

Lincoln Tenants' Panel Meeting Minutes (16 January 2019), City Hall, 10:15

Present LTP members Debbie Rousseau (Chair) Mick Barber (Vice-Chair), Christine Lamming, Steven Bearder, Caroline Coyle-Fox, John Ranshaw, Mandy Harley, Sheila Watkinson, Kathy Hill and Susie Parry.

Present Councillors and Officers: Cllr. Donald Nannestad, Daren Turner, Yvonne Fox, Chris Morton and Rachel Jackson.

Apologies for Absence: Steph Lonsdale-Ellis

43. Welcome and Apologies

The chair opened the meeting and welcomed everyone, no apologies were received.

The chair informed the panel about discussions with Stephanie Lonsdale-Ellis, the membership was discussed and a decision made.

44. Confirmation of Minutes - 12 December 2018

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 12 Dec 2018 be confirmed.

45. Resignation of LTP Member for Hartsholme-Brian Marshall

RESOLVED the panel accepted the resignation of Brian Marshall.

46. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED there were no issues raised under this item.

47. Update on Waiting Times and Applications for Housing (Yvonne Fox)

Yvonne Fox (Assistant Director of Housing) attended to give an update on Waiting Times and Applications for Housing. She stated that:

- She explained the bands of priority on the waiting list and how long an individual would be waiting to secure a property dependent on where the individual is in each band:
 - 1) Band 1- Applicants who have an urgent need to be housed in reference to legislation. These are housed within 4-8 weeks, however this could be a year if they are waiting on a limited property type, e.g. four bed properties.
 - 2) Band 2- Applicants may wait between 10-12 months to be housed. Although, dependent on the area and the property type they are requesting this may take less or more time.

- 3) Band 3- Applicants are considered to be in low need of housing. On average this takes over two years on the waiting list, however this can vary depending on the property type they want and the area they wish to move.
 - 4) Band 4- These applicants are the lowest priority to be housed and have a very low chance of getting a property.
- At the current moment there is a backlog of applications and it is taking around four weeks to process these.
 - If applicants are in priority need of housing they are prioritised even with the backlog.
 - A review is currently ongoing on to improve the allocations system
 - Yvonne received questions from the panel:

Question.

Are applicants in band four made aware that they are in low priority for housing?

Response.

We are reviewing this element as part of the review to ensure that band four applicants are informed at an earlier stage.

RESOLVED the update was noted and it was agreed to provide feedback on whether the council is meeting the 25 per cent quota for transfers.

48. LTP Quarterly Question Time (Daren Turner and Donald Nannestad)

LTP asked a number of questions as part of Quarterly Question Time, which enables members to ask housing related questions to the Director of Housing (Daren Turner) and the Portfolio Holder of Housing (Cllr. Donald Nannestad). Both Donald and Daren answered questions equally, the questions and responses are written below:

Question-What is the council doing to stop the rise in rent arrears?

Response:

- Housing officers are working hard to ensure that rent is collected and we are currently within the collection target
- The council have taken direct action to ensure that tenants have been supported by a specialist support team that assists tenants with applying for Universal Credit
- We are considering the possibility of deploying additional resources for new council tenants to have budgeting and increased support

- We are ensuring that housing officers intervene with tenants as soon as they fall into rent arrears to offer support and try to stop their rent arrears increasing further

Action - LTP asked if they can have feedback on how the rent arrears are broken down i.e what percentage is due to bedroom tax, universal credit, etc

Question-Please could you provide LTP with an update on the Western growth corridor?

Response.

- There is a plan in place for several consultations over the next month
- This is to ensure all voices have been heard and to give everyone clarity over the construction of the Western Growth Corridor
- They plan to start on the site in 2020 and start building in 2021
- 20 per cent of all these new builds will be affordable housing

Question

The council can evict tenants who are convicted of serious drug related offences, however do you believe the council should evict tenants who have been convicted of lesser drug offences? Is there a designated telephone number for people to report drug abuse in council houses to?

Response.

- As a last resort the council can and have evicted tenants for drug offences
- This issue is dealt on an individual basis in order to decide the appropriate level of action
- Additionally, it is a difficult area as tenants and police are not obliged to make the landlord aware of any drug offences committed.

Action – LTP asked if there could be a production of figures in regards to how widespread is action taken.

Question.

What help does the council offer tenants who want to downsize to a smaller council property- in regards to supporting more support in moving (if they have disabilities etc?)

Response.

- Council tenants are given priority on the waiting list although we do not give financial help to downsize
- We can definitely look into the report you made previously into downsizing and see whether we can support people moving for instance, physical help, having longer to move and adapting the process to be more lenient.

Action- For housing management to look further into the possibilities of further support for people moving.

