

# The Housing Board

Cambridgeshire | Peterborough | West Suffolk

Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020

Held online via Microsoft Teams



## Meeting Notes

### Present, apologies and previous notes

#### Present

- Suzanne Hemingway (SH), Cambridge City **Chair**
- Sue Beecroft (SB), Housing Board
- Jon Collen (JC), Hunts DC
- Elaine Field (EF), South Cambs DC **Notes**
- Iain Green (IG), Cambs County/Peterborough
- Nigel Howlett (NH), CHS
- Mohammed Hussein (MH), Peterborough
- Lee Price (LP), West Suffolk
- Helen Reed (HR), Cambridge City
- Harry Singh-Lal (HSL), Cambs County

#### Apologies

- Azma Ahmad-Pearce, Julie Baird, Liz Bisset, Sally Bonnett, Sean Evans, Julie Fletcher, David Greening, Dan Horn, Anne Keogh, Karen Mayhew, Carol Pilson and Heather Wood.

#### Previous Notes

Draft notes of March 2020 are available at <https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/housingboard/>  
A review of previous actions is at the end of this document.

### Covid-19 discussion, including Homelessness/rough sleeping. Prison discharge. Transformation work, Housing Providers and general housing market updates.

#### Homelessness/General

- **Cambridge City**  
Significant increase in rough sleeping, working to try to rehouse. Priority moving people out of temporary into more permanent accommodation, not transfers or exchanges. Doing electronic sign ups.
- **CHS**  
CHS are signing people up and only doing emergency / essential works, not voids, many HAs have stopped. Handover of new homes in Hunts also ground to a halt, contractor pulled out.
- **HDC**  
Some providers have gone to emergency repairs / services; lettings have not been prioritised. Other RPs trying to continue and looking at electronic sign ups. RPs reporting some problems with works not happening as would like, gas / electricity, voids. Across the board struggling to keep the capacity going. SH - If landlords want to discuss how we are managing to work, and which contractors are still able to do gas and electricity checks, to facilitate prioritisation of voids, we can pick that up. **NH will talk to Karen Mayhew.**  
JC - RPs have been asked to speak to LA's about vacancies they have coming through, not to advert, but to prioritise temporary accommodation and using direct let system.
- **Peterborough**  
PCC Housing Needs informed all RPs in the partnership on 24/3/20 that they were suspending all Choice Based Lettings (CBL) activity until such a time that the restrictions of all non-essential movement were lifted. The CBL edition which was due to commence that day was subsequently pulled from advert and Housing Needs advised that they would be updating clients on the Housing Register of these plans.
- Cross Keys Homes (CKH) requested the shortlists of applicants who bid on the final CBL edition to be

provided to enable viewings and lettings to be carried out. CKH has also continued lettings restricted to residents in CKH hostels with shared facilities in the first place followed by those needing an emergency transfer, decant or living in properties that impact on the living standards of the household. This is in line with the MHCLG guidance which encourages a pragmatic and common sense approach to resolving issues.

- Ministry is keen for feedback about problems with the system, homelessness etc. JC is asking Ministry to deal with these issues at the centre, to encourage all RPs to be imaginative in the way they are working and to share good practice/workarounds. **SH will ask this to be shared, all to convene practical operations, and help with feeding back to Ministry**, and if there are any units which can be let, we will need access to those properties.
- Neighbouring Authorities have placed people in Peterborough already, not sure if some of those have been placed under the Covid measures and what discussions, resource or services have been put in place. In Peterborough, rough sleepers have been put into the Holiday Inn hotel, with soup kitchen, basic needs being provided, not confident similar services are in place with other hotels being booked by other Authorities.
- In the last week 3 from HDC have been put in Peterborough B&Bs (checked first with Peterborough Housing Needs Team). Gillian Beasley wants these conversations to be held at strategic level. We need to agree what level we are reporting. Police are working to keep track of where people are being placed, from community safety and ASB point of view. All HAs should have been asked to feed back into that. **SB to collate who has been placed outside their Authority and what provisions and support are being provided**. Perhaps we can talk to accommodation providers outside of some of the main population centres to see if any of them can be persuaded to take people. Ministry are trying to get national chains to work with us, were not willing beginning of week.
- Peterborough have managed accommodation with Holiday Inn and procured half the rate of B&Bs, with security, food, nurse twice per week, scripts service sorted out, etc. Jackpot alarm available. Drugs service, Officer time available.
- HDC have self-contained units therefore not putting pressure into system. We should be trying to resolve any pressure elsewhere.

### Prisoners

The press has indicated that some prisoners will be released early. Nationally, the Ministry of Justice is looking across three different groups of prisoners:

- 1) Women who are highly vulnerable, pregnant or single parent
- 2) Underlying health conditions, complex needs, mental health, more difficult people
- 3) Due to be released in next few months, can be released on licence.  
Would need to resolve any issues around benefits.

