

# Bristol City Council

## Minutes of the Housing Management Board

30 May 2022 at 6.00 pm



**Chair:** Professor Alex Marsh, University of Bristol (Independent Member).

**Councillors:** Kerry Bailes, Tony Dyer.

**Tenant Representatives:** Peter Daw, Peter Edwards, Christine Jory, Philip Morris.

**Leaseholder Representatives:** Not present

**Associate Tenant Members:** Sibusiso Tshabalala

**Officers:** Donald Graham Interim Director (Homes and Landlord Services); Sarah Spicer Business Innovation Manager (Housing and Landlord Services); Jonathan Williams Policy & Project Officer (Housing and Landlord Services); Elizabeth Dewing Project Manager Housing (Change Services); Alison Napper Asset Management and Review Manager (Housing and Landlord Services); Craig Cook Head of Service Response and Repairs (Housing and Landlord Services); Steve Gregory-Clerk (Democratic Services).

### 1 Welcome, Introductions and Apologies for Absence

The Chair welcomed all parties to the meeting and introductions were made.

The Chair informed members that there had been a small change to the agenda order so that agenda item 6 (Housing Allocation Review) would now become agenda item 4.

Apologies were received from Councillor Carla Denyer, Councillor Richard Eddy, Councillor Tom Renhard (Executive Member Housing Delivery and Homes) and Nigel Varley (Associate Tenant Member), Liz Cheetham Engagement Team Leader (Housing and Landlord Services).

Noted that Ross Dallimore and Susan Houghton (Leaseholder Representatives) were not present.



## 2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Resolved –

**That the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 January 2022 be agreed as a correct record.**

### Matters arising

Several issues were raised these included –

1. Social housing cluster regarding local engagement with the Council so could know where and what type of area and type of properties engaged in the Business Plan review. Business Innovation Manager said that some follow up work had been done and details would be sent to HMB Members after the meeting. **Action** (action completed after meeting)
2. Clarification on certain complaints regarding Northfield House. Phil Morris to share details with Sarah Spicer, Business Innovation Manager to follow up. **Action**

### **Actions**

3. Homes and Community Board not met for a while. Business Innovation Manager to talk to Cllr Renhard as the delegate for the meeting. **Action**
4. Tenant participation looking at co-design and interest in ‘virtual’ v ‘in person’, but wider canvassing needed.
5. New housing officer only works part time, was there a redirect on e-mail when absent? Business Innovation Manager to clarify. **Action**
6. Additional information requested regarding the analysis of complaints, Business Innovation manager to provide this. **Action** (action completed after meeting)
7. Tenant Participation function completed.
8. Regarding recent referendum on Mayoral model v new committee system, confirmed that no changes proposed at current time as two years away so could not plan this early. A new committee structure would be put in place in due course.

## 3 Public Forum



No statements/petitions had been received from the public.

#### 4 Housing Allocations Review Update

The Committee received a presentation about how the Council proposed to improve the way it lets social housing and to implement a revised scheme that improved the service's ability to:

- Support more mixed, balanced, and sustainable communities.
- House those in the greatest need.
- Be more efficient and user friendly for applicants, the council, housing associations and other partner organisations.
- Give realistic expectations about being housed to those who had joined the Home Choice Bristol register.

It was envisaged that public consultation would commence in June 2022.

Members were informed of inputs that had been gathered so far –

- Initial Research & Analysis
  - 2019/2020 Evidence Base Findings,
  - Rethinking Allocations Summary
- 2020 Survey Report.
- 2020 Locality Report on Community Events.
- Opinion Papers (Andy Gale Housing, Shelter, Bristol Law Centre).
- Focus Groups Input (DV & Hate Crime, Adult Social Care, Young People, Older People, Healthcare, Disability, CSC, Various staff groups).
- Journey Mapping Events Output: A cross-sectional views on the experience of engaging with the housing scheme.
- Other LA's – Particularly those recently updated e.g. Manchester, Birmingham.
- Following analysis of all the gathered inputs there was a large engagement event on 25 May 2022 to provide wider consultation on the proposals being put forward.

