

MID ARGYLL & KINTYRE AREA COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, 13th January 2016 at 12.45pm
Dalriada House, Lochgilphead

Attendees

Colin Davidson, Independent (CD)
 Norman Beaton, Tenant (NB)
 Sandra Johnston, Tenant (SJ)
 Sandra MacKenzie, Tenant (SMack)
 John Muir, Tenant (JM)
 Councillor D MacMillan (DMacM)

Not in Attendance

Carole Ann Shields (CAS)

Staff in Attendance

Yvonne Angus, Regional Manager (YA)
 Jenna Shaw, Administration Officer (JS)

		Action
1.	Visit to new build site, Tayvallich Staff and members of the Area Committee visited the new build site at Tayvallich prior to the meeting.	
2.	Welcome and Apologies Colin Davidson (CD) welcomed all members to the meeting. Apologies were received from Michael Roberts.	
3.	Minutes of Previous Meeting – 20th November 2015 Members requested the following amendments: Page 8: “In terms of ACHA representation for their arrival, YA explained the Rothesay area team will be involved in this process.” Page 9: “YA explained that as part of the indicators set out by the Scottish Housing Regulator , it states that we must consult with our service users.” The minutes from 20 th November 2015 were agreed. Proposed by: Sandra MacKenzie Seconded by: Sandra Johnston	

4.	<p>Matters Arising (including Information Pack)</p> <p><u>Minutes of previous meeting – 20th November 2015</u></p> <p>Page 3: NB stated that ACHA's annual financial statements, previously demonstrated management costs at approximately £1,000 per property. NB queried if this figure had changed as a result of the restructure. YA to liaise with F&IT, although it may be too early to establish savings in this respect.</p> <p>Answer: YA advised that in terms of the information collated by the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR), ACHA's management and maintenance administration costs for 2014/15 were £1,127 per unit. This compared to the average of £1,195 per unit, therefore, ACHA are 4.85% below the average. Out of the other 160 Registered Social Landlords (RSL), 104 had higher levels of management and maintenance administration costs per unit than ACHA.</p> <p>The Housing & Neighbourhood Services (HNS) restructure will see significant savings. These savings are classed as management and maintenance administration so will reduce management and maintenance administration costs. However, the impact of inflation, pay awards and other costs may offset that saving and changes in the level of housing stock due to right to buy sales and new build also affecting the cost per unit calculation.</p> <p>In simple terms, the HNS restructure will change that management and maintenance administration cost per unit but there are other factors which make up and affect that ratio.</p> <p>CD commented that it would be useful to be provided with comparative figures for Fyne Homes, WHHA & Dunbritton. NB requested that we also extend our comparison to River Clyde Housing Association.</p> <p>YA advised that this could be benchmarked against RSL's that are members of Scottish Housing Best Value Network (SHBVN), however, this was declined by members.</p> <p>NB commented that the updated organisational structures were still to be issued. JS to ensure these are available for the next meeting.</p> <p>CD updated members that Douglas Prophet is now the Chair of the Finance & Audit Committee.</p>	<p>YA</p> <p>JS</p>
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Page 5: Investment & Regeneration: CD commented that it would be beneficial to understand the spectrum of repairs, excluding planned works, in terms of the type of repairs carried out within our properties which is deemed ACHA's responsibility.

Answer: Members were provided with Appendix 1 of the Repairs & Maintenance policy, which details ACHA's repair responsibilities and timescales for completion.

Page 5: Regeneration – Tayvallich: CD queried the rental charge for these properties.

Update: YA advised that if the properties are completed within 2016/17, the rent charge will be £4,770 per year, £95.40 per week (excluding service charges and Council Tax). YA explained there are currently two rent structures; one for existing properties and the other for new builds which are higher than the existing structure. For consistency purposes, a rent rationalisation working group has been formed which is led by Bruce West, Director of Finance & IT. A report with proposals is being presented to the Board of Management next week.

DMacM commented that page 6 of the KPI report (agenda item 9) demonstrates that ACHA's average weekly rents are lower than the Scottish average.

