

**Resident Scrutiny Panel Meeting  
Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2011 - 6.30 pm  
Island Gardens Housing Centre, Manchester Road, E14 3DN**

**Present:**

**Apologies:**

***Resident Members***

Rubiya Begum  
John Courtney (acting Chair)  
Margaret Donovan  
Linda Owers  
Usha Begum

***Resident Members***

Catherine Weir  
Sadiyya Dastegir

***Officers & Independent***

Raj Kumar – *Independent support to the Panel*  
Debbie Davies  
Peter Griffiths

**Action**

**1. Introductions & Welcome – TPAS Accreditation**

- 1.1 John Courtney (JC) agreed to Chair the meeting in the absence of the elected Chair. John welcomed everyone to the meeting.  
Debbie Davies (DD) introduced a report relating to the Tenant Participation and Advisory Service (TPAS) accreditation process. She explained that EastendHomes (EEH) are seeking accreditation from the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) for Resident Involvement. EastendHomes had already made written submissions to TPAS and random interviews with residents by telephone have also taken place. Face to face interviews had been carried out with some EEH staff on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2011 and additional interviews and checking will need to be completed. TPAS had asked to meet members of the Resident Scrutiny Panel but were unfortunately unable to attend tonight. A number of potential dates were put forward and the group agreed to try to go for Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2011 at 3pm at the Mile End Centre. The group agreed that JC, LO, Margaret Donovan (MD) and Usha Begum (UB) would attend. Debbie Davies/ Peter Griffiths to arrange (DD).

**ALL/DD/PG**

**2. Apologies (see above)**

**3. Minutes of Last Meeting (12<sup>th</sup> May 2011)**

- 3.1 Minutes Agreed (Proposed JC seconded Linda Owers LO). Following discussion the group agreed that the minutes of the Scrutiny Panel should be published on the EastendHomes website. However the group felt that they were still in their infancy and would review the possibility of observers attending their meetings in six months time. The terms of reference for the group included, in any event, publishing of any of their findings through EastendHomes Newsletters. **ALL**

**4. Matters Arising**

- 4.1 None (matters of interest were on the agenda for discussion)

**5. Minutes of Service Review Committee 25<sup>th</sup> May 2011**

- 5.1 DD stated that the minutes of the last Resident Scrutiny Panel were presented (see item 6) to the SRC who noted the report.
- 5.2 PG said that a member(s) had been invited to attend an SRC meeting as observers. Members discussed their potential availability for the September Committee but agreed attendance at the January 2012 SRC as observers would be more convenient. Agreed later that the group should discuss the invitation at its informal meeting in November. **ALL/ CW**

## **6. Fire Safety**

- 6.1 DD said that at the last meeting of the Scrutiny Panel she had provided the fire safety strategy for EastendHomes. At the request of the panel, risk assessment for all blocks where panel members live were distributed to panel members except Shearsmith House. In July 2011, new guidance on fire safety has been issued by the Local Government Group. The result is that EEH has now got to review its Fire Safety strategy against the new guidance. DD said that the revised strategy was about 65% complete and that it should be completed by January 2012 and would be brought back to the panel. **DD**
- 6.2 The group then discussed various examples that could be regarded as potential fire hazards e.g. plant pots, cigarette butts, bicycles, and washing lines and decided that EEH needed to take the views of the group into account when adopting a new strategy.

## **7. Draft Annual Report**

- 7.1 DD explained that the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) standards are the headings used throughout the report. The report also includes the “Local Offers” made by EEH to residents together with the focus that the Borough wants EEH and other Resident Providers to deliver on boroughwide.
- 7.2 DD stated that the photographs were liable to be changed with more up-to-date ones and that the text highlighted in yellow also needed to be updated.