Following discussion Members made the following comments:

1. The engagement event held on 25 May 2022 had been well attended with up to sixty-five people present.
2. Northfield House no notification of allocation rules, and significant social disorder on site. Business Innovation Manager to investigate. **Action**
3. Allocation review long overdue (Last reviewed 2014). There were currently 17,000+ on waiting register.



4. More Councillors to be briefed as Council makes final decision.
5. Consultation from end of June until mid-August and report to next HMB. The HMB to act as a sounding board.
6. The Housing Partnership Agreement was being reviewed and an initiative was on the go to review and revitalise Homes West which was the more general housing collaboration across the region.
7. Essential that public engagement be improved.

**Resolved – That the presentation be noted.**

## **5 Investment Plan – additional investment proposals**

The Committee received a report from the Asset Strategy Manager regarding a proposal on how to translate the additional budgets agreed following the Big Housing Conversation consultation into deliverable services and programmes of work to deliver the changes envisaged.

Members of the Board were advised that –

The Investment Plan had been considered as part of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan (HRA BP) review within the *Big Housing Conversation: Investing in Council Homes*. The feedback had influenced the proposals to improve standards in existing council homes and the HRA BP Cabinet report had proposed investment in:

1. **Energy efficiency and reducing carbon emissions:** an additional £80m to make homes more energy efficient and to reduce carbon emissions, through further wall insulation schemes and a programme of photo-voltaic (PV) panel installations. This would ensure all homes reached a minimum Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) of C by 2030.
2. **Bathroom modernisation programme:** £12.5m to commence a five-year bathroom replacement programme that would deliver 5500 modern new bathrooms in council homes by 2027.
3. **Investing in communal areas, blocks, and estates:** add £0.5m to the 2022/23 budget, and in total £8.7m over 5-years, to improve standards in communal areas, blocks, and estates. This would help address known issues with anti-social behaviour and further work would be undertaken to determine how best to utilise this.

The Board were further informed that -

4. Rent rises were being used to fund additional investment in homes.
5. There would be new programmes for bathroom, energy efficiency in blocks, communal areas and estates.
6. The planned improvements in energy efficiency would include pilots and bidding for Government funding.



7. For communal areas there would be an additional £0.5m focussed on improving the look and feel of estates. It was suggested that for year 1 there would be a rapid response service, assisted garden scheme, increased provision for Neighbourhood Improvement Bids and Environmental Improvement Bids.
8. Residents would be engaged for ideas regarding spending on improving blocks, communal areas, and estates from 2023/24. This would include looking at the cities ecological crisis and improving biodiversity and options for more frequent communal decoration.
9. Bathroom replacement would be a 5-year programme, and there would be reviewed information about which properties had more recent bathroom replacements, it was estimated that 75% would need a new bathroom over the next 15 years. Budget to be £0.5m for this year, then £3m per year.
10. Issues such as making bathrooms more accessible would be fully considered and a resident group would be set up to help to co-design the new specification and design of bathrooms.

For each of the areas, lower budgets had been agreed for Year One (22/23) to allow time to engage tenants, research, analyse data and develop strategies for larger programmes of work.

Key points made were –

11. A member felt that the proposals and intentions were positive but cited that personal experience over several years had shown that rarely did such projects transpire into solid results in the community. There were examples of some improvement works taking five years for work to start and in several other cases nothing had happened.
12. Tenants who volunteered to help make improvements were sometimes left to move the work forward with little help from the Council. There appeared to be a disconnect between the HMB and tenants on estates.
13. Housing proposals should where possible link in with wider social objectives such as social inequality for example assisting ex-offenders engaging with local communities and gaining meaningful employment.
14. It would be helpful if in future sharing information, such as this proposal, could be made more visual rather than a narrative so that everyone could engage more easily.

