

HOUSING MANAGEMENT ADVISORY BOARD

22ND MARCH 2017

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

I. Philp (Landlord Services Manager)
A. Simmons (Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing)
D. White (Repairs and Investment Manager)

L. Strong (Democratic Services Officer)

APOLOGIES: Mr T. Jackson and Councillor Sharp

The Chair welcomed Ms Riley as a new tenant representative on the Board.

17. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 9th November 2016 were confirmed as an accurate record.

18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

19. REFURBISHMENT OF SHELTERED SCHEMES

The Board received a report of the Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing to provide details of the Sheltered Housing and Support Review and the progress to date (item 4 on the agenda) (carried forward from the inquorate meeting of the Board on 18th January 2017). Progress made since that meeting was reported verbally to the Board, in particular detailing work undertaken and planned towards a Charnwood Standard for the Sheltered Schemes, including the experience and guidance taken into account in developing that and the proposed consultation planned.

Summary of issues discussed:

- (i) The Charnwood Standard for Sheltered Schemes was based on the units refurbished at Riversdale Court, Birstall.
- (ii) It was suggested that it would be useful to assess recent refurbishments against the new Standard, and to meet with residents who had moved in to those.
- (iii) In respect of the four completed schemes listed in paragraph 3.6 on page 2 of the report, it would be useful to have information on the how many refurbished units had been provided and the unit costs involved. It was recognised that that information would be more readily available

for Riversdale Court, Birstall than for schemes completed earlier as the earlier schemes pre-dated the current accounting system. **The Head of Strategic and Private Sector agreed to provide available information to members of the Board as soon as possible following the meeting.**

- (iv) The level of voids within the Council's sheltered housing schemes was briefly discussed. It was noted that bedsits were the most difficult to let and that the facilities provided by those were somewhat outdated.
- (v) A member of the Board referred to the possibility of the Council selling stock which was difficult to let.
- (vi) Reference was made to the HRA self-financing regime which enabled investment in the housing stock and the debt of £15,065 per property taken on as part of the agreed settlement.
- (vii) Examples were given of the facilities that would be provided under the Charnwood Standard for Sheltered Schemes.
- (viii) The Review would build on the work that had already been undertaken to make best use of that and so that work was not duplicated, as outlined in the report and including the desktop exercise referred to in paragraph 3.5 on page 2.
- (ix) Further explanation was provided of the Project Organisation Structure set out in the Project Initiation Document and on page 12/13 of the report, including the roles and responsibilities involved.
- (x) Schemes would be refurbished on a priority basis following assessment against an agreed Charnwood Standard for Sheltered Schemes. Refurbishment requiring less work could be undertaken alongside major schemes. The Project Plan provided at appendix 2 to the report referred to the proposal to submit a report to the Council's Cabinet in October 2017 to recommend solutions on a scheme by scheme basis and the next steps to implementing those.
- (xi) Budget provision for refurbishment was briefly discussed.

RESOLVED that progress on the Sheltered Housing and Support Review be noted.

Reason

To acknowledge the Board's consideration of progress with this matter.

20. REDEVELOPMENT OF GARAGE SITES

The Board received a verbal update given by the Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing on the position in respect of the Redevelopment of Garage Sites, consideration of this matter having been carried forward from the inquorate meeting of the Board on 18th January 2017. In summary, seven sites were being considered for the possible provision of bungalows were outlined, there being an identified need for such properties. Feasibility was currently being assessed, consultation would be carried out with those renting garages on the sites and adjacent residents and a report(s) submitted to the Council's Cabinet for decision as and when required.

Summary of issues discussed:

- (i) An ongoing need for bungalow accommodation was recognised.
- (ii) Where affordable housing was to be provided in connection with a development, officers tried to negotiate bungalows where appropriate, but were not always successful in securing those. Provision of bungalows on suitable garage sites provided a way forward, if those could be afforded by the Council.
- (iii) A number of issues needed to be taken into account, these included whether there was suitable access to the site, the current income to the Council from garage rental and whether alternative parking would be needed in the area and could be provided.
- (iv) The purchase of an existing property to enable suitable access was an option that could be considered.
- (v) The Council had 64 garage sites. Some of those were fully occupied and provided good rental income to the Council. By way of an example, one of the seven sites being considered for redevelopment had approximately one third of its garages currently void.
- (vi) Brief explanation was provided of the rental arrangements in respect of the garages and the notice periods involved. The requirement to consult with those renting affected garages was reiterated.
- (vii) Housing Associations were unlikely to wish to be involved in schemes involving only a couple of properties. The sites being considered were all relatively small ones. A member of the Board referred to a site he was aware of in the West Midlands developed for bungalows by a charity. The Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing would look into that.

