russell Square   |   Service Delivery Sub-Committee

## Attendees

#### Attended

#### Jimmy Black

#### Jeanette Gaul

#### Mrs. Cheryl Glen

#### Fred Jack

#### Stuart Storrie

#### Lauren Thomson (Minute)

Linlay Anderson (AHA)

Kevin Lynch (AHA)

Gail Robertson (AHA)

#### Did Not Attend

#### Hazel Farquhar

#### Linda McDonald

#### Sheena Welsh

## 1.0 Board Training Homelessness & AHA

#### Minute by Lauren Thomson

Homelessness Training was carried out by LA following recommendation from Committee. The training completed at 10.15am.

The presentation is available in the resources section under Board of Management - Training.

## 2.0 Apologies, Conflict of Interests & Notifiable Events

Purpose - For Noting

#### Minute by Lauren Thomson

The meeting commenced at 10:15am, including the training session, and came to a close at 11:57 am.

Apologies were received as above and no conflicts or notifiable events noted.

In attendance -

Casey Malone, Energy Advisor

John McGee, Maintenance Manager, in attendance for item 4 only.

## 3.0 Minutes of the Service Delivery Sub Committee Meeting held on 14/2/24

Purpose - For Approval

#### Minute by Lauren Thomson

The previous meeting minute as at 07 February 2024 was agreed as correct.

Matters Arising -

IMcD had queried on the previous minute the progress with the long term voids at The Steading. KL is still awaiting on an update from Angus Council regarding installing a soak away. This was verbally discussed with them, however AHA are awaiting confirmation in writing.

It was noted that the Committee will have a half day training session with Shakleton. GR has a meeting with them in the coming weeks to future plan and it is all going well currently. JB confirmed that they are very helpful and had fixed his IT issue.

In response to questions received from IM through DT, GR clarified that Casey Malone was attending the meeting at the request of the Board to provide information on her role. KL advised that progress had been made with Taylor Wimpey on the latent defects relating to EICR compliance and that are causing damp and mould in some of the Monifieth properties. For the damp issues, TW has agreed that following an inspection and suggestion for remedial works by AHA and approval by them, AHA can instruct its own contractors to carry out the work. This will speed up the completion of the work. With regard to the EICR's TW are carrying out the remedial work to the affected houses with the expectation that this will be completed by the end of August.

## 4.0 Asset Management Report

Purpose - For Approval

#### Minute by Lauren Thomson

Day to Day Repairs -

There is currently an overspend of £283,573, this is due to a number of reasons, one of these is due to miscoding and admin errors. Following monthly budget meetings with Maintenance and Finance this issue is improving.

Major repair works are also contributing to the overspend of this budget. For 24/25, a new code has been added to reduce this and ensure that work is allocated to the correct budget. There is also a new Energy Efficiency budget code.

As part of the review of the rent structure, there is a plan for tenants to pay for landscaping and maintenance costs where these come under a factoring agreement put in place due to the Section 75 consent. At the moment AHA fund this and tenants do not pay for the factoring.

Relets -

KL clarified the budget for the relets is based on 180 voids. In 2023/24 there have been 121 where the spend is £3283 (Q4) compared to last years cost of £2960 . Therefore, the cost has increased above the average cost spend, however the overall budget is below due to having less voids. The cost of voids is reducing and Maintenance Officers are using decoration allowances where possible. LA is currently in contact with Alexander Community Development to investigate the possibility of getting a youth programme in place to provide work on our voids. Following this, there is a potential that void times may be longer due to apprentices completing the work. This, however, would be information that AHA could provide to the SHR as context and it is hoped that the cost for voids should reduce.

CG queried how Angus Housing Association shows the impact the voucher scheme has JMcG confirmed that a report can be produced on the money spent on vouchers. This can be produced at year end to compare with previous years. KL also confirmed that the average spend on voids should decrease if vouchers are used more frequently as decoration is one of the highest costs for voids.

GR mentioned that there is an increasing number of properties where tenants leave belongings and carpets and the Association also have a cost to clear properties due to tenants leaving behind multiple items.

Gas Audit -

KL confirmed whilst the report shows Q3, the data is always a quarter behind. The Gas Audit for this quarter was 98.28%. There are multiple reasons on why a gas meter may be failed for example a broken meter door or no earth bonding at one property however the report shows that the gas contractor is performing well.

Emergency and Non-Emergency Repairs -

Contractors are improving by closing off a job and asking for a new works order. There is still room for improvement.

Long Term Voids -

SS queried the viability of the two properties at Castle Street being converted into a 2 bedroom flat. LA confirmed there is a demand for larger properties and therefore, there is potential for the property to be easier let if it's a two bedroom. A feasibility study is being undertaken and the results of this will be provided and a decision made.

Damp & Mould -

The Association is now reporting on damp and mould and more data will be shown in further reports. Angus Housing Association are looking to install environmental sensors in properties. A cost analysis is being carried out on products on the market. These will measure the average temperature, humidity levels and ventilation. If the temperature falls below the base level, the Association would get an alert and tenants will also get notified by text. The tenant will then be referred to the Energy Advisor to identify any fuel poverty issues and ensure tenants are on the right tariff and using the heating system correctly. Access will also be provided for the Association for a web portal where data will be stored.

