

Bristol City Council

Minutes of the Housing Management Board

10 July 2023 at 6.00 pm



Members Present:-

Councillors: Alex Marsh (Chair), Councillor Kerry Bailes, Councillor Sarah Classick, Councillor Carla Denyer, Councillor Richard Eddy, Councillor Tom Renhard, Peter Daw, Philip Morris, Tim De La Rew, Nigel Varley and Sibusiso Tshabalala

Officers in Attendance:-

Lesha Wilson, Liz Cheetham, Donald Graham, Fiona Lester (Minute Number 39), Alison Napper (Minute Number 38), Jamie Booth, Sam Robinson (Minute Number 40) and Jeremy Livitt

Also Attending: Chris Evans (Guest Resident), Matty Edwards and Adam Postans (Local Press Representatives)

35 Welcome, Introductions and Apologies for Absence

Alex Marsh welcomed all parties to the meeting and asked them to introduce themselves.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Tony Dyer.

The Board noted that Ross Dallimore had resigned from the Board. Members thanked him for his contribution to its work.

36 Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 19th April 2023

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the above meeting be approved.

Matters Arising

The Board noted that, following the very recent departure of Sarah Spicer, many of the actions in the minutes had not yet been picked up by her successor.

Homes and Communities Board

It was noted that the HCB was currently on hiatus pending the commencement of the revised One City Project. **ACTION: Councillor Tom Renhard to take any future action as required**



Social Value Assessment TOMS Mechanism

It was noted that Councillor Renhard had not yet investigated the different TOMS mechanism used by Goram Homes. He undertook to do this and to report back

ACTION: Councillor Tom Renhard

Fire Safety Update

- (a) Polystyrene - The Board noted the methods used to remove polystyrene and prevent polystyrene spread – **ACTION: Lesha Wilson to ensure lessons learnt**
- (b) Fire Marshalls and Fire Doors – As part of the post-Grenfell discussion, Fire Marshalls were taking action to close Fire Doors if they were open.
 - (i) Waking Watch Contract – **ACTION: Alison Napper to discuss with the person operating the Waking Watch Contract and include in the newsletter for all residents of High Rise Blocs to stress the importance of this**
 - (ii) Mobility Scooters - The situation was noted concerning people with mobility scooters who feel they need to do so to travel outside of housing blocks safely but leaving doors open in the process – Donald Graham advised that there are arrangements in place to make people aware of the danger of lithium batteries to avoid fires, to work on a joint fire communications strategy with the Fire Service and develop a programme to create more storage across blocks. The Board noted other dangers such as dogs finding their way into buildings. They also discussed sanctions against persistent offenders such as warning letters. Whilst eviction was always an option as a last resort for persistent failure to adhere to tenancy conditions, officers would always work with residents to find solutions. The Board noted that cages were being developed across all blocks to help solve this problem and this process needed to be speeded up as soon as possible
ACTION: Donald Graham to report back to the HMB
- (c) Investment In Communal Areas, Blocks and Estates Budgets – It was noted that an investigation was required into whether a new request was required by the residents of Nigel Varley's block for the door entry recording or whether this could be carried out automatically **ACTION: Lesha Wilson**
- (d) Environmental Neighbourhood and Improvement Budgets – **ACTION: Alison Scott to e-mail Peter Daw directly re investigation of the removal of furniture in the tenant block he occupies**
- (e) City Leap – Carbon Neutral Energy for Housing Tenants – It was noted that clarification was required from Bristol City Council for 27,000 tenants it was responsible for – **ACTION: Lesha Wilson to investigate and report back to HMB**

37 Public Forum

There were no Public Forum items.



