

**HOUSING MANAGEMENT ADVISORY BOARD  
6TH JUNE 2018**

PRESENT: Mr A. Davis, Mrs T. Edwardes, Ms T. Riley and Mr D. Wright  
Councillors Draycott, Jukes and Parton  
Mr T. Jackson

I. Philp (Landlord Services Manager)  
I. Allwyn (Group Accountant)

L. Strong (Democratic Services Officer)

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR 2018/19

**RESOLVED**

1. that Mrs T. Edwardes be elected as Chair of the Board for the 2018/19 Council year;
2. that Ms T. Riley be elected as Vice-chair of the Board for the 2018/19 Council year.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 9th May 2018 were confirmed as an accurate record.

Matters arising from the minutes:

- (i) The Board was due to receive an update on the mobilisation of the new Decent Homes contract at its next meeting (12th September 2018). **The Democratic Services Officer would add that to the Board's Work Programme, as it was not currently listed.** In addition, as it was some time until that next meeting, the **Landlord Services Manager would arrange for an update on the matter to be emailed to members of the Board at the end of July 2018**, to include information on the trials that had been undertaken. Members of the Board could let the Landlord Services Manager know if there was particular information they would like including in that email.
- (ii) In response to a question regarding Minute 37, Communal Cleaning Contract Consultation, the Landlord Services Manager outlined the current position. The Board had asked for an update to be submitted to its meeting on 12th September 2018. **The Democratic Services Officer would add that to the Board's Work Programme, as it was not currently listed.** The Board stated that it would like to see the draft consultation letter as soon as possible, the **Landlord Services Manager would arrange for that to be emailed to members of the Board, once available.**

- (iii) The Board briefly discussed the issue of storage of gas and propane cylinders. The matter would be featured in the July edition of the tenants' newsletter. In response to a question as to whether the officer carrying out inspections of communal areas (K. Henson) checked for inappropriate storage of such items in the external areas surrounding the accommodation, **the Landlord Services Manager considered that he did so, but would check that and confirm it to members of the Board.**

### 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

### 4. LANDLORD SERVICES PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2018/19

The Board received a report of the Head of Landlord Services setting out the Landlord Services Performance Indicators for 2018/19 (item 5 on the agenda). The report was presented by the Landlord Services Manager.

The following corrections to the report were stated. Page 2, section entitled "Tenant Satisfaction", first paragraph should commence "*Repairs satisfaction indicators (G, H and I -*" (rather than I, J and K), second paragraph should commence "*The decent homes indicators (J and K) are*" (rather than L and M).

Summary of discussion:

- (i) The targets set out remained stretching, but were based on a realistic level of achievable performance and took into account the more accurate performance data now available. Where targets had been changed, the report set out the reasons for that.
- (ii) Targets were reviewed mid-year.
- (iii) The performance data for 2017/18 was an amalgamation of that provided by the old and new recording systems. 2018/19 would provide more realistic and better quality data.
- (iv) The effect of 2017/18 budget underspends on the number of operatives working on repairs and, therefore, on repairs performance, was briefly discussed. It was important that the budgets provided were used. This issue was also raised in respect of a 2017/18 budget underspend on anti-social behaviour activity, it being confirmed that that service area was now at full establishment.
- (v) The Board had recently considered the measures being put in place to reduce the impact of the Welfare Reforms, including Universal Credit on rent collection and arrears.

- (vi) A view was expressed that lowering of targets, or setting targets in line with the performance of others, was not appropriate. A target of 100% for indicators J and K on page 3 of the report would have been preferred.
- (vii) It was important to work towards high targets, but what could realistically be achieved needed to be taken into account. Particular reference was made to it being unlikely that the Council could achieve 100% satisfaction in respect of anti-social behaviour activity as sometimes the outcome wanted by the tenant reporting the behaviour was simply not achievable in law. The importance of reporting and evidence in this area was highlighted.
- (viii) A view was expressed that the limitations of data needed to be kept in mind. Of most importance was ensuring that the Council's Decent Homes contractor performed better than the previous contractor and was monitored more stringently.
- (ix) How data was collected for the different indicators was briefly outlined.
- (x) The methods by which tenant satisfaction was surveyed were briefly discussed, including the difficulties involved, that a sample based approach was usually taken and how technology might assist that in the future.
- (xi) SAP rating referred to the energy efficiency of a property.
- (xii) The £400k projected increase in rent arrears referred to in the report and relating to Universal Credit being rolled out in Charnwood had been based on the experience of landlords elsewhere. The amount related only to those tenants expected to move onto Universal Credit in the period.

## **RESOLVED**

1. that the Service Performance Indicators 2018/19 be noted;
2. that the Universal Credit performance information included in the Performance Information Pack sent out with the agenda for meetings of the Board sets out the pattern of performance for the period concerned (rather than a snapshot at the end of that period);
3. that the Landlord Services performance information included in the Performance Information Pack sent out with the agenda for meetings of the Board sets out (i) the numbers of respondents on which the tenant satisfaction percentage data is based; (ii) the timescales that apply to the different categories of responsive repairs; and (iii) the financial

amounts of rent arrears on which rent arrears percentage data is based;

4. that the Anti-social Behaviour performance information included in the Performance Information Pack sent out with the agenda for meetings of the Board sets out the numbers on which the percentage data is based.

#### Reasons

1. To acknowledge the Board's consideration of this matter.
  2. Such information would assist the Board in better understanding the trends being experienced.
  3. Such information would assist the Board in (i) assessing the extent to which the data was statistically viable; (ii) better understanding the timescales for repairs; and (iii) better understanding the amount of those arrears.
  4. Such information would assist the Board in better understanding the extent of this area of activity.
5. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN 2017/18

The Board received a report of the Head of Finance and Property Services setting out the HRA Revenue and Capital Outturn 2017/18 (item 6 on the agenda). The report was presented by the Group Accountant.

