

**Bristol City Council**  
**Minutes of the Housing Management Board**

**4 October 2023 at 6.00 pm**



**Members Present:-**

Alex Marsh (Chair), Councillor Carla Denyer, Councillor Tom Renhard, Pete Daw, Tim De La Rew, Ben Hanrath, Christine Jory, Philip Morris, Sibusiso Tshabalala and Nigel Varley

**Officers in Attendance:-**

Lesha Wilson, Donald Graham, Liz Cheetham, Craig Cook, Richard James, Jeremy Livitt, Tom Gray

**Observers:** David Maggs and Ilona Marciniak – Tenant Participation Officers, Bristol City Council

**44 Welcome, Introductions and Apologies for Absence**

Alex Marsh welcomed all parties to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Sarah Classick, Councillor Richard Eddy, Councillor Tony Dyer, Councillor Paul Goggin and Alistair Goulding.

Ben Hanrath was welcomed to his first meeting of the HMB as an Associate Tenant Representative.

**45 Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 10th July 2023**

**RESOLVED – that the minutes of 10<sup>th</sup> July 2023 are agreed as a correct record.**

Alex Marsh confirmed that, following a nomination from the Housing Scrutiny Panel, Tim De La Rew had previously replaced Peter Edwards and was sitting on the Housing Management Board as an Associate Tenant Representative.

Homes and Communities Board – Councillor Tom Renhard confirms that this body has not met for a while and would not be meeting again until November 2023. He stated that he would ensure that Peter Daw was sent an invitation to the forthcoming meeting. **Action: Councillor Tom Renhard to ensure an invitation to the next Homes and Communities Board is sent to Peter Daw.**

Social Value Assessment TOMS Mechanism – Sibusiso Tshabalala advised the Housing Management Board that he had resolved this issue separately himself. He also pointed out that further assessment may be



required on the breakdown of costs in this area to housing of the total £6 Million costs. **Action: Councillor Tom Renhard in conjunction with Lesha Wilson as appropriate**

Fire Safety Update – Lesha Wilson advised that concerns about methods used to remove polystyrene and prevent polystyrene spread had been passed to the Project Team for action. Discussions had taken place with the contractors in relation to the fire doors to ensure safety and with the Waking Watch Team. A newsletter reporting on work in this area this was currently being finalised. It was acknowledged that the new contracts were more prescriptive and would help provide clear instructions on removing polystyrene and a monitoring process. **Action: Craig Cook to provide details of the new process and instructions as necessary for circulation to HMB members**

Mobility Scooter – Lesha Wilson advised that the implementation of a policy was under way enabling safe use of mobility scooters in housing blocks. Feedback from the Board had been shared with the Housing Policy Team. Concerns were noted from tenant representatives about continuing delays to the establishment of charging rooms to avoid charging on landings. Councillor Renhard confirmed that a programme of safe escape route for mobility scooters in blocks had been signed off by him. However, a wide storage programme across the block was required. Craig Cook acknowledged that a city wide response was required. Any information which was available would be circulated to HMB members. **Action: Craig Cook**

Investments in Communal Areas, Blocks and Estates Budgets – **Action: Lesha Wilson to pick up this action with Nigel Varley outside the meeting and resolve.**

Disposal of Furniture – Pete Daw had not received anything yet from Alison Scott but will pursue it as an open action. **Action: Alison Scott/Lesha Wilson to take any necessary action**

City Leap – Carbon Neutral Energy for Housing Tenants – **Action: Lesha Wilson to arrange for circulation to HMB members – via minutes or directly to Housing Management Board members**

**Please note below the response which is included in the minutes:**

**“Increasing deployment of solar PV on existing homes is a key part of our overall Energy Efficiency Strategy, which is due to be published in the early part of 2024.**

**We will look to invest more money in energy efficiency measures such as insulation and solar PV, in line with our corporate commitment for all BCC homes to reach EPC C or better by 2030.**

**With over 10,000 roofs thought to be suitable for rooftop solar panels, it’s vital that we prioritise homes with the poorest energy performance where the risk of fuel poverty is greatest.”**

Damp and Mould – The resident in the incident reported by Philip Morris had been contacted and it was now resolved. **Action: No Actions Required**

Energy Efficiency – District Heating Systems and New Builds – **Action: Lesha Wilson to confirm with Sam Robinson timescale for delivery of energy efficiency for BCC properties with these heating systems**

Leaseholder Team Contact – Lesha Wilson reported that a duty team was now on call with a rota to enable direct contact to the team. This should improve the situation. **Action: Lesha Wilson/Fiona Lester**



to pick up on feedback via Ben Hanrath.

