

The Housing Board

Cambridgeshire | Peterborough | West Suffolk

Friday 4th July 2019

Swansley Room, South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne



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Meeting Notes

1. Present, apologies and previous notes

Present

- Suzanne Hemingway (SH), Cambridge City **Chair**
 - Julie Baird (JB), West Suffolk
 - Sue Beecroft (SB), Housing Board
 - Iain Green (IG), Cambs and Peterborough
 - David Greening (DG), Cambridge City
 - Dan Horn (DH), Fenland DC
 - Nigel Howlett (NH), CHS – RP rep
 - Sharon Lock (SL), Home-Link
 - Anna Jones (AJ), Cambs County
 - Carol Pilsen (CP), Fenland DC
 - Heather Wood (HW), South Cambs DC
 - Elaine Field (EF), South Cambs DC **Notes**
- Vikki Barr
Armed Forces Covenant Development Officer,
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

Apologies

Jon Collen, Hunts DC

Sean Evans, Peterborough

Sarah Ferguson, Cambs County/P'brgh

Julie Fletcher, South Cambs DC

Anne Keogh, Peterborough

Karen Mayhew, Homes for Cambridgeshire & Peterborough (H4C&P)

Simon Phelan, West Suffolk

Helen Reed, Cambridge City

Previous Notes

Draft notes of June 2019 were approved and are available at:

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

A review of previous actions is at the end of this document.

2. Open conversation, about planned Allocations Review

HW discussed the Allocations Policy etc. Allocating fairly with right level of preference. Promoting social inclusion in sustainable communities. 41% of people who have been housed are working, similar to national average.

We need to check if the policy is still useful after the Homeless Reduction Act. New section called New Communities, chapter 9, specific policies. Need to make lettings policies as tight as possible. Also direct lets – properties outside of choice based lettings system, allowed, but we need to think about how we do that.

DG mentioned that we need to have a look at the harassment banding, has wide extremes of level and need to find a policy to distinguish between those. Full duty elevates band B to band A. We could look at that. HW added that the plan is that, there will be smaller focus groups around staff who are involved in lettings. DH has issues with direct let situations in Fenland.

The Board discussed the current situation in their Districts, including health needs. Often people want to live in certain popular locations, the Board discussed health / medical needs required and the need to live near a GP. Tuberculosis issue was discussed; we could have a common approach in Peterborough. HW added that we would take into account needs of applicants and prioritise certain conditions which are a concern for the NHS in terms of costs. Would need proper steer from GP's in terms of what the need is, house move, or mental health help, sometimes a move is not the answer. We could ask GP colleagues of what to include in the policy, recognising some wider public pressures and could promote encouragement for GPs being specific.

Some practices have them already, i.e. Granta Medical Practice in Sawston, multi-disciplinary teams are to be set up for GPs to discuss patients with complex needs, various Services attend, we could have a Housing Board representative attend that meeting. CHS has a colleague attend a local practice, weekly, regards social care not housing. The Board discussed other social issues, e.g. local connection, which could be added to the policy in the discretionary section.

We could build flexibilities into the policy to help other providers/partners/services, with costs and encourage allocation in their housing dispute issues. **Plan to hold several workshops to work through this, over the next couple of months and map out a project plan. Talk to different groups of people.**

AJ mentioned the New Development Surveys. Although new development focus groups have not picked up who has moved into social housing (could be done by post code, in order to ascertain clusters). **AJ was asked to look at the surveys to see how reliable the overall sample of social housing movers is, i.e. are there enough to draw any conclusions about how the allocations policy 'worked out' on the new development sites.**

SH discussed how we can influence who moves into our communities e.g. Marmalade Lane, Cambridge. We could add extra questions in terms of who and previous locations to help establish local connections in their community. The Board discussed peoples' expectations when moving home and how we could help with some of it. **Could we capture data on what peoples' use of services was before they moved (from NHS)?** Larger settlements and earlier phases of settlements could be helped and influenced.

Cambridge Institute of Public Health carried out a review project which looked at why people move into new developments etc. and did it by age, what needs are for different age groups for their priorities i.e. green space. Also asked, why people move. Also, they are looking at community development in Northstowe.

There is work to be done about the Local Lettings Plan Framework checklist document. Local lettings plans vary, might be good to review if they have worked. Local lettings plans could/should be monitored by the land lord. **Could discuss at future Housing Board (needs to be an evidence based document).**

3. Work around homeless veterans in Cambs and Peterborough

Vikki Barr, Armed Forces Covenant Development Officer for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough gave a presentation on the Armed Forces Covenant, see the slides here under recent meeting papers: <https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/housingboard/>

The Covenant (implemented 1947) is a promise between the nation, the government and the Armed Forces community, ensuring that those who serve, and have served, in the Armed Forces and their families, are treated fairly and are not disadvantaged by their service: <https://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/about/>

The Covenant Covers, access to services, education, housing, health, mental health, employment, transition,

family support, criminal Justice, welfare, community and Social Isolation. Push from central government on this. Reports by September on Veterans Strategy will help change policies.

