

Housing Advisory Panels (HAPs)

2014-2015 Annual Report by the Cross City Chairs Group

May 2015



I am incredibly proud of the work that has been carried out by the Housing Advisory Panels over the past year.

Together, we have

- *Increased panel membership.*
- *Supported hundreds of local projects and we have.*
- *Created some sound working practices to make sure all tenants across the city, whether wanting to join a panel, or looking for funding, are treated the same.*

In particular, with the support of the Cross City Chairs and Vice Chairs, we have been able to create a very positive 'can-do - will do', working culture and I believe the work and the efforts we contribute are becoming more well received and much better known throughout the city by Housing Leeds tenants.

In the year ahead we will build on these solid foundations and we will continue to play a major role in not just investing in local projects but also in helping the Housing Service review and design better services to tenants.

I would like to thank all Panel members, local Councillors and Housing Leeds staff for the help in making HAPs such an enjoyable and productive part of tenant involvement in Leeds, and I look forward to seeing and hearing about more local success stories in the future.



Ted Wilson

Chair of the Cross City Chairs Group

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1. Background

- 1.1. Housing Advisory Panel (HAP) Chairs have asked Housing Leeds to write this report to allow them to share their work and achievements to date with tenants and leaseholders of Leeds City Council, Leeds City Council officers (including the Housing Advisory Board), Ward Members and any other interested audience. This report shows the combined work of the 11 HAPs across the city since their creation in October 2013, and is in addition to the local annual reports produced by each panel in April 2015.
- 1.2. HAPs are tenant led groups set up to review the delivery of local housing services and monitor local housing performance. Each HAP also has a budget, allowing them to fund projects that benefit tenants and help tackle local and city-wide priorities.
- 1.3. Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the local HAPs regularly meet at their 'Cross City Chairs Group' (or CCCG) to help develop how HAPs work, guide the creation of policy and share ideas and case studies of projects that have worked well that could also work in other parts of the city. The Chair and Vice-Chair of this group are members of the Housing Advisory Board, and it's in this way that issues from the local panels can be highlighted into the main governing body of Housing Leeds.

2. Consistent ways of working

- 2.1. Throughout the last year, a priority of the HAPs and the Cross City Chairs Group (CCCG) has been to develop consistent ways of working so that tenants wishing to become panel members, or applicants seeking funding, have the same experience. The panels have also developed a consistent approach to managing their budgets to ensure money is spent wisely.
- 2.2. An early task of the CCCG was to create a **common funding application** form and supporting guidance notes. These are under regular review and have recently been updated for 2015/16 to make more user-friendly and clearer for panels and officers to make decisions. This work included agreeing how community orientated projects should be managed so that local decisions about funding can be made to reflect local priorities, but to also give the panel assurance that funding was being spent for the direct benefit of tenants. The funding form and guidance notes are available on the HAP webpage (www.leeds.gov.uk/hap)
- 2.3. To help guide the work and decision making of HAPs, each HAP has developed a '**Plan on a Page**'. Panels reviewed information about their local areas, including current tenant satisfaction levels with housing services, the types of homes and the profile of people, headline performance information and other key facts and figures that painted a picture of the type of community they represent. Using this, and taking into account Housing and the Council's wider 'Best City Priorities', each panel agreed their own 'service' and 'funding' priorities.

2.4. 11 HAPs identified the cleaner, greener and safer environmental agenda as well as the world of work in terms of employability, work and skills as funding priorities. 10 panels prioritised community safety and crime reduction and also the general health and well-being of communities. On a more local basis, the Outer South East panel specifically identified the health and well-being of elderly tenants; and the Inner East panel the importance of supporting projects to encourage community cohesion and the involvement of young people and BME groups.

