

Bristol City Council

Minutes of the Homes and Housing Delivery Policy Committee



20 September 2024 at 10.00 am

Members Present:-

Councillors: Barry Parsons (Chair), Richard Eddy (Vice-Chair), Jos Clark, Al-Maghrabi, Zoë Peat, Lisa Stone, Sibusiso Tshabalala, James Crawford (substitute for Jerome Thomas) and Kerry Bailes (substitute for Paul Goggin)

1 Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information

The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting and explained the emergency evacuation procedure.

2 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Jerome Thomas (Councillor James Crawford was in attendance as a substitute) and Councillor Paul Goggin (Councillor Kerry Bailes was in attendance as a substitute).

3 Declarations of Interest

The following declarations of interest were noted:

- Councillor Jos Clark declared an interest in relation to Agenda Item 12, Private Renter Sector Strategy, and did not take part in that item.
- Councillor Lisa Stone declared an interest in relation to Agenda Item 12, Private Renter Sector Strategy, and did not take part in that item.



- Councillor Zoe Peat declared an interest in relation to Agenda Item 12, Private Renter Sector Strategy, and did not take part in that item.
- Councillor Al Al-Maghrabi declared an interest in relation to Agenda Item 12, Private Renter Sector Strategy, and did not take part in that item.

4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Chair moved that the minutes of the previous meeting, held on Friday 19 July 2024, be noted.

Vice-Chair, Councillor Richard Eddy seconded.

The Chair asked the Committee members to confirm if the minutes were a correct record.

The Committee confirmed that the Minutes of the previous meeting were an accurate record.

The Committee **RESOLVED:**

- To note the minutes of the last meeting as a correct record.

5 Chair's Business

The Chair outlined the following updates regarding the council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA):

- Over the past 12 months, a significant amount of effort has been put into responding to areas of concern across the council's current housing stock.
- There is still a need for additional resource to raise our standards. This has a financial impact and requires additional investment that was not planned into the current HRA business plan.
- The Chair and Vice-Chair have reviewed the options with Officers and the Housing and Landlords have made changes to the HRA Development Plan.
- The council will no longer pursue the purchase of housing units from Goram Homes sites Baltic Wharf and Hengrove Park Phase 1B.
- Goram Homes have soft market tested the level of Registered Provider interest in these affordable homes and have had interest from Providers to take on the units at Baltic Wharf which means they will still be delivered as social rent and shared ownership to meet the city's housing needs.



6 Public Forum

Public Questions

The Committee noted that the following Public Forum questions had been received:

Q1. Joanna Booth: Bristol housing festival

Q2. Nigel Varley: Cladding remediation costs compensation

Q3. Fadumo Farah: Barton House

Q4. Shaban Ali: Barton House (this question and supplementary questions were presented by Fadumo Farah on behalf of Shaban Ali's)

It was noted that the questions, together with written responses, had been circulated to Committee members and were available on the Council's website alongside the agenda papers for this meeting.

Supplementary oral questions were received as follows:

Q2: In response to a supplementary question from Dan Ackroyd, further detail was outlined about how the service calculated the £147 support fund provided to Gilton House residents. The service used data provided by properties that had been completed as part of the cladding scheme.

Q2: In response to a supplementary question from Dan Ackroyd, further detail was outlined about how the decision was made to provide residents at Gilton House with £147. The Chair outlined that the decision to include a discretionary budget (the £147 per household at Gilton House) was decided at Full Council on Monday 3 June 2024 as part of the council's budget setting process. The total amount of the individual payments is deducted £150,000 budget already assigned to Gilton House refurbishment works.

Q3: In response to a supplementary question from Fadumo Farah, further detail was outlined about compensation and support that is available for younger Barton House residents who were advised to evacuate their homes in November 2023. The Chair advised that support is predominantly available for younger residents directly through their schools. Officers will review what additional support is available and this will be shared with residents. The Chair advised that, while it was a Bristol Green Party pledge prior to the 2024 Local Elections, there is not currently a specific compensation scheme for any Barton House residents. Conversations between the Chair and Officers are ongoing.

Q3: In response to a supplementary question from Fadumo Farah, further detail was outlined about a potential investigation into the Barton House evacuation in November 2023. The Chair highlighted the desire to understand the legacy of under investment in the council's homes, including Barton House. It was discussed that currently the Committee and the council's focus is on ensuring the safety of all residents and continuing to provide a decent service to all council house tenants. The Chair instructed the Housing service to provide the Chair with an updated analysis covering the costs required for an investigation to take place.



