

The Housing Board

Cambridgeshire | Peterborough | West Suffolk

Friday 5th October 2018

At Monkfield Room, South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne

Meeting Notes



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1. Present, apologies and previous notes

Present

- Suzanne Hemingway (SH), Cambridge City (chair)
- Sue Beecroft (SB), Housing Board
- Jon Collen (JC), HDC
- Sean Evans (SE), Peterborough City
- Sarah Ferguson (SF), Cambs County / Peterborough City
- Caroline Hannon (CH), Peterborough and HDC
- Dan Horn (DH), Fenland
- Nigel Howlett (NH), CHS - RP rep
- Karen Mayhew (KM), Homes for Cambridgeshire & Peterborough (H4C&P)
- Simon Phelan (SP), West Suffolk
- Helen Reed (HR), Cambridge City
- Heather Wood (HW), South Cambs
- Iain Green, Cambs County / Peterborough
- Elaine Field (EF), South Cambs (notes)
- Helen Rhodes (HRh), Cambs County
- Alison Smith (AS), Cambs County
- Alex Francis (AF), CPCA

Apologies

- Julie Baird, West Suffolk
- Julie Fletcher, SCDC
- David Greening, Cambridge City Council
- Roger Thompson, CPCA

Previous notes:

Draft notes of September were approved and are available at:

<https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/housingboard/>

A review of the previous meetings' actions are at the end of these notes.

2. Understanding the adaptations pathway

Helen Rhodes, Adaptations Pathway Project Manager at Cambridgeshire County Council talked through the role, which is a one year temporary post. She is looking at the adaptations pathway for the whole of Cambridgeshire, to find more efficient systems. Helen has looked at other organisations and how they deliver adaptations services and noted there are good home improvement agencies in Cambridgeshire. Part of Helen's role is to look at better efficiencies with the objectives of prevention, increasing independence of tenants / residents and looking at how funds are spent, whilst creating consistency.

- £4m spent on major adaptations in Cambridgeshire each year, minor adaptations cost less which the Handy Persons Service helps with.
- Housing Options and Advice teams provide self-help, for example by encouraging downsizing or moving to a property which is more accessible, related to the Housing Options for Older People project which was piloted at SCDC.

- Helen is looking at building in a relocation service, and advice is needed regards the different properties available; two staff had been allocated to this, one in children’s services and one in adult services.
- Timely adaptations means pressure is reduced for major adaptations.
- Warwickshire area is interesting. Governance is similar to ours, where two authorities operate one HIA together. Peterborough system is interesting too. Helen is planning to run a couple of small pilot projects. Also talking to Housing Associations to consider how they look at adaptations, and the RP and Enablers Forum is working together to look into how to build more adapted or adaptable homes.

CH: the system in Cambridgeshire has good Occupational Therapists (OT), looking at the health and social aspects related to adaptations. Without specialist advisors there could be additional pressure on housing options staff, if they need to know about this more specialist area.

DH: we need to look at the system prior to OT getting involved.

SB: the Integrated Commissioning Body (ICB) is looking at a new project at Peterborough City Hospital, whereby advice is received whilst in hospital. That approach could be applied at Hinchingsbrooke and Addenbrooke’s in future if the pilot is successful.

KM: a few years ago West Suffolk Hospital trialled a flat within a sheltered scheme to help with hospital discharge, which didn’t work as it was used as a resource for older people who were homeless whilst in hospital. The idea was to provide a place for them to be re-abled before going home. Havebury manages all minor adaptations themselves, via their own funding and technical help within the organisation; they also provide a relocation package (connected to a private organisation to help with the physical move).

SP: a single agency in Suffolk was provided by Orbit Housing, however it was underfunded, hasn’t worked and they are now looking at breaking it up. Struggled to meet the demand in West Suffolk. The funding issue needs to be allocated nationally; some Districts in our area are underfunded compared to others. SH added that a co-ordinated system is necessary. Could bring in support from third sector agencies. CH: we need a more common sense approach to allocating funding. Need discussions with landlord colleagues and what they do.

HR and HRh are taking the City Council’s adaptations policy to Public Service Board next week and the ICB. PSB will be looking at these questions, funding specifically.

Action: HR to circulate the PSB / ICB report.

Need to understand which processes are more effective, via health data. Building Research Establishment (BRE) has looked at health and safety rating and risks and costs; this was taken up by public health. Some universities are looking to fund this (perhaps two) for research reasons, but could be a year or two years.

