

RESIDENT SCRUTINY PANEL 24th JANUARY 2013 – 6PM
ISLAND GARDENS OFFICE

Present:

Resident Members

Margaret Hughes
Rubiya Begum
Usha Begum
Genia Leontowitsch
Farah Rashid
Mohammed Abdul (trial)

EEH Officers and Independent

Debbie Davies
Peter Griffiths

Apologies

Margaret Donovan
Amina Rashid
John Courtney

1. Introductions and Welcome

1.1 Debbie welcomed the group and then all members of the group introduced themselves and stated which estate they lived on.

2. Minutes of the last meeting - accuracy

2.1 Minutes of the last meeting were agreed by Margaret Hughes.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 **Outstanding action point (item 3.4 in previous minutes)** Keiron to arrange future void properties for the Scrutiny Panel to view. **Action Keiron**

4. Value for money presentation (on line)

4.1 Debbie distributed a graph to the group showing the results that they had produced from the last meeting and explained each of the datum point results.

4.2 Debbie further explained that the data supplied by EastendHomes to HouseMark can be compared by them to national and local peer groups. Debbie then proceeded to discuss with the group how EastendHomes fared in regard to the following services.

- Rent Arrears – EEH costs low, collected arrears above median, overheads low. Mrs Rashid asked what cost elements contributed to cost of collecting rent arrears. Debbie said this would include court costs, welfare advisors, rent arrears collectors and office overheads.

EastendHomes average employee cost was below the median but a slightly higher staff to property ratio than median.

- Anti Social Behaviour – Costs per case are quite high but there is a high resolution rate, overheads quite high and employee costs quite high per property. It was noted that average employee costs were below the median but that the direct employee ratio of staff to property was in the upper quartile; therefore, it is not that EastendHomes is paying staff highly, it is that it has a well-resourced number of staff compared to property numbers. This would be reflected by the local housing centre structure of delivering the service.
- Major Works and Cyclical Maintenance – Spend is very high, SAP ratings are low, decent homes failure high, satisfaction with quality of home low. Residents thought that this gave an accurate picture of EastendHomes situation, particularly for 11/12. The high spend on major works and cyclical maintenance was being driven by the stock condition identified in decent homes failures and low SAP ratings.
- Lettings – Costs for the service are in mid range and performance is just under the mid range. The group then looked at the factors which were contributing to the performance assessment and felt it is not as bad as it appears. The performance measure vacant but unavailable reflects properties waiting for demolition because of Regeneration works.
- Tenancy Management – EastendHomes is upper quartile in terms of costs and mid range in performance. One of the measures of performance used is tenancy turnover and Debbie advised that tenancy turnover in Tower Hamlets and EastendHomes would be high for a number of reasons. These include the overcrowding reduction strategy where EastendHomes is proactively arranging moves to appropriately sized property. Evictions are just below median. Overall satisfaction with the landlord above median for the group and the group queried why this high level performance measure for the organisation was being used to assess tenancy management only..
- Resident Involvement – The cost for resident involvements was upper quartile. Debbie explained how the HouseMark benchmarking system is based on apportionment of organisational costs overall and that given the local office structure (high resources), it seemed strange that tenancy management costs would be low and it is possible that the apportionment of costs between tenancy management and resident involvement has been skewed. The measures used to assess the quality of the performance includes diversity information held, alongside others, which seemed a strange measure to assess resident involvement.
- Estate Services – Estate services were being shown as poor performance and high costs. Debbie noted that the analysis did not

take any account of the extent of service being delivered. For example, EastendHomes delivers a seven day a week service, where others don't and many may not operate in a primarily flatted inner city environment. The performance measurement used is satisfaction with the neighbourhood which residents agreed would not reflect accurately on caretaking standards and would be highly influenced by the regeneration work going on on EastendHomes estates. Debbie said that when costs were plotted on a bar chart, EastendHomes spend on estate services is similar to local peers. **Action Debbie to send comparison graphs with other local landlords for all service headings.**

- Repairs and Maintenance- this is showing as good performance with high costs. Genia stated that EEH had inherited a lot of properties in poor condition. Also in regard to Rent Arrears although there were high costs there were also high results. Major Works, the results would be expected to improve once the works to properties was complete.

5. Update Tower Hamlets Scrutiny Panel

5.1 Debbie went through the minutes of 25th September 2012. Debbie stated that certain items listed as "Local Offers" were not reported on or included in the Local Offers agreed by EEH residents. Debbie then went through the "Tower Hamlets Local Offers" categories to allow the group to consider how EEH delivered that issue and whether they wanted further information or analysis on that issue.

