

Minutes



Meeting Name:	Leeds Housing Board	
Date:	Monday 25 th September 2023	Time: 10.00-11.30
Location:	Microsoft Teams	
Chair:	Cllr Jessica Lennox (JL)	
Members Present:	Cllr Mary Harland (MH), Cllr Kayleigh Brooks (KB), Cllr Sharon Hamilton (SH), Cllr Barry Anderson (BA)	
Attendees Present:	James Rogers, Director of Communities, Housing and Environment (JR), Gerard Tinsdale, Chief Officer, Housing (GT), Mandy Sawyer, Head of Housing & Neighbourhood Services (MS), Simon Baker, Policy Officer (Housing) (SB), Julia Preston, sector representative (JP), Helen Lennox, sector representative (HL), Mark Ireland, Head of Private Rented Sector (MI), Kerrie Murray, Head of Homelessness (KM), Adam Crampton, Head of Property Management (AC), George Munson, Senior Project Manager (GM), Tajinder Virdee, Localities Programme Manager (TJ), Kevin Brighton, Development & Improvement Manager (KB), Zioness-Amaka Curry, tenant representative (Z-AC), John Gittos, tenant representative (JG).	
Apologies:	Cllr Mary Harland, Claire Smith, Liz Jarmin	

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Item	
1	Introductions and apologies
1.1	JL welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the apologies. She also suggested that Homes England be approached to send a representative to future strategy sessions. There are lots of ways in which we can work together and they will be able to add an extra level of insight. GT agreed. HL pointed out that HE attends the West Yorkshire Housing Partnership, so may feel that they receive ample feedback via that forum. JL thanked HL for the feedback; the suggestion will be taken away and investigated further.
2	Housing Strategy One Year On update
2.1	MS introduced the report, that saw the Board receive an update on the six key themes that make up the Housing Strategy.

2.2	CJ updated the Board on progress with the 'Meeting Affordable Housing Need' theme. She explained the development and work of the Leeds Affordable Housing Growth Partnership Action Plan (LAHGPP) and its delivery target of 750 new homes per annum. She emphasised that the sector continues to face challenges, and pointed out that LCC will work with WYCA and other partners to maximise affordable housing in the city.
2.3	BA asked if there is a list that shows Council-owned brownfield sites and how the number of brownfield sites in each ward is being managed. Are conversations taking place with ward members? JL replied that when LCC looks at a site ward members are approached very early. CJ said Asset Management will have a list but pointed out not a lot of it is Council-owned, the bulk of it is privately owned.
2.4	BA pointed out that WYCA has brownfield development funding, but developers aren't building enough. Can we get a bigger share of that? CJ pointed out that we are constrained by the requirements of the planning system.
2.5	MS explained how the Council is being more effective in who we house, eg non-priority allocations have been suspended, looking to refresh lettings policy. Need to work with Private Rented Sector (PRS) to help maximise number of people re-homed into that sector. KM pointed out that there are 70 re-lets a month in the PRS currently. Landlords have been surveyed asking about improvements to the scheme, 1600 responses received.
2.6	MI, GM and AC updated the Board on progress with the 'Improving Housing Quality' theme. MI outlined continued work with Selective Licensing, a new Pathfinder Project financed by DLUHC and work with the Fire Service risk-assessing high rise buildings. AC informed the Board that 96% of stock meets the Decent Homes Standard, compliance with the new Building Safety requirements and improvement in housing stock such as 73% now meeting at least Band C SAP ratings and continued work in relation to damp and mould. GM gave an overview of the mixed political picture nationally in the energy efficiency sector – industry feels let down. Despite this a huge amount of positive work done in Leeds. Funding bids continue. Looking at solutions for middle-income homes, looking at finance options for ground source heat pumps, with the finance attached to the property rather than the person.
2.7	BA, noting the success of the Holtdales scheme, asked what steps are being taken to ensure we have the skills to maintain the upgrades we're installing. Are we working with WYCA to get more green jobs? Need to remind people with GSHPs how to use them. AC agreed that the new technology is not our traditional area. The majority of schemes come with an obligation from partners. GT added that we understand that we need to support tenants better to use the new heating systems. There is dedicated support and issues are picked up via tenant visits. New tenants are supported into the properties. In response to a question from KB, GT reaffirmed the Council's to the energy efficiency work. GM added that the PRS sector is most at risk due to the government's changed approach to reaching Band C. Good landlords will have done it, bad landlords won't do it now.
2.8	HL commented that in 40 years of working in the sector, this is the most challenging period. Not just issues with costs but also around supply chains and skills. The WYHP is working closely with WYCA to bid for funds, but very demoralising that national policy is against that.

2.9	<p>KM then addressed the Board on the ‘Reducing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping’ theme. We continue to perform well in Leeds. 68,000 contacts to LHO last year. Big area for us is how do we reach the customer before they need to come to us. Looking at prevention work. If people are evicted, working with landlords to slow the process and find new accommodation. She outlined all the work going on with landlords and to reach young people. With regard to rough sleepers we do well with new presentations but need to strengthen action with entrenched individuals. A clear new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy has been introduced.</p>
2.10	<p>JP emphasised the scale of demand for 1 bed properties – moving on people from supported housing is a longstanding problem.</p>
2.11	<p>KB and TV then jointly updated the Board on progress with the Thriving and Inclusive Communities theme. KB covered the work done in regard to ASB through the ASB Strategic Board. There has been no decline in ASB reporting, showing people trust us and come for advice and guidance. Good progress is being made with the Bonfire Plan. The ASB Action Plan 22/23 has a focus on the misuse of motor vehicles. The Housing Ombudsman and Social Care Ombudsman are being very proactive and we need to demonstrate we are listening.</p>
2.12	<p>TV gave an overview of the work being done through the target wards. A problem solving group has been established to address drinking, begging and rough-sleeping, delivering long-term solutions with support for housing, tenants. Aldi and Tesco have come on board. Localising strategies have been established to help meet needs in target areas, and work is being done closely with HAPs, elected members, to make better use of funding to support local people.</p>
2.13	<p>MS then gave an over of the Improving Health Through Housing and Child and Age Friendly Housing Themes. For the former the Board was apprised of the breakthrough project that is looking at how hospital discharge can be improved, reducing pressure on hospital beds and supporting people into suitable accommodation. MS briefed the Board on the progress being made following the decision taken that Leeds will become a Marmot City and the work that is being done with the IHE to understand where we should focus our attention, with an event being held on 7th November, with Board members involved, to bring together the city’s health and housing sectors. JL said the Board will be given a deeper look at the Marmot City work at a future meeting.</p> <p>Regarding the Child and Age Friendly theme, MS mentioned hoe the Board’s report outlines progress towards the target of 1,000 extra care units and mentioned the work done across the region in conjunction with WYCA.</p>

Next Meeting

Date: TBC

Time:

Location: Microsoft Teams

