

# **Housing Regulation Panel (HRP) Progress Report 2014/2015 to Housing Scrutiny Committee**

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

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 At the meeting of the Housing Management Board on 4 March 2014 the Executive Councillor
  - (i) Noted and welcomed the positive outcomes achieved by residents' Housing Regulation Panel in their third year of activity.
  - (ii) Resolved to continue to support residents' co-regulation and the constructive challenge provided by residents' Housing Regulation Panel
- 1.2 This report is to inform Housing Scrutiny Committee of the Housing Regulation Panel's activities during the year 2014/2015.

## **2. The Role of the Housing Regulation Panel**

- 2.1 The Panel is a group of trained tenants and leaseholders who independently inspects 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 2014/2015**

- 3.1 The Panel continuously reviews 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 The Panel continues to review the services it has previously inspected and reports locations to City Homes where a particular service is falling below the agreed service standards.

- 3.4 Representatives of the Housing Regulation Panel have been involved in:
- a) Voids Group meetings with Estates & Facilities and City Homes.
  - b) City Homes Residents Partnership meetings.
  - c) Estate Services Liaison meetings.
  - d) Leasehold Review meetings.
  - e) Judging the annual Residents' Garden Competition.
  - f) Review meetings with the Window Cleaning provider and City Homes.
  - g) Performance Monitoring sessions with the Business Development Officer and Resident Involvement Facilitator.
- 3.5 During the year Housing Regulation Panel representatives participated in:
- a) Chartered Institute of Housing Eastern Region conferences held in Cambridge (June 2014) and in Stansted (November 2014).
  - b) Viewing of the new build properties at Latimer Close.
  - c) Meeting with the Assessor for City Homes Customer Service Excellence Award.
  - d) Carrying out independent inspections at the request of City Homes to provide information on the standard of delivery of particular services at specific locations in the city following issues raised by residents.
  - e) The HRP Chair was a member of the Evaluation Panel for the Building Cleaning Tender.
- 3.6 The Housing Regulation Panel independently appraises Tenant Initiative Scheme (TIS) bids from residents and makes recommendations for approval or not to City Homes Management Team (CHMT). The projects recommended for approval were:
- a) Hanover & Princess Courts  
New planter in the location of the refurbished community room.  
Two new planters each side of the community room door entrance.
  - b) Mansel Court  
Furniture for the communal garden.
  - c) Talbot House  
Cover for the garden pergola.

During the year the Housing Regulation Panel reviewed the procedure for appraising TIS Bids. To provide opportunities to widen resident involvement and to make the use of meeting time more efficient, HRP set up a Residents TIS Bids sub-group to consider bids in detail and then refer them to HRP to make the final recommendations to CHMT.

#### **4. Housing Regulation Panel Inspection of Estate Services**

- 4.1 The purpose of the investigation was to determine:
- If the services are being provided in accordance with the specification
  - If the services are being provided consistently across the city
  - If the services provide value for money

The inspection of these services, which comprise 6 elements are governed by the seasons, so took a year to complete.

- 4.2 The Housing Regulation Panel commenced its inspection in December 2013 with a Chair's briefing from the Senior Operations Manager, Streets and Open Spaces.
- 4.3 It proceeded to collect information about the services from a variety of documented sources.
- 4.4 It developed Inspection forms for each of the 6 elements. The scoring criteria (Appendix 2) for each of the 6 elements are from the Housemark Estate Services Club Peer Review Photo Book
- 4.5 When requested by the Housing Regulation Panel, City Homes and Streets & Open Spaces provided clarification of issues arising during the inspections.
- 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 and Streets & Open Spaces.
- 4.8 Together, City Homes, Streets & Open Spaces and the Housing Regulation Panel agreed the improvements for the service which are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timed (SMART).
- 4.9 In April and May 2015 City Homes and Streets & Open Spaces reported back to the Housing Regulation Panel on the proposed actions to improve the service as agreed on 10 March 2015.

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

**5. Keeping tenants and leaseholders informed**

The Housing Regulation Panel gives regular updates to all tenants and leaseholders in the quarterly Open Door magazine. A future 2015 issue will feature the results of the inspection of Estate Services and the agreed service improvements.