

12 October 2021

Report of	Assistant Director Policy and Corporate	Author	Geoff Beales ☎ 506514
Title	Review of Colchester Borough Homes Performance 2020-21		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to give the Panel the background to the Management Agreement set up with Colchester Borough Homes (CBH). A presentation from Colchester Borough Homes will be provided (see Appendix 1 for slides) regarding the year's activities. Performance information contained within the Medium-Term Delivery Plan is also provided to assist Members in any questions they may have regarding performance during 2020/21.

2. Action Required

- 2.1 The Panel is invited to review the performance of Colchester Borough Homes (CBH) during 2020/21, having particular regard to the Performance Summary Information 2020/21 (see Appendix 2).
- 2.2 The Panel is also invited to make any recommendations to the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning on CBH performance management arrangements for 2021/22 and beyond.

3. Reason for Scrutiny

- 3.1 CBH is a wholly owned arm's length company of the Council and delivers the majority of the Council's housing functions, in particular those connected with the Council's housing stock and delivery of homelessness and housing advice services. As such CBH has a key role to play in contributing to the achievement of the Council's Strategic objectives. It is therefore appropriate for Scrutiny Panel to review the performance on an annual basis.

4. Background Information

- 4.1 The Council signed a ten-year Management Agreement with CBH in August 2013. In April 2014, following a review of the Council's Corporate and Financial Management functions, the Corporate Facilities Service was transferred to CBH. Following a further review in 2017 the Housing System Team transferred in June 2018. In November 2020 Cabinet agreed a five-year extension to the Management Agreement to August 2028.
- 4.2 The Management Agreement includes a Liaison Protocol which sets out how CBC and CBH will make decisions and how the Council will monitor performance. This includes a quarterly Principal Liaison meeting to monitor strategic, operational, financial and performance matters, including agreeing annual targets and reviewing progress against these, monitoring progress against the Medium-Term Delivery Plan, and overseeing the direction and implementation of the Asset Management Strategy and the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan. The Liaison Protocol also sets out the informal liaison arrangements between the Chief Executives of CBC and CBH and between the Chief Executive of CBH and "the Council's Representative".
- 4.3 CBC and CBH continue to work together to deliver financial planning, asset management and regulatory changes required following the introduction of the Housing Act the Homeless Reduction Act and the Social Housing White Paper.
- 4.4 Scrutiny Panel did not review CBH performance for 2019/20 last year. However, CBH led on the Housing response to the pandemic and were part of the Council's response to the coronavirus which was scrutinised by the Panel in June 2020.
- 4.5 The delivery of services for 2020/21 continued throughout the pandemic and various lockdowns and as such some areas of performance have been affected by this. However, in 2020/21 despite the pandemic, CBH continued to be a very high performing organisation with, for example, 98% of the rent collected, 100% satisfaction with its antisocial behaviour [ASB] service and 98% satisfaction with its repairs service. The latest Housemark benchmarking report rated CBH as high performing and providing value for money across a wide range of areas including responding to repairs, dealing with voids and lettings, rent arrears and collection, customer services and investing in the local community

5. Strategic Plan References

- 5.1 The Better Colchester Strategic Plan 2020-23 sets out clearly the Council's priorities. The services and projects delivered by CBH contribute directly to the following areas and their goals:

Creating safe, healthy and active communities

- Build on community strengths and assets
- Tackle the causes of inequality and support our most vulnerable people
- Provide opportunities for young people

Delivering homes for people who need them

- Increase the number, quality and types of homes
- Prevent households from experiencing homelessness
- Improve existing Council homes to keep them in good repair and improve energy efficiency

Growing a better economy so everyone benefits

- Enable economic recovery from Covid – 19 ensuring all residents benefit from growth
- Create an environment that attracts inward investment to Colchester and help businesses flourish

6. Consultation

- 6.1 Performance information and monitoring was developed in conjunction with CBH Board Members, Council Officers and the Portfolio Holder for Housing as part of its development subject to scrutiny by tenant and leaseholder representatives.

7. Publicity Considerations

- 7.1 The Medium-Term Delivery Plan performance report for the fourth quarter of 2020-21, which contains all performance information for 2020-21, has been included with this report (see Appendix 2).

8. Standard References

- 8.1 Having considered equality, diversity and human rights; financial, health, well-being and community safety, health and safety and risk management, there are none which are significant to the matters in this report.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Presentation Slides

Appendix 2 – Medium Term Delivery Plan 2018-22 Performance Information 2020/21