

HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD

TUESDAY, 2ND MAY, 2017

PRESENT: Councillor D Coupar in the Chair

Councillors B Anderson, J Bentley,
A Gabriel, S Hamilton and K Ritchie

67 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations.

68 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were made on behalf of Councillor A Gabriel.

69 Minutes - 28 February 2017

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 28 February 2017 be confirmed as a correct record.

70 Matters arising from the minutes

The Chair reported that Tracey McGarry had finished as runner up as Tenant of the Year in the Northern TPAS awards. Tracey was congratulated by the Board and received a round of applause.

71 STAR Survey - Headline Findings and Next Steps

The reports of the Chief Officer, Housing Management provided the Board with the following:

Headline Findings

A summary of responses to the survey and comparisons to a similar survey conducted in 2014.

Next Steps

An update on actions taken by Housing Leeds following the STAR Survey and in particular the following:

- The development of a STAR Action Plan, outlining how Housing Leeds intends to deliver service improvements in order to improve customer satisfaction.
- How Housing Leeds will monitor the delivery of service improvements through the STAR Action Plan.
- Plans to undertake ongoing surveys which will evidence whether service improvements are having the desired impact on customer satisfaction.
- Wider tenant engagement activity planned to increase communication opportunities with all tenants through increased digital engagement.

Frank Perrins, Research and Satisfaction Manager, gave the Board a presentation on the finding of the Star Survey. Mains issues highlighted included the following:

- Methodology – the same approach was used as with the previous survey taking a random representative sample from tenants across the city.
- Overall satisfaction remained constant however there was a noted drop within the east of the city.
- Most influential factors on satisfaction levels included the provision of effective services; being treated fairly; repairs and maintenance; overall quality of the home.
- Breakdown of data via demographic groups. Satisfaction levels were lower with younger tenants.
- Tenants priorities.
- Satisfaction levels in relation to repairs.
- Information relating to neighbourhoods where tenants had highlighted causes for concern.
- Rent and financial information.

In response to Members comments the following was discussed:

- Comparisons with other local authorities and housing associations – this has proved difficult in the past as other authorities had done things differently and it was not possible to compare on a like for like basis. It was hoped in future that comparisons could be drawn with other similar sized councils.
- Higher satisfaction levels from BITMO tenants – it was reported that higher satisfaction rates from younger tenants supported overall levels for BITMO tenants. Reference was made to tenant led services which had led to increased satisfaction particularly in relation to repairs and local access to services.
- Robustness of the survey samples – the samples were stratified before being sent out to take account of areas sent to, tenant ages and property types. Although this did not necessarily mean that the surveys returned would be entirely representative; the returns were weighted to take account of that.

- There was a continued approach to measure where successful improvements had been made following feedback on previous surveys.
- Concern that younger tenants were more likely to give online responses and that this could give an impression of reduced satisfaction.
- The possibility of only surveying those who had responded before to measure improvement.
- The use of other data sets to link in with responses from the survey – this had identified issues which would be followed up via the action plan.
- The survey was confidential and information could be used for other services where it would be beneficial.
- Home visits – there was some dissatisfaction expressed that home visits could be found intrusive and as to why they were necessary on an annual basis. It was reported that home visits could include an element of enforcement which would influence satisfaction levels. It was suggested that home visits could be structured differently for different tenants.

Mandy Sawyer, Head of Neighbourhood Services, updated the Board on the next steps following the survey and the development of the action plan. Issues highlighted included the following:

- Priorities to respond to feedback had been included in the draft action plan. These would also be considered at the next VITAL meeting.
- How the survey can help shape and inform the tenant engagement framework for staff, tenants and other partners and how to streamline communication methods.
- The Customer Care Training pilot which would be rolled out in 2017/18.
- How to improve the landlord reputation – the need to highlight positive outcomes and work of the service; refresher training on dealing with complaints and how complaints were responded to.
- Anti-social behaviour and noise nuisance – more detailed analysis was being carried out and there had been a review of procedures following tenant feedback.
- Estate environment – issues that could be tackled through the support of Housing Advisory Panels and use of Community Payback.
- Dissatisfaction with the moving home process – waiting times; perception of fairness; needs for adapted homes.
- Repairs and maintenance – how to improve order raising procedures and review call handling in relation to repairs.
- Quality of home – there had been increased satisfaction with heating and ventilation. There was a need to look at other data in order to identify other issues that could be addressed.
- Satisfaction of younger tenants – more analysis was needed to look at how this could be improved.
- Implementation of new IT system which would include a customer access portal.

- Monitoring of the action plan – this was a live document which would evolve and would be reported back to the Board and VITAL.
- The next Star Survey would be carried out in autumn 2018.

In response to Members comments and questions, the following was discussed:

- Works to address problems with car parking and litter, rubbish and dog fouling - car parking was being considered under the asset management strategy and provision was being looked at; there was also an issue due to increased car ownership. With regard to issues relating to issue and dog fouling there was discussion with Environmental Action Teams as to where resources needed to be targeted. It was suggested that further detail on these issues included in the action plan.
- The use of GIS along with other data sets to identify hotspots in relation to environmental issues.
- The possibility of including learning from complaints to Ward Members as these were usually a result because systems/processes had failed elsewhere.
- Sharing information with the Leeds Anti-Social Behaviour Team and West Yorkshire Police.
- Importance of capturing satisfaction of tenants living in particular property types. High rise flats face particular issues and it would be useful to identify the issues separately. Suggested that analysis of high rise be added to the action plan.
- Concern that there was a higher level of repairs for new tenancies and whether repairs could be carried out before tenancies commenced. This was partly due to the need to turn around void properties more quickly.
- Analysis of results against other data sets, e.g. health, fuel poverty, to identify links.
- Need to use the outcomes to inform conversations with tenants to better understand the issues.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the reports, presentation and discussion be noted.
- (2) That a further update be brought to the Board in autumn 2017.

72 Closing Remarks

The Chair announced that this would be the last Board meeting for Ted Wilson. On behalf of the Board she thanked Ted for his contribution to the Board and for all his work across other housing boards and panels in Leeds.

73 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Tuesday, 20 June 2017 at 5.00 p.m.