

Note of meeting held 17th May 2024

Subject: Tenant Scrutiny Group – meeting four.

Venue: Aberdeen Office – 680 King Street, Aberdeen

Time: 11am till 1pm

People present	Apologies	Meet separately
Samantha Hough (SH) Customer Participation Officer		
RB – tenant, Aberdeen	KH – tenant, Stonehaven	BL – tenant, Aberdeen
KR – tenant, Aberdeen	KP – tenant, Stonehaven	
CN – tenant, Ellon	RB – tenant, Aberdeen	
IT – tenant, Kemnay		
SC – tenant, Aberdeen		

Overview of the meeting

The purpose of the meeting was for the scrutiny group to meet again and review progress so far. This includes scrutiny training in February by TPAS (Tenant Participation Advisory Service) Scotland and joint scrutiny training undertaken by Lesley Baird consultants in March, organised in partnership with North East Tenants Residents and Landlords Together (NETRALT).

Attendance was excellent, which is essential for progress. There were a couple of apologies, but again absence reasons were legitimate, indicating a continuing appetite for inclusion in the group.

Further training, development and skill building were discussed with plans to visit Aberdeen City Council's 'Housing Service Review Group' in June to help us learn about scrutiny from our peers.

The group continues to move forward and maintain momentum with members continuing to embark on a journey of learning and development. The group discussed their next steps and plans for skill development, confidence building, setting the agenda, scrutiny project planning and frequency and location of meetings.

Item discussed	Notes
Welcome, housekeeping and announcement	<p>Members were welcomed by SH and offered refreshments.</p> <p>No fire alarm was scheduled for today so if the alarm were to sound tenants were informed of the procedure to leave the training area.</p> <p>The announcement was that a member of the group was celebrating his birthday, so the group all wished him well.</p>
Apologies and attendance	<p>SH relayed apologies received and repeated to group that submission of apologies at this stage needed to be made in advance so that SH can gauge interest and be made aware of any issues, which may be causing the absences. Also, that we are not wasting money on unnecessary refreshments.</p> <p>The group also received an update on the attendance of one tenant who will not be joining the rest of the group at regular meetings. BL will meet with SH separately in a location convenient for both parties to go through the agenda and receive and discuss BL's feedback. However, BL will attend scrutiny project events and any extra meetings for training and development.</p> <p>Also, another member who attended an early meeting and who has been receiving an invite to scrutiny events will no longer be invited due to no contact for several months. The group agreed with this action.</p>
Review of meeting notes and progress so far	<p>In light of the group having only met for three meetings over a period of a year (as one meeting was a training session), SH felt it important to review progress so far. This was completed using the meeting notes from previous meetings and working through each action, having discussions were necessary. For example, RB questioned what he had volunteered for during the September meeting. SH explained and promised to speak to Helen Gordon from the Langstane Support Service and provide an update to RB.</p> <p>Other points for discussion included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing light refreshments only so that group activities achieve value for money. • That the group dynamic continues to be positive with all members exercising courteous and respectful behaviours towards their fellow members. • Review of available technology in their home along with digital skills and abilities. • That the group need to think about what roles they would like to undertake i.e., report writing, agenda setting. • Review of the questionnaire, focussing on refreshments and value for money, frequency of meetings and meeting locations (community based versus office based).

Item discussed	Notes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of scrutiny pack provided to see if replacement documents were needed. • Training achieved and future plans. • Review of merchandise and volunteer badges. • Webpage development with staff and tenants working together. <p>SH also mentioned that in terms of achieving the aims outlined in their meetings to date the group will continue to be their best and gain meaningful results if they work together and don't allow themselves to be burdened or worry that they're doing it alone. SH repeated that they are a team, and she wanted the group to know there is a lot of support available to make their activities enjoyable, interesting, and achievable.</p> <p>SH also wanted to talk about the agenda's for these meetings, sharing her hesitation at sending an agenda in advance which would cause members to be intimidated or overwhelmed by the content. However, the group do not feel this way which was very positive. After discussion the group decided that for the time being SH would set a draft agenda and send to the group (in their preferred format) a week in advance of the meeting, so they are able to comment on and/or suggest additional items. All members were happy with this.</p> <p>Two important points from the questionnaire were discussed in more depth. These being the early proposition that the group would, once more established, meet at locations out in the communities. This was originally proposed because Langstane would like to take more of an inclusive approach to going into our communities instead of primarily asking them to come to the office. However, the group were not happy with this, feeling that it was a waste of money to hire venues, pay for travel, expensive refreshments along with excess staff travel costs. These staff travel costs would be because the group have invited staff members to attend meetings. The group would rather staff just pop upstairs to the training area or come through on video link.</p> <p>The other point of discussion was the frequency of the meetings going forward. The original vote and arrangement meant that the group would meet four times a year. However, this will not be frequent enough for the group to progress in a timely manner, keep all the information they learn fresh in their minds and start to achieve meaningful results once they start scrutiny projects.</p> <p>The group were happy with this and instantly worked together to put a date in the diary for July. All happy with 16 July which SH agreed she would confirm with the tenants not in attendance. Once confirmed SH promised to email confirmation of this date to all. The group will then start</p>

