



emh homes Scrutiny Panel Annual Report 2017/18





emh homes Scrutiny Panel: Annual Report 2017/18

Index:

| Title: | Page Number: |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| Introduction from the Chair | 2 |
| Meet the Panel | 3 |
| Value for money | 5 |
| Our Achievements | 5 |
| Vision for the next 12 months | 6 |
| Our Reports | 6 |
| Monitoring | 8 |
| Highlights of the year | 8 |
| Acknowledgements | 9 |
| Get Involved | 10 |

Introduction from the Chair:

Welcome to emh homes Scrutiny Panel's 3rd annual report. It has been a year now since I was voted in as Chair. This last year of tenure seems to have disappeared with speed. The Scrutiny Panel have achieved a lot in this period of time, with recognition for all our hard work and achievements. There was a lot to be proud of and a lot to be excited about.

Nationwide, we have witnessed through both social and national media, the terrible and tragic events of the Grenfell fire. It would be difficult to not mention the events surrounding the Grenfell Fire, where so many people lost their lives, families were broken apart; losing loved ones and children were left orphaned. We always jump on our policies and procedures after the event, which is no fire prevention at all. In this situation Residents' concerns, although voiced, were not listened to.

emh homes Scrutiny Panel were asked to look at how emh homes were performing in relation to fire safety. We looked at:

- What procedures were in place should a fire occur.
- Are the existing procedures safe?
- What are the monitoring procedures in relation to fire safety?
- Where and how is everything recorded?
- Are fire risk assessments up to date?
- What support does emh homes have externally for fire safety?
- Do tenants of emh homes have a voice and if so, are they listened to'?

The Scrutiny Panel did a lot of reading from the latest Dame Judith Hackitt report and articles from Inside Housing, using them as a checklist against our own findings. We put on our walking boots and went out to see for ourselves what the situation was in different schemes. It was a worthwhile journey. Our report on fire safety will be available for public reading after it has been to Board in June.

This annual report will bring you up to date with our other investigations that were completed throughout the year of 2017/18; as well as informing you about the recommendations we made to board (inclusive of all our investigations for this period). In addition the report will highlight how we keep up to date through TPAS inhouse and e-learning training and engaging with relevant emh homes staff to gain a better understanding in relevant subject's. We are always keeping an eye open on the development direction and how things are progressing and moving forward in the scrutiny world.

Within this report the Scrutiny Panel will introduce briefly the new initiatives that have been designed to assist the Scrutiny Panel during investigations and the monitoring of our work that is inclusive of the rest of the Co-regulation SIG's (Special Interest Groups).

We will celebrate our achievements and give an overview of our plans, going forward into next year. We will continue to work in partnership with emh homes to drive forward improvements in services. In doing so we act as an ambassador for tenants enabling them to have a voice.

The Scrutiny Panel have tried to present this report a little differently this year to make it more interesting to the readers, the Panel would welcome any feedback on this.

Gill Leverton-Taylor CIHM
Chair to emh Scrutiny Panel

Meet the Panel

Gill Leverton-Taylor Chair

My name is Gill Leverton-Taylor. I have been involved in Scrutiny for the last six years. I have one son, one daughter and three grandsons. My daughter lives in Worcestershire and my son lives in Wiltshire. My occupational experience is nursing, teaching, training and counselling. I hold a CIH (Chartered Institute of Housing) certificate.

For the last four years I have been on the emh homes Scrutiny Panel. During this time I have been Vice-Chair and now Chair. I enjoy the work that I do with the Scrutiny Panel. I have met a lot of people through this work. It is at times challenging and hard work because we must justify everything that we say. The highlight of my time as Chair of the Scrutiny Panel was when the Panel achieved the TPAS Quality Scrutiny Assured Award, presented to us in October 2017. It was a lovely occasion with lots of nice things said about our hard work.

Brian Carpenter Vice Chair

My name is Brian Carpenter, I live with my wife Janet and we have a son and a daughter aged 52 and 49 respectively. From the age of 29 I had been running my own business until retirement in 2000. My hobbies are sport and gardening. Currently my passion is golf.

I have been a member of the Scrutiny Panel since its inception in the present form. The first two and half years as Chair and now as Vice-Chair. Participation in scrutiny has been one of the most rewarding 'adventures' that I have had the pleasure of being involved in.

Terry Silverwood Panel Member

I have been married to Val for 51 years. We have two children and three grandchildren. I am now retired and able to spend time with family. My hobbies include all sport, gardening and reading, also travel when we can. I worked for the last 30 years before my retirement within a production unit at Ashby. The experience during the latter years was in health and safety and the environment. During my working time I was involved with local charities, most enjoyable was raising money to buy a local disability bus for the local community in Measham.

When I retired I needed something to occupy my spare time, so I applied to join emh homes Scrutiny Panel. After being accepted I now thoroughly enjoy meeting different people on our investigations. We are a very dedicated team. I joined Scrutiny 4/5 years ago. I had a spell away from the panel due to ill health, I resigned, then once I had recovered I re-joined. I received a very warm welcome from all. I am now enjoying my semi-retirement!

