

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

30 April 2019

Subject: Wiltshire Council's Housing Board Annual Report

Cabinet Member: Cllr Richard Clewer – Cabinet Member for Housing, Corporate Services, Arts, Heritage and Tourism

Key Decision: Non-Key

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to update Cabinet regarding the activities of Wiltshire Council's Housing Board between December 2017 and November 2018 and comply with its Terms of Reference which requires an update to be provided to Cabinet.

Throughout this period, the Board has engaged in a range of activities to shape the service offered to residents and their families, further increase service quality via appropriate monitoring mechanisms, encourage resident engagement and protect the reputation of the council as a landlord by ensuring a robust Business Plan is implemented.

Areas focused on by the Board are detailed in the main body of the report, with the primary focus of the Housing Board being:

- Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan
- Asset Management Strategy (AMS)

The Board is regularly updated about the budget position of the HRA and the implications of welfare reform and policy amendments, including the rent reduction of 1% per annum for 4 years. Members are also regularly updated about Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), with the targets for said indicators being decided between the service and a sub-group of the Board.

When considering the strategic direction of the service, and the main current and future strategic risks and actions, Board members act in such a way as to complement the council's corporate Business Plan and objectives.

There is engagement between the Housing Board and the Environment Select Committee (ESC), and the Board has a scrutiny group sitting below it comprised of volunteer residents – the Challenge and Change Group.

Reforms suggested by the Board and/or the scrutiny group, have been incorporated into our service plan monitor. Members have been involved in shaping the services' Forward Work plan.

The Board's Annual General Meeting included an overview of the year,

presented by the Chairman and an update on the budget position.

Board members operate in a fair and balanced manner, maintain their independence and make recommendations to Housing Services; the Board can also make recommendations to Cabinet; however, powers cannot and have not been conferred on the Board so as to enable it to make binding decisions, as outlined in the Paper passed by Cabinet on 22 January 2013.

The Housing Board is in its second cycle of 4 years, which is linked to the council's local electoral cycle.

Proposal(s)

For Cabinet to note this Annual Report.

Reason for Proposal(s)

Wiltshire Council's Housing Board's Terms of Reference require an Annual Report to be presented to Cabinet.

Alistair Cunningham
Executive Director

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

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Purpose of Report

1. To update Cabinet regarding the activities of Wiltshire Council's Housing Board between December 2017 and November 2018 and comply with its Terms of Reference which requires an update to be provided to Cabinet.

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

2. As part of their Away-Day's and their regular meetings, the Board set future priorities, which are constructed to complement the Council's Business Plan. In respect of the Business Plan 2017-2027, the Board contributes toward creating strong communities in Wiltshire, protecting those who are most vulnerable and being innovative and effective. There is emphasis on sustainable development, safe communities, personal wellbeing, community involvement, commercialism, people, change, digital, performance and delivering together.

Overview and Scrutiny Engagement

3. This report is for noting by Cabinet and provides an update on the activities of Wiltshire Council's Housing Board. It does not require a decision to be made. The Cabinet Member for Housing, Corporate Services, Heritage, Arts and Tourism presented this report to the Environment Select Committee (ESC) at their 8 January 2019 meeting. The ESC endorsed this report.

Background

4. At its 22 January 2013 meeting, Cabinet resolved that it approved the setting up of a Management Board for the governance of council housing consisting of an equal number of Councillors, tenants and independents, with a recommendation that such a panel should be in place by April 2013.
5. Appointments to the Board were made in November 2013 and December 2013 and the Board held its inaugural meeting on 17 December 2013. In January 2014, the Board introduced 'Open Sessions' at the beginning of each meeting where residents could attend and put questions to Board members.

6. Board meetings are approximately held on a bi-monthly basis:
 - a) For the year 2018, meetings were scheduled and held in January, March, May, July (held in August), September and November.