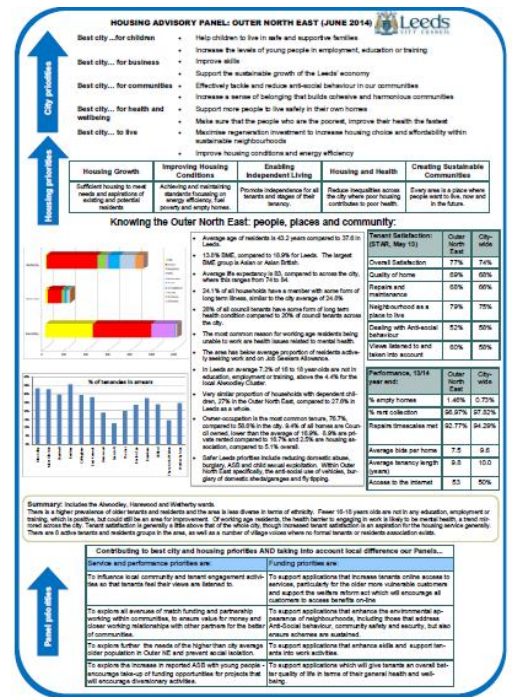
2.5. All HAPs wish to explore the services approach to rent collection to help mitigate the impact of welfare changes and all are interested in helping shape the future of the tenant engagement service. On a more local basis, the Inner North East and Outer East panels have highlighted the importance of engaging with under-represented groups especially younger and BME tenants and the Outer North East panel wish to explore how we tackle the issue of elderly residents being at risk of isolation.

2.6. A common **recruitment and selection process** is now in place across the city, so that all tenants wishing to become panel members are given the same information about the role and informal 'interviews' are all carried out in the same way. With the special input of some volunteers from the CCCG, an 'information pack' about HAPs has been written that explains what kind of person would make an ideal panel member, the expectations of the role and a little more about what HAPs are all about.

2.7. So that panels are able to start to better fulfill their role of monitoring and reviewing local housing service performance, the CCCG towards the end of the year agreed a **standard performance report**. This captured a range of measures that when reviewed together, gives insight into what the quality and difference in service exists across the city and how the panels might be able to shape the solutions for tackling this.

2.8. Based on some good practice from one of the former three areas, a **model evaluation form** for all HAP funded projects has been agreed that records what the project was, how much it cost, how many tenants benefitted, the longer term benefits to the community, any partners involved and any lessons learnt. This new evaluation record also doubles as a marketing tool, as is presented in a clear and accessible way for the HAPs to issue to local tenants and residents and to help further raising the profile of what local projects HAPs can support.

3. Supporting local projects



- 3.1. During 2014/15 HAPs supported 276 local projects, ranging in value from £32 to £30,200 and an average amount of £4,000. About two thirds were for 'environmental' projects, the other third for community related projects. The panels committed 94.5% of their total £1.32m and are grateful for the Council's support to allow the remainder to be carried forward to the new financial year.
- 3.2. The projects are many and varied, and have benefitted many thousands of tenants across Leeds. Some examples are:

Housing Advisory Panel Bid Success
New environmental improvement schemes ...
 Bin service provided for residents at Granville Road and Beckett Street




If you want to improve your environment or make a difference in your area, ask your housing office staff about Housing Advisory Panel Bids.

Funded by Housing Advisory Panels - Shaping your local community

Total spend £22,461

www.leeds.gov.uk/hap
 email: housingadvisorypanel@leeds.gov.uk

Housing Advisory Panel Bid Success
New community improvement scheme ...
 Provision of new garden tools to support the John O'Gaunts tool bank.




Ernest, Chair of John O'Gaunts Residents Association pictured at the tool bank with some of the tools HAP provided.

If you want to improve your environment or make a difference in your area, ask your housing office staff about Housing Advisory Panel Bids.

Funded by Housing Advisory Panels - Shaping your local community

Total spend £927

www.leeds.gov.uk/hap
 email: housingadvisorypanel@leeds.gov.uk

Housing Advisory Panel Bid Success

New environmental improvement schemes ...

Newly flagged patio area and fencing for residents of York Road, Wetherby. The area was cleared of overgrowth and re-seeded.



BEFORE **AFTER**

If you want to improve your environment or make a difference in your area, ask your housing office staff about Housing Advisory Panel Bids.

