

# TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

29 June 2023

### Report of the Director of Planning, Housing & Environmental Health

#### Part 1- Public

#### Delegated

## 1 HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK – SCOPING REPORT

### 1.1 Background

1.1.1 In the Council's Housing Strategy 2023-2027 Action Plan for 2022/23, there is an action to 'Engage with Registered Providers and private developers through regular strategic and management/liason meetings to ensure efficient and effective delivery of services'. The action plan goes on to talk about frequency of meetings and requiring data, including customer satisfaction information. This action will be continued into the 2023/24 Action Plan.

### 1.2 Current position

1.2.1 The table at **Annex 1** provides information on the Registered Providers who have stock in Tonbridge & Malling. This shows that Clarion is the largest provider, by a significant margin. Other providers with over 200 units are Hyde, Moat and Southern.

1.2.2 Given the significant level of stock held by Clarion, the vast majority of engagement by officers is undertaken with them. There are monthly operational meetings to discuss cases and properties, along with attendance at team meetings in both organisations if there are specific issues to discuss. In addition to this, the Director of Planning, Housing & Environmental Health and the Head of Housing & Health have quarterly meetings with the Regional Director, which have been ongoing for a number of years. In 2023, these have been supplemented by meetings with the Group Directors at Clarion, as a reflection of the level of stock in the borough and the importance of maintaining a strong working relationship.

1.2.3 At these quarterly meetings, performance data is discussed. The last update in March 2023 provided the following key information;

- Occupancy at 97.97%
- 24 lets in January, 27 in February, 33 in March
- 140 ASB cases received January to March, 43 still active in April

- Resident satisfaction on repairs is 90.78% against 85% target
- First time fix at 95.38% against 90% target
- 99.55% emergency responsive repairs against 98% target, 100% on emergency communal repairs
- Routine and communal repairs at 90.03% against 95% target
- 60+ voids in TMBC (this is considered excessive by Clarion and an action plan is in place to resolve this).
- Contact centre (data not disaggregated for TMBC) responded to 99, 431 contacts in March
- There has been a decrease in arrears and 4 evictions in 2022/23.

1.2.4 In addition to this, Housing officers have regular communication with other providers, mainly regarding lettings and condition of properties. There is also a significant amount of communication with providers where they are involved in developing new affordable units in the borough, discussing required provision, tenure details and local lettings plans.

1.2.5 The Council has a Housing Association Liaison Panel (HALP), which comprises of 5 elected Members. In recent years, this panel has met with Clarion annually to review their activity and performance.

1.2.6 Whilst there are a number of ongoing engagement activities, there are a number of opportunities to develop and augment the existing engagement with Housing Associations and to ensure that the Council is able to monitor the activity of these key organisations in ensuring the wellbeing of our residents.

### **1.3 Scoping considerations**

1.3.1 Members are invited to consider the following scoping considerations and to indicate whether they wish these to be progressed for the main report;

- Potential data requests; Members could request data from either all or some of the Housing Associations operating in the borough, perhaps dependant on the size of their stock holding on key statistics such as repairs, voids, complaints, managed moves and development of new units. This could be done initially through agreeing a list of performance data and a letter being sent by the Cabinet Member for Housing & Finance to the agreed list of Housing Associations.
- Clarion; as the largest provider of affordable properties in the borough, Clarion's performance has by far the greatest impact on the lives of TMBC residents. As such, it is considered likely that Members will want to discuss in detail Clarion's performance data and their wider work in the borough. They

could therefore be invited to attend a meeting of Overview & Scrutiny or of the Housing Association Liaison Panel on behalf of O&S (see below) to discuss their work in borough. Again, this could be done via an invitation from the Cabinet Member for Housing & Finance.

- HALP; the role of the Panel could be reviewed to consider whether the Panel's membership should be expanded and whether they could be set a specific work programme to invite Housing Associations to meet with them. Some consideration could be given to how this Panel's work should interact both with O&S and with the Housing & Planning Scrutiny Select Committee. It is the opinion of the Director of PHEH that to have a programme of regular Member engagement with Housing Associations this may be more than could be accommodated into the HPSSC work programme, given the number of other significant Housing and Planning matters that fall within that committee's remit.
- Review of nominations agreements: many of the nominations agreements that are in place are dated and given the length of time over which they have been entered into, have a number of differences. Members may wish to consider a review of these agreements by Housing and Legal and putting in place an agreed plan for proposing and agreeing changes.

1.3.2 Members are also asked to consider whether there are any other aspects of Housing Association performance and engagement with the Council that they would like to explore.

## **1.4 Legal Implications**

1.4.1 Councils have no formal power to scrutinise Housing Associations – this lies with the Regulator of Social Housing.

1.4.2 Nominations to properties owned by Housing Associations are governed through nominations agreement between individual providers and the Council.

## **1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

1.5.1 Having an efficient and well managed social housing sector operating in the borough helps to support best use of resources. For example, timely and high-quality repairs practices are likely to result in fewer complaints and cases for the Council to investigate and meeting void turnaround timescales is likely to result in shortened stays in Temporary Accommodation when a move on is identified for those households, which in turn means lower costs to the Council.

## **1.6 Risk Assessment**

1.6.1 If the Council does not have a robust approach to monitoring the activity of Housing Associations, it could be at risk of exacerbating resident issues or missing trends of activity that are negatively impacting on the Council's financial position or the wellbeing of residents.

## **1.7 Equality Impact Assessment**

1.7.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

## **1.8 Policy Considerations**

1.8.1 Customer Contact

1.8.2 Healthy Lifestyles

## **1.9 Recommendations**

1.9.1 Members are asked to CONSIDER the scoping considerations in this report and CONFIRM which of these they wish to see completed for or considered in the main report to O&S in September 2023.

Background papers:

contact: Eleanor Hoyle

Nil

Eleanor Hoyle

Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health