

HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD

THURSDAY, 9TH JULY, 2015

PRESENT: Councillor D Coupar in the Chair

Councillors B Anderson, J Bentley,
S Hamilton and K Ritchie

Tenant/Leaseholder

Ted Wilson
David Atkinson

Independent Representatives

Matthew Walker

Co-opted Members

Jo Hourigan

1 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals against the refusal of inspection of documents.

2 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no items identified where it was considered necessary to exclude the press members of the public from the meeting

3 Late Items

There were no late items of business, the Committee did however accept the inclusion of an updated report (Minute No, 10 refers)

4 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest made, however, Matthew Walker did express an interest in Item No. 13 (Review of Housing related Support Programme) his organisation being a partner of the programme (Minute No. 13 refers)

5 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from: Councillor Gabriel, Andy Liptrot, Timothy Woods, Andrew Feldhaus and David Glew.

6 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 20th May 2015 were submitted for accuracy and approval.

Referring to Minute No. 60 Tenant Scrutiny Board Recommendations – Review of Annual Tenancy Visit Process, Jo Hourigan, referring to her comments said the use of the word bad was not accurate and suggested its removal.

RESOLVED – With the removal of the suggested wording, the minutes of the previous meeting held on 20th May 2015 were accepted as a true and correct record.

7 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

The following Matters arising/ Actions from the Minutes were highlighted:

Housing and the Jobs and Skills Agenda – Minute No.6 – 4th December 2013 (Shadow Advisory Board refers)

In providing an update Officers reported that future apprenticeship schemes would be linked to the Housing Growth Programme. Other opportunities within Housing Leeds would continue to be explored. The Housing Advisory Board would continue to receive updates – Status of action “Open in progress”

Towards a New Housing Strategy – (Minute No.29 – 8th April 2014 refers)

It was noted that the Leeds Housing Strategy was approved at the meeting on 20th May 2015, proposed progress reporting arrangements would be included in the Board’s Work Programme – Status of action Closed

Housing Advisory Board Forward Plan – Minute No. 29 – 11th November 2014 refers)

A report on High Rise Blocks was considered at the meeting on 20th May 2015 – Status of action Closed

A report in relation to Tenant Engaging Framework was considered on 20th May 2015. Board to continue to receive progress report – Status of action “Open in progress”

A report in respect of Adaptations would be considered by the Board on 7th September 2015. Status of action “Open in progress”

Tenant Scrutiny Board Recommendations – Review of Annual Tenancy Visit Process – Minute No.61 – 20th May 2015 refers

A report providing data from home visits was included within the “Performance Report” which appeared later on the agenda for this meeting - Status of action “Propose to Close”

8 Housing Leeds Capital Financial Position Period 2 2015/16

The Director of Environment and Housing submitted a report which provided the financial position statement on the HRA Housing Leeds Capital programme at period 2 for the financial year 2015/16.

Richard Ellis, Head of Finance, Environments and Housing presented the report and responded to Members comments and queries.

Detailed discussion ensued on the contents of the report which included:

- Housing Leeds Services and BITMO
- Actual spend and commitments at period 2
- Planned works estimated to be £59.6m with spend and commitments at £5.67m (10% of revised estimated outturn)
- Responsive works at outturn 2014/15
- The overall Housing Leeds variance (£15.7m decrease) attributed to slippage in future years

In offering comment Matthew Walker said the “decent homes” standard was no longer referred to, so how were properties tracked that were a good standard?

In responding the Director of Environment and Housing suggested that the Leeds Standard required re-defining through to 2030. A return to the “decency standard was not desired”. He said the key element would be how to profile spend, following yesterday’s Chancellor’s Budget speech, which would in future mean significantly less funding in the Housing Revenue Account.

Ted Wilson referring to the Chancellor’s Budget Speech said there was an indication that the Capital Programme would be subject to a 1% reduction, what did this figure represent?

In responding the Director of Environment and Housing said 1% represented approximately £2m

Councillor Anderson reminded Officers that he had previously requested a breakdown of schemes by ward, was it near completion?

In responding the Director of Environment and Housing said details of works in each ward was progressing and would be circulated to Members as soon as it became available.

RESOLVED –

- (i) To note the Housing Leeds and BITMO refurbishment programme and Housing Leeds Council House Growth programme position at period 2, 2015/16.

- (ii) That a breakdown of housing works in each ward be circulated to members as it became available

9 Housing Leeds (HRA) Revenue Financial Position Quarter 1 2015/16

The Director of Environment and Housing submitted a report which provided an update on the revenue financial position for the Housing Leeds (HRA) Service as at the end of Quarter 1.

