

Tenants' Voice

7th May 2024, 6pm-8pm, hybrid meeting

Present:

TV Members:

Pawla Cottage (PC)	Tenant
Forid Ali (FA)	Tenant
Garry Harper (GH)	Tenant
Daniele Lamarche (DL)	Leaseholder
Luigi Candela (LC)	Leaseholder

Staff:

Tracey Gray (TG – Chair)	Interim Director of Housing Transformation
Beverley Greenidge (BG)	Director of Neighbourhood Services
Gulam Hussain (GH)	Head of Regulatory Assurance and Neighbourhood
Lesley Owen (LO)	Business Improvement and Development Manager
Nojmul Hussain (NH)	Senior Resident Scrutiny Officer
Elizabeth Skillen (ES)	Housing Policy and Regulations Officer
Hillary Howie (HH)	Head of Housing Repairs
Chris Martin (CM)	Repairs Contract Manager
Jenny Fisher (JF)	Policy Analyst

Members:

Cllr Kabir Ahmed (Cllr KA)	Lead Cabinet Member for Housing
----------------------------	---------------------------------

Apologies:

Gibran Afzal (GA)	Tenant
-------------------	--------

Summary of actions

1. Members to share TV group vacancies within their networks/contacts
2. Explore platform for young people's involvement
3. NH to add diversity and involvement representation as a future agenda item
4. ES to circulate damp and mould advisory leaflets and draft policy. Members to feedback on draft policy
5. ES to organise a sub-group meeting for further discussion around how the current response to tackling damp and mould can be improved. Members to email interest in taking part to ES/NH
6. LO to bring performance paper at the next meeting and members to think about performance indicators they want to include
7. Members to email NH if they have an area they would like added on the group's workplan
8. NH to share organisational structure and diagram of the governance structure illustrating how Tenant's Voice group feeds into the decision making process
9. Members to email NH if they want to nominate themselves as the Chair or Vice Chair of this group.

1. Welcome and Introductions

- 1.1 TG opened the first Tenants' Voice (TV) meeting and all present introduced themselves.

2. Introductions and scope

- 2.1 Cllr KA thanked members for their enthusiasm to participate as members of this newly formed group. He explained the context around why the new model was set up, which replaces the former Residents' Panel managed under Tower Hamlets Homes.
- 2.2 Background - Cllr KA explained accountability will be stronger as the housing management service is now directly under the Council. He emphasised the need for tenants/leaseholders to be pro-active in providing scrutiny and feedback in order to help improve the housing management service. Furthermore, in light of the Regulator of Social Housing compliance requirement against the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard this group is essential in holding the Council to account, providing feedback and shaping the way services are delivered.
- 2.3 Recruitment - PC enquired about the recruitment process; Cllr KA explained the process and that due to less people applying than expected, membership was not competitive. Thus, further spaces are available for residents. LO stated there is availability for 3 tenants and 1 tenant of a leaseholder. Recruitment for new members will take place soon. Members were requested to share the current vacancies within their networks.

ACTION: Members to share TV group's vacancies within their networks/contacts

- 2.4 Engaging young people - DL proposed having a platform to hear from young people, especially as Tower Hamlets has a large young population.

Tenants' Voice

Cllr KA and TG agreed that this could be explored but a different engagement method will need to be set up in order to draw interest.

- 2.5 FA felt the demographics within the borough are diverse and voices and representation need to be balanced. This includes young people that require representation.

TG suggested that we look at the diversity of the group at a future meeting.

ACTION: Explore platform for young people's involvement

ACTION: NH to add diversity and involvement representation as a future agenda item

3.0 Repairs - Damp and mould

- 3.1 ES explained that damp and mould is a high work priority as it impacts a large number of residents. There is much work currently taking place to ensure responding to and tackling damp and mould repair cases improves. ES outlined the current work activities taking place, including drafting a damp mould policy, developing service design work, undertaking health check (by independent consultants) and sharing best practice etc.

