

**HOUSING MANAGEMENT ADVISORY BOARD
13TH SEPTEMBER 2017**

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

P. Oliver (Head of Landlord Services)
I. Philp (Landlord Services Manager)
M. Harper (Principal Officer Investment and Programme
Delivery)

L. Strong (Democratic Services Officer)

APOLOGIES: Mr K. Brewin and Councillor Parton

The Chair welcomed Councillor Forrest as a new member of the Board.

9. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 7th June 2017 were confirmed as an accurate record, with the correction of a typographical error in paragraph (x) of Minute 4 (replace “spilt” with “split”).

Councillor Jukes confirmed that he had received the clarification he had requested at the last meeting as recorded in the minutes.

The Head of Landlord Services agreed to send, to members of the Board as soon as possible following the meeting, a copy of the Landlord Services’ Tree Policy. The Board briefly discussed recent survey work of trees, categorisation of risk, available budgets and how those were used, noting also that an article on the matter was scheduled for inclusion in the next Tenants’ Newsletter.

10. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of the Board did not declare any interests.

11. 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).

The Board received an interim report of the Head of Landlord Services to re-programme consideration of this matter to the next meeting of the Board, following consultation with the Chair (item 4 on the agenda).

Summary of discussion:

- (i) The visit to the Contact Centre would focus on the work undertaken to assist the Landlord Services function only. On this occasion, it would not be possible to listen to calls due to data protection/confidentiality requirements.
- (ii) The Customer Service Delivery Manager would attend the next meeting to assist the Board.
- (iii) There was a single/dedicated telephone number for tenants to call when contacting the Council via the Contact Centre.

RESOLVED

- 1. that consideration of this matter be re-programmed for the Board's next meeting on 8th November 2017, to include a visit to the Contact Centre prior to that meeting as set out in the report;
- 2. that members of the Board wishing to take part in the above visit arrive for the next meeting at the earlier time of 4.00pm, meeting in Committee Room 1;
- 3. that if there is specific information that members of the Board would like including in the report on this matter (in addition to that agreed by the Board at its meeting on 7th June 2017), those requests be sent to either the Landlord Services Manager or the Democratic Services Officer as soon as possible following this meeting.

Reason

To enable consideration of the matter at a time when the Customer Service Delivery Manager is available to assist the Board, and to ensure that the Board has the information it requires to undertake effective and useful assessment of the work undertaken by the Council's Contact Centre to assist the Landlord Services function.

12. PLANNED MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME (INCLUDING CHARNWOOD STANDARD)

Note: Annual report in November each year, but rescheduled by Board to this meeting (see HMAB Minute 8.4, 7th June 2017).

The Board received a report of the Head of Landlord Services providing an update on the Planned Maintenance Programme (item 5 on the agenda).

Summary of discussion:

- (i) Reference the slippage against programme referred to in the report, assurance had been received from the contractor that works would be back on programme by the end of October 2017.

- (ii) Reference a specific concern regarding fascia repair, Mr Jackson would email the Principal Officer Investment and Programme Delivery following the meeting with the details of that, so that it could be looked into. Fascia repair was generally attempted if less than 50% required repair, otherwise replacement was undertaken.
- (iii) The intention was to spend the majority of the budget on repairs to footpaths and car parks, so as to deal with health and safety concerns in those respects. A contractor for those works had recently been procured and was discussed briefly by the Board, in particular the quality work completed previously by that contractor.
- (iv) **The Principal Officer Investment and Programme Delivery agreed to send, to members of the Board as soon as it was available, the proposed programme of works.**
- (v) Garendon Green, Loughborough was discussed, in particular damage to grass as a result of it being used as a means of access by residents in cars and how that might be resolved. Members of the Board considered that that was generally occurring because of significant problems with parking in the area by University and College students, including usual access routes being blocked by that parking. It did not seem appropriate to block vehicular access to the Green while that on-street parking issue remained unresolved for residents. The possibility of a letter to the Leader of the Council regarding problems with parking in the area, or a petition to the Council, was noted. It was also noted provision of surfaced access or parking on the Green was cost prohibitive, with brief discussion of the reasons for that and previous investigation of the possibility of doing so.
- (vi) Reference proposed work to communal areas in flats, proposal was to do all works required, including replacement of doors where needed. It was recognised that some communal areas were more in need of improvement than others. A member of the Board referred to replacement doors in Loughborough Storer ward which she considered had provided significant improvement and looked very smart.
- (vii) Supply and fitting of bike barrier at Epinal Court, Loughborough would require specialist contractor, some difficulty in obtaining such.
- (viii) Replacement with items that did not require future maintenance could be more cost effective in the long run, for example composite doors or cement board cladding.
- (ix) The Board briefly discussed the proposed colour scheme for pilot project improvements to the Peel Drive, Loughborough flats, as detailed on page 8 of the report, including reference to the need for colour contrast (for persons with restricted vision), agreeing colour scheme based on the majority view of respondents and durability and fire safety of the paint.
- (x) In response to a question, the amount stated as “allocated budget” was the amount that would be spent if all planned works were completed (without any variation to those works). The allocated budget was lower than the overall budget, to allow for any variation which proved necessary.

