

TENANT SCRUTINY BOARD

WEDNESDAY, 28TH SEPTEMBER, 2016

PRESENT: Christine Gregory in the Chair

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

9 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

No items.

10 Late Items

There were no late items.

11 Apologies for Absence

Received from John Gittos.

12 Minutes - 31st August 2016

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 31st August 2016 be approved as a correct record.

13 Chair's Update

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

The Chair discussed the recent walkabout at John O'Gaunts which was done as part of the follow up to the previous inquiry.

The Chair noted that there is a sub-group of the board which will be holding their first meeting Friday 30th September at Navigation House to look at the Lettings Standard. They will be speaking with the Voids Manager and then have further meetings as part of the inquiry.

The Chair noted to the Board that Peter Marrington had now retired from the Council and offered their best wishes for the future to him.

14 Scrutiny Inquiry - East Leeds Repairs

The Chair introduced this item and guest speaker, Simon Jarman who was in attendance for this item.

Simon gave an update on his responsibilities in relation to responsive repairs for East at Leeds Building Services (LBS). Simon deals with day to day repairs, performance, site visits, and complaints. He is currently working on the performance of LBS and recently instigated special measures to look at the current performance which have now been put in place.

Simon spoke about the recent presentation to staff on the findings and provided a copy to the group.

Simon talked about the importance of tenants coming first. He spoke about the problems with the Orchard Direct Works system. only 30 out of 80 working on PDAS and current work is taken from timesheets. Recording systems are also a problem. Simon also explained there are failures around inputting data onto the system.

Questions raised by the group:

Q Will the new system (Total Repairs) link to the Contact Centre, or will it be a separate system.

A The Contact Centre use Orchard and once the order has been raised on Orchard it will be compatible and the order will appear on the Total Repair system. Working with Kirklees currently to iron out any problems they are currently facing. Contact Centre will be able to look at a glance on the new system where the job is currently at. Simon offered an invite to the group to view Total Repairs to see how it works.

Q TSB have heard from Simon and Tony about the problems with the IT system. Is this masking a real problem with the staff?

A There may be some issues with staff, bricklayers, supervisors need to do paperwork. We would like the supervisors to be out on site with them. We are aware of operatives who start late, leave early. We are working towards tackling this in one-2-ones. We have a lot of hardworking staff but like any other organisation some staff ...

Q TSB have heard stories about operatives being out and the supervisors not supervising.

A We have a full team of technical officers based at Navigation House who merge between the organisations, some staff have dual roles. There have been discussions about a split so that supervisors can be out on the estates with the operatives. There are shared frustrations about the processes and we are in talks to find a solution.

Budget allocation for the three areas South, East, West. Are they the same for each area? If not why is there a difference?

There is still a bit of a divide, due to the former ALMOs. We are trying to bridge the differences as East were in house and South and West staff worked with contractors. There are three areas, South and West work with the Mears contract. There are better working patterns having staff under one roof.

Can you give us the background as to why East Leeds repairs was done in house and not contracted out?

Simon unable to answer. Don't know the exact reason why. At the time the ALMOs were formed, the internal service provider wasn't big enough to deal with the whole city. We are now a bigger organisation which can manage the capacity and now want to keep the service under one roof.

How many employees dealing with repairs in East Leeds are employed directly by Leeds City Council?

We have 350 members of staff, both office based and operatives. The majority of the staff are operatives and we are looking to recruit. Every year we take on 18 apprentices. The apprenticeship is a 14 month scheme where participants do 2 days a week at college and 3 days training on site. It gives them a taster of the whole service, they leave with a recognised qualification and every year we take on 5 for full time apprenticeships. Looking to increase the opportunities for apprentices, up to 36 and take 10 for full time apprenticeship. The course is a modular course, giving a taster for each trade. We then recruit to the trades we are short of. We are an ever growing organisation which we hope will enable us to take over some of the works currently done by outside contractors.

Are any of the repair services contracted out in East Leeds and what are they?

Where we can we do in-house. Responsive is subcontracted out, because we don't have the resources to do the works. All our contractors go through the procurement exercise; they are quality checked and pricing taken into consideration. We always go for the best. We have recently introduced the sign with pride cards (a card that operatives sign at the end of their job which promotes them taking a pride in the work they've done). We are rolling out the same process to our sub-contractors.

Given East Leeds has a big number of High rise does that make dealing with repairs more complex compared to the other areas?