Item discussed	Notes
	<p>meeting at least every two months to maintain momentum of on-going activities.</p>
<p>Review of training to date</p>	<p>The group discussed the recent training sessions. First training session was with TPAS Scotland which gave the group an overview and introduction to scrutiny over and above information provided by SH.</p> <p>The next session discussed was the all-day event hosted at Langstane's Aberdeen office which was organised in collaboration with the NETRALT (North East Tenants Residents and Landlords Together) partners. This session was delivered by Lesley Baird consultant who is a tenant participation expert. 30 people from six landlord organisations attended what was a very successful event.</p> <p>The group discussed these events and reviewed the PowerPoint presentations. SH made sure all members have copies of these in their preferred formats. Also discussed was how these events were funded and what the group needs to move onto now initial training has been completed.</p> <p>Looking forward to our next steps SH proposed we look at skill and confidence building. The group was asked to consider this for the next meeting in terms of thinking a bit about what skills they bring to the group based on previous experience and what skills they would like to develop. Bearing in mind that everyone is different and has varying strengths and weaknesses and that we will all work at a pace that suits everyone.</p> <p>Next, SH talked about how two members (RB and RB) have recently completed their TPAS (Tenant Participation Advisory Service) Tenant Participation certificate. SH invited RB to talk a little about his experience of completing the qualification and if he had any advice for the other group members considering undertaking the course.</p> <p>There was some interest from the other members however SH advised the group there would not be budget for any more tenants to complete the course until the next financial year. All were happy with this.</p>
<p>Merchandise and tenant volunteer badges</p>	<p>Prior to the meeting SH discussed with colleagues about purchasing merchandise for the group and was awaiting an update on where funding would be provided from.</p> <p>Also, SH was informed that tenant volunteer badges can be printed inhouse. The topic of the badges, including the reason for them was discussed with the group who were all happy with having a photograph taken after the meeting for use in creating the badges. Badges will be essential to identify group members they start completing interviews with staff and during external activities while working on behalf of</p>

Item discussed	Notes
	<p>the tenant group and by extension tenant representatives of Langstane Housing Association.</p> <p>Photos were taken of each group member in attendance once the meeting finished. Lanyards will also be ordered.</p> <p>We also discussed the need for group photos to include all members for use when publicising the group. All group members in agreement therefore SH will co-ordinate with all members and arrange for a session as soon as possible.</p>
<p>Training, development, and skills building</p>	<p>SH informed the group that Aberdeen City Council 'Housing Service Review Group' have invited us all to attend their next meeting on 4th June at the Town House, Aberdeen. The purpose of the invite is to meet the group, learn how they have tackled scrutiny exercises over the years and for 'tenants to meet tenants', which is believed to be a powerful part of learning about tenant involvement activities.</p> <p>Everyone was interested in attending and SH promised to send an email to provide all the details, including times and meeting place.</p> <p>As already detailed the group are looking at developing their skills – SH asked the tenants what they feel they want, and the general consensus is that at the next meeting we focus on this with a look to review strengths and weaknesses. The group will work individually before the next meeting to write their thoughts down which can then be discussed at the next meeting to be developed and built on.</p> <p>If the group continues forward, deciding in the future to become a registered formal group, this preparation will assist them when roles and responsibilities are assigned.</p>
<p>Discussion of first scrutiny project</p>	<p>The group discussed initial projects which are manageable and can be completed in a relatively short period of time. Initial projects discussed could include walkabouts which was agreed to by all members. This will be developed over the next few meetings, in terms of location, travel and stationery and paperwork i.e., clipboards and paper.</p>
<p>Webpage development</p>	<p>SH proposed that the group work collaboratively to design a scrutiny page for the website instead of SH creating a draft and then getting the groups input.</p> <p>All members agreed and so planning will start during the next meeting.</p>
<p>Development of scrutiny framework</p>	<p>The group discussed that as they were all embarking on Langstane's scrutiny journey together that it would be good to work together to develop the framework. However, as the group continues to be informal it will be a basic framework to begin with, developing to something more in depth if the group becomes a Registered Tenant Organisation (RTO).</p>

Item discussed	Notes
	SH provided hard copy draft documents of a Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct draft. SH has requested that the group take them home and review them. Freepost envelopes were also provided so that group members can provide feedback before the next meeting.
Any other business	SH reminded those who needed to claim for their milage to do so. CN hadn't realised that he could claim milage so SH will ask finance team whether a backdated claim would be honoured, spanning all completed scrutiny meetings. CN happy with this.
Planning for next meeting	<p>Tenants in attendance happy with 16th July and SH will speak to those who are not at meeting and confirm date with all group members via email. Everyone happy with this.</p> <p>SH reiterated what she would like group members to do in preparation for next meeting. This includes looking at documents provided, read through PowerPoint training materials, along with thinking about the skills they bring to the group.</p>

Outcomes

- Meetings in future will be held at the Aberdeen office.
- Agreement that meetings will take place more frequently. Next meeting pencilled in for the 16th July.
- SH to continue preparing agendas for the group and sending out a week before meetings.
- Group will continue to arrange meetings using Forms to gather members availability.
- As the group is a pilot and new for the Association, SH proposes tenants and staff work together to develop the scrutiny framework.
- Tenants to make sure they claim their expenses for travel.
- Tenants to look at Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct for discussion at next meeting.
- SH and tenants to continue to work together with webpage and framework top of the agenda.
- SH and tenants will work together to arrange a neighbourhood walkabout.

Next steps for SH

- Arrange times to speak to the other members of the group and confirm next meeting date with them.
- SH will email members with details of what they need to prepare and think about for the next meeting along with details of the visit to Aberdeen City Council on the 4th June.
- SH will forward photos of all tenant volunteers so volunteer badges can be created.
- SH will chase the issue of merchandise and lanyards for tenant volunteer badges.
- SH will continue to monitor interest from members in completing the TPAS TP Certificate.
- Arrange a session where all tenants can attend to take some promotional photographs for the group to use for publicity.

- Process expenses claims for fuel and train costs. Arrange for back dated claim.
- Provide hard copies of scrutiny PowerPoint presentations for those who need them.
- Continue to work on developing scrutiny framework and keep tenants and staff updated on progress of the group.
- SH to investigate the level of agreements that are needed for the group to progress.