



Minutes

Folkestone & Hythe District and Parish Councils' Joint Committee

Held at:	Remote Meeting
Date	Thursday, 17 March 2022
Present	Councillors Graham Allison, Michael Boor, Peter Coe (In place of Paul Thomas), Laszlo Dudas, Gillian Heywood (In place of Roger Joyce), Frank Hobbs, Mrs Jennifer Hollingsbee and Terence Mullard
Apologies for Absence	Councillors Roger Joyce and Paul Thomas
Officers Present:	Andy Blaszkowicz (Director of Housing and Operations), Gill Butler (Chief Officer - Housing), Kate Clark (Case Officer - Committee Services) and Ellen Joyce (Democratic Services Trainee)
Others Present:	None

23. **Appointment of chairman**

Proposed by Councillor Graham Allison
Seconded by Councillor Terry Mullard

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Frank Hobbs be appointed as Chairman for the meeting.

24. **Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

25. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2022 were agreed.
Councillor Peter Coe abstained as he was not present at the meeting.

26. **Housing Asset Management Strategy**

A presentation was given to members on the Housing Asset Management Strategy. The presentation has been attached to these minutes.

Mr Andrew Blaszkowicz, Director – Housing & Operations, introduced Gill Butler as the new Chief Officer for Housing. Both officers then proceeded to give the presentation, asking for any comments and questions along the way.

Councillor Hobbs asked how many social housing properties do we have?

Mr Blaszkowicz advised there are around 3460 council properties, approximately a third of which are sheltered accommodation.

Councillor Mullard raised concerns regarding how much decision making is being given to tenants and regarding the costs surrounding repairs for tenants. He also noted that the estimated cost to reach Net Carbon Zero is very high.

Gill Butler advised that when consulting with tenants the Council ultimately makes the final decisions but it is important to bring the tenants with the Council on the journey to making any decisions.

Mr Blaszkowicz also highlighted that the My Account service will link to the NEC Housing management system which will inform tenants when looking to log repairs what is their responsibility to repair and what would be repaired by the Council. He also clarified that the Council and others have declared a climate emergency and that we will need to provide budget within the HRA to meet the demands of meeting Net Carbon Zero.

Councillor Boor asked for clarification regarding Right to Buy for tenants and if the investment in properties to be energy efficient may encourage current tenants to take up the Right to Buy and then deplete the housing stock the Council currently have?

Mr Blaszkowicz advised that he could not give a clear answer on this as can't predict the movement of tenants but that Right to Buy is available to current tenants and they will have to put in a level of risk management to keep housing stock at a good level.

Gill Butler advised that officers can give a number on take up of Right to Buy but does know the uptake on this is low. Tenants can buy the properties but not immediately sell them, as the Council have a buy back option on the properties within a certain time frame.

Councillor Dudas commented on having previously worked in local government and particularly within housing capital teams and wanted to make two points regarding the HRA. One regarding being surprised that only 6% of the housing stock had been surveyed prior to the management of the properties coming back in house from the ALMO and how low that is. Secondly regarding thinking a 25 year plan is too long and a lot can happen in that time and that 5 – 7 or 10 years is a more realistic time frame to plan for.

Mr Blaszkowicz thanked him for his comments.

Councillor Hobbs asked the officers how the council decides on where the new housing stock is located?

Mr Blaszkowicz advised that Section 106 means that 22% of new housing developments have to go to affordable housing. This can be offered out to other housing associations and the Council but they try to maintain a good working relationship with developers to encourage them to bring units forward to the Council.

He also advised that the Council have a development portfolio highlighting pockets of land where they can build and brown field sites that the Council can look to use. Examples of Biggins Wood and Ship Street were provided where the Council has stepped in to regenerate derelict sites and the Council are able to apply for grant funding government bodies.

Mr Blaszkowicz also highlighted that there would be a public engagement evening regarding Ship Street at the Quarterhouse in Folkestone on the following Thursday between 4pm and 7pm and councillors were welcome to come along.

Councillor Heywood queried how much of the housing in Otterpool Park will be affordable housing?

Mr Blaszkowicz advised that 22% of the properties in Otterpool Park will be affordable housing. He also advised that is yet to be defined how much will come into council stock, but that his hopes are that a third of that will be brought into the Council housing stock, however, this has not yet been agreed.

Councillor Heywood clarified if that would make the proposed number around 700.

Mr Blaszkowicz confirmed this would be around 600-700 properties but did highlight that this could also be taken on by Housing Associations. It should be noted that this would be over the life of the Otterpool Park development which spans 30 years.

He also advised that the Council are hoping to have 1200 new homes over the next 13-14 years with stock coming from the developments at Ship Street, Biggins Wood, Otterpool Park and Princes Parade among others.

Councillor Heywood asked how many of the 1200 properties were likely to be Council or Housing Association or is the 1200 to be all Council properties?

Mr Blaszkowicz advised that the aim is for the properties to all be part of the Council housing stock and is what is planned but will depend on the retrofitting journey and other demands on the HRA finances.

Councillor Boor noted that he does not believe that percentage of properties will be met at Otterpool Park.

Councillor Hobbs thanked the officers for their time and hard work on the presentation and pack.



