

Bristol City Council

Minutes of the Homes and Housing Delivery Policy Committee



19 July 2024 at 10.00 am

Members present:-

Councillors: Barry Parsons (Chair), Richard Eddy (Vice-Chair), Al-Maghrabi, Paul Goggin, Zoë Peat, Jerome Thomas, Sibusiso Tshabalala, Nicholas Coombes and Ellie Freeman (substituting for Cllr Lisa Stone)

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 Cllr Clark (Cllr Coombes was in attendance as a substitute) and Cllr Stone (Cllr Freeman was in attendance as a substitute).

3 Declarations of Interest

It was noted that there were no declarations of interest.

4 Chair's Business

The Chair highlighted the following points:

1. This was the first meeting of the Homes and Housing Delivery Policy Committee taking place under the new committee governance system.



2. He looked forward to the engagement of members in addressing this Committee's work programme over the coming year, and to public engagement with the Committee through the refreshed public forum arrangements for Policy Committee meetings, noting that a number of public questions had been submitted to this meeting.

3. Noting the recent publication of the regulatory judgement by the government's Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) in relation to Bristol's council housing services, the Chair particularly highlighted the report at agenda item 10 on today's agenda - the Housing and Consumer Standards Programme and compliance update.

5 Public Forum

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

Q1. Simon Hobeck, Totterdown Residents Environmental and Social Action (TRESA): Totterdown Bridge development

Q2. Simon Hobeck, TRESA: Totterdown Bridge development

Q3. Dan Ackroyd: Agenda item 7 - Quarter 1, 2024/25 Corporate Risk Report

Q4. Dan Ackroyd: Housing regulations

Q5. Dan Ackroyd: Agenda item 7 - Quarter 1, 2024/25 Corporate Risk Report

Q6. Joanna Booth: Agenda item 10 - Housing and Consumer Standards Programme and compliance update & Agenda item 7 - Quarter 1, 2024/25 Corporate Risk Report

Q7. Joanna Booth: Agenda item 7 - Quarter 1, 2024/25 Corporate Risk Report

Q8. Suzanne Audrey: Tower block developments

Q9. Suzanne Audrey: Housing repairs/maintenance

Q10. Suzanne Audrey: Housing stock

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:

Q4: In response to a supplementary question from Dan Ackroyd, further detail was outlined about how the service was responding to the RSH regulatory judgement. Preparation for the changes brought about by the Building Safety Act and Fire Safety Act had been underway prior to the new legislation coming into force. The service was focused on responding to the judgement and implementing the required improvements through the Housing and Consumer Standards Programme.

Q5: In response to a supplementary question from Dan Ackroyd, it was noted that any changes to the committee reporting structure around risk, as suggested through this question, would need to be assessed by officers and, if pursued, agreed ultimately through the Strategy & Resources Policy Committee.



6 Homes and Housing Delivery Policy Committee: Annual Business Report

The Committee considered the annual business report (agenda item 6).

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

The Committee **RESOLVED**:

- 1. To note the membership of the Homes and Housing Delivery Policy Committee for 2024/2025.**
- 2. To note the appointment of Councillor Barry Parsons as the Chair of the Homes and Housing Delivery Policy Committee for 2024/2025.**
- 3. To note the appointment of Councillor Richard Eddy as the Vice-Chair of the Homes and Housing Delivery Policy Committee for 2024/2025.**
- 4. To note the terms of reference of the Homes and Housing Delivery Policy Committee.**
- 5. To note the Homes and Housing Delivery Policy Committee's meeting dates for 2024/2025.**

7 Quarter 1, 2024/25 Corporate Risk Report

The Committee considered a report (agenda item 7) providing an update on current significant strategic risks to achieving the Council's objectives, within the Homes and Housing Delivery Committee's remit, as set out in the Corporate Strategy 2022-2027 and summarising progress in managing the risks and actions being taken as at Quarter 1, 2024-25.

