

TENANT SCRUTINY BOARD

WEDNESDAY, 13TH DECEMBER, 2017

PRESENT: John Gittos in the Chair

Sallie Bannatyne, Olga Gailite, Michael Healey, Rita Ighade, Roderic Morgan and Jackie Worthington

47 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

None.

48 Late Items

None.

49 Apologies for Absence

Maureen Lillywhite, Peter Middleton, Maddie Hunter.

50 Minutes - 15th November 2017

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2017 be approved as a correct record.

51 Discussion with West Yorkshire Police

The Chair explained the previous strands of this inquiry and who had previously been before the Board. The Chair then asked each invitee to give a brief description of their job roles.

Michelle Pollard, explained she is one of the Police Link Officers working with Anti-Social Behaviour Team. There are in total three such teams who work across Leeds.

Zahid Butt, LeedsWatch Business Manager, explained he ensuring the processes and communications work effectively, and also acting as a liaison with customers, Councillors and the various Council departments, including the Housing Service. His service is responsible for 280 public space CCTV cameras and carry out a security service across Council assets. ZB also produces all performance information for the service.

Bryan Wagner-Adair explained that he works in the Housing Options service, and deals with of issues around homelessness and within his team is Mediation Services. He also looks into reviews of decisions made by Housing teams.

The Chair opened by asking MP do you find that the Leeds Anti-Social Behaviour Team (LASBT) are dealing with issues which may be criminal in nature, and by definition should be referred to the Police? MP replied that this was something which wasn't occurring. MP did explain that a criminal and civil case can run parallel at the same time though.

The Chair asked about Domestic Violence and the number of cases. BWA explained there is a daily safeguarding meeting which looks at all cases which have occurred in the previous day and a list of actions are agreed which are dealt with quickly. The Chair asked how many cases are heard a day, BWA explained for the previous day for example there were 27, but usually there are between 12 and 24.

A question was asked if domestic violence occurs in certain areas but BWA explained there is no discernible difference between areas. MH asked if and when people are warned for domestic violence if this causes further problems. BWA explained Housing Leeds would not do cautions as this would be a police matter but Housing Leeds would provide security measures such as alarms and locks for the victim's property so they feel safer.

The Chair asked about domestic violence cases where there are children living with the victim and BWA explained that whilst Housing Leeds don't hold a list, there is a process where specialised officers can work with them and special interventions can take place. The Chair asked are Housing Leeds rehousing perpetrators of domestic violence near their victims. BWA explained that whilst the Council would do checks to ensure this doesn't happen, the Council cannot stop the perpetrators moving into a private rented property near their victim. The Chair in closing asked if domestic violence can be reported anonymously, and it was explained not to Housing Leeds but they can report anonymously to the Police.

52 Manager Discussion

The Chair asked if all CCTV cameras in multi storey blocks are working and linked up? ZB explained this is mixed picture across the City, some are working and fully integrated with LeedsWatch whereas others are working but are not linked up, a number of these being in the former East ALMO area of Leeds. However for the cameras which are not linked up ZB explained that we are looking to resolve this through a technical solution so that they can be linked up to LeedsWatch. There is also a piece of work to upgrade to 19 blocks in a similar fashion to what has been installed in the Clyde and Wortley blocks. It is hoped to complete this linking of cameras to LeedsWatch over the next 2 years.

A question was asked about cameras in multi storey blocks which can be seen by some tenants currently and if this will be the same in future. ZB noted that camera footage would not be viewable by residents but other agencies can when they request it, such as solicitors and insurance agents and a charge is made for this. Footage is kept for 31 days unless required to be kept, for example a court case. A Board Member asked if all the cameras are

being watched all of the time? It was explained not quite, but pointed out that they are all tested at the start of a shift to ensure they are working, and then the operator would look at the cameras which are most likely to be busy or where there has been intelligence given from the Police for example. LeedsWatch are also able to listen into Police radio airways and can send footage to the Police Control Room when requested by them. The Police Liaison Officer who works with LeedsWatch help facilitate requests from the Police for CCTV footage the Council holds.

SB asked who makes the decision as to the number of cameras installed. ZB explained this is done with the Capital Programme Team and Housing Leeds but ultimately the decision is with Housing Leeds, not LeedsWatch. The Chair asked why the Police have cameras in some places and the Council in the same places. ZB explained this is a historical issue, and would not happen now as there is better communication between the Council and the Police to prevent this. ZB explained a project is underway to identify these in order that they can be linked up and talk to each other which would help save money. ZB noted that whilst some Police cameras the Council are aware of due to local intelligence, there are some Police cameras, especially those being used for operations which the Council are unaware of. The Chair asked that there might be duplication because of this, but ZB noted the Council share where they are siting cameras which can help the Police better place camera sites.

53 Mediation Discussion

The Chair asked about mediation. BWA explained this has been carried out within Housing Leeds since January. Mediation is very effective providing both parties engage, with a 96% success rate, however this must be held in context that 2/3rds of cases refuse to engage in mediation. The Chair asked if certain age groups have better success with mediation than others? BWA noted those in their 20s and over 50s don't seem to engage. BWA explained that mediation does not seek to arbitrate on cases and who is right or wrong. The mediation workload comes 2/3 from LASBT and 1/3 Housing Officers. BWA noted mediation is not considered where the case has criminality.

BWA explained often a mediation case will be about gardens but often it is something more underlying which is discovered through the process. Mediation ends with a formal written agreement. The Chair in what venue does mediation occur? BWA explained normally this is at Council offices but arrangements can be made for alternative venues if appropriate, but if there is no good reason and parties to mediation don't want to come into the central Leeds office then it can be a sign that mediation will not work. A question was asked if mediation is only for Council tenants and what happens if the dispute is between a Council tenant and a private tenant. BWA explained they would still take this on.

The Chair asked if mediation is ever carried out for noise cases given this makes up 50% of cases? BWA explained yes but as explained previously, often there are a number of issues which come out during mediation so it is not solely about noise. The Chair asked if more mediation would help prevent

ASB in future? BWA explained this is difficult to say, it wouldn't prevent things like hate crime because this is above the threshold for mediation.

A question following on from this was asked about hate crime and if this had increased since the referendum to leave the European Union. MP explained that there has been some increase since the vote took place, and it was explained that often people do not know how to report this to authorities.

The Chair asked about begging and how it is dealt with and what advice you give people when coming into contact with beggars. MP gave an example of a case she was involved with of an incident of begging in St James Hospital car park, which given its location could be very distressing. The Chair asked how this was dealt with. MP explained the hospital has its own PCSO, who initially tried to dissuade people from giving money. However, given there were so many calls about this begging and its aggressive nature, the Police gathered statements from victims and the Council applied for an injunction.

In closing the discussion the Chair asked how, if they could change something to help them their job better.

BWA explained that more work on tenants who are signing up for a property to be 'tenancy ready' could help prevent problems in the future.

ZB noted that costs for fibre connections for CCTV cameras is expensive and work to help reduce this would realise savings. This could be done by utilising MSFs and radio frequencies from tower blocks instead of fibre.

54 Election Process for Vice Chair

The Scrutiny Officer explained that as per previous meetings, members had been requested to express an interest if they wished to apply for the Vice Chair role. One expression of interest had been received and the Board were asked to carry out a vote.

RESOLVED – The Board voted unanimously to elect Sallie Bannatyne to the role of Vice Chair.

55 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Wednesday 17th January 2018 at 1:15pm
(Pre meeting for all Board members at 1:00pm)

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 2:50 PM