

Note of meeting held 13th September 2023

Subject: Tenant Scrutiny Group – meeting two.

Venue: Aberdeen Office – 680 King Street, Aberdeen

Time: 1.30 - 3.30pm

People present	Apologies
Samantha Hough (SH) Customer Participation Officer	SC – tenant, Aberdeen
Rebecca Davidson (RD) Customer Service Manager	KR – tenant, Aberdeen
Helen Gordon (HG) Registered Service Manager with Langstane Housing Support Service (LHSS)	CN – tenant, Ellon
Robyn Henry (RH) Modern Apprentice	PD – tenant, Aberdeen
KH – tenant, Stonehaven	RC – tenant, Aberdeen
RB – tenant, Aberdeen	KP – tenant, Stonehaven
BL – tenant, Aberdeen	
IT – tenant, Kemnay	

Overview of the meeting

The purpose of the meeting was for the scrutiny group to meet for a second time. To move forward and maintain momentum. This involved discussing our next steps, including training, learning, and continuing to build relationships. This being not only within the group but with staff, leadership team and board members, who are vital parts of Langstane's future scrutiny framework and protocols (in the process of being developed).

Although a few members were unable to attend their reasons were legitimate. This indicates they still have an appetite for involvement in this project and they have not dropped out the group through lack of interest. We had two new faces in the group who have committed and are happy to attend in the future. There was a busy and full agenda with positive outcomes discussed and agreed.

An information pack was provided to members. The pack included the Scottish Social Housing Charter and other publications on developing effective scrutiny which is aimed at both staff and tenants. This material is from the 'Stepping up to Scrutiny' initiative run by the Scottish Government from 2014-2016.

Discussion also included how the group will communicate and whether we should use a programme such as 'Doodle Poll' to arrange future meetings. Tenants were also interested in being part of a private WhatsApp group.

The feedback to the questionnaire was reviewed and members happy to meet four times a year alongside some extra meetings for training.

North East Tenants Residents and Landlords Together (NETRALT) members would like to work with Langstane and our new scrutineers on some joint training and development of a joint information pack. Tenants were happy to be involved in this so we will continue to plan for this and arrange training with the Tenant Participation Advisory Service Scotland (TPAS) and other relevant consultants such as Lesley Baird (former Chief Executive of TPAS Scotland).

Item discussed	Notes
Welcome, introductions and apologies	<p>Members were welcomed by RD, who attended for the first few minutes to meet and greet attendees and introduce herself and her role. This was important as RD will be working closely with the group as we develop our scrutiny framework.</p> <p>Around the table were two new members along with new staff, so we completed a round of introductions before the meeting started.</p> <p>SH relayed apologies from those were unable to attend. Only one tenant did not submit apologies which is a positive indication about the overall attendance as detailed in the earlier overview.</p>
Review of LHSS improvement plan	<p>First item on the agenda was to provide some feedback to our guest, HG on the LHSS improvement plan. HG informed the group of the reason for the plan moving on to an explanation of the work the LHSS team have completed and challenges they've faced to try and gain tenant and service user feedback.</p> <p>She mentioned that they would like to form a 'Service User Participation Group'. After talking about the challenges of recruiting for this group, RB volunteered to be a member.</p> <p>From this HG asked if the group was happy to work through the plan, providing feedback throughout. She also offered the group her contact details so more feedback could be provided after the meeting. SH gave this information out after HG left the meeting.</p> <p>Discussion started with KH asking for an explanation of what the service does. To illustrate this, we used the front cover article from our Summer Newsletter 2023. A hard copy was provided to KH who was happy with the explanation provided. Other points of the discussion centred around addiction services, safeguarding, training for staff (dementia, drugs, children services and mental health) and continuous improvement. Also highlighted was the importance of frequent one to one's for the team with focus on written notes on these meetings to provide staff with actions and outcomes. The group said equality and diversity was important issues along with the underlying problem around drug and alcohol dependency and how to provide the proper support and help. The members asked about CAFÉ and HG explained what it was along with its uses.</p> <p>HG thanked the group for their input and reiterated that they email her with any other comments.</p>
Review of meeting notes & questionnaire results	<p>In order to recap with those who attended the first scrutiny meeting in May and to 'catch up' the new ones, notes from the May meeting were reviewed.</p>

