

Housing Services and Property Services Panel Meeting 13 February 2024 – The Council Chambers, Harrogate Civic Centre

Attendance: Staff - Lucy Tyne (Tenant Involvement Officer); Paul Boreham (Housing Safety Manager); Paul Cole (Capital Planned Works Manager)

Cllr Philip Broadbank

Involved Tenants – Barbara Rickards, Lesley Peplow, Carol Lawson, Richard Hinson, Arnot Wood, Chris Hesketh, Gary Bridge

1 Welcome, introductions and apologies

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1.1 Barbara welcomed all to the meeting and ran through introductions.

1.2 Apologies for absence had been received from- James Jenner, Lorraine Larini, Ian Howard, Jenny Kerfoot.

2 Minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2023

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2.1 The minutes had been previously circulated and were approved as a correct record. As with other recent minutes these would now be publicly available on the tenant involvement section of the council's website.

2.2 Barbara ran through the minutes, no matters were raised.

**Acti
on:**

- 3 Property Services update - Paul Boreham explained that Lorraine is currently in Richmond carrying out work around the restructure – that is why she cannot be here today.

3.2 Paul Cole – Capital planned works manager

3.2.1 Paul starting by discussing the decarbonisation pilot that he is leading on. The proposal is to work on 150 properties in a 2-year timeframe. Some of these will be tenanted and some void, they will all be brought up to an EPC C. A funding bid was submitted on the 31st January, the team have bid for funding to match the HRA funds for this pilot. Paul is currently in the process of writing a business tender, and this should go to procurement at the end of the month. If funding is awarded the pilot is scheduled to begin in June, using 2 contractors.

3.2.1 Chris asked who the project manager for this is, Paul confirmed it is himself. He will be appointing an internal project manager to manage those on the ground.

3.2.2 Lesley asked if any officers from NYCC will be helping on this pilot. Paul confirmed that it will be mostly staff from Harrogate as most of the work is based in Harrogate. The proposal is 100 properties in Harrogate, 30 in Selby and 20 in Richmond.

3.2.3 Gary asked how they will choose the 100 properties in Harrogate. Paul shared that it will be the properties with the lowest EPC, this is necessary in order to get grant funding. Tenants have not yet been notified, this engagement will be carefully done at the start of the pilot.

3.2.4 Cllr Broadbank asked if when referring to Harrogate does Paul mean the town or district – Paul confirmed he means the district.

3.2.5 Chris asked who they are liaising with for technical specifics – Paul confirmed it was Mitsubishi. Chris is concerned that there will be bias as the pilot is not using an independent source. Paul reassured him that this is not the case.

3.2.6 Chris also asked about the new properties on Dene Park and why they are not tenanted yet. Lucy explained that this was not a question the property team could answer but she will find out and get back to Chris.

3.3 Paul then moved on to give an update on void properties. The ambition is to use the in-house team for void properties, and this is working well so far. Currently, a lot more repairs are being completed using the councils own in house team than has been the case for a long time; more were completed this month and last month than we have seen for the whole of last year. The void team have even been able to take on bits of work that is usually carried out by contractors. This is a

great success and shows how things will progress as the team get bigger.

Lesley asked if Richmond and Selby are aiming to grow their in-house teams and do the same. Paul confirmed that this will be mirrored there too. He is spending a lot of time in Selby at the moment working on this. He explained that the aim is to have 1 void standard across Harrogate, Richmond and Selby.

3.4 Paul Boreham – Housing Safety Manager

3.4.1 Paul began by talking about his work on disrepair claims. He mentioned that in December a lot of disrepair claims came through – there were 16 in a matter of weeks, Paul is managing to keep on top of them though.

Paul warned tenants of no win no fee companies that target tenants and tell them that even if they do not win in court, they will have nothing to pay. This is not always the case; tenants can end up with expensive legal fees to cover.

3.4.2 HHSRS surveys are pursuing at a pace, Paul shared that one of his objectives is to have every property inspected within 18 months.

3.4.3 Paul also added that he will be around doing fire risk assessment in the independent living schemes soon. All communal fire risk assessments are taking place as we speak.

4 Housing Services update – Jenny Kerfoot – Executive Officer, Housing Growth

4.1 Lucy explained that Jenny is unwell today so unable to attend, she has passed on a written update to share with the group in her absence.

4.1.1 Business as Usual -

Since 1 April 2023 the Housing Growth Team has continued to operate as it did under Harrogate Borough Council to deliver affordable homes across the Harrogate Local Plan Area.

We deliver affordable homes in a range of ways. By far the biggest contribution is via affordable housing planning policy on sites allocated in the Local Plan. We work with developers and Partner Registered Providers (including NYC) to secure 40% affordable homes on all sites in the former district of ten dwellings and above. The requirement is 30% on brownfield (previously developed) sites, but there aren't many of those!

The table below shows affordable housing completions across NYC in the first three quarters of this financial year, although we don't yet have the Q3 stats for Hambleton, Richmondshire and Ryedale.

