

**Manchester City Council
Report for Resolution**

Report to: Audit Committee – 22 March 2018

Subject: Register of Significant Partnerships - Information Update

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive

Summary

This report contains supplementary information as requested at the previous Audit Committee meeting in relation to the following Partnerships: Manchester Safeguarding Children's Board, Avro and Shout Tenant Management Organisations and Hulme High Street.

Recommendations

Audit Committee is requested to note the supplementary information provided in relation to the Council's Register of Significant Partnerships.

Wards Affected: All

Contact Officers:

Name: Courtney Brightwell
Position: Performance Manager (Place and Core)
Telephone: 0161 234 3770
E-mail: c.brightwell@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Jill Hunt
Position: Performance and Intelligence Officer
Telephone: 0161 234 1854
E-mail: j.hunt@manchester.gov.uk

1. Introduction and Context

- 1.1. This report provides supplementary information for four Partnerships, following requests by Audit Committee at the last meeting.

2. Supplementary information

Manchester Safeguarding Children's Board (entry 17)

- 2.1 In recognition of the progress made in the last 12 months to strengthen and improve the governance arrangements, it was proposed that the 2017 risk rating for the Manchester Safeguarding Children's Board (MSCB) was lowered to "Medium", from "High" in the previous year.
- 2.2 Partnerships on the register are given two separate ratings:
- a partnership governance risk assessment reflecting the level of risk governance arrangements within the partnership pose to the Council in respect of the achievement of its goals, its financial position and reputation
 - and a significance rating reflecting the impact the partnership has on the achievement of the Council's goals, its financial position and reputation.
- 2.3 MSCB was rated as high significance recognising the importance of the role of the board in supporting the Council's objective to safeguard vulnerable children as well as the impact that safeguarding has on the reputation of a local authority. The governance risk assessment was reduced in 2017 from 'High' to 'Medium' in recognition of the significant progress made by the partnership in the delivery of its improvement plan. The improvements in the governance arrangements of the partnership would not impact on the significance score, which will remain high recognising the crucial role safeguarding plays in communities across Manchester.
- 2.4 This progress was recognised at the Audit Committee meeting in June 2017, when a report was presented on behalf of the Independent Chair by the Director of Children's Services. The Committee recognised the good progress that had been made, and welcomed the new links between the Manchester Safeguarding Adults Board and the Manchester Safeguarding Children's Board in that the same person is now Chair of both Boards. The Committee also welcomed the new robust structure that was detailed in the report, and were of the opinion that this would create a more effective structure to deal with issues of concern and prevent as far as possible issues arising in the future.
- 2.5 The key areas of improvement include a refresh of the terms of reference, and the creation of an integrated Business Unit supporting the work of both the MSCB and MSAB Boards and Sub-Groups, facilitated by staff employed by the Council. Slightly earlier than the timeframe above, a new Independent Chair was appointed in July 2016. The membership of the Board is reviewed on an on-going basis to ensure that partners from across the safeguarding community are represented by staff of appropriate seniority. The board meets

bi-monthly and agendas are structured to provide assurance of the multi-agency response to safeguarding and make sure the statutory responsibilities of MSCB are discharged. In relation to conduct and liability, all agencies have their own policies and procedures in place to address matters of concern that the partnership itself does not have policies and procedures in place that are specific to conduct and liability.

- 2.5 All areas of the MSCB Improvement Plan have been achieved, as detailed in the improvement plan appended. The Improvement Board has received bi monthly reports on the work of the MSCB providing additional external scrutiny. The Board is supported by a strong Leadership Group made up of sub group chairs and key partners including the Executive Director of Nursing & Safeguarding, Manchester Health and Care Commissioning, the Director of Children's Services and the Detective Superintendent GMP City of Manchester Division, who are responsible for driving forward board business, having ownership of the business plan, risk register, budget and providing a forum for discussion around how sub groups can work effectively together. The Leadership Group is chaired by the Independent chair and is a forum for challenge; red flags are raised at these in relation to performance and a Challenge and Impact Log is maintained to address issues of concern.
- 2.6 Feeding into the Leadership Group are a number of sub groups serving cross cutting strategic areas such as Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement, Communication and Engagement, Learning and Development, Safeguarding Practice Development and Complex Safeguarding.
- 2.7 The Child Death Overview Panel reports to the Leadership Group and there is a sub group specifically having oversight of the serious case review programme, making sure that legal responsibilities are met and most importantly that multi-agency learning from serious incidents is captured quickly and appropriately so that it can be embedded across the partnership.
- 2.8 The Board manages the delivery of its strategic objectives through a rigorous business planning cycle. The plan was reviewed in March/April 2017 and the views of children and young people were sought into the development of priorities for the coming year through an open survey on the newly refreshed MSCB website as well as through focus groups led by partner organisations. The input gathered was considered by Board and sub group members at a visioning event and a new set of priorities has been agreed and forms the basis of the new business plan and a corresponding new set of risks. These priorities and the business plan actions were discussed with children and young people using strength based conversations at a joint MSCB and MSAB event held in June 2017.
- 2.9 The joint board hosted children and young people's groups (such as young carers, a secondary school group, Manchester Youth Council) and adult service user groups to make sure that the work that both the children and adults safeguarding boards take forward resonates with Manchester's residents and citizens. At the other end of the planning process, partners have been asked for input into the annual report for 2016/17 and they have

populated their section 11 self-assessments (summer 2017) and attended a Peer Review session in September 2017 to review and discuss their responses where action plans were drawn up to drive through improvements. These assessments have provided clear evidence to demonstrate the progress made over the last year.

