



Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Cabinet

Thursday 15 February 2024

Telford & Wrekin Council Housing Management Board

Cabinet Member:	Cllr Richard Overton - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member: Homes & Enforcement
Lead Director:	Katherine Kynaston - Director: Housing, Employment & Infrastructure
Service Area:	Housing, Employment & Infrastructure
Report Author:	Toni Guest - Housing, NuPlace & Commercial Projects Service Delivery Manager
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Wards Affected:	All Wards
Key Decision:	Not Key Decision
Forward Plan:	Not Applicable
Report considered by:	SMT – 16 January 2024 Business Briefing – 25 January 2024 Cabinet – 15 February 2024

1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting:

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 1.1 Approve the creation of a Housing Management Board with responsibility for all aspects of the management, operation and oversight of the Council's responsibilities as Local Housing Authority, including the approval and adoption of any and all associated policies;
- 1.2 Delegate authority to the Housing Management Board to confirm and adopt suitable Terms of Reference;

- 1.3 Note the work which has been undertaken so far in respect of the Council's responsibilities as a Registered Provider of housing and Local Housing Authority; and
- 1.4 Require the Housing Management Board to provide an annual update of its work and decisions to Cabinet.

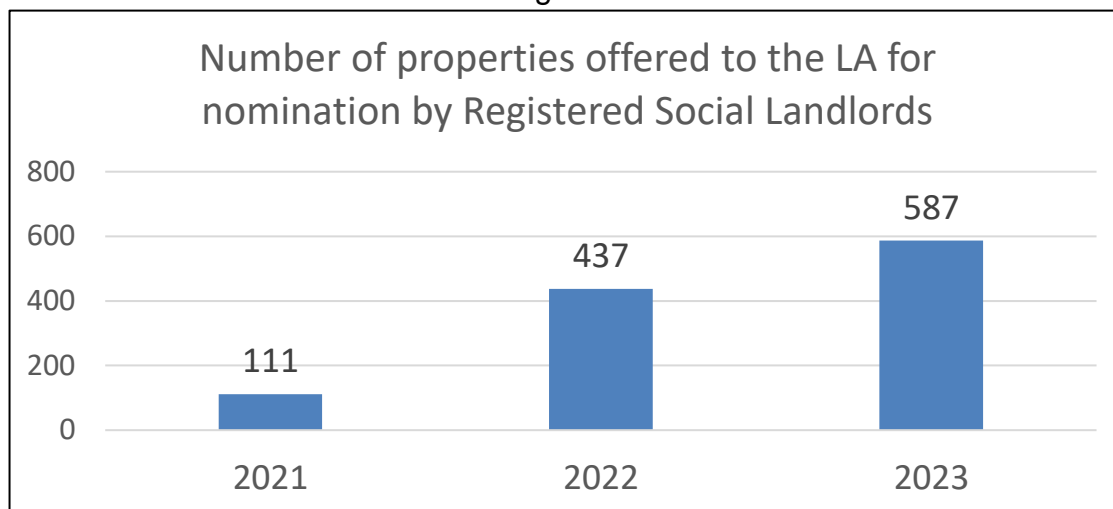
2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 The purpose of the report is to seek Cabinet's agreement for the creation of a Housing Management Board that will provide oversight and compliance for properties owned by Telford & Wrekin Council under their Registered Provider (RP) status and have responsibility for all aspects of the Council's role as Local Housing Authority. The Board will comprise of Cabinet Members and Senior Officers of the Council chaired by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing. While the Council is not a major stockholder it does manage a number of properties including supported and specialist provision and as regulation of the sector increases needs to ensure appropriate, senior oversight and compliance. The recent and proposed purchasing of properties as part of a number of schemes to help meet gaps within the market now requires us to ensure compliance and this new Housing Management Board will enable a strategic oversight and governance to achieve this.
- 2.2 It is proposed that the Housing Management Board should have authority to make relevant changes to related housing policies, procedures and documents, ensuring that the Council complies fully with the regulatory requirements on it as both a Registered Provider and as Local Housing Authority. The Housing Management Board will be best placed to ensure that the Council is able to meet the current and future local needs and provision within the Borough. Having oversight of the needs and gaps in the local market in order to develop the current housing stock and influencing other providers to meet need, or where this is not feasible to intervene in the current market and provide evidenced decisions in developing and managing properties ourselves. The Board would refer new or updated strategies or policies which constitute a key decision or where these are considered by the Board to have wider strategic implications, to Cabinet.
- 2.3 The Housing Management Board will operate separately but in parallel to the existing Housing Investment Programme Board which provides oversight to the investment being made through the Council's wholly owned Housing Company (Nuplace and Telford & Wrekin Homes) to deliver privately rented accommodation. These properties do not fall under the Council's Registered Provider stock holding responsibilities.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 Telford & Wrekin Council transferred their housing stock to the Wrekin Housing Group in 1999 as part of a government driven programme for housing.
- 3.2 Telford & Wrekin Council became a Registered Provider of Housing in September 2020, following the purchase of 13 properties under a grant to provide specialist accommodation to house street sleepers during the pandemic. Since the initial purchase additional properties have been acquired to meet some of the gaps in the current market around specialist accommodation provision. At present, the Council has 169 properties: 84 properties provide specialist supported accommodation and 2 general needs accommodation and are part of our registered provider status. Under national guidance properties that are used for providing temporary accommodation under our homelessness duty are not included under the registered provider status. This accounts for the remaining 83 properties.
- 3.3 Telford & Wrekin Council are growing their property portfolio on a targeted basis based on the identified needs of the local community and gaps in the current market. The current housing crisis nationally is highlighting a shortage of accommodation and specifically for those most vulnerable and in need of affordable housing. Examples of interventions to date include the purchase of 12 units of accommodation providing emergency accommodation for Children & Young People and 23 properties to accommodate Adults with Learning Disabilities offering both scheme based and individual accommodation with care and support one of which is to support an individual with complex continuing health care needs.
- 3.4 Alongside the delivery of accommodation directly, the Council is also working with other registered providers operating within Telford & Wrekin Council to ensure their accommodation is also benefitting the most vulnerable and their development programmes are delivering the right type of accommodation including an increasing proportion of adapted and specialist accommodation. Through the development of the nominations process we have seen a significant increase in