Page 8/9: Tenant Satisfaction Survey: In terms of cash prizes for staff, for example, presented to the winner of 'Employee of the Season/Year', NB noted his concerns of this offer and requested further guidance from the Scottish Housing Regulator. YA to follow up.

Update: YA advised that we have had discussions with the SHR previously regarding what they consider to be acceptable and not acceptable;

Employees

Although there is no requirement to recognise the achievements of employees, the Board of Management have chosen to reward achievement as it recognises the valuable contribution employees make to our success and the Board believe that by celebrating achievements, a happier and more productive working environment will result. The criteria which stops these rewards being a Payment and Benefit breach is that reward schemes are open to all employees without exception. The SHR requires us to have a fair approach and allows for small rewards to be made as long the scheme is open to all, the terms of reward are set out within relevant documentation and the cost is not excessive.

Some examples of relevant documentation would be;

- Salary is set out in Employee Terms and Conditions of Employment
- Expenses are set out within the Employee Expenses Policy
- Retirement criteria is set out within the Group Retirement Policy
- Pension provision is set out within the Group Policy Statement
- Achievement rewards are set out within the Group Employee Recognition and Reward Policy
- Employee of the Season/Year rewards are recorded within the Payment and Benefit Register

There is also provision within section 13 of our Group Payment and Benefit Policy which stipulates that;

- 13.1 It is appropriate that, from time to time and in accordance with agreed policy, we will offer hospitality and/or hold events or other activities to promote our aims and objectives and/or to demonstrate our appreciation of the commitment and support of our people.
- 13.2 Any such activities will reflect ACHA's role as a registered social landlord (and a Scottish Charity) and will be consistent with our agreed policy; we will not be unduly lavish or over-generous.

YA explained that in summary, we can give rewards for incentives as long as the scheme is not restricted, rewards are minimal and it is recorded.

NB raised concerns that the incentive is subjective, there is no impartial decision made and it can generate resentment from staff. CD acknowledged NB's concerns but advised it would be for the Board of Management to make any decision about changing this incentive.

Tenants

The same criteria stands for rewards to tenants whereby all tenants should be able to participate (even those who are governing body members or employees), any reward should be of minimal value and documented.

Page 10: Community Action Fund Applications – CAF Process & Donation Policy: JS to pass to policy writer, Alastair MacGregor, for consideration, with a view to implement from 1st April 2016.

