

MINUTES OF THE 559TH MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING OF WILLIAMSBURGH HOUSING ASSOCIATION, HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 11TH FEBRUARY 2026 AT 6PM (HYBRID)

PRESENT:	J. Scott J. Kerr J. Aitkin R. Coelho Cllr. W. Mylett Cllr. M. MacLaren O. Ikeh E. McDermott D. Eadie	Chairperson
IN ATTENDANCE:	J. Grant L. Ramsay L. Reynolds S. Vernal S. McNealey	Chief Executive Officer Head of Finance & Corporate Services Head of Property Services Head of Housing & Communities Factoring Assistant (for item 5)

1. (a) Apologies

Apologies were received from L. Shields, C. Henry and G.L. John.

(b) Declarations of Interest

Cllr. W. Mylet, Cllr. M. MacLaren and J. Scott declared an interest in item 5.

2. (a) Minutes of Management Committee Meeting: 26.11.25 (No.558)

The minutes of the Management Committee meeting held on Wednesday, 26th November 2025 (No.558) were proposed correct on a motion proposed by R. Coelho, seconded by Cllr. M. MacLaren. Use of the electronic signature was agreed.

(B) Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

3. Rent Review 2026/27

S. Vernal presented the report outlined the results of the tenant consultation on the proposed rent increase. There had been another good level of response to the consultation with 352 received. The vast majority (75%) were in favour of the 8.5% increase, with only 3 replies received noting disagreement with any increase. Additional face to face consultation events were held. Attendance was very low despite advertising and a range of staff attending to help with any other matters tenants wished to cover. This follows a consistent pattern where tenants provide a good level of feedback on-line or by SMS text message but do not attend in-person events.

3. Rent Review 2026/27 Contd.

Several members welcomed the response rate to the consultation and the low numbers of negative comments received. Staff were thanked for the quality of the communication to tenants regarding why the rent increase was higher than usual. J. Grant noted that this may also reflect the high tenant satisfaction levels with value for money, low levels of tenant complaints and a desire to maintain investment in homes and services.

A member agreed that face to face consultation was more challenging. Could a different approach be considered where rent levels were included as part of a wider event such as a tenant conference? S. Vernal noted that this would be considered as part of the tenant engagement plan and several activities were under consideration for 2026/27.

The recommendation to increase rents by 8.5% was approved, proposed by Cllr M. MacLaren, seconded by D. Eadie

L. Ramsay presented the proposed increases to the service charges and factoring noting that these are set to cover the costs of the service provided with no surplus made. She also presented the proposed new factoring charges, operational budget 2025/26 and the 5/30-year plan.

A member asked when the service charge policy would be reviewed? This could consider new approaches such as pooled charges. J. Grant advised that this is included within the 5 year business plan and scheduled for 2028/29. This follows the review of rechargeable repairs which will be presented to the March meeting and applied from April 2026, subject to approval. The planned review of rent structures is scheduled for 2029/30 and will consider how total rent for different homes is calculated based on property features such as number of bedrooms.

The recommendations were approved – factoring fee and service charge increases, 30 year plan and operational budgets 2026/27, proposed by D. Eadie, seconded by Cllr. W. Mylett.

4. Chief Executive's Report

J. Grant presented the report, noting that no current notifiable events were active and no new ones had been raised. The Committee had approved the three-year salary increase negotiated by EVH in 2025, and that this was the second year of the approval. Committee were also asked to approve new shareholding memberships, leave of absence for L. Shields and nominations to act as representatives of WHA for the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA) and Energy Action Scotland (EAS).

Members discussed nominations to act as representatives and agreed to address this during the appraisal process in April/May 2026.

4. Chief Executive's Report Contd.

The recommendations were approved - proposed by R. Coelho, seconded by J. Aitkin.

5. Policy Review Programme

L. Ramsay presented reviews of the staff expenses, Committee expenses and Whistleblowing policies. All had only received minor amendments and clarifications.

S. McNealey presented the review of the Factoring Policy and the Written Statement of Service. Both had been subject to updates on legislation and good practice.

A member welcomed S. McNealey's attendance at the meeting and the quality of her work.

The Committee also congratulated S. McNealey on the excellent results from the large-scale owner's satisfaction survey.

All the policies were approved, proposed by D. Eadie, seconded by R. Coelho.

6. IT Strategy

L. Ramsay presented the report, summarising the new IT strategy. WHA recognises that delivering a strong Information Technology (IT) strategy is an important organisational goal. The IT strategy aligns technology with strategic objectives, manages risks, optimises resources, facilitates change, forms customer services delivery models and enhances communication and collaboration. The new Business Plan contains a large range of IT projects which will deliver on the strategic priorities in the IT strategy.

