

## TENANT SCRUTINY BOARD

WEDNESDAY, 3RD AUGUST, 2016

**PRESENT:** John Gittos in the Chair

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

### **19 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public**

No items.

### **20 Late Items**

There were no late items.

### **21 Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absences.

### **22 Minutes - 29th June 2016**

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2016 be approved as a correct record.

### **23 Chair's Update**

The Chair has held two meetings with Sharon Guy to plan today's meeting and the associated agenda.

The Chair explained he had attended Environment and Housing Scrutiny Board on 7<sup>th</sup> July and advised there was a report submitted about tackling domestic violence. Details of progress made was given in relation to implementing the recommendations arising from the Scrutiny inquiry as well as an update of the work taken forward as part of the Domestic Violence Breakthrough Project.

A report from Safer Leeds was also presented, the key areas of discussion were; there had not been a significant increase in reporting of hate crime across the city since Brexit, although careful monitoring was still required. Concern was also raised about gaps in recruitment of PCSOs, particularly in terms of deployment of resources across Ward. Members were advised there were currently between 32-38 PCSO vacancies.

The Board received a report on performance which the Chair explained was similar to that they received at their June meeting. Of relevance to Tenant

Scrutiny was an update on changes to the in-house repairs service to resolve issues, which included revised reporting mechanisms, development of new performance indicators and a more robust service improvement plan.

The Chair also advised Board Members the report on Environment of Estates will be presented to Environment and Housing Scrutiny Board on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2016. Further to that report, the Chair advised the Board would undertake a further two estate walkabouts, to monitor progress on recommendations made.

#### **24 Response to Estate Inquiry from member of the public**

The Chair directed Board members to the response letter within the pack. The Chair noted that by coincidence he had met the individual at another meeting, and briefly discussed with him details of the response.

**RESOLVED:** The inquiry from the member of the public is recorded as resolved.

#### **25 Lettings Review Draft Consultation Report**

The Chair stressed this piece of work takes the form of a report for consideration rather than a full inquiry with recommendations. The Chair asked members to consider the draft feedback in the report pack and offer comments about this.

The following points were noted by the Board to include within the draft report:-

- Recognise the need for tenancy visits prior to letting.
- Allocating properties to people with a local connection.
- Lettings Policy to tenants over 40 years ago. Board members raised a potential issue with equality.
- New builds – the Board gave a view that tenants leaving designated clearance sites, should be given the opportunity to return if they wish to and they are suitable property types.

Concerns were raised about applicants seeking rehousing where there had been previous issues with anti-social behaviour. It was explained there is provision within the Council's Allocation Policy to assess eligibility from applicants based on past tenant history, including anti-social behaviour.

**RESOLVED** The Chair requested the draft report is brought back to the September 27<sup>th</sup> meeting with relevant amendments for sign off. The Chair reminded the Board that it would also need to consider the impact of the Housing and Planning Act.

#### **26 Future Work Programme**

The Chair introduced this item by noting the key objective of the Board is to consider value for money. The Chair noted he had not received any alternative work suggestions from members and so the following would be discussed which were identified by the Director of Environment and Housing.

- Adaptations
- East Leeds repairs
- Lettings and Voids (particular emphasis on the Lettings Standards)

It was noted of the three, the one which would have the most impact on finances would be the repair service in East Leeds. The Chair noted this area was one which was under performing. The Chair explained the Board would need to consider why performance is better in other areas of Leeds which are served by an external contractor.

The Chair noted that adaptations have a £3.5 million budget. Major adaptation jobs are not performing as well as minor adaptations. It has since been identified that the Housing Officer has discretion on smaller jobs to raise orders without going through the whole adaptation referral process. Members discussed an issue around adaptations being removed instead of rehousing someone in the property who would require them. It was noted whilst this may happen that it was likely to be exceptional circumstances.

Lettings and Voids were also discussed by the Board. The Chair noted that the key issues was about the Lettable Standard. The Director of Environment of Housing indicated he would welcome a tenants' perspective.

It was suggested by the Chair that the Board could do this as a mini review, to consider if properties are meeting this standard before being let. Ideally this could be a small working group of some members of the Board.

Following discussion, the Chair undertook a vote on the suggestions put forward for consideration. It was resolved that the next inquiry would be the repair service in east Leeds. With a smaller inquiry going on at the same time on Lettings and Voids.

**RESOLVED** – Members voted unanimously 9-0 to agree the main inquiry would be on repair service in east Leeds. The Chair abstained from the vote.

**RESOLVED** – Members voted unanimously 9-0 to undertake a smaller inquiry on Lettable Standard. The Chair abstained from the vote.

The Lettable Standard inquiry would be led by Christine Gregory with Peter Middleton, Jackie Worthington and Maddie Hunter taking part in this work.

**RESOLVED** – The Chair would work with Officers to draw up Terms of Reference for the next inquiry, which will then be presented to the Board at the next meeting.

## **27 Annual Report, Promotional Video of Tenant Scrutiny Board**

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting  
to be held on Wednesday, 31st August, 2016

Lee Ward, Scrutiny Officer presented a report asking Board members their views on taking part in a promotional video for the Housing Leeds Annual Report. It was explained there has not been a final decision on doing this promotional video but wanted views on whether it was something the Board would be interested in and if so what they might like to discuss.

**RESOLVED** – The Board agreed to this idea but would like a photo taken of all members in the meeting and then a discussion with one or two Board members.

## **28 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> August 2016 at 1:30pm (pre meeting for all Board Members at 1:00pm)