



**GGHT Panel of
Excellence and Scrutiny
Wednesday 15th January
2014, 10am The Gateway,
Room 6**

Minutes

Attendance:	Lynda Johnson, Graham Hanson, Jean Bullock, Dot Thacker, Alan Rankin, Debbie Ergen, Ayo Akinrele, Charlie Martin, Rebecca Hallam, Andrew Shaw, Marie Power, Tim Wright (observer)
Apologies:	Fiona Roberts

		Action
1.	<p>Apologies/Declarations of Interest</p> <p>No declarations of interests.</p> <p>Apologies as above.</p> <p>The Panel welcomed Tim Wright as an observer to the meeting.</p> <p>The Panel also welcomed Andrew Chair, Head Scrutineer of Halton Housing Trust (HHT), and Marie Power, Halton Housing Trust Scrutineer. AS and MP shared their contact details with the Panel and invited the Panel to contact them with any further queries outside of the meeting. The Panel thanked AS and PW for attending.</p>	
2.	<p>Election of Chair</p> <p>Lynda Johnson was re-elected as Chair of the Panel of Excellence and Scrutiny for a further 12 months.</p> <p>As the Deputy Chair was elected in November, the Panel agreed that Graham Hanson's term as Deputy will be rolled over for another 12 months.</p>	
3.	<p>Minutes of Meeting Held on 13 November 2013</p> <p>The Panel expressed concern about the cost using external venues for meetings. RH explained that this should following the move to the new head office.</p> <p>The minutes were approved as a true and accurate record.</p>	

4.	<p>Matters Arising (Action Monitor)</p> <p>RH explained that the action monitor would help the Panel to monitor actions raised at previous meetings.</p> <p>CM updated the Panel with actions taken since the December meeting.</p> <p>Action 028: Void Pilot Property</p> <p>RH advised that the property remains void and will update the Panel on the status of the property at future meetings. The Panel were concerned that the property remains void and asked for information on the average turn-around time in that street.</p> <p>The property the Panel viewed has been refurbished as part of a void pilot. RH advised that the pilot has not led to a reduction in void turn-around time and therefore will not be extended. Lessons learnt from the pilot will be considered as part of the Vanguard review.</p> <p>Comments/Queries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The review costs seem high. HHT Scrutiny Panel completed a review of voids which resulted in a significant cost saving for the Trust. How long is the review likely to take? ❖ Investment in void properties at HHT is significantly less than the amount spent on the void pilot properties. RH explained that some of the investment into the void pilot properties was work due to be completed under the kitchen, bathroom and security package investment programmes. The pilot was limited to two properties; the average amount spent on existing void properties is substantially less. ❖ Willow Park Housing Trust (now Wythenshawe Community Housing Group) conducted a review into voids which focussed on locations where it was difficult to let properties. As a result of the review the Trust introduced wardens to areas where there were reports of anti-social behaviour (ASB). The wardens work closely with the policy and monitored, 24 hour, CCTV was also introduced. The Trust found that the void time reduced as a result of these initiatives. <p>Action 029: Feedback on Universal Credit Training</p> <p>The Panel agreed to that the next review should be the focus of future meetings. The Welfare Reform champions will contact Carmel Morris to discuss future welfare reform changes.</p> <p>Responsive Repairs Review 2014: Action Plan</p> <p>The Panel requested that all updates and any related paperwork be given to them prior to the meeting. AS encouraged the Panel to contact Officers between meetings to follow up on actions or request information.</p> <p>CM explained the Responsive Repairs Review to AS and MS. The Review</p>	<p>RH</p> <p>RH</p>

