

**HOUSING MANAGEMENT ADVISORY BOARD
6TH NOVEMBER 2019**

PRESENT: The Chair (T. Edwardes)
The Vice Chair (T. Riley)
Councillors Draycott, Radford and Tassell
Board Members A. Davis and D. Wright

Repairs and Investment Manager
Head of Landlord Services
Group Accountant (IA)
Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing
Principal Officer Repairs and Maintenance
Senior Accountancy Assistant
Democratic Services Officer (NA)

APOLOGIES: Landlord Services Manager and T. Jackson

The Board was advised that the term had ended for the independent member T. Jackson and he had decided not to stand again. Therefore, the recruitment process was underway for a new independent member and everyone was advised they could share the advert with anyone interested.

47. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 11th September 2019 were confirmed as an accurate record.

48. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

49. DISABLED ADAPTATIONS POLICY REVIEW

The Head of Landlord Services submitted a report for the Board reviewing the implementation of the Disabled Adaptations Policy since last year.

The Board was advised that there had been several changes to the policy, including some that were significant. These were read out to the Board for their comment.

In regard to performance the Board was advised that whilst performance had improved, there was expected to be an increase in the current completion time of 63 days from the Occupational Therapist recommendation to completion of work as a number of cases that had formed a backlog were due to enter the completion figures.

RESOLVED

1. That the Head of Landlord Services would ensure that clear information about who to contact for adaptation requests was available on the Council's website.

2. That the useful contacts list issued to tenants would be updated to contain the number for disabled adaptation requests.
3. That the information contained in the new Disabled Adaptations Policy would be sent out to tenants via the Your Homes Matter magazine when Cabinet had approved the policy.

Reasons

1. To ensure that the information is widely available and easy to access for members of the public and Council tenants.
2. To provide them with helpful information and make it easier to contact the right person.
3. To inform all tenants about the policy.

50. ALLOCATIONS POLICY UPDATE

The Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing submitted a report for the Board with an update on the Council's revised Housing Allocation Policy.

The Board was advised that a review of the Housing Allocation Policy had taken place in 2017 which had included several consultation events. The revised policy now focused on "housing need" and the policy had been amended from 4 bands to 3. The Board was advised that more information about the bands was provided in the guide provided.

One of the concerns raised by the Board was the lack of paper forms provided for applicants and the move to an online system. The Board was advised that there had been a change to the system and applicants could apply either online, via a home visit or by completing the form over the phone with an officer.

RESOLVED

1. That the Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing will ensure that guidance provided for applicants by all staff includes all the different ways applicants can apply.
2. That the information be noted by the Board.

Reasons

1. To make sure that information provided to applicants is correct and applicants are fully informed about the applicant process and their options.
2. To acknowledge the Board's consideration of the item.

51. REVIEW OF SHELTERED HOUSING STOCK

The Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing provided a verbal update for the Board on progress made with the review of the Council's sheltered housing stock.

The Board was advised that the Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing had attended the Senior Citizens Forum to discuss their aspirations for their scheme, which would feed into the new sheltered housing standard that would be used to review schemes against. The standard would reflect the one recently used in the development of Riverside to ensure there was a consistency over all the schemes but acknowledging that not all schemes would be able to provide all aspirations due to their construction etc.

A Project Manager had now been procured for the Review of the Schemes.

A report would be presented at the January meeting of the Cabinet to approve the prioritisation of the Schemes to meet the Sheltered Housing Standard, a Communication Strategy, a Decant and Home Loss Policy and the recruitment of the Resident Engagement Officer. Once approved consultation would take place with the residents of the Schemes and Ward Councillors would be invited. The Resident Engagement Officer will be a single point of contact for residents and families throughout the review and delivery of the Sheltered Housing improvements.

RESOLVED

1. That the Ward Councillor(s) be included in the consultation process and be informed when work starts in their ward.
2. That an update on the scheme to be provided to the Board at its meeting on 25th March 2020 with a list of the proposed schemes to be renovated first.

Reasons

1. To keep the Ward Councillor up to date so they can advise residents in their ward.
2. To allow the Board to be kept up to date on this matter.

52. VOID PROPERTIES PROGRESS REPORT AND UPDATE

The Head of Landlord Services submitted a report for the Board to update them on the Council's current void properties and progress regarding improvements.

The Board was advised that currently the standard voids were on target but there was improvement to be made on the major void works. The internal cross departmental group continued to meet to discuss actions and monitor progress.

Some of the ideas to decrease the void times were to start work once a termination had been received by the team as well as advertising properties earlier to ensure a quicker turnaround of the property.

The Board was advised that the void standard had been updated and included more criteria to create a higher standard. The enhancements to the standard were highlighted to the Board for comment.

RESOLVED that the report be noted with the comments from the Board.

53. 2020/ 21 DRAFT BUDGETS

The Head of Landlord Services submitted a report to the Board for consideration and comment of the draft budget for 2020/2021.