38 Damp and Mould (Laura Pilkington/Craig Cook)

Alison Napper and Jamie Booth introduced this report and made the following points:

- A previous update had been provided to the HMB by Laura Pilkington and assessing how Housing Organisations deal with damp and mould
- Details of all the recommendations arising out of previous assessments were set out and of the performance that had been reached
- Since BCC had set a zero tolerance standard for this issue due to Health and Safety concerns, there was a requirement to respond quickly on a case by case basis. The appropriate response was then made and the key issues recorded as quickly as possible and support residents as much as possible
- Following the drafting of the Damp and Mould Policy, this would be submitted to the Tenants Scrutiny Panel on 18th July 2023
- During the pandemic, there had been a stop to standard Housing Report Inspections as a result of which current data was not as good
- In June 2023, Cabinet had agreed to set up a catch up surveys using external surveyors
- In Autumn each year, 40% of surveys were undertaken using an 89% sample of blocks to provide a picture of how it is performing

In response to Board Members' questions, Alison Napper made the following points:

- It was acknowledged that the previous Housing Health and Rating System needed improvements. Changes to the system had gone live in May 2023 and a leaflet had been provided with a tenant pack to residents and with further information online
- Work was carried out with the Sustainable Energy Team who were paid to support tenants to ensure they obtained the most from the heating system
- A lot of Bristol City council officers went to people's homes to assess problems. In addition, training was being provided to surveyors to change the culture
- It was important that when a response to a repair was raised, this was managed as a case with proper communication and photos. As a result of complaints, better use of technology was being developed for surveyors. Whilst the response to this change had been good, this needed to be part of an approach to how we deal with tenants and surveyors training

Board members made the following comments:

- The situation was noted at a property where black mould had been painted over. There was extensive damp and the fan was on constantly since it was triggered by a certain level of humidity
- It was good to see that the ombudsman was investigating certain instances where there were concerns
- There was a need for effective housing officer/estate manager interface when a repair was reported



- Residents had set up the Communication Working Group comprising tenants and officers which had agreed to address some of these issues but so far without success

ACTION:

- (1) Alison Napper to investigate the incident of painting over damp mould reported by Philip Morris
- (2) The link from the BCC webpage to be included in the minutes for the meeting – Jeremy Livitt (see below)

[Damp and mould in your home \(bristol.gov.uk\)](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/damp-and-mould-in-your-home)

39 CCTV Update (Fiona Lester/Martin Owen)

Fiona Lester introduced this report and made the following comments:

- Work was taking place in conjunction with the operation centre on an upgrade of the CCTV system costing £655,000 over two years with £327,000 being spent in 2023/24 on infrastructure and cameras
- A number of cameras across the city were obsolete and as a result the proper infrastructure behind the camera was not always working
- Priority sites were being identified for Councillors, PCC's, staff and local residents
- The Safer Streets scheme cost £75 Million and operating between 2022 to 2024 with the development of Crime Prevention Plans
- PCC's were able to submit bids on behalf of Local Authorities in hot spot areas
- The service had been awarded £32,000 which had been match funded to provide infrastructure for cameras across the city, including St Jude's, St Matthias, Middleford, Millmead and Hayleigh House to address growing concerns over ASB
- Works for Lansdowne Court and Ecclestone House were due for completion by the end of August 2023
- It was a challenge to co-ordinate the work to ensure it was properly carried out including cabling throughout the building. There had been difficulties with the way it had been carried out in the past
- The safe removal of asbestos was often a delaying factor with all priority sites projected to be completed by 2023/24 including enhanced CCTV and enhanced quality of images. This would enable better identification of perpetrators and a better storage system
- The project commitment was for blocks in Band 1 to be upgraded by 2023/24 with blocks 2 and 3 to be completed afterwards

Board members made the following points:

- Provision for mobile cameras needed to be investigated **ACTION: Fiona Lester to investigate**



- Investigation should be carried out into the possible provision of white lighting as opposed to oxide lighting which could not differentiate between different colours such as blue, red and yellow – as per work carried out for CCTV in Community At Heart in Barton hill
- It was good to see that Yemen House were on the list for works since they had a good community. This would allow effective joining up of work through the Residents Forums
- The provision of proper bike storage would provide additional reassurance for expensive bikes held in small units
- This was a good package of support for residents. In our own block, this had been achieved most directly through work with BCC.
- The safety of blocks was being improved through effective collaboration. There was a need to consider how grants from the Community Safety Fund could be used to support residents
- In some blocks of flats which were not on the immediate priority lists, there remained a recording entry system which was old fashioned.
- Cabling into blocks of flats could allow facial recognition. There was a need to avoid such systems drifting into corporate intrusion and to avoid a camera being provided on every floor

