

Minutes



Meeting Name:	Leeds Housing Board	
Date:	Friday 21 st July 2023	Time: 10.00-11.30
Location:	Microsoft Teams	
Chair:	Cllr Jessica Lennox (JL)	
Members Present:	Cllr Kayleigh Brooks (KB), Cllr Julie Heselwood (JH), Cllr Barry Anderson (BA), John Gittos (JG), Lynne Al-Muhtaseb (LA-M), Zioness-Amaka Curry (Z-AC)	
Attendees Present:	James Rogers, Director of Communities, Housing and Environment (JR), Gerard Tinsdale, Chief Officer, Housing (GT), Mandy Sawyer, Head of Housing & Neighbourhood Services (MS), Simon Baker, Policy Officer (Housing) (SB)	
Apologies:	Cllr Mary Harland, Tom Clarke, Adam Crampton	

Minutes

Item	
1	Introductions and apologies
1.1	<p>Cllr Lennox, attending her first Leeds Housing Board, welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Board has other new elected membership – Cllrs Julie Heselwood and Kayleigh Brooks – and the new tenant representatives John Gittos, Lynne Al-Muhtaseb, Zioness-Amaka Curry and Tom Clarke.</p> <p>JL confirmed that the Board's ToRs had been amended – there would now be four elected members of the administration and 1 member of the largest opposition party.</p>
2	Minutes of the Last Meeting
	The Board agreed the minutes and received a couple of brief updates on matters arising from issues arising from the previous meeting.
3	Regulatory Changes Overview
3.1	SB briefed the Board on the regulatory changes that are affecting the social housing sector, to bring the new Board members and tenant representatives up to date.

3.2	KB asked if there would be any extra funding for implementing the changes – GT confirmed no extra funding, it is funded via the HRA. BA asked if we are within the timetable of implementation, and what happens if staff don't pass exams for relevant qualifications. GT confirmed that the service is on target to prepare for implementing changes within timetable, IT systems are currently being implemented. A lot of staff already have qualifications, but we are still awaiting a lot of detail as to what exactly will be required.
3.3	LA-M asked about damp and mould work being undertaken – are response times set locally or by central government? GT pointed out a lot of work has been done over the last 12 months to ensure an effective response, including a triage system to assess urgency. MS added that central government has set the timescales – 14 days to investigate and 7 days to repair. A full report will be presented to November's LHB.
3.4	Z-AC commented that there used to be a focus on apprenticeships, but it is important that it is not just about paperwork but it is important that the housing service displays a human touch. MS replied that there are apprenticeships in place aligned to levels 3, 4 and 5 of the qualification requirements, and also ones in leadership and management available.
3.5	Z-AC asked how we provide increased customer satisfaction with a limited budget. GT acknowledged that budget management is a challenge as any increase in income comes from raising rents and we need to fund repairs and maintenance, investment in stock along with staffing costs of providing services. The service tries to secure external funding where possible.
3.6	JG asked GT about repairs – with reference to the repairs TSM, given that we use third party contractors, are they onboard with the regulatory changes, will we get control of their data? GT said that contractors know our requirements, they are on board and know our priorities, and LBS cover two thirds of our stock.
4	TSM 2022/23, Q1 23/24 findings
4.1	FP gave the Board an overview of the new TSM survey requirements and how the questions were developed, the guidelines we have to adhere to and how the surveys are carried out. He gave an overview of the first year's results for 22/23 and Q1 results for 23/24, explaining how the different surveying methods can affect them. There will be a paper to November's Board explaining the final survey approach and the Equality Impact Assessment, giving the Board an opportunity to comment.
4.2	Z-AC asked if there are any tenant representatives involved when the survey results are collated. FP pointed out that it would be difficult to convene a panel whilst the data was being analysed. Z-AC then asked that, given local issues around repairs etc, what is the relationship with the TSM findings? FP replied that the guidelines are very rigid; we cannot take into account external information. In analysing the results the housing service will of course consider all data, comparing both.
4.3	JG asked if, when the Board gets TSM reports, is there is any way of showing how many people the survey is sent to, and if the survey doesn't reach the target number do we then target the people we want? FP explained how work is being done to make sure the surveys are representative, with work being done

