

LANDLORD SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD

24 February 2022

NOTES

Present:

Cllr Nick Palmer

Cllr Paul Rivers (Chairman)

Terry Daubney, Waverley Tenants' Panel
(Vice Chairman)

Cllr Simon Dear

Cllr Jacquie Keen

Gillian Martin, Waverley Tenants Panel

Danielle Sleightholme, Waverley Tenants
Panel

23 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Officer Annie Righton, Strategic Director.

24 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting from 28 January were agreed to be an accurate record.

25 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest connected with the items on the agenda.

26 Senior Living Consultation

The Service Improvement Manager gave a presentation regarding the eight senior living schemes and 2021 consultation.

She stated that the service used to receive Housing Support Fund from Surrey County Council which enabled them to have full time Senior Living Managers on site. Now the service was focussed on health and safety of building, residents and about empowering people for independent living. Since the service was rebranded in April 2018, the Senior Living Manager committed to annual consultation events. This was not possible in 2020, nor 2021 so a paper survey was distributed.

The Service Improvement Manager shared the results, feedback themes and draft action plan. There was an overall response rate of approximately 30%, but very variable across the different schemes. The Service Improvement Manager said people were genuinely happy with their homes and the service, but a range of improvements and issues had been identified to inform the draft action plan. She invited comments.

The Board discussed the variable response rate and if it was a true reflection of tenants' views.

Some of the members of the Board also felt the stigma needed to be removed and the service needed to be modernised. Some others felt that removing senior living

support was not a good situation. Some of the Tenants' Panel felt that it was not ideal that there were no managers managing the senior living schemes on site anymore, they were managed by an officer, and this had caused confusion for some residents.

Board members believed there is an inconsistency in service across the schemes and Senior Living Officers are not delivering as advertised on the website. The Service Improvement Manager noted that the pandemic had prevented the the service evolving as expected following the 2018 relaunch.

Tenants' Panel representative Terry Daubney felt there needed to be more of a sense of urgency to ensure the survey responses were better collected from some schemes and that the areas of dissatisfaction were addressed. The Service Improvement Manager responded that the survey had identified issues and the housing operations team were going to pick them up. As a result of the consultation response, a draft action plan was drawn up. It was felt that communication was key. There would also be investigation into why the response rate from some schemes was so poor. It was felt that it was distributed in different ways in different places. It was stated that in future years the survey was likely to be carried out by a mixture of face-to-face surveys with residents and paper surveys.

Some members of the Board commented that the questionnaire had come at a difficult time for older people with the Covid pandemic occurring. Some of the Board did not think the survey gave a good representation of people living in senior living accommodation. Tenants' Panel representative Gillian Martin commented that the Tenants' Panel had only been made aware of the survey a few days before it went out. She reported that the Tenants' Panel had got a very negative response from tenants about it in one scheme. There was a lot of fear that their tenancy would be at risk if they raised issues.

The Head of Housing Operations confirmed that this was the start of the conversation and to use this information as an opportunity to review service provision and relaunch the service to meet the needs of current and future tenants.

27 Flexible Tenancy Review

The Service Improvement Manager presented the officer proposal to cease using flexible tenancies. She stated that flexible tenancies had been introduced in September 2014. A five-year fixed term was offered to maximise the use of social housing and for social housing to be a springboard into other forms of accommodation. There had been a change in view and perception of social housing and noted that some tenants were feeling insecure in their homes and were not building relationships in the community during that time.

It was pointed out that to change the terms and conditions of the flexible tenancies there would need to be a consultation process and change to the Council's Tenancy Policy and Tenancy Strategy.

The Head of Housing Delivery and Communities commented that many other social landlords were removing fixed term tenancies and the national view had changed over time.

Resolved

That the Board advised the Portfolio Holder to end the use of flexible tenancies and supported the proposal to progress the officer's implementation plan.

28 Work programme

It was stated that the details from the scheduled report on the HRA Finance would be included in the Quarterly Performance Report. It was agreed that feedback and progress on the Senior Living Service Consultation action plan would be added as a standing item on the agenda.

29 Date of next meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for 10am on 31 March 2022.