

Housing Engagement Board

Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting held on Thursday, 24 March 2022 from 13:00 to 15:00 via Zoom

Attendees:	<p>Cllr John Batchelor – Chair</p> <p>Cllr Claire Daunton</p> <p>John Taylor</p> <p>Les Rolfe</p> <p>Margaret Wilson</p> <p>Peter Tye</p> <p>Julie Fletcher (Head of Housing Strategy)</p> <p>Geoff Clark (Neighbourhood Services Manager)</p> <p>Eddie Spicer (Service Manager Housing Assets)</p> <p>Bronwen Taylor (Resident Involvement Officer) – Minute taker</p> <p>Gina Manderson (Housing Communications Officer) – Admin Support</p>
Apologies:	<p>Dave Kelleway – Vice Chair</p> <p>Cllr Mark Howell</p> <p>Peter Campbell (Head of Housing)</p> <p>Jennifer Perry (Resident Involvement Team Leader)</p>

Item	Subject	Action
1.	<p>Welcome and Apologies</p> <p>The Chair welcomed the members to the meeting at 13:00.</p> <p>Apologies were received from Dave Kelleway, Cllr Mark Howell, Peter Campbell and Jennifer Perry.</p>	-
2.	<p>Quorum</p> <p>The meeting was quorate.</p>	-

Item	Subject	Action
3.	<p>Minutes of previous meeting – 20 December 2021</p> <p>The Chair referred to the minutes of the previous meeting and asked for approval.</p> <p>The board approved the minutes.</p>	-
4.	<p>Matters Arising</p>	-
4.1	<p>Minutes of previous meeting – 21 September 2021 (Item 3)</p> <p>The Chair confirmed that the amendment in item 5.4 of the minutes had been amended as requested.</p>	-
4.2	<p>Terms of Reference (4.7) – (Item 4.2 (Item 4.1))</p> <p>The Chair confirmed that reference to the Co-option Policy document had been included in the Terms of Reference document.</p>	-
4.3	<p>Asset Management Strategy (Item 5.1)</p> <p>Julie Fletcher confirmed that the Asset Management Strategy had been presented to Cabinet in February 2022 and had been uploaded to the website. She said that the action plan would be monitored by the board.</p>	-
4.4	<p>Update on Tenant Satisfaction Survey Project (STAR) (Item 5.3)</p> <p>At the last meeting, Margaret Wilson referred to the cost of £16k for the survey and asked if:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.) we had a breakdown of how this figure was made up and would the board get sight of the figures, and 2.) what were the reasons for one of the contractors not meeting the brief? <p>Julie Fletcher provided an update under item 5.2 of the agenda.</p>	-

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4.5	<p>Complaints (Item 6)</p> <p>Geoff Clark advised that the actions worksheet, where all issues raised at estate inspections were recorded, had not been kept up to date by the housing officers and he had had a meeting with them to stress the importance of keeping it up to date. He added that some issues were not always straightforward. He said it was important to keep the tenant volunteers updated and offered his assistance should issues not be resolved.</p> <p>Les Rolfe said that it was important that the tenant representatives were kept up to date on the progress of all actions taken, including those that were done by other entities, example, County Council.</p> <p>Cllr Daunton asked if residents were notified of the issues raised at inspections.</p> <p>Bronwen Taylor advised that all dates and areas have been published on our website, and that at the beginning of each month's inspections, residents were able to complete an online form with comments. She added that they were also reported in monthly newsletters and on Facebook.</p> <p>Peter Tye asked for issues raised at inspections to be reported to the HEB and if future inspections could be conducted with Housing Officers as was done in other areas.</p> <p>Les Rolfe said that all inspections were held with Housing Officers, together with two tenant volunteers, and that all issues raised were agreed and signed off by each person attending the inspection.</p> <p>Julie Fletcher said that we were advertising for tenant volunteers for Estate Inspections and should anyone be interested, to contact Resident Involvement.</p>	

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	<p>Margaret Wilson said that sheltered housing residents received newsletters and asked if all residents received a newsletter, otherwise if they did not, they would need to regularly check the website for updates. She added that she does not use the website as she found it too difficult to navigate.</p> <p>Gina Manderson confirmed that newsletters were emailed to all tenants and printed copies were posted to all sheltered tenants. She added that we did try and reach as many people as possible.</p> <p>Margaret Wilson asked if printed copies were sent to tenants where we did not have email addresses.</p> <p>Julie Fletcher said that once a year we did mail out magazines to all our tenants so we could advertise the dates. She added that it was difficult to reach everyone, however, we would have a look at how we could improve on getting the message to tenants.</p> <p>Margaret Wilson said that she did not think it would be too difficult to plan well ahead for Estate Inspections, as was done with the HEB meetings.</p> <p>Les Rolfe advised that he had all Estate Inspection dates and areas to the end of October 2022, so they could be published in newsletters as soon as dates, etcetera were agreed.</p> <p>Cllr Daunton asked if local members knew when estate inspections were being held.</p> <p>Bronwen Taylor said they had not been advised but she would request the Democratic Services officer to include in the next weekly bulletin to members.</p> <p>Peter Tye asked if rent statements were being sent out quarterly.</p> <p>Geoff Clark said that currently they were not being sent out.</p>	<p>B Taylor</p>