- 7.3 PG said that the report and style that was produced last year was the result of consultation with residents and was judged by a series of independent organisations to be one of only four organisations out of two hundred and fifty in the country to be marked as top scorers. DD said that it was hoped to maintain the same high standard and style of showing more involvement with residents together with the photographic evidence and case studies this year.
- 7.4 Raj Kumar (RK) said that more information about the resident scrutiny panel and the projects that they are involved in with EEH should feature in future Annual Reports as the work of the panel develops.
- 7.5 Rubiya Begum (RB) felt that where regeneration and new build was mentioned a photograph of say the new build properties at St Georges would add to the report.
- 7.6 RK said that all services needed to be assessed to see if they were providing Value For Money (VFM) and the group also needed to consider whether certain EEH initiatives were VFM. **ALL**
- 7.7 DD stated that Tower Hamlets Council wanted Resident Providers to focus on forming a resident led Contract Performance Board. These issues are dealt with at EastendHomes through contractor accountability to local boards. DD advised that three residents had been trained to take part in the procurement of general build contractors. DD stated that progress against the “offers” put forward by the Borough as joint targets for registered providers was considered in the Annual Report. DD stated that any comments that the RSP Members had made would where possible be incorporated into the finished document.

## **8. Key Performance Indicators**

- 8.1 DD went through the report on an exception basis, highlighting where EEH were achieving well and where they needed to improve.
- 8.2 Voids – EEH were doing very well.
- 8.3 Repairs – Level of performance is due to the new contractor bedding in, however measures to review the contractors performance and lead to improvement were already in place.  
Income Collection – EEH had been very successful in the collection of rents and service charges.
- 8.4 The Group reviewed the Top Ten Indicators as set by residents last year and the National comparison indicators and decide which “pared down” information they would require for the future.
- 8.5 DD said that, for some indicators, the national picture could be skewed for example rent arrears collection at year end where weekly housing benefit payment benefitted councils and the group would need to consider local and operational difference when looking at national data.
- 8.6 RB said that the level of dissatisfaction by residents when moving into an EEH empty property was high. DD said that three residents had been trained to inspect empty properties to check EEH are meeting the standards that they have set themselves but for various reasons, including timing and speed of void turnaround, this has not progressed well so far. DD said that the organisation needs to strike a balance between achieving quick void turn around and a property standard which would be acceptable to new residents.

- 8.7 RB asked if EEH Officers checked the properties before and after the works deemed necessary to bring them up to standard were done. DD said that residents were offered £50 to let EEH Officers carry out an inspection of the property before they move. DD then explained the void procedure from a property becoming empty through to it being let and confirmed that 100% of void properties are inspected by EastendHomes staff on completion of work by our contractors and before handing the key to the new resident.
- 8.8 Margaret Donovan (MD) said that the little bit of money given to redecorate a flat was not enough considering the state of them (her property being a case in point) when they are handed over to the new occupant. DD said they had recently reviewed the level and use of the decorating voucher being used by EastendHomes and found it was generous compared to peers and often had some unused credit due to under spend. DD said she believed the trend for occupiers to paint walls instead of wallpaper them was leading to a lower spend requirement.
- 8.9 RB stated that she had had to spend her savings to do her place up to an acceptable standard. RB asked if the group could be given what the acceptable letting standards for EEH are. **DD**
- 8.10 JC said that a standard needs to be agreed by residents and EEH that is affordable and yet is a reasonable standard.

- 8.11 RB said that although the contractors were new, how long would it be before they bed in, the amount of time they are given needs to be monitored. Emergency repair performance appeared a particular concern. DD said that in regard to emergency repairs are liaising closely with the new contractor and have conducted mystery shopping of the out of hours service. RK said that he suggested that the performance of the new contractor be reviewed in six months. **ALL**

**9. Items for Future Discussion/Links to Tower Hamlets Scrutiny Panel**

- 9.1 The group after discussion agreed that the areas for future discussion would be – Annual Anti Social Behaviour Trends, Repairs, and Fire Safety. **ALL**

- 9.2 DD said that Catherine Weir had agreed to represent the group at the Tower Hamlets borough wide Scrutiny Panel that will monitor the boroughwide “Offers” and that EEH Annual Report will report progress on these. **CW**

- 9.3 PG to send members a copy of the Resident Empowerment Programme for information / attendance. **PG**

- 9.4 PG to arrange a lunch time meeting of the group at the Bromley By Bow Centre in early November 2011. **PG**

**10. Any Other Business**

- 10.1 None

**11. Date for the next meeting**

- 11.1 To be agreed at the informal meeting in November 2011 **ALL**