

BEST VALUE COMMISSIONERS

Housing Board Meeting - Birmingham City Council

8th April 2024 – 14:00hrs – 16:00hrs

Council House, Victoria Square

Board Members

Guy Chaundy, Assistant Director of Housing

Jackie Belton, Commissioner (JB)

Naomi Morris, Head of Service (Strategic Housing and Enabling Service) (NM)

Andrew Healey, Finance Business Partner (AH)

John Jamieson, Head of Service, Housing Management (JJ)

Paul Langford, Strategic Director City Housing (PL)

Councillor Jayne Francis, Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness (JF)

Wayne Davies, Service Director, Asset Management (WD)

Rose Horsfall, Cabinet Support Officer (RH) Stephen Philpott, Service Director, City Housing Solutions and Support (SP)

Councillor Ken Wood, Housing Lead, Conservatives (KW)

Mollie Sheehy, Business Support Coordinator and Minute taker (MS)

Apologies

Natalie P Smith, Head of Service for Housing Management (NS)

Graeme Betts, Interim Chief Executive (GB)

Councillor Penny Wagg, Housing Lead, Liberal Democrats (PW)

Myron Hrycyk, Commissioner (MH)

Max Caller, Lead Commissioner (MC)

John Coughlan, Commissioner (JC)

The Commissioners:

Max Caller CBE, John Coughlan CBE, Chris Tambini, Pam Parkes FCIPD, Jackie Belton, Myron Hrycyk, Lord John Hutton, John Biggs.

Chris Tambini, Commissioner (CT)

John Hutton, Political Adviser (JH)

John Biggs, Political Adviser (JB)

Tom Smith, DLUHC Chief of Staff (TS)

Elizabeth Thomas, DLUHC Chief of Staff (ET)

Stephen Gabriel, Service Director, Housing Management (SG)

1 Welcome & Introductions

1.1 Jackie Belton welcomed everybody to the meeting.

2 Previous Minutes

2.1 Notes of the last meeting of 11th March 2024 were reviewed and agreed as a true record.

2.2 Live actions were reviewed, currently one outstanding: Housing Performance Report. This is still on track to be presented to the Board in June 2024.

3 Repair and Maintenance Contracts

3.1 Wayne Davies updated the Board that in February and March there were a series of workshops with various service providers. These acted as training sessions for current providers that work with BCC. The workshops were successful in engaging service providers.

3.2 The team are in the midst of a strategic launch with two contractors and these launches are successful. Key engagement activity has been identified for April/May which will shape the contracts going forward.

3.3 Myron Hrycyk met with the team and Rooftop Housing Group. Wayne Davies noted that some of the ideas that were discussed are useful to the team.

3.4 The next steps is to provide the three sessions with Ward Councillors which are due to take place in the next few months. If these are successful, such workshops may be used to involve residents.

3.5 Asset management are soft market testing with the information retrieved from these sessions and using this to talk to potential partners in the future.

3.6 Councillor Jayne Francis asked about the approach for these sessions if some Councillors are resistant and do not wish to participate in these sessions. Wayne Davies advised that they are deliberately doing three different sessions, so these sessions are accessible to Councillors.

3.7 Councillor Jayne Francis advised that the team could consider advertising these sessions in the regular housing newsletter which is circulated amongst Councillors.

3.8 Councillor Ken Wood asked Wayne Davies for an overall timetable of these sessions so they can be presented to the groups. Wayne Davies advised that he will collate this and ask Mollie Sheehy to distribute following this meeting.