Yes, particular blocks such as Burmantofts in the winter time; we have lots of repairs due to mould. Fire damage within flats is a problem. A quarter to a third of our emergencies could be for high rise. Our operatives become more expert in their trade, when it comes to leaks, always a learning process and repairs within the high rise helps us to develop our knowledge and customer service skills to their best. We have a robust procedure in place working with local housing offices for access. Leaks are not left overnight; we manage the out of hours team so are able to ensure a team is sent out to the repair asap.

When a tenant in East Leeds reports a repair via the contact centre does the system treat it in the same way as it would were the tenant in West or South Leeds?

Yes it should be. Some problems may occur because Mears and LBS have different ordering codes, which we are trying to change. Every job has a SOR code attached to it; at LBS we don't have a specific code.

Simon explained the differences and confirmed that is something which is being looked at.

Would you say that you expect the same standards from East Leeds repairs that you do from those you give contracts to eg Mears?

Yes, the procedures we have to work to are shared with Mears and they should provide the same service. Regardless of where you live, you should be getting the same standard. We cannot vouch for it, but it is our priority to raise repairs to a high standard. The whole repairs process should be the same. People think because it's Leeds City Council that we don't have high expectations, but we do.

Which is the higher percentage, poor workmanship or repair not done at all? (Do you receive many/more complaints re-repairs either those that are undertaken but are of poor standard or that the repair has not been dealt with in a timely manner?)

The repair not done at all, where possible we will always try to ring the person to say we can't attend but we still have problems with 'no access'. We always investigate each complaint which comes in. Total Repair (new system) with GPS will prove we've been to the property, it can also take a photograph of the door so Housing Office staff can see we have proof we attended. One issue is access to multi storey flats as operatives do not have a master key.

How are complaints logged and who deals with them, (I would presume that the South and West complaints are dealt with by the contracting company) for East Leeds?

Yes, we have our own complaints team who deal with this. We also benchmark with our contractors. We look at Mears key performance but the onus is on customer satisfaction regardless of what Mears or anyone else is doing.

Q Do you get a lot of instances where incorrect information is given to you, does it happen a lot?

On a regular basis. Turnover of staff at the Contact Centre means we have to make sure a robust training process is in place. People ring up and they are not sure about the repair, we develop with the contact centre to make sure there is enough information on the system but maybe 10% of orders are raised wrong. Training is in place and we always refer back to the order raiser. It's never going to be a quick win, but we do have processes in place to resolve the situation

Q In East Leeds do they have fire safety checks?

Yes, the team based at Navigation do regular checks. Fire Safety review for the high rise, they'll do a check, this happens in all areas.

Q It appears that there needs to be more training for staff.

A There are over 350 staff who can raise a repair, concerns are that staff only get 5 minutes training and a login without having an in depth training session. We are looking at limiting the number who can raise repairs. We

could take it out of the office, setting up a team who would do this correctly. Problems with orders being raised incorrectly can raise tenants expectations; we are working hard to try and stop the problems at the start and are looking into a phone line for staff to call for help with raising orders.

Q Looking at the graph figures have come down, 58 complaints what percentage would that be?

A Between 4,000 and 5,000 repairs are done in a week. The complaints make up a very small percentage, over 90% go smoothly. We have a team who telephone customers to do ad-hoc repair surveys about the service they received. We get information from people, who wouldn't normally complain, but we also get compliments, we publicise them, name the operative and thank them for a job well done, it acts as a great motivation for staff.

Q Do you give a specific time for repairs?

We can only give an am or pm. We take into account when tenants say they are not in and try to adhere to the notes. Operatives will ring ahead to stop some of the no accesses.

Q Do you provide an out of hours repairs service?

A Occasionally, given the circumstances we can arrange an alternative at the managers discretion. We do have operatives working 24-7 so we can be flexible.

The Chair thanked Simon for his attendance today.

Simon extended an invite to attend any other meetings TSB require and he is organising a demonstration of the new Total Repairs system with members of TSB.

RESOLVED: Sharon Guy to arrange dates for this demonstration.

15 Work Programme 2016/17

The Chair asked the group to look at the Work Programme for 2016/17 and suggested that because Simon had offered for members to visit Leeds Building Service, the programme can be looked at then. Because there are two visits coming up, it was suggested that TSB members names were chosen randomly to attend the visits.

RESOLVED Sharon to find dates for visits, names will then be chosen randomly in October to decide.

RESOLVED The draft work programme was agreed.

16 Sharing of Board Member Contact Details

The Chair explained that details would be shared between the board members, including telephone numbers and email numbers if appropriate. This will not be shared with anyone else.

RESOLVED That Board members details would be shared with the exception of JW who agreed that only her email would be shared, not her mobile number.

17 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Wednesday 26th October 2016 at 1:30pm (pre meeting for all Board Members at 1:00pm)