Richard Ellis, Head of Finance, Environment and Housing, presented the report and responded to Members comments and queries.

Detailed discussion ensued on the contents of the report which included:

- Key variances to Budget – Income projected to be £106K – Expenditure, savings of £544K projected
- Right to buy sales (RTB) sales
- Arrears

Referring to the Chancellor's Budget Speech, Councillor Anderson asked if Board Members could receive details about possible Council Housing rent implications as a consequence of changes to the budget.

In responding the Director of Environment and Housing said officers were currently preparing a Briefing Paper which would be circulated to Board Members and would explain the position following reconfiguration of the Housing Revenue Account.

Councillor Anderson asked if there was sufficient funding to meet disrepair claims.

The Director of Environment and Housing said there would be an additional budget to meet disrepair claims, details about claims would be included in future Performance Reports.

RESOLVED –

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted
- (ii) That a Briefing Paper on Council House Rent implications be circulated to Board Members as soon as it becomes available.

10 Performance Report

The Director of Environment and Housing submitted a report which provided a summary of the latest available performance data against the six Housing Leeds priorities.

The report also highlighted the ongoing development of the relevant performance measures that would be used to report comprehensively against these priorities.

Debra Scott, Head of Resources and Strategy, Environment and Housing, presented the report and responded to Members comments and queries.

Detailed discussion ensued on the contents of the report which included the following:

- Environmental Investment
- Rents and Benefits (Arrears Statistics) and (Under Occupation Statistics)
- Housing People – Homeless prevention/ Average re-let days/ number of void
- Repairs right first time
- Capital Programme effectiveness
- Knowing our tenants (Annual Home visits Outcomes)

Commenting on paragraph 3.4.1 of the submitted report Councillor Ritchie suggested that the figures on homeless preventions did not say a great deal, could more information be included in future reports.

Commenting on Annual Home Visits, David Atkinson referred to tenants suffering from deteriorating health problems and how such people may be assisted.

In offering comment the Chair suggested that such tenants required help in finding the right support (Signpost)

Jo Hourigan said some really good work had been carried out in East Leeds in terms of signposting and suggested such works could be replicated in other areas.

RESOLVED –

- (i) To note the most recent performance information against the six Housing Leeds priorities
- (ii) To note the progress being made to develop dashboards for each of the six Housing Leeds priorities which will be reported to future meetings of the Board

11 Environmental Improvement Programme Update

The Director of Environment and Housing submitted a report which provided an update on Environmental Improvement Programme.

Liz Cook, Chief Officer, Housing Management, Environment and Housing, presented the report and responded to Members comments and queries.

Detailed discussion ensued on the contents of the report which included:

- Programme established through the provision of £3m Housing Revenue Account Funding
- The aim of the programme is to the quality of the Council's Housing estates, improve tenant satisfaction and address long standing local concerns.
- Schemes categorised into the following themes: Dealing effectively with the City's Waste, Community Safety, Landscaping, Play and Parking
- To date a programme of 82 schemes had been approved
- Currently detailed plans being developed with a view to implementing overt the next 18-24 months.

Referring to paragraph 3.3.6 of the submitted report, Ted Wilson asked if CCTV schemes were being delivered as part of the full programme.

In responding Officers confirmed that CCTV schemes would be delivered as part of the full capital programme.

Councillor Hamilton requested to know the progress on Scheme CS4 (Sholebrooke Mount/ Street CCTV)

In responding officers said details on progress of individual schemes was not readily available but an undertaking was provided to Councillor Hamilton that the requested information would be supplied.

Councillor Ritchie questioned the spread of projects, suggesting more might be targeted to reduce inequality and deprivation across the city, and that the spend ought to be proportionate to the Council house stock levels

In responding the Director of Environment and Housing said that the programme had been based on local bids rather than an officer assessment of need, however, where funding was going into more affluent wards, it was still addressing pockets of deprivation.

Matthew Walker said the provision of such a programme was welcome.

In summing up the Chair said it was a really worthwhile programme but demand outstripped the funding.

RESOLVED – To note the progress on the Environmental Improvement Programme.

12 Contract Strategy and Future of Construction Services

The Director of Environment and Housing submitted a report which provided an update on the initial programme and outputs for the integration of Property Maintenance, currently part of Civic Enterprise Leeds and Construction Services.

Simon Costigan, Chief Officer Property and Contracts, Environment and Housing, presented the report and responded to Members comments and queries.