Cristina Strood, from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, will hold a meeting next week to understand capacity, options, and management of these groups. Picks up longer term work around temporary accommodation, moving prisoners on in the future and if we need to ask Government to fund. The Board discussed capacity (none via Trailblazer currently). Housing Leads have a framework which can be built on as long as involved from the start. Cristina sent an email out last night; all Housing leads should get an invitation. **Will update at next Housing Board meeting.**

### Housing Provider Update

NH - Problem with voids work stopping, need clearer guidance from government that this work can continue. Money advice needed for renters and shared owners who cannot meet their mortgage payments, and a key part is getting people basic food and necessities to those who have no money or are self-isolating or have no internet. CHS is still continuing on full range of repair work currently in agreement with our contractor but probably will go to emergency repairs soon if things get worse. Biggest issues currently in extra care and

supported housing, big problems in supported housing for vulnerable young people who are finding following government advice difficult, lots of aggression, fighting and unacceptable behaviours, young people and teenagers under pressure feel they don't owe society anything and getting them to follow advice is proving hard work, social distancing etc. NH discussed an Extra Care outbreak of Covid19 in Cambridge, two residents died and a third person in hospital, guidance is contradictory on risk assessment and self-isolating, which is filling CHS staff with fear. Conflicting advice from hospital and government, making it difficult to run and maintain a service with confidence.

JC - Request received from Cambs County social care about mutual aid re moving people on from hospitals, to identify beds available in sheltered care and existing stock etc, have put this through the HomeLink Partnership to all RP's, and to coordinate via Lynne O'Brien at County. SH advised we should push this back up to SCG and request a risk assessment to ensure how care is managed to prevent spread, JC added should be virus free people (hospital needing to free up beds). Need to be tested to ensure they are Covid-19 free . **Co-ordinate through Lynne O'Brien.**

NH – Government's new guidance states elderly people coming out of hospital will not be tested and expect care homes to take them - these need to be ensured are negative. Could lose staff as they won't be prepared to work. Staff are concerned. **SH will escalate this within the County.**

SH mentioned, already highlighted that completions aren't being handed over and concerns over the wider housing market, we need to keep an eye out for sites that are at risk. **SB to send an email around to housing enablers** regards this (particularly larger sites) any sites we have concerns about we could escalate with the Combined Authority. LP added, same issue in West Suffolk, some developers are continuing, other concerns around work materials' availability for these sites.

Updates from local partners can be found here (with some national messages):  
<https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/housing/coronavirus-covid-19-newsreel/>

From DWP, libraries and County wide hub of community support of what different partners have emailed through via the Financial Capability Forum. **All send any additions to SB.**

### **Public Health**

IG advised public health is collating an additional list of vulnerable people (on top of the Shield list), who might fall through the cracks. Looking at for example homeless, discharged from prison, people using alcohol and drugs, and gypsies and travellers. How do we get messages out to those people. This is linked to a County hub that has been set up who are also doing work on data. Some travellers sites we already know about, however there are sites we are not aware of e.g. private sites not known to public health and illegal encampments. Those who might need shielding, how do you self-isolate those in a caravan. HSL will collate a list of questions, we need to know who to co-ordinate this through. Look at Gypsy and Travellers first, who are those Leads? There was a request from coordinator group to LA CEO's. County co-ordination hub and those linked in from District Councils will pick up from there. **HSL to email questions to EF.**

SB has received data from Districts sent to MHCLG, on number of rough sleepers and what type of accommodation people are in, **SB will forward to Public Health to understand issues.** Includes work from previous G&T accommodation needs assessment for some context.

NH asked what publicly accessible data there is, to understand on how pandemics are managed in Cambridgeshire, to help with pressure and demand, to help plan how we manage exhausted staff resources. IG advised this is being done, intelligence cell looking at modelling locally, IG will advise when ready, not robust enough to share yet.

SH concluded that the Ark4 work is postponed currently due to urgent issues. Still expecting them to share a virtual presentation end of April, so can discuss in May. We will see if we can think about that at that time.

## Future Meetings

To be held online via Microsoft Teams until further notice.

17 April (ad-hoc)

1 May 2020 (scheduled)

15 May (ad-hoc)

5 June (scheduled)

Email SH if useful to have shorter more frequent meetings.