RESOLVED that the position with Redevelopment of Garage Sites be noted.

Reason

To acknowledge the Board's consideration of the position with this matter.

21. MOBILITY SCOOTER POLICY

The Board received a report of the Head of Landlord Services to consider the position with the Mobility Scooter Policy, following the Board's endorsement of a draft policy at its meeting in April 2015 (item 6 on the agenda). This matter had not been included on the agenda for the subsequently inquorate meeting of the Board on 18th January 2017 following a request by the Head of Landlord Services that it be rescheduled to this meeting.

Summary of issues discussed:

- (i) The approach set out by the Policy appended to the report had been taken by officers over the past two years. The Policy was based on

- 2015 good practice and met the requirements of the Fire Service while also seeking to balance the needs of users of mobility scooters.
- (ii) The monthly inspection programme identified if any mobility scooters were being stored in communal areas and enabled any such occurrences to be dealt with and tenants advised of the restriction.
 - (iii) The Council continued to look at how it could manage the need for mobility scooter storage. Provision of suitable storage facilities was particularly difficult in non-sheltered blocks. There was some budgetary provision to address perhaps one or two of these sites moving forward.
 - (iv) Fire Service requirements prohibited the storage of any equipment in the communal areas due to the need for unrestricted entry and exit, this would include bicycles. Signage was provided to remind tenants of the restriction, advice was also included in quarterly tenant newsletters and incidences would be picked up by monthly inspections.
 - (v) Properties with their own entrances were not affected by the Policy.
 - (vi) Paragraphs 8.1 and 8.2 in the Policy aimed to address the issues of limited availability of storage facilities and the basis on which those would be allocated.
 - (vii) Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) was the responsibility of the tenant, not the Council.
 - (viii) The Policy referred to mobility scooters not being permitted in lifts or to be used in/driven through communal areas (paragraph 9.5). It was unclear whether the restriction also applied to an electric wheelchair in use all of the time both indoors and out due to a disability. It would not be reasonable to expect a tenant or visitor in that position not to travel through a communal area or in a lift in that wheelchair. It was considered that the Policy related to vehicles solely for outdoor use, but **the Landlord Services Manager agreed provide to clarification on the matter to members of the Board as soon as possible following the meeting.**
 - (ix) There was brief discussion regarding the ways in which external storage facilities might be provided, including individual pods which could safely contain any incidences of scooters catching fire. Feasibility of the options was being considered and a trial scheme would be progressed following that. Different sites would require different solutions.
 - (x) The position was currently being managed by ensuring that communal areas were not blocked by mobility scooters, requirements for permission to be obtained as set out in the Policy were not yet in operation. It was not currently known how many mobility scooters were owned by tenants living in properties with communal areas, although monthly inspections had provided an indication of where such scooters were located.
 - (xi) Brief reference was made to an incident in a particular property involving a mobility scooter and information provided on how the related damage would have been paid for.
 - (xii) Paragraph 9.8 of the Policy (that mobility scooters should not be driven through internal communal areas to a resident's property) was a

- requirement of the Fire Service and had been supported by the Board when it had considered the Policy previously.
- (xiii) Brief reference was made to the possibility of schemes contributing towards the cost of storage facilities.
- (xiv) It was recognised that the issue was not an easy one to resolve given the characteristics of the housing stock concerned and the costs involved. The issue was also one which affected housing in the private sector.

RESOLVED that the position with the Mobility Scooter Policy and how the issue is being addressed be noted.

Reason

To acknowledge the Board's consideration of the position with this matter.

22. NEW DECENT HOMES CONTRACT - UPDATE

The Board received a report of the Head of Landlord Services to consider an update on the new Decent Homes Contract (item 7 on the agenda). Further to the report, the Repairs and Investment Manager stated that Cabinet was now scheduled to award the contract at its October 2017 meeting, this would ensure that there would be sufficient time following that to mobilise the new contractor.