Detailed discussion ensued on the contents of the report which included:

- The Property Maintenance arm of Civic Enterprise Leeds would transfer to Housing Leeds Property and Contracts on 1st July 2015. Harmonisation of terms and conditions was programmed for 1st August 2015. The integration process with Construction Services was underway and would run until March 2016.
- The integrated service would provide efficiencies in both management and service delivery and focus on enhanced customer service outcomes.
- The integrated service would further develop opportunities for external trading thereby generating revenue for the Council.
- The integration process would be managed by Property and Contracts and operational managers from both Property Maintenance and Construction Services. The process would be supported with resources from the Projects, Programmes and Procurement Unit.

In offering comment Jo Hourigan said the integration of the service may result in reduced sickness levels and could improve the rates for “getting it right first time”

Commenting on the Construction Services vehicle fleet, Ted Wilson asked if any consideration was given to the use of electric vehicles?

Responding the Chief Officer, Property and Contracts confirmed that electric vehicles and other vehicles that used eco-friendly fuels were all being tested and considered for use.

RESOLVED –

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted
- (ii) To note the identified dates for implementation and completion of the process.

(Matthew Walker expressed an interest in the following item (Review of Housing related Support Programme) his organisation being a partner of the programme)

13 Review of Housing Related Support Programme

The Head of Commissioning, Strategy and Commissioning, Office of the Director of Public Health, submitted a report which provided an update on the

review of housing related support services which was currently taking place. The report requested the views of the Board on what the model for housing related support should be in the future.

Julie Staton, Head of Commissioning, Office of the Director of Public Health, presented the report and responded to Members comments and queries.

Detailed discussion ensued on the contents of the report which included:

- Identifying opportunities for reconfiguration and remodelling
- Review to be undertaken in the context of the Council and City's priorities and strategies
- Methodology and timescales

In offering comment David Atkinson said it was important that the views of the people living on the estates were taken into account, using the Tenants and Residence Association network.

The Chair suggested the Community Committee structure would also be a useful way of receiving resident/ community feedback.

RESOLVED –

(i) That the contents of the report be noted

(ii) To note the methodology and timescales for the review

14 Update on the Delivery of the Council Housing New Build Programme

The Director of Environment and Housing submitted a report which provided an update on the delivery of the Council Housing New Build Programme

Mandy Sawyer, Head of Neighbourhood Services, Environment and Housing, presented the report and responded to Members comments and queries.

Detailed discussion ensued on the contents of the report which included:

- Progress in delivering the Housing Regeneration Project in Little London and Beeston Hill and Holbeck, via the PFI
- Progress in developing delivering Council Housing Growth Programme
- Progress with letting the first round of properties, some lessons learnt and how the properties are contributing towards the development of strong communities

In offering comment Councillor Hamilton referred to favouring current Council tenants who had conducted their tenancy well. She said such an approach favoured "the perfect tenant" what about those tenants who were unemployed or who had other issues?

In responding the Director of Environment and Housing said that the department does take into account the needs and disabilities of all tenants and is mindful to equality issues. The Director, however, pointed to the level of investment taking place and the importance of ensuring that tenants would look after the properties properly in the years to come.

Jo Hourigan welcomed the initiative, as something which would reward tenants who behaved well.

15 RESOLVED – That the contents of the report be noted.
Delivery of Enhanced Income Management Service Offer to Support Tenants who are Affected by Welfare Reform.

The Director of Environment and Housing submitted a report which provided an update on progress in supporting tenants to respond to Welfare Reform and set out the proposed Enhanced Income Service Offer of a flexible resource to respond to demand over the next 3 years.

Liz Cook, Chief Officer, Housing Management, presented the report and responded to Members comments and queries.

Detailed discussion ensued on the contents of the report which included:

- Preparation for Welfare Reforms & Universal Credit
- Ensure Tenants would be effectively supported and advised
- Specific programmes and initiatives had delivered good results and long term solutions

In offering comment the Chair welcome the investment of additional resources to support tenants affected by Welfare Reform

RESOLVED –

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted and welcomed
- (ii) To support the additional resources allocated to support tenants in responding to the challenge of welfare reform and universal credit.

16 HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD FORWARD PLAN 2015

The Board considered the contents of the Housing Advisory Board Forward Plan for 2015.

RESOLVED – That the contents of the Housing Advisory Board Forward Plan for 2015 be noted.

17 Date and Time of Next Meeting

RESOLVED – To note that future meetings of the Board will take place as follows:

- Monday 7th September 2015
- Tuesday 10th November 2015

All meetings to take place in the Civic Hall, Leeds, commencing at 5.00pm