Funded by Housing Advisory Panels - Shaping your local community

Total spend £10,000

www.leeds.gov.uk/hap
email: housingadvisorypanel@leeds.gov.uk

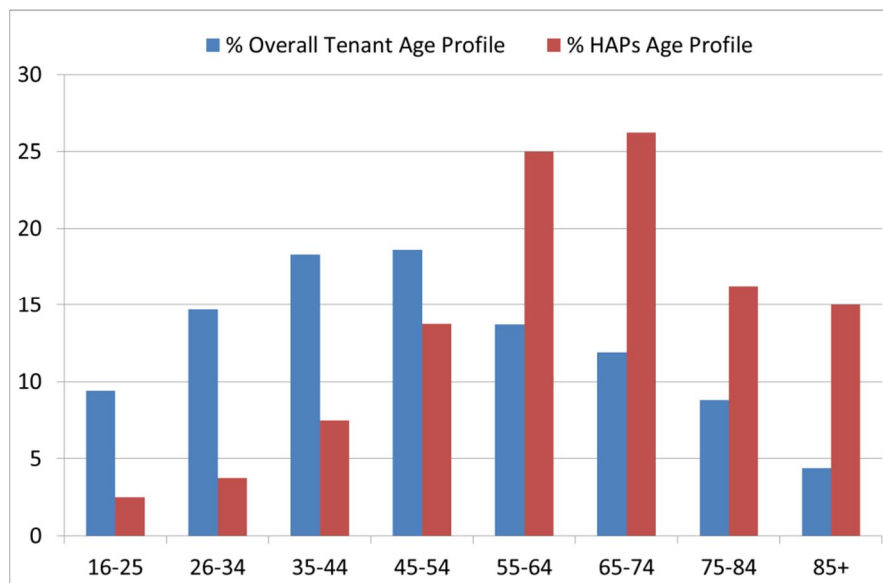
- 3.3. HAP funded projects have made a significant contribution to helping the Housing Service achieve the aim of its Housing Strategy. The majority of projects contribute to 'Creating Sustainable Communities', 20 support 'Independent Living', 12 helped improve 'Housing and Health' and 5 were related to 'Improving Housing Conditions'.
- 3.4. In addition, each project helped Leeds City Council achieve its Best City Priorities. 147 projects contributed to the Council's Best City for Communities by helping reduce crime levels and their impact across Leeds, effectively tackling and reducing anti-social behaviour and by ensuring that local neighbourhoods are clean. A further 103 projects helped Leeds to achieve its ambition to be the Best City to Live, by improving the quality of the environment. Some 39 projects helped to place Leeds as the Best City for Health and Well-being by support more people to live safely in their own homes. Helping children to live in safe and supportive families and increasing the levels of young people in employment, education or training was the overall aim of 18 projects and 4 helped Leeds become the Best City for Business by either improving skills or increasing people's participation in cultural opportunities.
- 3.5. Panel funding supported projects in 32 out of the 33 Wards, the exception being Headingley Ward. Headingley however, has a much smaller number of homes (just 159) compared to other Wards.
- 3.6. During the year, the service included HAP funding on the Leeds City Council funding search tool: www.idoxopen4community.co.uk/lcc. HAPs hope to encourage a broader range of interest from local groups active in areas of Council housing with this tool. The officers supporting HAPs are now also able to signpost this tool in cases where the HAPs have been unable to support projects as are for activities not in line with local or wider Council priorities.
- 3.7. Over 80 funding requests came from community or voluntary groups including Tenants and Residents Associations, 36 originated from enquiries from individual

residents and 138 were submitted by staff of various housing and housing related teams in response to tenant, resident and/or Ward Member feedback.

- 3.8. HAPs contributed £160,00 to the 2014/15 Housing Revenue Account Estate Improvement Fund, helping the service fund more activity that it would otherwise have done enabling more environmental, waste/recycling and community safety projects to improve customer satisfaction.

4. Membership

- 4.1. The number of HAP members has increased since their inception from 71 to 80. This includes 4 co-optees and 2 leaseholders. Panel membership varies across the city, ranging from 3 in ONE to 12 in INW (who also have 2 co-optees). The average number of tenants on each panel is 7.
- 4.2. The gender of members is equally split between make and female. Panel diversity in terms of ethnicity broadly matches that of the wider tenant base and panels represent well the interests and needs of disabled tenants and those with physical impairments. The overall age profile of HAP members is more elderly than the age profile of tenants more widely, however, this mirrors the trends of other involvement activities.



- 4.3. The service is working in the local areas to attract new members, especially for those panels with lower numbers of tenants. The recent STAR survey was used by the Involvement Team to contact tenants who were happy to get involved, a number of which have been to observe panel meetings or have an informal interview arranged for full membership.