homeless and vulnerable clients being nominated and moved into homes.



- 3.5 The Housing Management Board will be supported by a cross service Officer Group chaired by the Director – Housing, Employment & Infrastructure. This will develop and bring forward to the Board a series of policies for approval in order to be compliant as a registered housing provider as outlined by the Regulator of Social Housing and advise the Board on changes in legislation and regulation.

4.0 Summary of main proposals

- 4.1 Cabinet is asked to agree to the creation and setting up a new Housing Management Board to deliver oversight and compliance for properties owned by Telford & Wrekin Council under their Registered Provider status. This board will ensure that the council is operating in accordance with the objectives of the Social Housing Regulator.
- 4.2 It is also proposed to delegate authority to the Housing Management Board for decisions relating to the Council’s responsibilities as Local Housing Authority, with key strategic decisions being taken to Cabinet for approval. This will allow the Housing Management Board to have strategic oversight of all matters which pertain to the way in which its housing stock is let and managed and crucially, the policies and procedures which will apply to our tenants and the way in which their tenancies are managed. This oversight will mean that there is a single accountable body for all these related elements of housing work.
- 4.3 It is proposed that the Housing Management Board consists of 3 Cabinet Members, namely the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member: Homes & Enforcement, Cabinet Member: Place (The Economy & Neighbourhood Services), Cabinet Member for Healthy, Safer and Stronger Communities and Partnerships, the Executive Director for Housing, Communities & Customer Services and Director: Housing, Employment and Infrastructure, supported by relevant Senior Managers..

