

Asset Compliance Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 20 December 2023 at Shire Hall, Warwick at 6.00pm.

Present: Councillors Barton, Boad, K Dickson, Dray, Gorman and Phillips.

Also Present: Councillor Armstrong – Vice-Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Overview & Scrutiny Committee Observer),
Councillor Wightman – Portfolio Holder for Housing & Assets,
Councillor Yellapragada (observing only).

1. **Appointment of Chairman**

It was proposed, duly seconded and

Resolved that Councillor Phillips be appointed Chairman of the Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.

2. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Falp, Hales and Hunt.

3. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made.

4. **Asset Compliance Plan Progress**

The Committee considered a report from Neighbourhood and Assets which gave an update on the current position and progress made following on from an independent asset review.

Subsequent to the review, the Council self-referred itself to the Regulator of Social Housing on 9 November 2023. A meeting between Council officers and representatives from the Regulator's Office took place on 27 November, followed by a request for information from the Regulator on 29 November. The deadline for the provision of the information was 8 December.

On 13 December, the Council's newly formed Asset Compliance Board met to review and assess progress. The Board also included a tenant representative (who had received training from Penningtons) and the CEO from the Association of Stock Retained Authorities.

The Board requested that a consultant from Penningtons joined Board meetings going forward from 2024.

The Council had also recently appointed technical specialists covering fire safety and building safety, as well as securing Penningtons to support the programme over the ensuing 12 months.

Several appendices were attached to the report:

- Appendix 1 – a highlight report presented to the Compliance Board;
- Appendix 2 – the Action Plan;
- Appendix 3 – a copy of the information sent to the Regulator on the 8 December;
- Appendix 4 – a copy of the data compliance dashboard; and
- Appendix 5 – the current risk assessment.

The Asset Compliance Committee was instituted on 15 November 2023. The remit of the Committee was set out and agreed at Warwick District Council's meeting on that date and was recorded in Appendix 4 to Warwick District Council's minutes of that meeting.

The Asset Compliance Committee Chairman explained the purpose of the newly formed Committee. The Committee had been asked to review and challenge the progress to ensure compliance with safety under the Social Housing Regulation Act. This followed some work undertaken by Penningtons in September 2023. A copy of the report they produced was available on the Council's website. This had resulted in a significant number of actions for the Council to undertake. The Committee would check and monitor the progress and would make reports to the Cabinet.

Members requested that in future, to facilitate monitoring that actions would be met on target delivery dates, they should be provided with a report that listed what the action was, the current position, who was responsible for delivery and the expected delivery date. The report should highlight slippage. Currently, they were forced to refer to other parts of the report to find out all of the necessary information. All actions were to have delivery dates stated. It was noted that some information given in Appendices 1 and 2 conflicted and the suggestion was made that these should be collated into one document to remove the conflicting information.

In response to questions from Members, the Head of Neighbourhood & Assets and the Deputy Chief Executive explained that:

- There were already Legionella risk assessments in place, so the Council was compliant, and these had all been reviewed. The Council was undertaking all necessary prevention regimes such as flushing out the system. The Council changed contractors back in May and they would be re-doing the risk assessments with their own staff using their own methods. The agreed completion date for this was June 2024.
- The Head of Neighbourhood & Assets would be reviewing all of the action plan dates from the start of 2024 as more detail became available. The Action Plan would become more detailed as a result. The Action Plan would break down in more detail the tasks and milestones.
- The detailed Action Plan, with a risk assessment below, would form the core of future Committee meetings following a request from the Committee.
- After the training that would be provided the following evening to Members, officers and Members would re-evaluate the way in which information was presented to see if a more "visual" approach could be applied to the Action Plan.

- There were 128 overdue electrical safety inspections. The Council had reduced its reinspection dates from 10 years to five (the standard operated in the Private Sector) which had caused the increase in numbers of overdue reports. Work was well underway to reduce this figure and Members would be able to see progress in the next report. The figure for inspections outstanding was dropping daily as inspections were underway.
- Members would be getting a compliance dashboard to use which would allow them to examine compliance areas by category, current progress by number and percentage completed, to allow them to track progress. This dashboard would be updated frequently, giving Members a more accurate picture. It was important to look at the trend because the figures were changing on a daily basis and for Members to be satisfied that the trend was heading in the right direction. If Members required the exact position for that moment, then they could request the information from officers via email. Committee meeting papers were published a week in advance so could only be accurate at the point when they were written.
- Data recording showing progress against target delivery date was an action that would be picked up in future reporting.
- The Council had invested in a "Customer Relationship Management" system, and this held tenant records. As part of the roll-out of this system, there were plans to update it with full details of every tenant. This information would then inform staff on the best way to communicate with tenants. For computer literate tenants a portal would be coming online for them to use. Tenants in the meantime could still come to see officers at the Council, telephone or email. An update on this would be provided at the next meeting. So far, around 50 tenants had contacted the Council about the issues on compliance; these had all been checked and their properties had been compliant.
- Tenant and leaseholder engagement would be an item on the next meeting agenda. The Council needed to ensure it was getting information to all of its housing customers including the less computer literate and the vulnerable. It was accepted that the focus of the Asset Compliance Committee's involvement had to be kept controlled because it was not the Committee's real purpose. Tenant engagement could be better dealt with by other means such as a Task & Finish Group.
- The Chairman and officers would liaise to discuss the report format to ensure that the inconsistencies spotted between Appendices 1 and 2 were removed by collating reports together.

The Committee thanked officers for the work they had been doing to ensure compliance. The amount of work required was recognised.

Resolved that:

- (1) progress be noted; and
- (2) requirements for information and assurance data are:
 - a) to facilitate monitoring that actions will be met on target delivery dates, a report should be provided that lists what the

action is, the current position, who is responsible for delivery and the expected delivery date. The Chairman will meet with officers to agree the requirements so that the Committee can monitor progress and slippage;

- b) the detailed Action Plan with the Risk Assessment sitting beneath it should be the core of future meetings;
- c) the Action Plan will be reviewed to see if the information can be presented in a more "visual" way to help monitor progress;
- d) data should be presented showing progress against target delivery dates and this should show the start point and progress up to delivery in a "visual" way; and
- e) engagement with tenants and leaseholders will be an agenda item for the next meeting.

(The meeting ended at 6.35pm)

CHAIRMAN
22 January 2024