

Orkney Residents' Panel

Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 23 Oct, at OHAL Offices, Kirkwall

Present: Kate Barrett (Tenant OHAL) Chris Soames (Tenant OHAL) John Foster (Sharing Owner, OHAL) Jon Barker (Tenant OHAL) Alma Murray (Tenant OIC) Linda Lennie (Tenant OIC) Inga Ross (Tenant OIC) Kath Fennell (Sharing Owner, OHAL) Ria Leslie (Tenant Participation Officer, OIC) Suzy Boardman (Communication & Engagement Officer, OHAL) Paul Scott (Head of Housing & Customer Service OHAL) Part.

Apologies: None

Facilitator:

Minutes: Suzy Boardman

Item	Action
<p><u>Welcome</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– SB thanked everyone for coming and recapped on the code of conduct that everyone signed when joining the group as a reminder to be respectful of everyone in the group as we all have different opinions, but we should listen to one another. SB also said that it can be difficult to keep up with the conversation if lots of people are talking at once so to bear that in mind and only speak one at a time.	
<p><u>Estate Management Scrutiny</u></p> <p>SB went over the background of the project looking at the Charter definition of estate management, what it includes and what it doesn't include. Details contained in slides</p> <p>PS joined the meeting to reiterate the purpose of the scrutiny exercise to focus on the services that OHAL & OIC offer to its tenants, and to look for where improvements can be made to include in the report.</p> <p>CS suggested that OHAL & OIC should have a vision for the future in terms of estate design and building in new technology and renewables. PS said although a good point that this would be considered at the design stage and estate management is about working with what is already there and how we look after that.</p> <p>PS encouraged members to think about only what they have seen and what the tenants they have spoken to have said about the services they receive, particularly with garden and grounds maintenance in mind.</p> <p>The group should also consider if there have been any issues of anti social behaviour but this should not include any hearsay or perceptions.</p>	

<p>The garden & grounds maintenance contract will be out for re-tendering very soon and we have a live consultation on our facebook and website about the current service. Asking, among other things if tenants feel that 14 cuts per year is enough to keep the place looking tidy.</p>	
<p>LL said she had noticed walking through Sommerville Sq that although there is no gardens as such the paving was covered in moss and weeds, making it slippery underfoot. SB suggested that could be included as a recommendation in the report that the weeds should be sprayed more than just once during the year. The group discussed the use of the red brick paviments in many of the new estates and how they do look untidy when the weeds grow through. SB said that this is something considered at the design stage and would feed into a new build design specification.</p>	<p>Recommendation</p>
<p>KB – Finstown, around Grimmond area the shrub and tree beds don't look like they have been weeded as stated in the ground maintenance contract. Around the wooden bench at Jewadale Drive could do with the trees cutting back around it to make it useable.</p>	
<p>AM suggested that the area around the bench could do with more regular cutting as the children have been playing in that area. This particular area gets a 'cut and drop', 3 times a year. To clarify a 'cut and drop' is usually large areas of land that would be too costly to cut on the same schedule as the smaller common parts and what it means is that the grass gets cut and left on the ground (not picked up) AM suggested that if it was to remain as a 'cut and drop' that maybe some thought could be given to when these take place i.e. before the school holidays to allow the children to continue to play and keep them off the roads a bit more.</p>	<p>Recommendation</p>
<p>The issues of traffic was discussed among the group but SB stated that this again is something considered at the design state of the estate and while this could be added as a recommendation in the report for future consideration it would come under the premise of estate management.</p>	
<p>LL suggested that it would be good for the group to visit other estates to get a wider understanding of how things are managed in different areas. SB said that this could be arranged when the weather improves next year but the group should draft the report on the current findings which can then be compared following the additional visits.</p>	<p>Recommendation</p>
<p>IR asked if estate management would deal with how individual tenants look after their properties? The reason for asking is that a house near where she lives has very visible signs of rising damp on the external wall of the house. SB suggested that this would be something that if/when carrying out regular estate inspections housing officers would pick up and take steps to rectify. This could be added as a recommendation that OIC Housing Officers to carry out regular estate visits. This would have the added benefit of building relationships with tenants and encouraging greater understanding.</p>	<p>Recommendation</p>

<p>JF did highlight the difficulty in trying to balance keeping the estates tidy as one size does not fit all and what for many people would be perceived to be enough grass cutting, to others might not be enough!</p> <p>Members did note that on their visits they had not seen any graffiti and very little litter laying around, although there can be a problem after the bins have been collected.</p> <p>KF asked about the strimming around the pavement side of the fence as she had seen this often being left to grow and can end up on the paths becoming slippery underfoot.</p> <p>JF asked how this is worded in the contract and going forward it should be made very clear if this is included. This could be a recommendation to check what exactly is stated in the contract regarding areas for strimming</p> <p>JF went on to ask about having a balance between short cut grass and wild flower areas. Discussion on the difficulties of maintaining a wild flower meadow to prevent it becoming just lots of weeds.</p> <p>JB mentioned that although for some it was important to remove all the weeds and have them spray, he found that the weed killer used has adverse effects on his asthma. He suggested that for those with asthma, small children and animals might think that the current levels of spraying would be enough.</p>	<p>Recommendation</p>
<p><u>Scrutiny Report</u></p> <p>SB spoke to the group about keeping up the current momentum and getting started on drafting a report. SB suggested that it would be good to get input from all members on the different report heading which could then be pulled together to form the basis of the report which the group could come together and agree.</p> <p>SB asked for volunteers as to which sections they would like to cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is involved? A little bit of background on the group and why you got involved. - KB • Introduction to the Report (why this area was chosen and what are the legislative requirements of the landlord to deliver this particular service. Include at Charter outcomes.) KF • Process of the exercise (what methods were used to research and carry out the exercise, questionnaires, estate walkabouts, interviews with staff etc) AM • What is purpose of the report (what area will you be looking and what do you hope to achieve?) JB • Findings (what did you find out while carrying out the exercise?) JF • Recommendations (are there things that you can suggest to make improvements to the current service) IR 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Actions (what actions need to happen following the completion of the report?) IR <p>SB said that if members could get their input before the next meeting she would pull this together for discussion and agreement.</p> <p>Any members wishing any support or assistance are to contact either SB or RL to discuss and even arrange to come in.</p>	
<p><u>AOCB</u></p>	
<p>Session concluded: 4pm</p> <p>Date of next meeting: Wednesday 6th November 2pm at OHAL offices</p>	