

TENANT SCRUTINY BOARD

FRIDAY, 21ST SEPTEMBER, 2018

PRESENT: John Gittos in the Chair

Sallie Bannatyne, Michael Healey, Peter Middleton and Jackie Worthington

28 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

None.

29 Late Items

The Chair admitted a late item around the working group and asked that this group look at the way the Board decides on future inquiries but keeping within the current terms of reference, using best practice models as a guide.

30 Apologies for Absence

Colin Halliwell, Maddy Hunter, Rita Ighade, Roderic Morgan

31 Minutes - 17th August 2018

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 August 2018 be approved as a correct record.

32 Next Inquiry

In explaining the process for this item, the Chair explained that he will go through each topic which has been suggested for inquiry, and hold a brief discussion on the topic. The Board would then adjourn for ten minutes. The Chair also noted he would make a suggestion at the end as an alternative approach prior to voting on the suggestions which have been made.

Refuse Collection

It was noted that all areas are treated the same for the collection of kerbside bins. But it was noted and shown as an issue when walkabouts were carried out as part of the Estate Environment inquiry, due to narrow roads and the way estates were built. A previous recommendation was to introduce the best waste collection solution for individual estates, even if that resulted in variations across the city.

Members noted the situation in multi storey blocks of flats and how there are ongoing issues around recycling and also chute use.

Council Housing Growth Programme

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting
to be held on Friday, 19th October, 2018

The Chair noted this could be a difficult subject to work through as the example given relating to the time one tenant had taken to be rehoused would have been influenced by the current system of awarding priority to housing applications, based on need and that any changes to this system would be a matter for the Executive Board to consider.

Review of Housing Advisory Panels (HAP) & Tenant Involvement

The Chair explained that because no members of the Board can be Housing Advisory Panel members, he had attended a HAP meeting this week as an observer, so that he could have an understanding of what happens in a HAP meeting. The chair also noted from his attendance that there has been a recent review of Housing Advisory Panels and that the findings from this are currently being rolled out.

It was noted there is a current shortage of members on the panel he attended which is something which is also an issue with this Board, and that any inquiry on this subject or Tenant Involvement, should include considerations being given to how we can recruit more tenants onto Boards and local forums.

The Chair reported that he had found it difficult to find information about the HAPS via the internet and when he had, that minutes of meeting were not always the most up to date. He felt that members not already involved with Housing Leeds may struggle to become involved and this would `also make it more difficult for a new person looking to join to have a fuller understanding of what goes on in a meeting.

A discussion was held around whether there was a concern that with fewer members there was a possibility of bids being approved within their own areas, at the detriment of other areas, and that this could be one of the driving forces for recruiting more members.

Older Persons Service

In introducing this item the Chair noted that this inquiry could touch on areas which the Scrutiny Board cannot make recommendations to, such as those which affect Social Services. The Chair noted to the Board that whilst we might think of older people living in sheltered housing, there are many more who are likely to live in general needs properties, which would mean either a narrow scope or a much larger inquiry scope.

Communication Standards – Contact Centre

It was noted by the Board that there was some ambiguity as to what was being suggested specifically around the Contact Centre as no direct examples or evidence had been provided of the issue.

Drugs – Impact on the community of drug dealing

The Board discussed and noted that this recommendation was unlikely to be able to be supported because of the need to involve the Police, which is an external service which the Board cannot make any recommendations to.

Upholding and enforcement of tenancy standards /agreements particularly in high rise

The Board noted that given the Council are awaiting further guidance from Central Government around Grenfell Tower that this recommendation, with a focus around high rise would be inappropriate and may be best considered at a later date once details have been received from Central Government.

Communal Cleaning

The Chair asked that the Board don't comment on this yet, as the proposal the Chair wished to table after the break could cover this.

Dog fouling in and around estates

The Chair noted his surprise at this recommendation, especially as it had been touched on during the Estate Environment inquiry. The Board commented on that it was more around educating people about this than simply attributing it to the difficulty of wardens to patrol areas.

Grounds Maintenance particularly in retirement life schemes

The Chair again noted that this was something which had been touched on during the Estate Environment inquiry.

The Board held a ten minute break.

On return, the Chair asked before members voted on an inquiry topic, if they would consider the following proposal.

The Chair noted that a number of the suggestions presented today had already been picked up through previous inquiries, and that it might be logical to review previous reports and recommendations to assess what impact those recommendation have had on those services.

Members agreed that in the light of further reported concerns, some recommendations would need to be reviewed even though they have been deemed to be completed as it is clear from the suggestions made to the Board that things which should have been resolved have not. It was also felt that given the reduced numbers on the board, carrying out a review of previous recommendations rather than a full new inquiry, would give the Board the opportunity to cover a variety of topics throughout the year.

The Chair acknowledged for this approach to work, that Officers called before future meetings would require some questions from the Board beforehand, otherwise time would be lost because in some cases they would need to go back and research this.

RESOLVED – The Board voted unanimously to the proposal to look back on the three previous recommendation reports, as well as the Anti-Social Behaviour Inquiry which would have been planned into this municipal year. The Board would also carry out a smaller inquiry into the Contact Centre and also around Communal Cleaning.

RESOLVED – That the Scrutiny Officer write to Councillor Barry Anderson, Jill Wildman and VITAL (Voice of Involved Tenants across Leeds), thanking them for their inquiry ideas and of the Board’s decision for the municipal years inquiry.

33 2018/19 Work Programme

The Chair noted to Board Members that all future agenda packs would contain a copy of the work programme. This work programme is a live document as the year progresses and is therefore subject to change.

34 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Friday 19th October 2018 at 1:15pm
(Pre meeting for all Board members at 1:00pm)

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 2:50 PM