Summary of discussion:

- (i) Explanation was provided in respect of the 2012 self-financing settlement, the resulting loans owed by the HRA and how the principal amounts would, in time, need to be refinanced or paid back. Most authorities had been part of the 2012 settlement.
- (ii) Underspends on the Tenant Bids budget and the Customer Engagement budget were briefly discussed, in particular how tenants were made aware of the funding and the requirements that needed to be met to secure it. Charnwood Housing Residents' Forum (CHRF) worked to promote involvement. A member of the Board expressed concern that funding would be lost in future years if underspends continued. **The Landlord Services Manager would both pursue the matter again through CHRF and include information on it in a future tenants' newsletter.**
- (iii) **The Democratic Services Officer would email to Councillor Parton as soon as possible details of where he could view HRA Revenue**

**and Capital Outturn reports submitted to the Board in previous years**, so that he could compare the position over that time.

- (iv) It was stated that the Board would be considering its role in respect of budget consultation and monitoring at its next meeting.
- (v) Write off of rent arrears was funded from rents income. A view was expressed that having to write off arrears was unacceptable as the funds could otherwise have been spent for the benefit of Council tenants. A strict approach to those not paying their rent was required. In response, it was stated that all efforts were made to collect rents and chase rent arrears, including those owed by former tenants. Further details of the approach taken and results achieved were outlined. The cost of continuing to chase arrears that were unlikely to be recovered had to be considered. The extent to which previous rent arrears could be taken into account when considering a new tenancy was also discussed.
- (vi) Universal Credit, in particular that payments would be made to the claimant (rather than the direct to the landlord as was usually the case with Housing Benefit) was briefly discussed. The Board noted that the landlord could apply for “managed payments” such that payment was made direct to it, if there was concern that rent arrears would result from payment to the claimant. General concern was expressed in relation to the difficulties Universal Credit might pose to some tenants, for example those with mental health issues. In addition to those staff whom would be directly assisting with Universal Credit issues, all Landlord Services staff were increasingly aware of the matter and how to refer those needing assistance on to the correct officers/services.

**RESOLVED** that the HRA Revenue and Capital Outturn 2017/18 be noted.

Reason

To acknowledge the Board’s consideration of this matter.

6. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

In accordance with the Board’s decision at its meeting on 22nd March 2017 (HMAB Minute 24.1), 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.

7. 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.

Summary of discussion:

- (i) The Government guidance awaited in relation to fixed term tenancies to enable the Tenancy Agreement to be revised had still not been received.
- (i) Reference was made to some tenancy agreements still referring to the former Charnwood Neighbourhood Housing.
- (iii) **The Landlord Services Manager would check the position in respect of the availability of a landline telephone number for tenants to contact the Decent Homes contractor and confirm that to members of the Board.** It was understood that only a mobile telephone number was currently available and the Board considered that to be unacceptable due to cost to the tenant (even if the initial call was only of short duration and the contractor then rang the tenant back). Also, some tenants were reluctant to ring mobile numbers.

## **RESOLVED**

- 1. that the issue "Housing Capital Programme Monitoring", listed at the end of the Work Programme, be deleted;
- 2. that the Landlord Services Manager be asked to arrange a visit for all members of the Board to the offices of the new Decent Homes contractor;
- 3. that the Board's Work Programme be updated to reflect all decisions made above and earlier in the meeting.

## Reasons

- 1. The Board had not considered the matter by way of specific report since October 2013 and now monitored the matter via the Outturn and Draft Budget reports it received in June and January each year respectively.
- 2. Such a visit would be of interest and use to members of the Board.
- 3. To ensure that the information in the Work Programme is up to date.

Notes:

1. An updated work programme for the Board 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 12th September 2018.

## HOUSING MANAGEMENT ADVISORY BOARD - WORK PROGRAMME

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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 Pack – 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 considered following close of formal meeting.
12th September 2018	Update on the Sheltered Housing Support Service	Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing	As requested by the Board at its meeting on 9th May 2018. Date changed to accommodate report procedure.

<b>MEETING DATE/ FREQUENCY</b>	<b>ISSUE</b>	<b>INFORMATION REQUIRED/ INVITEES/ OFFICERS</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
12th September 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 21st March 2018.
12th September 2018	Role of Board in Budget Consultation and Monitoring	Head of Landlord Services	Added to work programme 8th June 2016.
12th September 2018	Mobilisation of New Decent Homes Contract – Update	Head of Landlord Services	
12th September 2018	Communal Cleaning Contract Consultation - Update	Head of Landlord Services	
January 2019	2019/20 Draft Budgets (Revenue and Capital)	Head of Landlord Services	2018/19 Draft Budgets were not considered formally by the Board as meeting (17th January 2018) was incomplete.  Annual Report.
June 2019	Election of Chair and Vice-chair		Annual Item.
June 2019	HRA Revenue and Capital Outturn (2018/19)	Head of Landlord Services	Annual Report.
<b>TO BE SCHEDULED:</b>			

<b>MEETING DATE/ FREQUENCY</b>	<b>ISSUE</b>	<b>INFORMATION REQUIRED/ INVITEES/ OFFICERS</b>	<b>NOTES</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	Review of the update the Strategy.
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.
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.

<b>MEETING DATE/ FREQUENCY</b>	<b>ISSUE</b>	<b>INFORMATION REQUIRED/ INVITEES/ OFFICERS</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
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.

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.); (iv) Anti-social Behaviour (relating to Council's housing stock) Information; and (v) Universal Credit Performance Update.