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. CRR60 (critical threat risk) - Failure of HRA stock to meet landlord statutory obligations, the decent homes standard and consumer standards leading to death/serious injury and/or regulatory enforcement action:** It was noted that this risk was assessed as critical due to the number of statutory obligations that the service needed to meet as per the Regulator of Social Housing's published regulatory judgement. The required actions were being taken forward through the Housing and Consumer Standards Programme. In response to questions, it was noted that a resource plan had been developed in relation to implementing this programme; careful consideration was being given to the appropriate level of officer resourcing (and associated remuneration) required to deliver this programme effectively. Recruitment had been progressed successfully in relation to a number of key roles.
- 2. CRR48 (high threat risk) - We may not be able to meet the affordable housing needs of the city by failing to meet the Project 1000 delivery targets:** In terms of mitigating actions against this risk, it was



noted that the Project 1000 housing delivery plan was being reviewed; in addition to direct delivery of new affordable housing, the service was working with a range of registered housing providers and with Goram Homes with a view to addressing the need for affordable housing delivery and maximising development opportunities. Certain external market factors had to be taken into account in fully understanding the context around this risk, e.g. the recent increased incidence of developer and construction related insolvency.

3. CRR37 (high threat risk) - Homelessness and the subsequent cost of providing suitable affordable accommodation may affect long-term outcomes: In terms of mitigating actions against this risk, it was noted that these were being taken forward through the Tackling Homelessness Transformation Programme; a detailed update was due to be brought to the next meeting of the Committee on 20 September. In response to questions, it was noted that a service re-design was being taken forward as part of this programme.

4. CRR52 (high threat risk) - Failure to manage and evidence compliance with the Building Safety Act 2022 obligations in HRA stock leading to death/serious injury and/or regulatory enforcement action: It was noted that mitigating actions were being taken forward through the Housing and Consumer Standards Programme.

5. A question about raised about delays in taking forward HRA stock condition surveys further to the Cabinet decision (6 June 2023) to approve progressing the necessary contractual arrangements. In response, it was acknowledged that this work had only begun recently (and at a later date than anticipated originally) as part of the Housing and Consumer Standards Programme. It was also confirmed that the programme included clear plans to accelerate and complete outstanding historic electrical safety actions.

6. It was noted that the risks (and related mitigations) around meeting the requirements of the Building Safety Act and Fire Safety Act were closely related.

7. In response to questions, it was confirmed that improving IT systems and data quality and assessment were integral elements of the Housing and Consumer Standards Programme.

The Committee **RESOLVED:**
To note the report.

8 Framework Contract for Temporary Accommodation

The Committee considered a report (agenda item 8) which asked members to note the urgent key decision taken on 14 June 2024 to enter into a 2-year contract with Click Travel until March 2026 with a contract value of £2.1m.



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. As per the detail set out in the report, it was noted that an urgent key decision had been progressed on this matter, taken on 14 June 2024 to enter into a 2-year contract with Click Travel. In response to questions, it was noted that Click Travel were on the NEPO507 Framework Contract for the provision of travel management services; this was a trusted external framework used widely by other local authorities.
2. It was noted that the urgent key decision had been expedited ahead of this meeting due to timing issues; transparency had been maintained through clear information supplied to the Chair, Vice-Chair and committee members in advance of the decision being taken, and through publication of the decision.
3. It was noted that the longer-term aim, as the Tackling Homelessness Transformation Programme was taken forward and implemented, was to eliminate the use of hotels for temporary accommodation purposes.

The Committee **RESOLVED:**

To note the urgent key decision taken on 14 June 2024 to enter a 2-year contract with Click Travel until March 2026 to secure hotel accommodation for clients who are homeless as set in the Officer Decision Notice at appendix A.

9 5 month extension of Homelessness Supported Pathway Contracts

The Committee considered a report (agenda item 9) that:

1. Asked members to note the decision taken to extend homelessness supported pathway contracts by just over 5 months from 27 October 2024 to 31 March 2025.
2. Sought approval for an additional 5 months of funding for pathway services in 2029/2030 so that full 5 year contracts could be offered.

The Chair commented that this was a key decision report, as the proposed decision involved spend of more than £500k.

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

1. In the context of Project 1000, it was re-emphasised that through the Transforming Homelessness Transformation Programme, every effort was being extended to develop affordable housing solutions with a range of registered housing providers, recognising the market challenges and the homelessness/housing supply issues faced in deprived areas of the city, including deprived areas of the inner city.



2. In response to further questions, it was noted that as part of Project 1000, the Bristol Supported Housing Delivery Plan 2024-29 was in place; this plan aimed to provide clarity for the Council and delivery partners about the supported housing requirements of their different user groups.

