

**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.