7. The Board's Annual General Meeting was held on 26 November 2018.

Overview (December 2017 – November 2018)

8. The Board did not have a meeting scheduled for December 2017.
9. Between January 2018 and March 2018, the Board considered the strategic direction of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) with particular emphasis on financial and budgetary matters, including:
 - a) The rent reduction of 1% per annum having reduced the Rental Income Budget by £0.294 million.
 - b) Increasing garage rents by 4% increased the Rental Income Budget by £0.013 million.
 - c) Service charges moved to full cost recovery.
 - e) There was an allowance for 3% increase in salaries to reflect inflation and increments, which is an increase of £0.089 million.
 - f) The amount Returned to Revenue Reserve was £0.245 million.
10. Furthermore, between January 2018 and March 2018, the Board contributed toward creating, reviewing and refining the HRA Business Plan and new HRA model, in the context of the main current and future strategic risks. Short, medium and long term priorities served to strategically link the service with corporate objectives.
11. Also between January 2018 and March 2018, the Board received Budget Updates, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) data, maintained the risk register, refined the Pets Policy and supported the service in seeking TPAS (Tenant Participation Advisory Service) accreditation. The Challenge and Change Group (C&CG) is the Housing Board's scrutiny group which ensures we are compliant with the Regulatory Standards which require scrutiny. The C&CG is comprised of volunteer residents who conduct scrutiny exercises; the Board received:
 - a) An update on the Housing Board Chairman's annual meeting with the C&CG's Chair in order to inform the formal evaluation of the Group.
 - b) The Management Update Report to the 'Anti-Social Behaviour' report.
 - c) The Management Update Report to the residents' magazine 'Housing Matters' report (in the prior year, the original C&CG papers recommendations had been suspended pending further research being conducted by the service as requested by the Group, which was later presented, in turn delaying the timeframe of actions).

12. Participants also considered and made recommendations, between January 2018 and March 2018, on changes to the frequency of remuneration payments, updated and agreed new Terms of Reference and a review of all garage sites review. The need to review the Terms of Reference was a part of the Environment Select Committee agreeing for the Board to continue, after last years' review.
13. In April 2018, a small number of Board members met for the annual sub-group to set targets for the services' Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the year 2018/19. Attendees were presented with an End of Year Performance Report alongside the proposed targets, 1 of which was amended. Attendees also agreed that a full review of key performance indicators should be conducted in the current year and for this to include:
 - a) Costs, benefits, achievements and benchmarking, when considering the appropriateness of current and proposed KPIs.
 - b) Separating KPIs from general Business Information.
 - c) Moving from 4 to 2 repair classifications ('urgent' and 'non-urgent').
14. In May 2018, members continued a focus on risk management and Key Performance Indicators, which included more in-depth information around complaints alongside the 2017/18 End of Year report and the sub-group reporting back, which included agreed targets for the year 2018/19 which were constructed to complement the Board's priorities, and the KPI outcomes for 2018/19 Q1. The Board also received the SWAP Audit report on Rents, budget update, supported and voted in favour of stage 2 of the new house building programme, received the end of year 2 progress report in respect of the Asset Management Strategy (AMS). The Challenge and Change Group presented papers to the Board:
 - a) 'Garages' report.
 - b) The Management Response to the 'Garages' report.
15. In June 2018, Board members were informed that:
 - a) Councillor John F. Smale (formerly Chairman of the Housing Board) was no longer involved with housing or the Housing Board.
 - b) Councillor Richard Clewer, our Cabinet Member, was now directly responsible for the Housing Board and would chair future Board meetings.
 - c) Councillor Ashley O'Neill was the new Portfolio Holder for Housing and Electoral Review, although he was likely to focus on non-HRA housing duties.
16. The July 2018 meeting was put back to August 2018 and the Board enjoyed public attendance from both residents and media, and welcomed the newly appointed Director of Housing and Commercial Development. Members considered the works being undertaken at The Friary and resolved that the service would review the implications for leaseholders when major works are undertaken. A written response was provided to the leaseholders whom attended the Board meeting.

