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HOUSING MANAGEMENT ADVISORY BOARD 12TH JUNE 2019

PRESENT: The Chair (T. Edwardes)
The Vice Chair (T. Riley)
Members Davis, Wright, Jackson, Draycott,
Radford and Tassell

Councillors Harper-Davies (Cabinet Lead Member
for Performance of Major Contracts) and Mercer
(Cabinet Lead Member for Housing)

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

31. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR FOR 2019/20

The Board was asked for nominations for a Chair and Vice-chair for the Council year 2019/20.

RESOLVED

1. that Mrs T. Edwardes be elected as Chair of the Board for the 2019/20 Council year;
2. that Ms T. Riley be elected as Vice-chair of the Board for the 2019/20 Council year.

32. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Matters arising from the minutes:

- (i) The Tenancy Policy was due to be considered at the June meeting. The Board was advised that the item had been deferred as it was not ready for publication. It was agreed that it would be brought to the Board when it was ready.
- (ii) The date of the January meeting following concerns about previous January meetings being inquorate. The Board discussed options but agreed that the date of the meeting would remain the same and be rescheduled.

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 27th March 2019 were then confirmed as an accurate record.

33. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

34. MOBILISATION OF NEW DECENT HOMES CONTRACT - UPDATE

A report of the Head of Landlord Services to provide information to the Board on the mobilisation of the new Decent Homes Contract was considered (item 05 on the agenda).

Ryan Wilkes the Contracts Manager and Andy Green the Regional Operational Director (North) attended the meeting from Fortem to assist with consideration of the item.

Discussion points raised:

- (i) Some of the projects had not been completed such as the bathrooms but they would be carried over into the next year of work and Fortem were confident that all of the work would be completed.
- (ii) There had been an improvement in performance throughout quarter 1 and the target dates for completion of work had reduced. Fortem were aware that whilst the improvements were positive more needed to be done to improve waiting times for completion of work. They advised that Board that recruitment was in place for more staff to help achieve targets. There was also an ongoing discussion with the Council's officers regarding a change of materials used to help with quicker completion dates. This would be implemented if it proved to be cost and time effective.
- (iii) Fortem were keen to highlight their involvement with local schools and colleges in the area where they were able to talk to the students about apprenticeship training.

RESOLVED

1. That some more information be provided to the Board regarding the completion times for properties and a detailed explanation of "snag" properties to identify any trends or persistent problems.
2. That a breakdown of the customer satisfaction survey responses be provided to the Board to show the levels of satisfaction for different work streams.
3. That the report be noted.

Reasons

- 1&2. To provide the Board with the information requested.
3. To acknowledge the Board's consideration of this matter.

35. HRA REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN 2018/19

The Board received a report of the Head of Finance and Property Services setting out the HRA Revenue and Capital Outturn 2018/19 (item 6 on the agenda). The report was presented by the Group Accountant.

Summary of discussion:

- (i) In regards to the HRA £1.079M had been moved to the Housing finance fund throughout the year.
- (ii) The Council currently owed £79M in debt relating to the 2012 self-financing settlement to the government. There was a concern that the money would need repaying soon.
- (iii) The planned maintenance works fund had a shortfall of £268,000 which was due to work not being carried out over the course of the year and so the money was being carried over to the next financial year.
- (iv) The amount of rent arrear debt had increased from £866,000 to £965,000 over the past year. The money to cover the rent arrear debt had already been provided for. If arrears were collected that could be spent on other housing priorities.
- (v) In regards to the Capital Programme there had been a £754,000 shortfall in spending but the Council had spent £6m which was more than in previous years. This amount included purchasing 11 properties to add to the Council's housing stock.
- (vi) The Finance Team would be working on a revised HRA business plan to cover HRA spending for the next 30 years, specifically detailing the next 5 years. The plan also included balancing spending with loan repayments.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Reason

To acknowledge the Board's consideration of this matter.

36. THE COUNCIL'S NEW SCRUTINY STRUCTURE

A report of the Head of Strategic Support was presented to the Board detailing the Council's new Scrutiny Structure (item 7 on the agenda).

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

The Board was keen to ensure that under the new structure their comments would still be included. The Cabinet Lead Members for Housing and Performance of Major Contracts attended the meeting and assured the Board that they valued their comments and endeavoured to include them wherever possible. They were also grateful for the input of the Board on issues as they knew the situation best being tenants themselves.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Reason

To acknowledge the Board's consideration of this matter.