- 2.10 Manchester's Children's Services were inspected and the subsequent report published in December by Ofsted found services were no longer inadequate. Whilst the board was not specifically re-inspected, there were positive comments made with regard to partnership working finding leadership, governance and management to be good; in which, alongside the Children's Board, Corporate Parenting Panel, and Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, the MSCB play an important role.
- 2.11 Work as per the above will continue in strengthening the partnership and ensuring that the MSCB continues to meet its current statutory obligations.
- 2.12 Following a national review of Safeguarding Children Boards, a new statutory framework will be introduced (date currently unknown, anticipated May 2018), which will set out clear requirements, but give local partners the freedom to decide how they operate to improve outcomes for children. There will be a transition period during which time the current statutory obligations will remain
- 2.13 The MSCB has agreed to carry over the priorities which were set in April 2017 for the financial year 2018/19 and a meeting of the MSCB and MSAB is taking place to review progress and determine future actions to ensure that the progress is made in relation to the priorities of Neglect, Complex Safeguarding, Transitions and Communications and Engagement.

Avro Hollows Tenant Management Organisation (entry 40)

- 2.14 The Avro Hollows TMO was set up in 2008 to manage a relatively small area of housing stock (312 properties) in Newton Heath on behalf of the Council. A risk rating of "Medium" was recorded for 2017, which remains the same as the last two years. Following discussions at the last Audit Committee meeting, Members requested more detailed assurance that robust risk and governance arrangements are in place and under review for each TMO. In light of the Grenfell disaster in June 2017, Members requested further detail about what impact this has had on the TMO governance arrangements.
- 2.15 In terms of improving governance and risk management arrangements, officers from the Council's Strategic Development team hold a regular liaison meeting with the TMO housing managers which also includes walkabouts to check on the arrangements in relation to fire safety, as outlined below. Council Officers are due to meet with the Avro management team imminently, and it is proposed that a formal policy will be put in place whereby the walkabouts will become a mandatory activity to be undertaken on a quarterly basis, and will involve Avro residents as well as the TMO representatives. The findings from the walkabouts will be documented and an action plan created to ensure these are undertaken and reported back to Housing Strategy DMT. This will provide

assurance to the Council that checks are being carried out and follow up work is being given a high priority.

- 2.16 The City Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Board is chaired by the City Treasurer and receives reports on the implications of the Grenfell Tragedy for the HRA. This is supported by various sub groups of Council Officers and officers from the Councils managing agents, Northwards Housing, S4B and Renaissance Miles Platting. This group will work through the range of options and issues raised in December's Executive report and will recommend the best course of action to the Council, taking into account findings of the GM Task Group as outlined below, any early findings of the Grenfell Inquiry, resources and risk.
- 2.17 More widely, Officers from Planning and Building Control, Housing, Education, Facilities Management and Health and Safety meet regularly to ensure that a corporate response to fire safety issues are addressed properly. The Deputy Leader meets the Director of Housing and Residential Growth on a weekly basis and updates are provided at those meetings.
- 2.18 A Greater Manchester Task Group has also been established, with the aim of providing a response in terms of a standard approach to fire safety in high rise buildings agreed with the GMFRS; to develop a clear 'ask' of Government if we believe we can manage any aspect of regulation better at a Combined Authority level and to provide evidence and input into the Grenfell Enquiry. Officers from the City Council attend both the Task Group and the workstream groups.
- 2.19 Northwards have been working with Savills, who work on behalf of Northwards ALMO, to develop a programme of improvement works to the four Avro Hollows blocks which includes the Fire Risk Assessment recommendations, the retrofitting of sprinkler systems and the refurbishment of individual flats to complete the 'other' room (kitchen or bathroom) which was not refurbished in the Decent Homes Programme. It is anticipated that feasibility and surveying works will commence in April 2018, leading to a start on site in late summer 2018 and programmed completion in late summer 2019. Savills have been fully engaged in the development of this programme and are satisfied with the proposed timescales. Steve Kirkham, Northwards Head of Design and Delivery, has arranged a meeting with the Avro Hollows Board on 14th March 2018 to discuss the proposed scheme.
- 2.20 Following the first meeting with the Fire and Rescue Service, recommendations that they made from their initial visit have been carried out. This included door closures to areas where they were not installed already. Caretakers also checked landings for any compartmentation issues with follow up work if needed. There have been three visits from the Fire and Rescue Service in total and no further recommendations for improvement have been made.

