

- Present:** Debbie Rousseau. (*in the Chair*)
- Members:** Sheila Watkinson, Mick Barber (Vice-Chair), Brian Botham, Caroline Coyle-Fox, Christine Lamming, Kathy Hill and John Gooding.
- Officers:** Bob Ledger, Andrew McNeil, Jo Collett, Rob Kay and Chris Morton.
- Councillors:** Councillor Peter West.

Apologies for Absence: Sharron Elsom, John Ranshaw and Felicity Kelsall.

197. Welcome and Apologies

The chair opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. Apologies were received from Sharron Elsom and Felicity Kelsall.

Additional seat on LTP for a member of the Next Generation Group.

Mick Barber, Vice-Chair of LTP explained there was a need for an additional seat on the panel for the member of the Next Gen group. This would allow the group and LTP to have a good channel of communication and would make sure younger people are represented on the panel. LTP members were asked to vote on the following proposal:

'Create an additional seat on LTP for a member of the Next Generation group.'

LTP members voted unanimously in favour to accept the above proposal.

RESOLVED that an additional seat is created on LTP for a member of the Next Gen group.

198. Confirmation of Minutes - 03 January 2018

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 3 January 2018 be confirmed.

199. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED there were no declarations of interest raised.

200. Feedback from Executive - Meeting 08 January 2018

The panel were informed the following reports were approved at Executive Committee on 8 January 18. These were:

- Lincolnshire County Homelessness Strategy 2017-2021
- Choice Based Lettings Allocation Policy- Proposed Amendments.

RESOLVED LTP to note the feedback.

201. Housing Investment and Strategy (Andrew McNeil)

Andrew McNeil, Assistant Director (Housing Investment and Strategy):

- a) Introduced himself as the new Assistant Director (Housing Investment and Strategy)
- b) Explained he is responsible for the following teams and gave an overview of them. These were:
 - a. Investment. Keeping properties in a decent condition by renewing items such as kitchens and bathrooms
 - b. Housing Strategy. Making sure all of the necessary strategies are in place and together
 - c. Development. Building new properties; inside the HRA there is a target to build 400 homes by 2020 and also the establishment of the housing company that will sit outside of the HRA
- c) Advised he has a background in these areas and has worked for a number of different organisations; most recently as head of investment at Derby Homes
- d) Stated he would like LTP to have a role in his service areas and made a number of suggestions for how they could be involved. This included viewing new properties to see the designs and assessing the quality of items fitted to homes
- e) Invited the panel to put forward any questions.

Question

Is the council looking to expand the size of properties e.g. by adding extra bedrooms where the garden is big enough?

Answer

There might be space to build an extension however the extra bedroom might not be needed as the family gets smaller, they could be hit by the bedroom tax and it's not possible to extend all properties. That said we will look to see which properties can and need to be extended.

Question

Would it be possible to reduce the size of a garden on a void property and build more properties in the space?

Answer

We are not looking to do this at present however we will always evaluate our housing stock and re-build if necessary.

Question

Are you looking to build more bungalows for the elderly and disabled people? This would free up houses.

Answer

Yes we will look into this as it can free up both houses for families and then in turn this can free up flats.

202. Moorland Local People Project (Jo Collett)

Jo Collett from the Moorland Local People Project attended to give an update on the project.

- a) Explained the background to the project and that several smaller projects have already been completed including community bulb planting, theatre in the woods and a Christmas tree display.
- b) Advised she is currently working with a group of residents on two main projects. These are:
 - Improve the area on Turner Avenue near to the 'roundshops.' This includes adding mosaics to the shops, placing planters on the grass, moving the notice board and leasing one of the vacant shops as a community hub
 - The area of woodland next to Walford Drive. This includes reducing the number of nettles, clearing plants that have overgrown the path, planting a wildflower meadow and vegetable garden.
- c) Invited LTP to ask questions about the project.

Question

How is the project being funded?

Answer

The project is being funded through the People's Health Trust.

RESOLVED the update be noted by LTP members.

203. Universal Credit Update (Rob Kay)

Rob Kay Welfare Reform and Project Officer attended to give the following update on Universal Credit:

- a) Explained that UC was introduced to Lincoln in November 2015 however this only applied to single people. However, from March 2018 all claimants will be moved onto UC.
- b) Advised UC replaced several individual benefits including Job Seekers Allowance and Housing Benefit with a single monthly payment. Benefits that won't be replaced by UC include Child Benefit and Disability Living Allowance. He also advised that some residents are exempt from UC are:
 - People of Pension Credit age
 - Those who are living in Temporary or Supported Accommodation
 - Families with more than two children, who have not previously claimed Universal Credit within the last 6 months.
- c) Stated that claims for UC must be made online and explained the council is providing support to help people make a claim.

RESOLVED panel members noted the update and requested Rob Kay attending in May/June to give a further update.

