

## **HOUSING MANAGEMENT ADVISORY BOARD** **8TH NOVEMBER 2017**

PRESENT: Mrs T. Edwardes (Chair)  
Mr T. Jackson (Vice-chair)  
Ms T. Riley and Mr D. Wright  
Councillors Draycott, Jukes and Parton

P. Oliver (Head of Landlord Services)  
I. Philp (Landlord Services Manager)  
A. Le-Cras (Customer Service Delivery Manager)  
M. Harper (Principal Officer Investment and Programme Delivery)

L. Strong (Democratic Services Officer)

The meeting commenced at a later time of 4.45pm as five members of the Board had visited the Contact Centre immediately prior to the meeting in respect of item 4 on the agenda and had been delayed.

The Board noted that Mr Brewin (Tenant Representative) had resigned as a member of the Board and welcomed Councillor Draycott as a new member of the Board (replacing Councillor Forrest).

### **17. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 13th September 2017 were confirmed as an accurate record.

Councillor Jukes considered that minutes should state data in figures as well as percentages, referring to paragraph (ii) of Minute 13.

### **18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members of the Board did not declare any interests.

### **19. WORK UNDERTAKEN BY COUNCIL'S CONTACT CENTRE TO ASSIST LANDLORD SERVICES FUNCTION**

(See HMAB Minutes 4.2, 8.1 and 8.2, 7th June 2017 and Minute 11, 13th September 2017).

The Board received a report of the Head of Landlord Services on work undertaken by the Council's Contact Centre to assist the Landlord Services function (item 4 on the agenda).

Members of the Board had been able to take part in a short visit to the Contact Centre prior to this meeting and the Customer Service Delivery

Manager attended this meeting to assist the Board with its consideration of the matter and present the report.

*Councillor Parton arrived at the meeting at 5.05pm. The Board had been notified that he would be late arriving, due to attendance at another meeting.*

Summary of discussion:

- (i) Peak call times were discussed, including the percentages of total calls received at those times. The upgraded telephony system assisted with planning resources accordingly.
- (ii) Some members of the Board had received reports from tenants that call waiting times were longer than the averages stated. By nature, average times did not illustrate extremes. A tenant representative on the Board stated that he considered the service he had received when calling to have been very good.
- (iii) Reference was made to making the best use of resources and the ways in which the Contact Centre was working to achieve that, also to constrained budgets which public services were working within.
- (iv) The importance of dealing with a call adequately before taking the next call was recognised.
- (v) Whether there were more effective ways of gathering feedback was being considered by the service and was briefly discussed, noting that asking callers to stay on the line to give feedback involved a greater call cost to them.
- (vi) The overall service provided as a result of a call was important, not just the initial response time. Monitoring, up to point a matter was closed to the satisfaction of all parties, was necessary, particularly where a call was transferred beyond the Contact Centre for services to deal with.
- (vii) In response to (vi) above, reference was made to the role of Lagan (the Council's Customer Relationship Management System), together with work to continually improve scripts to better meet the needs of services and customers.
- (viii) There was brief discussion regarding how telephone numbers for various Council services were made known to residents of the Borough in general. The Council would always seek to transfer callers to the number they required. The Emergency Contact telephone (0333) number was a local rate number for mobiles and landlines.
- (ix) It was not known at this meeting whether data could be provided to illustrate how many enquiries were dealt with at first phone call (against a customer having to ring two or more times to resolve a matter). The Customer Service Delivery Manager would look into that.
- (x) The benefits provided by the upgraded telephony system were outlined.
- (xi) There was brief discussion regarding how calls were dealt with, in particular whether they were transferred through to services. That was dependent on the enquiry being made.
- (xii) The Customer Service Delivery Manager would welcome feedback on the service provided when calling the Contact Centre.

The Chair thanked the Customer Service Delivery Manager, stating that the information provided and the visit to the Contact Centre had been most informative and would assist in helping tenants understand the service better.

