

Minutes of City Housing Involvement Board
Thursday 6 June 2024, 16:30 p.m. -18.30 p.m.
Microsoft Teams

Present: Members: Name	Surname	Housing Involvement Board
Carl	McCooty	Yardley
Eric	Shipton	Sutton Coldfield
Dadirai	Tsopo	Harborne
Samantha	Vaughan	Perry Barr
David	Wray	Selly Oak
Andrea	Leon	Hodge Hill
Maria	Rawlins	Kingstanding
Sheila	Devaney	Hall Green
Margaret	Ryan	Ladywood
Officers		
Louise	Fletcher	Senior Service Manager - Tenant Engagement
Dave	Ashmore	Director of Housing Management
John	Jamieson	Head of Housing management
Wayne	Davies	Director - Asset Management
Grant	Kennelly	Strategy & Modernisation
Asha	Patel	Asset Management
Firoza	Loonat	Change Management Officer
Jean	Campbell	RI & TMO Support Officer
Apologies		
Paul	Langford	Strategic Director – Housing
Colin	Hanno	Engagement Manager
Guy	Chaundy	Assistant Director Housing
Winnie	Edwards	Change Management Officer

0.1 Introduction to the Meeting and Welcome

Louise Fletcher welcomed all to the meeting.

0.2 CHIB election of Chair/Vice Chair

Louise Fletcher announced the outcome of the CHIB election process.

For the position of Chairperson: David Wray.

For the position of Vice Chairperson: Andrea Leon.

Louise Fletcher thanked Eric Shipton for his commitment and passion over the years that has helped the Central Engagement team shape City Housing Involvement Board (CHIB). Eric's continued involvement is appreciated throughout the whole process such as, working with TPAS and developing the CHIB model for the new Engagement Framework.

Thank you to the Central Engagement team and Tenant Participation Officers for their hard work and effort during the development of the new CHIB framework.

We also received support from the wider directorate and senior management team.

We need to ensure there is representation from all the wards/local groups. We are in the process of setting up the sub-groups and revising their Terms of Reference.

We need to ensure the tenants of Birmingham have a voice.

0.3 Service redesign in Housing Management by Dave Ashmore

BCC has involvement by the Social Housing Regulator, also there will be new consumer standards introduced relating to social housing. There will be a restructure in the City Housing Directorate, formal consultation will start by 1st of July 2024. We would like to hear from the residents regarding some of the proposals that BCC is taking forward to improve the housing service.

Summary of the proposals

- Increase the number of Housing Officers
- Taking more ownership and accountability on behalf of the resident
- Ensuring we meet the new regulatory standards.
- Improve performance of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures

Key features of the proposal

- Implementing three specific locality services and a central services function to support localities. Deliver specific services such as voids, lettings and careline service.
- Create closer and better relationships with our tenants and leaseholders.

Benefits of the proposed new model

- **Locality-based Solutions:** Facilitating a holistic approach to realising objectives, by focusing resources where they are most needed within constituencies, wards, and local patches.

For further details see the full presentation slides.

Eric Shipton asked from a tenant's point of view, you are trying to squeeze a quart into a pint pot. BCC is moving very quickly. For example, the Housing Officers are not fully trained to do the job, and do not have the information the tenants need which is not helpful to the tenants. The officers should be in place first with all the base knowledge that the tenants need, and then the officers can engage with the tenants which would be more helpful.

Dave Ashmore responded the purpose of this update is to talk collectively regarding the proposals. Across the city the demand from the tenants is similar, currently we do not have enough people/Housing Officers on the front line. We aim to correct this;

we have significant training programmes which involve staff learning and development. The housing staff have excellent knowledge. It is a challenge for BCC staff. We welcome the resident's feedback.

David Wray asked regarding the summary of proposals the section on improving performance of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures, concerning BCC contractors. At Holly Rise there are high volumes of complaints relating to the repairs service provided by BCC contractors. There needs to be some emphasis placed on improving the service provided by the contractors.

Wayne Davies responded BCC currently have two-year interim contracts. Our aim is to re design the contracts and plan how we want to move the service forward. This should include feedback on what the residents would like to see included in the new contracts. We will keep the residents informed during the process.

0.4 Regulatory Compliance update by Wayne Davies

We provide regulator updates to the Regulator of Social Housing this update will include work that the team is sharing with the regulator. The members need to understand the requirements of the regulatory compliance process.

BCC plan to be compliant, our target date is June 2024 for BCC. This involves gas servicing electrical testing, asbestos, fire risk assessments for high rise and low-rise properties.

Landlord H&S Compliance- April 2023- May 2024 progress

- All compliance data will be fully explained, alongside key messages and risks as part of any monthly reporting process.