204. Resident Involvement Budget Update (Mick Barber/Chris Morton)

Chris Morton, Resident Involvement Manager:

- a) Presented an update on the resident involvement budget for 2017/18
- b) Explained the budget is in place so all resident involvement groups can operate. These include LTP, working groups, mystery shoppers, tenant inspectors and residents groups
- c) Advised this pays for meeting room hire, travel expenses, training and catering
- d) Stated the total spent as of 16 January 2018 and that this is roughly the same as last year.

RESOLVED the report be noted.

205. Quarterly Question Time with Portfolio Holder for Housing and Director of Housing (Councillor Peter West and Bob Ledger)

Question

As a panel we were informed when at Hamilton House last year on the changeover, we were going to get apprenticeships to do the fencing and we were not going to buy anymore in because this way it would be cost effective. We understand this is not happened and would like to know the reason why.

Answer

There is a presumption that apprentices can be cheaper and this is not always correct as it might take them longer to carry out the work. Also the council has general labourers who can carry out some fencing work. The council also needs to make sure it develops apprentices and this will not happen if they just carry out fencing work.

Response

Would it be possible for students studying construction at college to gain work experience at the council.

Answer

Yes in principle and we would support this where possible.

Question

We completed a Tenant Void Inspection on the 16th of October 2017 on Sincil Bank, this property is still empty and we understand you're going to use this for some other purpose is it possible you could explain, as this property is of good size and could accommodate a large family.

Answer

The property is being held back as a reserve property for a community hub on Sincil Bank as part of the regeneration project. It is not in the favoured property though as it is not in the best location and the council is currently trying to secure a property that is in a more prominent location in the Sincil Bank area,

Question

Last year the green bin price went up by £5 the tenants weren't informed of this, the panel has got great concern because the feedback that we have is, if it goes up again they will not continue with the service. So we are concerned about how residents will dispose of the garden rubbish, we feel this will encourage people to fly tip which is not acceptable, would he support for it to stay at the same price as last year?

Answer

The charge was introduced a few years ago to cover the cost of the service. This has been implemented on an incremental basis rather than the entire charge being put in place at the start.

Question

Because there's an increase regarding vermin on our Estates would he agree on a pilot system to make tenants aware of the issue? This would be to put out publicity advising tenants not to leave out food or rubbish because it can attract vermin. It would also advise tenants can be find if the state of their property attracts vermin.

Answer

All cases of vermin reported are treated on a case by case basis. If the vermin have been attracted due to the lifestyle of a resident the council can re-charge them. LTP members were also advised to report these issues straight away to the resident involvement team or Jo Sedgwick.

Response

The panel is concerned that housing officers don't always have time to take action against properties that are attracting vermin.

Answer

LTP members were advised to report these cases to the Director of Housing through the Resident Involvement team.

Question

I understand with some sadness that we are losing assistant director Karen early the new year, will we get the opportunity sit in for the interviews regarding this post?

Answer

Yes Karen Talbot is leaving and she will be a loss to the council. Representatives from LTP are currently taking part in the interviews today.

206. Leasehold Matters (Felicity Kelsall)

RESOLVED there is no further update available at this point.

207. Update on Windows (Mick Barber)

Mick Barber, Vice-Chair gave an update on LTP's recommendation that window restrictors should be fitted at some properties. The Investment Team had supplied a potential specification for the restrictors and this was circulated. The next stage is for a restrictor to be presented at the next LTP meeting.

RESOLVED the update by noted.

208. Review Groups

209. Allocations and Tenancy (Caroline Coyle-Fox)

Caroline Coyle-Fox, chair of the A+T group gave an update. She stated that:

- For the next meeting the voids team leader has been invited so they can be asked about the furniture scheme
- Alive Church have been invited so they can be asked about the furniture scheme from their side.

RESOLVED the report be noted.

210. Neighbourhood, Community Involvement and Home (Chris Morton)

Chris Morton advised that at the last NCIH meeting the group finalised the survey for tenants and arranged to shadow operatives.

RESOLVED the updated be noted.

211. Anti-Social Behaviour Monitoring (Debbie Rousseau)

Debbie Rousseau advised LTP are awaiting a date for the ASB development group, however in the meantime a meeting should be arranged for 1 Feb 18 for LTP to discuss garden conditions.

RESOLVED a meeting is to be arranged for LTP to discuss garden conditions.

Action CM to set up the meeting.

212. LTP Publicity and Membership (Chris Morton)

Chris Morton requested that LTP members let him know of any upcoming events over the next year where resident involvement can be promoted.

RESOLVED the update be noted.

213. LTP Training (Chris Morton)

Chris Morton advised that the next LTP training date is scheduled for 7 Feb and would cover equality and diversity.

RESOLVED LTP members to note training date.

214. Items for the Next Meeting

215. Review of the Work Programme (All)

RESOLVED the items for the next meeting be noted.

216. Non Agenda Items

RESOLVED no items raised.