Folkestone & Hythe District Council Housing Asset Management Strategy 2022- 2027

Presentation
March 2022



Housing Asset Management Strategy

“Asset management is a key part of business planning which connects, at a strategic level, decisions about an organisation’s business needs, the deployment of its assets, and its future investment needs.” RICS

Asset Management Strategy primary document in a library of publications: -

- Carbon reduction strategy
- HRA housing new build strategy
- Annual major works five-year delivery programme /published business plan
- Healthier Housing Strategy
- Tenant Engagement Strategy

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Purpose of the Asset Management Strategy

- Supports the Corporate Plan and Council’s ambitions
- Framework for decision on the existing and future housing stock
- Provides priorities for future works programmes
- **Helps shape 30-year HRA Business Plan & Budgets from 2022-23**

Housing Asset Management Strategy

Priorities and Objectives

Objective 1 *Ensure the housing stock is safe and well maintained.*

Objective 2 *Develop a social housing portfolio that is fit for purpose, meeting the needs of current and future generations of tenants and their families.*

Objective 3 *Improve the energy efficiency of the housing stock and the ways of working that reduce carbon emissions and levels of fuel poverty by achieving at a minimum EPC rating of 'C' by 2030 and operational 'net*

zero carbon in use (NZC)' by 2050 for all of its housing stock.

Objective 4 *Developing skills and supporting the local economy.*

Considerations

complex, long-term, competing priorities, unknowns...

Priorities that support the Corporate Plan, the **Local Plan** (housing and the built environment) and the **Place Plan**, the boundary of which includes a number of the council's homes: -

1. Ensure homes are safe and compliant at all times.
2. Work towards achieving a planned: responsive maintenance programme of at least 70:30.
3. Determine the future use, design and locations of the Sheltered Schemes.
4. Develop and implement a 'fabric first' approach to 'net zero carbon in use'.
5. Implement a new build programme to deliver 300 homes by 2026 and a pipeline to deliver over 1000 homes by 2036.

Housing Asset Management Strategy Considerations

Objective 1- *Ensure the housing stock is safe and well maintained.*

- HRA remains sufficiently funded to maintain the stock
- Tenant involvement in choices

Objective 2- *Develop a social housing portfolio that is fit for purpose, meeting the needs of current and future generations of tenants and their families.*

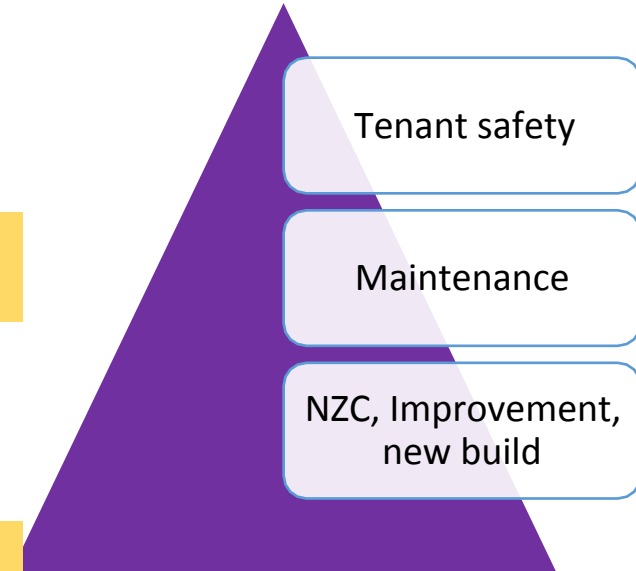
- Understanding the needs of an aging population over 65's increase by 50% to 2041
Homes fit for purpose. Demolition, disposal if necessary
- Review of sheltered schemes, both the service offer & building suitability
- Long-term and major investment in the stock, *where* in the district & *when*

Objective 3- *Improve the energy efficiency of the housing stock and the ways of working to reduce carbon emissions and levels of fuel poverty, (minimum EPC rating of 'C'), by 2030, and operational 'net zero carbon in use' by 2050.*

- Significant expense; solutions not totally in our hands; future technologies
- Indicative costs to Retrofit stock to NZC @ £39k /per property - £132.5m
- Properties currently below EPC 'C' - £12.4m (NZC); cost effective/ disposal?
- Approach – *fabric first, worst first, least regrets*
- New homes 'Net carbon zero ready'
- Increase costs of new homes and review business model; payback, cross subsidy

Objective 4- *Developing skills and supporting the local economy.*

- 'Just in time' work, 'push & pull' of planned work and impact e.g. windows
- Maximising efficiency
- Use of local labour & skill development – apprenticeships / added social value
- Tenant involvement in quality



Housing Asset Management Strategy

Monitoring and engagement

Regulator of Social Housing

The 'Charter for Social Housing Residents' published in November 2020 highlights the main areas of national housing policy, ensuring social housing tenants are "**safe in their home, have good quality homes and neighbourhoods to live in.**"

Asset Management action plan

The detailed plan identifies what needs to be done, what the expected outcome looks like, time frames and the officer responsible for delivering the action. It will be monitored and reported on quarterly as part of the Housing Service Plan.

Tenant engagement and communication

As a social housing landlord we will work closely with tenants in scrutinising the delivery of standards. This is a key element of the housing service's vision and a requirement of the Regulator of Social Housing. Tenants are, and will increasingly be involved in shaping service decisions via many methods, as outlined in our Tenant Engagement Strategy.

The preferred method of communication with tenants will be digital, maximising the website, email, text and social media. Electronic communication is easier, cost effective and more responsive to changing circumstances. Where practical, each tenant will be given a choice over how they receive communication and we will be mindful of digital exclusion.



Housing Asset Management Strategy



Discussion, questions?