

Housing Management Board Agenda (AGM)



Date: Wednesday, 29 July 2020

Time: 6.00 pm

Venue: Zoom meeting

Distribution:

Members: Alex Marsh (Chair), Paul Smith, Charlie Bolton, Nicola Bowden-Jones, Harriet Clough, Richard Eddy, Paul Goggin, Jo Sergeant, Richard White, Pete Daw, Andrew Hatley, Kerry Bailes, Christine Jory, Juliette Henderson and Ross Dallimore

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Date: Tuesday, 21 July 2020



Agenda

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1. Election of Chair

2. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies for Absence

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

To confirm as a correct record.

(Pages 4 - 7)

4. Public Forum

Up to 30 minutes is allowed for this

Any member of the public or Councillor may participate in Public Forum. The detailed arrangements for so doing are set out in the Public Information Sheet at the back of this agenda. Public Forum items should be emailed to democratic.services@bristol.gov.uk and please note that the following deadlines will apply in relation to this meeting:-

Questions - Written questions must be received 3 clear working days prior to the meeting. For this meeting, this means that your question(s) must be received in this office at the latest by 5 pm on 23 July 2020.

Petitions and Statements - Petitions and statements must be received on the working day prior to the meeting. For this meeting this means that your submission must be received in this office at the latest by 12.00 noon on 28 July 2020.

Please note, your time allocated to speak may have to be strictly limited if there are a lot of submissions. This may be as short as one minute

5. Report back from Bristol Homes Board - verbal update

6. Housing and Landlord Services Covid-19 update

(Pages 8 - 9)

7. Moving Forward Together

(Pages 10 - 22)

8. Date of Next Meeting

9. Any Other Business





Bristol City Council Minutes of the Housing Management Board

7 January 2020 at 6.00 pm



Tenant/Leaseholder Representatives: Pete Daw, Juliette Henderson, Christine Jory and Richard White, Ross Dallimore

Chair: Professor Alex Marsh, University of Bristol

Councillors: Paul Smith (Cabinet Member for Housing), Charlie Bolton and Jo Sergeant

Officers: Liz Cheetham (Senior Tenant Participation Officer),

Gillian Durden (Service Manager, Planned Programmes)

Corrina Haskins (Democratic Services)

Julian Higson (Director: Housing and Landlord Services) and

Sarah Spicer (Business Planning Manager, Housing and Landlord Services)

Also in attendance: Pat Donovan, Philip Morris and Stephen Newton

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies for Absence

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were reported from Councillors Harriet Clough, Richard Eddy and Paul Goggin.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Tenant representatives requested that the minutes be circulated to them at the earliest opportunity to allow them to feedback to their Area Forum meetings.

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the Housing Management Board of 8 August 2019 be confirmed as a correct record.

3. Public Forum

The Chair confirmed that there was no public forum statements, questions or petitions submitted in advance of the meeting.

4. Report back from Bristol Homes Board



Pete Daw confirmed that he had been unable to attend the previous meeting of the Bristol Homes Board (BHB) and suggested that a Deputy be appointed in the event of him not being able to attend future meetings. He confirmed that he was available to attend the next meeting on 16th January and would ask BHB to agree the principle of him sending a Deputy. It was agreed that, in the event of him not being able to attend, he would advise officers who would contact other Members of the Housing Management Board to see if they were available. Christine Jory expressed an interest in deputising, but she would be unable to do so until later this year.

In response to a question about the remit of the BHB, Cllr Smith confirmed that it brought together various representatives of the Housing Sector including the Council; developers; private landlords; Shelter; St Mungo's; Acorn; business; Bristol University to seek to influence housing outcomes in Bristol.

5. Fire Safety Update

The Service Manager (Planned Programmes) presented a report to update the board on fire safety in Council housing, particularly in the context of the Grenfell Tower fire and the publication of Phase 1 of the report into the events on the night. She drew attention to the following:

- Bristol City Council (BCC) owned and managed housing for 62 High Rise blocks, the definition of High Rise being 5 storeys or more;
- None of the buildings owned or managed by BCC had the same type of cladding that was on the Grenfell Tower Block and this was an important message to be communicated to tenants;
- BCC's blocks were proven to perform very well in the event of a fire.;
- The seriousness of the Grenfell fire was due to factors other than just the cladding such as quality of fire doors and BCC tenants had been reassured that their properties had good quality fire doors which had been tested independently;
- BCC worked closely with Avon Fire and Rescue Service (AF&RS) and AF&RS inspected tower blocks regularly, offering advice and support for residents;
- In relation to the recommendations of the Phase 1 report, BCC was either already carrying out the recommendations or looking at how the recommendations could be implemented;
- No issues had been raised by BCC tenants following the publication of the so far following the publication of the independent checks reports on their individual blocks;
- Phase 2 of the Grenfell Inquiry would look at the building, the cladding refurbishments and the activities that led to the fire spreading and **officers would report back to the Board on any further recommendations arising from the publication of the Phase 2 report.**

