

Present: Councillors Councillor Gary Hewson (*in the Chair*), Bob Bushell, Jackie Kirk, Jane Loffhagen, Pat Vaughan and Keith Weaver

Apologies for Absence: None.

Also in Attendance: Brian Botham, Gaynor Brown, Caroline Coyle-Fox and Eric Jenkinson

30. Confirmation of Minutes -14 November 2016

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2016 be confirmed.

31. Matters Arising

Caroline Coyle-Fox requested that her apologies be noted for the Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee held on 14 November 2016.

32. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

33. LTP Matters

Eric Jenkinson, Chair of LTP advised on the following matters:

- The Santa's Grotto that took place at Ermine West and St Giles had been successful.
- New LTP representatives were needed in Ermine West, Moorland, Birchwood and Newport.
- The next LTP meeting would be held on Wednesday 18th January at 10am.

34. Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy and Rechargeable Repairs Policy

Bob Ledger, Director of Housing,

- a. presented to members the Repairs and Maintenance Policy and Rechargeable Repairs Policy which encompassed the established terms and conditions of the tenancy agreement.
- b. requested members support for the documents and advised that the documents primary use was as guidance for staff to ensure a consistent approach to prioritising repairs and fair and consistent recharges.
- c. advised that it was best practice to have a repairs and maintenance Policy that captured the contractual rights and responsibilities for a number of reasons:

- Housing Officers were usually more familiar with the terms and conditions of tenancy than repair staff who administer repair requests.
- An internal policy provides clarity for all staff, not just repairs staff, about what works would be done and within which timescale.
- Clarity around emergency repairs ensures that only these are attended as out of hours calls thereby managing the costs of this aspect of service delivery.
- Assists with the continuation of service improvement through performance management.
- Ensure that all public facing information that followed reflect messages within the policy to ensure consistency.

d. a rechargeable repairs policy also ensured:

- Fair and consistent application of recharges whilst allowing for exemptions for vulnerable tenants.
- Clarity around repairs responsibilities during the mutual exchange process.
- Fair and consistent application of recharges to former tenants of void properties.
- Clarity around the process as to how and when tenants will be advised that a repair can be completed but may be charged to them with an explanation as to why.

e. advised that the contents of both policy documents had been considered and approved by Lincoln Tenants Panel at their meeting on 17 August 2017.

f. Invited members questions and comments.

Question: How would a decision be made on whether a tenant had damaged a property or if it was general wear and tear?

Response: It would be a judgement call of the officer, if there was any doubt it would be assessed as fair wear and tear.

Question: Members referred to paragraph 3.4.2 of the Tenancy Agreement and asked about “the right to see data which we hold about you subject to payment of a small fee.”

Response: Currently there was no fee being charged.

Comment: The guidance for staff was supported by the LTP as it provided clarity for all staff and they would have a better understanding of the Policies and Tenancy Agreement.

Response: Staff briefings would be held to raise awareness of the Policies.

Comment: Tenants needed to know that the Policies were in place and suggested a future topic for the Neighbourhood Scrutiny Panel.

Question: There was generally a complaints process as part of Council policies and asked if the rights of appeal could be included in this policy.

Response: There was a democratic process for council tenants and a paragraph on complaints could be included within the policy.

RESOLVED that

1. the contents of the report be noted
2. a paragraph on the rights of appeal be added to the policy.

35. Work Programme 2016-2017

The Democratic Services Officer

- a. presented the work programme for the Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee for 2016/17 as detailed at appendix A of the report.
- b. advised that this was an opportunity for the committee to suggest other items be included within the work programme.

The Chair requested that a visit to St Botolphs Court be arranged to view the modernisation works.

Bob Ledger, Director of Housing suggested that the next meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Committee be held at St Botolphs Court with a tour of the building prior to the meeting.

RESOLVED that

1. the work programme be agreed
2. the Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee due to be held on 13 March 2017 be moved to St Botolphs Court commencing at 4pm.