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5.	Standing Items	-
5.1	<p>Update on Repairs Contract</p> <p>Eddie Spicer referred to the document in the pack and advised that there was a preferred contractor, however, this was subject to clarification, the Standstill process, Consultation via S20 notices, member approval and the final issue of the offer. He added that due to the elections, the successful candidate would be announced formally in June 2022.</p> <p>Margaret Wilson asked how much weight the scores of the tenants were given throughout the process.</p> <p>Eddie Spicer said that all scores were adjudicated and were equal irrelevant of who gave them.</p> <p>A discussion on the process and scrutiny was held.</p> <p>Les Rolfe confirmed that the tenants had just as much input as everyone on the panel.</p> <p>A discussion on vulnerable tenants, their personal details and the council's responsibility in terms of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) was held.</p> <p>Cllr Daunton said that the housing officers would know their tenants well enough to know of any issues, and there was a lot of work by the Council's Community Safety Partnership where the fire services worked alongside the council and other services, such as the police and other important services, to deal with any issues with tenants.</p> <p>A discussion on the state of empty properties and relets was held.</p> <p>The Chair asked for the next steps of the repair contract process.</p> <p>Eddie Spicer said that the contract had been offered to one of the bidders and the "go live" date of the contract would be 1 October 2022. He explained that they had 30 days with the S23 process to raise any</p>	-

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	<p>issues, which would be addressed and then it would go to council in June 2022. He said that provided it was agreed and passed, the process would be as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal notification stage with the Standstill period (10 days), • Contract signed • Mobilisation period • Implementation <p>The Chair said that it had been a very thorough process and thanked everybody who played a part in the renewal process.</p>	
5.2	<p>Update on Tenant Satisfaction Survey Project (STAR)</p> <p>Julie Fletcher referred to the documents included in the pack and said at the last meeting the cost of the survey was questioned and that the quote from M E L Research was included for information. She said that the survey was sent out by SMS and email on Friday, 4 March 2022 and that to date 600 responses had been received. She added that the survey would be posted out during the week to all those who had not responded to the electronic versions, which would mean that we should get a bigger response. She said that the closing date was 11 April 2022 and that M E L Research would collate the answers and provide feedback.</p>	-

Item	Subject	Action
6.	New Matters	-
6.1	<p>Resignation of Wendy Head – Co-option process</p> <p>The Chair said that Wendy Head had resigned as she had moved out of a council property and thanked her for her contribution to the council.</p> <p>Bronwen Taylor advised that the co-option process had started at the beginning of February 2022 and that the application closing date was 1 March 2022. She said three applications had been received but one of the applicants had withdrawn his application. She added that the applications had been emailed to the HEB Tenant Representatives on 7 March 2022, however, there was an issue with one of the applications.</p> <p>Julie Fletcher said a meeting with the Monitoring Officer for clarification on the issue had been scheduled, however, the final decision of the successful applicant would be by the tenant volunteers.</p>	B Taylor
6.2	<p>Update on Projects – Evaluation of Tenant Engagement Projects</p> <p>Bronwen Taylor advised that the Project Initiation document and the Project Evaluation form were sent to Peter Tye and Brian Burton, the two volunteers working on this project, on 19 January 2022 for their comments and input. She said that the documents had been used by the teams working on the Tenant Satisfaction Survey and Doubling Nature projects.</p>	-
6.3	<p>Update on Doubling Nature Project</p> <p>Geoff Clark advised that he had a meeting with Margaret Wilson and Les Rolfe on Friday, 25 February 2022, to discuss ideas for this project. He said that they focused mainly on trees, however, also discussed wild-flower areas and allotments. He advised that he had recently received</p>	