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

Cllr Eddy seconded this motion.

The Committee **RESOLVED** (unanimously):

1. To note the decision taken to extend homelessness supported pathway contracts by 5 months from 28 October 2024 to 31 March 2025 at a maximum value of £2,570,462.

2. To authorise the Executive Director: Growth and Regeneration, in consultation with the Chair of the Homes and Housing Delivery Policy Committee, to take all steps required to procure and award the contracts necessary for the implementation of the Homelessness Pathways Commissioning Plan, for 3 years with an option to extend for a further 2 years, in-line with the procurement routes and maximum total budget envelope of £30,846,870 (subject to any annual uplift agreed that will be based on CPI and an appropriate housing index) as outlined in the report.

3. To authorise the Executive Director: Growth and Regeneration, in consultation with the Chair of the Homes and Housing Delivery Policy Committee, to invoke any subsequent extensions or variations specifically defined in the contracts being awarded, up to the maximum budget envelope (subject to any annual uplift agreed that will be based on CPI and an appropriate housing index) outlined in the report.

10 Housing and Consumer Standards Programme and compliance update

The Committee considered a report (agenda item 10) that provided an update for members on the Housing & Consumer Standards Programme and related compliance issues.

The Chair commented that there were no decisions to be taken on this report, which was for the Committee's information but that future decisions would inevitably come forward to the Committee as this work was progressed.

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

1. The Chair further commented that following the publication of the regulatory judgement of the RSH, the Council had issued an unreserved public apology to its tenants and re-emphasised that the Council would work with the regulator until their concerns had been satisfied and full compliance achieved. Regular progress reports would be submitted to this Committee.



2. An issue was raised about the suggestion that a decision had been made to pay compensation amounting to £25 a week to tenants of Gilton House, Brislington in respect of winter heating costs incurred whilst cladding had been removed from this block and window replacement works had taken place. Whilst noting that this matter was not related directly to this report, the Director: Housing and Landlord Services stressed that no final decision had been taken on this matter – the service was committed to transparency in its decision making and committee members would be kept informed on this issue.
3. It was noted that officer recommendation 5. as set out in the report contained a typographical error – the reference to ‘section 6’ should read as a reference to ‘section 5’. It was noted that section 5 set out full details of proposals to engage with the Committee in terms of ensuring effective oversight of housing performance and delivery, including the delivery of the Housing and Consumer Standards Programme.
4. It was noted that taking forward the required actions under the programme brought cost implications for the authority. There would be a corresponding need to review the HRA Business Plan and difficult choices lay ahead in terms of the prioritisation of resources/spend, recognising the overriding objective of the Council providing safe and decent homes for its tenants.
5. A question was raised about the particular RSH finding that the Council could not evidence that it was fully meeting carbon monoxide safety requirements across Council homes. It was noted that the Council was now confident that it is in a strong position with regard to carbon monoxide alarm coverage; 95% of council homes were accounted for with approx. 5% remaining to be checked.
6. In response to questions, it was noted that significant weaknesses in data governance needed to be addressed; to help address this, a new IT system provided by NEC was being implemented.
7. The Chair noted that a number of Council tenants had observed this discussion from the public gallery and thanked them for their attendance; he stressed that a full programme of engagement with the Council’s tenants was being developed as it would be essential to listen carefully and widely to the views of tenants in taking forward this essential improvement work.

The Committee **RESOLVED:**

- 1. To note the key findings and recommendations of the external Consumer Standards Preparedness Review and Landlord Compliance Data Review (item 3 and Appendix A)**
- 2. To note the update on the Housing & Consumer Standards Programme and programme board and the Strategic Housing Review (item 1 & 2)**
- 3. To note the self-referral to the RSH on 15 April 2024 (item 3) and the Regulatory Judgement of the RSH published on 9 July 2024.**
- 4. To note the potential requirement to review the 24/25 HRA Budget within the financial year (item 2).**
- 5. To note and endorse the proposed engagement with the Homes and Housing Delivery Policy Committee (item 5).**



11 2024-25 Period 2 financial forecast

The Committee considered a report (agenda item 11) that presented the Housing and Landlord Services financial forecast at period 2/quarter 1 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.

The Committee **RESOLVED:**

To note the report on the Period 2 forecast for Housing and Landlord Services.

Meeting ended at 12.00 noon

CHAIR _____