	<p>Members requested an update for the next meeting. Update: A.MacGregor has reviewed the amended Community Action Fund application form and was happy with the proposed changes. The new application form will be implemented from 1st April 2016.</p> <p>From the Board of Management meeting held on 22nd October 2015, NB noted the reference to the Job Evaluation process and commented that he did not consider this to be a valuable or sensible exercise.</p>																																																								
5.	<p>Conflicts of Interest to Declare There were no conflicts of interest declared.</p>																																																								
6.	<p>Correspondence No correspondence was received prior to the meeting.</p>																																																								
7.	<p>Regional Managers Update YA provided members with the following update:</p> <p>Investment The figures in terms of the investment programme include:</p> <table><tr><th>Investment Works Package</th><th>Area</th><th>Estimated Target 2015/16</th><th>To end Oct 2015</th><th></th></tr><tr><td>Windows/Doors</td><td>Mid Argyll & Kintyre</td><td>193</td><td>9</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Kitchen/Bathroom</td><td>Mid Argyll & Kintyre</td><td>23</td><td>10</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Heat/Re-wire</td><td>Mid Argyll & Kintyre</td><td>35</td><td>34</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Roof/Rough</td><td>Mid Argyll & Kintyre</td><td>161</td><td>124</td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Totals</td><td>412</td><td>177</td><td></td></tr></table> <table><tr><th>Repairs & Maintenance Contract</th><th>Area</th><th>Annual repair numbers end Sept</th><th>Monthly average</th><th>Average repairs per day</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>Mid-Argyll</td><td>1201</td><td>150</td><td>6.9</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Kintyre</td><td>1680</td><td>210</td><td>9.66</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Totals</td><td>2881</td><td>180</td><td>8.28</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>% of Total Repairs</td><td>36.25%</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>	Investment Works Package	Area	Estimated Target 2015/16	To end Oct 2015		Windows/Doors	Mid Argyll & Kintyre	193	9		Kitchen/Bathroom	Mid Argyll & Kintyre	23	10		Heat/Re-wire	Mid Argyll & Kintyre	35	34		Roof/Rough	Mid Argyll & Kintyre	161	124			Totals	412	177		Repairs & Maintenance Contract	Area	Annual repair numbers end Sept	Monthly average	Average repairs per day		Mid-Argyll	1201	150	6.9		Kintyre	1680	210	9.66		Totals	2881	180	8.28		% of Total Repairs	36.25%			
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	<p>YA advised members that the roof & roughcast programme is currently running 8-weeks behind schedule, primarily caused by more asbestos removal than first allowed for. The new window and doors contract is due to be tendered before year end.</p> <p>CD raised concerns that the completion figures are substantially behind target at the end of October.</p> <p>Regeneration</p> <p>Tayvallich – following the site visit prior to the meeting, YA explained the two 3-bed houses are progressing well on site and are currently ahead of programme. A handover date is not yet available but April/ May 2016 should be deliverable.</p> <p>Tower View, Inveraray – further to the administration of Stewart McNee Ltd., a contract has been tendered and awarded to MacLeod Construction to complete the 12-unit development. The new contractor is due to commence onsite on 4th January and a completion, subject to utility issues, will be April/ May 2016. YA advised the previous completion date was March 2016.</p> <p>Members requested a site visit to be incorporated into the next meeting, due to be held in March.</p> <p>Members believed it would be beneficial to know the extra cost arising as a result of the administration of Stewart McNee Ltd. YA explained that if this information wasn't confidential, this could be reported at the next meeting.</p> <p>Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) Project, Inveraray</p> <p>Gleeson Historic Building Consultants were appointed by the private owners and ACHA to be lead consultant for the four CARS priority buildings in Inveraray in which ACHA have a share.</p> <p>John Gleeson is currently in discussions with Argyll & Bute Council regarding listed building consent for the works to the four buildings. As soon as this is awarded, the owners will be able to appoint the preferred contractors, who are standing by ready to start work.</p> <p>It had been anticipated that the works for all four projects would start on site on 1st February 2016, however this may slip by a couple of weeks if the listed building consent is not granted.</p> <p>Care of Garden Scheme</p> <p>A total of 86 tenants within the Mid Argyll & Kintyre are receiving assistance through our care of garden scheme. This figure</p>	YA
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includes 23 tenants within the Mid Argyll area & 63 tenants within the Kintyre area. Currently, there is only 1 tenant on the waiting list for the Kintyre area.

Your Voice Panel

Members were previously made aware that the Panel are reviewing ACHA's Minimum Letting Standard.

The exercise has included:

- Visiting vacant properties
- Interviewing new tenants
- Interviewing staff

The Panel are due to meet on 20th January to discuss the outcome of the exercise and to agree their recommendations.

The final report and recommendations will be submitted to the Board of Management for consideration.

Syrian Refugee Resettlement Programme

Since the last Area Committee meeting, ACHA have rehomed 4 refugee families in Rothesay. The families arrived on the island on 3rd December 2015. They were taken to their new homes and were met by staff in their house, along with an interpreter, who helped them settle in. The staff involved advised that this was a very humbling experience.

The families are also integrating well into the community. The community centre has been working well as this has become a place where the refugees have space with activities, crafts, a new PlayStation etc.

The 2nd phase of the resettlement to Rothesay is due to commence towards the end of this month where a further 4 refugee families will be rehomed on the island.

This will bring the total to be rehomed by ACHA to 8, with a further 7 being rehomed by Fyne Homes.

The refugee resettlement group continues to meet with the next meeting due to be held on Friday, 15th January. Discussions are now on-going with the resettlement of 5 families to Campbeltown, which is likely to be around March this year.

Tenant Satisfaction Survey

Over 1,600 tenants were contacted and 450 tenants participated in the recent survey. An interim report is being submitted to Board of Management with the findings. The initial findings are positive in terms of improvement in satisfaction.

YA advised a tenant from Oban was the lucky winner of the T.V.

