



HOUSING MANAGEMENT ADVISORY BOARD

To: Board Members Davis, Edwardes (Chair), Riley (Vice-Chair), Wright, Radford, Seaton and Brennan (For attention)

All other members of the Council
(For information)

You are requested to attend the meeting of the Housing Management Advisory Board to be held in Virtual Meeting - Zoom on Wednesday, 29th July 2020 at 4.30 pm for the following business.

Chief Executive

Southfields
Loughborough

21st July 2020

AGENDA

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR FOR 2020/21

The Board's Terms of Reference state that the Chair of the Board will be appointed annually by the Board, from among the tenant/leaseholder members. The Board may also appoint a Vice-chair from among its members.

2. APOLOGIES

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

3 - 7

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 15th January 2020.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

All members will make a declaration at each meeting if they have an interest in any item of business on the agenda which would affect them more than tenants or residents of the ward(s) affected generally.

5. LANDLORD SERVICES STATUS UPDATE

8 - 13

A report of the Head of Landlord Services to advise the Board of progress within the service since the last meeting.

6. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

In accordance with the Board's decision members of the Board were asked in advance of this 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

14 - 16

A report of the Head of Landlord Services to enable the Board to review and agree its Work Programme..

HOUSING MANAGEMENT ADVISORY BOARD 15TH JANUARY 2020

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

Repairs and Investment Manager
Head of Landlord Services
Landlord Services Manager
Group Accountant (IA)
Democratic Services Officer (NA)

Andy Green (Fortem)
Glen Richamond (Fortem)

APOLOGIES: T. Riley

57. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 6th November 2019 were confirmed as an accurate record.

58. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

59. AGENDA VARIANCE

At the approval of the Chair the following item was brought forward: Mobility Scooter Policy Update.

60. MOBILITY SCOOTER POLICY UPDATE

The Head of Landlord Services submitted a report to the Board to provide an update on the implementation of the Mobility Scooter Policy since 2015 and to enable the Board to propose any necessary changes to the policy.

The Board was advised that two sites had been identified for the pilot scheme of building individual scooter storage. These schemes would be financed from the budget allocation in the HRA account.

The Board highlighted various issues with scooter storage in communal areas of communal housing blocks so were pleased to hear that the Council was looking at ways to improve the storage of individual scooters.

RESOLVED that the update be noted with no changes to the policy.

Reason

To acknowledge the Board's consideration of the item.

61. CAPITAL CONTRACT UPDATE

The Head of Landlord Services submitted a report to the Board with an update on the progress of the decent homes contract with Fortem.

Andy Green and Glen Richmond from Fortem attended the meeting to provide an update to the Board. They provided an explanation for the red performance indicators in the list of contract commitments. They advised the Board that since the report had been published actions were in place to ensure that the commitments were completed or on track and expected to see more green indicators at the next meeting.

The Board was also advised that new contractors had been recruited to maximise direct delivery of the contract and a new additional site manager would be in place to provide further operational support. The team at Fortem felt that they were now adequately resourced to deliver the contract and that the Council could expect to see an improvement in the next few weeks.

The Board noted their concerns about the length of time it was still taking for work to be completed and felt that this was discouraging tenants from agreeing to works being completed in their property. The team from Fortem felt that progress could be made by early viewing of the Council's programme of upcoming work to allow them to schedule work by area, thus maximising resources and transport.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Reason

To acknowledge the Board's consideration of the matter.

62. CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY ACTION PLAN REVIEW

The Head of Landlord Services submitted a report to the Board with an update on the customer engagement strategy action plan.

The Landlord Services Manager attended the meeting and assisted with consideration of the item.

The Board was advised that the action plan was implemented last March with the principal aims and actions of the plan being targeted on the ways in which tenants could be involved and delivering a new menu of involvement.

The customer engagement strategy action plan was deemed successful as it had led to a successful tenant networking event and feedback from tenants regarding their level of involvement in events.

Work was now starting on the new strategy for 2021 - 2024 and all the feedback gained from tenants would be used to inform the new plan and create the focus for the next year.

The Board also raised the issue of tenant involvement in the review of the Council's new communal cleaning contract. There was some concern and disappointment from the Board that tenants who had volunteered to help with the review of the contract had received no acknowledgement from officers. It was felt that an update should have been provided to the tenants to keep them informed.

Action: The Landlord Services Manager would ensure that any interested tenants were responded to as soon as possible and provide the Board with an update report on progress with the contract to members at HMAB's March 2020 meeting.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Reason

To acknowledge the Board's consideration of the item.

63. 2020/21 DRAFT BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Head of Landlord Services submitted a report to the Board to advise of the projected draft budget and capital programme positions for 2020/21.

The Head of Landlord Services and the Group Accountant assisted with consideration of this item.

The Board was provided with an update on the budget process since the last meeting. The additional resource for the Universal Credit Officer was added to the draft budget, to be agreed by the Cabinet. There had also been a review of any work completed by other officers and services in regards to the function of the HRA, as requested by the new Chief Executive, which identified that there had been some under-charging which had resulted in an increase in re-charges to be applied to the HRA.

There had also been some changes to the capital programme amounts to reflect work programmed for the coming year. A substantial sum had been put aside to pay for new doors and fire safety work as required in the new guidance for local authorities. This raised a discussion over fly-tipping in communal areas as a result of the charge for bulky waste collections and how it could affect fire exits. The Board was advised that any instances of fly-tipping should be reported to the Council's Tenancy and Estate Management Team who could visit the property and investigate.

RESOLVED that the report be noted with agreement from the Board concerning the 2020-21 draft budget.

Reason

To acknowledge the Board's consideration of the item.

64. CORPORATE BUSINESS PLAN 2020 - 2024

A report of the Head of Landlord Services was submitted to enable the Board to comment on the draft Corporate Business Plan for 2020 – 2024 and propose any additional actions.

The Head of Landlord Services assisted with consideration of the item.

The Board was given a detailed explanation of the proposed Corporate Business Plan actions relating to tenants and the Council's housing stock.

One of the actions was to introduce a new tenancy policy and tenancy agreement which would reflect recent changes. This led to a discussion about the quality of some properties due to neglect from tenants and how that was dealt with. The Board was advised that properties in poor condition due to neglect or tenant damage were often identified in the course of day to day repairs, gas servicing and housing management activity. The Council could take enforcement action against tenants if they have damaged their property as a breach of tenancy.

The Board noted that the Council's Scrutiny Commission had concerns that the Corporate Plan did not contain enough focus on people and the residents. There was an assurance that the focus on universal credit in the plan, and the review of the tenancy policy and tenancy agreement would reflect this aspiration, and that Landlord Services worked hard to ensure that tenants kept successful tenancies.

RESOLVED that the comments of the Board in relation to the new Corporate Business Plan be incorporated.

Reasons

To ensure that the needs of the tenants are being represented.

65. 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.

66. WORK PROGRAMME

The Board received a report of the Head of Landlord Services to enable the Board to agree its Work Programme (item 10 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 an update on the Council's general and major voids be added to the Board's Work Programme for its meeting in March 2020.
2. That the Council's new Corporate Plan be added to the Board's Work Programme for its meeting in May 2020.
3. that the Board's Work Programme be updated to reflect all decisions made above and earlier in the meeting.

Reasons

- 1&2. To enable the matter to be considered by the Board.
3. To ensure that the information in the Work Programme is up to date.

NOTES:

1. No reference may be made to these minutes at the Council meeting on 24th February 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.

HOUSING MANAGEMENT ADVISORY BOARD - 29TH JULY 2020

Report of the Head of Landlord Services

SERVICE STATUS UPDATE

1. Purpose of Report

To provide an update on the status of landlord services in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

2. Recommendation

The Board is asked to note the update.

3. Background

In March 2020 the below steps were taken to:

- Reduce the risk of transmission of Covid-19
- Comply with government guidance
- Maintain critical services due to an increasing likelihood of staff shortages
- Support Tenants

Health and Safety - A suite of Covid-19 risk assessments were produced and training on the correct use of personal protective equipment delivered to staff.

Repairs - The scope of repairs was limited to urgent and emergency only, and non-urgent planned works (e.g. kitchens, bathrooms etc.) were stopped. In-house resources were targeted towards work in empty properties.

Other Home Visits - Non-urgent visits were put on hold.

Tenancy Enforcement - The service of new notices of possession proceedings was placed on hold (generally).

Legionella testing - Due to a shortage of wardens, who normally undertake legionella flushing at sheltered accommodation, the Council's contractor Second Element was instructed to undertake the work. The in-house repairs team subsequently took over the function to bring it back in house.

Outbound Telephone Calls to Vulnerable Customers - remaining warden capacity was directed towards calling lifeline customers and residents in sheltered accommodation to check they were OK and to refer them to Community Action Charnwood where appropriate. Additionally, all single tenants in general needs accommodation over the age of 70 were called.

Sheltered Accommodation -

- Notices were placed in sheltered schemes reflecting government guidance
- An enhanced frequent contact point cleaning regime was introduced.
- A letter was issued to all residents of the steps they could take to protect themselves and others.
- Communal lounges and kitchens were closed.
- Scooter rooms were limited to one person at a time.
- Notices were affixed to access points stating that only essential visits were permitted.

General Communication - A letter was sent to all tenants to set out the position in respect of services and websites were updated.

4. Monitoring of Critical Services and Key Performance Information (KPI)

Critical services have been monitored on a weekly basis and include:

- Undertaking urgent and emergency repairs
- Void works
- Delivery of the 24-hour lifeline service and warden attendance to lifeline activations
- Compliance activity - fire inspections, alarm testing, gas checks, legionella testing and dosing, electrical testing, lift servicing, etc.
- Cleaning at sheltered accommodation
- Checking on vulnerable tenants

A suite of KPIs has been monitored on a weekly basis. Highlights include:

Urgent and Emergency Repairs - Around 85 urgent and emergency repairs were completed each week in June 2020.

Gas Safety Checks - In March 2020 the courts stopped hearing applications for warrants of entry to undertake a gas service, and tenants have refused access in some instances for reasons including self-isolation due to suspected or confirmed Covid-19 / shielding due a member of the household being extremely clinically vulnerable. The number of checks not completed at the end of June is 58.

Rent Arrears / Rent Collection - The number of tenants known to be claiming universal credit has increased from 1072 at the end of March 2020 to 1204 at the end of June. Due to Covid-19 the government has halted possession proceedings, and as stated generally new notices of seeking possession are not being issued. As expected, rent arrears have increased, and this is consistent with the national picture. Rent arrears were £670k at the start of April, increasing to £836k at the end of June 20. Whilst an upward trend over this part of the year is expected, the increase in arrears is steeper than in previous years. Advice and support are offered to tenants by the Financial Inclusion and Tenancy Support Teams and Universal Credit Officer.

Number of Open Anti-Social Behaviour Cases - The team are currently experiencing a peak in workload and have reduced staffing. In early April 2020 the team had around 100 open cases rising to 228 at the end of June. The increase in reports of ASB is consistent with the national picture. Housemark projections suggest that the number of reports of ASB will now decrease, returning to normal levels over the rest of the Summer and into the Autumn.

Calls to Vulnerable Tenants - Around 1000 calls have been made each week to vulnerable tenants.

5. Restoration of Services

The primary position is that where reasonable and practicable interactions with customers will take place remotely i.e. by telephone, email, or letter, or outside the property. The time inside the property and interactions with tenants is kept as short as reasonably practicable, and a 2-metre distance must be observed.

Households that are subject to local lockdown restrictions / self-isolation due to suspected or confirmed coronavirus / social shielding are identified. Visits to these households only take place with approval of the Head of Service or another member of the Council Corporate Leadership Team following the completion of a dynamic risk assessment. Visits of the nature must be of an urgent / emergency nature.

Most non-urgent services are now being delivered and new non-urgent repairs can be logged from 4th August 2020 to allow a period for the backlog of repairs put on hold in March to be worked on. The status of services at 10th July 2020 is set out at Appendix 1. An update letter will be sent to all tenants.

Officer to contact:

Peter Oliver
Head of Landlord Services
Peter.oliver@charnwood.gov.uk
01509 634666

Appendix 1 - Service Status at 10th July 2020

Key

Green - Service can be delivered

Amber - Service can be delivered only with specific authorisation

Red - Service cannot yet be delivered

Function	Local Lockdown Area	Rest of Borough	Authorisation Level / Comment
Repairs and Voids			
Urgent and emergency repairs (internal works)	Amber	Green	Head of Landlord Services or member of Corporate Leadership Team
Urgent and emergency repairs (external works)	Amber	Green	Head of Landlord Services or member of Corporate Leadership Team
Non-urgent and non-emergency repairs (internal and external works)	Red	Green	New repairs from 4 th August 20. Backlog to be worked on first.
Void repairs	Green	Green	
Planned works (external)	Red	Green	
Planned works (internal)	Red	Red	Contractor risk assessments not yet received
Disabled adaptations	Amber	Green	Local Lockdown Area -

			Head of Landlord Services or member of Corporate Leadership Team / Rest of Borough - case by case decision making at Team Leader level subject to an appropriate risk assessment being in place
Compliance			
All compliance activity - gas servicing, electrical tests, fire safety inspections, legionella tests, testing of fire alarms, and emergency lighting etc.			
Tenancy and Income Management			
Mutual exchange visits			
Urgent and emergency estate inspections and visits that do not involve entering an occupied property			Head of Landlord Services or member of Corporate Leadership Team
Non-urgent and non-emergency estate inspections and visits that do not involve entering an occupied property			
Urgent and emergency visits that involve entering an occupied property			Local Lockdown Area - Head of Landlord Services or other Member of the Corporate Leadership Team
Non-urgent and non-emergency visits that involve entering an occupied property			
Urgent and emergency office appointments	NA		Subject to office opening
Non-secure licensee sign ups at the council offices	NA		Subject to office opening

Warden and Lifeline Services			
Repair to existing lifeline equipment			Head of Landlord Services or Member of the Corporate Leadership Team
Delivery, and collection of lifeline equipment			
Demonstration and installation of lifeline equipment by officer			
Pull cord and pendant checks			
In person emergency response to lifeline activation or sheltered accommodation fire alarm			
Cleaning of sheltered accommodation			
Viewings at sheltered voids			

HOUSING MANAGEMENT ADVISORY BOARD – 29TH JULY 2020

Report of the Head of Landlord Services

ITEM WORK PROGRAMME

Purpose of the Report

To enable the Board to agree its work programme. The current work programme, appended, sets out the position following the last meeting of the Board on 15th January 2020.

Recommendation

To agree that the Board's work programme be updated in accordance with the decisions taken during consideration of this item and any further decisions taken during the course of the meeting.

Reason

To ensure that the information contained within the work programme is up to date.

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.
9 th September 2020	Tenancy Policy	Head of Landlord Services	Review of the new policy will be brought to the Board once it has been published.
9 th September 2020	Update on Voids	Head of Landlord Services	Requested by the Board at their meeting on 15 th January 2020.
9 th September 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.
May 2021	Election of Chair and Vice-chair		Annual Item.

MEETING DATE/ FREQUENCY	ISSUE	INFORMATION REQUIRED/ INVITEES/ OFFICERS	NOTES
TO BE SCHEDULED:			
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.