Link to BRE report here:

<https://www.bre.co.uk/filelibrary/pdf/87741-Cost-of-Poor-Housing-Briefing-Paper-v3.pdf>

The Board discussed who funds and what is put in to systems.

SF: linking with work of the CPCA and those connections, especially if the CPCA bids for health and social care funding which would be useful.

HW: we need to make sure that the stock is right and to plan ahead for future needs. Longer term strategic view would be helpful including predictive analysis. Partnership work, links with housing strategies, linking to housing related support review at the County Council.

3. “Think Family”

Alison Smith talked through the “Think Family” approach:

- Identifying the process whereby people / families need support and how this works in relation to housing. Helen Brown of the Homelessness Trailblazer Project has been carrying out training with

housing providers.

- Numbers of early help assessments from housing is suspiciously low.
- Significant families being referred to MASH when they shouldn't be. Need to encourage referral to the correct place in the first instance. Staff defaulting to a MASH referral.
- DH gave an example of a case in Fenland of a family not coping; going to early help first was successful in this case.
- HW mentioned the messages getting back from professionals and that it goes along with protocols already in existence, need to ensure things have changed where needed. Training needs to be in place. Need one message and a review of the policies (and timescales).
- SP and JC mentioned how staff are trained and what clarifies neglect and abuse, need to have same conversations with RP's.
- JC: everything here reinforces that the homelessness prevention work is based around think family work.
- The Board discussed processes, and the fact that the integrated front door was originally intended to take the risk away from partners, so that someone at the "front door" would define if a case was for, Early Help or the MASH. There is a concern that this decision is being passed back to the referring partner, which may discourage referrals. NH to ask all frontline staff to look at these issues, and will take the points back to Housing Associations to discuss. Also could provide links.

Action: Need to look at who is best to talk about integrated front door at The Housing Board meetings. Alison will find this out.

Slides can be found here:

<https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/think-family-housing-board-051018.pdf>

4. Homelessness Trailblazer

Dan Horn talked about the Trailblazer project:

- DH will attend PSB next week where he will focus on the next steps for the Trailblazer project. Since the project started, much has changed, including:
 - New Homelessness Reduction Act came into force in April 2018.
 - Time limited funding.
 - The flexible homeless support grant has replaced other temporary accommodation funding.
 - New burdens grant.
- Adjusting to new requirements, some Councils have increased teams to keep up with demands.
- Homelessness funding is unsure from 2021 / 22 onwards.
- Will also be a reduction to County Council housing related support by £1m.
- Trailblazer funding ends Between April and June 2019, DH is taking the discussion to PSB about whether there are elements of the project to be continued or ended.

DH will take his summary report and the Briefing Note on the first year of the trailblazer project to PSB. The review document has been to Trailblazer Board this week. Concern around pace, teams with contracts coming to an end, and the fact staff will be looking for other work.

Comments:

- JC – Two year pilot programme to get ready for implementation of the Act, however there have been delays, most of year one was involved in setting up the team and those processes, only seeing about 13 months' worth of outcomes. Verbal agreement from MHCLG, happy to continue, as a Board we would like to see, and have more evidence of, what has been achieved. No future for those areas which have not delivered. Board suggestion is, if the MHCLG can put this in writing, what groups are we looking at to continue for the next 12 months? For the PSB, the key message is yes there are additional spin offs, i.e. reduction in MASH referrals, however need to highlight to PSB the high

number of preventions with very limited number of affordable housing options. If we increase housing options we could provide more support. SF added that we need to draw out in reports what hasn't worked. Important for the evaluation report. DH could add some points regards this and add it to the main body of the document.

- HW – echoes comments from JC, and asked what is meant by “pooling budgets” means (page 4 of update report). Might be what is already in place? However need to be clear – DH, HW and JC to clarify the wording for DH’s report. Might need national expertise to bring in to advise. Also been asked about reforming public sector delivery and how we can perform across the area, looking at duplication, gaps and competition.
- SE – Asked questions regards funding and what trailblazer funds is for, asked DH to make that clear in the paper. We could carry on with trailblazer, whilst looking at other ways of funding for the longer term.
- JC added that our Trailblazer project is one of six national good examples, which is seen as good practice and being closely looked at, so that is something to celebrate.
- **Action: Subject to amendmenets made as suggested at this meeting (and a short discussion after the meeting between Officers involved), the Housing Board is happy for DH to take this forward to PSB.**
- **DH to circulate the final report to Housing Board members for information.**

5. CPCA update on their strategic projects and pipeline

Alex Francis introduced the CPCA build programme management sheet, looking spearately at approved and pipeline schemes.

