

Voluntary Right To Buy Operational Board Meeting

**25 November 2020
3:00pm – 4:00pm
Remote (via Teams)**

Chair: [REDACTED] – MHCLG
Secretariat: [REDACTED] – MHCLG

Attending: [REDACTED] – MHCLG
[REDACTED] – MHCLG
[REDACTED] – Homes England
[REDACTED] – Homes England
[REDACTED] – National Housing Federation
[REDACTED] – National Housing Federation
[REDACTED] – Orbit Group
[REDACTED] – Midland Heart
[REDACTED] – Stonewater
[REDACTED] – Citizen Housing
[REDACTED] – Housing Plus Group
[REDACTED] – Accord Group
[REDACTED] – Wrekin Housing Group

Apologies: [REDACTED] – Bournville Village Trust
[REDACTED] – Longhurst Group
[REDACTED] – Jigsaw Homes
[REDACTED] – Greatwell Homes

Acronyms: MHCLG – Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government
(V)RTB – Voluntary Right to Buy
URN – Unique Reference Number
IMS – Investment Management System
RICS – Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors

Item 1 – Welcome, review and objectives of meeting [REDACTED], MHCLG)

- 1.1 Members present were welcomed and introduced themselves. The minutes from the previous meeting were agreed. The only action from the previous meeting, for MHCLG to circulate details and dates of the publication of sales and replacement data, had not been completed yet as the details had yet to be agreed.

Item 2 – General update on pilot progress ([REDACTED], MHCLG)

- 2.1 This would be the final meeting of the Operational Board and members were thanked for their contributions to the pilot. MHCLG would remain in contact throughout the publication of the evaluation and to track the completion of the outstanding applications where needed.

- 2.2 Sales were continuing steadily, with just over 50 remaining in the system. [REDACTED], Homes England, would cover the progress of sales in more detail later in the meeting. It had been recognised that sales may continue into the next financial year, but this would need to be minimised. Members were thanked for their comments on the draft of the pilot evaluation, which [REDACTED], MHCLG, would cover in a later item.
- 2.3 No further decisions had been made regarding future pilots. No funding for VRTB had been announced for the following year in the spending review but further directions from the Secretary of State were expected at a later date.

Item 3 – IMS data ([REDACTED], Homes England)

- 3.1 The data under this item was accurate as of COP Friday 20th November 2020. There had been 1793 completions under the pilot, across 55 organisations. 56 of these had been portable sales, 2 of which had completed between organisations.
- 3.2 [REDACTED], Homes England, explained the importance of progressing the remaining 55 applications to completion as soon as possible. These had already dropped from 95 since the board last met. The 4 applications that had previously been missing forecast data had all been updated by housing associations. The 7 applications with no RICS applications had reduced to 2. The 36 applications with lapsed forecast completion dates had risen to 38. Members were asked to regularly review and update this information on IMS.
- 3.3 A number of applications were still experiencing delays due to Covid-19, as well as due to the requirements for EWS1 forms, lapsed mortgage offers, furloughed staff and a reduced number of mortgage products offered. Around 60% of the remaining applications were expected to complete by the end of Q3 2020/21, with the rest estimated to complete in Q4.
- 3.4 Members were asked to submit as many completions as possible by COP 22nd December 2020 in order to give colleagues from Homes England time to process these before the IMS was closed over the Christmas period.

Item 4 – Update from housing associations (All)

- 4.1 [REDACTED], WHG, gave no update as all applications had progressed to completion.
- 4.2 [REDACTED], Orbit, thanked Homes England for their support throughout the pilot and noted 1 remaining application which was expected to complete in Q3.
- 4.3 [REDACTED], Midland Heart, noted 1 remaining application which was now progressing thanks to having opened negotiations regarding a developer payment clause.
- 4.4 [REDACTED], Stonewater, noted 1 remaining application which was now progressing as the tenant had returned to work. The lender had requested 3 months of payslips before releasing funds.

- 4.5 [REDACTED], Citizen, noted a number of remaining applications – all of which were portable – but reported that there had been issues in getting EWS1 forms. Most were moving with many completions expected before Christmas.
- 4.6 [REDACTED], Housing Plus, gave no update as all their applications had progressed to completion.
- 4.7 [REDACTED], Accord, noted 1 remaining sale. The tenant had requested an extension following Covid-19 related employment concerns.

Item 5 – DELTA collection update ([REDACTED], MHCLG)

- 5.1 [REDACTED], MHCLG, updated housing associations on the progress of the DELTA collection. This data was currently undergoing quality assurance and was expected to be published within the next few months.
- 5.2 The data would be aggregated for all housing association collectively, providing an overview of the progress of the pilot and one-for-one replacement. It would cover details of homes sold as well as replacement units which had been started on site and future plans.

Item 6 – Evaluation Report ([REDACTED], MHCLG)

- 6.1 [REDACTED], MHCLG, thanked members for their comments on the draft evaluation report, which had been returned to RSM. These had principally focused on one for one replacement and the expected challenges surrounding this aspect of the pilot. The evaluation would be published shortly, but no date had been set yet.
- 6.2 [REDACTED], Citizen, noted that the evaluation did not include an analysis of why so many tenants issued URNs never made a formal application, as these tenants could not be interviewed.
- 6.3 Feedback would be passed along to RSM, along with further comments provided via email, as a priority.

Item 7 – AOB (All)

- 7.1 [REDACTED], MHCLG, thanked all members for their work on the pilot which he noted had been a successful piece of genuine partnership working.