Minutes

Nottingham City Council | Housing Services

Housing Assurance Board Minutes

MINUTES of the meeting held on **24th OCTOBER 2024** at 6pm via Microsoft Teams.

ATTENDEES

BM- Board Member

Tanaiya Daniel (Chair), Tom Shaw (Vice-Chair) Kudzai Muganhiri (BM), Anne Dean (BM), Marie Smith (BM), Bereket Amaha (BM), Jayati Bhattacharjee (BM), Victor Haven (BM), Chereece Jenkins (BM), Jessica Moyo (BM)

Mark Lowe (Head of Housing and Regeneration), Dan Luca (Housing Strategy and Partnerships Manager) Cllr Jay Hayes (Portfolio Holder for Housing), Sharon Guest (Interim Director of Housing), Alison Brown (Director of Property Services) Andy Shone (Business Improvement and Performance Manager), Lisa Dawkins (Head of Involvement), Cherrelle Daniel (Tenant Involvement Project Manager), Gareth Wallace-Parkin (External RSH), Angela France (External RSH)

APOLOGIES Linda Chamberlain (BM), Lutfy Jorban (BM), Geraldine Chesta (BM)

1	Introductions from Board members, Presenting Managers and those in attendance.	All
2	Apologies for Absence	CD
3	Declaration of interest – None	CD
4	Minutes from the meeting held on 1st October The Chair confirmed the minutes of the meeting as a correct record. There were some actions to follow up around information requested around the Tenant satisfaction Measures (TSMs), these have been addressed and responses provided to the Board.	CD
5	**NCC Landlord Draft Strategy– presented by Mark Lowe and Dan Luca** Landlord strategy presented to seek input from the board with a view to enhance the current draft, so that it aligns with leaseholder and tenant priorities.	ML DL

- The NCC Landlord draft strategy outlines the strategic approach to providing landlord services. It sets out the priorities and direction of travel for the council and is underpinned by an improvement plan and several service plans, which will be available to the board at a later date.
- The strategy provides an introduction to the context of housing, both nationally and locally and legal basis. The local context considers the new government's commitments and the financial challenges faced by councils.

Overview of Housing Strategy and Customer Profile

- The housing strategy is a 10-year plan that encompasses various aspects of housing in the city. The strategy provides a detailed customer profile, including information on homes, tenants, and demographics. It includes the governance framework, on decision-making and scrutiny frameworks.

Goals and Values of a Housing Social Landlord

- The strategy covers vision, mission, goals, and values of housing services.
- The Tenant's charter has been set within the context of the Governments social housing white paper which sets out four priority areas for the social housing sector.
- Safety is a vital driver for people to have a safe home.
- Priorities include safety work, compliance, and resident engagement.

Maintaining Decent Homes Standard

- It sets out plans to maintain the decent homes standard and address potential new standards indicated by the government.
- Addresses long-standing issues like damp and mould and enhances homes to be more energy efficient and reduce fuel bills for residents.
- Focuses on providing affordable housing, including new builds and reducing waiting times for tenants.
- tackling tenancy fraud and implementing cost-effective policies for leaseholders and service charges.

Resident Engagement and Feedback

- Residents' voices should be heard in engagement processes. It aims to provide various ways for residents to engage and provide feedback on services. It was mentioned that there is a deliberate gap in the strategy around performance measures and feedback is welcomed from the board to develop what these measures should be.

The presentation concludes and the floor is open to the Chair, the following concerns are raised in relation to the draft strategy.

TD

	1. Concerns raised around the format of the strategy, specifically whether it will remain in text format or incorporate more images and diagrams. The chair stated the current format is difficult to digest. • This was noted by Dan Luca and advised that an improved version with a better layout and an executive summary would be provided as the final version. It was mentioned that there are financial implications having a draft designed at an early stage.	DL
	2. Concerns around whether the strategy would be available in multiple languages. • Sharon Guest advised that this will be available in a range of formats if requested but is not something that is routinely done. Tools available on the NCC website to accommodate different formats. Currently reviewing accessible information policy and NCC are Committed to making information accessible to all.	TS SG
	3. Concerns around the lack of references for the data and statistics within the strategy. • Mark Lowe noted this point and agreed to take this on board.	TD ML
	4. Concerns that the strategy resembles a vision statement rather than a strategy as it lacks clearly defined steps to achieve the commitments. • Mark Lowe advised that the improvement plan and service plans will outline these steps in more details and will be brought to the board at a later date.	TD ML
	5. The board raised that the current strategy needs a fresh vision as the strategy uses the previous motto of Nottingham City Homes "to create homes and places where people want to live". • Response from Mark Lowe and Alison Brown to advise that NCC are seeking input from the board to shape what the vision needs to look like and develop the strategy.	TS ML AB
	6. The board suggested that Section 4 of the strategy could be elevated by including data from the tenant satisfaction measures. This would provide a basis for understanding the importance of these measures. • Mark Lowe noted this point and agreed to incorporate this.	TD ML
	Due to time constraints, the board moves on to the second item on the agenda, The Chair advises that there are further recommendations around the strategy that will be sent over on a follow up email after the meeting. These recommendations were as follows and have been included below: - The use of jargon without adequate context, e.g. 'Carbon net zero future'. There is a need to mindful that the average NCCHS tenant may not understand this terminology or its impact on the direction of the strategy. A brief definition of this concept and what this means in the context of the strategy would be beneficial for greater understanding of the impact that this objective has on the strategy and wider organisation.	TD