Item discussed	Notes
	<p>KH raised a couple of issues. SH thanked KH for this feedback and reassured the group that all these points (protocols for staff and tenants when working together, confidentiality agreements, possible insurance, and training sessions about scrutiny) will be addressed by Langstane when we develop our scrutiny framework. KH and group were happy with this.</p> <p>SH informed the group that these meeting notes would be published on Langstane's website, making them available to all tenants who are interested. All members happy with this.</p>
Overview of this meeting	<p>SH explained what the rest of the meeting would focus on, which mainly includes reviewing and discussing the information pack provided and the next steps for the group. This includes future training along with attendance at Langstane's annual general meeting (AGM) along with possibilities for further learning.</p>
Commitment from new member	<p>Only one new member had not discussed their commitment to the group. The other had met with SH separately and was interested in involvement long term. The tenants preference discussion this was to stay at the end and discuss privately with SH.</p> <p>Once the meeting was concluded SH and IT discussed his involvement levels concluding in his commitment to the group for as long as he is able.</p>
Information pack content discussion	<p>This started with an overview of the contents and SH concern about providing the right balance of information without overwhelming group members, which could potentially lead to information fatigue at this early stage.</p> <p>Firstly, we reviewed the questionnaire completed by members in May. The results highlighted afternoons were preferable for meetings and from the results the group would meet four times a year. There was also an overview regarding refreshments, however SH explained that this aspect of meeting planning will be subject to change to avoid waste. Reason for this is that as a group we want to demonstrate value for money and proper use of resources afforded to the group's activities, in this case the Tenant Participation budget. We want to make use of our resources as effectively as possible and wasting food is an initial indicator we are not making good use of money. The group agreed and were happy with this.</p> <p>Also discussed was the location of the meetings. SH suggested that all training and learning sessions in 2023 and leading into 2024 are better to be held at our Aberdeen office. Then as the group becomes more settled we move to arranging meetings out in our communities. All were happy with this.</p> <p>Although the team were happy with the content of the summary the quality of the presentation was not 100%. SH</p>

Item discussed	Notes
	<p>made sure those who needed it had large print, however some text throughout the presentation was too small, therefore edits are needed. SH apologised and will make sure the quality of future materials meets the requirements of the group. These materials will be redesigned and provided to the tenants to replace today's materials. Tenants accepted this and were happy that improvement will be made.</p> <p>The scrutiny materials were then discussed with quick overviews of each document. Tenants were then asked to take them home so they could read and absorb the material at their leisure. From this came the theme of hard copy vs digital. SH provided hard copy packs for everyone however only one copy of the Scottish Government jargon buster. She asked for them to discuss their preferences with three in favour of hard copies and one for digital versions. This is again interesting and indicative that for moving forward we look at saving resources and money as a long-term aim and an important one for the group in their scrutiny journey. From this, two more copies of the jargon buster were provided before the end of the meeting.</p> <p>These literature packs were well received as aids to help the group understand what scrutiny is and what we will be undertaking in the future.</p> <p>Packs will be provided to those who missed the meeting.</p>
Plan for future meetings this year and early 2024	<p>This led nicely to discussion about the next steps for the group. SH informed the group that she had contacted TPAS Scotland, requesting scrutiny training at the King Street office. TPAS were delighted to help and await contact from SH on a future date.</p> <p>Another training opportunity has come from discussions with Aberdeen City Council and other landlords through involvement with NETRALT. Many landlords are interested in arranging some joint scrutiny training and development of a joint information pack, which has come at the perfect time for the group and Association. Tenants were happy to be involved in both therefore SH will work to move this forward with NETRALT partners and set dates and locations for this training.</p> <p>One suggestion that came from a recent NETRALT meeting was to request Lesley Baird consultancy as a trainer. Lesley is the former Chief Executive of TPAS Scotland and from this has a wealth of knowledge and experience in tenant participation and scrutiny.</p> <p>SH plans to contact Lesley and will keep the group updated. RB also brought up the possibility of meetings on Saturday mornings. SH fed back that there are a few members who have indicated previously that Saturdays don't work for them,</p>