17. Also at the July 2018 meeting (held in August 2018), members were provided with updates around the council house building programme and the repairs and maintenance service, as Cabinet had agreed in principle to bringing Responsive Repairs work in-house and this may later be extended to include works undertaken by Ian Williams Ltd. These changes are expected to be implemented over the next 3 years and the C&CG supported this. The Annual Report to Tenants and Leaseholders was agreed and key performance indicators were studied, along with a budget update and further discussion around the Business Plan.

18. At its September meeting, held in Amesbury, Members contributed to the Chairman's response to the Governments Green Paper and endorsed the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) borrowing bid being taken to the council's Cabinet and received a leaseholders briefing, including future work to be undertaken by the service. A prior suggestion from the C&CG around promoting the ability for leaseholders to overpay, prior to receiving a bill, had not been performed as expected and the Board determined this needed to be fulfilled. Members agreed the scope of the leaseholders review.

19. The Board's September 2018 meeting included:

- a) The C&CG's 'Local Housing Panels' report.
- b) The Management Response to the 'Local Housing Panels' report.
- c) A draft work-in-progress Resident Engagement Plan.
- d) Aligning the C&CG's work year to the financial year.

20. Furthermore, at their September 2018 meeting, Board members evaluated the Garage Sites Options Appraisals giving due attention to the services 30 Year Business Plan and the council's corporate Business Plan. Members supported the progression of the preferred option for each site and noted that the Head of Housing – Strategy and Assets would soon depart the council.

21. In November 2018, the Board held its fifth Annual General Meeting, which included a Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Finance Update and the Chairman's overview of the year. Opportunities were provided for questions to be put to the Chairman. There were no public attendees beyond the members of the Challenge and Change Group.

22. Immediately following the AGM meeting, the Board held its regular meeting, which was dedicated to 4 significant priority items:

- a) STAR Survey – Outcomes, which is a survey of residents conducted every 2 years.
- b) KPIs for 2018/19 Q2 and the outcome of the KPI review sub-group. This also included the Challenge and Change Group presenting their tenth project 'Planned Maintenance: Key Performance Indicator' and the management response.
- c) Resident Engagement Plan.
- d) Business Plan (analysis around lower spend on Responsive Repairs).

23. The Challenge and Change Group works with the Housing Board. To date, the group has produced a number of reports:

- (a) **Project #1 – ‘Introduction to a Tenancy’ (July 2015).**
The report was presented at the Board meeting held on 27 July 2015. The management response was presented at the Board meeting held on 5 October 2015. A management response update was presented at the Board meeting held on 25 January 2016.
- (b) **Project #2 – ‘Voids’ (October 2015).**
The report and management response were presented at the Board meeting held on 30 November 2015. A management response update was not required.
- (c) **Project #3 – ‘Planned Maintenance: Kitchens and Bathrooms’ (March 2016).**
The report and management response were presented at the Board meeting held on 21 March 2016. A management response update was presented at the Board meeting held on 5 September 2016. At the September 2017 meeting, it was agreed that a further management update report would be circulated, along with the original report. This was circulated in December 2017.
- (d) **Project #4 – ‘Housing Matters’ (June 2016).**
The report and management response were presented at the Board meeting held on 5 September 2016. The Board placed the recommendations on hold, pending the outcome of a residents’ survey. The findings of the research were presented to the Board on 27 March 2017 and a management response update was presented on 25 September 2017. A further management response update was presented at the Board meeting held on 26 March 2018.
- (e) **Project #5 – ‘Grounds Maintenance (particularly grass cutting)’ (November 2016).**
The report and management response were presented at the Board meeting held on 27 March 2017. A management response update was not required.
- (f) **Check-Back #1 – Verbal Exercise (November 2016).**
The group spoke with the appropriate officers, to establish if their recommendations had been implemented, the impact of their recommendations and to gain the feedback of officers. The group provided a verbal update to the Housing Board on 27 March 2017.
- (g) **Project #6 – ‘Leaseholder Involvement in Maintenance Matters and Leaseholder Handbook’ (March 2017).**
The report and management response were presented at the Board meeting held on 27 March 2017. A management response update was later provided verbally.

