

**Housing Regulation Panel (HRP) Progress Report 2012/2013
to Housing Management Board**

Presented by: Chair of Housing Regulation Panel, Mr. Stan Best

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At the meeting of the Housing Management Board on 6 March 2012, the Executive Councillor resolved to congratulate the residents' Housing Regulation Panel on their first year of activity and to continue to support residents' co-regulation and the constructive challenge provided by the Housing Regulation Panel.
- 1.2 This report is to inform Housing Management Board of the Housing Regulation Panel's activities during the year 2012/2013.

2. The Role of the Housing Regulation Panel

- 2.1 The Panel is a group of trained tenants and leaseholders who independently inspect the standards of Cambridge City Council's landlord services. It has the authority to challenge any services that are falling below the agreed service standards.
- 2.2. The Panel provides a residents' view about service, performance and business direction.

3. Housing Regulation Panel's programme of activities 2012/2013

- 3.1 The Panel reviewed its own practices and procedures to make them appropriate for specific activities within its programme.
- 3.2 In addition to inspecting a specific Landlord Service, it has widened its role to obtain an over-view of the services provided by the landlord. This helps to inform its forward plan.
- 3.3 Representatives of the Housing Regulation Panel are involved in:
 - a) Voids Best Practice Group
 - b) Repairs and Maintenance Improvement Plan Scrutiny Group
 - c) Grounds Maintenance and Communal Cleaning Liaison meetings
 - d) Citywide Garages Review Working Group
 - e) South Replanting Programme
 - f) Estates and Facilities Service Plan
 - g) Judging the annual Residents' Garden Competition

- 3.4 During the year Housing Regulation Panel representatives have been involved in:
- a) Recruitment and appointment of the Resident Involvement Facilitator
 - b) Recruitment and appointment of the Resident Involvement Communications Officer
 - c) The tour of potential housing redevelopment sites
 - d) Study visits with representatives from other housing providers to share good practice
- 3.5 The Housing Regulation Panel independently appraises the Tenant Initiative Scheme (TIS) bids from residents and makes recommendations for approval or not to City Homes Management Team.

4. Housing Regulation Panel Inspection of the Caretaking Service

- 4.1 The purpose of the investigation was to determine:
- If the service being provided is in accordance with the service level agreements
 - If the service is being provided consistently across the city
 - If the service provides value for money
- 4.2 The Housing Regulation Panel commenced its inspection with an information briefing from City Homes Area Housing Managers and Estate Champion.
- 4.3 It proceeded to collect information about the service from a variety of documented sources.
- 4.4 It developed a Caretaking Service Inspection form (Appendix 2) for site visits using the Council's Caretaking Service Agreement leaflets and the Housemark Estates Services Peer Review Photo Book.
- 4.5 When requested by the Housing Regulation Panel, City Homes (South) Area Housing Manager, Estate Champion and City Homes (North) Housing Officer made site visits with HRP during the inspections to provide clarification of issues arising.
- 4.6 The Housing Regulation Panel collated the results from all the site inspections (Appendix 3)
- 4.7 On completion of the inspection the Housing Regulation Panel presented the report of its findings and recommendations for improvement (Appendix 4) to City Homes.

- 4.8 Together, City Homes and the Housing Regulation Panel agreed the improvements for the service which are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timed (SMART).
- 4.9 In January 2013 City Homes reported back to the Housing Regulation Panel on the actions taken to improve the service as agreed.

(Appendix 5 lists HRP's recommendations for improvements together with the actions taken by City Homes).

5. Next service-inspection by residents' Housing Regulation Panel

Residents' Housing Regulation Panel have commenced their next inspection process, which is on the communal window-cleaning service. The Panel also have a more detailed Forward Plan through which they consider which services to inspect after window-cleaning. In 2014 HRP will report back to HMB with the results, outcomes and impacts of all the service-inspections they have done in the meantime.

6. Keeping tenants and leaseholders informed

The Housing Regulation Panel gives regular updates to all tenants and leaseholders in the quarterly Open Door magazine. The Winter 2012 edition featured the full findings and results of the inspection of the caretaking service. (Appendix 6)

7. Housing Regulation Panel support and recruitment

- 7.1 The Housing Regulation Panel Chair has regular meetings with the Resident Involvement team to support the independent work of the panel.
- 7.2 The work programme of the Resident Involvement Facilitator includes strategies for the recruitment of more residents to become involved. A number of newly-involved resident representatives are being developed to progress on to HRP in 2013.