Q4: In response to a supplementary question from Fadumo Farah (on Shaban Ali's behalf), further detail was outlined about re-housing Barton House residents. The Chair highlighted that while the Chair is on the record stating that the urgent re-housing of Barton House residents would be appropriate, this decision does not sit with the Chair. Decisions on individual priority housing and re-housing cases are made by HomeChoice Bristol and applications for re-housing must go through the HomeChoice Bristol process. The Chair commented that they have asked for a paper to be presented on Barton House residents at a Homes and Housing Delivery Policy Committee Chairs Briefing.

Public statements:

The Committee noted that the following public forum statements had been received:

S1. Nigel Varley – Safety issues

S2. Shaban Ali – Barton House (read by Fadumo Farah on behalf of Shaban Ali)

It was noted that the statements, questions and answers had been circulated to Committee members and were available on the [council's website](#) alongside the agenda papers for this meeting.

7 Tackling Homelessness Transformation Programme (quarterly)

The committee considered a report (Agenda Item 7) introducing and an update on the progress of the Tackling Homelessness Programme.

The Chair commented that there are no decisions to be taken on this report, which is for the Committee's information only.

Summary of main points raised/noted in discussion of this item:

1. It was noted that this programme could provide monetary savings for the council as well as good outcomes for residents.
2. It was discussed that officers will present progress reports to Committee for noting, and that a several key decision papers will be presented for this Committee in the future.
3. Questions were raised about the decision to not purchase homes from the Goram Homes' programmes Baltic Wharf and Hengrove Park Phase 1B, which the Chair outlined during Agenda Item 5 (Chairs Announcements), and whether that could mean that the council will lose additional housing options for residents. It was confirmed that another provider, who the council have selected to work with, will purchase the affordable homes at the Goram Homes sites and these will be allocated through HomeChoice Bristol.
4. It was confirmed that residents in Temporary Accommodation are not excluded from applying for homes via HomeChoice Bristol.



The Committee **RESOLVED:**

1. To note that the report states that the Tackling Homelessness Programme's financial objectives include £3,593,000 of recurring subsidy loss reduction. The programme is working on additional initiatives that will result in even further subsidy loss reduction, amount to be confirmed.
2. To note that the report states that as per baselining at Corporate Leadership Board (CLB) on 06 August 2024 and 13 August 2024, the Tackling Homelessness Programme budget is £2,689,985 (plus contingency held centrally by CLB).
3. To note that as per baselining at CLB on 28 May 2024, no funding has yet been approved for 2025/26.

8 Mobility Scooter Policy

The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 8) which asked members to approve and adopt a revised policy and process for the management of mobility scooters in blocks of flats including an approach to enforcement, should it be required.

The Chair commented that this was a key decision report, as the proposed decision effects more than two wards.

Summary of main points raised/noted in discussion of this item:

1. There were questions asked around the council's statutory duty under Section 6. It was noted that Disability is a protected characteristics and as a landlord the council are bound by Section 20 and Section 21 to allow reasonable adjustments to tenants. Assurances were provided that mobility scooter storage would only be removed as an absolute last resort.
2. A question was raised about when the last public consultation on mobility scooter storage took place. Officers outlined that the last iteration of this policy was consulted on publicly in 2015.
3. The Chair and Vice-Chair commented that, due to the nature of the topic, there isn't an alternative option to approving the Officers recommendations in this report.

The Chair thanked Members for the valuable debates.

The Chair then moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

Vice-Chair, Councillor Richard Eddy seconded.

The Committee (six in favour, three abstentions) **RESOLVED:**

1. That the revised policy and process for the management of mobility scooters in blocks of flats including an enforcement approach (if necessary/required) are approved by the Committee for implementation.



Vice-Chair, Councillor Richard Eddy, vacated the meeting after Agenda Item 8 and did not participate in any future decisions during this meeting.

9 Housing & Consumer Standards Programme (H&CSP) and Compliance Update

The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 9) which asked members to:

1. Note and comment on the Housing & Consumer Standards Programme (H&CSP) improvement plan summary.
2. Note and comment on the business as usual and H&CSP landlord compliance performance updates.
3. Approve the proposed enhanced strategic reporting suite covering the council's social landlord function.
4. Note and comment on the update on landlord compliance and building safety related corporate risks.
5. Note for information the summary H&CSP governance map.
6. Approve the learning and development proposal for the Homes & Housing Delivery Committee.

Summary of main points raised/noted in discussion of this item:

1. A question was raised about whether council officers were already trained on stock condition surveys. It was confirmed that the proposed training is for Committee Members not Officers (who have already received training).
2. Questions were raised about how invasive the surveys will be. It was noted that the surveys are visual surveys but are not intrusive. The surveys are to ensure properties have smoke detection etc. and make sure certain things are there such as smoke detection.
3. A question was raised about why IT systems are critical to the council's Housing and Landlord service. It was noted that currently the Housing and Landlord service is holding data on several different platforms which poses a potential risk. One platform holding all the information will enable officers to report more efficiently and enable officers to focus on service improvements rather than managing data.

