

## Bristol Homes Board

### Minutes of the meeting 20 June 2019, 3.00 pm Venue – City Hall, Bristol

#### Board members:

Councillor Paul Smith, Cabinet Member for Homes & Communities (Chair)  
David Ingerslev, St Mungo's  
Ian Knight, Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)  
Jackson Moulding, Bristol Community Led Housing Hub  
Penny Walster, ACFA: Advice Network  
Laura Welti, Bristol Disability Equality Forum

#### Other attendees:

Tom Gilchrist, Service Manager, Private Housing Sector  
Corrina Haskins, BCC Democratic Services  
Deeanne Klein, Housing Policy and Projects Manager  
Cathy Provenzano, Garrick Property Services  
Jez Sweetland – Bristol Housing Festival

### 1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, and introduced Cathy Provenzano who was attending the meeting with a view to joining to Board as a representative of the Private Rented Sector.

Apologies for absence were received from Alistair Allender, Bristol Housing Partnership; Julian Higson, Director: Housing and Landlord Services; Pete Daw, Housing Management Board Tenant Representative; Nick Horne, Independent; Rob Kerse, Bristol University and Tom Renhard, ACORN.

### 2. Public Forum

There was no public forum.

### 3. Minutes of the last meeting

It was agreed that if there were any actions arising from discussions, these should be highlighted in bold.

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the 21 March 2019 were agreed as a correct record.



#### 4. One City Thematic Board update

The Board received an update on the One City Thematic Boards from Deeanne Klein. She reported that the Mayor had met with leads from the Boards to talk about the objectives of the Thematic Boards and how they could link together and move forward in a similar way while sharing good practice. It was agreed that it would be useful for Bristol Homes Board (BHB) members to be invited to a future meeting of the “Big City Gathering”.

Members noted that some of the Boards had a clear overlap, and the BHB had links with the Environment Board in terms of housing and carbon use/climate issues and with the Health and Wellbeing Board in relation to homelessness and mental health. It was suggested that there may be occasions where it would be useful to hold joint meetings or members of one Board lead a presentation for another Board. It was noted that the Boards had different arrangements for public access and some were held public while others were private and were also at different stages of development with some being recently established while others like BHB had been running for a few years.

In response to a question about how other Boards were appointing members to ensure a cross section of representatives it was noted that there had been an open application process for the Environment Board but the selection process was unknown. It was agreed that it would be useful for BHB members to have information in relation to the membership of the other Boards.

#### **Action:**

**Bristol Homes Board members to be invited to the next Big City Gathering.**

**Bristol Homes Board receive information about the membership of other boards and who they represent.**

#### 5. Discretionary Licensing

Tom Gilchrist gave an update on Discretionary Licensing as follows:

- Private Sector housing accounted for 81.5% of the stock in Bristol and Private Rented Sector accounted for 28.9% of all housing in the city;
- The Council had run three pilot discretionary licensing schemes for the private rented sector in Stapleton Road, Eastville and St George;
- The scheme would be extended to the central area from July 2019 and a consultation on the additional licensing resulted in 69% of 2746 responses agreeing/strongly agreeing that this would help resolve the issues of poor management and poor conditions in Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs);
- A 2nd consultation sought views on a revised fee structure (which followed a court case in London) and 47% of 257 responses strongly agreed/agreed that the revised fee structure was fair;
- In addition to the discretionary licensing, there was mandatory licensing of large HMOs with 5 or more unrelated occupants;



- There were exemptions to licensing of HMOs such as student accommodation managed by the Accreditation Network UK (ANUK)/Bristol University/University of the West of England;
- The scheme allowed the local authority to enforce standards relating to room sizes/occupation/heating ventilation/fire standards above the statutory requirements;
- The object of the scheme was not to make money for the Council instead it was to improve standards and provide some protection for tenants in the private rented sector.