One system the Association is considering is installing a gateway, a Wi-Fi system, which 400 houses can be connected to. For example, the Association could put this into the Dundee Office and it would gather the information of the surrounding properties. GR confirmed that many Housing Associations are putting these systems in as standard to their properties, not only for damp and mould but as a preventative measure for component fails however this can be quite costly.

Planned and Cyclical Maintenance Programme -

KL highlighted to the Committee that each section is green and the carry over actions from the previous financial years into the current year are all on track. KL stated there are actions that are completed and the next report will reflect this.

IMcD had queried the works at Victoria Street. KL stated this contract was originally awarded to McGill's, however they started off with the heating in this area but never completed kitchen and bathrooms in this particular property as they went into liquidation. New surveys were carried out in order for AHA to ascertain which works had been completed. Wharf Street kitchen and bathrooms were also not completed. The Association are still attempting to get access to all properties in Victoria Street, Castle Street and Wharf Street to see if there are any works outstanding.

Energy Efficiency and Stock Condition Works -

KL highlighted there are 21 properties which are non-compliant with the EICRs, although these figures include two long term voids, two long term access issues and seven at Victoria Grange which are being worked through. There are two genuine no access' and eight properties had been missed from the programme. A review of the stock has been complete to make sure that there are not any additional units missing. As of this meeting, there are now 18 properties non compliant.

Cyclical Paintwork Maintenance -

The Association are due to appoint contractors to the paintwork framework. There has been decent interest and work will be allocated to all that are approved.

JB commented that he is interested in hearing more about Asset Management's site visit to consider solar panels and batteries for flats as it progresses. KL mentioned that there has been a historical issue with installing solar panels and heat pumps in flats. The company contacted the Association directly and KL and CK visited Cube Housing Association in Glasgow to see the system and it is neatly installed and works well. The system allows each flat to receive it fair share of energy provided and this system will be trialed in a number of Association's flats. The contracts and legal work is in progress and the majority of this system being funded.

It was agreed once the work has been progressed a report will be submitted to Committee and a site visit arranged for Committee. The system will be monitored to show the benefits for the tenants and costs will be compared between tenants who have this system and those that do not.

In response to questions asked through DT by IM, KL confirmed that with regard to the repairs right first time, there were a total of 1136 repairs carried out for 23/24, with 1086 completed 'right first time', so 50 were not completed 'right first time'.

## 5.0 Housing Management Report

Purpose - For Approval

#### Minute by Lauren Thomson

Anti Social Behaviour -

There were no issues raised. LA noted there has been an increase in serious anti-social behaviour cases from three to five. LA highlighted Chart 3 - Number of Anti-Social Behaviour Cases total to 31 March 2024 will be changed to the financial year going forward.

LA highlighted one area of concern in Dundee in which two tenants are complaining about the other. SS noted the positivity of the lower number of hot spots for ASB.

Estate Management Complaints -

CG questioned why, given the years long regularity in parking and bins, there were no trends in the estate management complaints. LA confirmed the Association would experience problems throughout the summer hence there are no trends for this quarter.

Environmental Improvement Budget -

SS had queried if there is a budget for play parks and sensory gardens. However, LA stated these are costly items which the Association would not be able to afford without external funding. The Association, however, are planting green growing spaces, one in Russell Square and the other in Whitecraig Loan. There is an issue with the water at the green growing area for Whitecraig Loan, although the TP team is currently working on this.

If playparks were to be installed, finance would be required to be involved due to costs as insurances would need to be sought along with the annual maintenance costs of keeping the equipment compliant.

Allocations -

LA confirmed there were no issues with allocations presently. One reporting concern was the discrepancy in the number of lets between 'General Needs' and 'Supported Housing' under Chart 3 breakdown. LA confirmed that the Association is now classifying properties more accurately, which resulted in working with PG and the Maintenance Team. The split between supported and general needs is an SHR determination.

Voids -

In response to a question about the number of days to let, LA stated that the target is twenty days. During this quarter the figure is 27.4 days, compared to 20.3 days last quarter.

It was confirmed that there have been some additional days for Housing Officers for a number of voids, particularly in Forfar, which take longer to be let. There is also a higher turnover in this area. LA highlighted that the days to let for voids is a combination between Housing and Maintenance.

KL confirmed that Maintenance is looking into procedures regarding the condition that the Association is receiving their properties back in. Maintenance are working with Capital Works to see if any components can be replaced early in order to let the void quicker.

Arrears -

LA highlighted the number of arrears has decreased during Q4 in comparison to the last quarter, although still slightly above target.

Arrears Benchmarking -

LA confirmed that a number of landlords have not provided the data for this quarter and therefore the figures are for Q3.

FIT -

Energy Advisor Update -

CM attended a training session on heat pumps in order to get a better understanding on how to provide advice to tenants as the Association now have a number of properties with heat pump systems.

