

# Association of Retained Council Housing

# What is ARCH

- ARCH
  - Tenants Conference
    - Held in Great Yarmouth
    - Attended by 3 member of our Overview and Scrutiny Panel
      - Martyn Lund
      - Lynne Lund
      - Jim French
- Accompanied by Trevor Costello.

# The Conference Day

- Tenant Led Conference
- Chaired by Jenny Hill, Chair of ARCH Tenants Group

Specialists attended upon the request of the ARCH tenants group.

# Conference Highlights

- Key speakers and Workshop Leaders
  - Ben Taylor, Assistant Director CIH.  
HRA Self-financing
  - Sam Lister, Practice & Policy Officer CIH  
Impact of Welfare Reform

# HRA Self-Financing

- Focus on the 1<sup>st</sup> year of self-financing
- How self-financing revenues are being used
- How revenues can be used for new-build, repairs and regeneration
- Their research highlighted that the sector is investing wisely, with priorities being:
  - Securing existing stock
  - New build
  - Regeneration
  - Green investment
- Rent debate to be had

# Welfare Reform

- A summary of welfare benefit changes provided. Specific information on Housing Benefit Room Restriction Rates and the Benefit Cap.
- Presentation concentrated on lobbying and providing examples of hardship to the press to exert pressure on the government.
- Very overheated debate.
- Public Perception – we are all ‘the public’ too...

# What did we learn....

- Lynne and Jim to explain more!

# Learning from Croydon – Lynne Lund

- Croydon Borough Council
  - Complaints Panel established, consisting of 15 people.
  - **How do you incentivise?**
  - Monthly meeting to discuss different ways to introduce new ideas – fun days – tombolas – raffles. Advertise in YMCA, churches, CAB, Help the Aged, Job Centres, Hostels. High number of vulnerable tenants. Panel recruiting themselves. Work with Housemark to produce information / leaflets.



# Learning from Wandsworth and Warwick – Jim French

- Wandsworth
  - Focus on the importance of Tenants Involvement. An attempt to encourage more Local Authority landlords to enable Tenant Involvement in all areas of service delivery.
- Warwick City Council
  - Tenant Scrutiny Panel on repairs. The panel scrutinise all repairs performance against targets and the repairs manager is responsible for answering to the panel.

# Learning from Bishops Stortford – Lynne Lund

## Voids scrutiny hints and tips

- Improved void times at the council by:
- Asking more probing questions
- Choosing void properties to inspect

## This has led to:

- Staff and procedure changes
- Improved communication between the scrutiny panel and officers

# Snippets from other Landlords

- Hull City Council – working with disabled tenants. Working in partnership to improve homes for disabled people.
- North Tyneside – built a very strong tenant support group, working on ASB. Past perpetrators involved in understanding the impact of ASB (paperwork, staff time, costs, harm)
- Nottingham City Council – Tenant Academy. Working on designing and writing. Involve local colleges.

# The Most Impact....

- Great Yarmouth – Young Persons Group. Wonderful group of young people from various youth groups who work with other young people to improve life chances.

# Impression of the Conference

Comments from our ARCH tenants  
representative

As a representative of the Forum, how does  
your new knowledge affect your contribution to  
the forum?

Sharing knowledge....learning from it...use it  
to improve.