- Approved schemes come to over £15m (approved just over £9m), many of these approvals made last July. Most have now started, although a couple have stalled. AF can circulate the spreadsheet, and can provide in a different format for future audience if required.
- The Board discussed the programme criteria, and asked if possible to publish them so it’s a little more clear to all potential partners. The Board discussed the schemes and AF encouraged partners to keep submitting more schemes to CPCA.
- The Board discussed the CPCA process and the information they require, compared to Homes England. Although there might seem to be similarities, the CPCA runs an independent programme to Homes England, so they cannot rely on Homes England’s processes or regulation. CPCA want to find ways to make the process quicker and smoother, to be able to deliver future funding and the CPCA ambitions.
- NH mentioned at the last Regisered Provider and Enablers forum that some organisations were concerned about the process and would prefer to go to Homes England. AF advised that the CPCA have funds which can be used in more flexible ways. Being able to use funding on a site by site basis is positive.

The Board discussed Homes England’s processes compared to CPCA and that some CPCA shcemes are now coming through, though some are slower. CPCA have a new committee which will meet in November to consider schemes, and working with Local Authority Members and the Housing Board.

KM mentioned that 13 Housing Associations are in alliance called Homes for Cambridgehsire & Peterborough, there might be something unique which CPCA can offer alongside the processes, which is already working well, idea is to work together and find best ways.

AF mentioned that some Housing Board members have raised concerns to CPCA saying that they are not able to deliver Affordable Rent tenure homes. AF advised, that Affordable Rent units can only currently be funded by Homes England – not CPCA. The Mayor is aware of the issue and will soon issue a statement. Legislation may be required, but currently CPCA will be talking to providers on a scheme by scheme basis. Most urgent are those which are about to complete. CPCA are waiting for MHCLG to give a steer on how long the process

will be. Alex will keep everyone involved.

CH asked for consultation with the Local Authority in relation to tenures and any switches, AF is in consultation with lawyers regards this.

The Board discussed the term 'Affordable Rent' and what level this is set at in each District, relating to LHA rents and Section 106 agreements. An option could be to change some S106 agreements in some Authorities. AF stated a practical solution might be to get legal advice on a deed of variation, to change s106's where this problem has arisen, so could create a new local product with rent levels and facilities similar to "Affordable Rent" as an interim measure.

Action: CH agreed to take this forward. AF asked for text re clarification of the difference in intermediate and affordable. **CH to define intermediate rent to AF.**

AF will circulate the pipeline spreadsheet to Housing Board members following some editing. And will circulate something similar to future meetings (quarterly) so the Board can keep up to date with progress.

Need to ensure we spend CPCA and Homes England funds, and have good links. We could invite Homes England to future meetings, for specific agenda items.

6. AOB

Caroline Hannon

Caroline is leaving in November for a joint to joint role at South Holland and Breckland Council. Anne Keogh will attend The Housing Board meetings for Peterborough. Contracts with East Cambs and Hunts will end, but carrying on with Fenland.

Sue Beecroft

SB asked AF, how did the housing strategy go with the CPCA Board? - reply was, not well, not enough inclusion originally, need to work more closely next time via a workshop for the Leader, Members and Officers. They initially felt they were not engaged, and had no opportunity to feed into it. Real concerns regards affordability being expressed. Some Leaders have concerns.

Other:

- The Housing Market Bulletin was published last week.
- National rough sleepers count data over the last 7 years is available on Cambridgeshire Insight at: <https://data.cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/dataset/rough-sleepers-across-england>
- Also published land value data from the Valuation Office Agency at <https://data.cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/story/land-values>

Alex Francis

Meeting with the Combined Authorities to discuss the implications of National Planning Policy Framework and ONS population forecasts.

Action: are there implications for CPCA programmes they need to be aware of? Feed back to AF.

Next Meeting

2 November 2018, 9.30am, Monkfield Room, South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne. Then 7 December 2018.