The Business Innovation Manager said the officers would reflect on the points made and look at them in more detail. Reference made about Halston Drive would be dealt with outside of the HMB meeting.

#### **Action**

The Director for Homes and Landlord Services agreed to raise comments made directly with Goram Homes and where appropriate work more closely with them. **Action**

Another member referenced work to Northfield House and new windows not being fitted properly giving examples of 3–4-millimetre gaps which led to significant drafts. This had been raised with Response and Repair team but apparently no action had been taken.



The Business Innovation Manager agreed to take this up outside of the meeting.

The HMB were introduced to the Head of Service for Response and Repairs (Craig Cook) who explained some of the complexities involved with this work but assured the Board all that could be done to improve outcomes would be done but emphasised that quality of work would not be compromised to achieve estimated work timescales.

A member expressed concern about the slow pace for bathroom replacements despite being in the 30-year business plan, although acknowledged this was now part of the current proposals. Also referred to photovoltaic (PV) roof panels and heat pumps being fitted as part of Green Capital and to dovetail with the City's One Plan on carbon reduction commitment. It was requested that yearly and monthly surveyor reports, including costs, be made available so that members could closely monitor progress of work.

The Director for Homes and Landlord Services emphasised that such level of detail would not be practical and that there were already surveyor reports done on work progress. Regarding bathroom replacements this would be a rolling programme of work and where possible could include PV panels and heat pumps, although specifically that some properties would not be suitable for PV panels. Noted that current funding was too low to achieve all carbon reduction ambitions and that imaginative methods of increasing funding would need to be explored, this could include liaising with Homes England, Core Cities, other local authorities to proactively lobby central government for more funds.

Members were informed that the Council had recently signed off £1.8 billion over the next 30 years. There would be no more unrealistic promises made and where it was found work could not be achieved as planned it was essential to explain to tenants why this was the case, so there was clarity. Further to this the need for far greater tenant participation was crucial to ongoing work as funding for it was coming from rent payments and this made it even more important that tenants shared their views as they were the people who would have to live with the improvements.

**Resolved – That the paper and the comments made be noted.**

## **6 Tenant Participation Review Update**

The Committee received a verbal update from Business innovation Manager.

Members noted that a survey had been carried out online, on paper and by telephone. About 1,600 responses had been received. A further questionnaire to tenants had met with a response from about 1,500. The responses were currently being collated and analysed and the findings would be reported back to the next HMB meeting in September.

**Resolved – That the verbal update be noted.**



## 7 Landlord Services Complaints 2020/21

The Committee received a paper about the Council's performance in dealing with landlord services complaints for the 2020/21 financial year.

Analysis of the landlord service complaint handling performance had been undertaken and the key findings were as set out below.

1. 868 complaints had been handled, 4% less than the previous year.
2. 85.4% of complaints had been responded to within the 15 working day target, achieving the corporate target of 85%. This was a 24% improvement on the previous year.
3. 91% of complaints had been resolved at stage 1, with 8% being resolved at stage 2 and 1% progressing to Ombudsman stage. This was largely unchanged from the previous year.
4. 46.3% of complaints were not upheld, with 47.8 being upheld or partly upheld, this was largely unchanged from the previous year.
5. 75 cases (8.6% of complaints received) were rated by the complainant in terms of their overall satisfaction with how we handled the complaint. Ratings of good or very good were received on 38.7% of those cases, which was 12% lower than the previous financial year.

**Resolved – That the update be noted.**

## 8 Date of Next Meeting

September 2022 date to be confirmed.

## 9 Any Other Business

Peter Daw raised issue of respraying pavements clashed with laying of fibre optic by BT could more be done to share work more closely.

Peter Daw asked for a copy of Andy Gale Housing Allocation Review. **Action** (action completed after meeting)



Meeting ended at 8.05 pm

**CHAIR** \_\_\_\_\_

