## **STRATEGIC TENANTS AND RESISENTS (STAR) PANEL MEETING**

Wednesday 7th February 2024

6:30pm -8:30pm

Walthamstow Town Hall (Innovation Lab) Hybrid

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| MINUTES | ACTIONS |
| PRESENT  Josie Lewis (Chair) JL  William Wood WW  Bert Morris BM  Juli Ozer JO  Heather Gardiner HE  Officers  Cate Evans, Acting Director of Housing Management CE  Shahid Mallam – Head of Engagement and Insight SM  Yasmin White – Housing Engagement Manager YW  Sharon Leigh Gordon – Assistant Director, Housing Repairs & Planned Works SLG  Natalie Gasper -Finance Advisor NG  Natalie McPherson – Finance Manger NM  Sarah Baptiste - Housing Engagement Officer SB  Apologies: Dave Cook DC |  |
| 1 Welcome and Introductions  JL Opened the meeting, and invited all present members, and online members to introduce themselves. | YW Sent invite link to Leslie Cartwright to Join via MS TEAMS |
| 2 Minutes from last meeting  SM Led on review of key actions following the last STAR meeting (Wednesday 18th October 2023) with panel members and officers present.  SM Performance satisfaction – Refer to basecamp documents for information (differentiation between quarters and quartiles)  WW Raised the poor performance satisfaction KPI Void 29/31 days now running at 103 days.  CE There has been really high levels of voids 103 days is unacceptable. There are many factors that came together to have an impact on the timescales. (New buildings came over relatively quick in succession Hyland which has 120 properties had to be filled). Residents moving from smaller properties into more suitable accommodation, which has left voids. Insufficient staffing levels, all posts are now filled. The current focus is on the backlog of works.  CE Allocations was short staffed as well as tenancy, there is a new joint project with allocations and housing management to help improve voids performance.  WW Raised an issue of a known void on his estate (The Drive).  Previously the flat had issues with drug dealing before partial closure order served. Property had been voided since 26th October 2022, works are now being done on the property, but it is still boarded up.  Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as correct. | WW to share property details with CE  CE Will investigate case. |
| 3 Housing Allocations Policy  Deferred to next meeting. | Apologies from DC. Agreed that this item would be carried forward to the next panel meeting. |
| 4 Housing Revenue Account HRA Rent setting.  NG presented the proposal for the HRA budget setting.  Outlined financial challenges due to high levels of inflation, although lower than 2023 increase is occurring albeit at a slower rate.  Highlighted that reserves within the HRA are on the low side, in need of replenishment over the next ten years.  Committed to a saving strategy of three hundred thousand pounds per year proposal 2024/ 2025 to be put forward to cabinet later this month February 2024   * Explained that the proposal to cabinet will be to increase rents by 7.7% in alignment with the rent standards that is produced by the regulator of social housing CPI Plus 1% * Service charge will increase by 7.7% with the exception around estate service charges, this is due to a restructure that has happened within the team, to deliver better tenant satisfaction. * Garage rents to increase 10% for residents and 20% non-residents * Shared ownership rents to increase in alignment with the lease. * Housing fees and charges have been in agreed in December 2023, most of which relate to lease holder charges, applied for various items. With the saving should be fully recovered 2027 / 2028 forwards   **Capital investment**  NG outlined the capital investment spend over the next ten years as set out in the presentation.  Highlighted that we are currently working on a thirty-year business plan, this is expected to be delivered in 2024 / 2025 to help provide a financial strategy to help maintain investment within the housing stock.  2024/ 2025 Budget highlighted in presentation please see basecamp documents for reference.  **Revenue**  Expenditure and cost of borrowing required for the capital program.  CCO is a contribution from the revenue account which will help to fund the capital program.  Savings over the next ten years, are highlighted in presentation, please refer to basecamp.  Surplus 20024 – 2025 followed by a deficit and then a surplus going forward.  Graphed research indicates, lowest point will be 2026 -2027 and then recover going forwards.  **Capital programme**  Works on housing stock (Decent homes, fire safety, to follow contractual commitments that are already in place)  HG The low point of reserves 2025-2026 is this correct, as it looks like the low point is 2024 -2025  NG Minimum reserve should be 10% of the income, 2024 – 2025 indicate the useable reserves the graphs make it a little difficult to clarify.  HG cost increase except for estate services and energy, I had been asked to review information that was to be sent out to residents on caretaking, when do the new service provisions start.  CE Charges are starting, all residents have been informed of the new service standards.  BM Raised issues of increase in Garage rents of 10% for residents and 20% for non-residents. Asked whether the planned audit of Garages had been completed.  CE Advised that the audit was carried out, LBWF found several garages that needed works to upgrade the disused and recover ones that are no longer in use, those no longer used have been handed back.  SM Next steps will this be going to cabinet? When?  NG 22nd Feb to cabinet.  NG - Business plan already working on updates a more detailed plan should be available around October 2024 for a more detailed plan to span the next thirty years. | NG Has provided slides to presentation these are uploaded on basecamp.  NG to add in the totals to clearly indicate the findings NG to resend the presentation for the panel.  CE will ask the Place Team to provide a short summary of the changes to the service and when costs changed etc. |