5.0 Joint working

- 5.1 The HAPs and especially HAP Chairs/Vice-Chairs have worked to create a culture of partnership working and continuous improvement. The working relationship

developed with all levels of officers has been positive, helped by joint events such as an end of year review session with many panel members and the Tenant and Community Involvement Officers. The panels continue to benefit from the input and support of local Housing Managers and their teams, helping the panels keep in touch with key staff delivering local services and to enable HAPs to explore their local priorities. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the CCCG have met regularly with the Deputy Leader of Leeds City Council and Executive Board Member for Neighbourhoods, Planning and Personnel, Councillor Peter Gruen and Neil Evans, Director Environment and Housing to share HAP feedback.

- 5.2 All HAP members came together in October 2014 at an event at the Civic Hall to share good practice, help set a common 'HAP vision' and to encourage networking and sharing between panels. HAP members, their Chairs and officers have recently met to also consider their forward plans for the year, which includes working and engaging with other teams and services to help panels tackle some of their service related priorities.
- 5.3 The CCCG are now regularly sharing good practice and considering ways of joint working. For example by sharing local projects such as 'maecare' (a community based organisation tackling social isolation of elderly residents through a range of innovative ways) and collectively supporting a HAP funding proposal for a 'Community Payback' project that will benefit tenants across the whole of Leeds.

5. Communications

- 6.1 Throughout the year panel members and the CCCG have instigated a number of communication related actions to raise the profile of HAP work and to ensure more tenants (and other LCC services, stakeholders, voluntary groups etc) know what HAPs are and what their role is.
- 6.2 A new webpage www.leeds.gov.uk/hap now introduces HAPs, including individual panel minutes, meeting dates, plans on a page, local annual reports and some other key documents such as the funding application form and some case studies on HAP successes.
- 6.3 HAPs have featured regularly in 'Housing Leeds', the newsletter for all Council Tenants. HAP activity has been regularly shared with online tenants on both Facebook and Twitter:



- 6.4 A number of individual HAPs have held their meetings in different locations, and visited other tenants groups or meetings to help raise their local profiles.
- 6.5 In April 2015 each HAPs produced a short 'annual report', sharing with tenants what its priorities were, what projects it had supported and feedback from tenants about what difference it made to them.

What our communities say about the funding they've received ...

Put Sidlow, member of Haverhill Community Group ... before HAP funding, there was no opportunity to get out (on their own) the funds have helped us jing our way out ... on the large, and out it get us together as a group.

Angela Barker, Manager of St. Augustine's distributed some of the Winter Islands Parks as Christmas gifts ... Thank you for HAP for the generous amount. The tenants were thrilled to receive their Winter Islands Parks.

Kath Thompson, Community Champion on the Haverhill's page ... You are very helpful with the work you do, thanks to HAP!

Housing Advisory Panels (HAPs) are tenant led groups, representing five to six local housing services and monitor local performance. Each panel is made up of up to 30 Council tenants some of which can be Council representatives, plus 2 local business who work together to improve housing services and fund projects that benefit tenants.

We are always looking for new members to join our Housing Advisory Panels. If you are interested in becoming a member, call the number below to find out what's involved.

Find our more at www.housing.gov.uk/hap, email: housingadvisorypanels@leeds.gov.uk or call 0113 378 3330

Annual Report 2014/15

Inner East
Covering Cleaton and Tharville, Burncliffe and Richmond Hill.

Housing Advisory Panels - Shaping a local community

Welcome to the first Annual Report from the Inner East Area Housing Advisory Panel.

In this report you'll find:

- Our priorities
- Housing Advisory Panel bid successes
- A breakdown of spend and
- Hearing from our tenants so how the funding has helped them or improved where they live.

Janice Gottlieb
Chair of Inner East HAP

Shaping a local community

- our panel service and performance priorities are:
 - To monitor the repair services, working to improve the quality of response times for repairs.
 - To work closely with Leeds City Council's Locality Team ensuring communities in which we live become cleaner and safer for local people.
 - To monitor news collected and understand the affects of welfare changes.
 - The role of tenants to be heard and they have their concerns are acted on.
- our panel funding priorities are to support:
 - Young groups and promote youth engagement activity
 - Schemes that improve the environment and address community safety, helping to reduce crime.
 - Projects that increase health, wellbeing and employability.
 - Projects that develop community spirit and bring communities together.