	<p>was presented to the Board at the November meeting and was positively received. However, the Board suggested that future reviews have a narrower scope. AS agreed that the Review was wide ranging and expressed concern that the Panel could be spread too thin. The Panel agreed that more focus was needed and felt this has been a problem in recent meetings.</p> <p>AS explained that he arranges meetings with service managers on a monthly basis to discuss follow up actions. Meetings are also arranged prior to a review starting which helps ensure the review remains focussed. The Panel agreed that they should consider the scope of the next review before starting work.</p> <p>Action 1: The Panel are awaiting a response from Mark Burrows, Head of Property Service. CM will follow-up.</p> <p>Action 4: The Panel are awaiting a response from Steve Lamb, Head of ICT and BRP. CM will follow up.</p> <p>Action 7: The Handyman Policy has been widened to allow people who are not of pensionable age to access the scheme. Overall uptake has been low and as a result the number of handymen has been reduced from two to one. The Panel may want to consider whether customers should be allowed to access the scheme more than once in 12 months.</p> <p>The handyman scheme at HHT has generated a lot of interest and uptake of the scheme has been good.</p> <p>The Panel felt that awareness of the scheme amongst GGHT customers is low. They also felt that there is a misunderstanding over how the scheme can be used. A handyman can have up to 2 hours to complete a job, if the appointment takes 20 minutes, the customer may assume that they can still use the handyman at a later date for the remaining 1 hour and 40 minutes.</p>	<p>CM</p> <p>CM</p>
5.	<p>Scrutiny Panel Budget 2014/15 and Reflective Log</p> <p>Budget 2014/15</p> <p>CM provided an overview of the Panel's budget for 2014/15.</p> <p>Comments/Queries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The Panel asked whether their budget should be calculated based on the number of properties that GGHT manages. <i>Benchmarking information suggests that other providers base their budgets on the previous year's spend and as well as future needs rather than the size of the housing stock which allows for flexibility in the budget. AS confirmed that this is also the approach that HHT takes.</i> ❖ As the HHT Panel has developed there has been less need for 	

	<p>external training and as a result they do not make full use of their budget. The majority of the training is provided in-house. The Panel use HELP software on an electronic learning system to undertake training and also work with other organisations to reduce the cost of external trainers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ To date the HHT Panel has spent approximately £2500 in the 2013/14 financial year. The Scrutineers undertake best practice visits to other organisations which represents a significant part of their budget. ❖ HHT has a ring-fenced Customer Involvement budget which was used to provide ipads and laptops for Panel members. There is now a pool of IT equipment for new members to use. AS uses the IT equipment to write the Panel's reviews and other members undertake review work outside of meetings, for example conducting telephone surveys to customers. ❖ The Scrutineers use HHT issued mobile phones and have a secure system to store customer contact details to ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act 2000 (DPA). The Surveys are conducted from the Panel's office; a former warden's office in one of HHT's sheltered accommodation buildings although one member does work from home. Panel members use a Word template to record responses which are then transcribed by an HHT officer. HHT also provides Scrutineers with an annual internet allowance of £180. ❖ The Panel asked if GGHT would allow Panel members to conduct customer surveys without the supervision of GGD staff. CM explained that this may be difficult due to the ongoing IT and telephony upgrades. ❖ Will the have a dedicated meeting room in Bank Park House? <i>No, the Panel will be able to book meeting rooms for meetings and other activities.</i> ❖ The Panel have found it difficult to organise and store all papers from the previous meetings and asked if the HHT Panel face similar difficulties. The Scrutineers store all papers electronically. <p>Reflective Log</p> <p>AS explained how he uses the Reflective Log to ensure that learning and training is focussed. The Log ensures consistency and is a good learning tool for new Panel members.</p> <p>The Panel agreed that the Log is a useful learning tool and will be used for future training and reviews.</p>	
6.	<p>Future Scrutiny Panel Reviews</p> <p>Ground Maintenance</p> <p>The Ground Maintenance Partnership Agreement with Warrington Borough Council (WBC) has been extended to October 2016. CM suggested that Ground Maintenance should be a long term area of review. The Panel can work with the Tenant Inspectors to monitor service standards. This will also help to establish a working relationship between the Panel and the Tenant</p>	

