STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**HOUSING MANAGEMENT ADVISORY BOARD
MINUTES**

Date: Thursday, 21 June 2018
Time: 6.00pm
Place: Shimkent Room - Daneshill House, Danestrete

Present: **Councillors:** Sandra Barr, Lizzy Kelly, Lin Martin-Haugh and
Sarah-Jane Potter

Resident Members: Fiona Plumridge (Vice-Chair) (Tenant),
Christine Anderson (Tenant), Kerry Gibson (Tenant),
Jon Thurlow (Leaseholder), Len Saunders (Tenant) and
Lesley Storey (Tenant)

Staff Members: Jaine Cresser (Assistant Director – Housing and
Investment) and Craig Miller (Assistant - Director Direct Services)

Start / End Time:	Start Time:	6.00pm
	End Time:	7.55pm

1   **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR**

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that Councillor P Bibby be elected to
serve as Chair of the Housing Management Advisory Board (HMAB) for the
municipal year 2018/2019.

2   **APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR**

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that Fiona Plumridge (Tenant) be elected
to serve as Vice-Chair of the Housing Management Advisory Board (HMAB) for the
municipal year 2018/2019.

3   **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Jon Thurlow in the Chair

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor P Bibby.

There were no declarations of interest.

4   **MINUTES - 19 APRIL 2018**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 19 April 2018 are
approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5   **HOUSEKEEPING**

The Board considered the Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct of the HMAB.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That Terms of Reference of the HMAB are noted subjected to the following amendments:

   a) Change all references of Housing Management Board (HMB) to Housing Management Advisory Board (HMAB)

   b) Change paragraph 6.1 to "The positions of Chair and Vice-Chair will be elected annually at the Away Day or the first HMAB meeting after Annual Council whichever comes first

   c) Change paragraph 8.1 from "The Board will adhere to requirements of the data protection act" to "The Board will adhere to requirement of data protection legislation."

   d) Change paragraph 9.2 to the following:
   Declaration of interest should be made at the beginning of each meeting under "Apologies for absence and Declarations of Interest"

   e) Delete the following from paragraph 10.1:
   "administrative support including distributing papers and providing minutes"

   f) Insert a new paragraph 10.2: "Constitutional Services Officers will provide administrative support including distributing papers and providing minutes"

   g) Change paragraph numbering 10.2 to 10.3

   h) Change paragraph 12.2 to the following:
   "HMAB will meet monthly. Papers will be published five clear working days in advance."

2. That the HMAB Code of Conduct is noted subject to the following:

   a) Change all references of Housing Management Board (HMB) to Housing Management Advisory Board (HMAB)

   b) Change paragraph 3 to the following:
   "This document should be read in conjunction with relevant aspects of the Stevenage Borough Council Constitution, HMAB Terms of Reference and the Nolan Committee "Seven Principles of Public Life" (see appendix 1)."

6   **RIGHT TO BUY RECEIPTS**

The Board noted the Right to Buy (RTB) presentation that was delivered by the

Finance Business Partner (HRA). The presentation was aimed at highlighting current rules relating to RTB and the challenges faced by local authorities.

The presentation covered the following:
- Pooling one-for-one receipt rules
- Stevenage one-for-one receipts position
- Financing New Builds
- Stages for New Builds
- Mitigating Actions
- Suggestions to improve the system

In response to questions about the RTB challenges, the Board was informed that the Council had adopted creative ways of finding appropriate sites for new builds. These measures included redeveloping neighbourhood centres. It was indicated that the situation regarding RTB one-for-one sales receipts would improve if central government considered the following recommendations:
- Increase the three-year retention period
- Change the 30% rule for funding new homes using one-for-one
- Relax the debt cap

7   **NORTH ROAD AND KENILWORTH CLOSE UPDATES**

The Housing Development Officer provided an update on North Road and Kenilworth Close projects.

With regard to the North Road scheme, the Board was informed that the contracted firm of architects was currently working on finances for the project. The scheme had been earmarked for private flats. The Council was in consultations with the owners of neighbouring properties and they appeared to be keen on the scheme.

