

TENANT SCRUTINY BOARD

WEDNESDAY, 4TH NOVEMBER, 2015

PRESENT: John Gittos in the Chair

Sallie Bannatyne, Olga Gailite, Christine Gregory, Michael Healey, Maddy Hunter, Peter Middleton, Roderic Morgan and Jackie Worthington

29 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no exempt items.

30 Late Items

There were no late items.

31 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

32 Minutes - 7 October 2015

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2015 be approved as a correct record.

33 Chair's Update

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which provided the Chair of Tenant Scrutiny Board with an opportunity to update Board Members on some of the areas of work and activity since the October meeting.

The Board was advised that Housing Leeds had met with Mr Ilee following his request for scrutiny in relation to contractors working in sheltered accommodation. A number of recommendations for changes in practices had resulted from these discussions. The Board was advised that Mr Ilee would be written to by Housing Leeds and that he would be asked if that correspondence could be shared with the Board.

The Board was also advised that Guy Close would no longer be supporting the Board. The Board Members asked that their thanks be sent to Guy for his hard work over the past year.

Finally, Board members were provided with a written update on mobile working.

RESOLVED – That the above update be received.

34 Scrutiny Inquiry - Environment of Estates

The Head of Scrutiny and member Development submitted a report which presented information as part of the Board's inquiry on the Environment of Estates.

The following information was appended to the report:

- Written reports produced by Board Members detailing their findings following recent estate walkabouts.

The following officers were in attendance:

- David Longthorpe – Head of Housing Management
- Judith Wray – Housing Manager
- Lynn Richards – Housing Manager
- Baldev Dass – Housing Manager
- Gloria Thompson – Housing Manager
- Rebecca Smith – Housing Manager
- Akhwan Ali – Housing Manager
- Ann Marie Carney – Housing Manger
- Sam Costigan – Housing Manager
- Peter Wajdner – Team Leader
- Christopher Capitano – Team Leader
- Sharon Guy – Housing Manager (Customer relations, Tenant Scrutiny, Tenant Involvement and Equality)
- Lee Ward – Neighbourhood Services Officer.

By way of introduction, the Chair reminded attending officers the reasons behind the Board's current inquiry and the desired outcomes. The Chair also outlined the draft timetable for completing the review.

An initial general discussion took place, focusing on the following areas:

- The current housing management structure and the role of individual post holders
- The current exercise being undertaken by Housing Leeds to 'harmonise' policy and procedures following the demise of ALMOs
- The acknowledgement that estate walkabouts had not yet been through that harmonisation process, and that this was a project being led by Judith Wray
- The need to include as part of this review of walkabouts a review of paperwork and associated processes, the way in which tenants are involved and how actions identified by walkabouts are progressed
- The need to involve tenants in this review

Following on from this general discussion, the Board discussed in turn the walkabouts undertaken by Board Members. Those who attended the walkabouts provided a verbal report and asked the appropriate housing officer specific questions in relation to that walkabout and estate. A number of common themes emerged from these discussions. Those being:

- The lack of tenant involvement in walkabouts
- The role of local ward members in the walkabouts
- A discussion on the best people to attend walkabouts. There was a general consensus that there would be no added value for a PCSO to attend, but a close relationship with housing officers was required. There was further consensus that whilst desirable, it was unrealistic to have a member of the locality team on the walkabouts due to limited resources. This therefore should be compensated by a close working relationship between the locality team and housing office.
- A general consensus that one of the biggest issues on estates was the management of waste and general issues around litter. A discussion took place on the pros and cons of communal waste areas. A discussion also took place on whether estates needed bespoke waste collection arrangements.
- The management of gardens and the understanding tenants have of their responsibilities under their tenancy agreement.
- Whether the (Middleton) model of tool banks could be rolled out to other areas to encourage good garden maintenance
- How owner occupiers on estates are integrated into the activities and community of estates
- The role of tenants in 'mapping'
- The use of tenant surgeries in some areas and where this model could be rolled out to other estates
- The general need for agencies to manage tenants expectations by being clear as to what services are provided and in what time scales.

Concluding the discussion, the Chair outlined the next steps of the inquiry which would include, in December, a discussion with relevant local ward councillors and in January discussions with tenants.

RESOLVED –

- I. That the officers be thanked for their attendance and hospitality during the estate walkabouts
- II. That further information be received regarding the project to harmonise estate walkabouts
- III. That the next steps in the inquiry be noted.

35 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Wednesday, 2 December 2015 at 1.30pm
(pre-meeting for all Board Members at 1.00pm)

(The meeting concluded at 4.05pm)