



Bristol Homes and Communities Board

Date/time	14 th November 2023, 10:00 – 12:00
Location	Easton Community Centre, Bristol
Co-chairs	Cllr Tom Renhard, Oona Goldsworthy
Attendees (members)	Nina Skubala, City Office; Dom Wood, 1625 Independent People; Paul Hassan, ACH; Jez Sweetland, Housing Festival; Barra MacRuairi, University of Bristol; Alex Raikes, SARI; Stacy Yelland, Eastside Community Trust; Kathryn Pennington, Vistry Partnerships; Helen Parnham, Board Support Officer;
Apologies	Jon Bower, Womble Bond Dickinson; Sarah O’Leary, Missing Link; Julia Gray, City of Bristol College; Donald Graham, BCC; Suzanne Rolt, Quartet; Anna Klimczak, Brighter Places; Simon Hill, Bristol Community Land Trust; Judith Brown, BOPF; Jonathan Lee, inHope; Rachel Sherratt, the Crown Estate; Penny Germon, BCC; Francesca Barclay, City Office; Louise Davidson, BCC
Observers	Rachel Butler, Bristol Community Land Trust; Sarah Smith, Missing Link
Invitees	Simone Wilding, BCC; Nicola Knowles, BCC; Louise Davidson, BCC; Rose Whitehorn, Acorn; Paul Smith, UoB;
ITEMS	
1) Welcome and introductions	
<p>The work of this Board continues to be a high priority. Since the Board last met in September a housing minister (Rachel Maclean) has been sacked, new articles on those suffering from damp and mould are now featured in the papers on a daily basis, and Edinburgh has declared a housing crisis.</p> <p>Aim of this meeting is to hear progress updates from Task and Finish groups and vote on a H+C Board goal to be put forward to be voted on at the next City Gathering taking place in person on 24th November. (Board members should all have received an invitation).</p>	
2) Council update	
<p>Update on changes to Cabinet responsibilities: Cllr Tom Renhard has recently become the new leader of the Labour group of councillors, his portfolio will now shift to focus on housing</p>	

delivery and homelessness. Responsibility for council housing services (i.e. maintenance of the council housing portfolio), including oversight of the private rented sector, will pass to Councillor Kye Dudd, (who is also in charge of energy policy). Cllr Tom Renhard will retain co-chair position of the Homes and Communities Board.

In view of upcoming transition from Mayoral model to the Committee system, Oona has reached out on behalf of the Board to the Green party, Conservatives to get their views on retaining current One City arrangements. All were positive about the benefits of city partners working together and wouldn't want to lose it.

The City Office will be organising two webinars in early December to give an update on the new committee system.

3) Welcome from host; Stacy Yelland and Eastside Community Trust

Eastside Community Trust runs Easton Community Centre and Felix Road adventure playground. [The merger](#) of Easton Community Centre, Felix Road Adventure Playground and Up Our Street was completed in 2020. ECT recently won an award at Locality conference.

Easton Community Centre has been running since 1989 and has a large number of tenants in the building: BCFM; Brigstow HIV support charity, 2 nurseries, Houria run a social enterprise café. They have 10 members of staff and run on a budget of £700,000, doing a lot with not a lot.

Stacey joined the H+C Board to give a voice to communities. It is vital to have local buildings that are free to access in your community, community is what makes your housing more of a home. Stacey would like the Board to consider whether there is an opportunity to adopt a goal around community assets, and to support that has produced a manifesto for change around community assets. This calls for more leadership on community assets in the council, and more transparency around processes.

There is a lot of talk about the importance of communities in the council, and a real reliance on the sector when crises' hit... but need to ensure this follows through into sustainable funding – it seems people only notice community buildings when they are about to be lost. Importance of understanding and communicating the monetary value of everything these buildings host, before they are sold to save council budgets. There is a challenge in being able to articulate the value in language understood by finance executives making the decisions.

Another issue in the timeframe of leasing arrangements – 30 years is not long enough to make the most of the asset.

The message we are trying to drive home is that we understand the critical financial situation within Bristol City Council; but believe that the social infrastructure is a vital part of the solution.

To be aware - Voscur are carrying out a [quarterly survey called 'the Pulse'](#) looking at sustainability and interdependence of third sector organisations.

Actions – 1) Circulate manifesto to Board 2) Set up separate meeting for Stacey to talk through manifesto with Cllr Renhard; 3) Set up small group to look at manifesto and discuss next steps, possibly including research on where other cities have managed to monetise the value of community assets well

4) Update and discussion: Homes, Delivery and Infrastructure T+F group (Jez Sweetland)

Main focus of group so far has been on Temporary Accommodation. Three themes identified:

1. Awareness Raising Campaign

Aim: to educate, inform, engage and create a series of calls to action. Proposed Activity: looking to build on/ partner with the work of Crisis and Ikea to explain the TA Crisis and the harm that is doing both economically and humanly. IKEA have been doing some work to demonstrate what its like living in TA – possible outcome could be to encourage downsizing to free up homes.

2. Practical Action/ Activity

Aim: to explore and develop actions that will reduce subsidy loss and offer a better TA solution within Bristol. Proposed Activity: to develop and select a series of actions that can be scaled:

3. Policy Engagement

Aim: to identify a number of key areas where the group can support / lobby for policy change. Proposed Activity: to agree a number of priority areas:

- Explore if CIL funding (currently unspent) can be allocated to support TA / social rent housing intervention and if not, what policy changes are required
- Health integration – opportunity to embed TA focus in existing work between ICB and BCC on Local plan – looking at how we ensure health infrastructure. Opportunity to widen this work into ensuring the right house types are built for the city. ICB looking at prevention and wider determinants – housing could be a critical element of this work
- Change in LHA rates

Discussion – highlighted importance of talking about LHA and subsidy loss with wider partners as well as Landlords – he has recently discussed with Hayes. Lobbying work needs to continue on LHA but outside of Board.