## 46 Public Forum

There were no Public Forum items.

## 47 Developing a Building Safety Engagement Strategy - General Update and Resident Engagement Strategy

Craig Cook gave a presentation on this issue concerning the Building Safety Act and the requirements for Bristol City Council to be compliant with this legislation.

He explained that it has been introduced in 2022 following the Grenfell and Hackett Reviews. The Act requires all buildings of 18 metres or above to be registered with the building safety regulator. It was noted that Bristol had 62 existing high rise buildings with 57 of these within scope and needing to be registered.

He then outlined each of the required stages of the Act:

**Stage 1 – all high risk buildings to be registered by September 2023.** He confirmed that each building had been prescribed a unique safety number and this had been carried out within the required timescale to enable the regulator to build a national picture

**Stage 2 – all key building information to be collected within 28 days.** John Smith was the officer signing off on this and provided key information relating to the structure of the building, fire detection and fire prevention (fire doors, smoke systems etc.). This also set out the type of cladding and other materials. One of the key elements is the golden thread of data to provide a history of the building.

Craig Cook noted concerns raised by HMB members about concerns picked up by a Housing Officer Inspection in June 2022 for one of the blocks relating to fire doors and the laundry room door not shutting, as well as lights not working on the Ground Floor. He advised HMB members that officers were working to ensure a more data led and visible approach following the introduction of this Act. He confirmed that all repairs would be assessed annually and managed with required action taken and followed up as necessary. **Action: Craig Cook to investigate**

HMB members further noted that existing fire risk assessments were now more significant, with greater emphasis on accountability and visibility. This information had been submitted ahead of the required deadline

**Stage 3 – the building safety case to be submitted by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.** There would be a report on each building to provide evidence that all reasonable steps are taken to manage safety risks. It was now a criminal offence not to take the necessary action and criminal prosecution could take place if required.

This was a risk based approach to identify any flammable cladding and known structural concerns. A risk matrix would be completed by the end of November 2023 and would be regularly updated and resubmitted to the regulator. An assessment certificate would be required and would be applied for every



5 years. Compliance tests and date for updated changes would also be provided. The regulator had the power to regularly review cases.

In response to questions, Craig Cook confirmed that the risk of RAAC concrete being on rooves was believed to be very low. However, a new piece of work was being carried out to commission structural surveys to take this into account and assess safety levels. **Action: Craig Cook to provide more details**

HMB members drew attention to the rising demand to Bristol City Council and how to manage these potential complaints. There was a need for resources and additional staff to manage complaints and increased building costs.

Councillor Tom Renhard drew attention to the refresh of the business plan. He advised that repair and service programme would be part of this and linked to rent rises. There were sector wide challenges obtaining surveyors. There would therefore be a need to prioritise works and ensure a reset in the engagement process with tenants. He also confirmed that the Housing Delivery Team post had now been appointed and would operate separately from the repairs team.

Lesha Wilson outlined arrangements for the tenant engagement process.

- The aims of the strategy were to target all high rise blocks
- The survey would concentrate on the safety of the home, access information and communication.
- There had been regular fire safety updates to residents since Grenfell and further resident engagement in 2022 following the fire at Twinnell House. There is now a dedicated building safety team in the council whose role is to concentrate on building and fire safety in council homes. . Since September 2023, this issue had been discussed at the Housing Forum.
- In November 2023, there will be a city wide Residents Safety Survey. This survey will be aimed at resident living in high rise blocks and will be conducted by telephone survey through the council's provider Acuity Research Limited. Survey questions have been drafted up
- Following the telephone survey, council officers will reach out to residents in local areas through door-knocking and in the foyers of blocks. By March 2024, a city wide safety group or forum would be created providing a dedicated space for residents to raise/discuss building safety issues.

The views of the HMB were sought concerning any other mechanisms for sharing information and the monitoring process including the evacuation of buildings.