- (h) **Joint Project #1 – ‘New Ways of Working: Recruitment and Collaboration’ (June 2017).**
The group worked in collaboration with Paragon Community Housing’s scrutiny team (now PA Housing). The report and management response were presented at the Board meeting held on 25 September 2017. A management response update has been timetabled for January 2018. The report was formally ‘launched’ by the partners at a TPAS (Tenant Participation Advisory Service) regional event on 27 September 2017.
- (i) **Project #7 – ‘Anti-Social Behaviour’ (November 2017).**
The report and management response were presented at the Board meeting held on 27 November 2017. A management response update was presented at the Board meeting held on 26 March 2018.
- (j) **Quick Look Exercise #1 – ‘Fire Safety’ (November 2017).**
The short viewpoint report has been presented to the service.
- (k) **Project #8 – ‘Garages’ (April 2018).**
The report and management response were presented at the Board meeting held on 21 May 2018. As the outcomes were folded into the ongoing Garage Sites Review, a further update was not required and thus not timetabled.
- (l) **Project #9 – ‘Local Housing Panels’ (June 2018).**
The report and management response were presented at the Board meeting held on 24 September 2018. A management response update has been timetabled.
- (m) **Project #10 – ‘Planned Maintenance: Key Performance Indicator’ (September 2018).**
The report and management response were presented at the Board meeting held on 26 November 2018. A management response update was not required and thus not timetabled.

Priorities

24. The Board has previously recommended to the service that the following strategic matters be prioritised, as noted in the minutes of their meeting held on 23 May 2016:

- a) “That the main 2 priorities, in respect of the Housing Revenue Account, be:
- Asset Management Strategy.
 - Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.

Furthermore, in respect of the 2 priorities, above:

- The Board endorses the service having the flexibility to utilise additional resource, as and when required, within the overall finances of the Housing Revenue Account.
- That when the first version of the Asset Management Strategy is presented, it will include proposals for resident consultation, and the full Asset Management Strategy is to be delivered over the coming 12 to 18 months.”

25. Board members operate in a fair and balanced manner, maintain their independence and make recommendations to Housing Services; the Board can also make recommendations to Cabinet; however, powers cannot and have not been conferred on the Board so as to enable it to make binding decisions, as outlined in the Paper passed by Cabinet on 22 January 2013.

Membership and Attendance Record (December 2017 – November 2018)

26. Attendance relates to Board meetings only (that is, the figures exclude Away-Days, sub-groups, etcetera).

27. Of the 6 meetings held in 2018, attendance was:

WCHB Member	29/01	26/03	21/05	13/08	24/09	26/11	Total
Councillor Richard Clewer	Not member; attended as a guest 29/01, 21/05			✓	✓	✓	3 (100%)
Councillor Ashley O'Neill	Not a member of the Housing Board; attended as a guest on 13/08 and 24/09						N/A (N/A)
Councillor John F. Smale	✓	✓	✓	No longer involved with the Housing Board			3 (100%)
Rachael Arnott (Tenant Member)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	5 (83.3%)
Angela Britten (Tenant Member)	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	4 (66.6%)
Robert Chapman (Independent Member)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6 (100%)
Cindy Creasy (Independent Member)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	5 (83.3%)
Councillor Brian Dalton	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	5 (83.3%)
Jacqui Evans (Independent Member)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	5 (83.3%)
Lorraine Le-Gate (Tenant Member)	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	4 (66.6%)
Councillor Fred Westmoreland	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6 (100%)