4.4	<p>to ensure the results reflect the tenant profile. We don't look to target 'happy' people, the work is more about making sure we represent the demographics of the city. FP said we are looking to survey around 500-600 people per quarter, to get to around 2,200 responses per annum. These numbers will be included in future reports to the Board. JL commented that this will be taken forward to housing management, to try and boost the number of responses going forward. BA requested an action plan is put in place to look at how we consolidate successes and challenge areas of difficulty. This will help to communicate results and to give explanation and how we respond to issues highlighted. GT said this is a valid point, and that the Board will be a forum where progress against actions are highlighted and discussed. Action Point – GT / MS to consider action planning to improve TSM performance and report back to LHB</p> <p>KB commented that there is a lot of information to consider in the report, and noted specifically that the 'agree the landlord has a good reputation in your area' - is it possible to provide an area by area breakdown? Can targeted work be done? KB also pointed out that with regard to the 'satisfaction with landlord's handling of complaints' some of her constituents are waiting some time for repairs to be completed. Recognised that is partly not the fault of the housing service, but pointed out this might be down to communications as well. FP said that the results are not very accurate when broken down to ward level, and that Area Panel is more accurate. With regard to repairs, GT pointed out that with the data looking at 12 months that has thrown up lots of challenges – catching up from the pandemic, implementing new damp and mould processes. The work done has been good and in Q1 results we can see that the direction of travel is positive with complaints down.</p>
5	Complaints Handling Performance
5.1	<p>MS gave the Board an overview of the report. She pointed out the stronger role the Regulator for Social Housing as part of the regulatory changes, and the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code that has been in place for some time. She outlined the 22/23 performance, which has been impacted by Covid related backlogs and increases in demand for service, and detailed the work that has taken place in response, such as regular reporting, staff training, strengthened QA. This focus has seen a significant increase in performance – 90% in May for the 10 day timescale. There will be regular updates to the Board in this area, and MS requested that there is a Complaints Champion appointed by the Board.</p>
5.2	<p>JG asked about the standard of complaints recording, MS clarified that what is being reported to the Board is accurate and is subject to quality control. JL said the positive changes show the resolve of the service to address the issues.</p>
5.3	<p>Z-AC commented on how residents have to sometimes deal with different departments and teams in the course of their repair, complicating the process. JL said she is interested in the 'journey' of a complaint, with more information on how complaints are managed.</p>
5.4	<p>KB added that the process of raising a repair can be particularly challenging if you don't have good English. The simplification of the process of submitting repairs could reduce complaints. GT replied that there is a new housing management system and that will see a new tenant portal that will make be more pictorial and will make it easier to report problems. It will allow tenants to</p>

5.5	<p>follow the progress of repairs and report any issues. More detail will be shared with the Board. MS advised that some customer journey mapping is undertaken and that this can help to identify and address any inefficiencies / customer care weaknesses.</p> <p>JG welcomed the indications that things are going well and the figures are improving and asked how complaints become stage 2. GT responded that if a resident is unsatisfied with a complaint response at stage 1 they can choose to escalate it to stage 2, and a more senior officer will look at it. GT thanked JG for the positive comments but acknowledged there is still further to go meet the 95% target.</p>
6.	Annual report update
	<p>The Board was presented, by MS, the latest annual report for their consideration and comment. MS pointed out that work is being done on how this information is being shared – we are moving towards releasing quarterly ‘snippets’, sent to tenants quarterly via email. JL requested that Board members share the info via their contact networks. BA requested to be sent the final report as a pdf so he can distribute, and praised the report for being well laid out and concise. He asked how tenants could raise any questions on the back of the report – who is the best contact? JL supported the request for a pdf, and said she will push the final report out to members from herself and the service directly. Action Point – share the pdf of the report with members.</p>
7.	Consideration of Forward Plan of future meetings
	<p>SB shared the Forward Plan with the Board. The Board are happy with it and no comments were received.</p>
8.	AOB
	<p>JL said she is confident that the service is listening to issues raised, and thanked everyone for attending.</p>

Next Meeting (Housing Operations)

Date: 22nd November 2023

Time: 10:00 – 11:30

Location: Microsoft Teams