To pencil in (no outlook invites sent yet):

- 11 January 2019, 1 February 2019, 1 March 2019

Action & when added	Lead	Still to do	Doing	Done
October 2018				
Adaptations pathway				
Housing Board to support work to make better sense of the nationally allocated DFG funding, and help each District benefit from the funds proportionately, achieving a more coordinated system. SB to help put together a report for Housing Board, with help. To include comparison of Registered Provider approaches to DFGs in their helps is needed	HR, HRh, SB		✓	
Circulate the PSB / ICB report the Housing Board	HR			✓
Circulate link to BRE report (link in these minutes plus on Housing Board meeting papers page)	SB			✓
Messages getting back from professionals that referrals issues go along with protocols already in existence, need to ensure things have changed where needed. Training needs to be in place. Need one message and a review of the policies and timescales	HW, AS	✓		
NH to ask all frontline staff to look at these issues, and will take the points back to Housing Associations to discuss. Also could provide links to Alison.	NH	✓		
Alison will find this out who is best to talk about integrated front door at The Housing Board meetings.	Alison Smith	✓		
Trailblazer Subject to amendmenets made as suggested at this meeting (and a short discussion after the meeting between officers involved) , the Housing Board is happy for DH to take the Trailblazer report and Year 1 review to PSB. Nigel to share final PSB rpeort and bring outcomes to November Board	DH	✓		
CPCA and affordable rents CH agreed to take forward work on legal advice about re-wording s106 agrements regarding Affordable Rent. Alex asks for text re clarification of the difference in intermediate and affordable. CH to define intermediate rent to Alex.	Caroline Hannon, Alex F		✓	
Alex will circulate the pipeline spreadsheet to Housing Board members following some editing, following this meeting and approx quarterly thereafter. Now uploaded to Board papers page.	Alex F			✓
Invite Homes England to future meetings, for specific agenda items	EF / SB	✓		
All to check first 3 suggested meeting dates for 2019: 11 January 2019, 1 February 2019, 1 March 2019. Elaine will send outlook dates for calendars	EF / SB	✓		
September 2018				
Dementia Friendly Housing Charter Nigel to talk to other housing organisations to discuss options for joint training on the charter	NH	✓		
Cath to circulate what is happening at Northstowe about the Charter. Cath has now left.	SB to contact Clare Gibbons		✓	

Action & when added	Lead	Still to do	Doing	Done
Sarah to discuss the Charter with Lynn O'Brien and Peterborough housing needs staff, and involve in joint training.	SF	✓		
Cath to circulate the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough charter which HWBBs have adopted.	Cath Mitchell			✓
CPCA strategy Alex to refresh CPCA Housing Strategy statistics and update the schemes and slides, for circulation.	Alex Francis			✓
An updated version of the CPCA AH programme pipeline will be sent to the Board and discussed at Housing Board in October.	Alex Francis SB			✓
Separate meeting for 30mins to an hour to be set up for enablers after each housing Board meeting (drawing form housing Board members, to link back to individual District teams) on the AH programme	Alex Francis, JF			✓
SF / Lisa will go away and look at dates / timescales regards discussion with Districts on housing related support.	SF	✓		
SH and SF could scope piece on re-shaping housing related support and bring back to future Housing Board meeting. Date to be set. SF will bring other updates to the Board.	SH / SF	✓		
SC to share who goes to MAPPA meetings and information links to NH, to send onto HAs to encourage attendance.	SC & NH	✓		
Helen to circulate Cambridge City response to the govt's housing green paper for Housing Board members to be aware of.	HR	✓		
NPPF implications discussion needed by the housing Board, SB to put on future agenda for Dec	HR / SB / BR	✓		
SB to send round details of homelessness summit planned, to housing Board members	SB			✓
Sarah F to update on outcome of bid for future Domestic Abuse project – November meeting (Emailed Sarah 26.10)	SF	✓		
DH to share the paper he is writing on the Trailblazer project with the Housing Board before goes to PSB	DH			✓
June 2018				
Staying Close: project asks that CRHB consider them and have them involved in conversations on this subject. Bring back to CRHB once the project is more advanced; SB to identify when to return to the Board.	SB / JV	✓		
ToRs: SH to ask Antoinette Jackson, Chief Exec at Cambridge City, to take a paper to PSB Board and Need to write to East Cambs asking them formally to attend meetings, after terms of reference finalised. If no longer wish to attend, move to CC list.	SHm	✓		
May 2018				
Disability housing: need to talk to the Planners regards Local Plan requirements, to inform the Local Plan. Gather evidence to support individual planning application requirements. New project with RP forum.	SB / NH		✓	

Note: Actions completed are "ticked" and reported to the following housing Board meeting. Once the "done" tick has been seen by housing Board members, the action is then removed from the table but can be found in the previous meeting notes if members want to look back on the actions completed in the year. At the end of year review meeting all the actions will be brought together in one table to see what has been completed in the year.