**RESOLVED** that the work undertaken by the Council's Contact Centre to assist the Landlord Services function be noted.

Reason

To acknowledge the Board's consideration of this matter.

20. NEW DECENT HOMES CONTRACT - UPDATE

(See *HMAB Minute 16.2, 13th September 2017*).

The Board received a brief verbal update from the Head of Landlord Services on the position with the new Decent Homes Contract, including the involvement of tenants and the Board in that process to date and over the next few months, and that Cabinet would consider the award of the contract at its meeting in December 2017.

Summary of discussion:

- (i) How concerns with the current contract had been addressed for the new contract was briefly discussed, particularly how the new contract would ensure a minimum level of acceptable performance based on the contractor being able to claim a calculated profit for meeting that, together with stringent monitoring arrangements.
- (ii) The new contract was for five years, with option to extend for two further periods of two years.
- (iii) The current contract allowed prices to be renegotiated each year, the new contract provided fixed prices for the first two years and increases linked to the Consumer Price Index thereafter.
- (iv) The Council's general needs stock was currently at 0% non-decent, so the Council was now working to maintain that, such that the programme of works would be much smaller for the new contract. There was some non-decency within sheltered schemes, which was being considered as part of a current review.
- (iv) Pilot projects were being used for each work stream to ensure the quality expected was known to all and could be referred back to.
- (v) The Council was aware of properties where Decent Homes work had been refused, that work would be done at void (empty) stage. Planning took into account the possibility of refusals subsequently wishing to have work done, or replacement being necessary earlier than expected.
- (vi) It was confirmed that the new contract enabled the Council to disagree with who was being employed by the contractor.

**RESOLVED** that the update on the position with the new Decent Homes Contract be noted.

Reason

To acknowledge the Board's consideration of this matter and to ensure that the Board is kept informed of the position.

21. DISABLED ADAPTATIONS

(See HMAB Minute 16.1, 13th September 2017)

The Board received a report of the Head of Landlord Services on the current position with Disabled Adaptations (item 6 on the agenda).

Summary of discussion:

- (i) There was a considerable amount of background work required in relation to major adaptations, as illustrated in the report.
- (ii) There was brief discussion regarding the likelihood of finding tenants with similar needs for previously adapted properties and the cost to the Council of removing adaptations no longer appropriate to a new tenant. In response, reference was made to a small pilot being undertaken to install Lifetime Home bathroom designs that provided interchangeability between a wet room style shower and a bath, details of which were outlined. Such an approach involved a higher initial cost, but could "futureproof" the property in terms of bathroom facilities. The Board wished to express support for such an approach when undertaking Decent Homes works.
- (iii) A member of the Board considered that it would be useful to know major adaptation work undertaken over the past five years, in terms of numbers, type, number of successful applications against numbers who had applied.
- (iv) A member of the Board considered that having to contact the County Council for assessment was an obstacle to some tenants and that the Borough Council needed to do all it could to assist those tenants in doing so. It was recognised that direct contact was needed for correct assessment. The Council's Tenant Liaison resource would assist vulnerable tenants where able to do so. That resource also worked to keep tenants informed where adaptations were being undertaken.
- (v) The new Decent Homes contractor would be required to ask tenants about their needs in the same way as currently.
- (vi) There was brief discussion regarding the Disabled Adaptations budget, in particular that there had been overspend in recent years, that the current year's budget was likely to be spent in full and the proposals for next year's budget amount. Adaptations were funded from the Housing Revenue Account.
- (vii) A member of the Board expressed concern that assessments by Occupational Health sometimes took a long time to be done.

- (viii) There was brief discussion regarding minor adaptations, such as installation of grab rails and the approach taken to ensure that such works were done as quickly as possible, given that they involved much less work but could make a significant difference to the tenant. It was stated that hospital referrals were also a priority. The timescales involved to survey, raise jobs and for contractors to complete jobs were outlined.
- (ix) A member of the Board raised a concern regarding the effect on the budget of adaptations requiring an extension to the property, also that Right to Buy meant that the value of that was lost to the Council. It was recognised that a policy was needed to address the issue. Also, that the Council could look at using portable extensions for the purpose at less cost, this had already been done by other authorities.

