

Tenant Board Meeting Wednesday 29th October

Attendees:

Liz Perryman	Tenant Board Member (Chair)
Tim Riach	Tenant Board Member
Stella Morris	Tenant Board Member
Sara Szczepanski	Tenant Board Member
Georgia Mecoy	Tenant Engagement Co-ordinator
Kerry Lecomber	Tenant Engagement Co-ordinator
Cllr Ruth Hendry	Housing Portfolio Holder (Babergh)
Cllr Richard Winch	Housing Portfolio Holder (Mid Suffolk)
Jeremy Robins (Jez)	Housing Management Lead- Income and Sustainment
Beth Newton	Housing Services Manager

Apologies

David White, Tony Cole, Paula Warren and Gerry Crease

1. Welcome and Introductions

Jez (Jeremy) and Beth introduced themselves and their roles.

2. Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made.

3. Actions from Previous Meeting

- Tenant Influence Budget to be carried forward to this meeting.
- Full report on decommissioning of sheltered schemes to be shared.

4. Tenant Influence Budget Update

- Kerry shared that the budget includes training, travel expenses, membership fees, incentives, room hire, and promotional materials.
- David is working with Finance to provide a detailed breakdown.
- TPAS guidance is being sought to ensure best practice.
- The Board will receive a full breakdown at a future meeting.

5. Communication Scrutiny Update

- Review of 5 call transcripts, 5 email chains, and 5 live chats.
- They will also receive complaints involving internal communication across various services.
- 47 tenants expressed interest in participating.
- Project expected to begin mid-November.

6. De-sheltered Schemes Update

- Kerry shared where we are with the project with timeline
- Proposal to decommission 8 schemes due to the BT digital switchover
- Most tenants do not use the alarm service and those tenants needing alarms will be supported.
- Consultation was thorough and well received.
- Final Cabinet decision expected 11th November.
- Outcome will be shared at the following Board meeting.

Comments:

- Ruth made a comment that Local Lettings Policy may be reviewed for 5 years rather than the 10 initially suggested if this is reviewed earlier, it must return to the Board and impacted residents.
- Liz asked how tenants felt about the proposal and Kerry noted tenants had the opportunity to engage and will be working with those who need further support on a one on one basis
- Jez confirmed the consultation was thorough and there will be strong indicators that the councillors will have to help them make a decision
- All: Emphasis on a holistic approach and supporting individual needs.

7. Overview and Scrutiny Committee Update

- Kerry shared the following recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny Committee
 - 1) That the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the recommendations made by the Tenant Scrutiny Board and is assured that this work is meaningful and that tenants are successfully influencing services.
 - 2) That the Cabinet Members for Housing explore communicating the work of the Tenant Scrutiny Board and the transformation to the housing service to all tenants, including within the Mid Suffolk Magazine.
 - 3) That the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee endorses the provision of incentives to the Tenant Scrutiny Board members for their time and work undertaken.
- Liz and Sara attended and shared feedback. There was some difficulty hearing councillors; David assisted.
- Sara may pursue a hearing review before the next meeting.
- Liz suggested asking councillors to speak louder and slower.
- **Action: Remind O&S members to speak clearly into microphones at future meetings.**

8. Getting to Know You Project Update

- The aim of the project is to improve accuracy of tenant data.
- Staff assigned around 30 properties each, they will be contacting our tenants via email, phone, and visits to complete a survey to gather tenant data
- Data accuracy improved: Babergh 24% → 40%, Mid Suffolk 27% → 47%.
- Alongside collecting the data we have had some positive tenant feedback around the project and people have said they are happy to see us in the community
- We have also picked up multiple issues while speaking to our tenants regarding repairs, compliance and ASB
- Full reports to be shared in January.

9. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Discussion

- Deborah Fenton and Jeni Smithies presented overview in July.
- The Board discussed what information they would like to investigate from the Housing Revenue Account.
- It was decided that the Board wanted to be presented with information around the costs associated with voids, service charges, contractors and grounds maintenance.

Comments:

- Liz and Tim raised concerns about void costs
- Liz and Sara queried grounds maintenance and service charges
- Jez clarified service charges are detailed in annual rent letters and currently apply to sheltered properties.
- Tim asked about contractor tendering and rolling contracts.
- Jez explained changes under the Procurement Act will lead to more structured reviews and therefore recently there has been changes around how we procure contracts and for what time.
- **Action: To investigate and inform the Board around how the council tender for contracts and if they are rolling contracts.**

10. Any Other Business

- Asset Management Survey: To be shared with Tenant Board before wider distribution.
- Decant Process Engagement: Update to follow.
- Christmas Meal: Proposed dates – 3rd or 10th December. Liz prefers 10th.
- Tenant Board 1-2-1s & Video Project: Updates to follow.
- Staff Recruitment Influence: Ongoing.
- Colchester Borough Homes Meet-up: 3rd December, 9:30–11:30, Endeavour House.
- Housing Interviews Date Change: Now 7th November.
- Christmas Venue Suggestion: The Last Anchor.