- 2.21 Savills have carried out more detailed inspections of the multi storeys and have completed an inspection of all communal areas. Further visits from Savills were carried out to the different types of flats on the estate.
- 2.22 Savills completed the Type 4 Fire Risk Assessment inspections to the four Avro Hollows blocks in December 2017 and have provided Fire Risk Assessments for each individual block together with a collated action plan. Savills found that the blocks are reasonably good from a fire risk assessment perspective but have recommended some repair and improvement, mainly in respect of firestopping and compartmentation. On 23rd February 2018, Savills delivered a presentation to representatives of Northwards, MCC and GMFRS detailing their methodology, process, findings, recommendations and priorities.
- 2.23 In practical terms, several improvements and actions have been implemented at Avro Hollows specifically in light of the Grenfell disaster. Leaflets were distributed to all tenants in the four multi storey blocks immediately after the fire occurred, informing tenants that Avro Hollows carry out weekly fire checks to all blocks and that issues are dealt with as a priority. Avro Hollows also instructed tenants that they were still adhering to a 'stay put' policy. By circulating this message quickly, this reduced the number of enquiries made by tenants who may have been worried about their safety if there was to be a fire. The caretakers also checked every landing and all fire doors the next day to identify any issues.
- 2.24 All obstructions from landings were removed including door mats. Tenants were asked to remove them from landings with an explanation as to why this had to be done. This is now picked up on a daily basis by caretakers who check all landings, smoke alarms and bin chute rooms every morning and last thing at night. Tenants have cooperated fully with this. Any mats identified at front doors are removed immediately.
- 2.25 All bin chute rooms were cleared of combustibles and stored outside in a cage until removed by the Council. Any combustibles left in communal areas are removed immediately. Additionally, bin chute rooms are kept clear following the Grenfell fire.
- 2.26 Several telephone calls were made to the office enquiring whether the blocks were safe. Information has also been provided by way of leaflets informing of the visits from the Fire and Rescue Service and Savills. Fire Safety has also been communicated through Board meetings.
- 2.27 Weekly fire safety checks have been carried out by caretakers for the last two years and are recorded in a fire safety log book. Checks include fire extinguishers, signage, emergency lighting, keeping escape routes free of obstacles and fire doors.
- 2.28 Since Grenfell, caretakers ensure that landings and bin chute rooms are clear. Also the electrical intake rooms are kept clear. Log books are completed and kept in the office. Any issues that are raised through these checks are given a

high priority and dealt with immediately by caretakers where possible to ensure that the work is carried out quickly.

Shout Tenant Management Organisation (entry 41)

- 2.29 Shout TMO manage low rise properties so have no actions to complete in relation to concerns over residential multi storey buildings.
- 2.30 In the Audit Committee meeting reference was made to concerns raised regarding management arrangements within Shout TMO. The Council's Head of Internal Audit and Risk Management is working with staff in the Housing department to investigate these concerns and an update on the outcome of this will be provided separately to the Committee.

Hulme High Street Ltd (entry 46)

- 2.31 At the last meeting of Audit Committee members commented that the partnership should not be assessed as "High" risk given that the nature of the risks in the partnership did not significantly impact the Council's financial position, reputation or the achievement of its objectives.
- 2.32 As described in 2.2 above partnerships are rated both for the level of risk posed by the governance arrangements and the significance the partnership has in terms of its impact on the Council's financial position, reputation or the achievement of its objectives. Hulme High Street was recorded as having a 'High' partnership governance risk assessment and 'medium' significance. Following the comments raised by Committee members it is proposed that the significance rating be changed to 'Low' reflecting the limited impact the quality of the partnership's governance arrangements have on the Council as a whole.
- 2.33 While Hulme High Street Ltd's business dealings have little impact on residents on a day to day basis and pose no risk as regards their safety or well-being, the governance arrangements are considered to be weak.
- 2.34 Muse Developments provide the Company Secretarial function for the Company. Risk factors relate to the knowledge base of the history and purpose of the Partnership dwindling over time, with most officers with understanding of the partnership no longer being current employees. The ongoing use of resource involved in bringing the partnership to a close and the lack of representation on the board over recent years whilst the partnership has been in a hiatus are the main factors that led to a "High" risk assessment relating to the governance arrangements, although it is acknowledged that the impact of the current governance arrangements is limited.
- 2.35 It has now been confirmed that the legal process is shortly to be outsourced; it is recommended that the Partnership remains "High" risk until the process to dissolve the partnership is complete.

3. Next Steps

- 3.1 An update on progress made to strengthen governance arrangements in those partnerships where a “Medium” or “High” Partnership Governance Risk Assessment is recorded will be taken to Audit Committee in July 2018.
- 3.2 All partnerships will undertake reassessment of their governance arrangements in September 2018; this will include new partnerships that have been formed in 2018, including the Housing Investment Fund Phase 2 (Matrix2) which is due to be formed in April/May 2018. Following this, a Register with revised risk ratings will be submitted to Audit Committee in December 2018.