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- 3.9 Wayne Davies went on to present on procurement approach. He advised that the purpose is to use Birmingham related contractors, but this is not always realistic due to the size of the jobs. Across three regions there are approximately 20,000 contracts.
- 3.10 These contracts can still be sizeable, including compliance schemes, gas and electrical works.
- 3.11 If a regional size contractor cannot deliver the size and scale, they can subcontract providers. Partners will be interested in maintaining the business relationship and this may still provide a value for money.
- 3.12 Jackie Belton asked across the three regions, how many contracts would look like a “good” response? Wayne Davies advised that a healthy response is usually 10 to 12 contractors for each of the individual lots.
- 3.13 **ACTION: Jackie Belton would like to see the numbers following the soft market testing.**
- 3.14 Jackie Belton asked how compliance is going in the right direction. Naomi Morris advised that that they report monthly at the Compliance Board and report on Cabinet meetings. They report quarterly at Overview and Scrutiny. They report quarterly at CLT.
- 3.15 The Asbestos work is unlikely to be cleared by the June 2024 deadline.
- 3.16 **ACTION: Jackie Belton would like to see updates on the new deadline for the Asbestos work in the next Housing Board meeting.**
- 3.17 There are 95 properties that will need fire risk intervention over the next three years. There were 700 remedial actions completed last month and the team are getting through a large amount of work.
- 3.18 Jackie Belton asked what the performance per surveyor and cost at Savills is for these fire risk assessments. Wayne Davies advised that a fire risk assessment with EPC costs BCC £140 per assessment.
- 3.19 **ACTION: Jackie Belton would like to see information on cost different between Acivico and Savills in the form of a summary table.**

4 Ombudsman Complaints

- 4.1 Naomi Morris advised that there are two stages of complaints, stage 1 and stage 2. Volumes lower than last week. The complaints team are reducing backlog and there are currently 36 cases pending with the Ombudsman.
- 4.2 Jackie Belton advised the team to continue to monitor these complaints and use as benchmarking.

5 Tenant Engagement

- 5.1 Naomi Morris advised that the team have been hosting local meetings for the last few weeks to engage Council tenants in discussions. The engagement has not been an accurate representation in terms of age and ethnicity. As this is a new method of engagement, the team would like to have some time to settle into this work before providing further gathered information on this work.

6 Homelessness

- 6.1 Stephen Philpott presented slides to the Board.

The Commissioners:

Max Caller CBE, John Coughlan CBE, Chris Tambini, Pam Parkes FCIPD, Jackie Belton, Myron Hrycyk, Lord John Hutton, John Biggs.

- 6.2 Tim Grey is looking at the quality of current temporary accommodation around the city as part of a bigger piece of work. They will be considering future acquisitions in terms of quality and cost benefit.
- 6.3 The Improvement and Recovery plan will review the temporary accommodation strategy.
- 6.4 The new Homeless Prevention Strategy is on track to go to cabinet in May and is currently being worked on by Naomi Morris' team.
- 6.5 The official rough sleeper count is 36 which is a small reduction from 39 in 2022/23.
- 6.6 There are going to be further consultations with the voluntary sector on the Homeless Prevention Strategy.
- 6.7 **ACTION: Further discussion on the performance data selection, targets and understanding the provided data would be useful so all teams are cohesive in their data analysis.**
- 6.8 Councillor Ken Wood noted that it would be beneficial for the Board to apply pressure to planning. There was a policy in place promising a 35% reduction in affordable housing, but this is currently materialising at approximately 9%.
- 6.9 **ACTION: Councillor Jayne Francis is going to have a conversation with the Chair of Planning Committee and invite them to a future Board meeting.**

7 AOB

- 7.1 The Board were not able to cover all items on today's agenda and would like to review the following agenda items in the next meeting: Regulatory Compliance, Finance Update and Forward plan.

8 Date of next meeting

- 8.1 The next meeting will be on Monday 13th May 2024.

Actions

- Jackie Belton would like to see the numbers following the soft market testing.
- Jackie Belton would like to see updates on the new deadline for the Asbestos work in the next Housing Board meeting.
- Jackie Belton would like to see information on cost different between Acivico and Savills in the form of a summary table.
- Further discussion on the performance data selection, targets and understanding the provided data would be useful so all teams are cohesive in their data analysis.
- Councillor Jayne Francis is going to have a conversation with the Chair of Planning Committee and invite them to a future Board meeting.