The following comments/questions were raised:

- Although raising standards in the private sector was welcomed, there was a concern that it would result in the loss of cheaper low standard housing which could impact on people being made homeless. PS responded that an increase in the provision of affordable housing was the best way to mitigate this risk;
- *Why was some student accommodation exempt from the scheme?* TG clarified that the only exemptions were big blocks of accommodation that were already well managed and as only 20% of private rented accommodation could be licensed it was important to focus on the worse accommodation;
- *Can the Council set a standard for visual rather than audio fire alarms as there is evidence of deaf people being turned down for accommodation due to fire standards?*  
**Action: TG undertook to look into this issue and report back to LW.**
- It was important to note that not all HMO schemes were bad and celebrate good schemes. TG agreed that 80-85% of landlords were good and the Council supported landlords by offering training and support. He also confirmed that the Council was trying to improve the quality of landlord provision across the city and not just focus on HMOs;
- *There was a new generation of purpose built co-housing that was a positive example of HMOs. Was there a way for the community led non-profit housing sector to not require a licence for these schemes?* TG responded that there were difficulties in blanket exemptions for charitable organisations as there had been cases of rogue landlords registering as charities, but a case by case approach could be considered for future schemes.
- *What were the sanctions for landlords who don't apply for a licence or don't meet the standards? Could the Council prosecute or confiscate properties?* TG confirmed that there was the "fit and proper person test" that a landlord would need to meet under the licensing legislation, but properties would not be confiscated and instead there was a financial penalty for landlords who did not comply.

## 6. Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

Graham Jones and Dave Clarke gave a presentation on the results of the recent consultation on the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy as follows:

- The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy consisted of 5 priorities:
  - Tackling rough sleeping;



- Prevention and Early Intervention;
- Improving Health and Wellbeing and Supporting People to Build Better Lives;
- Delivering Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in all Services;
- Working in Partnership.
- The following issues were raised as a result of stakeholder consultation and were fed into the strategy:
  - Factors leading to homelessness;
  - Hidden homelessness;
  - Impact of adverse childhood experiences;
- The public consultation resulted in 377 responses and there was strong agreement with the 5 priorities;
- The following additional comments were raised:
  - Housing first approach;
  - More affordable/social housing;
  - More work required with the private sector;
  - Conversion of empty business buildings into affordable accommodation;
  - Support for mental health services and drug/alcohol services;
- The consultation asked respondents to rank the top actions 5 and these were;
  - Move focus on accommodation;
  - Reducing temporary accommodation through preventative work;
  - Increasing the supply of affordable homes;
  - Building on existing links with health services;
  - Reviewing, and where needed, changing the range of supported accommodation options available;
- Who responded to the survey?
  - 5% of homeless people;
  - More women than men;
  - An over representation of owner occupiers/older people;
- It was hoped that the final strategy would be approved by Cabinet in September.

The following comments were raised by Board Members:

- There were other commissions on the issue of Homelessness and it would be worth cross-referencing the findings;
- The document had been co-produced with service providers/people with experience of the issues and so it was not just a Council document;
- It was essential for the different agencies to work together to deliver services in partnership and meet the challenge in reducing the figures of people in temporary accommodation or sleeping on the streets;
- It was important to consider the causes of homelessness such as the impact of traumatic childhood experiences and poor mental health and look at preventative work to build the resilience of people at risk of homelessness due to their background.

**Action:**



- 1. that a full analysis of the consultation be circulated to the Board once complete;**
- 2. To bring the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy action plan back to the Bristol Homes Board to track progress in achieving the priorities.**

## **7. Archbishop of Canterbury All Faiths Project**

Jez Sweetland, Bristol Housing Festival, gave an presentation on the Archbishop of Canterbury All Faiths Project including a short introductory video:

- Justine Welby recognised housing as being a key challenge in society;
- Marvin Rees had been approached to be involved in the project as a result of the housing work led by Cllr Smith and the One City approach;
- Members of the project would meet for 18 months and report back on their findings;
- It was imperative for Bristol to identify sites and see how these could be brought forward to serve the local community;
- The aspiration was to identify actual sites that could be unlocked to make a real contribution to the housing shortage.

Board Members welcomed the project and the opportunity afforded by the substantial assets of the Church of England and other faith groups.

The Board was invited to feed back any ideas that could assist this project including the identification of pieces of land that could be used.

## **8. Autumn Away Day**

The Board agreed to hold an “Away Day” in the Autumn.

**Action: Away Day to be organised for Autumn.**

## **9. Dates of Future Meetings**

**RESOLVED – that the dates of future meetings be noted as follows:**

**Thursday 10 October 2019**

**Thursday 16 January 2019**

**Thursday 19 March 2019**

**Meeting finished at 5.06 pm**

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