5.2 Local Offers Feed back -

5.2.1 Social Landlords should have trained tenants in the repairs and estate services procurement process appropriate to the needs and aspirations of local residents and at least three trained residents should be involved in the repairs and estate services procurement process. Debbie stated that three residents were trained on procurement when the general build contract was being procured in 2010. Although they were trained, only one went on to spend about a week interviewing contractors. Genia said that she had been involved in procuring the window renewal contract on St Georges estate. Debbie noted that estate services is delivered in-house and therefore the reference to procurement isn't relevant.

5.2.2 Decent Homes - (item 7) Debbie stated that 85% of EEH properties now met the Decent Homes Standard and that new kitchens and bathrooms have been offered to all tenants. Where tenants were in situ, they were offered choices on fixtures, fittings and colours. Genia advised that she had been moved into a void property that had already had the Decent Homes work completed and therefore didn't get a choice.

5.2.3 Registered Providers (RPs) should consult with all anti-social behaviour (ASB) complainants to agree the frequency with which updates will be provided on the progress of their complaint until the case is closed and

landlords will publicise details of successful action taken to resolve ASB cases– (items 8 and 9)- Debbie explained the ASB procedure that EEH have in place for residents requires officers to contact the complainant once a week to report on any progress and also to check if there have been any further developments in the case. Genia said that the actions being taken by EEH together with the results should be published in EEH'S newsletter. Debbie said that the group could audit 2 cases in order to see two cases through from the perpetration of the offence to the action taken. **Action Debbie to send a list of case numbers to Genia so that two cases could be randomly identified and these will then be audited for contact by Farah and Genia on behalf of the group. Action agreed that the group be provided with EEH'S definition of what constitutes ASB and a profile of ASB per housing centre area.**

5.2.3.1 All residents will have the right to make representations on all tenant matter through the Resident Scrutiny Panel or equivalent Improvement Board (Item 4): Genia said that residents should be encouraged to complain. Debbie said that EEH have a Complaints Panel and at stage 3 of the Complaints Procedure members of the Scrutiny Panel are included in the assessment of the complaint.

Genia asked what powers the group had to change any decisions made by the Complaints Panel. Debbie said that the role of the scrutiny panel is to identify areas of non performance and make service improvement recommendations. It is for the Service Review Committee to review the recommendations and decide whether they can be reasonably resourced. Debbie advised that the complaints panel role sat to the side of this. Margaret Hughes reported back on her experience as a member of a Stage 3 Complaints panel and she said she felt the issues involved in the complaint were fully investigated and aired at the panel.

Genia said that residents needed to get their complaints resolved and do not want them to take them to take up considerable time. Debbie advised that the process at stage one allows for residents to meet with their local manager. Genia said that she felt that EEH had got the process right. **Debbie agreed to provide a profile of complaints so that the group could further assess whether they were happy about how this is being dealt with at EastendHomes.**

5.2.4 Scrutiny Panel – (item 3) Debbie said that EEH has set up a Scrutiny Panel and were continuing to recruit new members to the group. Debbie asked the group if they agreed with reporting to wider residents groups once a year. The group felt their involvement and any changes or influence for EEH to their policies or procedures could be published in the annual report which is sent to all residents. **Action Debbie to include in October 2013**

5.2.5 Repair Appointments Kept as a % of Appointments Made/ % of Tenants Satisfied with Repairs and Maintenance - (items 1 and 2) Debbie said that the above data and the background as to how it was arrived at will be provided at the next meeting of the group. **Action Debbie**

6. A.O.B

6.1 Farah stated that security in Buttermere House is needed re the main entrance and ground floor properties. Debbie said that the cost of a door entry system would have to be shared by all residents in the block. Farah to discuss with other residents in the block if there is support for a door entry system. Debbie advised that given the high leaseholder occupancy at Buttermere, if this could be progressed, it would result in a high cost recharge to leaseholders. Debbie also advised that if Farah reported incidents and the area was highlighted as a hotspot, additional resources may be called upon, for example local police patrols which would involve no more additional cost.

Action Debbie to pass details to Andy Osborne

6.2 Genia said that crime could be a future item for the group to discuss and **Debbie agreed to source a crime data report to be considered alongside the ASB profile.**

7. NEXT MEETING DATE, TIME AND VENUE

Thursday 28th March 2013 at 6pm Tayside House, 31 Pepper Street, London E14 9RP.

ACTION - ALL