37. COMMUNAL CLEANING CONTRACT

A report of the Head of Landlord Services updating members of the Board on the proposed communal cleaning service to residents was considered (item 08 on the agenda).

The Landlord Services Manager assisted with consideration of the item.

Discussion points raised:

- (i) The Board was advised that a mixture of fortnightly and monthly cleaning had been decided for the communal blocks following tenants being consulted on their preferences and then comparing those with the opinions of tenancy management officers. There would be a weekly charge for tenants which would be eligible for recovery for those claiming housing benefit and universal credit. The additional charge might also make some tenants become eligible for housing benefit or universal credit who were not at the current time.
- (ii) The Board wanted to see a review of the scheme to see how it was working. It was agreed that a review would be provided to the Board halfway through the contract.

The Board wanted to record that they welcomed the report and were thankful for the work that officers had completed so far. They were pleased that the communal cleaning could begin soon and hoped that it would encourage tenants to take pride in their homes.

RESOLVED

1. That some more information be provided to the Board following the meeting detailing which schemes would be cleaned on a fortnightly and monthly basis.
2. That a recommendation be added to the report to include that the first cleaning to take place will not be charged to tenants.
3. That the report be noted, and the Board endorses the recommendations.

Reasons

1. To provide the Board with information requested.
2. To ensure the information is provided to tenants.
3. To acknowledge the Board's consideration of the matter.

38. 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 although the Board requested some updates which were added to the Board's work programme.

39. PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

A report of the Head of Landlord Services updating the Board on changes to the reporting of Landlord Services performance information was considered (item 10 on the agenda).

The Landlord Services Manager assisted with consideration of the item.

Discussion points raised:

- (i) It was proposed that some of the information currently provided to the Board be removed. The effect on rent arrears of welfare reform measures, namely the benefit cap and the spare bedroom subsidy, which were introduced in 2013 and on which Landlord Services have reported since then, has now stabilised. It is neither having an increasing nor a significant effect on arrears now. For that reason the proposal was to cease reporting on these measure and concentrate on develop further, performance indicators on the effect on rent arrears and income collection of universal credit.
- (ii) The Board requested additional information on universal credit performance by including the average debt owed by tenants who were not receiving universal credit in order to compare that with the average debt of those who are. There would be a change to the reporting of anti-social behaviour cases to make the presentation of performance information consistent. An additional performance measure would be added, namely, the number of cases still open at the end of the reporting period and the average time those cases had been open.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Reason

To acknowledge the Board's consideration of the matter.

40. WORK PROGRAMME AND MEETING DATES FOR 2019/20

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 an update on the Council's Sheltered Housing review be added to the Board's Work Programme for their next meeting in September.

2. That a progress report on the Council's void properties and the process for dealing with voids be added to the Board's Work Programme for their meeting in November.
3. That the Repairs and Investment Team Leader be invited to the Board's next meeting in September.
4. 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 provide the Board with an update on the Repairs and Maintenance Service under new management.
4. 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.

MEETING DATE/ FREQUENCY	ISSUE	INFORMATION REQUIRED/ INVITEES/ OFFICERS	NOTES
Every meeting	Performance information – update on universal credit and update on Fortem decent homes contract		Two updates to be included in the performance information pack.
11 th September 2019	Sheltered Housing review	Head of Landlord Services	Review requested at the last meeting of the Board on 12th June 2019.
11 th September 2019	Disabled Adaptations Policy	Head of Landlord Services	Annual Report.
11 th September 2019	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 27th March 2019.
6 th November 2019	Void Properties progress report and update	Head of Landlord Services	Information requested by the Board at its meeting on 12th June 2019.
6 th November 2019	2020/21 Draft Budgets (Revenue and Capital)	Head of Landlord Services	2019/20 Draft budgets were considered formally by the Board at its meeting on 7th November 2018. Annual Report.
13 th May 2020	Election of Chair and Vice-chair		Annual Item.
13 th May 2020	HRA Revenue and Capital Outturn (2017/18)	Head of Landlord Services	Annual Report.
TO BE SCHEDULED:			

MEETING DATE/ FREQUENCY	ISSUE	INFORMATION REQUIRED/ INVITEES/ OFFICERS	NOTES
To be scheduled	Tenancy Policy	Head of Landlord Services	Review of the new policy will be brought to the Board once it has been published.
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	Review of the update the strategy.
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:

1. No reference may be made to these minutes at the Council meeting on 2nd September 2019 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.