Councillor Parton left the meeting during part of the presentation of the report, but was in attendance for the discussion and decision on this item.

Summary of issues discussed:

- (i) Explanation was provided of the OJEU notice (Official Journal of the European Union), including the key documents issued as part of that.
- (ii) Reference was made to the inclusion on financial penalties for not meeting targets.
- (iii) Page 19 of the report set out the key priorities identified by the "Visions and Values" workshop day detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.
- (iv) Key milestones were briefly outlined, these were set out in Appendix 2 to the report.
- (v) Reference was made to the Member Reference Group and the work it was and would be undertaking.
- (vi) The further consultation with tenants by telephone mentioned at the end of the "Visions and Values" workshop day had been undertaken with a wide group of tenants and the outcomes had been fed into the process. Tenant involvement would continue through the process, details of which were outlined. The Board would also be kept up to date with progress.
- (vii) Priority 28 on page 18 of the report aimed to address previous experience of a tendency by the contractor to focus on jobs where access was easier and not make sufficient efforts to gain access where

- that was more difficult. The Council would need to be provided with evidence that sufficient effort had been made to gain access.
- (viii) The options relating to amendment of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) during the contract had been carefully considered. The approach would be that the Council would not be looking to amend KPIs regularly, but they could be reviewed or added to by mutual agreement and any changes formalised via a contractual variation.
 - (ix) The contract would be for five years, with an option to extend for a further three years.
 - (x) There would be no Decent Homes backlog to be addressed, rather renewal requirements which would vary year on year. A larger workload would arise again at a future point and measures might be taken at that stage to move works to balance that out. The various work streams under the contract were briefly discussed. Spending was being moved to different work, but not reduced.

RESOLVED that the update on the new Decent Homes Contract be noted, and that further updates be submitted to the Board as and when there are matters to report.

Reason

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

23. CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT REVIEW – DRAFT CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2017-2020

The Board received a report of the Head of Landlord Services to consider the outcome of the Customer Engagement Review, the draft Customer Engagement Strategy 2017-2020 (item 8 on the agenda).

Summary of issues discussed:

- (i) The Strategy provided a framework for moving forward, recognising the need to expand the range of opportunities for tenants to get involved. The importance of publicising outcomes was also recognised.
- (ii) A range of different approaches would be used to keep tenants informed of how their input had been used for improvements, examples of which were given and included online and via social media.
- (iii) It would be possible to update tenants on performance more frequently than once a year. The benefits of doing so were briefly discussed.
- (iv) The draft Strategy would also be considered by the Charnwood Housing Residents Forum and the Council's Policy Scrutiny Group as part of the consultation process.
- (v) Tenants should be informed when it had not been considered appropriate to make the changes that they had suggested, including the reasons for that decision.

- (vi) The channels by which tenants could get involved needed to be made known to them. How that might be ensured was briefly discussed.
- (vii) Events held on the estates were invaluable in assisting tenant engagement.
- (viii) Current engagement forums and the level of participation in those were briefly discussed.
- (ix) It was disappointing that meetings of this Board had not always taken place due to being inquorate. That position should improve as tenant representatives on the Board reached full quota (it was hoped that the remaining vacancy would have been appointed to prior to the next meeting of the Board in May).
- (x) The value of tenants having a Facebook page administered by tenants as part of the engagement arrangements was briefly discussed. Tenants might be more willing to get involved under such an arrangement.
- (xi) How the “Charnwood 100” initiative referred to on page 10 of the report would operate was briefly outlined. That could be developed once the Strategy had been agreed.

RESOLVED that the draft Customer Engagement Strategy 2017-2020 be noted.

Reason

To acknowledge the Board’s consideration of the Strategy.

24. WORK PROGRAMME AND MEETING DATES 2017/18

The Board received a report of Head of Landlord Services to enable the Board to agree its Work Programme and meeting dates for 2017/18 (item 9 on the agenda). The Work Programme appended to the report set out the position following the last meeting of the Board on 9th November 2016, updated to take account of the inquorate meeting on 18th January 2017.

