

Bristol City Council

Minutes of the Housing Management Board

19 April 2023 at 6.00 pm



Members Present:-

Independent Member: Alex Marsh (Chair)

Councillors: Councillor Kerry Bailes, Councillor Sarah Classick, Councillor Tony Dyer

Tenant Representatives: Pete Daw, Phillip Morris

Association Tenant Representative: Nigel Varley

Officers in Attendance:- Sarah Spicer (Business Innovation Manager), Liz Cheetham (Engagement Team Leader), Donald Graham (Interim Director Homes and Landlord Services), John Smith (Executive Director: Growth & Regeneration) and Jeremy Livitt (Democratic Services)

Presenting Officers: Paul Sylvester (Minute Number 30) and Allison Scott (Minute Number 32)

26 Welcome, Introductions and Apologies for Absence

Alex Marsh welcomed all parties to the meeting.

Councillor Richard Eddy gave his apologies for the meeting.

It was noted that Peter Edwards had resigned from the Housing Management Board. A proposal for a replacement would be considered at Agenda Item 4.

27 Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 26th January 2023 and Matters Arising

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the above meeting be approved as a correct record subject to the reference to Liz Cheetham (Minute Number 23 – Home Choice Allocations Review) being corrected to Liz Dewing and subject to the reference to Eastville Park in Minute Number 25 (Any Other Business) being corrected to Eastfield Park.



MATTERS ARISING

Item Number 19 Matters Arising 30th May 2022 Meeting - Page 8 of Minutes

Problems with Riding Scooters at Northfield House – Sarah Spicer advised that she had exchanged e-mails with Phillip Morris on this issue and was pursuing it.

Homes and Community Board Meetings – Peter Daw advised that he had still not received any communication about his attendance at these meetings **ACTION: Councillor Tom Renhard to pursue**

Social Disorder at Northfield House – Sarah Spicer advised that she was pursuing this matter with Phillip Morris.

Halston Drive – Sarah Spicer advised that Alison Scott would pick this issue up as part of her presentation

Social Value Assessment TOMS mechanism – Sarah Spicer stated that, since Councillor Renhard was not present, she would pursue this matter with him after the meeting and report back to HMB members as required **ACTION: Sarah Spicer/Councillor Tom Renhard**

Item Number 20 Fire Safety Update – Page 9

Impact of Smoke Spreading Through Vents - Nigel Varley confirmed that this issue had been investigated and would not be an issue since the mechanism closes with heat. An engineer and been sent out twice to confirm this and had explained the process. However, there remained problems with the amount of polystyrene spread during the replacement of cladding at Gilton House which needed to be reviewed. Despite previous assurances that this was safe, following Grenfell Fire, large amounts of further expenditure had been required to ensure safety. An explanation for the reason for this was required. In addition, it had been very cold for residents who had to increase their heating during these works.

Peter Daw referred to the Building Research establishment's assessment and the implications of it in relation to this issue.

Sarah Spicer confirmed that Craig Cook had recently met with the contractors within the last two weeks and that the remaining polystyrene would now be removed. There would be changes in future to reduce the amount of rubbish and mess on site.

Action: Sarah Spicer to note and make sure lessons learnt as required

Fire Marshals and Fire Doors – Sarah Spicer advised that, since Alison Napper had been out of the office recently, she had been unable to pursue this matter. However, an update would be brought to the next meeting. **Action: Sarah Spicer/Alison Napper**



Item Number 22 – HRA Budget

Damp and Mould – It was noted that, following a recent e-mail from Democratic Services, this item had been withdrawn but would be submitted to the next meeting. **Action: Craig Cook/Laura Pilkington**

Item Number 23 – Home Choice Allocations Review

It was noted that there would be a Cost of Living Special in a forthcoming edition of Housing News addressing this issue. Sarah Spicer indicated that she would also check to see if anything more detailed could be provided in there to help with people requiring to provide identification. **Action: Sarah Spicer**

Phillip Morris pointed out that Bristol City Council tenants could be fined for a failure to register on the electoral roll and that, since the Central Government grant that BCC received was based on the electoral roll, BCC was potentially losing a lot of money by not pursuing this. Peter Daw pointed out that there was a growing number of people who were not registered on the electoral roll. Council tenants could be disenfranchised from voting since they needed to provide ID to enable this.