Majority of people transform from the military fine, about 5% have issues. We have about 4,000 charities around the country which can help with these issues. Public legislation does not cover American forces but the Covenant Policy does.

Reserve regiment staff can have problems when coming back from a tour and families can be affected.

Some families chose to live off camp and not in the military community, children go to normal schools. Not aware of support in the military camp. Person away Monday to Friday then home for the weekend.

Housing legislation covers veterans up to 5 years not having to have a local connection, when they leave the army. Divorcing spouses are not covered under the current legislation, with a 93 day eviction notice for wives and children to move out of military accommodation. These families have moved around a lot, therefore will not have a local connection.

RAF Wittering is a pilot for accommodation model. Over the next 30 years there will not be military accommodation just some single quarters, people need to move within a stated 50 mile radius. Pilot running until 2022, followed by run out across all bases. Military houses will be sold off eventually. Wittering, for their pilot project, need 250 families to move out, up to 2000 families currently live there. There is a financial incentive to move.

Civilian-Military Partnership Boards, provide a strategic link within partner organisations with regard to the Armed Forces Covenant

MOD policy is, if you fail a drug test, you are off camp within 24 hours. This causes some housing problems with people who are charged and then leave. Those who are discharged for physical reasons etc. they get a lot of help, referred and get help put in place before they are discharged. There are gaps in how people transition out from the military.

The current project covers:

- Coordination and support for the Covenant Boards (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough)
- Strategic oversight and policy change, data gathering, training, raising awareness, community engagement and public events
- Digital presence development, signposting and referral pathways, further projects to improve lives of the military community
- Further funding for housing project to tackle Veteran homelessness.

RAF Bassingbourn will triple in size over the next few years; they will be housed on camp at present. There are issues with services at that location, much social isolation. Children and family support going in, but will impact as the population there gets bigger.

A signposting app will be developed which will help people get access to services. Housing Board can have something on there. Vikki Barr provides training for staff too. **Vikki to contact Board as and when we can help with the app and refer people to the training.**

Ministry of housing had underspend and went out to Authorities and gave them £90k (gone to CPCA and County managing). Funding gone to Light Project at Peterborough. Rough sleeping amongst veterans in Peterborough is a bigger problem than usual, complex PTSD issues. Rest of funds will enable a new Housing Outreach Officer (in preparation now, part time, 18 months' post) to work with Districts to do a project on what is happening (could be a secondment opportunity). **Vikki Barr to provide what the CPCA project involves.**

There are many service charities. Services need to be on Cobseo (The Confederation of Service Charities, working for the armed forces community) and unsuitable services will be taken out when the app is implemented.

Stoll (Sir Oswald Stoll Foundation) housing and helping Veterans, has been in place since WW1, they have an accommodations and veterans nomination scheme. Stoll will be at the 5th November 2019 Annual Covenant Conference.

Data from the Home-Link choice based lettings system, in our area, shows 226 applications from veterans and regular servers who are leaving.

The military appear not to have knowledge of duty to refer. They give people 6 months' notice. **SB to clarify if they have the duty and if not, whether we can do anything about this locally.**

Public Health carried out a JSNA on the armed forces in 2013, old but still helpful.

4. Homelessness System Transformation: Business Case

SH discussed the need to flag the shortfall in funding in some Districts from next year for the Trailblazer project. Impact on general fund budgets reducing, we do not know the exact figures.

Want the report to focus on how we transform the entire homelessness system and do things better together.

Agreed to remove some of the detail around the trailblazer project, so report could focus more clearly on the system transformation project while flagging the lack of Trailblazer funding for 2020/21. Housing Board will work on the funding opportunities for 2020/21 and whether any additional partners might contribute, and if needed can take that back to CPSB but only if necessary.

The board discussed the charts, prevention figures, amendments to the document, and desire to have CPSB commit to the system transformation approach, initially.

Report to be amended and take to CPSB next week by Suzanne /Sarah.

5. Future approach to housing need assessment: Update

SB discussed being part of a small group which has met with Planners, and talked about what the future approach should be to the SHMA.

Planners feel best to have Consultants provide an external report, following new government guidance about housing needs, not Peterborough only Cambs and West Suffolk. County Council has offered a day per week, to quality test Consultant's work.

