

TENANT SCRUTINY BOARD

FRIDAY 18TH JUNE 2021

PRESENT: John Gittos in the Chair
Sallie Bannatyne
Mary Farish
Rita Ighade
Jackie Worthington
Ian Parr
Peter Greenwood

67 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

None.

68 Late Items

None.

69 Apologies for Absence

Stanley Burton (SBu), Peter Middleton, Maddy Hunter

70 Minutes -

RESOLVED – The minutes of the previous meeting held on 21st May 2021 were approved as a true record.

71 Chair's Update

JG informed the board that he attended the meeting on the 14th of June for the panel members of the various citywide forums of Leeds, and thanked the TSB members who also attended. JG had a further meeting on 17th of June with YD and PG to discuss the outcomes of the meeting and the next steps. An update for the board is an agenda item for the present meeting.

Councillor Rafique, the new Executive Member for Environment and Housing has contacted JG to introduce himself, and has asked for a meeting to get an update of the present work of the TSB. JG will be providing an update to Councillor Rafique in the coming weeks.

72 Phase 1 Report

JG informed the board that the report that had initially been scheduled for review at the present meeting had not yet been finalised but that it will be ready in time for the July meeting. JG noted that previous scrutiny board

reports had taken up to ten weeks to be finalised and so the current timeframe is not unusual.

73 Phase 2 Planning

JG once again thanked the board members who were present on the 14th of June, and noted that the meeting was an effective vehicle for conversation for the citywide panel members to express their opinions about the proposed changes to the involvement forum structure. Regarding the creation of a single tenant voice panel, JG informed the board that he expressed the previously agreed ideas of the board that the move would be a positive step to increase the growth and diversity of involved tenants in Leeds, though there were participants in the same meeting who did not agree with the proposal for a variety of reasons. JG told the panel he received phone calls from members of the other forums following the meeting who expressed their concerns about the proposals.

JG told members the changes as they were presented might affect the plans of the board moving forward into phase two, so it is important to outline the next steps for the board as phase two begins. With this in mind, the Chair laid out the plans for phase two which are as follows:

1. Invite Mandy Sawyer and Ian Montgomery as the managers of the Tenant Engagement team to present evidence to the board supporting changing to a single tenant voice panel.
2. Gather evidence from the tenants who are currently members of the other existing city wide forums – VITAL, VOLT, The High Rise Strategy Group, and The Repairs and Investment Group. Also invite opinions from wider tenants using Your Voice Leeds and any other effective methods.
3. Invite Yvonne Davies to present evidence to the board about how other housing authorities interact with their tenants with similar approaches.
4. Collate all of the evidence and produce a report.

JG clarified that these plans should see the board ready to produce a report in December, though the board members should keep their own detailed notes with their own thoughts after each meeting to make writing the final report easier.

IM agreed with the outlined proposal and offered his support to the board, including access to any staff who are required for evidence and assistance with contacting the other panel members as necessary. IM agreed that the city wide members meeting did not seem to sit well with all of the attendees and that this approach will allow for more input from the panel members, and for the ideas to be introduced more gradually.

JG noted that any outcome will take time, but that other housing associations prove that engagement can be carried out effectively with a single panel, and if the city wide panel members are involved in the discussions then it should result in better and more informed outcomes. IM offered to share the slides from the city wide meeting as well as some further updates from the present meeting with all of the city wide panel members to keep them informed of the discussion.

The idea of co-opting some members of the city wide forums to the TSB was raised, YD suggested that co-option might be too formal of an approach which may raise some unexpected issues with the respective terms of reference of each group and any approval required when the same outcome may be achieved by inviting the panel members as observer so they are still a part of the conversation. It is important to consider what the desired aims are of inviting guests, and that any guest understands their role in a meeting so they are not discouraged from participating. JG agreed that there will need to be discussions about how guests are invited to the TSB meetings, as well as considering if the meetings will be taking place online or in person by September as that may alter the dynamics of the meetings. JG emphasised that regardless of the approach towards external members, the final vote will be taken by the regular TSB members only.

YD noted that phase two is scheduled to conclude in December, which leaves a large span of time during which engagement should continue wherever possible. YD suggested that it will be important to keep all of the group members engaged as much as possible, especially when there is a chance that Leeds is assessed under the new consumer regulations to check on the levels of tenant engagement in the city.

Ahead of the next meeting JG suggested that if any guests are invited then it should not be for the section where the phase one report is being discussed. IM proposed a smaller discussion regarding how the report is shared with the wider tenant base once the board has accepted it, including the possibility of a summary document instead of the whole report to make the recommendations easier to understand.

74 Election to Chair/Vice Chair process

PG informed the board members that following the conclusion of phase one, the election for Chair and Vice Chair of the TSB can now take place as previously agreed by the board members. The application form will be sent to all board members in case they wish to apply, with a return date by the Friday the 2nd of July. If multiple applications are received for one of the Chair seats, the board agreed to cast their vote via an email to PG, with the results announced at the July TSB meeting.

75 Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next zoom meeting is scheduled for Friday 16th of July at 12:45 for a 1.00pm start

