

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

31 January 2023

Subject: Wiltshire Council's Housing Board Annual Report

Cabinet Member: Cllr Phil Alford Cabinet Member for Housing, Strategic Assets and Asset Transfer

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 October 2021 and November 2022.

Areas focused on by the Board are detailed in the main body of the report, with the primary focus of the Housing Board being to ensure that a prudent Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan is being implemented.

Key achievements of the Housing Board over the past 12 months are presented in 5 groups (additional details are provided in the main report: Economic Response; Planned Investment in Homes; Services Performance; Approach; and Challenges and Opportunities.

The Board is regularly updated about the budget position of the HRA. Members are also regularly updated about Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), with the targets for said indicators being set between the service and a sub-committee of the Board.

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.

The Housing Board is in its third cycle of 4 years, which is linked to the council's local electoral cycle; this cycle commenced after elections in May 2021.

Proposal(s)

For Cabinet to:

- 1) 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.

Terence Herbert
Chief Executive

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

31 January 2023

Subject: Wiltshire Council's Housing Board Annual Report

Cabinet Member: Cllr Phil Alford Cabinet Member for Housing, Strategic Assets and Asset Transfer

Key Decision: Non Key

Purpose of Report

1. To update Cabinet regarding the activities of Wiltshire Council's Housing Board between October 2021 and November 2022 and to comply with its Terms of Reference which requires an update to be provided to Cabinet.

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

2. This report supports the Business Plan 2022 to 2032, in particular our mission to ensure 'The people of Wiltshire are empowered to live full, healthy and enriched lives', 'Our communities continue to be beautiful and exciting places to live', 'Our local economy thrives and is supported by a skilled workforce' and 'We lead the way in how councils and counties mitigate the climate challenges ahead'. Additionally, the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) actions support: 'We have vibrant, well-connected communities', 'We ensure decisions are evidence-based', 'We live well together', 'We have the right housing', 'We take responsibility for the environment' and 'We are on the path to carbon neutral (net zero)', and more around supporting vulnerable customers and supporting the local economy.

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. This report was presented by the Director – Assets and Commercial Development to the Environment Select Committee (ESC) at its meeting held on 4 January 2023.

Background

4. Housing Board appointments terminated in line with the local Government electoral cycle in May 2021.
5. Following the provision of information events, advertisements were placed to facilitate recruitment of new Housing Board members. Applicants were interviewed by the Cabinet member for Housing and officers.
6. Appointments were made between late May 2021 and early July 2021.

7. One previous Housing Board member remains on the Housing Board.
8. After appointments in 2021, one resident who was appointed to the Housing Board moved to a property outside the HRA. This member stepped down from the Board as they were no longer eligible to hold the appointment.
9. A new resident was appointed to the Housing Board in 2022, however this resident also later moved to a private property. This member stepped down from the Board as they were no longer eligible to hold the appointment.
10. Residents were notified of the latest vacancy and invited to attend a virtual taster session in October 2022. Applications could then be submitted. The closing date was extended by one week. In November 2022, a resident was appointed to the Housing Board however this resident shortly after moved into the private rented sector and was thus ineligible to hold the appointment.
11. In late November 2022, recruitment plans were approved with advertising due to commence in December 2022, a virtual taster session will be held in December 2022 and the closing date for applications will be in January 2023.

Key Achievements of the Housing Board over the past 12 months (please note: this is an overview rather than an exhaustive list)

12. Economic Response

- a) Continuing Actions
 - i) Officers continued working remotely
 - ii) Emergency repairs continued
 - iii) Non-emergency repairs backlog cleared
 - iv) Enhanced Tenancy Sustainment support
- b) Digital Resident Engagement
 - i) Estate Inspections
 - ii) Virtual Scrutiny
 - iii) General online engagement sessions
- c) Service reconfiguration to better align with customer expectations

13. Planned Investment in Homes

- a) Refurbishments and Planned Maintenance
- b) Housing Energy Efficiency Programme (HEEP) (moving Housing Revenue Account stock to Energy Performance Certificate B)
 - i) In the prior year, the council was successful in being awarded funding of £500 thousand from the Green Homes Grant for works on 100 properties.
 - ii) We are now progressing works on batches of properties, focusing on those with the greatest potential increase in energy efficiency. Work includes retrofit assessments, pre

works EPCs, programming works via partnership contractors, through to completion.

iii) The council is continuing to receive positive feedback of electrical utility savings from those tenants that have benefitted from HEEP works.

