

SWT Tenants Strategic Group - 25 January 2021 held via Zoom Video Conference

Present: Councillor Alex Akhigbemen (Chair)

Councillors Paul Cram, Kevin Hellier, Corrine McMylor, Livi Mongare, Mark Lithgow, Janet Lloyd and Francesca Smith

Officers: James Barrah, Stephen Boland, Chris Brown, Ian Candlish, Shari Hallett (Housing Performance Manager), Sharon Yarde (Housing), Simon Lewis, Kerry Prisco and Tracey Meadows (Democracy and Governance)

Also Present: Councillors

(The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm)

24. Apologies

Apologies were received from Jessie Bunn

25. Notes from previous meeting

The notes of the meeting held on the 23 November 2020 were approved.

26. Directorate Report

Housing Directorate Report to Housing Tenants Strategic Board

The Group considered a comprehensive report presented by James Barrah (Director of Housing and Communities), Chris Brown (Assistant Director – Development and Regeneration), Ian Candlish (Assistant Director, Housing Property), Simon Lewis (Assistant Director, Housing and Community Development), Shari Hallett (Housing Performance Manager)

Comments from group members included;

- Happy that the new 8 properties at Laxton Road were now let and were good sustainable properties;
- The tenants that are under occupying their properties, are we encouraging or mandating them to downsize? *We encourage and are not mandating at all. We are looking at our policies to see how we can encourage our tenants to downsize;*
- How do we manage ASB's; *we always try to manage this before it gets to the Ombudsman;*

27. Property Safety Compliance Update Report

Landlord Health and Safety Property Compliance Update Report

The group were asked to consider a detailed report regarding Property Compliance by Adam Evans, Compliance Manager - Housing Property

Comments by group members included;

- Concerns that the Legionella checks were not being undertaken as prescribed; *the funds are set up between our general fund and our HRA properties. A specialist contractor has been brought in to organise these checks;*
- Why are you doing re-inspecting areas for asbestos? *communal areas were being re-inspected to check for no damage since the last inspection;*

28. **Budget and rent setting**

HRA Revenue and Capital Budget Setting 2021/22 including Dwelling Rent Setting 21/22 and 30- Year Business Plan Review

The group were asked to consider a detailed report regarding the Capital Budget setting for 2121/22.

Comments from the group included;

- Has the ITC programme been factored into this budget? *The ITC programme has been paid for in an ongoing budget. New projects will need further funding;*
- With an aging population would we need to put more money aside for aids and adaptations? *We need to maximise our budget by getting our lettings right for new properties rather than making permanent adaptations to properties. This will be kept under review;*
- Is there a reserve fund for repairs to leaseholder's flats? *Our blocks where we have leaseholders are of traditional construction so we do not have a cladding issue. The external envelope of the building would be our responsibility to maintain and then a recharge process pro rate through a service charge for works relating to the properties. There will be a review of Service Charges in the coming year;*

29. **A New Deal for Social Housing - White Paper Summary**

Summary of Social Housing White Paper – “The Charter for Social Housing Residents”

The committee considered the brief presentation on the new Social Housing white Paper.

Comments from the group included;

- Concerns with the wording on the report frequency stating adhoc. This was a bit vague; *the report was old due to Covid. This financial year we will do the Annual report and this will appear on our website and in the tenant's newsletter. If more information was needed on any of the items discussed the group can request that these items appear on the agendas, that way the group can direct us on the direction that they would like us to go in;*

30. **Complaints Self Assessment against Housing Ombudsman Code**

Self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Code

The group considered the information report that was in the agenda pack.

Comments from group members included;

- Is it correct that the Ombudsman expect a response to a complaint within 5 working day? *Currently we do it within 2 working days and stage 2 requires a response within 20 working days;*

31. **Tenants' Strategic Group election update**

Tenant's Strategic Group Election Update

Reported that everything was running on track. 10 or less applications will result in this not going to election;

Comments from the group included

- How many nominations had been received? *We have now received 3 nominations.*

(The Meeting ended at 7.27 pm)