	<p>CD queried how the new figures compared to other housing associations. YA to investigate and provide details.</p> <p>Factoring Satisfaction Survey The factoring satisfaction survey has now concluded with the figures currently being analysed.</p> <p>SMacK questioned if we received a good response from the survey. YA explained that unfortunately, we didn't have a successful response.</p> <p>Gypsy Traveller Survey A face-to-face survey is due to be undertaken during February. The results will be collated and reported thereafter.</p>	YA															
8.	<p>Community Action Fund Applications</p> <p>a) Budget Update</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="3">Community Action Fund Budget</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Budget for 2015/16</td><td></td><td>£2,500</td></tr> <tr> <td>Total Cost of Approved Projects</td><td>-</td><td>£2,250</td></tr> <tr> <td>Returned CAF grant</td><td>+</td><td>£ 500</td></tr> <tr> <td>Balance</td><td></td><td>£ 750</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>b) Review existing applications: there were no existing applications to be reviewed.</p> <p>c) Consider new applications: there were no new applications to be considered.</p> <p>d) Press Release: members agreed to the proposed press release and quote that was circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>JM suggested that additional information is circulated to publicise the availability of these grants. DMacM commented that as part of the role of the Area Committee, it is the responsibility of members to publicise this scheme. YA also explained that the press release to local papers will be used to promote the scheme, with posters also available in all ACHA reception areas; within the tenant's newsletter and by local word of mouth.</p>	Community Action Fund Budget			Budget for 2015/16		£2,500	Total Cost of Approved Projects	-	£2,250	Returned CAF grant	+	£ 500	Balance		£ 750	
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9.	<p>Key Performance Indicators Members confirmed that they were satisfied with the repairs information that was provided within the report. NB commented that there appears to be a lot of work put into collating this information and queried if there was any way we could summarise the report to minimise staff time.</p>																

CD commented that page 3 of the KPI report demonstrates generally good performance and pages 4/5 ascertains where performance could be improved. YA advised that staff are working hard to improve figures where objectives have not been met. The key focus for area staff is on arrears and void performance, with a number of new initiatives being introduced.

Members agreed to read the report in detail and raise any queries at the next meeting.

SJ commented that the findings from the recent work carried out by the 'Your Voice' Panel will provide valuable information to the reasons why properties are being refused.

YA explained that in terms of Direct Debit calculations, currently these are not calculated to ensure tenants are paying monthly in advance and as a result approaches the highest arrear point in October. As a result, a false impression is given until the turn of the year.

CD noted that page 7 of the KPI report, recorded the amount of money ACHA collected for current and past rent was equal to 101.7% of the total rent it was due in the year.

In terms of works to meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) by April 2015, SMaCK queried what would be the result of ACHA not achieving the required policy target.

CD explained that in certain circumstances, permission is granted to exceed this target time, however, there will be a certain time limit for works to be completed. It is possible a financial loss could be incurred to ACHA, e.g. loss of grants available to private owners, if work is not completed within the time specified.

YA further explained that a cause of works not being achieved within target could be due to tenant or property conditions that restrict works being undertaken.

SMaCK queried if we were still pursuing factoring. YA explained that staff will act upon an interest initiated by owners but ACHA are not actively pursuing this.

As previously commented by DMacM under agenda item 4, YA reiterated that ACHA offer a lower rent charge than the Scottish average.

CD commented that there is potential this will be changing in view of the rent rationalisation exercise where tenants were invited to partake in the consultation process.