- (xi) The Board considered that the visual nature of the report was very helpful to its consideration of the matter and to illustrate to tenants the good work that the Council was undertaking to improve its housing.

RESOLVED

1. that the update on the Planned Maintenance Programme be noted;
2. that future reports to the Board on the matter better describe the locations to which proposals relate by stating the town or village as well as the street name concerned.

Reasons

1. To acknowledge the Board's consideration of this matter and to ensure that the Board is kept informed of the position.
2. To assist the Board in better understanding where planned maintenance will be taking place.

13. HOUSING REPAIRS SERVICE – BREAKDOWN OF COMPLAINTS

The Board received a report of the Head of Landlord Services providing an update on the Housing Repairs Service Complaints (item 6 on the agenda) (considered by the Council's Performance Scrutiny Panel on 22nd August 2017). The matter had been last considered by the Board on 14th September 2016.

Summary of discussion:

- (i) Explanation was provided of how a complaint might be counted more than once as it progressed through the stages set out in the appendix to the report.
- (ii) The Board considered that an overall complaint rate of less than 1% for 17,428 completed repairs (in 2016/17) illustrated excellent performance.
- (iii) In response to a question, brief explanation was provided of the role of the Corporate Development Officer and the benefits of dealing with Stage 2 complaints via that arrangement.

RESOLVED

1. that the update on Housing Repairs Service Complaints be noted;
2. that future updates on the matter be submitted to the Board every six months (in accordance with the frequency that they are considered by the Council's Performance Scrutiny Panel).

Reasons

1. To acknowledge the Board's consideration of this matter and to ensure that the Board is kept informed of the position.
2. To ensure that the Board considers the position with complaints on a regular basis.

14. VOIDS (EMPTY) PROPERTIES

(See HMAB Minute 8.3, 7th June 2017).

The Board received a report of the Head of Landlord Services providing details of the current position with Void Properties (item 7 on the agenda).

The Head of Landlord Services referred to an error in the figures set out in paragraph 7.1 of the report and circulated to all members of the Board a more detailed summary of the position with current Void properties, which included a correct split of those properties between General Needs and Sheltered Housing.

Summary of discussion:

- (ii) Reference was made to the review of Sheltered Housing schemes currently being undertaken by the Council's Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing.
- (ii) A member of the Board raised the possibility of changing the designation of some blocks of bedsit type accommodation which were not fully let so that it was less age restrictive, to enable younger tenants in larger properties who wished to downsize to do so, with existing older tenants in those blocks moving to accommodation that remained age restrictive and also had vacant units. That approach might result in less void properties. **The Head of Landlord stated that he would discuss the suggestion with the Council's Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing and provide a response for the Board.** It was noted that a change of designation to non-sheltered would require a major consultation with existing tenants of that accommodation.
- (iii) In response to a question, it was confirmed that the new kitchens installed into void properties were of the same brand and quality as those installed for tenanted properties, but were supplied flat pack and for void properties to provide for more expediency/storage purposes. The most popular kitchen style among tenanted properties was fitted to void properties and standard floor tiles used as there was no tenant to make that choice.
- (iv) The Head of Landlord Service acknowledged that performance in turning around Major Voids was not acceptable and its significant effect on rental income. Major Voids represented a considerable opportunity for improvement and a working group had been set up to identify where

there were problems in the process and put measures in place to resolve.

- (v) Properties should meet a fit to let standard before being relet to a tenant. Consideration had been given in the past to what work might reasonably be done after a property had been relet, aimed at reducing relet times and loss of rental income.
- (vi) A member of the Board stated that Standard Void turnaround rates were considerably better than had been the case in the past. There could be a number of complexities which affected the time it took to get a property back to a lettable standard and as a result, performance often needed to be considered on a case by case basis. There would be some cases where the Council had not done repairs as quickly as it should have done. However, the Council was sometimes faced with properties that had been very badly damaged by the previous tenant.
- (vii) There was brief discussion regarding disabled adaptations, in particular the demand-led nature of the work and the peaks in workload that could present.
- (viii) **The Head of Landlord Services agreed to send, to members of the Board as soon as possible following the meeting, details of the position in respect of the following and in relation to the fit to let standard:**
 - **Supply to new tenants of keys to lockable windows (following concern expressed by a member of the Board that tenants with small children should be in a position to lock windows for health and safety reasons);**
 - **Fitting of sink to separate toilet facilities for health and safety reasons;**
 - **Ensuring new tenants are informed of where the stopcock is located in the property.**
- (ix) Costs of damage by tenants were quantified and listed as a debt owed by the tenant that the Council made every effort to recover. That debt did not necessarily preclude rehousing of that tenant due to requirements of any duty to rehouse, but a recharge for that previous damage would be applied to that tenant. There would be no effect on the new tenant of the property that had been damaged. Pre-transfer inspections were always carried out. Reference was made to the limited prospect of recovering debts from tenants.
- (x) The Board briefly discussed work by the Council to install mains-wired smoke and carbon monoxide detectors (and to monitor existing battery operated detectors in the meantime), heat detection in kitchens and refitting of doors to kitchens where those had been removed.