The Council had already carried out asbestos and ecological surveys in preparation for the scheme. The Council had also appointed a contractor to remove Japanese knotweed from the Council property. Demolition was due to start within the next three months. A pre-planning application would be submitted in the next two to three weeks and a full planning application was due for submission in the summer of 2018. Members were informed that income from the private properties on the North Road Scheme would contribute towards the development of social housing schemes in Stevenage.

The Housing Development Officer informed the Board that architects had been contracted to work on the Kenilworth Close Scheme. The scheme would include independent living properties, a general needs block, private sale flats, shops, a community centre with three flexible spaces and residents parking. The two-phase scheme was scheduled to be completed in four years. Public consultations were held in May 2018 and 65% of the respondents had been positive about the development. A visit to a similar scheme in Dunstable, Bedfordshire had been arranged for 15 residents. It was indicated that some respondents had expressed concerns about proximity of the scheme to the highway and the poor public transport service in the area.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Housing Development team be invited to future HMAB meetings to provide updates on the schemes.

8   **HOUSING ALL UNDER ONE ROOF UPDATE**

The Assistant Director (Housing and Investment) provided an update on the Housing All Under One Roof (HAUOR) programme. The transformation programme covered 25 projects in the first 18 months. The highlights of the programme were:

- Recruitment of three operations managers
- Health check of the Northgate system
- Procurement of the electronic document management system
- A Northgate Module for Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 statutory returns
- Introduction of a task management system
- The Big Knock door-to-door survey

It was indicated that the next phase of the programme would include the procurement of hand-held computer devices for the supported housing team. Following the success of the "Big Knock", there were plans to do a similar exercise for the caretaking service.

It was confirmed that the HAUOR update was a standing agenda item for the HMAB.

9   **VOIDS AND REPAIRS UPDATE**

The Assistant Director (Stevenage Direct Services) provided an update on Voids and Repairs service. It was pointed out that as part of the business unit review, a number of office-based staff were relocating from Cavendish Road Depot to Daneshill House. This move was aimed at improving collaboration with Housing and Investment, Tenancy and Customer Services teams and reducing costs.

It was reported that voids and repairs performance reporting was now based on the recently-introduced In-Phase Performance Management system. Members highlighted the relatively high quality of reports that were produced using the In-Phase system. The Board was informed that the business unit review had contributed to improvements in a number of reporting areas including:

- Average end-to-end emergency repairs
- Average repair cost per dwelling
- Percentage of repairs fixed first time
- Percentage of appointments made and kept
- Time taken to re-let major works general needs voids

It was indicated that the time taken to re-let standard voids was below target due to four hard-to-let properties that had taken between 123 and 343 days to let. Time taken to re-let major voids was below target but this had improved relative to the previous reporting period.

Plans were in place to collate performance data for the grey areas such as average

repair cost per void, void loss per year (rentals) and average end-to-end time for routine and urgent repairs.

Members sought clarification on categories of void properties and repairs, re-modelling of voids and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). In response to the questions, the Assistant Directors mentioned that voids properties were classified as sheltered or major works voids. There were different turnaround times for the voids categories. Decisions to re-model properties were made on a case-by-case basis. Repairs were categorised as emergency, urgent or routine. The completion targets for the repair categories were 24 hours, five days and 21 days respectively. KPIs were based on HouseMark benchmarks. Members were informed that any changes to SBC KPIs were subject to scrutiny by the Senior Leadership Team.

It was **RESOLVED t**hat the Assistant Director (Direct Services) report on the grey areas when data became available.

10   **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chair accepted an urgent item regarding customer care and related training for SBC staff. Members highlighted incidences of poor handling of customer complaints within their wards and at the Council offices. In one recent incident at Daneshill House reception, the SBC officer dealing with the customer appeared not to be able to handle the situation.

Members were informed that some form of customer care training was offered to all staff. All business units that worked directly with customers had a budget for customer handling training. The Housing and Investment Unit was currently reviewing training arrangements in place and had invited external providers to showcase soft skills training.

It was **RESOLVED** that an update on customer care training be provided as part of the Housing All Under One Roof update.

11   **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Thursday 19 July 2018, Shimkent Room, Daneshill House

CHAIR