

HOUSING MANAGEMENT BOARD

6 March 2012

5.30 - 6.15 pm

Present:

Executive Councillor for Housing: Catherine Smart

Councillors: Blackhurst (Vice-Chair), Bird, Blencowe, Brierley, Todd-Jones, Rosenstiel, Stuart and Znajek

Tenant/Leaseholder Representatives: Diane Best (Chair), Kay Harris, Brian Haywood, John Marais and Terry Sweeney

Officers: Liz Bisset (Director of Customer & Community Services), Robert Hollingsworth (Head of City Homes), Sandra Farmer (Area Housing Manager), Marella Hoffman (Resident Involvement Manager) and Martin Whelan (Committee Manager)

Also Present: Stan Best (Housing Regulation Panel Chair) and representatives of the Housing Regulation Panel.

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

Prior to the formal start of the meeting the Chair thanked all members and officers for their support over the last 12 months, and welcomed members of the Housing Regulation Panel to the meeting.

12/13/HMB Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Price. Cllr Todd-Jones attended as an alternate.

12/14/HMB Declarations of Interest

None.

12/15/HMB Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

12/16/HMB Public Questions

None.

12/17/HMB Report on residents' co-regulation, introducing a Progress Report from the Housing Regulation Panel to the Housing Management Board

Matter for Decision:

To consider the report of the Housing Regulation Panel.

Decision of the Executive Council for Housing:

The Executive Councillor resolved to:

- i. Congratulate the residents' Housing Regulation Panel on their first year of activity.
- ii. Continue to support residents' co-regulation and the constructive challenge provided by the Housing Regulation Panel.

Reason for the Decision:

As per the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

Not applicable

Scrutiny Considerations

The Director of Customer and Community Services explained that the meeting was focussed on a single item, and that the report reflected the strong and important role played by tenants and leaseholders in Cambridge. The Director

also explained that the meeting was also the last for Brian Haywood, and wished to thank him for his contribution over the years.

The committee received a report from the Housing Regulation Panel regarding its work. Prior to the presentation from the Chair of the Housing Regulation Panel, the Principal Tenant Participation Officer outlined the framework in which the panel operated, and the issues associated with the work of the panel.

Clarification was requested on the current number of members and whether this was sufficient for the panel to manage its work. The Chair of the Panel explained that there were currently six members, and it was intended to have between 6 and 9 members with rotation of members every couple of years. The Head of City Homes explained the structure supporting the work of the Housing Regulation Panel.

The committee agreed that it was important to have a strong independent tenant role in the regulation of housing services, and for tenants to be able to “place a mirror” against services provided. The Chair of the Panel welcomed the feedback and explained the rationale used by the panel, namely:

- Is the service being provided in accordance with the service agreement?
- Is the service being provided consistently across the city?
- Does the service provide value for money?

The important work of the panel was welcomed and it was agreed that the panel could only provide this role with the strong support of officers.

The commitment of the existing members and the time committed to the process over the last 12 months was welcomed, but it was questioned whether any consideration had been given to the sustainability of the arrangements in the long term. The Principal Tenant Participation Officer highlighted the structure in appendix 5, and the strategies designed to nurture talent. The Director of Customer and Community Services explained that the work undertaken provided a different perspective to the provision of services, but that it didn't replace work undertaken by professional staff.

With the re-emergence of the housing forum, it was suggested that there may be an opportunity to promote the work of the panel. The Chair of the Panel

welcomed the suggestion but emphasised that the panel must be seen and continue to be seen as independent.

In response to questions from members, the Chair of the Panel explained the scoring system used by members of the panel when assessing services.

The committee thanked members of the panel for their commitment and important work.

Councillor Rosenstiel proposed an amendment to the recommendations to change recommendation 2.1 to “congratulate” the panel for its work.

The committee approved the amended recommendations unanimously.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations and congratulated the panel for its work and the vital role played by tenants in the regulation of housing services. The Executive Councillor thanked all members of the Panel, and thanked the members of the Housing Management Board who were not standing for re-election. The Executive Councillor paid tribute to the work undertaken by Brian Haywood, and highlighted his significant contribution to the tenant movement in the city, particularly his time as the first tenant Chair of Housing Management Board.

Terry Sweeney paid tribute to Brian Haywood and highlighted the progress of the tenant movement over the last 10 years in the city. Terry also highlighted the previous contributions of Brian, including chairing the Cambridge Federation in its early stages. A presentation was made to Brian.

Brian thanked the committee and officers for their support over the last 10 plus years, and welcomed the significant distance travelled by the tenant movement. Councillors and Officers were thanked for welcoming and integrating the tenants and leaseholders into the design-making processes of the council.

Brian also stated that the Council was the “best ever” and thanked officers and councillors, particularly the Executive Councillor, for their support.

The meeting ended at 6.15 pm

CHAIR

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