

MEETING	Six Town Housing Board
DATE	11 November 2009
SUBJECT	REACH – Resident Led Self Regulation
STATUS	FOR PUBLICATION
REPORT FROM	Vicki Haslam Acting Director of Corporate Services
REPORT BY	Vivien Simon Team Leader Community Involvement Team
TELEPHONE/EMAIL	0161 686 8000 v.simon@sixtownhousing.org

Purpose

Following a review of LIAG last year, it was agreed in December 2008 in light of developments around the future regulation of social landlords, the TSA and the Cave Review, to develop a resident regulator group. This group would play a central role and put tenants at the heart of co-regulation and scrutiny activity within Six Town Housing.

At the beginning of January 2009 a development programme was put in place and led by Vivien Simon.

At the Board meeting of the 25th March 2009, it was agreed by Board for a resident led regulation model within Six Town Housing to be developed. This report sets out the progress to date, and the key principles of how the group will operate. A full report will be brought to Board next year.

Link to Strategic Objectives

The Board have ultimate responsibility for the purpose and delivery of the strategic objectives of Six Town Housing and for ensuring they work in the best interest of all our stakeholders. Resident scrutiny will

- Provide ‘critical friend’ challenge by tenants to the board/executive policy and decision makers
- Be carried out by independent minded tenants who lead and own the scrutiny process
- Drive improvement in services, and
- Inform the annual assessment process of ‘self regulation’ and ‘co regulation’ as to how the organisation is meeting the national standards set by the future housing regulator.

Recommendation

Board members are asked to:

- Continue to support the development of REACH, as set out in this report.
- Support the development of a Memorandum of Understanding between REACH, STH Board of Management and the Executive Management Team.
- Consider the future budget implications for REACH

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Risk Management		
Impact: High	Probability: Medium	Risk Rating: Medium
<p>Proposed changes to the regulatory framework for social landlords and the creation of a new regulator, the TSA will see more emphasis placed on resident focussed regulatory reform increasing resident empowerment. As an ALMO we have been quick to respond to these changes through the implementation of REACH. REACH will ensure that we have tenant driven scrutiny and accountability, improved services and will contribute positively to co-regulation.</p> <p>Failure to adopt this model could result in us delivering services which do not meet the needs and aspiration of current and future customers, and managing performance and business decision which are not resident centered.</p>		
<p>Financial Implications (including Value for Money / Efficiency Agenda)</p> <p>How STH will resource resident regulation will be a central consideration. Resources will need to be allocated to and devoted to bringing resident scrutiny to life and to embed it within the organisation.</p> <p>REACH will need its own budget in order to set up and service the group. Elements which will need to be considered are:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Induction, training and appraisal of scrutiny members• Training for staff• Costs associated with gathering information for the group• External consultants/expertise• Staff time preparing and servicing meetings• Administration costs, expenses, refreshments, venue hire. <p>At present the development of resident regulation is being funded through the community involvement team budget. A budget of £4,600 has been allocated to REACH from existing resource, and we are currently at an expenditure this financial year of £3,892.</p> <p>Appendix one provides estimated costings for their future operation.</p>		

Impact on Customers

The engagement of residents in scrutiny and co regulation, will significantly improve:-

- Resident involvement in the organisation
- The organisation's customer focus and drive for continuous improvement in service delivery
- Best use of resources.

Done well, resident scrutiny will

- Deliver services that tenants want in a way that they want to receive them
- Brings a wider perspective from customers and other benchmarks
- Develops more openness and accountability.

Service User Consultation Undertaken

STH housing staff and customers will be given the opportunity to feed into the development of REACH as it progresses.

Equality and Diversity Implications

It is recognised that the group is not sufficiently diverse and that member recruitment needs to be further developed.

TRACKING/PROCESS

EMT	WORKING GROUP	COMMITTEE
26.10.09		
BOARD	COUNCIL	OTHER
11.11.09		

1. Introduction:

REACH has an agreed membership of 12 tenants and leaseholders, and is supported by a lead officer/officers from the Community Involvement Team and officers from Performance & Governance. The group also have also recently taken on an independent mentor, Jon Warnock from TPAS.

REACH has developed clear terms of reference for the group, as appendix two. The group once fully developed will adopt a robust scrutiny process which will:-

- Scrutinise the organisations quality and performance in all services and policies
- Scrutinise the organisation's governance arrangements against best practice governance benchmarks and the regulatory code
- Scrutinise the development of the organisations strategy and business priorities

It is envisaged that the group will carry out their first scrutiny activity as a test case in January 2010, over a period of 8-12 weeks, (see appendix three). Following this the group will create an annual programme of activity, which will be informed by tenants, REACH, STH Board and Performance & Governance, and approved by Board. Following their scrutiny activity the group will produce a report which will be presented to Board with their outcomes/recommendations. STH Board will have a duty to formally respond and commission an action plan to address the groups recommendations.

A working group has been set up with representatives from REACH, STH Board of Management and Executive Management Team to agree the formal reporting arrangements for the group in a Memorandum of Understanding, and to agree protocols in the event of disputes or failure to act. It is not envisaged that the reporting arrangement will be finally agreed until after the groups first test case.

REACH will formally report their findings and outcomes to all customers and staff, and will be subject to internal and external review. STH Board can also call for a review of the group at any time should they have any concerns about how it is operating. Equally REACH will have sanctions should Six Town Housing Board fail to act.

2. Conclusion

'Leading the Way' is a policy proposal made to housing organisations, residents and the new regulator for a way to increase residents' empowerment to drive accountability and excellence that can link into and benefit the operation of a new resident-focused system of regulation.

3. Recommendations:

Board members are asked to:

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- Support the development of a Memorandum of Understanding between REACH, STH Board of Management and the Executive Management Team.
- Consider the future budget implications for REACH