**The Head of Landlord Services agreed to send to all members of the Board, as soon as possible following the meeting, information on average waiting times for Disabled Adaptations.**

**RESOLVED** that the position with Disabled Adaptations be noted.

**Reason**

To acknowledge the Board's consideration of this matter.

**22. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE BOARD**

*(See HMAB Minute 24.1, 22nd March 2017)*

In accordance with the Board's decision at its meeting on 22nd March 2017, members of the Board had been asked in advance of the agenda being published whether they had any questions on matters within the remit of the Board that they wished to ask, for response at this meeting. On this occasion, no questions had been submitted.

In response to a question from the Chair at the meeting, proposals for recruiting to the tenant representative vacancy on the Board (following Mr Brewin's resignation) were briefly outlined.

**23. WORK PROGRAMME**

The Board received a report of Head of Landlord Services to enable the Board to agree its Work Programme (item 8 on the agenda).

Members of the Board could identify matters that they considered required looking at over the next few meetings of the Board, including any already listed on the Work Programme but not yet scheduled. Officers present could provide advice as to whether items might be appropriately considered at the time proposed.

## **RESOLVED**

1. that a report on the Housing Income Policy be submitted to the meeting of the Board on 21st March 2018;
2. that a report on Communal Security Doors be submitted to the meeting of the Board on 17th January 2018;
3. that the item already listed on the Work Programme “Welfare Reform (Impact of) – Update” be rescheduled to the meeting of the Board on 21st March 2018;
4. that a report on Anti-social Behaviour (relating to Council’s Housing Stock) be submitted to the meeting of the Board on 21st March 2018, to include information on the number of cases, the stages at which cases are resolved, the numbers of Court actions, the time taken to resolve cases and the estate/area involved, if possible;
5. that a further report on the new Decent Homes Contract be submitted to the meeting of the Board on 21st March 2018, to focus on the mobilisation plan for the contract;
6. that the item already listed on the Work Programme “Planned Maintenance Programme” be rescheduled to the meeting of the Board on 9th May 2018;
7. that the Board’s Work Programme be updated to reflect the decisions made above and earlier in the meeting.

### Reasons

1. To ensure that the Board is informed on this matter and can provide input as appropriate to its role.
2. The Board wished to consider the position on this matter, in particular their value, condition and contractor concerned.
3. To consider the matter at a more appropriate time.
4. The Board considered that it would be useful to consider the matter at a formal meeting, rather than as part of the performance information pack provided with the agenda for each meeting.
5. The Board briefly discussed at this meeting that there would be detailed mobilisation plan and that tenants and the Board would be involved in that process, concluding that it would be of value to consider the position on that at a future meeting. The Board wished to be assured that the transition would be a smooth one for tenants. The Board noted

that consideration of the matter could also include a brief presentation from the new contractor.

6. The Chair of the Board wished to consider an update earlier than scheduled.
7. To ensure that the information in the Work Programme is up to date.

Notes:

1. A work programme for the Board, updated following this meeting, is appended to these minutes.
2. These minutes are subject to confirmation as a correct record at the next meeting of the Board on 17th January 2018.

APPENDIX

**HOUSING MANAGEMENT ADVISORY BOARD - WORK PROGRAMME**

MEETING DATE/ FREQUENCY	ISSUE	INFORMATION REQUIRED/ INVITEES/ OFFICERS	NOTES
<b>SCHEDULED:</b>			
Every Meeting	Work Programme		To review the Board's Work Programme.
Every Meeting	Questions from Members of the Board		Questions on matters within the remit of the Board (if any), for response at the meeting.  Members will be asked in advance of the agenda being published for each meeting whether they have any such questions, for listing on the agenda.
Every Meeting	Performance Information – Questions		See HMAB minute 14.4, 9th November 2016. To enable the Board to ask questions, if any, on the performance information pack* sent out with the agenda for the meeting. To be last item on agenda.
17th January 2018	2018/19 Draft Budgets (Revenue and Capital)	Head of Landlord Services	2017/18 Draft Budgets were not considered by the Board as meeting (18th January 2017) was inquorate.  Annual Report.