CM confirmed that she is now working with an MP due to the length of time it is taking for her deal with energy suppliers that are consuming a lot of effort, particularly with OVO. When CM went to visit the tenants at Kirkbank, she discovered that some of them still had incompatible meters which needed to be removed. CM observed a trend where suppliers are hesitant to install smart meters in properties that have pre-payment meters. Due to the challenges in getting them removed, an MP is assisting at least 8 tenants in Kirkbank and 1 in Russell Square.

GR confirmed that the concerns regarding employees' ability to reach suppliers via the contact center had been brought up with SHFA. The question posed was if the Scottish Government could obtain a direct phone number from the Energy Suppliers for Associations to use.

CM highlighted there was funding available for Energy Efficiency Packs for tenants, which was used mainly during winter. CM confirmed this is on hold during the summer months although there is still funding available to use when needed.

Financial Gains -

CM confirmed the debt write-offs are currently closed, though they may reopen during winter, however it was said that the Association may need to be stricter with tenants and to educate tenants as after the debt is written off they need to start paying towards the bills.

Tenants who have had their heating upgraded have received letters from CM informing them of help available and will be following up with telephone calls and visits.

After completing benefit training, CM is proactive during visits, identifying issues and providing initial help.

Tenant Participation -

Following the recruitment of the two Tenant Engagement Assistants, more work has been completed and AHA have engaged more with tenants.

JB queried whether LA had any volunteers for the Whitfield "Alternative Voice". Although the LA acknowledged that they had not received many responses, in April, it has officially been a year since the engagement questionnaires were sent. The Association are looking to follow up to find out whether tenants had noticed any changes.

AHA has introduced Housing Perks to tenants which will offer them discounts for a variety of shops.

## 6.0 Recharge - Current and Former Accounts Report

Purpose - For Approval

#### Minute by Lauren Thomson

SS queried the figures and narrative of Table 2 in this report. It was confirmed this was a date error.

## 7.0 Former Tenants Report

Purpose - For Approval

#### Minute by Lauren Thomson

There were no issues raised.

## 8.0 All Owners Arrears Report

Purpose - For Approval

#### Minute by Lauren Thomson

There were no issues raised, although it was noted this report should state the report is for Q4.

## 9.0 Housing Management Workplan

Purpose - For Noting

#### Minute by Lauren Thomson

LA confirmed there is only one red action, as discussed above LA is currently in contact with Alexander Community Development for a possibility to get a youth programme to work on Angus Housing voids. There are also other partnerships LA is looking to explore.

In response to a question about when the actions will change if they haven't been updated, GR stated that they would remain green until they are updated and changed to an alternate colour.

## 10.0 Policy Review - Medical Adaptations & Tenant Alterations and Improvements

#### Minute by Lauren Thomson

Medical Adaptations -

This policy was due to be reviewed by October 2023, there was a minor change to the charter indicator numbers that this policy refers to.

KL confirmed the funding bids for adaptations for 24/25 is not currently open and there is no indication from Scottish Government on how this budget will be spent.

JG queried if the budget has been spent and a further adaptation request was submitted what would happen to the request. KL confirmed that the tenant would be added to a waiting list and when the new budget is released it will be installed. Although if the adaptation was minor, under £500, the Association will just go ahead with this and take the money from the new budget when released.

SS queried if an appeal was made regarding adaptations, this would be submitted to the Service Delivery Committee. GR advised this would be dealt with through the complaints procedure.

Tenants Alterations and Improvements -

KL confirmed there was no changes made to this policy.

The rationale for this policy is that it can often be expensive for the Association to restore the property to its original condition during a void. Due to this the Association may recharge a tenant. KL confirmed that tenants should request permission before making alterations and improvements. However, if the improvements are an acceptable standard, the Association may also adopt them.

## 11.0 Asset Management Workplan

Purpose - For Noting

#### Minute by Lauren Thomson

KL confirmed there are two red actions. Both SS and IMcD queried if there was any further progress with these. KL confirmed that the Equalities Impact Assesement action is a timing issue. KL commented the other outstanding action is the review of the housing stock. This is a significant project however he is looking at software in to help with this and this action will be carried over into the next year and will be tied in with the new Asset Management Strategy. It was confirmed that there is no expected date currently as the Association is awaiting Government guidance although there is an expectation that it will take some time to budget and plan once the expectations have been set by the Government.

JB inquired if Association collects and documents information pertaining to each property. KL confirmed that this is the case, and GR advised the Board that they are welcome to visit the office to oversee the collected data.

## 12.0 Overview of the main points of the Housing (Scotland) Bill 2024

Purpose - For Noting

#### Minute by Lauren Thomson

LA confirmed there are three main points the Housing (Scotland) Bill 2024 may impact on Angus Housing Association. The first one is dealing with evictions, duty to consider delay, as the Sheriff has the ability to delay awarded decrees. The second point that may affect the Association is the delivery of notices, although the Association is already considering alternative ways of delivering these. The final point that may affect the Association is regarding tenants affected by domestic abuse, LA confirmed the Association already has a robust policy in place which is due for review this year.

## 13.0 AOB

Purpose - For Information

#### Minute by Lauren Thomson

There was no other business noted.