Services Committee
Summary of a meeting held on 25 August, 2020

Committee members present:

Tanya Martin	Tracey Walsh	Melanie Vickers
Rob Hannabus	Shabana Yousaf	

Performance

Tanya met with Nazmul and members from the Business Support Team prior to the meeting to finalise the KPI format. We noted that as this is the first quarter report in the new format there are no comparative figures. As we move forward we will see the trends emerge.

We noted void loss (all tenures). Andrea explained that it was illegal to let any properties for three months earlier this year due to Covid so this will be reflected in the performance figures throughout this year.

We noted the impact on certain services due to Covid-19 and will monitor potential recovery plans carefully.

Covid-19

CMT provided verbal updates on Poplar HARCA's response:

Housing: Andrea spoke about our recovery plan following Covid, the financial impact it has had on recruitment, planned maintenance, service provision etc. and the tough decisions we were having to take to keep Poplar HARCA focused on delivering its purpose.

Poplar Board approved the budget in March and then Covid hit, we will still aim to meet our budgets, anticipated rent arrears throughout the year will have a large impact. Rent and Safeguarding teams will be protected as much as possible during the recruitment freeze. There will not be any corporate events and any bonuses will be looked at.

Andrea explained that this is early days in terms of scoping out, the Performance Report will be used to monitor incredibly closely and any areas of concern brought to Members' attention.

We understood that a recruitment freeze would have an impact, but are keen that we keep a close eye on how this is affecting frontline services.

Technical: Kevin confirmed that there was a partial return to the workplace in August with around twenty staff including surveyors, engineers and Facilities staff working out of Head Office. Estate Services is operating normally. There has been Health and Safety input throughout to conduct Covid-safe risk assessments for our premises and services in line with government guidance.

Fire Risk Assessment Programme: This has continued as before throughout the Covid-19 period. Internal audit took place in July and the programme achieved a substantial assurance rating.

Estate Services: Front line cleaning and horticulture staff numbers are back to pre-coronavirus levels. No job losses. Inspections by senior management have commenced and work is underway to increase services to pre-coronavirus levels. Some areas are still working staggered shift patterns to maintain social distancing requirements.

Compliance: Kevin assured Members that we have remained compliant as an Organisation throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

Communities & Neighbourhoods: The Employment and Training office (The Hive) and a number of our community centres including Spotlight have also re-opened albeit in a reduced manner. Programmes and partnerships are strong and continuing well.

We expressed our deepest gratitude and asked that our thanks be passed on to staff for keeping services going throughout lockdown. Tanya commented that as the Board's safeguarding adults' champion, she has been bowled over by their super impressive hard work, dedication, how they have coped and continued to support residents and each other.

Asset Management Strategy Review

We noted a QR code pilot has been installed at nine of our blocks. Compliance and safety information is now publically available via a QR code on the main entrance of these blocks with the use of a smartphone. Anyone can access the details of the block to make it easier for residents (and us) to see how we are managing building compliance. The pilot project will be extended over the coming months.

We noted that fire risk assessments continue in a timely manner and follow on works addressed.

We were complimentary of the work of the Team and the detail in the report including the forward thinking actions of the 'When things go wrong' project bringing customer focus to the fore.

Compliance briefing and statutory compliance framework

We commended the framework and how well it is communicated.

Corporate website

Lorna and Hannah from the Comms Team walked Members through the new website which was launched two weeks ago. We were shown why the changes were necessary, and how resident and staff feedback had informed content and layout. Sign up to 'My HARCA' is integrated in the site, and the 'Latest news' will keep residents informed of important information in real time. Online forms on the website do not need to be printed.

We asked how many residents have signed up to 'My HARCA'. Andrea confirmed that the figure is just over 3,600 to date.

We really liked the clean layout, and some had already tested how it worked. And it came through with flying colours.

OTHER REPORTS

The following reports were noted:

- Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code
- JEP summary
- Key Operational Risks
- Terms of Reference & Policies Assurance
- Attendance Record
- Agenda Planner

Tanya Martin
Chair, Services Committee