49. ARCH Feedback (John Ranshaw)

John Ranshaw (LTP member of ARCH) stated that the meeting of ARCH took place on the 14 Jan and explained that they looked at the Green Paper and Key Performance Indicators. ARCH have produced a booklet that is due to be sent out to all council tenants to increase knowledge about ARCH and increase numbers of people in ARCH. He further informed the members that Kettering council would like to work with City of Lincoln Council regards to best practice in the future.

RESOLVED the update was noted.

50. Scrutiny
51. Allocations and Tenancy (Caroline Coyle-Fox)

Caroline Coyle Fox- chair of Allocations and Tenancy stated that a meeting was held on the 10 Jan, where they reviewed and scrutinised the voids checklist. Caroline passed around the voids checklist to LTP members. This will be updated ahead of the next meeting.

RESOLVED the update was noted.

Action – LTP asked for us to gain the checklist that the Housing Officer gives to a tenant before moving out. LTP further stated that it would be advisable to add to the list that tenants should photograph their property following clearing out to ensure they are not recharged for any items that are placed onto their property.

52. Neighbourhood, Community Involvement and Home (John Ranshaw)

John Ranshaw- chair of Neighbourhood, Community Involvement and Home Group stated there was no report as a meeting was due to occur next Monday.

RESOLVED the update was noted.

(a) Garden Scrutiny (Mandy Harley)

Mandy Harley- chair of gardening scrutiny stated that a meeting will be taking place between herself, the Housing Officer Lewis Heaney and Chris Morton to look at a Fun Day/Tidy up day on the estate. If this is successful this can be expanded to other areas.

RESOLVED the update was noted.

53. LTP Training
(a) Trafford Hall Arrangements (Rachel Jackson)

LTP members were informed that there would be no Trafford Hall in March as the ASB Training has been cancelled. Additionally, they were informed of the travel arrangements regarding the Trafford Hall training which is taking place on the 23rd and 24th of Jan.

RESOLVED the update be noted.

54. Anti-Social Behaviour Monitoring (Debbie Rousseau)

Debbie Rousseau informed the panel that the next ASB focus group meeting would be taking place on the 29th Feb, City Hall at 10am.

RESOLVED the updated be noted.

55. Neighbourhood Board Meetings (All)

Susie Parry gave an update on West End Residents Association. She stated that the group only have two business meetings a year and is endeavouring to find out the usefulness of these meetings. She has made contact with West End Ladies Group and joined them for their activities and currently is planning to formally set up a residents group at Derek Miller Court.

Mandy Harley gave an update on the Ermine Community Action Group making strong connections with councillors.

Christine Lamming gave an update on Sincil Bank in that they have recently had the unofficial opening of the Sincil Bank Community Hub and soon will be having the official opening.

Mick Barber gave an update on behalf of the board of boards that they are awaiting to hear if they receive lottery funding.

RESOLVED the update be noted.

56. Estate Inspection Results (Mick Barber)

Dave Ward (Tenancy Services Manager) attended to give an update on the estate inspections. He stated that:

- Previously in 2016 a review took place on estate inspections, due to other pressures they decided to not reinstate a regime of estate. Inspections and rather an inspection regarding identified hot spots and monitoring these specific hot spots.
- They now plan to reinstate the inspections and invite people of the community and organisations to carry out an initial inspection and a three month review of the area.

- Dave Ward encouraged the tenants panel to work with the housing managers to reinstate the estate inspections

RESOLVED the update be noted.

Action – LTP asked for the documents of the review in 2016 to be circulated and for the LTP in the future to tell Dave Ward what they would like to see in future estate inspections.

57. LTP Pass (Mick Barber)

The panel all agreed that they were impressed and supported the new LTP badges.

RESOLVED the update be noted and the new badges will be ordered.

58. Items for the Next Meeting

59. Review of the Work Programme (All)

RESOLVED the work programme for the next meeting was agreed.

60. Non Agenda Items

There were a number of items raised under non-agenda items. These were:

Mobile Phones

Debbie Rousseau explained that LTP members should turn on silent and not use mobile phones during meetings as this is distracting for other members.

Visit to Control Room

Rachel Jackson explained that Clive Thomasson had explained that it was possible for LTP members to visit the control room. The following members expressed interest: Caroline Coyle-Fox, Steven Bearder, Susie Parry, Mick Barber, Sheila Watkinson and Christine Lamming.

Fire Safety Email

Rachel Jackson explained that the government would like a response from LTP on best practice. She has for all responses to be sent back to her by the 29th Jan for Chris to complete a response.

Fencing Costs from John Zubic

Rachel Jackson explained that she was unable to obtain this information and it would be made available for the next meeting.

LTP Review Meeting

The LTP work programme review meeting was planned for the 13th Feb between 11am and 1pm.

Tenant Involvement Conference

The panel decided that they would like John Ranshaw to attend the Tenant Involvement Conference.