The Chair moved the recommendations of the report and advised that recommendations 3 and 6 are for approval, and recommendations 1, 2, 4, and 5 are for noting.

Councillor Sibusiso Tshabalala seconded.

The Committee **RESOLVED** (unanimously):

1. To note the Housing & Consumer Standards Programme (H&CSP) Improvement Plan summary.
2. To note the business as usual (BAU) and H&CSP Landlord Compliance performance updates.
3. To approve the proposed enhanced strategic reporting suite covering the council's social landlord function.



4. To note the update on landlord compliance and building safety related corporate risks.
5. To note the summary H&CSP governance map.
6. To approve the Learning and Development proposal for the Homes & Housing Delivery Committee.

10 Housing Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2023 - 2024

The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 10) that provided the Committee with the Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report for complaints handled by Bristol City Council Landlord Services in 2023/24. This is in line with Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.

The Chair noted that they regularly receive reports from the Housing Ombudsman and that the Chair and officers will be attending Complaints Training in November. The Chair also noted that a Complaints Performance and Service Improvement update will be presented to the Committee each month.

The Chair commented that there were no decisions to be taken on this report, which was for the Committee's information.

Summary of main points raised/noted in discussion of this item:

1. There was a discussion around contractors who are outsourced and the impact of this on the council such as additional costs and work not being completed to a high standard which can lead to an increase in complaints from tenants. It was noted that as part of the Housing and Consumer Standards Programme there is a review to be conducted about out-sourcing contractors but that some services will always need to be procured. It was also noted that the Repairs and Maintenance Service is increasing its oversight and that contract oversight teams have input when the council go through a procurement process.

The Committee **RESOLVED**:

1. To note the Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report for complaints handled by Bristol City Council has been published on the website.

11 Finance Report Update

The Committee reviewed a report (Agenda Item 11) which presented the Housing and Landlord Services financial forecast at period 4 against the approved budget as at the end of May 2024.

The Chair commented that there were no decisions to be taken on this report, which was for the Committee's information.



Summary of main points raised/noted in discussion of this item:

1. There was a question about the decision to not purchase of the two Goram Home sites: Baltic Wharf and Hengrove Park Phase 1B. It was commented that the decision for this purchase taken by a vote at Full Council. It was noted that decisions regarding the HRA Programme and Affordable Housing are officer delegated decisions. This approach was approved by the last sitting Cabinet and this decision was taken in accordance with the correct authorities.
2. There was a question regarding the risk register that are developing. It was noted that there are two risks (in-year pressure and the stability of the business plan) that are developing and they will come to a future Committee meeting.
3. There was a question about retrofitting bathrooms. It was noted that there has been a multi-million pound bathroom programme in place, for around 18 months. It was also noted that there is a date required under the decent home standard and a budget commitment for the obligation for bathroom replacement.

The Committee **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the report on the P4 forecast for Housing and Landlord Services.

12 Draft Bristol Private Rented Sector Strategy options paper

Prior to Agenda Item 12, the Committee were explained the legal procedural advice provided by the council's Director of Legal.

The advice was:

1. It contains recommendation which is a non-key decision but needs to be voted on.
2. Any Committee Members that live in a private rented property or is a landlord of a private rented property must vacate the room and cannot participate in the decision.
3. Following the above happening, the quorate for the meeting is then three.

The Committee then considered a report (Agenda Item 12) which updated the Committee on the Private Rented Sector Strategy and outlined the options going forward.

The Chair noted that since the report has gone through the Council's Decision Pathway process and was presented at the Policy Committee Chairs Briefing, there has been a Renter's Rights Bill new announcement from National Government.

Summary of main points raised/noted in discussion of this item:

1. There was discussion around the legal advice provided and the impact of Committee Members with direct experience in the Private Rented Sector having to vacate the room for Agenda Item 12.



2. It was noted that there is already a draft bill available. It was also noted that the bill is expected to go through Parliament by Summer 2025. Officers will review and will bring an updated PRS to a future Committee meeting.
3. The Chair commented that they will take the points raised regarding the legal decision to the Values and Ethics Committee to review attendance for private rented items.

The Chair then moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

Councillor James Crawford seconded.

The Committee (unanimously) **RESOLVED:**

1. That the Committee for Homes and Housing Delivery temporarily pause the development of a Private Rented Sector Strategy until the new national policy agenda has been implemented.

Meeting ended at 13:00.

CHAIR _____

