

TENANT SCRUTINY BOARD

WEDNESDAY, 1ST JULY, 2015

PRESENT: John Gittos in the Chair

Sallie Bannatyne, Jim Fergusson, Olga Gailite, Christine Gregory, Michael Healey, Maddy Hunter, Roderic Morgan, Andy Williams and Jackie Worthington

1 Election of Chair

RESOLVED – That John Gittos be appointed Chair of Tenant Scrutiny Board for the 2015/16 municipal year.

2 Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed all in attendance to the first meeting of the 2015/16 municipal year, particularly newly appointed Board Members, Sallie Bannatyne, Olga Gailite, Christine Gregory and Andy Williams.

The Board discussed the possible introduction of a standing item on future agendas entitled 'Chair's update'. The purpose of this item was to keep the Board up to date about key activities that had taken place since the last meeting and which didn't feature elsewhere on the agenda.

The Board also briefly discussed the possibility of scheduling a pre meeting for all future Board meetings to commence 30 minutes prior to the main meeting.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That a standing item entitled 'Chair's update' be introduced as a standing item on all future agendas.
- (b) That a pre meeting be scheduled for all future Board meetings to commence 30 minutes prior to the main meeting.

3 Late items

There were no late items.

4 Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was submitted by Peter Middleton.

The Board was informed that Barry Stanley had resigned as a Member of Tenant Scrutiny Board. The Board asked to place on record its thanks to Barry for his hard work, support and positive contribution to the work of tenant scrutiny.

5 Minutes - 18 February and 19 March 2015

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meetings held on 18 February and 19 March 2015 be approved as a correct record.

6 Matters arising from the minutes

The Board was advised that Councillor Peter Gruen was no longer the Executive Member responsible for housing. This was now the responsibility of Councillor Debra Coupar, Executive Member (Communities). It was suggested that Councillor Debra Coupar be invited to attend a future Board meeting to discuss the work of tenant scrutiny.

It was also suggested that Councillor John Procter, Chair of Scrutiny Board (Environment and Housing), be invited to attend a future Board meeting.

RESOLVED – That Councillor Debra Coupar, Executive Member (Communities) and Councillor John Procter, Chair of Scrutiny Board (Environment and Housing) be invited to attend a future Board meeting to discuss the work of tenant scrutiny.

7 Terms of Reference and Procedure Rules

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which presented the terms of reference and procedure rules for Tenant Scrutiny Board.

RESOLVED – That the terms of reference and procedure rules for Tenant Scrutiny Board, be noted.

8 Tenant Scrutiny Board recommendations - Review of Annual Tenancy Visits

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which provided an update regarding the Board's inquiry into Annual Tenancy Visits (ATVs).

Appended to the report was a copy of the report to Housing Advisory Board on recent changes made to ATV policy and procedure following the Board's inquiry.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Liz Cook, Chief Officer (Housing Management)
- Sharon Guy, Housing Manager (Customer Relations, Tenant Scrutiny, Tenant Involvement & Equality).

The Board was thanked for undertaking the inquiry, particularly its positive contribution to service improvement and delivering better outcomes for tenants. Board Members were advised that 8 out of the 10 recommendations had been agreed with the department and would be implemented. It was advised that progress made against the recommendations would be tracked by the Board.

The key areas of discussion were:

- Greater emphasis on tenant satisfaction – a training programme had been developed focussed on the purpose and benefits of the AHV.
- The role of Sheltered Support officers.
- An update on the mobile working pilot. It was suggested that a detailed update be provided to a future meeting.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the Board notes the response from Housing Leeds to the recommendations made by the Tenant Scrutiny Board following its inquiry into ATVs
- (b) That the Board receives a detailed update on the mobile working pilot.

(Maddy Hunter joined the meeting at 1.50pm during the consideration of this item.)

9 Work Programme - Discussion with Chief Officer (Housing Management)

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which introduced, Liz Cook, Chief Officer (Housing Management) to share her views on potential areas of work for Tenant Scrutiny Board for the 2015/16 municipal year.

The following information was appended to the report:

- Performance information (May 2015/16)
- STAR Survey 2014/15 – Headline Findings.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Liz Cook, Chief Officer (Housing Management)
- Sharon Guy, Housing Manager (Customer Relations, Tenant Scrutiny, Tenant Involvement & Equality)
- Frank Perrins, Research and Satisfaction and Business Partner.

Liz Cook, Chief Officer (Housing Management), identified the following key areas as potential areas for scrutiny:

- Development of an environmental standard and the quality of housing estates and reviewing whether schemes had been effectively delivered.

- Rent collection – potential further changes to the welfare programme including universal credit and the impact on council rent collection target (98%).
- Support measures in place for tenants in response to universal credit, under occupancy charge, removal of housing benefit for under 25 year olds and reduction in benefit cap.
- Prevention of homelessness.
- Empty homes and voids – it was noted that some work had already been undertaken by the former Scrutiny Board (Housing and Regeneration) regarding development of a community lettings policy.
- Housing repairs, particularly in terms of getting repairs right first time, reducing costs and improving tenant experience.
- Delivery of capital programme.

The following projects were also highlighted:

- Review of high rise properties, particularly, different management arrangements required for different blocs.
- Review of sheltered housing and greater consistency of approach needed across the city.

Board Members were invited to share their ideas on potential areas for scrutiny as follows:

- The impact of Housing Leeds restructure on tenant satisfaction, especially in terms of tenants not knowing who to contact.
- Review of contact centre arrangements.
- Prevention of homelessness.
- High rise properties, including whether they were safe for young children and improvements to communal areas.
- Cross tenure adaptations.
- Community lettings.
- The impact of changes to the welfare programme and associated support measures.

RESOLVED – That the above issues form the basis of a discussion around the Board's work programme.

10 Dates of Future Meetings

It was suggested that an informal meeting be arranged to take place in August 2015 to consider the Board's work schedule for 2015/16.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That an informal meeting be arranged to take place in August 2015 to consider the Board's work schedule for 2015/16.
- (b) That the Board notes the following meeting dates for the 2015/16 municipal year:

- Wednesday, 2 September 2015
- Wednesday, 7 October 2015
- Wednesday, 4 November 2015
- Wednesday, 2 December 2015
- Wednesday, 6 January 2016
- Wednesday, 3 February 2016
- Wednesday, 2 March 2016
- Wednesday, 6 April 2016

(All meetings to take place at Leeds Civic Hall at 1.30pm)

(The meeting concluded at 3.05pm)