The Board was advised that two service pressures had been identified:

1. Procurement of the Mobysoft RentSense software to help support officers with the increase of tenants moving over to Universal Credit. It was anticipated that the workload for the officers will increase and this software would help to alleviate some of their workload as well as help to identify tenants in need of extra support.
2. Extension of the Universal Credit Officer for a further two years to help assist with the migration of additional tenants over to Universal Credit. The Board was pleased to see this but felt that an additional officer should be put in place to deal with the increase in tenants migrating over. They felt strongly that there needed to be sufficient resources in place to support the tenants moving over to Universal Credit and did not feel that one officer was sufficient. The Board was advised that the situation would be closely monitored and there was an additional Tenancy Support Officer being recruited to help the team going forward.

The Board was also advised that there would be an increase in rent in line with the Government's rent policy for 2020 which would mean an increase of 2.7%. This raised some concerns with the Board as tenants were already struggling to meet their rents due to changeover to Universal Credit. The Head of Landlord Services advised that the increase would be eligible for universal credit.

The Board discussed the introduction of Universal Credit thus far and their concerns over the process of paying rent in arrears. The Board was advised that the current system of offering four rent free weeks spread out over the year was a well-known mechanism which tenants were familiar with, so the Council was apprehensive to change this.

The Council's garage sites review was also highlighted by the Board as it was currently underway and could provide additional housing units for the Council's housing stock. This idea was being explored by the Housing Team and would be considered.

RESOLVED

1. That an update of the Council's garage sites review be provided to the Board as soon as it is available.
2. That the concerns and views of the Board in relation to the need for additional Universal Credit Officers be fed back to the Cabinet.

Reasons

1. To keep the Board up to date with this matter.
2. To ensure that the Cabinet is aware of the Board's concerns.

54. PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

The performance information pack was presented to the Board for comment and consideration.

It was highlighted that the number of complaints in the Bellfoundry Estate had decreased. This was due to hard work from officers across the Anti-Social Behaviour Teams in the Council. The Board was advised that there was a monitoring system in place for complaints to ensure that improvements were continuous.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

55. 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.

56. WORK PROGRAMME

The Board received a report of the Head of Landlord Services to enable the Board to agree its Work Programme (item 11 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 the Scooter Policy and guidance be added to the Board's Work Programme for its meeting in January 2020.
2. That an update on the budget process be added to the Board's Work Programme for its meeting in January 2020.
3. That an update on the Council's Sheltered Housing Review be added to the Board's Work Programme for its meeting in March 2020.
4. That an update on the Council's garage sites review be added to the Board's Work Programme for its meeting in March 2020.
5. that the Board's Work Programme be updated to reflect all decisions made above and earlier in the meeting.

Reasons

1. So that the item can be considered by the Board.

- 2,3,4 To ensure the Board are kept up to date with this matter.
 5. To ensure that the information in the Work Programme is up to date.

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.
15 th January 2020	Housing Capital Programme	Head of Landlord Services	Last considered 16th October 2013.
15 th January 2020	Scooter Policy	Head of Landlord Services	Agreed by the Board at its meeting on 6 th November 2019.
15 th January 2020	Update on the budget process	Head of Landlord Services	Added by the Board at its meeting on 6 th November 2019.

MEETING DATE/ FREQUENCY	ISSUE	INFORMATION REQUIRED/ INVITEES/ OFFICERS	NOTES
25 th March 2020	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 11th September 2019.
25 th March 2020	Review of HRA Business Plan	Head of Landlord Services	
25 th March 2020	Housing Asset Management Strategy	Head of Landlord Services	Review of the update the strategy.
25 th March 2020	Tenancy Policy	Head of Landlord Services	Review of the new policy will be brought to the Board once it has been published.
25 th March 2020	Pets Policy	Head of Landlord Services	Added by the Landlord Services Manager.
25 th March 2020	Sheltered Housing Review	Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing	Added by the Board at its meeting on 6 th November 2019.
25 th March 2020	Garage Sites review	Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing	Added by the Board at its meeting on 6 th November 2019.
13 th May 2020	Election of Chair and Vice-chair		Annual Item.
15 th July 2020	HRA Revenue and Capital Outturn (2017/18)	Head of Landlord Services	Annual report.
9 th September 2020	Disabled Adaptations Policy	Head of Landlord Services	Annual report.
TO BE SCHEDULED:			

MEETING DATE/ FREQUENCY	ISSUE	INFORMATION REQUIRED/ INVITEES/ OFFICERS	NOTES
To be scheduled	Housing Strategy	Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing	Added to work programme 2nd April 2014.

NOTES:

1. No reference may be made to these minutes at the Council meeting on 20th January 2020 unless notice to that effect is given to the Democratic Services Manager by five members of the Council by noon on the fifth working day following publication of these minutes.
2. These minutes are subject to confirmation as a correct record at the next meeting of the Housing Management Advisory Board.