RESOLVED that the position with Void Properties be noted.

Reason

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

15. 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.

16. WORK PROGRAMME

The Board received a report of Head of Landlord Services to enable the Board to agree its Work Programme (item 9 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.

The Head of Landlord Services briefly outlined the process undertaken to date in respect of the new Decent Homes Contract and the next steps, confirming in response to a question that the outcomes of the Visions and Values workshop held with the tenants at the start of the process had been taken into account. As soon as it was permissible to make the decision public, members of the Board would be informed of the successful contractor.

Brief reference was made to the Work Programme item "Storage of Gas and Propane Cylinders (Clause 9.2.30 of the consultation draft of the revised Tenancy Agreement)" which had been added to the programme in February 2015. In response, it was noted that revised Tenancy Agreement was awaiting Government guidance.

RESOLVED

1. that an report setting out the current position with Disabled Adaptations be submitted to the next meeting of the Board (8th November 2017);
2. that an update on the new Decent Homes Contract be programmed for consideration at the next meeting of the Board (8th November 2017);
3. that an update on Welfare Reform (Impact of) be programmed for consideration by the Board at its meeting on 17th January 2018;
4. that the Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing be asked to advise of a suitable date on which she might provide an update to the Board on the Sheltered Housing and Support Review, and the matter be listed on the Work Programme accordingly;

5. that the position in respect of the item “Housing Strategy”, which had been listed on the Board’s Work Programme as “to be programmed” since April 2014, be established so that the Work Programme can be updated accordingly;
6. that the Board’s Work Programme be updated to reflect the decisions made above and earlier in the meeting.

Reasons

- 1-3. To ensure that the Board is aware of the current position in respect of these matters and can provide input as appropriate to its role.
4. The Chair had noted, when the Board had considered the matter in March 2017, that an update could be provided in due course.
- 5 &6. 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 8th November 2017.
3. In respect of the Performance Information Pack sent out with the agenda for this meeting, the Head of Landlord Services circulated at the meeting Decent Homes Contractor Performance information, which had not been included with the pack, providing explanation of the reason for that.

HOUSING MANAGEMENT ADVISORY BOARD - WORK PROGRAMME

MEETING DATE/ FREQUENCY	ISSUE	INFORMATION REQUIRED/ INVITEES/ OFFICERS	NOTES
SCHEDULED:			
Every Meeting	Work Programme		To review the Board's Work Programme.
Every Meeting	Questions from Members of the Board		<p>Questions on matters within the remit of the Board (if any), for response at the meeting.</p> <p>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.</p>
Every Meeting	Performance Information – Questions		<p>See HMAB minute 14.4, 9th November 2016.</p> <p>To enable the Board to ask questions, if any, on the performance information pack* sent out with the agenda for the meeting.</p> <p>To be last item on agenda.</p>

MEETING DATE/ FREQUENCY	ISSUE	INFORMATION REQUIRED/ INVITEES/ OFFICERS	NOTES
8th November 2017	Work undertaken by Council's Contact Centre to assist Landlord Services Function	Head of Landlord Services	See HMAB Minutes 4.2, 8.1 and 8.2, 7th June 2017 and HMAB Minute 11, 13th September 2017. Report to include information on telephone call waiting times and script(s) followed. Customer Service Delivery Manager will attend to assist. Brief visit to the Contact Centre prior to the meeting, meet at 4.00pm.
8th November 2017	New Decent Homes Contract - Update	Head of Landlord Services	Updates as and when there are matters to report. Last considered 7th June 2017.
8th November 2017	Disabled Adaptations	Head of Landlord Services	See HMAB Minute 16.1, 13th September 2017. Report on current position.
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.

MEETING DATE/ FREQUENCY	ISSUE	INFORMATION REQUIRED/ INVITEES/ OFFICERS	NOTES
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	Welfare Reform (Impact of) - Update	Head of Landlord Services	Updates as programmed by Board. Last submitted to Board 10th December 2014.
June 2018	Election of Chair and Vice-chair		Annual Item.
June 2018	HRA Revenue and Capital Outturn (2017/18)	Head of Landlord Services	Annual Report.
November 2018	Planned Maintenance Programme (including Charnwood Standard)	Head of Landlord Services	Annual Report in November each year. Last considered 13th September 2017. (Future reports to describe the locations to which proposals relate by town/village as well as street name).
TO BE SCHEDULED:			

MEETING DATE/ FREQUENCY	ISSUE	INFORMATION REQUIRED/ INVITEES/ OFFICERS	NOTES
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.

MEETING DATE/ FREQUENCY	ISSUE	INFORMATION REQUIRED/ INVITEES/ OFFICERS	NOTES
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.