

- Present:** Councillors Councillor Gary Hewson (*in the Chair*), Bob Bushell, Jackie Kirk and Pat Vaughan
- Apologies for Absence:** Councillor Andy Kerry, Bob Ledger, Chris Morton and Caroline Coyle-Fox
- Also in Attendance:** Eric Jenkinson, Debbie Rousseau and Sheila Watkinson

7. **Confirmation of Minutes - 19 June 2017**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2017 be confirmed.

8. **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were received.

9. **LTP Matters**

Eric Jenkinson, Chair of Lincoln Tenants' Panel (LTP) reported that the workshops were going well. The next meeting of the panel was to be held on 16 August 2017. Members were going to Melton Mowbray on 17 August and training had been arranged for 23 August at City Hall. Members of the panel were attending the ARCH Tenants' Conference on 20 September 2017 in Birmingham.

Members were asked for any comments or questions.

Question: Would it be feasible for LTP to have an involvement in setting targets as the LTP was the voice of the tenants and was aware of how the service should work?

Response: The current process was to look at the service plan, meet with the service managers involved, take a draft of the service plan and suggested targets to LTP. Negotiation then took place with the Portfolio Holders to agree or disagree the targets. This was a normal process similar to that carried out nationally and by other local authorities.

Comment: At the last Performance Scrutiny meeting the Leader of the Council agreed that tenants should have some input.

Response: A flow chart was being produced by the Corporate Policy Business Manager and would be discussed further at the next Performance Scrutiny meeting to be held on 17 August 2017.

10. **Draft Annual Report to Tenants and Leaseholders 2016 -2017**

Karen Talbot, Assistant Director of Housing :

- a. presented the draft annual report for tenants 2016 -17. The report had been developed in consultation with tenant representatives through the Lincoln Tenants' Panel (LTP).
- b. advised that the main theme of the report celebrated the amazing achievements that tenants had made and contained their stories. One article was about an ex LTP member who had received an MBE, a current

LTP member had set up a thriving Community Bingo Club and another resident artist was planning to organise a community art exhibition.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

11. Performance Monitoring Report Quarter 1 - 2017/18

Karen Talbot, Assistant Director of Housing:

- a. presented the end of quarter report on Performance for the first quarter of the year 2017/18 (April 2017 and June 2017).
- b. advised that 10 targets had been met and 13 had not been achieved.
- c. referred to Appendix A and highlighted the following areas:
 - Percentage of rents collected and the arrears always followed seasonal trends and at the end of quarter one there was no reason for concern.
 - The re-let period was off target - out of 146 properties 76 required major works and 54 were the result of evictions. There had been an issue with the asbestos contract which had been cancelled and a new one started on 1 July 2017. Available property was being re-let as quickly as possible and the work in progress team met every Wednesday.
 - Allocations were below target and the main reason was that people often changed their minds after they had bid for a property.
 - The team was focussed on getting repairs right first time and improving performance.

Members were asked for any comments or questions.

Question: What were the major works that were causing the delays? Could earlier visits to the property be arranged to save time with the major works?

Response: Wherever possible properties would be inspected before vacated but often tenants who had lived in their properties for years would not let anyone in to carry out repairs. Karen Talbot agreed to provide a list of the types of works carried out to members.

Comment: The allocations figure appeared disappointing.

Response: It was reassuring that all properties ready for letting had got tenants allocated to them.

Question: What happened when someone didn't like the area?

Response: This was a tricky situation to handle as the housing needs didn't change and often people made a bid for a property and then turned it down because they did not like the area.

Question: Did the homeless clients ever turn down a property and if they did what did they do?

Response: Yes they did and sometimes they would prefer to sleep rough as they might have mental health issues or addiction to drugs/alcohol. They were

always directed to other agencies and partners to try and get them the help they needed.

Question: A white paper was due to come out about homelessness - would this affect the council?

Response: The paper referred to was the Homelessness Reduction Act - which would come into effect next year. The main duty by the Local Authority would be to provide or secure the provision of free advisory services. These services would provide information and advice on:

- Preventing homelessness
- Securing accommodation when homeless
- The rights of people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness
- How to access help and point in right direction

The council would be working with other agencies and this would include developing money management skills and work towards helping people to help themselves.

Question: Was there any funding available?

Response: There would be some funding for the first 2 years which would help to pay for resources however the main concern was that there would be nothing after the initial 2 years.

Question: Would the individual still be paid direct by benefits rather than the landlord?

Response: In Lincolnshire Universal Credit was only being rolled out to single people. As stated earlier, advice would be made available for the individual to get help in money management. When tenants were in arrears by a certain amount of weeks the landlord could apply to the DWP for the payments to be made direct to the landlord.

Members thanked Karen Talbot for the report and for answering the questions.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

12. Work Programme Update 2017/18

The Democratic Services Officer:

- a. presented the work programme for the Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee for 2017/18 as detailed at Appendix A of the report
- b. advised that this was an opportunity for the committee to suggest other items to be included within the work programme

Members of the committee suggested that the following topic be discussed at the next meeting in November:

- Supported Housing Review

RESOLVED that the contents of the report and members suggestions be noted.