We would need to look at numbers as well as needs. And need to keep an eye on that, when allocating. Could result in issues if we do not look at it, overlay with functional economic areas, how we generate growth.

Peterborough is commissioning its own SHMA. The idea is to use a similar methodology in order that both SHMAs are comparable.

6. AOB

Homelessness Reduction Act one year on: SB is drafting a summary of the govt committee which carried out this review, and its headlines. **Aim to e-mail round before next Board meeting.**

LHA rates, making the case for a review: looking at getting data together about private rents. NHS is looking at reports on problems in housing their staff, HW asked about evidence around the District to show employers' problems in housing their staff.

Action: If we can collate data to bring back to Housing Board meeting including, if possible, a comparison with Oxford, Swindon, Norwich and Milton Keynes?

SH mentioned what 'our ask' of government is, and the broad rental market area. How rents are set in affordable sector and private sector was mentioned by NH. The Board discussed the best approach and wording. **Will need to look at the data before deciding on an approach.**

SB's Housing Market Bulletin will be out early next week.

Lauren Stabler (PhD Researcher, Anglia Ruskin University, Global Sustainability Institute) has asked to cancel the GCGP Housing & Wellbeing Multi-stakeholder workshop in October. The Board discussed this. The PhD is about the future of tenants etc., how housing will work in the future. **We will ascertain what is happening, then decide if cancelling housing board or not.**

SB's letter is ok to go to Kit Malthouse MP.

7. Future meetings

All at Swansley Room, South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne:

2 Aug 2019, 6 Sept 2019, 4 Oct 2019, 1 Nov 2019, 6 Dec 2019

#	Agenda item	Action & when added ¹	Lead	To do	Doing	Done
July 2019						
1.	Allocs policy review	Plan to hold several workshops to work through this, over the next couple of months and map out a project plan. Talk to different groups of people.	HW / Sharon	✓		
2.	Allocs policy review	See if can use new devt surveys to see how reliable the overall sample of social housing movers is, i.e. are there enough to draw any conclusions about how the allocations policy 'worked out' on the new development sites. Also, can we capture data on what peoples use of services was before they moved (from e.g. NHS).	AJ	✓		
3.	Allocs policy review	Add evidence based document bringing this all together to future Housing Board.	All	✓		
4.	Military covenant	Vikki to contact Board as and when we can help with the app including housing info, and refer people to the training. Also Vikki will provide what the CPCA project involves.	VB	✓		
5.	Military covenant	SB to clarify if the military have the duty to refer (part of action 11).	SB			
6.	System transformation	Report to be amended and taken to CPSB next week by Suzanne / Sarah.	SF/SH			✓
7.	HRA one year on	Homelessness Reduction Act one year on: SB is drafting a summary aim to e-mail round before next Board meeting.	SB		✓	
8.	LHA rates	SB to collate data on LHA rates to bring back to housing board meeting including if possible a comparison with Oxford, Swindon, Norwich and Milton Keynes. Will incorporate with previous work on the percentile of private rents, the LHA rate is hitting – to provide feedback to DWP. DG asked would be good to report on monthly rents instead / as well as weekly figures.	SB		✓	
9.	Future h'less fund	Letter is ok to go to Kit Malthouse MP.	SH		✓	
June 2019						
10.	Housing related support	Lisa S and DH to work with providers to come up with a solution for Fenland, where providers are not keen on the new way to approach HRS.	LS/DH		✓	
11.	Homelessness	SB to investigate how well we use the duty to refer and whether others could work with us under this duty or something very like it? Commitment to refer by NHF – trailblazer team supportive of promoting its use by all partners in our area. SB to investigate whether could be used by other partners (e.g. GPs, military)	SB		✓	
12.	Homelessness	s21 and the Homeless Reduction Act Report by DG. A lot of work around invalid notices etc. DG to share document.	DG			✓
13.	Home-Link update	HW to add new information i.e. number of bids per property, number of people on register in each District and band, checking accessibility of people understanding system.	HW		✓	

¹ 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. Items to add to agendas are listed separately.

#	Agenda item	Action & when added ¹	Lead	To do	Doing	Done
		Add no. of bedrooms, type and who is on the register on Housing Boards' regular update. Any particular questions feed back to HW to include in quarterly report.				
March 2019						
14.	DAHA	Could ask Homes England about effect of DAHA on shared ownership and HtB; currently Help to Buy is all standard paperwork. NH and VC in contact about this.	NH		✓	
February 2019						
15.	New developments	Investigate the system of numbering and naming of streets, and postcodes – can we help get postcodes set up earlier in the process to facilitate life for new residents? SCDC to share findings from Northstowe with other district postcode teams. SB to help with info-sharing process. Survey in progress.	NH to send info to Mike Hill and cc HW		✓	