In response, Fiona Lester made the following points:

- The cabling system enabled a link to the operational centre. In instances where it was preventing problems with intruders, this was likely to be satisfactory but upgrades might still be required to ensure an up to date system was maintained
- CCTV is general funded not funded through the HRA.
- Work took place across BCC with reporting to various bodies as appropriate
- A balance was needed between the need for privacy and maintaining the safety of blocks to avoid situations where vulnerable people felt threatened when they came home at night

40 Energy Efficiency (Sam Robinson)

Sam Robinson introduced this report and made the following comments:

- A £70 Million retrofit had taken place over the last 7 years to improve the heating for 800 homes and for an external wall insulation for 1000 flats
- Works for double glazing, loft insulation and cavity wall insulation had all been carried out
- Over 95% of homes had gas central heating
- Details were provided of the numbers of different types of blocks and the minimum EPC levels required by 2030
- It was noted that £9 million had been provided by the Decarbonisation Fund to address to help address this issue. This could also include solar panels where required
- The City Leap was helping to deliver proper levels of insulation to reduce the levels of heat demand and energy bills
- There was a longer term shift from gas heating to prioritise green objectives



In response to Board Members' questions, Sam Robinson made the following points:

- There was a programme to analyse the situation concerning storage heaters and immersion heaters which were very inefficient and to help identify the right solution
- It was noted that improved project management would help address concerns about the lack of alignment arising from the Fire Safety Programme when flammable cladding was removed and new cladding not replaced until some time later, frequently during cold weather
- Further investigation was required for the District Heating System
- Historically the technology had not existed to spread technology for solar panels across blocks
- The introduction of low carbon district networks would help provide infrastructure to deliver solutions
- Board members' concerns were noted about the need to ensure proper priorities when selecting properties, to provide heat pumps by 2030 if possible and to confirm how arrangements for solar panels would be made since the cost of replacing gas boilers would exceed the HRA account. It was noted that St Katherines Court had operated with heat pumps for nearly 20 years
- It was explained that 511 Heat Pumps would be provided as part of the City leap rollout and that a strategy on solar panels was being developed and would be clearer by the end of the year

The Board was also advised that a formal partnership was operating with City Leap to develop the energy programme.

ACTION: District Heating Systems and New Builds – Sam Robinson to report back on progress for energy efficiency for BCC properties with these heating systems

41 Resident Satisfaction Survey Results (Lesha Wilson)

Due to shortage of time, this item was deferred to the next meeting.

ACTION: Lesha Wilson to add to the agenda for the next meeting – 6pm on Wednesday 4th October 2023.

42 Any Other Business

Moving Forward Together

Fiona Lester reported that a co-design was taking place with residents and feedback obtained from officers. This provided a blueprint for change and would then be followed by appropriate action. The key themes were to ensure that it was more visible and to improve the percentage of the Tenancy Order. Following improvements to the Digital Aspect, this would be relaunched within 2 weeks and ensure



greater visibility and the development of an ASB Action Plan as part of the service's duty of care to leaseholders.

The Board pointed out a number of recent incidents when it had been difficult to contact the Leaseholder Team.

Fiona Lester indicated that the problem might have been exacerbated by recent transformational change.

It was also noted that satisfaction surveys would be made available as part of tenant information from 1st October 2023.

There was also brief discussion of the role of the Low Carbon Network in City Leap.

ACTION: Fiona Lester to note the concerns raised by Board members about the difficulty of contacting the Leaseholder Team and to pursue with the manager of this team.

43 Date of Next Meeting

The Board noted that the next meeting was scheduled to be held at 6pm on Wednesday 4th October 2023 as a remote meeting.

The meeting ended at 8.05 pm

CHAIR _____