<b>MEETING DATE/ FREQUENCY</b>	<b>ISSUE</b>	<b>INFORMATION REQUIRED/ INVITEES/ OFFICERS</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
17th January 2018	Housing Repair Services – Breakdown of Complaints	Head of Landlord Services	As per six-monthly update reports considered by the Performance Scrutiny Panel.  Last submitted to Board 13th September 2017.  Next report as per Performance Scrutiny Panel 12th December 2017.
17th January 2018	Communal Security Doors	Head of Landlord Services	See HMAB Minute 23.2, 8th November 2017.
21st March 2018	Housing Income Policy	Head of Landlord Services	See HMAB Minute 23.1, 8th November 2017.
21st March 2018	Welfare Reform (Impact of) - Update	Head of Landlord Services	Updates as programmed by Board.  Last submitted to Board 10th December 2014.
21st March 2018	New Decent Homes Contract – Mobilisation Plans	Head of Landlord Services	See HMAB Minute 23.5, 8th November 2017.
21st March 2018	Anti-social Behaviour relating to Council's Housing Stock	Head of Landlord Services	See HMAB Minute 23.4, 8th November 2017.
9th May 2018	Planned Maintenance Programme (including Charnwood Standard)	Head of Landlord Services	Last considered 13th September 2017.  (Future reports to describe the locations to which proposals relate by town/village as well as street name).
June 2018	Election of Chair and Vice-chair		Annual Item.

<b>MEETING DATE/ FREQUENCY</b>	<b>ISSUE</b>	<b>INFORMATION REQUIRED/ INVITEES/ OFFICERS</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
June 2018	HRA Revenue and Capital Outturn (2017/18)	Head of Landlord Services	Annual Report.
<b>TO BE SCHEDULED:</b>			
To be scheduled	Review of HRA Business Plan	Head of Landlord Services	See HMAB minute 14.6, 9th November 2016. Cannot be reviewed until regulations to enable this have been received from the DCLG. Annual report.
To be scheduled	Housing Asset Management Strategy	Head of Landlord Services	Annual report.
To be scheduled	Role of Board in Budget Consultation and Monitoring	Head of Landlord Services	Added to work programme 8th June 2016.
To be scheduled	Housing and Planning Act 2016 - Update	Head of Landlord Services	Last considered by the Board on 17th February 2016.  (Report on Pay to Stay and Flexible Tenancies provisions in Housing and Planning Act 2016 considered 9th November 2016).  Awaiting Government Regulations.
To be scheduled	Review of Repairs Standards and Response Times for Repairs, following consultation with Tenants	Head of Landlord Services	Added to work programme 1st April 2015.

<b>MEETING DATE/ FREQUENCY</b>	<b>ISSUE</b>	<b>INFORMATION REQUIRED/ INVITEES/ OFFICERS</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
To be scheduled	Storage of Gas or Propane Cylinders (Clause 9.2.30 of the consultation draft of the Revised Tenancy Agreement for Secure, Introductory and Demoted Tenants)	Head of Landlord Services	Added to work programme 4th February 2015.  Revised Tenancy Agreement is awaiting Government guidance.
To be scheduled	Service Area Delivery Plan	Head of Landlord Services	Added to work programme 13th August 2014.
To be scheduled	Housing Strategy	Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing	Added to work programme 2nd April 2014.
To be scheduled	Housing Capital Programme Monitoring	Head of Landlord Services	Last considered 16th October 2013.

Notes to Work Programme:

1. All reports must include an explanatory list of any acronyms used.
2. \*Performance information pack will include (i) Decent Homes Contractor Performance; (ii) Landlord Services Performance; (iii) Compliance Performance (Fire Safety, etc.); and (iv) Anti-social Behaviour (relating to Council's housing stock) Information.