Terry Farrelly-Panel Member

My name is Terrance(Terry) Farrelly. I have been a member of emh homes Scrutiny Panel for approximately six years. I wanted to work with other panel members on behalf of emh homes tenants, to receiving and investigating their concerns regarding the landlords management of their homes and living areas.

It is pleasing to be able to say that there currently exists a very good and effective relationship between the Scrutiny Panel and the management of emh homes; one which is based on mutual respect, care and a readiness to examine complaints made. This has resulted in an excellent working relationship between the Scrutiny Panel and 'emh homes' staff and Board members going forward.

Amanda Boulter Panel member

I became a tenant under unfortunate circumstances; having lost my job. I very quickly lost my home. This is something I would not wish on anyone. However, thankfully I was able to remain in my home; thanks to emh homes buying my property. As soon as I realised that I could give something back to emh homes and other tenants I was quick to become involved.

I have been a tenant for five years now and have previously been a Housing Officer. I have also worked as a Community Development Worker at Holmwood an ex mining village near Chesterfield. Before this I worked in Quality Assurance. I am a Parish Councillor and work hard to improve the lives of people in my community. I am able to see both sides of the tenant/emh relationship and know how important communication between the two can be.

Jim Marks Panel Member

I am a retired Automotive Mechanical design engineer. I recently joined emh homes Scrutiny Panel about 9 months ago. I have been involved with Scrutiny for five years with another Scrutiny Panel.

This is another opportunity to get involved in our home environment. When I joined the group, they were finalising a report on communal internal cleaning. We are now in the process of cumulating a report on fire safety. I have attended several scrutiny training courses and seminars. These have been organised by TPAS and conducted in house or e-learning online programmes.

Jim Humphreys Panel Member

Before retiring I was a concrete testing engineer. I have a City and Guilds qualification in this work at supervisory level. The Institute of Concrete Technology accepted me as an associate member (AMIQA) and I then became treasurer for this group.

I was the treasurer for Three Oaks Federation and a Board member for Three Oaks Homes, before they joined emh. I am now involved in emh Scrutiny Panel and hope to carry on as such.

Value for Money

Here is some key information and headlines regarding the cost and outputs for the Scrutiny Panel during the 17/18 financial year:

| Costs | | Outputs |
|--|----------|--|
| Buffets/Networking | £1281.85 | Three reports submitted to Board |
| Mileage and Taxi Costs (inclusive of investigation visits and training) | £5417.10 | Approximately 750 hours worked (for investigations and annual report) |
| | | 44 recommendations made |

The Scrutiny Panel use the three E's to measure our performance

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Economy | Achieving the best values from our inputs |
| Efficiency | Maximising the outputs for a given level of inputs-how good are we at creating an output? |
| Effectiveness | Measuring the outcome-ensuring the outcomes deliver the desired outcomes |

These are also measured by our self-assessment as part of our 11-step plan

Value for money is about quality not just cost

Our Achievements

These are some of the highlights of what we have achieved this year:

- We have added new initiatives into our 11 step plan, streamlining it and improving how we record information. We then put the updated plan into action, finding that it has helped us to reduce the time it takes us to complete an investigation.
- A induction programme for new scrutiny members was developed and successfully implemented.
- We achieved the TPAS Quality Assurance Award for Scrutiny.
- We developed Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)for Scrutiny to measure our own performance.
- We have developed a process for self-evaluation at the end of an investigation.
- The Scrutiny Panel have had two other Scrutiny Panels visit our meetings. (Futures Housing Group and Mosscafe st Vincent).
- Two members of the Co-ordinating Committee have visited our meetings (The Chair and one panel member).
- The Scrutiny Panel hosted a Christmas lunch to thank all the Directors, Senior Managers and staff of emh homes who supported our investigations.
- We completed our second annual involved tenant reviews; helping us look at any training needs and what we would like to do in the future.
- We have recruited one new member .
- Three of our panel members completed procurement process training and three attended emh group Staff Conference. Panel members also attended the Conference run by Residents Action Group South (RACS).

Vision for the next 12 months:

Over the next 12 months the Scrutiny Panel are planning to complete investigations into the following service areas:

- Grounds Maintenance (Grass Services)
- Service Charges

Our Reports

The following Reports were completed during the period of 2017/18 and presented to Board:

Gas Services:

The scrutiny Panel noticed when checking the STAR Survey that gas services were not at 100% completion. As this is a legal requirement we decided to do a desk top review to find out why this was. We interviewed staff and reviewed documents to do with the service and looked at letters being sent to tenants.

Following the desk top review we recommended making change to the wording of the second letter sent to tenants/residents, which informs them about the importance of their gas service and explains that further action will be taken if gas was not serviced in their home. We also recommended that this letter be hand delivered, because of its importance.