28. Of the 4 meetings held in 2017, attendance was:

WCHB Member	30/01	27/03	May	July	25/09	27/11	Total
Councillor Richard Clewer	✓	✓	Became Cabinet Member				2 (100%)
Councillor John F. Smale	Not Appointed		Governance Review		✓	✓	2 (100%)
Rachael Arnott (Tenant Member)	Appointed November 2017					✗	0 (0.0%)
Angela Britten (Tenant Member)	✗	✓	Governance Review		✓	✓	3 (75.0%)
Robert Chapman (Independent Member)	✓	✓	Governance Review		✓	✓	4 (100%)
Cindy Creasy (Independent Member)	✓	✗	Governance Review		✓	✓	3 (75.0%)
Councillor Brian Dalton	Appointed November 2017					✓	1 (100%)
Jacqui Evans (Independent Member)	✓	✓	Governance Review		✗	✗	2 (50.0%)
Lorraine Le-Gate (Tenant Member)	✓	✓	Governance Review		✓	✓	4 (100%)
Emma Powell (Tenant Member)	Stepped down in January 2017						N/A (N/A)
Councillor Ian Tomes	✓	✓	Not re-elected				2 (100%)
Councillor Fred Westmoreland	✓	✓	Governance Review		✓	✓	4 (100%)

29. Of the 6 meetings held in 2016, attendance was:

WCHB Member	25/01	21/03	23/05	05/09	03/10	28/11	Total
Councillor Richard Clewer	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6 (100%)
Angela Britten (Tenant Member)	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	4 (66.6%)
Robert Chapman (Independent Member)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6 (100%)
Cindy Creasy (Independent Member)	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	5 (83.3%)
Jacqui Evans (Independent Member)	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	2 (33.3%)
Lorraine Le-Gate (Tenant Member)	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	4 (66.6%)
Emma Powell (Tenant Member)	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	4 (66.6%)
Councillor Ian Tomes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6 (100%)
Councillor Fred Westmoreland	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5 (83.3%)

Overview and Scrutiny Engagement

The Environment Select Committee considered this report at their [8 January 2019](#) meeting. The Committee resolved to endorse the Housing Board's Annual Report.

Safeguarding Implications

30. There are no significant safeguarding implications associated with this report.

Public Health Implications

31. There are no significant public health implications associated with this report.

Procurement Implications

32. There are no significant corporate procurement implications associated with this report; although should the Board make recommendations regarding procurement of services to be delivered to residents, then this will become a consideration.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

33. All Board members operate in and treat all residents in a fair and balanced manner, maintain their independence and make recommendations to Housing Management. Board members do not represent a particular area; they represent all council residents in the county of Wiltshire and make recommendations in the best interests of all council residents in Wiltshire.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

34. There are no significant environmental or climate change implications associated with this report.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision and related work is not taken

35. Wiltshire Council's Housing Board would fail to meet the requirements of its Terms of Reference, namely to provide an Annual Report to Cabinet and potential deterioration of or missed opportunity to improve services if the Board were not to focus their efforts on the identified priorities. This paper is only for noting.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is taken and actions that will be taken to manage these risks

36. Wiltshire Council's Housing Board may fail to make recommendations which improve services for residents and their families, missing an opportunity for improvement, or make recommendations which leads to a deterioration of service quality. This paper is only for noting.

37. Powers cannot and have not been conferred on the Board so as to enable it to make binding decisions, as outlined in the Paper passed by Cabinet on 22

January 2013. The Board makes recommendations to Housing Management and can make recommendations to Cabinet.

Financial Implications

38. There are no significant financial implications associated with this report.

Legal Implications

39. There are no significant legal implications associated with this report.

Options Considered

40. A formal report to Cabinet is required. No alternative options were considered.

Conclusions

41. There is increasing evidence that Wiltshire Council's Housing Board is having a positive impact on the quality of service provision to residents and their families, has itself created an additional opportunity for residents to engage with the service and shaped further engagement opportunities.

