

## DRAFT

### Housing Services and Property Services Panel Meeting 7 February, 2023 – The Stray Room, Harrogate Civic Centre

**Attendance: Staff - Lucy Tyne (Tenant Involvement Officer); Madeleine Bell (Head of Housing and Property); Stephen Wilson (Neighbourhood Services Manager); Lorraine Larini (Executive Officer, Property services)**

**Cllr Trevor Chapman**

**Involved Tenants - Pauline Lockley; Barbara Rickards; Lesley Peplow; Michael Fenwick-Scott; Arnot Wood; James Jenner; Duncan Morris; Gary Bridge; Andrew Lees – Small**

#### 1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

1.1 Steve welcomes all to the meeting.

1.2 Apologies for absence had been received from- Sue Eddleston, Leigh Thompson, David Thomas, Jenny Pateman-Harrison

#### 2. Minutes of the meeting held on 1 November, 2022

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 Steve ran through the minutes and a number of matters were raised:

2.2.1 **4.5 Garages** In response to a query Barbara raised Steve explained that the plan to build a certain number of houses on that site will still be going ahead. Some of the garages need demolishing.

2.2.2 **4.6 Anchor Housing** In response to a question from Duncan, Steve explained that the properties were leased to Anchor for a long time and Anchor want to rescind this lease. Assessment of the

**Action:**

condition and valuation of the stock is still ongoing. No decisions are being made until this assessment is completed.

**2.2.3 6.2 – void update** – In response to a query from Lesley, Lucy confirmed that she had spoken to Ian Howard in regards to involved tenants inspecting void properties and has received a number of volunteers for this. Lucy will put the group together and arrange a meeting this month, ready to start visiting the void properties.

Lucy

### **3. Property Services update – Lorraine Larini, Executive Office (Property Services)**

#### 3.1 Planon update

3.1.2 Lorraine stated that work is continuing the implementation of Planon, LGR has had an impact and the scope of delivery has been reduced due to corporate decision to change the financial management system we will all use. However, the mobile working element for housing responsive repairs is continuing, system configuration work is almost complete and live testing with tablets is due to commence with a view to phasing the roll out from March.

3.1.2 Barbara and Arnot queried how satisfaction surveys would be kept anonymous if they were done on a tablet whilst the operative was still at the property. Lorraine explained that the tablet would be passed to the tenant and once filled out, the form is submitted and the operative cannot access it. The information is then recovered through a back office function and would appear on a report. This eliminates postage and printing costs.

#### 3.2 Decarbonisation update

3.2.1 Lorraine confirmed that data gathering for the pilot has continued. The team have been researching suppliers to produce retrofit surveys on the volunteer properties. Unfortunately as they didn't get enough volunteers they are looking to supplement the pilot with VOID properties and those that have an EPC rating of E or F. Direct communication with those tenants should take place in March.

3.2.2 Barbara queried how energy usage will be tested in the void properties. Lorraine explained that for the void properties that will be used in the pilot their EPC and retrofit surveys will be used as an estimate of energy usage. The incoming tenant will then be asked for real data to clarify whether estimated changes have occurred as a result of the works.

3.2.3 Michael asked how he can see his EPC – Lucy confirmed she would show him how to view it.

Lucy

3.2.4 Cllr Trevor Chapman queried if this will be going back to cabinet before the end of march. Lorraine confirmed that that was the hope however the team are in talks with legal as to whether approval from management board would be sufficient rather than it having to go to cabinet. Lorraine also confirmed that the funding for the pilot scheme is ring fenced.

### 3.3 Cyclical works update

3.3.1 Lorraine went on to explain how there has been a minor restructure in the team and a focused recruitment drive, she confirmed all vacancies in the Planned team have been filled. Some internal transfers and some new to the organisation. We are now dedicating resource to appointed contractors for those contracts that failed or lapsed in the last 12 months. Windows, Kitchens and Adaptations are our priority and we hope to have new contractors appointed in April.

### 3.4 Ground source heat pumps - compensation scheme

3.4.1 Lorraine explained that our legal team raised a number of questions relating to the draft policy which are currently being worked through to ensure we are being fair and transparent in our methodology. Communication with affected tenants is on-going.