- The lack of references for data and statistics; for example, in the 'National Context' and 'Local Context' sections. For context, fact-checking and accountability, it is vitally important that sources are provided for all data used within the document. It is relevant to see the source, year and context from which each statistic derives. Similarly, on page 25 'Commitment to identifying and supporting tenants when they most need help', this section could also be elevated by providing statistics regarding the number of tenants living alone and how tenants requiring additional support are actively identified and supported.
- The section 'Profile of the Council's homes and the tenants who live in them' section does not require so many graphs/diagrams; these statistics could be condensed or presented in a more visually appealing and easily digestible format. This section could also be elevated by exploring how the diversity of NCCHS' tenants has influenced the direction of the strategy.
- On page 25, paragraph 2 in 'Commitment to identifying and supporting tenants when they most need help', you have stated 'We hold much information about residents who live in the Council's homes'. In isolation, tenants may find this statement concerning. It may be beneficial to elaborate on the type of data held and how this data is used to support tenants and to underpin the objectives of this strategy.
- On page 28, you have stated that one of the commitments is to 'Improve how we work on empty properties between lettings, using an IT package to reduce the time homes are empty (void times)'. The Board feels that further clarification is needed here regarding the IT package that will be used and how this will be used, or whether this is the correct terminology.
- On page 31, 'To have your complaints dealt with fairly', one of the commitments is to 'Review and improve our reporting of complaints, and the speed and effectiveness of complaints handling'. It would be beneficial for commitments to be backed by statistics to highlight the current standard and the target standard in order to portray a clearer picture of strategic direction.
- Regarding Section 4 'Our Tenants' Charter: Delivering Services and Key Objectives', no data or statistics are provided to underpin or support each sub-heading or objective. This section would be an excellent opportunity to incorporate the results of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) to reinforce the value and importance of the tenant voice and to provide the reasoning behind some of the outlined commitments, such as re-branding the older persons Independent Living offer.
- The consensus was that, without the presence of the 'Action/Implementation Plan', the document reads more as a vision statement than a strategy. There are no clearly defined steps outlined for achieving any of the objectives or commitments within the document. Critically, there is no current financial data to support the financial viability of these commitments. The HAB are keen to see this additional document. Are you able to provide a timeframe for when this would be available for the public domain.

	These recommendations have been acknowledge by the Responsible Officers and the Landlord Draft strategy will be presented to the board again at a later date. The second item on the agenda is discussed.	
6	**July Performance and KPI Data presented by Andy Shone** Andy provided the Board with an update on July's financial performance across housing services. September's data is now available at the time of the meeting. • Rental income collection reached 98% and the aim is 100%, with £3.8 million collected, exceeding the target of £3.5 million and bringing a credit balance of £4.3 million. Collection is now over 100% of target, with a positive outlook anticipated for August and September. The Council is focused on boosting rental income, with even higher returns expected in Q4. • The leaseholder service charge collection target stands at 6.9%, supported by a structured income collection strategy to improve annual income from both rent and leaseholds. The rents and tenancy sustainment teams were praised for their effective collections, which have bolstered financial stability. • The Council aims to support sustainable tenancies, reduce void properties, and make more housing available. Collaboration with registered providers and managing a diverse housing portfolio remain essential to addressing ongoing housing challenges. • New builds being funded through right to buy sales and income from rents are paying for repairs and other housing service improvements. Repairs KPI and performance data: Tenant satisfaction with repairs currently stands at 61%. However, there are significant gaps in the data, which the Board has highlighted as a concern. It was acknowledged by the Director of Property Services, Alison Brown, that the current software, the NEC console system, may not be providing reliable data. To address this, a new scheduling and work order management system has been introduced. This update aims to improve data accuracy, making information more accessible and enhancing overall service management. The Board also reviewed void property data, noting that 82 new voids in July and 360 voids a year to date. Compliance with the 'Big 6' (gas	AS SG SG ML AS AB AS

	safety, electrical safety, water hygiene, lifts, asbestos and fire safety) must also meet the statutory requirement of 100% compliance. Currently 0.7% of households are inaccessible and NCC is working to address this. Due to time constraints, the performance presentation was cut short. The Board's recommendations on the draft landlord strategy will be shared with relevant managers to inform its development. Members also agreed to send any further questions on the performance data to the Chair, who will forward them to the appropriate managers.	
7	No other Business to discuss	ALL
8	Chair thanked Service Managers for their presentations and contributions and thanked those that attended.	TD
9	Meeting concluded at 20:04PM.	