In response to questions raised by Board Members, it was reported that:

- Although there were no BCC owned properties with the same cladding as the type used on the Grenfell Tower block, there were a couple of private blocks in Bristol with this type of cladding and the private landlord/s would be required by law to ensure the safety of these buildings;



- BCC had an evacuation plan and gave residents simple instructions to follow which were displayed near lifts. In response to a comments from a tenant representative about these notices not being securely fixed, **officers undertook to look into this issue;**
- BCC did not hold fire drills as this was not recommended for tower blocks, but had experienced fires in BCC properties which had tested the agreed procedures;
- Where fires had occurred in BCC tower blocks, they had been contained in a small area and had not spread;
- Cladding was not just used for aesthetic reasons, in the case of BCC properties, it was used to provide insulation and protect the structure of the block;
- BCC did inspect stairwells for safety and **officers undertook to look into a concern about a petrol lawnmower being kept in a stairwell;**
- Residents were informed about what to do in the event of a fire via briefing meetings and newsletters and AF&RS provided additional professional advice about fire safety;
- The recommendations in the Phase 1 report were mainly related to tower blocks but some of the recommendations were relevant for all properties, e.g. smoke alarms.

6. Rent Standard and Regulation

The Business Planning Manager reported on the new national Rent Standard Regulation that would take effect from 2021 and drew attention to the following:

- April 2020 rents could increase by a maximum of CPI+1% (Consumer Price Index, which is a rate of inflation) following a 4 year Government mandated 1% annual rent reduction;
- Individual rents could not increase above the rent cap or above the 2020 limit;
- Landlords could apply 5% flexibility on formula rents (10% on supported housing);
- There were exclusions to the standard.

In response to questions, officers confirmed:

- A CPI+1 increase would amount to just under £3 a week rent increase for all properties;
- Tenants claiming Universal Credit or Housing Benefit would receive a corresponding increase in Housing Benefit benefits and so would not be directly affected by an increase;
- Almshouses did not apply as they were covered by different legislation;
- Income raised by rent increases could only be used in the Housing Revenue Account and as such could only be spent on activities of BCC as a landlord such as investment and repairs;
- It would be difficult for BCC to review and improve property and service standards invest in improvements and provide a good quality services without the rent increase;
- An increase in rent would allow more money to be invested to support tenants, such as investing in the Welfare Rights and Money Advice Service and investing in innovations e.g. energy efficient properties which would make housing more affordable for tenants.

Tenants expressed concern that even a £3 increase a week could impact on low earning tenants who would not have the increase offset by Housing Benefit. It was also suggested that BCC look at increasing revenue in other ways e.g. increasing laundry charges.



7. Estate Safety Progress Report

The Director of Housing and Landlord Services gave an update on the Estate Safety project since the previous meeting and drew attention to the following:

- There had been a further two meetings of the project;
- There was a pilot of 4 blocks 2 in the south of the city and 2 in the central area;
- There had been a number of short term actions such as introducing security patrols, improvements to lighting, pruning of trees, planting and rubbish clearance to discourage anti-social behaviour;
- The project was considering longer term options such as better security doors; CCTV; higher visibility of the Housing Service;
- In terms of next steps, the project was looking to secure better representation from other agencies.

Tenant representatives agreed that anti-social behaviour was the main concern raised by tenants and shared their personal experiences of living with this problem. It was acknowledged that it was difficult for the Council to secure an eviction but tenants agreed that action should be taken against tenants breaking the law and this may need the support of other agencies. Officer agreed that more work could be done to reach out to the third sector to help address issues associated with anti-social behaviour in housing estates.

8. Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held in March before the start of the pre-election period (23 March) and Board Members would be canvassed about a suitable date.

9. Any Other Business

Tenant/Leaseholder representatives were advised that development training was available to them and training dates would be circulated.

Meeting ended at 7.43 pm

CHAIR _____



How have our services been affected by Covid-19?