**Affordable Housing
completions: 23/24**

	Cra ven	Hambl eton	Harro gate	Richm ond	Ryed ale	Scarbor ough	Sel by	Tot als
Qtr 1	40	18	121	14	0	19	0	212
Qtr 2	24	61	153	0	10	27	27	302
Qtr 3	5	0	152	0	0	19	3	179
Qtr 4								
Tot als	69	79	426	14	10	65	30	693

Over the last 4 years, we've helped deliver between 340 and 360 affordable homes per year. We're on track to blow our record out of the water for this year (apologies for all the housebuilding).

Roughly speaking, the split is 70% affordable or social rent to 30% shared ownership. And roughly 60% urban to 40% rural. The council has nomination rights to all new affordable homes.

Included in the overall figures are homes directly delivered by the council, accessing government grants to do so. In the first three quarters of the year, NYC has delivered 37 homes. These comprise new builds (on small, underutilised HRA garage sites, sometimes gardens of void properties) and acquisitions, normally buying back ex council houses. Harrogate and Craven did this – the other districts didn't. We were well resourced with a team of six working across both former districts.

We are heading for 60 directly delivered council homes this year. Once we have secured funding/internal approvals and planning permission for newbuilds, sites are passed to IHDT to build out and buybacks are handed to IHDT for refurb. There are also new homes acquired from private developers at less than build cost under planning policy – most recently at Castle Hill, southwest Harrogate. All then go into the HRA.

Restructure and Target Under the Emerging Strategy

This is currently underway. Housing Growth sits under Hannah Heinemann, Head of Housing Delivery and Partnerships. Subject to consultation, there will be a Delivery Manager (small sites) with a team of two Delivery Officers. This will mop up most of the small council owned sites, across North Yorkshire. Also, acquisitions. The target is:

100 directly delivered homes per annum from 1 April 2024 across North Yorkshire.

4.1.2 Taking from Jenny's point on building in council properties extra land, Paul Cole added that there is a growing need for 4 bed properties. The team has been buying back properties to help with this need. As well as this, where possible, if a current council property has enough space in its garden for an extension this possibility is also explored. Doing this can mean that a family doesn't have to move from their home should they need more rooms or large adaptations.

5 Performance Information Report

5.1 Lucy explained that she is working to find a way to present the performance information to tenants in future meetings – we can take advantage of being members of house mark now.

5.2 Paul Boreham added that tenants should be involved in agreeing on what information should be presented, he made the point that sharing performance information should be productive and allow the group to gain insight from it. The meeting agreed with him.

6 Any other business

6.1 Barbara asked how long it takes the repairs team to reply to the feedback forms. Ian Howard added that when they fall within his area, there is no specific time frame, and this can be due to many factors such as –

The time taken for Asset Admin to send the letters

The length of time for the customer to complete and return the form

The time taken for Asset Admin to upload the information on to the system

The time constraints of staff, leave, sickness and pre booked appointments

Finally, what has been fed back, sometimes there is nothing to make contact about. It may be myself or the CoW's that make that contact if I feel that Property Support Officers would not be able resolve the issue.

6.1 .1 Barbara shared her concern that people are not leaving feedback after repairs, be it negative or positive. It was suggested that the group could look at the feedback form and see if it can be changed in any way to encourage more feedback.

6.1.2 Chris added that negative feedback can be used for good and something to learn from. Paul confirmed the council do learn from complaints regularly. Lucy added that as part of the new regulatory requirements in tenant engagement the council will need to publish complaints and how we learn from them.

6.2 Richard added that he's experiencing long repair times – Paul Cole confirmed that the team are short staffed in repairs but there is a recruitment process going on at the moment.

Paul also added that they are really trying to educate repairs staff, so visits are more efficient and proactive - not always just reactive.

6.3 Arnot submitted a question regarding the replacement of the heating system at Carlton Lodge. Lucy has been in touch with Simon Noble to get some information on this and she will liaise with Mr Wood directly.

6.4 Chris shared with the group that he will be requesting more information on why the previous decarbonisation pilot did not work.

6.5 Lucy shared that the TSM survey is finished, herself and Carl are meeting with Acuity to discuss when the tenant friendly report will be ready to share with you. Lucy is hoping to be able to share this at the All Panels meeting in March. Lucy is hoping that the feedback from the survey will kickstart a scrutiny project – in the areas where the most dissatisfaction was found.

6.6 Chris wanted to let the group know that he is now at stage 3 of the Yorkshire waters complaints procedure, in regard to the withdrawal of their "imperative" proactive service to period maintain external stop taps on request to which he has filed a retrospective analysis, in contact with the regulator OFWAT to which is ongoing, to which highlights the concerns as a joint bill payer, involved tenant in consideration of public interest, will keep the group & Lucy informed accordingly.

6.7 Chris wanted to inform the group that he will be requesting to the project manager of the cancelled low carbon a retrospective analysis of the project. This will form an important part of a lesson learning exercise going forward, where time and resources are the most valuable in crisis situations and especially in the ever-increasing climate crisis where time is running rapidly short & together with ever increasing pressure on the public purse where business efficiency is key. He confirmed he will keep Lucy informed accordingly.

6.8 Barbara shared with the group that she had her house surveyed and her property will be undergoing quite a bit of work. So far, she is very happy with all contact she has had. She has a clear plan of what will be taking place and when it will be happening.

7 Date of next meeting

7.1 The next meeting will be Tuesday 14th May in the Stray Room at 2pm

7.2 Barbara thanked all for attending and closed the meeting at 4pm.