

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
CABINET HOUSING PANEL – 19 JULY 2021
REPORT OF SHAREHOLDER GROUP

NOW HOUSING – PROGRESS REPORT

1 Executive Summary

1.1 This report provides an update on Now Housing Limited.

2 Recommendation(s)

2.1 That Cabinet Housing Panel notes the report of Now Housing Limited (shown in Appendix A), which presents an update on the company's progress to date.

3 Explanation

3.1 In January 2019 the Cabinet of Welwyn Hatfield Council approved the creation of Now Housing Limited, a new wholly council-owned housing company to provide housing for local people whose needs cannot be easily met through the private or social rented sectors.

3.2 Cabinet appointed a shareholder representative group to oversee the set-up of the Now Housing, on behalf of the council. Members of the shareholder group consist of the Council's Head of Paid Service, Section 151 Officer, Corporate Director (Public Protection, Planning and Governance) and Monitoring Officer.

3.3 The business plan for Now Housing Limited was approved in October 2019 and as part of the shareholder monitoring arrangements, regular updates on Now Housing's performance against the business plan are required to be presented to Cabinet Housing Panel.

3.4 Now Housing owns and manages one block of 12 flats in Chequersfield.

3.5 Performance on rent collection is currently 100% and there has been no rent lost due to voids.

3.6 As required by the council, the business plan for Now Housing Limited is subject to annual review with the last review taking place in September 2020. The business plan was provided as an appendix at the previous meeting in March 2021.

3.7 A meeting between the Vice-Chair of Now Housing Limited and the Shareholder Group took place on 10 June 2021. An update on the progress of Now Housing was discussed with the shareholder group. This update is contained within the attached operational briefing note.

Implications

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 Now Housing Limited is a legally constituted company and robust governance arrangements are in place, as agreed with the shareholder group and based on expert legal advice provided to both Now Housing and the shareholder group.

5. Financial Implication(s)

- 5.1 A loan agreement has been agreed between the council and Now Housing to cover the period from April 2021.

6. Risk Management Implications

- 6.1 Now Housing has developed a comprehensive risk map, covering both strategic and operational risks.
- 6.2 The risk register for Now Housing is reviewed every quarter by the Now Housing Board.

7.1 Communication

- 7.1 A communications plan has been developed to ensure that the council promotes the achievements of the Housing Company.

8.1 Security & Terrorism Implication(s)

- 8.1 There are no security or terrorism implications arising from this report.

9. Procurement Implication(s)

- 9.1 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

10. Climate Change Implication(s)

- 10.1 There are no climate change implications arising from this report.

11. Human Resources Implication(s)

- 11.1 There are no human resource implications arising from this report.

12. Health and Wellbeing Implication(s)

- 12.1 There are health and wellbeing implications arising from this report.

13. Link to Strategic Aims

- 13.1 The subject of this report is linked to the council's Strategic Aims:

- a) **Quality homes through managed growth** and specifically our approach to 'secure land, funding and partnerships to deliver homes that people can afford'.

14. Equalities and Diversity

14.1 An EqIA was not completed because this report does not propose changes to existing service-related policies or the development of new service-related policies

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Attached documents: Appendix A - Now Housing Performance update of the Board of Now Housing Limited.