

**BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL**

**HOMES O&S COMMITTEE – PUBLIC MEETING**

**1400 hours on Thursday 18 April 2024, Committee Room 6, Council House**

**Minutes**

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**Present:**

Councillor Mohammed Idrees (Chair)

Councillors: Ziaul Islam, Saqib Khan, Rinkal Shergill, Penny Wagg and Ken Wood

**Also Present:**

Councillor Jayne Francis, Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness

Wayne Davies, Director, Asset Management

John Jamieson, Head of Service, Housing Management

Paul Langford, Strategic Director, City Housing

Naomi Morris, Head of Strategic Enabling

Stephen Philpott, Director, Housing Solutions and Support Service

Jayne Bowles, Scrutiny Officer

Sarah Fradgley, Overview and Scrutiny Manager

The Overview and Scrutiny Manager informed the Committee that the Chair had been slightly delayed and therefore nominations were invited for a Chair to start the meeting. Following nomination and agreement by the Committee, Councillor Saqib Khan chaired the meeting for items 1 to 3.

**1. NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST**

The Chair advised that this meeting would be webcast for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's Public-I microsite and that members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there are confidential or exempt items.

**2. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors Lauren Rainbow and Ron Storer, and an apology for lateness was received from Councillor Mohammed Idrees.

### **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

Members were reminded that they must declare all relevant pecuniary and other registerable interests arising from any business to be discussed at this meeting.

No interests were declared.

At this point, Councillor Mohammed Idrees joined and chaired the remainder of the meeting.

### **4. MINUTES**

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2024 be confirmed as correct and signed by the Chair.

### **5. ACTION TRACKER**

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the action tracker be noted.

### **6. COMMISSIONER'S REVIEW AND COMMENTS ON THE AGENDA**

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the Committee noted the Commissioner's comments on agenda item 7.

### **7. REGULATORY COMPLIANCE**

Councillor Jayne Francis, Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness; Paul Langford, Strategic Director, City Housing; Wayne Davies, Director, Asset Management; John Jamieson, Head of Service, Housing Management; Stephen Philpott, Director, Housing Solutions and Support Service; and Naomi Morris, Head of Strategic Enabling, were in attendance for this item.

The Chair welcomed the Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness and Officers to the meeting.

The Cabinet Member introduced the report and informed the Committee that this area of work continued to be a priority with a focus on how the Council might respond to potential regulatory inspection.

The Director, Asset Management and Head of Strategic Enabling presented the latest update on the Council's position around landlord compliance, which included Landlord Health and Safety Compliance; Remedial Actions; Damp and Mould; Decent Homes Standard; Complaints; and Tenant Satisfaction Measures.

The Strategic Director, City Housing informed the Committee that by September all regulatory compliance issues will have been resolved, with the exception of the asbestos programme which now had a later target date.

During the discussion, and in response to Members' questions, the main points included:

### **Health and Safety Compliance**

In response to a question regarding the installation of carbon monoxide detectors, the Committee was informed that carbon monoxide detectors would be provided when electrical testing was being undertaken. Also, smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors would be checked as part of the stock condition surveys and it would be raised as a category 1 hazard under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System if they were not compliant. In properties that had a gas supply, carbon monoxide detectors would be checked on an annual basis.

### **Damp and Mould Reports, Disrepair and Litigation**

The correlation between the percentage of damp and mould repairs completed first time and the percentage of cases where damp and mould had been reported on more than five occasions was queried. The Director, Asset Management explained that this was due to repeat visits not being measured as they were classed as recalls.

In terms of outstanding claims, the delays were due to the nature and legalities, with some cases taking more than 12 months depending on the approach by the lawyer and the extent of the schedule of work.

### **Section 82 Housing Disrepair Proceedings**

Reassurance was sought that adequate resources were being allocated to deal with proceedings brought against the Council by tenants. The Committee was assured that cases were robustly defended where it was appropriate to do so, and that the Ombudsman was clear in encouraging residents to use the complaints route.

### **Decent Homes Standard**

The Committee was informed that it would be a while before all Council housing stock met the Decent Homes Standard, with many homes failing the test due to the poor condition of kitchens and bathrooms. Members noted there were now 7,000 homes a year benefitting from new kitchen and bathroom installations and there would be £1.4 billion of capital investment over the next seven to eight years.

The committee welcomed this investment, however the importance of having a planned preventative maintenance scheme was raised. Members were reassured that the Decent Homes Standard 2 would take into account the condition of a component, not just the life cycle.

### **Tenant Satisfaction Measures**

The Committee noted that the relationship between housing officers and tenants was important in dealing with issues, particularly in relation to disrepair and anti-social behaviour, to prevent the issues from escalating. The Cabinet Member informed the Committee that the intention was to ensure estate staff were equipped with the tools to be able to do that.

**RESOLVED:**

That:

- The report be noted.
- The next regulatory compliance session be programmed for July 2024.

**8. WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chair confirmed that this was the last scheduled meeting of the municipal year and informed the Committee that evidence-gathering for the Inquiry on Improving the Standard of Re-let Properties would continue during May.

The Chair thanked committee members and officers for their contributions during the year.

**RESOLVED:**

That the work programme be noted.

**9. REQUEST(S) FOR CALL IN/COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION/PETITIONS RECEIVED (IF ANY)**

None.

**10. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

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The meeting ended at 1459 hours.