Item discussed	Notes
	therefore we will take note of this comment and ask tenants in future if necessary.
Group communication	Group discussed both having a WhatsApp group and making use of Doodle Poll to help set dates and check everyone's availability. SH informed the group that she would need to look into Doodle Poll and see if this was an Association friendly application which we could use including checking about any financial cost. All attendees were in favour of a WhatsApp group therefore SH will progress this.
Working together with staff and Leadership Team	<p>Part of the 'next steps' includes working to build relationships with staff. SH plans to provide updates to staff initially through the Associations internal communication channels such as the weekly team brief. In the new year, once tenant development has progressed, team meetings will be facilitated with SH informing staff about the remit of the group, update on progress, discuss plans for how scrutiny will work and discuss the new and constantly developing scrutiny framework.</p> <p>SH also informed the group of the enthusiasm the Leadership Team have in engaging with the group and assisting them in the scrutiny journey. Tenants happy with this.</p>
Attendance at Langstane Housing Association AGM	<p>A short discussion took place about members attending the Association's annual general meeting (AGM) and that there is no expectation on the group to stand up and speak. That it is purely a meet and greet. If any explanation of what the group has done or is planning to do then SH would provide an update. All those who need to complete their membership forms have and formal invites will follow. Group happy with this.</p> <p>KH suggested that in the future, the group be allowed to observe the Board of Management. Not necessarily for the entire meeting but to get a flavour of what they do and what they're remit is. SH assured the group this idea would be put forward to management however we may need to look at confidentiality agreements and may not be allowed to listen to business sensitive conversations.</p>
TPAS Tenant Participation certificate	<p>One of the members also attends NETRALT meetings and at a recent meeting heard about the TPAS TP certificate. He was keen to learn more and so SH added to the agenda for this meeting.</p> <p>A brief overview (due to time) was provided by SH and the website was brought up on screen for the group to look at. Two members are interested in learning more and may be interested in completing the course. SH assured the group that they would receive her full support (as she has already completed the course) and that the Association would fund their studies. Next step is to therefore provide more information and to take the tenants interest to senior staff so that the financial element can be considered.</p>

Item discussed	Notes
Questions, closing comments and queries	Expense forms were discussed for both fuel and train travel. SH will work with tenants to make sure they are compensated for all expenditure.

Outcome

- Happy to continue forward with the group and are happy to hear about future meetings and training.
- Continue development of Langstane's scrutiny framework.
- Update of notes from the meeting will be provided to HG so it can be fed into the improvement plan.
- Meetings will be held four times a year with the possibility of extra sessions for training, either Langstane focussed or joint with NETRALT partners.
- Information pack feedback was positive therefore this seems to be (at the moment) a balanced level of information at this point in the groups development.
- Group happy with Aberdeen office as location of meetings for the time being with plans next year to out in our communities.
- Two tenants interested and wishing to learn more about the TPAS TP certificate.
- Tenants are looking forward to meeting Leadership Team and Board of Management at Langstane HA AGM.

Next steps for SH

- Continue to work on developing scrutiny framework and keep tenants and staff updated on progress of the group.
- Create a WhatsApp group chat where those not available today can choose if they want to be involved.
- Investigate Doodle Poll to see if it's a viable and safe option.
- Alter the design of the questionnaire summary and reissue to tenants in either hard copy or digitally.
- Process expenses claims for fuel and train costs.
- Provide digital and hard copy information on the TPAS TP certificate to attendees.
- Speak to RD about the possibility of funding and supporting tenants through this qualification. Starting January 2024.
- Send information packs to those who weren't able to attend meeting. Hard copy in the first instance to avoid waste of preprepared materials.
- Move forward with planning of joint training and information pack.