The strategy also sets out the approach to the assessment and adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies. WHA aims to promote AI as a positive platform to enhance the work of staff and Board in the workplace by setting direction and boundaries for its use while maintaining the human element of decision making and intervention. Only GenAI tools approved by the IT Manager may be used. Overall, a cautious approach will be adopted to ensure data protection compliance and value for money, with only solutions that are proven to work being considered for adoption.

The Committee discussed the strategy and the approach to the adoption of AI tools. It was important to move forward with AI and take the benefits while managing the risks. Steady progress was preferred to ensure investment was wisely spent. A member asked how AI tools would be evaluated before adoption? L. Ramsay advised that a business case would be completed to ensure the cost of new tools would bring measurable benefits. Discussions with other Housing Associations who had adopted new AI tools was also active to assess actual results against claims made by the suppliers.

6. IT Strategy Contd.

The recommendations were approved, adopt the AI strategy and the AI risk statement, proposed by Cllr. W. Mylett, seconded by J. Aitkin.

7. Assurance Statement: self-assessment review

J. Grant presented the report, noting that the self-assessment review has not identified any areas of material non-compliance. WHA is compliant in all sections with areas for improvement summarised. Steady progress is continuing to be made on delivering the improvements. Examples of improvements include - additional tenant engagement, tenant's handbook published on-line, complaints management and recording enhanced, external forensic audit of electrical safety management and processes.

A member noted that there was a good level of assessment and evidence provided. Two policies had been seen but were linked to the wrong assessments – Legionella and asbestos management. Was there a challenge in keeping the large amount of evidence linked to the assessments? J. Grant agreed that the volume of evidence, and the regular updating, was an administrative challenge. Each individual assessment is manually checked and updated 3 times per year. While this is a useful exercise, and keeps compliance at the centre of considerations, it is very resource intensive.

The Committee thanked staff for their focus on assurance and noted the report.

8. Strategic Risks Q3 and Strategic Risks Training

J. Grant presented training on strategic risks, covering importance of risk management, setting a risk appetite, risk identification and the range of mitigation approaches.

Current significant risks were highlighted alongside activity to mitigate. A new risk had been added concerning Radon compliance. This had been the result of the national Radon position with regards to risk having recently changed. This resulted in new geographical areas being included in mandatory radon monitoring. To manage the risk WHA has appointed technical consultants to conduct the necessary work, which may require hundreds of Radon monitoring kits to be put into tenant's homes for three months.

A member asked what had happened to increase the Radon risk in properties? J. Grant advised that the risk is assessed from modelling completed at a national level. The modelling has recently changed, and this has increased the geographical areas in the higher risk category. The likelihood of the risk has increased, and its impact could be very significant, but it is currently still a theoretical risk based on one national data set. It is another example of additional compliance requirements, with significant costs, where the actual risk assessment is passed on to housing associations.

The Committee noted the report.

9. Strategic Objectives Q3

J. Grant presented the report, noting good progress against the objectives in a challenging context. Most objectives were on track with expected progress, with staff sickness and reactive work impacting on those that were moving slower than originally scheduled.

The Committee thanked for staff for the progress made and noted the report.

10. Annual Health and Safety (H&S) Report

L. Reynolds presented the report, summarising the range of H&S activity undertaken over the year. This continued to build on previous achievements made relating to the culture and staff focus on H&S, while acknowledging that H&S continues to evolve. An open “safety first” culture is promoted in the Association, where all staff know their obligations, receive quality training and there are no barriers to raising any concerns and taking appropriate action. Governance continues to evolve, with detailed reporting to management and sub-committees, alongside a H&S staff Committee chaired by the CEO.

A member agreed that H&S required constant vigilance by staff and committee members. It was assuring to see that it was prominent throughout the organisation and continued to develop.

The Committee noted the report.

11. Any Other Business

- (a) J. Grant advised that the office would be closed to the public for essential safety upgrade works. It was expected to last up to 12 weeks, beginning on the 2nd March. Staff would also be working from home for at least 4 weeks.
- (b) J. Grant advised that the next Management Committee meeting, on the 25th March, would be held on-line only as a result of the office closure.

12. Date and Time of Next Meeting

J. Scott thanked everyone for their attendance and advised that the next scheduled meeting of Williamsburgh Housing Association’s Management Committee would be **Wednesday, 25th March 2026 at 6.00pm (On-line only)**

CHAIRPERSON:

DATE:

