

**HOUSING MANAGEMENT ADVISORY BOARD
8TH NOVEMBER 2023**

PRESENT: The Chair (Edwardes)
The Vice Chair (Riley)
Board Members Ali, Hudson, D. Wright, J. Wright,
Goode, Infield and Monk

Director Housing and Wellbeing
Repairs and Investment Manager
Landlord Services Manager
Democratic Services Officer (RD)

APOLOGIES: Board Member Davis

22. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 6th September 2023 were confirmed as an accurate record.

23. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS, AND OTHER REGISTRABLE AND NON-REGISTRABLE INTERESTS

No disclosures were made.

24. BUDGET SETTING AND PRIORITIES FOR 2024/25

The Board considered a report providing an overview of the budget setting process and priorities for 2024/25 (item 4 on the agenda).

Assisting with consideration of the matter: The Director Housing and Wellbeing.

The Board noted an error in the report (page 2 of the agenda supplement) which was identified in the paragraph under “Annual budget setting process” where the second sentence should not have been included.

Summary of responses to questions and discussion:

- (i) Expected that the number of voids would decrease from early in 2024 once the post of Void Repairs Manager was filled and a contractor for standard voids appointed;
- (ii) Tenants were telephoned directly after delivery of service for their feedback and this was considered positive, although transactional telephone-based satisfaction surveys of this nature generally recorded a higher satisfaction rate than perception-based surveys and postal surveys;
- (iii) The Board would be kept updated in respect of the systems being developed to support the tracking of responsive repair works;

- (iv) Garage sites were currently being reviewed and there would be an update next year;
- (v) It was noted that there was an increase in waste items being left in communal areas. The Board were interested in the costs for estate maintenance in 2023/24 and whether the new bulky waste collection system was more cost effective. Costs would be circulated to the Board through Democratic Services.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Reason

To acknowledge the Board's consideration of the matter.

25. CAPITAL DELIVERY UPDATE

The Board considered a report providing an update on the delivery of capital works (item 5 on the agenda).

Assisting with consideration of the matter: the Director Housing and Wellbeing.

It was noted that the replacement windows being used were of good standard in terms of thermal insulation. Further details on the thermal insulation ratings would be circulated to the Board.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Reason

To acknowledge the Board's consideration of the matter.

26. ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY UPDATE

The Board considered a report providing an update on the delivery of the Asset Management Strategy 2023-2028 (item 6 on the agenda).

Assisting with consideration of the matter: The Director Housing and Wellbeing.

Summary of responses to questions and discussion:

- (i) Clarified that "M&E" surveys referred to mechanical and electrical surveys;
- (ii) A copy of the High Level Energy Study would be circulated to the Board.

RESOLVED

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the following item be added to the work programme:

Repairs Policy (to be scheduled for the 10th January 2024 meeting).

Reasons

1. To acknowledge the Board's consideration of the matter.
2. It is useful and appropriate for the Board to consider this matter at a future meeting.

27. RECRUITMENT OF REPAIRS STAFF - UPDATE

The Board considered a report providing an update on the vacancies within the Repairs and Voids teams of Landlord Services (item 7 on the agenda).

Assisting with consideration of the matter: Repairs and Investment Manager.

The Board noted an amendment to information in the report relating to the expected advertisement date of four new posts created within the Repairs and Voids teams. The posts would now be advertised in early 2024.

Summary of responses to questions and discussion:

- (i) Positive that there had been a good response to the recruitment campaign;
- (ii) Considered important for roles to be attractive and competitive against the labour market, e.g. competitive salaries, holiday allowance, pension scheme and availability of apprenticeships;
- (iii) It was hoped that the possible introduction of apprenticeships would be investigated towards the end of the financial year;
- (iv) It was envisaged that apprenticeships would be concentrated in the local area with local colleges and the university.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Reason

To acknowledge the Board's consideration of the matter.

28. COMMUNAL AREAS CLEANING – CONTRACT MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS & CRITERIA FOR NEW CONTRACT

The Board considered a report providing an update on progress with the procurement of a new communal cleaning contract (item 8 on the agenda).

Assisting with consideration of the matter: Landlord Services Manager.

The closing date for tender applications was 13th November 2023 and it was noted that in using an 'open tender' there would likely be an increase in the number of applications received.

Officers would assess the tender applications in the weeks commencing 20th and 27th November 2023 and it was confirmed that the Chair would be involved in the assessment process.

Summary of responses to questions and discussion:

- (i) There would be a standstill period of two weeks, on completion of the contract award, in which unsuccessful contractors would have the chance to challenge the decision;
- (ii) The contract would begin in the new year;
- (iii) Internal bin storage areas would be included in the new contract;
- (iv) Concerns raised with the quality of the service in relation to cold water being used for cleaning. Confirmed that the current specifications did not require hot water and that cold water cleaning was not a problem if the correct chemicals were used;
- (v) Confirmed that the tenancy management team carried out inspections;
- (vi) Board of the view that the communal cleaning specification was positive.

RESOLVED

1. that the Chair and/or Vice-Chair meet with the appointed contractor in the new year.
2. that the report be noted.

Reasons

1. To reflect the Board's involvement and interest in the communal cleaning contract.
2. To acknowledge the Board's consideration of the matter.

29. SHELTERED SCHEMES REVIEW

The Director of Housing and Wellbeing provided the Board with a verbal update on the Sheltered Schemes Review. He stated that a planning application for nine bungalows had been submitted in August 2023 and was currently awaiting planning permission, possibly to be considered at Plans Committee on 14th December 2023.

A response had been made to queries received from the Highways Agency and further comments were expected. Subject to planning permission the scheme would be going out to tender by the end of 2023, with expected appointment of a contractor in March 2024.

EV charging points, energy efficiency, power source assessment, heat pumps and property insulation would all be investigated.

RESOLVED that the Board noted the update.

Reason

To ensure that the Board was kept informed of the progress of the Sheltered Schemes Review.

30. PERFORMANCE INFORMATION PACK

The Board considered a report providing information on the performance of Landlord Services for the second quarter of the financial year, July to September 2023 (item 10 on the agenda).

Assisting with consideration of the matter: Repairs and Investment Manager.

Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) had recently been implemented by the Regulator of Social Housing, requiring authorities to report on and maintain the measures.

Summary of discussion:

- (i) Highlighted that the number of anti-social behaviour (ASB) cases opened per 1,000 homes was relatively high;
- (ii) A high number of complaints were being resolved at stage 1 which was considered positive, although the number of complaints was too high and response times too slow;
- (iii) Attention was drawn to figures relating to gas responsive works, roofing and drainage;
- (iv) 'DLO' referred to Direct Labour Organisation in relation to repairs;
- (v) Further resident liaison and administrative resource had been secured and contractor orders would be managed through a portal on the system. It was hoped that this would improve complaints response times and ensure target timescales were met;
- (vi) Repairs and Investment Manager confirmed that further data could be provided if required.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Reason

To acknowledge the Board's consideration of the matter.

31. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

In accordance with the Board's previous decision, 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.

32. WORK PROGRAMME

The Board considered a report to enable it to agree its work programme (item 12 on the agenda).

Assisting with consideration of the matter: Director Housing and Wellbeing.

The Decant and Disturbance Policy would be going to Cabinet in January 2024 and a minor amendment to the report would be needed regarding food allowance.

RESOLVED

1. that the following item be added to the work programme:

Re-designation of Stock (Declassification of 45+ Properties) – Update (20th March 2024 meeting).
2. that the following already listed item be scheduled as follows:

Housing Strategy (10th January 2024 meeting).
3. that the Board proceed on the basis of the submitted work programme, updated to reflect work undertaken at this meeting and any amendments or additions agreed above or earlier in the meeting.

Reasons

- 1&2. It is appropriate and useful for the Board to consider these matters and to ensure that items already listed are suitably scheduled.
3. To ensure that the information in the Board's work programme is up to date.

At the close of the meeting the Chair thanked the Repairs and Investment Manager and the Customer Engagement Officer for their hard work in supporting a tenant with a roofing problem. Their support had made a positive difference in a difficult situation.

NOTES:

1. No reference may be made to these minutes at the next ordinary Council meeting 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.