3.4.2 In response to a query from James Lorraine confirmed that Sure will no longer look after ground source heat pumps.

3.4.3 Duncan asked how compensation would be calculated for those who don't not have proof through bills. Lorraine stated that it has been agreed that a pence/kWh would be used along with standardised government statistical estimations of how much energy each property type uses.

## **4. Housing Services update – Stephen Wilson, Neighbourhood Services Manager/Madeleine Bell, Head of Housing and Property/**

4.1.1 Steve talked through the information provided by James Robinson on property purchases for Q3 that had been circulated.

4.1.2 Following a query from Barbara, it was agreed that for the next panel meeting we would seek information on Empty Homes. Lorraine pointed out that James Tuck could provide us with this.

4.1.3 Lesley pointed out that it seems the council are buying a lot of properties that house 5 or 6 people. Steve and Lorraine confirmed that the waiting list will require this. It was stated that more properties are needing to be adapted for disabled children and

Lucy

adults. Steve also pointed out that there are a lot of people on the waiting list who need 4 bed properties – something the stock doesn't currently offer a lot of.

4.1.4 Following a query from Barbara Steve confirmed the properties will be available for social rent and be additions to the stock held within the Housing Revenue Account.

4.2 Steve then ran through a staffing structure that had been previously circulated and explained that this was ever updating.

4.2.1 Following some queries, it was agreed that a document detailing which areas each housing officer covered would be circulated with these draft minutes.

Lucy

**5. Local Government Reorganisation – Stephen Wilson, Neighbourhood Services Manager/Madeleine Bell, Head of Housing and Property**

5.1 – Steve started with a general update in that things are changing by the week as we move towards the 1<sup>st</sup> April. As an example of a small change coming, Steve showed the members of the panel the proposed new opening times for customer services and we move into the new council. It was agreed this would be circulated with the draft minutes of this meeting.

Lucy

5.1.1 Cllr Trevor Chapman queried whether housing services will be based here – Madeleine confirmed that there was assurance that services would still run from where they currently are and that people are not losing their local service.

5.2 There was several comments made around rent increases. Madeline and Steve confirmed that all districts within the new council will be using a 7% rent increase.

5.3 In response to some comments around the formation of the new council Madeline confirmed that the Housing Revenue Account money is ring fenced.

5.5 Steve touched on the move to Choice Based Lettings, he explained that this is an inevitable change that will happen in time.

**6. Performance Information Report**

6.1 The meeting then ran through the performance management figures for the third quarter 2022/3; these had been previously circulated. Overall the figures were good and everyone was satisfied. A number of comments were made:

CHP31- This shows the % of all repairs that are classed as an emergency. Lorraine explained that it is showing as higher in Q3 compared to previous quarters due to the season and weather. She went on to explain that through a planned preventative approach we try to keep this percentage as low as possible.

6.2 Lorraine asked if there's anything else the involved tenants think should be monitored. The consensus was, what we already do is adequate. Barbara went on to compliment the in house maintenance team, she stated the experiences she had with them were fantastic. Lorraine thanked her for this information.

## **7. Any other business**

7.1 Madeleine announced her retirement from Harrogate Borough Council and confirmed she would not be moving forward into the new council. Everyone thanked Madeleine and expressed that she will be missed.

7.2 Cllr Trevor Chapman also announced he will not running as councillor for the new council. He went on to say how much he has enjoyed his 19 years, involved tenants and officers thanked Trevor for his time and wished him well.

## **8. New tenant chair for the Housing and Property Services Panel**

8.1 Only 1 tenant had put their name forward for chair of both the Housing and Property Services panel and the Neighbourhood Services and Housing Needs Panel. Barbara was asked which panel she would prefer to Chair, she decided she will Chair the Housing and Property Services Panel.

8.2 Lucy explained that this means the Neighbourhood Services and Housing Needs Panel is still vacant of a chair, the role remains open to all involved tenants.

8.3 Barbara and Lesley both brought up the idea of training around charring meetings. Lucy confirmed that she had made enquires with the in house training team to get this arranged.

## **9. Date of next meeting**

9.1 The next meeting would be held on Tuesday, 9 May, 2023 in the Council Chamber.

9.2 Steve thanked all for attending and closed the meeting at 3:55 pm.

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