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	<p>the results of the last stage of the tree audit and that he would set up a meeting with Margaret Wilson and Les Rolfe to go through the report.</p> <p>Julie Fletcher advised that we did have a small budget for Community Grants for tenants and we could use some of the funds for this project to benefit tenants.</p> <p>Margaret Wilson said that they had a project in St Vincent's Close, however, they did not have a committee yet. She asked what the minimum requirements were if grants were applied for.</p> <p>Julie Fletcher suggested they have meeting to discuss this request.</p> <p>A discussion on the tree audit and the responsibilities of trees was held.</p> <p>Peter Tye asked for the list of where SCDC's trees were planted as this would help Parish Councils identify their trees.</p> <p>Cllr Daunton asked Geoff Clark to notify County Council of the tree audit.</p>	<p>G Clark</p> <p>G Clark</p>
<p>6.4</p>	<p>Forward Plan</p> <p>Julie Fletcher referred to the document included in the pack and advised that this was a draft plan for the next few years and was a live, active document which would keep us more organised and for officers and members of the HEB to focus on what was planned for the rest of the year. She went through all the items on the document and listed a few more items that she had thought of and would add, which were the tenancy policy, budgets and complaints. She asked the board to send her any items that they thought she be added to the document.</p> <p>The Chair said that they need to give thought to policies in order for this board to comment well in advance.</p> <p>Peter Tye referred to the Mutual Exchange Policy and asked if it would be beneficial to review it.</p>	

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	<p>Julie Fletcher said that this policy could be reviewed. Geoff Clark agreed that it had been drafted a few years ago.</p> <p>Peter Tye said that it would make a big difference to residents.</p> <p>Margaret Wilson said that there was no policy in place for outgoing tenants to meet the new incoming tenants. She said that she thought it would save money and time as perfectly good items were removed from houses which could be re-used.</p> <p>Eddie Spicer said that this was something that he was looking into.</p>	J Fletcher
6.5	<p>Tenancy Review Policy</p> <p>Geoff Clark advised that at the Away Day in September 2021, a request was made to remove the reference to fixed terms in this policy. He said that there had not been time to get a project group together to go through the policy, however, reference to “fixed term tenancy” had been removed and replaced with a “introductory 12-month tenancy and thereafter a secure lifetime tenancy”. He added that it had been presented to Cabinet and after the 5-day cooling off period, it would be adopted and an announcement made the following week.</p> <p>Peter Tye thanked Geoff Clark for the work on this policy.</p> <p>Margaret Wilson congratulated Geoff Clark and the Chair agreed that it was the right thing to do.</p>	-
6.6	<p>Small Land Sales Policy</p> <p>Julie Fletcher advised that this policy had been taken to cabinet on 22 March 2022, with the recommendation to approve the draft policy following consultation with the board today. She said there was still time to make amendments or comments before Cllr Batchelor had final sign off and then a decision notice would be issued before the policy was</p>	-

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	approved. She added that this policy was purely to look at small land sales.	
6.7	<p>Council Stock Condition Survey</p> <p>Eddie Spicer advised that he was looking at preparing a tender in the next few months and he would like tenant participation in this project. He said that he would collect data on all the council stock. He added that he would prepare a PID and asked which tenants would like to be involved.</p> <p>Peter Tye and Margaret Wilson said they would like to be involved in the project.</p>	-
7.	Any Other Business	-
7.1	<p>Audit Accounts</p> <p>Margaret Wilson said that at the September 2021 meeting it was said that the audit accounts for Communal Halls in Sheltered programmes would be published and given to halls to display by the end of the tax year and she wanted to check that this was still in hand.</p> <p>Geoff Clark said that he was not aware of this as he has not attended any previous meetings, however, he would have a look into this issue.</p>	G Clark
7.2	<p>Installation water heating systems</p> <p>Margaret Wilson said that last year workman had installed a new hot and cold-water system in the communal hall at St Vincent's Close. She said that some of the small hand basins do not have hot water and one of the residents who had had a look at them seemed to think the issue could be that temperature valves had been installed.</p> <p>Eddie Spicer said that regulations stipulated that anti-scald mechanisms had to be installed and he would arrange for this issue to be resolved.</p>	-

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7.3	<p>Solar Panels</p> <p>Margaret Wilson said that she had been advised that all solar panels should be installed on east and west facing roof tops and about five years ago, some houses had them installed on south facing roof tops. She said that there had been advances in technology and she would like this to be looked at in more detail, and although it may not be something that the HEB would look at, she thought it should look into this kind of issue as a policy going forward.</p> <p>Eddie Spicer said that there was a project where 60 new properties would be having solar panels installed and they have been assessed in accordance with new guidance.</p>	-
8.	<p>Proposed meeting dates for 2022 / 2023</p> <p>The Chair referred to the following proposed meeting dates for 2022 / 2023:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22 June 2022 (Zoom / venue tbc) • 21 September 2022 (Zoom / venue tbc) • 21 December 2022 (Zoom / venue tbc) • 23 March 2023 (Zoom / venue tbc) <p>John Taylor requested for the December 2022 meeting to be held earlier in the month.</p> <p>The Chair said that he was unable to attend the June 2022 meeting.</p> <p>Bronwen Taylor said she would send out Zoom meeting invitations.</p>	<p>B Taylor</p> <p>B Taylor</p>
9.	<p>Closing</p> <p>There being no further business to discuss, the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and contribution. The meeting ended at 14:40.</p>	-