#### Evacuation Plans – Wheelchairs:

HMB members drew attention to kit that had previously been available for wheelchair evacuation. Craig Cook confirmed that wheelchair evacuation plans were available recording areas of vulnerability which were put forward by residents **Action: Craig Cook to provide.**

#### Pin Point Fire Safety Point Assessment

HMB members noted the Pin Point Fire Safety Assessment which identified fire blocks in key areas of the city. **Action: Lesha Wilson to assess possibility of using Pin Point to identify the specific location of fire safety blocks.**



### Phone Survey

Lesha Wilson noted that not all HMB residents responded to phone calls from unknown numbers. Comments would be welcomed from all sources. **Action: Lesha Wilson to provide e-mail address to HMB members for comments. Any questions from HMB will be considered.**

### Engagement and Cladding

Engagement - HMB members expressed concern about the current difficulties with engagement throughout all tower blocks. There had been a recent formal complaint to Bristol City Council from a number of residents in one of the blocks.

Cladding – There were ongoing big delays with cladding to a number of the Tower Blocks. As a result, there was likely to be a lack of proper insulation through the winter and increased heating costs. There was a need for proper timing and project management between Bristol City council and contractors – if necessary, compensation should be provided to people who needed to use more heating than usual.

Councillor Renhard stated that cladding removal during the winter months was being assessed as part of the overall approach to this issue. He confirmed that a clear deadline would be required for the completion of cladding works. He indicated that he was happy to meet residents on this issue as required. **Action: Councillor Tom Renhard to meet with Tower Block residents at Gilton House to discuss issues with cladding as required**

### Standard of Polystyrene and Cladding

In response to a question from an HMB member, Craig Cook confirmed that feedback sessions were in operation to ensure problems were picked up and kept on track. In addition, legal parts of the contracts were in operation to ensure the proper standards were adhered to.

### Respectful Treatment of Residents

Nigel Varley raised concerns about the recent treatment of residents in a meeting with Bristol City council officers. He stressed the need to ensure they were treated with respect. **Action: Donald Graham and Councillor Tom Renhard to discuss separately with Nigel Varley and respond as required**

Cladding Removal in Northfield House – Philip Morris raised concerns that meetings with residents about cladding removal were taking place in the afternoon which did not allow residents who worked to attend. **Action: Donald Graham to ensure contractors arrange meetings at other times (including weekends and evenings). It was also clarified that there will be door to door consultation once projects have commenced.**



## 48 HRA Business Plan - Consulting the Board on HRA Priorities for 2024/25 - Richard James

Richard James introduced this report and made the following comments during his presentation:

- The review of the HRA provided a wider scene setting of the situation including the background position and key challenges. It included details of how investment needed to be prioritised and provided a timeline for the HRA and a business planning exercise
- There were approximately 28,500 rented and leasehold homes involved
- The HRA had a separate account, income for tenants, leaseholders, rent, service charges and included funding to keep homes in good repair
- A 30-year old plan was maintained and reassessed each year. Over the next 5 years, approximately £865 Million would be invested in major works (£405 Million for existing homes and slightly more £460 Million for new homes) plus £685 day to day repairs
- There were a lot of changes in the sector that required a response. There was a need for adequate investment for this to meet the challenges and demands that this required.
- The Council had been impacted by higher interest rates impacting the amount of money available – there had been 7% inflation on rent, materials (including windows) had increased by about 16% and labour had increased by approximately 9%
- The squeeze between the money that was being received and the costs of the work provided would affect what work would be possible in the future. The large development programme would need to be subject to more stringent sustainability assessment
- It was important to respond to new legislation – the building safety act, fire safety act and increased consumer standards as a result of the housing safety legislation bill
- The Government was seeking to review the decent homes standard. It was noted that consultation would commence imminently. As a result, there would be a need to invest in fire safety, measures to prevent damp and mould, adequate electrical standards, carrying out servicing programmes
- It was also important to ensure that the appropriate energy efficiency standard was reached – all homes were required to reach EPC C by 2030 and net zero carbon. It was acknowledged that this would be very costly for Victorian and Edwardian homes and a major challenge for them
- Stock condition surveys would need the resources and funds to respond to demand and consider potential regeneration opportunities arising from these
- The prioritisation of investment was important. The 2021 Big Conversation asked tenants their priority and built new council housing to ensure that homes were energy efficient by replacing key components where required (ie bathrooms, windows and heating systems)
- Ensuring tenants' homes were safe was the number one priority, closely followed by ensuring they were free of damp and mould, installation of adequate CCTV and the move away from fossil fuels, ensuring proper energy efficiency prior to the installation of environmentally friendly homes
- The timeline was set out – September 2023 had involved the development of budgets along with assessing and prioritising demands. In October and November 2023, there would be investment and modelling of what was required, along with prioritisation and detailed timescales. There would then be wider discussion with tenants and management teams. In December 2023, a report





would be presented to the Mayor's Office, in January 2024 Cabinet approval would be sought and Full Council approval in February 2023

HMB members were requested to confirm whether or not they agreed with the proposed priorities or if they felt any changes needed to be made.