c) Council House Build Programme and off-site manufacture via Modern Method of Construction (MMC) (carbon: net-zero homes)

i) Profiled Programme expenditure

Phase	HRA Business Plan No. of Units (agreed position)	Current position – November 2022	HRA Business Plan approved figures	Current position – November 2022
2	28	28	£5,773,788	£5,783,147.62
3.1	91	94	£21,950,972	£23,672,344.89
3.2	98	109	£20,446,014	£26,911,085.30
3.3	100	107	£20,000,000	£29,401,836.00
3.4	100	102	£20,000,000	£30,295,089.00

- The revised costs are as a result of increasing construction costs and increased quality of build using MMC. The current position has not been agreed by the Housing Board or by Cabinet.
- A paper will be developed on receipt of the agreed Rent Cap and will seek to make the Cabinet aware of the increased costs and seek approval to increase the total programme budget in line with the costs.
- All projects within the programme, still sit within the agreed parameters.

ii) Breakdown of Programme by delivery type

Phase	Purchasing	S106	New Build
2	17	6	5
3.1	18	24	52
3.2	14	39	58
3.3	5	32	70
3.4		27	75
	54	128	260

- New build sites can fall in and out of the programme or deliver less units as due diligence takes place.
- This currently represents a split of 12 purchase, 28% s106 new build and 58% WC New Build
- The original intention was to see a 60/40 split in favour of new build.

iii) MMC 3 Year procurement process

- This year we have completed a tender through the South West Procurement Alliance Framework for a 3 year MMC partner to delivery 1000 new homes manufactured for Wiltshire Council and Magna Housing Association.
- The collaboration with Magna Housing has enabled WC to achieve a more competitive manufacturing price.
- The tender includes a fixed price guarantee for any orders placed before the end of March 2023.
- By working together, we are saving costs on design and we are sharing good practice and absorbing learning already achieved with neighbouring housing providers.

iv) Project Progress

- Planning has been achieved on the three MMC Pilot sites at Rowde, Corsley and Durrington. Work is underway for the units to be completed in the factory and the ground works contractor to re-quote for the ground costs.
- Work continues with the NHS to purchase land from them in Devizes that will see 33 affordable homes delivered
- Work continues with a design team for another site in Devizes that will also bring forward 33 units. Anticipated to be in for planning by the end of 2022.
- Work continues at a site in Ludgershall to bring forward an disused care home forward for 18 units, with pre-app feedback currently being addressed.

- Work also continues at a site in Mere to bring forward an additional disused care home for Older Persons accommodation in Mere.
- Work completed on 7 Rough Sleeper properties, which we part funded by Homes England to support the Rough Sleeper Initiative.
- So far in 2022/23, we have seen the completion of 30 new homes including 6 x 1 Bed Flats for adults with learning disabilities.

14. Services Performance

- a) Key Performance Indicator(s)
 - i) Proposed targets for 2022/23
 - ii) End of Year Report
 - iii) Complaints and Compliments Report
 - iv) KPIs for 2022/23 Q2 are attached at Appendix A.

- b) STAR Survey
 - i) The Executive Summary is replicated below (STAR Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2022, page 2):

Bench mark	2020 result	change over time	2022 result	Question source
78%	81%	↓	77%	satisfaction overall 
23	22	↓	18	net promoter score 
75%	77%	↓	75%	quality of home 
81%	83%	↓	80%	safety and security of home 
63%	N.A.	N.A.	61%	communal areas well maintained and safe 
81%	87%	↓	83%	rent value money 
72%	73%	↓	69%	repairs and maintenance overall 
79%	78%	↓	74%	last completed repair 
79%	80%	↓	77%	easy to deal with 
63%	60%	↓	58%	listens to views and acts on them 
71%	75%	↓	66%	keeps tenants informed 
56%	63%	↓	56%	approach to handling complaints 
82%	84%	↓	83%	neighbourhood as a place to live 
62%	N.A.	N.A.	61%	makes a positive contribution to area 
55%	56%	↓	55%	dealing with ASB 

- ii) Report outcomes were presented to the Housing Board.
- iii) It was agreed that actions should be reflected in the HRA Business Plan actions document, and if they are not already included, they should be added.
- iv) The Housing Board determined that actions are already incorporated into our future actions and anticipates improved performance outcomes in the future.

c) iHousing portal

- i) More residents are signed up to use our digital option.

Former iHousing (to November 2020)	New iHousing (October 2021)	New iHousing (14 November 2022)
900 approximate registered users which included inactive and never used accounts	1,900 approximate registered users, we also email new tenants after 1 week, 6 weeks and 4 months, if they have not registered	2,467 approximate registered users which is growing daily, especially when we send mass email blasts, we also email new tenants after 1 week, 6 weeks and 4 months, if they have not registered

- ii) More efficient and positive outcomes for customers.

d) Resident Engagement Plan

- i) The Housing Board reviewed the Resident Engagement Plan in an earlier year.
- ii) The Housing Board extended the Resident Engagement Plan for a further year, as some elements had to be put on hold due to the circumstances.
- iii) Outcomes continued to be delivered, benefitting residents and their families throughout the last year.
- iv) A new Resident Engagement Plan is being prepared and will be presented to the Housing Board in 2023.

