

RESIDENT SCRUTINY PANEL 22nd MAY 2013 – 6PM
TAYSIDE HOUSE, 31 PEPPER STREET, E14 9RP

Present:

Resident Members

Usha Begum
Genia Leontowitsch (Acting Chair)
John Courtney
Margaret Donovan
Margaret Hughes

EEH Officers and Independent

Debbie Davies
Peter Griffiths
Raj Kumar (Independent Support)

1. Introductions and Welcome

1.1 The group individually introduced themselves. Genia agreed to chair the meeting. Raj explained he is a housing consultant specialising in scrutiny panel support, governance and value for money.

2. Apologies

2.1 Amina Rashid, Tahmina Begum and Farah Rashid gave their apologies.

3. Minutes of the last meeting – accuracy and matters arising

3.1 Minutes of the last meeting were agreed by Genia and seconded by Usha.

3.2 **ASB Complaints Case Studies** – Genia confirmed she had received the anonymised ASB cases and advised that she would raise the issue later.

4. Repairs

4.1 A summary report was presented by the officers detailing how the responsive maintenance service is delivered within EastendHomes. This was broken down into three strands 1) The handyperson service who carry out a range of low level, non-technical repairs 2) The general build contract where EastendHomes stock is split in two, with Mile End and Island Gardens being covered by Breyer and St. George's/Glamis and Holland being covered by Olli's. In addition to delivering the general build functionality during normal working hours, Breyer also provide the call handling service for all of EastendHomes stock and covering all contractors, including specialists. For example, out of hours if a communal heating system went down in Holland, Breyer would be responsible for taking calls from the public and raising a job to the central plant contractor, GEM. 3) EastendHomes uses a range of

specialist contractors who deal with very specific building components, for example door entry or lightning conductors.

4.2 Debbie went through contractor performance and satisfaction across all of the contacts and the potential re-procurement time frame was noted against all contracts. Some contracts were of limited financial value and had few orders raised, compared to the largest contract, Breyer with over 3000 jobs raised annually with a cost of in excess of half a million pounds.

4.3 Genia asked why some repairs were not being completed in target and Debbie said that for some of the larger jobs, problems on securing parts and/or materials may make it difficult for the 28 day target to be met.

4.4 It was noted that following identified problems with the emergency call out service, a next day 100% telephone survey is being carried out to users of the service the previous night. This has identified that areas of resident dissatisfaction do not always relate to the call handling service, and timely attendance or non-attendance by the operative will influence perception of the call handling service.

4.5 Debbie said that as part of re-commissioning the service with Breyer, EastendHomes had produced a detailed script which the call centre operatives should work through to identify whether the repair responsibility lies with EastendHomes and who should carry out the work but despite this, calls were sometimes mishandled.

4.6 Breyer's call centre response is split in two with the service being provided directly by Breyer's call centre in Dartford up till 8pm. From then on, the call handling operation is switched to a generic call centre in Southampton.

4.7 Debbie advised that a large number of call centres provide a call handling service across a range of services. These can include insurance claims, undertaker services and housing emergencies. The range of skills and knowledge required can be quite diverse and pay is low for contact centre staff and turnover is high.

4.8 A large number of calls, especially during the winter relate to the breakdown of central heating and hot water services and given the range of heating systems within EastendHomes stock, some of it still within warranty, this increases the potential for mix-ups, errors and confusion.

4.9 Debbie said that the current service is on notice that the contract will be terminated and EastendHomes is looking at re-procuring the service. Scrutiny panel members were welcomed to participate in the procurement process.

4.10 Genia stated that her neighbour who was very vulnerable had locked himself out of his flat and had to have his door knocked down for which he was recharged for the repair to his door.

4.11 Margaret D asked what EEH were doing about noisy neighbours that were Leaseholders. Debbie said that, where reported, EEH would write to the absentee Landlord to resolve the matter.

The group agreed to have a half hour break-out session without EeH staff to discuss their priorities for the repair service and identify the scope of their next scrutiny exercise.

***** Half hour private discussion within group with support from Raj Kumar**

4.12 DD and PG re-joined group. The group looked at which contractors were having the greatest impact on residents' repairs experience, together with those that had a low resident satisfaction rate. They were particularly interested in the repairs and out of hours (ECO) repairs resident satisfaction rates. The group then decided to focus on ECO repairs and to use an independent organisation to Mystery Shop the ECO service.

4.13 Raj stated that the group also needed to think about out of hours calls and to identify if it was the same people calling all the time and what the pattern if any there was to the calls.

4.14 Raj asked the group to further think about the tender and the possibility of mystery shopping the potential service providers for the ECO service and participating in the selection process.

4.15 Agreed Debbie – to get the history and record of the out of hours repair issues and calls for the group from Breyer.

4.16 Debbie said that quotes would need to be obtained in regard to the out of hours service. Mystery Shoppers could shop the potential service providers who are providing cost information.

4.17 Margaret H asked if the contract specified that the contractor appointed did not sub-contract the work out to another contractor but carried out the work themselves. Debbie said that this could be looked at but the larger firms, in order to provide a 24/7 service, tend to cover a range of sectors rather than just housing.

4.18 Debbie said that Breyer have admitted that they got it wrong ECO wise and have not been charging EEH for certain jobs.

4.19 Raj said that in regard to the out of hours service a picture needs to be built up of the calls being made to include –

- Location
- type of property
- vulnerability / disability
- if seasonal
- resident feedback on existing service

4.20 Raj also said that there needs to be a clear Disputes Resolution Procedure, a wide script of answers to calls, and that staff attitude/service delivery needs to be monitored and staff turnover rates obtained as part of the procurement process.

5. Mystery Shopping

5.1 The group agreed to use the budget of £3k for Mystery Shopping of the ECO repairs service. Also for at least three mystery shopping firms to be interviewed in the near future and for members of the group to be asked to be part of the interviewing panel.

6. A.O.B

6.1 **Agreed Usha and Genia to attend** the Boroughwide Scrutiny Panel on 9th June 2013.

6.2 **Agreed Genia to attend** the Service Review Sub Committee at the Centre Merchant Street on the 27th June 2013 at 7pm.

6.3 Genia re ASB cases – Debbie said that the relevant Housing Manager could attend the next meeting of the group. Genia asked how EEH felt about the entire investigation process particularly REACT. **It was agreed for Genia to meet with the Housing Manager for Mile End to discuss the ASB cases which had been reviewed. Debbie to arrange**

6.4 **Agreed that** the data required in regard to the ECO system would be produced within one month.

7. NEXT MEETINGS

7.1 **Agreed that the group** would meet with Raj on 3rd July 2013 at 6pm at Tayside House Pepper Street.

7.2 **Agreed next full meeting of the group** would be on 17th July 2013 at 3 pm Tayside House Pepper Street.