Action (JS) – Decide whether a joined up campaign needed on this, and identify where there are stakeholders with potential to help if they are made aware of the issues. Can the T+F get support from IKEA, as we're piggybacking on their work, and can we show the Council that we could save money quickly in this area?

5) Update and discussion: Heathy Homes T+F group (Oona Goldsworthy)

Group met with representatives from NHS respiratory teams, CSE, Public Health and others. NHS colleagues hadn't been in touch with housing providers before, so were keen to understand what happens, once a letter has been sent from doctor's to housing provider about respiratory issues.

The new context is that 'Awaab's Law' will require landlords to fix reported health hazards within specified timeframes. This will become an implied term in social housing tenancy agreements. These measures, along with other provisions from the Act, are expected to come into force in 2024.

Group identified skills development as a priority, also many housing providers don't have enough staff to carry out surveys. Discussed possibility of training up existing staff, and also on having a themed city action on 'damp and mould'

Action – 1) Group to look out how we can better inform health colleagues on legal recourse to housing providers, 2) Group needs more resource/capacity to take forward work, HP to discuss with BCC/Public Health; 3) Find out more about the London NHS example above

Discussion:

- In London, the NHS paid for additional council enforcement officers to improve damp and mould as they felt that that was a better use of funding than continuing to prescribe medication for young people with respiratory issues, who weren't getting any better because it was housing related.
- 1625 Independent People trialling use of new anti-mould product [Homefresh](#) on some properties, will report back on success!
- Rachel suggested connecting with the [Bristol Commons](#), a project for community power, land justice and systemic change (in effect a peer-to-peer network of citizens looking to solve issues such as housing themselves), set up by Coexist. They are holding an all day event on sat 18th Nov.
- Board noted the absence of private landlord voices in recent meetings and would like to encourage this again

6) Update and discussion: Private rented sector reference group (Helen Parnham)

Update: The Living Rent Commission report [went to Cabinet in October](#), all recommendations now endorsed. Many of the actions for the council will be taken forward in the new Private Rented Sector Strategy, which is in development at the moment. This group has been convened to drive forward that work and met on 1 November.

- Tom Gilchrist, BCC Service Lead for private housing (BCC) provided an update on progress with those report recommendations that were for the Council: The council is continuing to use full spectrum of powers to improve conditions in the private rented sector, including banning orders, new licensing agreements – all of which now contain an anti-discrimination clause within them. Also developing a tenants information pack and a

training video for Police Officers called to respond to incidents of harassment and illegal eviction of tenants taking place outside of council working hours.

Actions: 1) At the next meeting group to discuss which recommendations are more urgent and should be prioritised. 2) Group to consider a discrete project to support accessibility of information for renters on their rights.

7) Race Equality Sub-group (Alex Raikes and Paul Hassan)

Group is renaming to the 'Race Equality Subgroup' to broaden scope beyond taking forward actions from the two Race and Housing Conferences, they will be looking at the BSWN report too.

- NHF have a diversity group that this group will report to, as well as the H+C Board, and also to a Race Equalities Strategic Leaders group set up by the Mayor's office.
- Simon Nunn from NHF is supporting the work and might be able to provide a secretariat. The group has good buy-in now in terms of membership
- Group meetings are being hosted at Osborne Clarke for a year
- Currently populating an action plan; themes have been identified
- A key project is developing S.H.A.R.P (Social Housing Anti-Racism Policy); basically guidance developed post-Grenfell for housing providers on how they can ensure their organisations are not racist. Now looking at what success would look like in 3, 6, 12 months. Race is a KEY issues in T.A., where there are cases of damp and mould and with an over-representation of BAME people as clients of housing providers generally.

8) Discussion on which goal to present at City Gathering

Board discussed and then agreed that the Homes and Communities Board will be presenting the following goal at the One City Gathering:

'Actions from the 2023 Race and Housing conference and History Commission are being considered by relevant partners and, where formally agreed, incorporated into the city's approach to housing in all forms'.

9) AOB

Agenda slot requests for next meeting:

1. CLT would like to include an item on Community Led Housing, specifically to present some of the innovative solutions they are developing in projects like Sea Mills, to discuss ways to improve the sector's relationship with the council, promoting the value the sector could bring if better resourced.
2. Dom would like item to discuss practical steps on the YIMBY movement, or how we can mobilise support for the local plan from people who would benefit from delivery of affordable housing. Stacey offered to provide outreach routes if we can find out what is required.

3. Agreement that inviting cross-party leaders to next meeting would be good step to engage them on housing challenges and inspire more 'whole-city' perspective, avoiding future nimbyism.

Venue: Offer from UOB to host the next meeting on 30th Jan.

Simone couldn't attend the meeting this morning but sent through update on local plan:

Update from Simone Wilding (Chief Planner, BCC)

- Our key request of the Homes and Communities Board, **is support in making 35% affordable housing from all housing development above 10 houses work in practice and to help the council in demonstrating its deliverability.**
- BCC are currently on track for Local Plan publication opening on 21/11 which will then be open for representations until 09/01/24. We aim to submit then all responses (collated and broadly analysed) together with the published report for examination to the Inspectorate in late Feb early March.
- The full plan is already publicly available as part of the papers that were published for full Council.