

SWT Tenants Strategic Group - 19 July 2021 held via Zoom Video Conference

Present: Alex Akhigbemen (Chair)

Paul Cram, Kevin Hellier, Ivor Hussey, Luke Manning, Livi Mongare and Samantha Rickward,

Officers: James Barrah (Director of Housing and Communities), Chris Brown (Assistant Director - Development and Regeneration), Ian Candlish (Assistant Director - Housing Property), Shari Hallett (Housing Performance Manager), Sharon Yarde (Housing), Julie Sabey (ASB Case Manager), Simon Lewis (Assistant Director - (Housing and Communities), Kerry Prisco (Specialist - Finance) and Tracey Meadows (Governance and Democracy)

Also Present: Councillors Mark Lithgow and Janet Lloyd

(The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm)

9. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Colin England and Jessie Bunn.

10. **Minutes from the previous meeting**

The notes from the previous meeting on the 24 May 2021 were approved.

11. **Directorate Report**

The Group considered a comprehensive report presented by James Barrah (Director of Housing and Communities), Chris Brown (Assistant Director – Development and Regeneration), Ian Candlish (Assistant Director, Housing Property), Simon Lewis (Assistant Director, Housing and Community Development), Shari Hallett (Housing Performance Manager)

Comments/questions from the group members included;

- Concerns with maintenance scheduling. Schedulers not contacting tenants with appointment times for maintenance staff to carry out repairs. There were also times that staff were turning up to properties that had already been repaired; *we were still being challenged with Covid and the backlog of repairs. Additional tradesman were being sought to carry out the backlog of work. We are also updating out IT system for scheduling works;*
- Concerns that void turnaround times were still quite high and not on target; *Again, Covid has had an impact on this with trade staff etc, but this is being looked into and processes would be put in place to speed this process up;*

- What is classed as a reasonable turnaround? Concerns that this is holding up other areas like Homefinder/Regeneration Programmes; *we are trying to get the property advertised on Homefinder sometimes before the work starts. We are also interviewing and allocating properties. For a minor void this is 30 day and longer for a major;*
- Sheltered housing voids seem to be taking longer, 12 weeks in Monmouth Road; *There were several mitigating circumstances behind why this was being held up. We are aware of this and looking to resolve the issues;*
- Under the Housing and Communities team, do you know how many residents in the housing stock were registered as disabled as there was nothing on the Homefinder forms to ask if a tenant was disabled? *We do have statistics around this. We collect this data as part of the Homefinder application form. A tenant Census would be completed to capture this process to include into our processes. The tenants that were registered disabled would be brought back to the next meeting in September;*
- The Council needed to build their own policies and structure around disabilities and not rely on Occupational Therapists who had their own structure and may not fit in with the Council policies; *In the past we have relied on our Aids and Adaptions process or our Disabilities Grant Process. There was another layer of service delivery that needed looking at on how we provided these services;*
- we needed to look at our Policies from a customer basis; *this was something that we are looking at to get this process right;*
- why has it taken so long for the Disabled Policy to be looked at? *We have an Equalities Policy in place, but these Policies do need looking at to see that we are covering all needs and decision making;*
- Training for staff needs to be undertaking on dealing with all aspects of the public; *We were working with customer services to try to help with this training on how we deliver this service. We can share details at a later date;*
- Information was needed from Officers on the training progress as we did not want to come back in 6 months with the same concerns from the group members;

The report was noted.

12. **Finance Outturn Report**

The group considered a Financial Monitoring – Outturn Position 2020/21

Questions/comments from the group included;

- Concerns that the ICT costs had increased; *this was an approved Capital Budget, new system implementation that had started during this financial year;*

The report was noted.

13. **2020-21 HRA Scorecard**

The group considered the HRA Scorecard 2020-21 report.

Comments/questions from the group included;

- Concerns with the Gas Compliance Company not updating their systems as received a Certificate for the previous tenant (6 months for the correct Certificate to come through) also the tenancy satisfaction statics, how were you getting this information; *once a repair was completed a repairs survey was sent to the tenant that can be completed using a QR Code. Initially only low numbers received. Will provide feedback at the next meeting on why one of the group members had not received this survey despite work being completed on the property and the long period for the delay in issuing Gas Safety Certificates;*
- Figures required for the outstanding ASB cases for 3,6 and 12 months old *would be brought back to the next meeting;*

The report was noted.

14. **Development update Report (New Build Council Homes)**

The group considered the report on the ambitions and scheme updates on the Council's New Build Housing Programme

Comments/questions from group members included;

- Would tenants be moved into the new builds at Priorswood when all the phases were finished, or would they be moved in when each row of homes were ready. If it is the former, would the tenants Council tax be reduced on this? *This was not on our agenda due to the amount of rent already lost to the Council. Phase A would be ready to move in first, but it would still be a building site;*
- The Government recently announced that they have set aside 11 billion for housing, would we be bidding for money for new homes? *We would be using the Right to Buy Receipts. Seaward Way and zero carbon right to buy would be our main subsidy. We are also trying to bid for brown field regeneration money as the site was a brown field site;*

The report was noted.

15. **Anti-Social Behaviour**

The group considered the presentation on Anti-Social Behaviour

Comments/questions from the group included;

- The group acknowledged that this work would be difficult and challenging for the team. They praised the team for their hard work;
- How many cases that you deal with were under 18. Were there other organisations that you brought in to help the parents deal with their children? *We list the parents as the tenants and make it clear to them that their child's behaviour would have an impact on their tenancy. We have used multi agencies partners who have gone door to door in an area where there had been a recent spate of ASB. Activities would be put on in the summer months to engage with the local children;*
- Concerns that some of these cases had been going on for a year, would these tenants be supported? *We do signpost support groups which the tenant can contact;*
- ASB needs to happen a lot quicker than it does at present, tenants do not feel supported and no one had given consideration for the victims; *most ASB cases take a year to get to court, this was not a quick process. We need to collate as much information as possible to get the best possible outcome for the tenant;*

The report was noted.

(The Meeting ended at 8.15 pm)