Proposal

42. For Cabinet to note this Annual Report.

Reason for Proposal

43. Wiltshire Council's Housing Board's Terms of Reference require an Annual Report to be presented to Cabinet.

Simon Hendey (Director - Housing and Commercial)

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17 January 2019

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Housing Priorities and Workplan (April 2016).

Appendix 2 – Service Plan Monitor (external PDF file).

Background Papers

The following documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:

None.

Appendix 1

(please note: document relates to multiple housing services, not just the council's landlord business which are highlighted in orange)
Please also consider Appendix 2: Service Plan Monitor (external Excel file).

Housing Priorities and Workplan (April 2016)

Priority	Action(s)	Lead Officer	Target date	Notes
1 Ensure residents are able to access a range of housing and care options to meet needs	a) New Build programme and delivery of new affordable housing to meet need I. Council house build programme	Tim Bruce	March 2018	
2 Make best use of existing housing stock in Wiltshire	a) Develop an asset management strategy for council housing stock to include; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Options for regeneration of The Friary (security doors) ii. Disposal strategy and strategy for high value stock iii. Sheltered housing review/remodelling proposals iv. Strategy for garages v. General stock issues e.g. Bemerton vi. Approach to adapted properties vii. Void standard 	Tim Bruce	March 2017	Needs to be completed within next 12 months

3 Review services to ensure they meet need, deliver good value for money and deliver good quality outcomes	a)	Review and procure planned and responsive maintenance contracts (i) Consult with managers (ii) Agree how to involve staff & residents (iii) Clarify timeline/project plan (iv) Review policies and procedures	Janet O'Brien	September 2017	Interim options followed by long term options going forward
	b)	Review HRA Business Plan (i) budget (ii) impact of housing & planning bill and welfare reform (iii) update policies e.g. tenancy policy (iv) Review service charges including leaseholds (i) Review staff structure in line with agreed priorities	Nicole and Janet – along with finance	April 2017	
	c)	Explore options for delivering ongoing efficiencies and savings across HRA and general fund	All managers	April 2017	
	d)	Review of the Housing Board	James	October 2016	Looking to appoint a consultant

4 Ensure robust strategies and policies are in place supported by a robust evidence base to enable successful delivery of projects and services	a) Review and develop statutory strategies and policies (iii) Tenancy Strategy (iv) Update of policies including Debt policy to reflect legislative changes and audit requirements (v) Update of procedures to reflect changes of policy	Helen Taylor and Ian Seeckts	Review by December 2016	JC to discuss with Robin
	b) Review and consider the impact of any legislative or policy changes (i) Impact of Welfare Reform on existing Wiltshire Council tenants (ii) Response of other providers to these changes – understand the impact of this (iii) Support and options for tenants impacted by these changes (iv) Impact on Under 35s – affordability and options (v) Housing and planning bill (vi) Consideration to councils response in creating fixed term tenancies – creation of a tenancy policy	Jamie Peters (council tenants / Wiltshire Money)	September 2016	Research and reports underway. UC rollout likely in March 2017. Welfare Reform Report With NS UC report being drafted.
5 Implement effective systems for management of the whole	a) Ensure robust systems are in place for; (i) Risk management (ii) Information management/filing (paperless) (iii) Performance management (iv) Budget management	Janet / Nicole / Simon	April 2017	Documents to be reviewed and ready by April 2017

housing service & deliver efficiency savings	(v) Communication (vi) Data sharing			
	b) Building a strong landlord service with our residents through effective resident engagement (regulatory framework) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Work towards a quality mark for resident engagement (ii) Implement audit and ESC recommendations on engagement (iii) Revenue budget to encourage resident engagement 	Dot Kronda	September 2017 April 2017 December 2016	
	c) Review or service level agreement with Legal to ensure an efficient and effective legal service can be provided <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. HRA – efficiencies / SLA II. General fund process 	Nicole Smith	September 2016	