	<p>Inspectors which can be utilised during future reviews. AS advised that the HHT has a close working relationship with Customer (Tenant) Inspectors.</p> <p>The Panel agreed but noted that they will need to specify what they would like the tenant inspectors to look at to ensure that they receive the required information.</p> <p>Damp and Condensation</p> <p>The window and cavity wall insulation has led to reduced ventilation in tenant properties and has contributed to an increase in issues related to damp and condensation. There is a campaign to raise awareness of this problem within GGHT and the Panel confirmed that they had received the article about this from the December 2013 Staff News.</p> <p>The Panel would like an update from James Doran on the use of anti-fungal paint in bathrooms in spring 2014.</p> <p>AS encouraged the Panel to consider the timing of their future reviews; a review into Ground Maintenance would be most effective during the summer, whilst a review into damp and condensation is best done during the winter.</p> <p>No Access</p> <p>A review of no access would allow the Panel to look closely at issues highlight in the Repairs review. Mark Moore is currently reviewing no access in relation to gas servicing. A review by the Panel could focus on no access for the in-house repairs team.</p> <p>The Panel asked whether Mark Moore could provide an update on their gas review and also whether access for gas servicing had improved. The Gas Servicing Champion explained that Mark has been pro-active in addressing issues linked to gas servicing and as a result access had improved.</p> <p>The Panel agreed to focus on no access for their next review.</p>	<p>RH</p> <p>RH</p>
8.	<p>Project Plan for No Access</p> <p>AS explained that the Panel has the opportunity to help GGHT make significant cost savings if they can suggest effective initiatives to manage no access.</p> <p>Angela Perry had suggested the following areas for the panel to evaluate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ No access by repair priority (emergency, urgent, non-urgent and planned works) ❖ No access for out of hours repairs ❖ Repeat offenders of no access ❖ How appointments are being communicated ❖ How operatives are picking up appointment times ❖ How no access is being recorded ❖ Should GGHT consider introducing charges where there is no access 	

for appointments

Comments/Queries:

- ❖ Blackpool Coastal Homes (BCH) use a handheld system called ‘Connect’ by Telecetera which allows appointments to be booked, and viewed by operatives, up to two weeks in advance. BCH has found that this has reduced the number of no access appointments because it allows operatives to plan ahead and ensure that they have the correct parts.
- ❖ RH will contact BCH to ask for some more information on the system. The Panel expressed an interest in visiting BCH in the future.
- ❖ BCH also have a floating team of operatives who go from door to door on each estate to do on the spot repairs. TW asked if GGHT would be able to introduce a similar service.
- ❖ Some providers use a gold, silver and bronze scoring system to identify customers that kept to their tenancy agreement. Gold member receive a better service, for example a faster repair, than a silver member. This is something that the Panel may want to consider as an alternative to sanctioning customers for no access.
- ❖ GGHT need to be careful as the introduction of sanctions could result in properties falling into disrepair.
- ❖ How are GGHT customers notified of appointments? *An SMS reminder is sent which includes the GGD phone number to allow customers to cancel or rearrange the appointment if necessary. However customers are not able to reply to these texts. HHT uses a similar system and it was agreed that being able to reply to text messages would help improve communications between HHT and their tenants.*
- ❖ It was agreed that the Panel need to speak to customers to find out the reason behind no access. The Panel suggested holding a ‘Scrutiny Surgery’ in a community centre. It is important that the focus of the Surgery is made clear to avoid unrelated issues being discussed.
- ❖ When a customer calls to rebook an appointment following a no access visit, are they asked the reason for there being no access? *Update: Customer Services Advisers do not routinely ask why there was no access. If an adviser can see that there have been a lot of no access appointments they may ask whether there was any reason for this but it will depend on the individual adviser’s judgement.*
- ❖ Is a no access alert put on Contact Manager for tenants who have had no access? If so, how often is this updated? *Update: An alert cannot be put onto Contact Manager. ‘Access Information’ can be added to the Repairs screen on Contact Manager, for example to show that a tenant has mobility difficulties and may need longer to answer the door, or to show that they will not be available at the beginning and end of the school day. Any access information which is added will remain on the account permanently and can be viewed for each repair. Access information will only be added at a tenant’s request.*
- ❖ Can operatives contact customers directly? This could save time and money and would remove the need for a member of GGD to contact the tenant on the operative’s behalf. *Update: Currently*