- 3.2 **Group discussion** - ES asked members to think about their experience of damp and mould, how they would like to be consulted during the repair journey and what aspects can be improved. Key points include:

- PC reported when reporting damp and mould she was on the phone for over an hour until the line went off. Subsequently, having to issue a complaint
- DL reported her experience of flooding/leaks. It was felt that often the contractors (Mears) do not prioritise the root cause, i.e property/flat it is emerging from
- JF advised looking at the council's building insurer and how dissatisfied leaseholders are with the service
- FA suggested introducing 'catchment' areas where repairs service provides a dedicated service. TG explained will have a local neighbourhood based approach and share performance intelligence with members. Furthermore, contractors will move towards patched based repairs service. This will enable a tailored service
- JF mentioned that Health Determinant Collaboration is doing research around housing quality, this entail investigating damp and mould; JF suggested this group feeds into the research.

- 3.3 CM explained factors which contributes towards damp and mould such as structural defects in the building or poor performance from contractors in resolving the problem.

- 3.4 Members were informed about information/advise leaflets available around damp and mould. This was requested to be circulated to group members. In addition, ES said she will circulate the damp and mould policy for members to feedback on.

ACTION: ES to circulate damp and mould advisory leaflets and draft policy. Members to feedback on draft policy.

- 3.5 It was agreed that further discussion can take place through a task and finish group. This will provide an opportunity to obtain detailed feedback and co-produce service materials. Members were requested to email ES or NH if they want to participate.

ACTION: ES to organise a sub-group meeting for further discussion around how the current response to tackling damp and mould can be improved. Members to email interest in taking part to ES/NH

- 3.5 ES informed members that the Council is exploring the idea of having damp and mould checked during an annual gas safety check.
- 3.6 DL emphasised the importance of having an understanding of the building so that contractors are equip with the appropriate tools so that they can resolve the problem during first visit, subsequently resolving the problem quicker. Discussion ensued around the current data available on blocks; CM outlined challenges and issues around current building/block data.
- 3.7 PC raised concerns around residents with disability who are unable to clear their furniture/materials before repair work. ES recognised the vulnerability and explained this is an area of development.

4.0 TSM – performance indicators

- 4.1 LO briefly explained Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs), set by the Regulator for Housing, which the Council must show compliance against.

LO said performance reports will be circulated to members which illustrates performance against key indicators. LO requested members to think about what indicators they would like to look at.

ACTION: LO to bring performance paper at the next meeting and members to think about performance indicators they want to look at.

5.0 Workplan 2024-25

- 5.1 NH explained under the previous model, the panel agreed an annual work plan. Since 2018, workplans included a variety of scrutiny reviews such as exploring communication standards to strengthening consultation during major works. It also included inviting service heads from across different services to present the delivery of their work in the form of spotlight sessions.
- 5.2 NH informed members that standing items include performance updates, managing complaints handling and regular building safety updates. NH outlined some proposed items such as the refresh of the tenant and leaseholder engagement strategy, co-producing the website and members training.

NH asked members to email any areas they wish to add on the workplan.

- DL proposed looking at waste management and recycling of building materials

Tenants' Voice

- PC requested an organisation chart, including diagram of the governance structure

ACTION: Members to email NH if they have an area they would like added on the group's workplan.

ACTION: NH to share organisational structure and diagram of the governance structure which shows how the Tenant's Voice group feeds into the decision making process.

6.0 Selection of a new Chair/Vice Chair

6.1 Members were asked to email NH if they wanted to nominate themselves as the new Chair or Vice Chair of this group. NH explained nominations can take place at the next meeting.

ACTION: Members to email NH if they want to nominate themselves as the Chair or Vice Chair of this group.

7.0 AOB

7.1 Some discussion took place around repairs and a need for post repairs inspection.

8.0 Date of next meeting

8.1 Wednesday 3rd July 2024, 6pm - 8pm