Housing Management visits (contribution to stock condition

- 130 new tenant visits undertaken during the lettings process.

Decent Homes update

- 2024/2025 represents the start of the Council's £1.4bn investment programme.

Implementing TPAS recommendations:

- Complaints performance beginning to improve across all service areas.

For full details see presentation slides

Eric Shipton asked regarding the new decent home's standards on void properties, what is the time taken to bring the empty property back into use?

Wayne Davies responded, we have a target time of 28 days to complete the work on void properties. This is delayed if there is capital works, for example a new kitchen to be fitted, in the property. The contractors normally achieve the 28 days. We are working with the contractors to improve this timeline.

0.5 Housing Repairs, Maintenance & Investment 2026 by Wayne Davies

BCC will have a new repairs, maintenance, and investment contract from 2026 onwards which covers all the geographical areas around the city. The contracts were redesigned with stakeholder engagement such as ward, councillors, CHIB and BCC staff. The team also, held project board workshops.

Background

- Lack of interest from the market in the opportunity, with two incumbents bidding only
- **Stakeholder Engagement**
 - Housing Group/Procurement sessions

Future

- Contract term – 10/15 years with break provisions.
- Service Levels and KPIs,
- Resident satisfaction
- Appointment time slots
- Repairs & Maintenance Contracts / separate specialist Contracts for Compliance/Major Construction Projects

For full details see presentation slides

David Wray asked, if there was a lack of interest from the markets? There has been new legislation introduced after the Grenfell tragedy. Do you believe the market will settle down?

Wayne Davies responded there is Decent Homes Standard Two which is a consultation relating to improving standards for homes. There will be more regulatory requirements. The design of BCC contracts will be challenging for the two contractors Equans and Fortem who will deliver the contract service. BCC received feedback from residents also from stakeholders who considered BCC's contracts should be smaller value this would make the contracts more manageable.

Eric Shipton stated long term contracts would be beneficial to the tenants because the tenants will see the repairs teams on a regular basis and can determine if it is working well or not. In his opinion the contracts should last for five-year periods, then the contractors would be able to deliver the services. The contractors service needs to be monitored for efficiency of their work.

Wayne Davies responded, long term contracts can perform well, there can be a break clause built into the contract. The contractors could have a change in management or a change of approach which could affect the service provided. There may be a no-fault break clause where a notice period and an exit are agreed with the contractor. Within the local areas, the Housing Management teams work with the contractor's repair teams to resolve the issues that arise. The team is seeking the views from residents, BCC has a 2-hour response time for an emergency. We need to determine if the 2-hour emergency response time needs to be reviewed.

Dadirai Tsopo stated the new contracts need to be value for money. This may involve setting up smaller size contracts which are manageable. The residents consider quality should be the prime requirements of the new contracts. Regarding setting up the KPI's (key performance indicators) for the contracts these should be achievable and relevant/(SMART). Where the new contracts are realistic the market will respond to perform the requirements of the contracts. The contractors need to develop a working relationship with the Housing Management teams and with the tenants. The contractors need to be held to account for the quality of their work on tenants' properties. The Housing Management teams and contractors should use terms/language that the tenants can understand. Communication with the communities such as the Local Housing Involvement Boards should be an important part of the process. Also, tenant engagement is a method of improving relationships with the contractors.

Wayne Davies responded; the contractors need to provide good service quality delivered at reasonable prices which is value for money. The team will set KPI's for the new contracts which are linked to tenant's feedback/suggestions. The residents should be aware of which team or contractor is responsible for different aspects of the work. Also, the contractors need to attend the appointment when arranged with the residents. The contractors should ensure they have the correct equipment to complete the repair jobs when they attend the resident's property.

David Wray explained there have been occasions where the contractors fail to attend the tenant's property. Also, times where the contractor does not have the correct equipment to carry out the work required. In the past the contractor has closed the job down for example if the tenants do not answer the door in sufficient time. On the occasions when the tenants report an emergency, the contractor response time needs to be realistic for the contractor to attend the tenant's property.

Also, a report from Holly Rise tenant, who was informed the response time is between 2-4 hours for an emergency response.

Wayne Davies responded if it is an emergency, the Housing teams, and the resident needs to be informed when the contractor will do the work. Regarding the

contractors' jobs they should be closed when the work has been finished or the work is complete. It will be an Audit issues if the job is not finished/complete but has been closed by the contractor and the work has not been completed. We use the term 'recall' to describe incomplete jobs, the Asset Management team monitors 'recalls'.

