

HOUSING MANAGEMENT BOARD2 July 2007
5.30pm – 7.35pm

Present: Councillors: Blair, Blencowe, James, Kightley, Levy, Pitt, and Walker (J Rosenstiel also as alternate member).
Tenant Representatives: Tony Barnes (Chair), Diane Best, Brian Haywood, John Marais, Terry Sweeney, Anna Vine-Lott.

Also Present: Councillor Smart, Executive Councillor for Housing.

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

07/HMB/20 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 19 March 2007 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

07/HMB/21 Apologies For Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Armstrong and Herbert.

07/HMB/22 Declarations Of Interest

Diane Best two personal interests – (07/HMB/24) husband was nominated as a co-opted representative to Community Services Scrutiny Committee. (07/HMB/29 and 37) as a leaseholder.

07/HMB/23 Public Question Time

No questions were asked by the members of the public present.

**07/HMB/24 To nominate three tenants/leaseholders representatives to
Community Services Scrutiny Committee for municipal
year 2007/08**

The Chair announced that Stan Best, Brian Haywood and Tony Barnes would be the representatives for 2007/08.

07/HMB/25 Review the Conditions of Tenancy

The Committee approved the recommendation by 14 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendation.

07/HMB/26 Talbot House Refurbishment

Tony Barnes asked that there was sufficient resident involvement and officers assured the HMB that this would be done.

Cllr Levy asked if the experience of the Mansel Court project would be taken on board. The HMB was advised that the figures in the report were only estimates, but as accurate as they could be at this stage, and this had been prepared in the knowledge of the Mansel Court financial planning.

Cllr Blair asked to visit one of the Council's refurbished sheltered schemes. The Head of City Homes undertook to arrange a visit for HMB members of a number of the City's schemes, including Mansel Court if possible.

Action: Head of City Homes

John Marais asked whether the current tenants would all have a place in the new scheme bearing in mind the refurbished scheme would be 5 units less. The Head of City Homes stated that as Talbot House was currently not full, all existing residents would be able to return, but would also be given the widest choice possible.

The Committee approved the recommendation by 12 votes to 0.
The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

07/HMB/27 Use of additional Housing Revenue Account Resources 2007/08

Cllr Blair asked what was proposed for replacement lighting in communal areas. The HMB noted that the lighting would work by photo light cells rather than time clocks which had proved problematic. This change would save energy. In response to a question from Terry Sweeney, the Finance Officer stated that the resources would be targeted at tenanted areas (e.g. not general fencing).

The Director of Community Services emphasised the commentary in para 3.3 of the report ie. there were significant pressures on the Housing Revenue Account in future years e.g Supporting People and that retaining the underspend was the financially prudent approach.

The Committee approved the recommendation by 12 votes to 0.
The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

07/HMB/28 Revenue and capital outturn, carry forwards and significant variances 2006/07

In response to questions concerning the variance on day to day repairs (and noting the comments made by officers in the report on planned repairs), the Director of Community Services stated that it was a 'responsive' budget which had more calls upon it than anticipated in 2006/07. Obviously officers would keep monitoring the budget and HMB would have the opportunity to scrutinise it in November. Cllr Blencowe asked if the Procurement Manager had been asked to look into the increased building/repairs costs stated in the officer report. The Director of Community Services stated that the Decent Homes contract (with City Services and Apollo) had efficiencies built into it, but she would report back on the Procurement Manager's involvement.

Action by Director of Community Services

The Committee approved the recommendation to carry forward all requests by 12 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendation.

07/HMB/29 Leasehold Services Review

Diane Best welcomed the Review, but requested the officers to keep leaseholders fully informed (and consulted where relevant) with the progress as any financial implication for leaseholders should be well trailed.

The Committee approved the recommendation by 12 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendation.

07/HMB/30 Right to Buy repurchases – right of first refusal

Some members of HMB had concerns whether this was an appropriate policy to adopt (and use of scarce resources). The Executive Councillor said it was better that the Council had the right of first refusal than not and it was likely to be used very infrequently.

The Committee approved the recommendation by 12 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

07/HMB/31 Energy services provision at start of tenancy

Cllr Pitt asked that officers ensure that energy efficiency proposals in the scheme are continually promoted.

The Committee approved the recommendation by 14 votes to 0.
The Executive Councillor approved the recommendation.

07/HMB/32 Progress and performance in resident involvement

HMB passed on its appreciation of the work by the Tenant Participation Officer and her team and the Cambridge Federation. HMB welcomed the work of the 'Count Me In' project with black and minority ethnic tenants and thanked the support workers who had enabled this to happen.

John Marais asked why the HMB had not been advised of a national conference of those member authorities of ARCH. The Head of City Homes stated that he was awaiting a reply from the Secretary of ARCH and would write to HMB as soon as possible.

Action by Head of City Homes

The Committee approved the recommendation by 14 votes to 0.
The Executive Councillor approved the recommendation.

07/HMB/33 Write-off of tenant arrears

The Committee approved the recommendation by 14 votes to 0.
The Executive Councillor approved the recommendation.

07/HMB/34 Achieving a two star housing service

The Committee approved the recommendation by 14 votes to 0.
The Executive Councillor approved the recommendation.

07/HMB/35 Simons House: pre-submission as bid to 2008/10 Housing Corporation National Affordable Housing

The report was received and noted.

07/HMB/36 Introductory Tenancies – 12 month review

In response to a question from Cllr Rosenstiel, officers would look at whether this service could be a local Performance Indicator.

07/HMB/37 Communal Cleaning – 12 month review

The Executive Councillor congratulated the work of the Standards Group over the past 12 months.

07/HMB/38 Performance Monitoring 2007/08

The report was received and noted.

07/HMB/39 Decent Homes – Audit outcome

The report was received and noted.

07/HMB/40 Mansel Court – project update

The report was received and noted.

07/HMB/41 Self Financing of the HRA – Financial Freedoms

The report was received and noted.

07/HMB/42 Date and time of meetings

HMB agreed to meet on Tuesday 6 November and review after that.

The meeting ended at 7.35pm.

Chair