#	Agenda item	Action & when added	Lead	To do	Doing	Done
April 2020						
1.	Covid and stock owners/landlords	If landlords want to discuss how City Council is managing to work on voids, reletting etc and contractors still able to do gas and electricity checks, to facilitate prioritisation of voids, we can pick that up. NH will talk to Karen Mayhew.	NH/KM	✓		
2.	Covid and temp accom	JC is asking Ministry to encourage RPs to be imaginative in the way they are working and to share good practice/workarounds. SH will ask this to be shared, all to convene practical operations, and help with feeding back to Ministry	SH			
3.	Covid and temp accom	SB to collate who has been placed outside their Authority and what provisions and support are being provided.	SB			
4.	Covid and early prison release	Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner meeting next week to understand Government's early release programme. All Housing leads should get an invitation. Will update at next housing board meeting	All			
5.	Covid and hospital discharge	JC added hospital discharges should be virus free people. Need to be tested to ensure they are Covid-19 free. Co-ordinate through Lynne O'Brien.	LO'B			
6.	Covid and hospital discharge	Government's new guidance states elderly people coming out of hospital will not be tested and expect care homes to take them - these need to be ensured are negative. Could lose staff as they won't be prepared to work. Staff are concerned. SH will escalate this within the County.	SH			
7.	Covid and new homes	SB to send an email around to housing enablers regards concerns on particularly larger sites- we could discuss with the Combined Authority.	SB			
8.	Covid and Public Health	HSL to email public health questions to EF.	HSL			
9.	Covid, G&Ts	SB has received data from Districts sent to MHCLG, on number of rough sleepers and what type of accommodation people are in, SB will forward to Public Health to understand issues. Includes work from previous G&T accommodation needs assessment for some context.	SB / IG / HSL			
March 2020						
10.	H'less Review	LAs to provide half year data to Arc4 as they request	Arc4		✓	
11.	H'less Review	Need to share this with homelessness teams, reps not all at Board meeting so we need to understand next steps and take to teams. Then collaborate work around teams	SH / SB		✓	
12.	£100K homes	HB requested to see business plan going to CPCA board in March 2020 to help us brief	EG (CPCA)			✓

#	Agenda item	Action & when added	Lead	To do	Doing	Done
		others				
13.	Trailblazer team	SB to look at where reports are coming from (i.e. which partners are referring, has that changed?).	SB		✓	
<b>Feb 2020</b>						
14.	T.B. and housing	Workforce development opportunity. TB and hospital discharge. Could use champions in Housing Options Teams to raise awareness, all Housing Authorities identify a person.	DH lead	✓		
15.	T.B. and housing	Pick up link with arc4 work	LS		✓	
16.	T.B. and housing	Specific work Cambridge city and Peterborough. Conversations with Housing leads and CCG to get details of issues regards what we may need to accelerate. To do this, VK to feed back to Laurence Gibson, contact Sean Evans and David Greening about this, and CCG lead.	SF lead	✓		
17.	T.B. and housing	Just had RSI funding agreed - could reflect TB issues. Actions for City & Peterborough to action asap, not forgetting others	SF	✓		
18.	T.B. and housing	Housing Board to help with recommendations / actions in the JSNA	All	✓		
19.	Homeless System Transformation	IG offered to bring a Think Communities presentation alongside primary care networks to the Housing Board	IG	✓		
20.	Homeless System Transformation	Need a discussion around think communities and homelessness. SF and SH facilitating a session, asking question of what think communities can contribute to this community. SF will ask Adrian Chapman in April or May.	SF			✓
21.	Health and wellbeing strategy	All to check first section of HWBS (planners leading but we may want to contribute) and specifically look at second section we will be responsible to. Add to agenda item for April.	IG	✓		
22.	AOB	Update on allocation policy review for April agenda.	HW		✓	
<b>December 2019</b>						
23.	System Transformation	All Districts to help by sending Affordable Housing SPDs or link to them to SB.	All / SB			✓
<b>November 2019</b>						
24.	Trailblazer	Investigate how much time we could extend the remaining team for. Keep on agenda: DH to report back.	DH		✓	
25.	Street Support	Other Districts keen to consider being included, Chris to set up meeting with HDC, FDC and SCDC.	Chis Jenkin			✓
26.	Homelessness review	Housing First representative to be invited to Housing Board SB to identify what, who and when.	LS and SB		✓	

#	Agenda item	Action & when added	Lead	To do	Doing	Done
27.	Homelessness review	Housing Benefit Plus model is the finance to secure the types of tenure etc; can we share evaluation coming out of that. SB to identify what, who and when.	SB to explore	✓		
28.	Winter pressures funding	Do we need to identify a lead for the Districts? IG for health. JC will find out who can make the bids. Then approach those who can make them, SF to find out who can lead on social care.	JC, SF	✓		
29.	TB JSNA	Put Tuberculosis clinics and screening on StreetSupport app. SB investigating with support from Public Health.	SB		✓	
<b>September 2019</b>						
30.	Victims of sexual exploitation	IG mentioned the 'Improving Pathways' trailblazer work issues may be the same. Could take the issue to Health and Wellbeing Board, with Helen and ensuring Cambs Constabulary are invited. Action for DH.	DH	✓		
31.	Victims of sexual exploitation	Bring progress on all back to Housing Board. Alice and Kate of Cambs Constabulary offered to come back if required.	All		✓	
<b>August 2019</b>						
32.	JSNA rough sleeping	Vicki Peacey (CCG) to circulate a draft of the JSNA when ready, and bring back to Housing Board.	VP		✓	
<b>July 2019</b>						
33.	Military covenant	Vikki to contact Board as and when we can help with the app including housing info, and refer people to the training.	VB		✓	