RH

RH

All

	<p><i>operatives cannot phone tenant's directly. Using the handheld device there is not a way for an operative to withhold their number leading to concerns that for future jobs a tenant may phone an operative directly instead of making their appointment via GGD.</i></p> <p>❖ Can tenants set a password for an operative to use when they attend appointments? This may give tenants an additional feeling of security.</p> <p><i>Update: A password can be added at a tenant's request to the Repairs screen on contact manager which will be passed to the operative's handheld device. All operatives attend properties in a GGHT marked van, wear a GGHT uniform and are required to show their ID badge upon entering a property to ensure tenants are confident that they are allowing a GGHT operative into their home.</i></p>	
9.	<p>Training Forward Plan</p> <p>RH advised that GGHT will host a tenant networking event at Orford Jubilee Hub on 13th February 2014. The Panel agreed that the event will be an excellent opportunity to share ideas with other panels. HHT's Scrutineers have also been invited to the event. RH will send information to AS and Jo Tinsley at HHT.</p> <p>The Panel asked for further information on the Active Learning For Resident's training programme run by the Chartered Institute of Housing. RH will investigate and will feed back to the Panel in February.</p> <p>The Chair and Deputy expressed an interest in Chair training. RH will pass further details of the training onto the Chair and Deputy.</p>	<p>All</p> <p>RH</p> <p>RH</p>
10.	<p>Agenda for February Meeting</p> <p>The Panel agreed that the February meeting will focus on the No Access review. One of the responsible managers will be invited to the meeting to discuss the review.</p> <p>The Deputy Chair would like to give a value for money update at the February meeting.</p>	<p>Deputy Chair</p>
11.	<p>A.O.B</p> <p>The Scrutiny Panel Terms of Reference allow each member to serve for a period of 3 years. CM suggested that in light of the difficulties faced to recruit new members and the fact that current members have a good working relationship, membership should be rolled over for a further year. The Panel agreed.</p> <p>AS confirmed that there is a provision in the Scrutineers Terms of Reference for membership to be rolled over.</p> <p>MP asked how the Panel recruits new members. CM advised that vacancies are advertised on the GGHT website and Facebook page, the Twitter account, via SMS and on the IVR for customers calling GGD. MP felt that it</p>	

	<p>was important for staff across the organisation to be aware of the Panel and their work. The Scrutineers attend staff events and have sent Christmas cards to different departments to raise their profile. As a result of this, and the quality of their work, officers now approach the Scrutineers to suggest areas of review.</p> <p>The Panel explained that they would like an independent mentor to help them to develop as a group. AS and MP agreed to act as mentors. They will attend another meeting in 6 months. The Panel extended their thanks to AS and MP.</p> <p>CM to circulate the regulatory gap analyses update to the Panel and approval will be sought at the next meeting.</p> <p>Two Panel members have not been issued with ID badges. RH will contact Communications Officer, Jacque Atherton, to arrange for them to receive ID badges.</p>	<p>AS/MP</p> <p>CM</p> <p>RH</p>
	<p>Meeting Costs</p> <p>Postage: £5.68</p> <p>Out of Pocket Expenses: £40</p> <p>Room Hire: £44.34</p> <p>Catering Expenses: £39.10</p> <p>Total: £129.12</p>	
	Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 19th February, Venue TBC	