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 issues discussed:

- (i) It would be useful if the members of the Board could ask miscellaneous questions at meetings and have those answered. It was recognised that it was not appropriate to have an “Any Other Business” item on the agenda as notice should be given of the matters the Board intended to consider at each meeting. However, members could be asked in advance of the agenda being published whether they had any such questions, and those could then be listed on the agenda for response.

- (ii) Reference was made to the Council's lettings policies and whether consideration of those would be a matter within the remit of the Board as those were not within the Landlord Services function. **The Democratic Service Officer agreed to provide clarification on that to members of the Board as soon as possible following the meeting.**

RESOLVED

1. that members of the Board be asked in advance of the agenda being published for each meeting whether they had any miscellaneous questions on matters within the remit of the Board, and an item be included on the agenda for each meeting listing those questions (if any), for response at the meeting;
2. that , in addition to the Board considering its work programme at each meeting, members of the Board be asked in advance of the agenda being published for each meeting whether there are any additional items that they wish to consider at that meeting, and those be included on the agenda (if any);
3. that the following issues be removed from the work programme: (i) Tenant Inspectors and (ii) Customer Engagement – Tenant Inspectors – Feedback from the Charnwood Housing Residents Forum;
4. that the issue "Briefing and Housing and Planning Bill" be updated to be titled "Housing and Planning Act 2016 – Update";
5. that when a meeting of the Board cannot take place due to being inquorate, that meeting be rescheduled where possible;
6. that the following dates be agreed for meetings of the Board during the 2017/18 Council Year (all at 4.30pm):

Wednesday, 7th June 2017
Wednesday, 13th September 2017
Wednesday, 8th November 2017
Wednesday, 17th January 2018
Wednesday, 21st March 2018
Wednesday, 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 enable members of the Board to discuss and receive responses to such matters and to ensure notice is given of the matters to be considered at each meeting.

2. At the request of the Chair, to enable such items to be considered.
3. It had not been considered feasible to progress Tenant Inspectors as part of tenant engagement and other members of such engagement would be progressed.
4. To ensure that the information in the Work Programme is up to date.
5. To ensure, as far as possible, that regular meetings of the Board are held.
6. The Terms of Reference of the Board state that the Board will agree a programme of meetings for the forthcoming year annually, on the basis of meetings taking place every two months.
7. To ensure that the information in the Work Programme is up to date.

Notes:

1. Any questions that members of the Board might have on the performance information pack sent out with the agenda for this meeting would be emailed directly by those members to officers for response.
2. An updated work programme for the Board following this meeting is appended to these minutes.
3. These minutes are subject to confirmation as a correct record at the next meeting of the Board on 10th May 2017.

APPENDIX

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		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.
10th May 2017	Anti-social Behaviour relating to Council's Housing Stock	Head of Landlord Services	See HMAB minute 14.14 (and 14.13), 9th November 2016.
7th June 2017	Election of Chair and Vice-chair		Annual Item.
7th June 2017	HRA Revenue and Capital Outturn (2016/17)	Head of Landlord Services	Annual Report.
8th November 2017	Planned Maintenance Programme (including Charnwood Standard)	Head of Landlord Services	See HMAB minute 14.8, 9th November 2016. Report last submitted 18th January 2018 (meeting inquorate). To be Annual Report in November each year.

MEETING DATE/ FREQUENCY	ISSUE	INFORMATION REQUIRED/ INVITEES/ OFFICERS	NOTES
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.
TO BE SCHEDULED:			
To be scheduled	Housing Repair Services – Breakdown of Complaints	Head of Landlord Services	Six-monthly update reports are considered by the Performance Scrutiny Panel. Last submitted to Board 14th September 2016.
To be scheduled	New Decent Homes Contract - Update	Head of Landlord Services	Updates as and when there are matters to report. Last considered 22nd March 2017.
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.

MEETING DATE/ FREQUENCY	ISSUE	INFORMATION REQUIRED/ INVITEES/ OFFICERS	NOTES
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.
To be scheduled	Welfare Reform (Impact of) - Update	Head of Landlord Services	Last submitted to Board 10th December 2014.
To be scheduled	Service Area Delivery Plan	Head of Landlord Services	Added to work programme 13th August 2014.
To be scheduled	Open Spaces Contract	Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces	Added to work programme 13th August 2014.
To be scheduled	Housing Strategy	Head of Planning and Regeneration	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.