In response to members' questions, he made the following points:

- Investigations were being made into different options for provision of district heating
- There were teams which were examining the wider sector, including new technology such as wind and solar energy and also developing energy efficiency strategies

HMB members made the following comments:

- Project Management was important to enable proper assessment of the council's overstretched budgets. A map indicating the renovation projects currently taking place and future developments would help to provide a visual representation of this as well as of any gaps and inequalities in housing provision to understand the wider impact
- Following the installation of cladding throughout blocks, double glazing in some blocks was much worse than others
- Whilst reports seemed very positive about many of the changes which had been made, tenants had raised issues with adequate laundry facilities and water egress from blocks. Whilst there was an overarching plan for housing blocks, some repairs seemed take place without a long term plan to ensure full oversight of maintenance and ensure these were done within budgets
- There needed to be more ambition and more joined up thinking in future energy provision. Officers noted that some HMB members could provide support for this

Councillor Renhard made the following comments in response:

- The reference to achieving net zero by 2050 in the report was incorrect since the plan was to go much faster and sooner as part of the Council's social decarbonisation strategy
- Rents had an impact on the Council's ability to meet their ageing housing stock.
- Any issues concerning repairs needed to be raised by tenants and Councillors
- He indicated that he was happy to meet with any HMB member to discuss ideas they had for energy provision

**ACTION: Councillor Tom Renhard to (1) meet with HMB members as appropriate concerning any ideas for higher aspirations and earlier timescales (2) arrange for the provision of visual information to HMB members on affordability**



## 49 A Review of the Housing Management Board - Lesha Wilson/Liz Cheetham

Lesha Wilson introduced this report and made the following comments:

- Following a previous smart review of tenant participation. The Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) made several recommendations to strengthen the role of the HMB, and to reassess its impact and how to engage most effectively with residents
- The Board needed to be more representative of tenants and reinvigorated to put in place improved recruitment
- The board is part of BCC formal tenant involvement structure and provides an opportunity for council tenants and leaseholders to meet and influence decision makers and be involved in the governance and scrutiny of the service. Council tenants and leaseholders can also get involved and share their views with Housing and Landlord Services in a range of other ways.
- The introduction of the committee system in May 2024 would also impact on recruitment and representation.
- The report set out three key options as follows: Option A – Recruiting Resident Representatives from the lower bodies of the structure such as Forums and service user groups, with opportunities promoted citywide to residents . Option B – City Wide Recruitment and Selection Process. Option C – A combination of both A and B
- The proposals also included changes to the Terms of Reference and to the co-option of local organisations who work with residents on a regular basis and who deal with their client base.

HMB members made the following comments:

- Co-opting clients who work on housing issues was a good idea.
- Recommend the draft Terms of Reference needed to be changed to include a reference to the committee system
- Tenant Participation ~~was~~ feels currently very top down. Suggested a working party with tenants was required to ensure more direct involvement
- Suggested Housing could ~~should~~ also approach other groups such as the Youth Mayors, ACORN Bristol, Citizens Advice Bureau and the Bristol Student Unions for advice on this issue
- Suggestion Leaseholders and tenants panels could send more than one representative to HMB meetings to avoid a loss of skills each time someone resigned and was replaced

**ACTION: Residents to e-mail any comments and suggestions on the proposals to Lesha Wilson by the end of November 2023 – Lesha Wilson to provide her e-mail address to HMB members**

## 50 Annual Report to Tenants (Verbal Report to be Provided at the Meeting)

Lesha Wilson advised that the information for 2022/23 was now available online, including performance levels and tenant satisfaction.

**Action: Lesha Wilson to include a link to this document in the minutes – Jeremy Livitt to add (see below)**

[Annual Report for Tenants 20-21 \(bristol.gov.uk\)](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/annual-report-for-tenants-20-21)





**51 Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

**52 Date of Next Meeting (February 2024 - Date to be Confirmed – now fixed provisionally for 28<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

**Action: Lesha Wilson to circulate a proposed date in February 2024 to HMB members in due course.**

The meeting ended at 8.10 pm

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