- 4.4 The Housing Management Board will also continue to lead the strong partnership working which has been undertaken with other local registered social landlords and housing providers through close oversight of the Council's allocations and subsequent nominations processes.
- 4.5 It is proposed that the Housing Management Board will be able to look at current gaps within the market and identify potential solutions to address emerging needs and quickly respond to changes in the market.
- 4.6 The Council is working with local housing providers and successfully housing a significant number of residents through the nominations process. By delegating oversight of the allocations process and policy to the Housing Management Board, the Council will be able to ensure that as changing needs and themes emerge, the Council will be able to quickly respond if required.
- 4.7 Finally, it is proposed that the Housing Management Board be required to provide an annual update of the matters it has decided and actions taken in respect of managing the Council's Housing Authority duties to Cabinet. This will provide information and reassurance around its activities.

5.0 Alternative Options

- 5.1 Cabinet could choose not to create a separate Housing Management Board and link these functions with the Housing Investment Programme Board. Having a single accountable body responsible for drawing together the various strands of housing work could allow the Council to work flexibly to identify future needs. However, there are different regulatory requirements on the Council's owned stock to the privately rented accommodation owned and managed by the Council's wholly owned housing company. In addition, the scope of oversight of the Housing Regulator is only likely to expand, meaning there will be a need for dedicated oversight of the Council's Local Housing Authority duties.

6.0 Key Risks

- 6.1 There is a risk that as the regulatory landscape expands, without a dedicated body to oversee the work, the way in which the Council's housing functions are operated will not be consistent and will not work best to achieve the Council's aims and objectives. This could lead to legal challenges.

7.0 Council Priorities

- 7.1 This report supports the following Council priorities:
- Every child, young person and adult lives well in their community

- Everyone benefits from a thriving economy
- All neighbourhoods are a great place to live

8.0 Financial Implications

8.1 There are no costs associated with the creation of the proposed Housing Management Board. There is no Special Responsibility Allowance payable to the Cabinet Members involved and officer costs are already met from existing budgets.

9.0 Legal and HR Implications

9.1 Decisions related to Housing are matters which are presently reserved to the Council's Cabinet as set out in the Council's Constitution and are powers which the Cabinet may exercise as per the Local Authorities (Arrangements for Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2012. Cabinet has the power to delegate functions to a board of this nature by virtue of section 9E(3) Local Government Act 2000.

9.2 By ensuring the proposed Housing Management Board reports back to Cabinet on at least an annual basis, Cabinet will be provided with reassurance around the continued compliance of the Council with requirements of the Regulator of Social Housing and the Council's registered provider status. Advice will be provided on an ongoing basis by Legal Services as new proposals emerge or in response to legislative changes.

9.3 There are no direct HR implications arising from this report.

10.0 Ward Implications

10.1 This report covers all wards and outlines our positive interventions within housing across the Borough.

11.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications

11.1 The relationship between housing and health is widely recognised. Not only poor housing conditions but having access to the right accommodation is important to both physical and mental health. This report works towards a positive step in setting out a reporting mechanism to identify gaps and looking at addressing needs.

11.2 With the current housing crisis, having access to affordable accommodation is difficult which places further strain on residents both social and economic situation. The work carried out through this report positively works to address this through increased successful nominations with local providers into affordable accommodation and supporting the delivery directly and/or via influencing the market to meet current and future housing needs. This includes provision that will support vulnerable young people, adults and those facing homelessness.

12.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

12.1 All housing related work carried out as part of this report will be in accordance with local needs and developed with regard to the legal requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty

13.0 Climate Change and Environmental Implications

13.1 There are no direct climate change and environmental implications arising from the proposals set out in this report. The Council has made a commitment to reduce climate change emissions from direct operations to zero by 2030. While the Council cannot legislate for how people live in properties it rents, consideration is given to ensuring new accommodation delivered is energy efficient, meets future homes standards and supports a reduction in carbon emissions.

14.0 Background Papers

None

15.0 Appendices

None

16.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Legal	03/01/2024	04/01/2024	RP
Finance	03/01/2024	05/01/2024	AEM
Director	03/01/2024	10/01/2024	KK