During April and May we:

- At the end of May **91%** of Landlords services staff were able to work, providing much needed emergency or safety related housing services
- We made **7,456** calls our most vulnerable tenants, to check if they needed any help or support
- Responded to **607** ASB, Nuisance or Hate Crime cases, including reports of noise nuisance and breaches of Covid-19 social distancing measures
- Responded to **32** reports of Domestic Abuse, ensuring support and/or temporary accommodation is provided to those at risk
- At the end of May **96.0%** of homes had a current gas safety certificate (the national average, according to Housemark, is 89%) . We now call all tenants first to explain how we can keep them safe during their service, increasing our access rates and we are now reducing the backlog
- Completed **3,131** emergency repairs and **2,519** pre COVID repair appointments rescheduled and completed



How have our services been affected by Covid-19?

During April and May we:

- **107** homes have been repaired and relet through direct offers to homeless and urgent cases. Staff have secured white goods and other essential furniture, transported people to new tenancies, to ensure families have been able to move during this time
- At the end of May we were housing **864** households in Temporary/Emergency Accommodation, and we ensured that everyone who had been sleeping rough received an offer of accommodation
- Were the only English Council to establish 2 temporary sites with **43** vehicles where residents were able to access drinking water and washing facilities
- Installed home adaptations or Technology Enabled Care for **542** disabled residents to enable them to be safely discharged from hospital and/or remain at home during the height of the pandemic.
- Some staff provided support to other council services (making screens for the CSC, helping homeless people move, delivering food etc)



Moving Forward Together

Housing Management Board

July 2020

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Agenda Item 7



Contents

1. Background

2. Our Commitments

3. Co-design in lockdown

4. A vision for our service

5. Your priorities – The Big Six

6. Moving Forward...

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Background

Our Vision

To become a world class housing and landlord service; a service that meets the needs of our residents, provides a great place to work and has equality and diversity at its heart.

The driver for change

1,300 survey responses from residents across the city identifying six clear priorities

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Commitments

To meet the resident priorities, we have committed to:



Design services from the resident's point of view



Be a diverse and inclusive service that fully represents the city of Bristol



Provide services that are visible and local



Engage residents and employees in a creative and meaningful way



Rebuild trust and relationships



Give back accountability and decision making to residents and employees



Co-design in lockdown

20 staff from across H&LS formed a 'Co Design' group

30 additional staff from across H&LS formed a 'Review' group

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Locally focused roles – what do they need to deliver?

Support roles in a new model; what do they look like?

Designing a resident focused service

Approaches to community engagement

Options for how we deliver our services

15 virtual workshops completed

Culture and behaviour

Resident journey – what should 'good' feel like when people use the service?

What services do we currently offer? What are resident priorities?

Current ways of working – what works well, not so well?



A vision for our service

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Local

Being more visible and having a local presence

- Our teams will be visible in local communities and more accessible to residents
- Our services will be tailored to the needs of the local community
- We will build positive relationships and work together
- Our local teams will understand the communities they serve and adapt to resident's needs

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Listen

Listening to what residents say

- We will increase opportunities for residents to give feedback and use it to improve our services
- We will listen and hear what residents say to understand your concerns and needs
- We will work with residents at a city wide and local level to design the services you need us to deliver



Easy

Making it easier to contact us

- We'll provide residents with a named Housing Officer as a single point of contact
- We'll empower our local employees to make decisions when you first contact us
- We'll increase access to information and services so you can contact us however you want to when you want to, including better digital access to services



Trust

Keeping our promises

- Your Housing Officer will be responsible for the level of service you receive; no more 'passing the buck'.
- We will work hard to develop strong and lasting relationships with residents and communities.
- We will conduct regular satisfaction surveys, publish our performance and encourage greater scrutiny from residents.



Safety

Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour

- We will act quickly working together with the police and other organisations when dealing with crime and anti-social behaviour
- We will keep residents safe by empowering local employees to make decisions around safety and security issues on our estates
- We will collect data and insight on anti-social behaviour to continually improve the service

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Security

Improving the security of our homes and estates

- Our local team will work with residents to ensure homes and estates are safe and secure
- We'll listen to the concerns of our residents and work with them to make our communities safer
- We'll investigate physical ways to make our homes and estates more secure



Moving Forward....

- We'll continue to develop our vision through co-design with residents and employees between now and October
- We'll be ramping up engagement with residents over the coming weeks
- We'll use a creative mix of communication and virtual workshops to reach the widest audience
- We'll also provide some face to face opportunities
- We appreciate your help and support so we reach as many residents as possible, as well as well as your ideas for the future of the service

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