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| 5 Future of STAR Panel | Agreed.  YW will work closely with panel members, to put together a proposal, with the intention of engaging external consultant interest, to independently support all scrutiny projects.  YW to send all panel members recruitment package to review, and feedback on before sending out.  YW to add Housing Transformation to next meeting agenda.  YW to set up a separate meeting so LBWF can report back on progress made on the repairs scrutiny recommendations. |
| YW presented proposals on the changes to the panel. YW confirmed she will facilitate the STAR panel going forward, working alongside the Chair to ensure all panel members are heard and valued.  Outlined that we will shortly be commissioning and independent to support resident-led scrutiny.  Working alongside JL and YW to ensure key areas for scrutiny are brought forward in a timely manner. Very much a team effort. From putting the feelers out, as well as the internal strategic process.  BM Mentioned using some of the old tools that worked previously, in the plan going forward.  YW Emphasised on the working together as a panel through the entire process, this is a team effort.  BM Brought up the lack of reply from the work put into the previous scrutiny work.  YW TOR Reflect the power for the panel to call in the signed off action plan on development on the task and finish scrutiny projects.  YW Regulator of social housing new standard **April 1st, 2024**  YW STAR proposed to be changed to – Resident Influence and accountability panel.  BW/ WW/ JL / HG / JO to agree on the move forward to refer to STAR now as the Resident Influence and accountability panel.  YW - Terms of reference to reflect the name change if agreed from STAR to Resident Influence and accountability panel.  Agreed that an acronym will not be used and that it will be referred to in full rather than RIA.  YW – TOR Clearly indicate that the panel are the champions of resident involvement at the highest level of governance. Over seeing the work for Housing Engagement to ensure residents are at the heart of everything we do as a housing service.  WW STAR / Resident Influence and accountability panel, has always had the power to recall any task and finish scrutiny work, although this has not happened.  YW - Agreed access to scrutiny task and finish work is already embedded this is a review to strengthen the TOR going forward.  CE - Six month / twelve-month papers for information update on developments within scrutiny. Highlighting works that need a meeting to be reviewed this would be added to the agenda where relevant.  YW – Advised that a new recruitment pack for the Resident Influence & Accountability Panel and scrutiny had been developed. It includes:   * Cover letter * TOR * Role description * Application form * Minutes from previous meetings * Past scrutiny exercise   Additionally, a notification for pre and post meeting, as well as resident training opportunities hosted by LBWF and its partners.  YW - Incentivising new members to the STAR panel, appreciation for time, effort, and work, at the highest governance level of resident influence. £100 shopping voucher if they attend all four meetings.  WW - The voucher will not make a difference to personal participation, with a wider view on recruitment in the borough, being careful to note that residents with an interest would apply irrespective of the shopping voucher.  CE - Recognition as opposed to incentivised for dedication, and hard work to the strategic panels.  HG - Value would be a social gathering this would indicate appreciation.  JL – Recognition would look like being kept informed on updates and outcomes on task and finish scrutiny projects, in a timely manner.  CE Total offer for joining the panel, gives the value and recognition it deserves taking feedback from panel into account.  BM – Cabinet member portfolio Cllr Khan, to be more involved in the strategic resident agenda going forward, at least one meeting per annum. Appreciating the large portfolio he has.  CE Look at what we can do to strengthen that element of housing portfolio lead.  Independent view, not to overtake from a political standpoint.  SM - 80% residents and leaseholders 20% two TMO represent STAR Current vacancies one in TMO and one on the STAR panel. The steer is much for the scrutiny task and finish projects, as this is more challenging as it is more acute look into council service provision.  YW Introduced the new service diary proposal (similar to a mystery shopping exercise). Scrutiny at all levels of the organisation. This would look like a service diary, for any enquiry, they would go through a list of strategic questions that would review the resident journey. This would be rolled out to residents on current data base, over the coming few weeks.  YW -This is for service improvement, this will also be brought to panel, so that a review will give way to a particular area to be scrutinised.  YW - Forward plan, working with JL and the panel, looking at the areas of interest, what officers would the panel like in attendance. Building safety compliance have expressed an interest to be on the forward plan. However, it was noted that there is an existing Resident Building Safety Group that covers this, and WW attends so could feedback to this panel as needed to avoid duplication.  YW – Interest from Charlotte about the Housing transformation, regarding what is happening and what is changing, with particular interest to the mystery shopping piece of work. Agreed this should come back to the next panel meeting.  SLG AD Housing Repairs and planned Works – Introduced herself. Housing repairs for a number of years, twenty years plus. Most recent post Kensington and Chelsea for five years, with a key focus on the customer experience improvement within LBWF.  Panel members thanked SLG for attending and looked forward to working with her.  CE - Upcoming opportunity for residents to raise repairs online.  YW – Plan to update on the last repairs satisfaction scrutiny with a view of progress alongside SLG with JL and panel members. |
| 6 AOB  YW Dates from Morgan Sindall Property services to host STAR Panel  **6 Argall Ave, London E10 7QE**  25th 26th or 27th 28th March (Mon – Thurs)  Transport arranged where necessary.  YW - Sixty Bricks visit still on, just waiting for better weather.  Sunflower Hub July 2024 where the old Wood Street library used to be. Homes and family’s hub, residents can book to see tenancy officers there will be a customer reception area.  BM - Billericay housing stock for residents that live out of borough, to be accessible (MSPS and Aston Group)  CE – Out of borough housing surgeries are to be offered. |  |
| 7 Date of Next Meeting and Close – TBA For the next Four Meetings | Noted that the Innovation Lab was not very accessible or suitable for some members. Engagement Team to source alternative rooms for future meetings. |