Inner East HAP Annual Report
Covering: Cleaton and Tharville, Burncliffe and Richmond Hill.

Housing Advisory Panel Bid successes

Environmental Improvements - Security camera at St Augustine's.

Removal of overgrown bushes / shrubs at Pembroke Grange

St Augustine's

New gateway and gate at Riverside Court

St Augustine's received funding to support an event to celebrate St. 100th anniversary of the 1st world war

St Augustine's received funding to support an event to celebrate St. 100th anniversary of the 1st world war

It's been a very busy year for the Housing Advisory Panels. To reflect the amount of Council investment in panels, we've focused on making sure we spend our budget wisely. In the year ahead all the panels will be looking at our wider role too, building our relationships with local tenants, responding to performance and tenant satisfaction trends and helping Housing Leeds review the quality of its services.

Inner East HAP Annual Report
Covering: Cleaton and Tharville, Burncliffe and Richmond Hill.

Breakdown of spend Inner East HAP

| | |
|--|-----------|
| St Augustine's Residents Association - chemical toilets | £195.00 |
| East Hill Levensham Hall | £276.00 |
| Croft Gate | £100.00 |
| Cross Green Community Group - Wm event | £750.00 |
| Mena Room (Space 1) - funding for equipment | £820.00 |
| Leeds African Cup of Harbours - Nigerian Community Leeds | £840.00 |
| Theright Social Club - equipment | £350.00 |
| Burncliffe Senior Action - Garden clean up | £1,750.00 |
| St Wilfrids - fencing scheme | £1,084.32 |
| Riverside Court environmental improvement - pathway and gate | £1,335.00 |
| Leeds Police | £1,000.00 |
| St Augustine Residents Association - community activity for families | £1,619.08 |
| Indians and Active Group | £1,700.00 |
| Pembroke Grange environmental improvement | £1,448.48 |
| Coley Park Scouts - camping trip | £1,880.88 |
| St Augustine residents association - funding for activities | £1,050.00 |
| Widder Harthorn | £1,000.00 |
| Leeds Refugee Forum - One Community Centre | £1,000.00 |
| Haverhill Festival Partnership | £2,198.00 |
| St Augustine security camera | £1,000.00 |
| Community Pathway - East Panels Funding | £5,371.00 |
| Dorset Road CCTV (match funding) | £5,821.00 |
| Croft/Haverhill/Burncliffe - Green Work Sector Project | £8,240.00 |

Shaping a local community

Inner East HAP Annual Report
Covering: Cleaton and Tharville, Burncliffe and Richmond Hill.

7 Training and Development

- 7.1 An induction training session was held in February 2015, to help newer panel members understand their role and the role of the panel. Feedback from the induction was positive, and will be used as a model for officers to follow for new panel members in the future.
- 7.2 A sub-group of HAP Chairs drafted a training and development plan, capturing the training needs of HAP members following feedback from all members and worked with officers to prioritise certain themes.

8 The Year Ahead

- 8.1 The focus for HAPs in this first year has been to develop common ways of working and to achieve consistent decision making for funding applications. The panels have made significant progress in this area and have a solid foundation to build upon.

8.2 There are a number of areas that the HAPs now wish to develop further during 2015/16, these include:

- Gaining a better understanding of the performance of key housing services, and to use this knowledge to work with officers to help shape improvements in services and innovative project proposals.
- Learning more about new tenant satisfaction information, to help understand what tenants think about housing services and the neighbourhoods they live in. This will help panels keep their local priorities up to date and support funding projects that benefit tenants the most.
- Building on existing skills and knowledge by participating in more varied and useful training and development opportunities. This could be bespoke training just for HAP members, or joint training with other involved tenants and also staff.
- Creating stronger and more visible links with local Tenants and Residents Groups, other tenant groups and forums working with Housing Leeds and to have a clear mutually beneficial relationship with the new 'Strategic Tenants Body'.
- Continue to promote HAP success stories using a variety of ways.
- Seeking more insight into the impact and beneficiaries of panel activity, for example by mapping funding decisions to see if any communities have yet to benefit, or by reviewing equality information to see if there are any customer groups that have benefitted less than others.