15. Upcoming areas of work

- a) Upcoming areas of work for the Sub-Committees may include:
- i) Development and Investment ('Place')
- Housing Energy Efficiency Programme (HEEP)
 - Council House Build Programme
 - Sheltered Housing Refurbishments
 - Sheltered Housing Review
- ii) Finance and Policy ('Pounds')
- Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan – including budget setting and rent setting
- iii) Performance and Risk ('People')
- STAR Survey – Action Monitoring
 - Risk Register

- c. Key Performance Indicators – setting and benchmarking
 - d. Resident Engagement Plan
 - e. Implementing reforms coming from the Social Housing White Paper
- b) Challenge and Change Group
- i) Continued remote working
 - ii) Decant Policy
 - iii) Anti-Social Behaviour
 - iv) Potential future project may include Sheltered Housing Service Charges
- c) Small Improvement Bid(s)
- i) 13 bids received for 2022/23 in phase 1
 - ii) 8 bids received for 2022/23 in phase 2
 - iii) Ongoing monies for future years
 - iv) Scheme rules being reviewed, may return to a single annual cycle in the future rather than 2 phases per year

16. Priorities and Service Objectives

- a) Housing Energy Efficiency Programme (HEEP) – Climate Change
- b) Council Housing Build Programme
- c) Service Redesign

17. Membership and Attendance Record (October 2021 – November 2022)

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

19. Of the 7 meetings held thus far in the period, attendance was:

WCHB Member	24/11	26/01	30/03	25/05	27/07	28/09	30/11	Total
Councillor Phil Alford	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	7 (100%)
Rachael Arnott (Tenant Member)	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	6 (86%)
Councillor Richard Britton	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	7 (100%)
Councillor Brian Dalton	✓	Not a member						1 (100%)
Cris David (Tenant Member)	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	6 (86%)
Melissa Davies	✗	Not a member						0 (0%)

(Tenant Member)								
Kevin Ellis-Brush (Independent Member)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	7 (100%)
Glenn Loftus (Independent Member)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	6 (86%)
Rachel Luton (Tenant Member)	Not a member		✓	✓	✓	✓	Not a member	4 (100%)
Richard McCormick (Tenant Member)	Not a member						Not a member	0 (0%)
Simon Maggs (Independent Member)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	7 (100%)
Councillor Ricky Rogers	Not a member	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6 (100%)

20. Sub-Committee Membership

21. Whilst all members are able to attend any or all of the sub-committees, membership of the sub-committees is as follows:

Housing Board member	Development and Investment ('Place')	Finance and Policy ('Pounds')	Performance and Risk ('People')
Councillor Phil Alford	✗	✓	✓
Rachael Arnott	✓	✗	✓
Councillor Richard Britton	✗	✓	✗
Cris David	✓	✓	✓
Kevin Ellis-Brush	✗	✓	✗
Glenn Loftus	✓	✗	✓
Richard McCormick	N/A	N/A	N/A
Simon Maggs	✓	✗	✗
Councillor Ricky Rogers	TBC	TBC	TBC

Safeguarding Implications

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

Public Health Implications

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

Procurement Implications

24. 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

25. 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. The service continually works toward Housing Board membership better reflecting council house residents, in respect of the protected characteristics of the Equalities Act.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

26. There are no significant environmental or climate change implications associated with this report. That is because the report is for noting not making a decision. Members may consider the HEEP programme discussed above and net-zero MMC housing in relation to environmental and climate change considerations.

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

27. Wiltshire Council's Housing Board would fail to meet the requirements of its Terms of Reference, namely to provide an Annual Report to Cabinet.

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

28. Vacancies can occur from time-to-time; there is a risk that there may not be any applicants for vacant posts, however recent experience demonstrates that there was a wealth of applicants for member types (councillor, independent or tenant). We will continue with the same recruitment approach.

Financial Implications

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

Legal Implications

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

Workforce Implications

31. There are no significant workforce implications associated with this report.

Options Considered

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

Conclusions

33. 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

34. For Cabinet to:

- 1) Note this Annual Report.

Reason for Proposal

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

Simon Hendey (Director - Assets and Commercial Development)

Report Author: Ian Seeckts, Governance and Scrutiny Officer,
ian.seeckts@wiltshire.gov.uk, Tel: 01722 434353

30 November 2022

Appendices

Appendix A – Key Performance Indicators (2022/23 Q2).

Background Papers

The following documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:
None.