We also asked for promotional material to be more vivid. During a discussion with Nikki Chawda, Director of Housing and Neighbourhoods, it was clear to see why some properties were not serviced, all with valid reasons. We also understood that figures may fluctuate. There was an assurance that monitoring of gas services was thorough and efficient. Reasons for non-compliance by tenants is all recorded.

The Scrutiny Panel identified that there are effective procedures in place for non-compliance.

Internal Communal Cleaning:

The Scrutiny Panel started this investigation thinking that it would be a short investigation. It turned out to be bigger than we had anticipated. In all we made 29 recommendations of which three were not accepted. S

Some of the outcomes from the recommendations are currently being put in place. Examples of these include improvements to notice boards in schemes, a procurement process in place for cleaning contractors and new contractors. New monitoring processes are in place, which include a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPI's), as well as communication methods being agreed. Estate Champions have been put into situ and improvements to communication and ways of providing feedback to emh homes of cleaning standards are being established and monitored. Only schemes were involved in this investigation.

The Scrutiny Panel is about to do its first monitoring of the Internal Communal Cleaning Report.

Fire Safety:

In April of this year the Scrutiny Panel completed their report into fire safety within emh homes.

The Scrutiny Panel looked in detail at fire risk assessments, as well as ways of recording and monitoring processes. The Scrutiny Panel found the recording and monitoring processes to be outstanding.

The Scrutiny Panel also found that the procedures, in different schemes, were safe.

Within our investigation we reported on the need for more tenant engagement in fire safety and made this a recommendation. Making your home safe is an important part of fire safety. Knowing what to do and what not to do is important, especially when living in communal housing blocks.

This was a very positive report, with 10 recommendations. Some of these recommendations were already underway and some were for the future. All of the recommendations were accepted with action points and timescales identified in the Senior Managers action plan.

Fire Safety is currently of a high profile nationally, following the devastating outcomes of the Grenfell tragedy.

Whilst doing this report the Scrutiny Panel found many areas of good practice, one of those being the back up and support from Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service.

The Scrutiny Panel concluded that residents were safe with well trained staff available and excellent measures for safe practice and procedures should a fire occur.

Consultation for investigations:

With both the Internal Communal Cleaning investigation and the Fire Safety investigation the Scrutiny Panel used Survey Monkey to seek out the thoughts and opinions of Residents.

The Scrutiny Panel would like to thank all of those tenants/residents that took part in those surveys. Your thoughts and information provided has been most valuable and as always helps the Scrutiny Panel work with emh homes to improve services to tenants/ residents.

A big thank you.

Monitoring:

The Scrutiny Panel's new monitoring procedures are underway. These started back in February 2018 with emh homes website. The results of the monitoring are now final and will be reported back to the Scrutiny Panel by the Residents Action Committee South (RACS); who kindly undertook the monitoring process for this short desk top review.

The Scrutiny Panel would like to thank RACS for undertaking this work for them. It has been a time consuming and thorough piece of work.

Highlights of the year

In October of 2017 we were presented with the Tpas Quality Assurance Scrutiny Award by Jenny Osbourne, Chief Executive of Tpas



In March 2017 we welcomed Futures Housing Group from Derbyshire to one of our meetings



Acknowledgements:

Author for this report: Gill Leverton-Taylor CIHM, Chair to emh homes Scrutiny Panel

Scrutiny Panel Members 2017-18:

Gill Leverton-Taylor Chair

Terry Farrelly Panel Member

Brian Carpenter Vice-Chair

Jim Marks Panel Member

Terry Silverwood Panel Member

Jim Humphreys Panel Member

Involved residents thanks:

We like to thank all Tenants and Co-regulation Groups that have supported us in many different ways throughout this last year.

In particular we would like to thank:

Roy Swan, Chair of the Co-ordinating Committee for inviting the Chair of the Scrutiny Panel to report on our activities at their meetings

Members of Residents Action Committee South (RACS) for monitoring our website investigation.

Staff thanks:

The Scrutiny Panel of 2017-18 would like to thank all of the staff from emh Homes and Group who have supported the Scrutiny Panel throughout all of our investigations. Some of which are mentioned below.

Polly Cox Community and Investment Officer

Ben Clark-Betts Community and Investment Officer

Emma Lindley Quality and Standards Manager

Emily Taylor Policy and Engagement Manager

Adrian Cheetham Director of Property Services

The Executive Management Team for their support and advice during this year

Board member thanks:

We would like to thank all emh Board members for their support with our reports and recommendations this year

Get Involved:

The Scrutiny Panel are always looking for new Members. If you think you would like to get involved and assist your Landlord to improve services for tenants, please contact:

Polly Cox or Anne Phillips

Community and Investment Officers

Quality and Standards

Memorial House

Coalville

Leicestershire

LE67 4JP

Tel: 0300 123 6000

Email: polly.cox@emhgroup.org.uk or anne.phillips@emhgroup.org.uk