28 Public Forum

There was no Public Forum for this meeting.

29 Proposal for new Associate Board Member by Housing Scrutiny Panel - Sarah Spicer (Verbal Report)

The Board noted that, following Peter Edwards's recent resignation as a member of the HMB, the Housing Scrutiny Panel had proposed that Tim De La Roux be appointed in his place on the HMB as an Associate Tenant Representative. Following brief further discussion, it was

RESOLVED - that Tim De La Roux be appointed as an Associate Tenant Representative of the Housing Management Board ACTION: Jeremy Livitt – to alter membership and distribution lists as appropriate

30 Update on the Housing Allocations Review - Paul Sylvester

Paul Sylvester gave a presentation on this issue and made the following points:

- It was noted that most of the previous work on this issue had been carried out by Liz Dewing who was now working on another project. The Board passed on their best wishes to her
- The new policy had now been approved by Cabinet on 4th April 2023
- The new IT provision would be rolled out to ensure that it could be put in place
- Councillor Tom Renhard had requested that additional work was carried out on the provision of additional bedrooms for children with SEND
- The move to managed choice would enable 50% of allocations to be made by direct offer



- There would be an increase in priority for Care Leavers
- Additional under occupiers would be prioritised to Band 1 to help free up homes for large families
- All categories of homelessness would be prioritised to Band 2
- The introduction of a new deal for the homeless at home for those faced with eviction from the family home
- The Composite Need facility to differentiate between household need, distinguish people between bands and assist people with multiple needs, particularly for people in areas such as Lawrence Weston, Lockleaze, Knowle. This would enable letting teams to set aside housing to meet local need
- Other actions were to increase the prioritisation of downsizing, provide additional support to those who were moving home too frequently, ensure as much information as possible was available in the guidance, move people out of supported housing where possible and make the most of mutual housing exchanges

In response to questions from HMB members, he made the following points:

- There were different types of housing throughout the city including different types of sheltered housing, some of which had fewer age restrictions than others. Whilst some tenants may be of working age and may appear to have no disability, it was important to ensure no-one was left homeless while there were any sheltered housing vacancies
- HMB members' concerns were noted about removing 9,000 people from the waiting list who had very little chance of being offered a place since this masked the problem of housing in Bristol. However, it was noted that this did not prevent them from being on the register itself but did restrict their bidding
- The rules concerning siblings sharing bedrooms had not changed – there was guidance indicating that those of the same sex could share up until 21, with those of different sexes could share until 10
- The comments thanking BCC for their engagement on this issue were welcomed and would be passed on to Liz Dewing
- The different arrangements were noted at places such as Slough Borough Council concerning the criteria for housing (i.e. that any Housing applicant needed to be on the waiting list for at least five years). This was to prevent people from outside the local authority applying. The HMB were advised that BCC operated a two year residency criteria

Peter Daw advised that he was prepared to help as a volunteer if required in this work.

31 Update on the Investment in Communal Areas, Blocks and Estates Budget - Sarah Spicer

Sarah Spicer introduced this presentation and made the following points:

- An update was provided following the previous discussion at the last meeting in January 2023



- Key elements from the budget were set out – rapid response, assisted gardens, the increase in the EIB and NIB budgets, improvements, communal works and recycling
- £327,500 had been made available for estates safety with £1.6 Million to tackle problems of damp and mould in housing stock including an additional £130,000 per year. In addition, there would be additional training for officers in providing fire and safety training
- Wider safety measures included lighting with very large provision for stock surveys

In response to members' questions, she made the following points:

- Details were noted of the suggestion by Phillip Morris to use £327,500 to set up control rooms in flats with existing CCTV's to further discourage vandalism and crime. **Action: Sarah Spicer to advise Fiona Tudge to investigate the viability of this and/or the replacement of cameras and cabling for CCTV cameras**
- Any CCTV control rooms should not be provided if it resulted in increased service charges
- **Action: Sarah Spicer to investigate whether a new request was required by the residents of Nigel Varley's block for the door entry recording or whether this could be automatically provided**
- There was an acknowledgment of the disagreement between HMB members concerning the usefulness of CCTV control rooms as opposed to general maintenance and improvement of CCTV together with improved street lighting

32 Environmental and Neighbourhood Improvement Budgets - Alison Scott

Alison Scott introduced this report and made the following comments:

- The total amount available was £137,500 for EIB (Environmental Improvement Budget) and £462,500 for NIB (Neighbourhood Improvement Budget). Most funding proposals were put forward by a combination of tenants, housing officers, caretakers and Councillors. The online form was available and easy but rarely used
- It was noted that NIB schemes were awarded at the beginning of the financial year, whilst EIB schemes were allocated monthly. It was also noted that the process for NIB applications involved a £15,000 tender process
- Examples of EIB schemes included security, ecological improvements, boundary fencing, garden works and landscaping
- 37 EIB schemes had been completed in 2022/23, with 18 awaiting consultation and 5 having been rejected. Details of the EIB spend for each region were noted (north, central and south) which totalled approximately £74,000. These include the following: removal of a dangerous structure, securing a garage site, bin relocation and renovation of a courtyard. Examples of some of these schemes were shown
- 14 NIB schemes had been approved for 2022/23 at a total cost of just under £700,000. These included Communal garden improvements, protective railings and posts, walling and car park resurfacing + line marking



In response to members' questions, Allison Scott made the following comments:

- She stated that funding had not yet run out. She would investigate progress on Gilton House's request for funding and advise Nigel Varley on progress with the consultation. She pointed out that anyone without access to a Housing Officer could still use the online form. However, community rooms were not within the remit of the scheme. **Action: Allison Scott to advise the residents of Gilton House of progress and to investigate how funding for community rooms is provided.**
- Whilst the successful use of the EIB was noted in funding works for the garden for one of the housing blocks, it was also noted that no benches had been provided. **Action: Phillip Morris is invited to complete an online form request for benches and submit to Allison Scott**
- Allison Scott's work in acting as a trustee on a separate matter was noted
- **Action: Allison Scott to investigate the removal of furniture in one of the tenant blocks occupied by Peter Daw**
- The difficulties were noted for residents in Peter Daw's block following the construction of a fence which cut off Westbury-on-Trym village from Southmead and made it impassable for people with walkers and wheelchairs **Action: Alison Scott to investigate**
- **Action: Statue with Jagged Points at Ludlow Close that could be dangerous for children - Allison Scott to investigate and report back to Councillor Kerry Bailes**

The link below to the webpage for the application process was posted in the chat for the meeting:

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/residents/housing/council-tenants/home-safety-improvements/improvements-to-communal-council-housing-areas>

33 Any Other Business

Action: Sarah Spicer to provide HMB Tenant Representatives with a structure for the Housing Department including the Management Structure.

City Leap – Carbon Neutral Energy for Housing Tenants

Despite a very good piece of work by Councillor Kye Dudd on the key issues involved in BCC's transition from gas/hot water to carbon neutral energy. There was not yet any plan for tenants on how to address the concerns for remission of fuel poverty. Whilst some homes had been promised voltaic energy, this had not happened yet. Clarification from BCC was required for 27,000 homes that it was responsible for.

ACTION: Sarah Spicer to investigate and report back



Northfield Resident

- One resident who suffered from COPD was living in very difficult conditions during some works in her flat to remove plaster from the walls. **Action: Sarah Spicer to investigate whether the resident can be moved elsewhere temporarily**

Sarah Spicer to Leave Bristol City Council

The HMB noted that Sarah Spicer would be leaving BCC at the end of June 2023 and thanked everyone for all their contributions and input to this body.

HMB members thanked Sarah for her work on this body and wished her well for the future.

34 Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled for 6pm on Monday 10th July 2023 and would be held as a remote Teams meeting.

Meeting ended at 7.55 pm

CHAIR _____