Louise Flecher explained the directorate are in the process of developing the service standards for the services provided by City Housing. The service standards will outline the response times for the specific tasks. It is important that the tenants are aware of the standard to expect. We are reviewing the way we communicate with tenants to remove the use of jargon. We need to ensure the Contact Centre record the correct repair request.

Dave Ashmore explained, it is important to receive feedback from residents on what residents would like to have written into the contracts. BCC should also include the social value and benefits to the residents of Birmingham.

Asha Patel explained, it is important to identify the social value which is linked to the contracts. There are a variety of local projects which the contractors are involved in and supported by housing managers.

Wayne Davies explained, there are community benefits which the contractors will be involved in as a part of the social value element of the contract. An example would be the contractor's offer employment on apprenticeships to people who live in the Birmingham area. Working on community projects with the residents.

0.6 Vulnerability Policy by Grant Kennelly

Why Do We Need a Vulnerability Policy?

- The Regulator of Social Housing's new Consumer Standards require all social landlords to set out how they identify tenants with vulnerabilities and how these are addressed through "reasonable adjustments."

What are "Reasonable Adjustments"?

- Reasonable adjustments are actions, a social landlord should take in order to ensure that tenants are able to access services and receive the appropriate support to recognise their vulnerability.

How do we identify vulnerabilities?

- Through Housing Application forms.
- During pre-tenancy workshops.
- During tenancy sign-up.

What do we provide for vulnerable tenants?

- The level and degree of support will be agreed with tenants.

For full details see presentation slides

David Wray explained, a new tenant had a problem with the heating system in the property, the tenant's vulnerability was she does not speak English. I understood there is a BCC 12-week support system in place. BCC investigated the heating system but were unable to resolve the issue for twelve days. The only method of communicating with the tenant is through Google Translate. If a tenant is unable to speak English, this should be included in the Vulnerability Policy.

Grant Kennelly responded; BCC needs to be aware of the tenants who do not speak English. We need to ensure the services are tailored to people who do not speak English. BCC needs to be aware if there are tenants who speak an uncommon language. There are various issues that are covered by the Equality Act which BCC need to be aware of that could affect the tenants. This information would be shared with the Regulator of Social Housing.

Dave Ashmore explained regarding the new consumer standards for social housing, landlords need to recognise tenants who have vulnerability issues. The housing teams will be involved in series of checks on tenants to determine if they have issues relating to vulnerability.

0.7 Any Other Business

Dadirai Tsopo asked regarding the gutters on tenants' properties which need to be cleaned. The contents of the gutters could damage property. Could the cleaning of the gutters on low-rise blocks be included in a programme of works for Sellcroft Estate, Harborne.

Eric Shipton informed previously the type of guttering used was 6-8 inches wide. The current type of guttering used the width is smaller. This change in the type of material used. The decisions need to be reviewed because guttering is required to last for a least 10 years to reduce the cost of spending. Also, previously the repairs teams used a ladder to clear the guttering. Under health and safety measures if it is above a certain height a cherry picker or scaffolding should be used.

Wayne Davies responded we aim to design the contracts which includes preventative visits such as issues with gutters. Also, the materials used is to a specified standard which will last for a period of time. There are stock condition surveys and planned programme of works. The team welcomes feedback from the residents.

Dadirai Tsopo asked regarding the request from tenants who want to harness the rainwater from their drainpipes/gutters to be used as water for the garden. Would this

be allowed?

Wayne Davies responded the resident should write to the local Housing Manager, who will respond also provide advice on the process to be followed to avoid an overflow of rainwater or flooding.

Dadirai Tsopo stated the Marketplace event was very helpful to the residents. Would the team consider a local community/area event of the same nature.

David Wray asked regarding face-to-face sessions for future CHIB meetings. Will the team look into a location to hold face-to face meetings.

Louise Fletcher responded we will seek the views of the CHIB members to determine if face-to-face meetings for CHIB are preferred by the majority of the members. The team will look for a suitable venue to hold meetings. The local LHIB meetings are face-to-face. The virtual meetings were introduced due to CIVID-19.

Wayne Davies stated a visit is due to be organised for a group of CHIB members to visit the property with kitchen and bathroom refurbishment. The Asset Management team will be coordinating the visit and inform the CHIB reps the date and time the visit will take place.

Louise Fletcher responded, we will ask the CHIB members to determine which members are interested in a visit to view the kitchen and bathroom.

Louise Fletcher thanked David Wray (chairperson) and Andrea Leon (vice chairperson) for volunteering to be the tenant representatives.

For a copy of the presentations please e-mail ResidentInvolvement@birmingham.gov.uk

Louise Fletcher thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

The next meeting of the City Housing Involvement Board will be held on:
Date: Thursday, 25th July 2024: Time: 4:30pm - 6:30pm