	<p>NB commented that the questions within the rent rationalisation consultation document weren't clear or didn't provide context to the question, e.g. "do you agree with the rent rationalisation?" The question didn't explain what was meant by 'rent rationalisation'. It would be beneficial that contextual information is provided to support questions to ensure everyone fully understands and is better equipped to respond to the question that is being asked. CD commented that contextual information had been provided as part of the Tenant Satisfaction survey which had proved beneficial.</p> <p>In terms of the houses provided to the refugee families, SMaCK queried why these properties weren't wanted by applicants on the waiting list. CD explained that reasons for refusal consist of these being older properties; design; location; oversupply and a huge private rented sector that we are competing against.</p> <p>SMaCK asked that if an applicant refuses a property, do they go to the bottom of the waiting list. YA explained that on receipt of a second reasonable offer within a year, if this is refused by an applicant on the transfer or general list, the applicant will be suspended from the waiting list for a period of six months, after which the applicant will be considered for offers again.</p> <p>YA advised that we widely advertise our immediately available properties within our offices, local amenities and the ACHA and Home Argyll websites.</p> <p>Members requested a presentation on the results of the Tenants Satisfaction survey at the next meeting.</p>	YA
10.	<p>Customer Complaints</p> <p>SMaCK requested that the summary of the complaint categories and trends is also provided. Information to be circulated to members at the next meeting.</p> <p>CD expressed concern about a complaint that was not upheld by the Association but was subsequently upheld by the Ombudsman. YA explained that as a result of this case, we have made changes to our procedures and furthermore tighter controls and measures have been put in place. YA further explained that lessons have been learnt from the complaints received and performance in dealing with complaints has improved as these are reportable to the SHR. A huge amount of work has been done by all departments and as part of the HNS restructure, extensive training was carried out with HNS staff which has proved very worthwhile. In addition, all complaints are reviewed by the Complaints Working group which is chaired by A.MacGregor.</p>	JS

	CD commented that we look forward with interest to the outcome of the complaint currently under investigation by the Ombudsman.	
11.	Article for Tenants Newsletter (Spring Edition) Prior to the meeting, members were provided with a report of previous newsletter articles produced by each Area Committee. After discussion, CD volunteered to draft the article for the next newsletter and email to JS. Thereafter, JS to include a photograph and circulate to members for approval.	CD JS
12.	Garden In Bloom – Proposals for 2016 SMacK commented that she felt it unfair that the winner of the container category receives the same prize to the winner of the garden category. There is more work and expense involved in maintaining a garden to containers and that this should be reflected within the prize money. After discussion, members agreed to reduce the prize money for the container competition that being, 1 st prize: £30; 2 nd prize £20; 3 rd prize: £10. It was agreed the competition would be held from April to August 2016. Members also agreed to the press release, including the quote provided by CD.	
13.	Policies Due for Review – 2016 Members were provided with a list of policies due to be reviewed and requested to be consulted in the following policies during 2016: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Business Plan 2. Repairs & Maintenance Policy 3. Estate Management 4. Low Demand Strategy 5. Customer Contact & Feedback Strategy 6. Tenant Involvement Strategy 7. Group Remuneration Strategy incorporating Total Reward 8. Group Retirement and Flexible Retirement Policy 9. Group Training & Development Policy 10. Heating Policy 11. Rent Policy – members were made aware that it is possible this is currently being reviewed by the Board of Management in light of the rent rationalisation exercise that is being carried out. 12. Talent Management and Succession Planning Programme NB felt that there were too many policies, some of which should be	

	<p>dealt with by a common sense approach.</p> <p>YA explained that there are policies for which we must comply with as stipulated by the SHR and legislative requirements.</p> <p>NB also questioned if this exercise would be worthwhile and whether the comments provided by members would be considered by the policy writer.</p> <p>Members were advised that where policies are due to be reviewed, these would be issued and responses should be returned to JS for collation.</p>	
14.	<p>Agenda items for March meeting</p> <p>It was agreed that the following agenda items would be considered at the next meeting with no further items to add:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site Visit to Tower View, Inveraray • Minutes of Previous Meeting – 13th January 2016 • Matters Arising (including information pack) • Conflict of Interest • Correspondence • Regional Managers Update • Key Performance Indicators • Customer Complaints • Community Action Fund Applications • Presentation on the results of the Tenants Satisfaction survey • Review of Estate Management Action Plan Projects 2015/16 • Judging of Employee of the Season (Autumn Award: October - December). Nomination close: 31st January 2016 <p>Following a vote, CD, NB, SJ & JM expressed concerns and reservations of the value of the Employee of the Season initiative.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agenda Items for May meeting • Any Other Business 	
15.	<p>AOCB</p> <p>None</p>	
16.	<p>Date, time of next meeting</p> <p>The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 9th March 2016. As members requested a site visit to Inveraray, time and venue to be confirmed.</p>	

The meeting concluded at 2.15pm.