

FEDERATION EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CORE BRIEF

A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF WHAT THE FED DOES

The Federation is the national organisation of tenants, residents, leaseholders and service users (referred to as tenants) in Riverside. The Executive Committee is the body which represents all Riverside tenants at a national level. Members are selected by their Riverside Divisions to serve on the Executive for a three year term of office.

The Executive acts as Riverside's "critical friend" – independent but working in partnership with Riverside and strives to ensure tenants' views and concerns are properly heard and taken into account at all levels of the organisation, from neighbourhood shop to Riverside's Group board. It is part of the decision making process for Riverside and its tenants and residents on policy, service delivery and strategy.

DATE OF LAST MEETING.

Thursday 14 April 2016

WHAT WAS DISCUSSED (list of agenda items)

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of Previous Meeting held 18 February 2016
4. Matters Arising
5. Declaration of Interests
6. 1% Rent Decreases (for information)
7. Operational Implications of Local Housing Allowance (for information)
8. Proposal for a joint 2016 Annual Report to Tenants (for decision)
9. Update on the Asset Management Communications Strategy Consultation
(*paper was not received*)
10. External Funding opportunities for Federation Activities (for decision)
11. Advocacy within Riverside's Complaints Process (for consultation)
12. Update on Budget 2016/17 (for information)
13. Update on Federation Workplan (for information)

- Federation's Annual Report 2015
- Update on Chin Wag
- Federation Representation Working Group
- PR & Promotion
- Fundraising

14. Minutes from the National Scrutiny Committee meeting held 20 January 2016 (for information)

15. Completion of Core Brief

16. Any Other Business

17. Date and Time of Next Meetings:

- Thursday, 19 May 2016 at 11.30am at the Brain Charity, Norton Street, Liverpool 3 (joint meeting with National Scrutiny Committee)
- Thursday, 23 June 2016 at 11.30am at Riverside's Head Office, 2 Estuary Commerce Park, Speke, Liverpool 24

WHAT WAS AGREED

- 1% Rent Decreases – noted that there is a one year exception for Supported and Sheltered Housing pending a broader review of sector funding. Three quarters of Riverside's stock has seen the expected reduction of at least 1% with 17% of income lost for first 4 years. Noted a revised business plan was agreed by Group Board in October 2015 and that Riverside is continuing to provide the Money Advice Service.
- Operational Implications of Local Housing Allowance – noted that LHA is maximum amount of housing benefit that will be paid and is based on 30% of market rents in an area. Housing Benefit eligibility based on household size not rent and includes any service charges. Concern expressed that LHA applies to all tenants not just those of working age and noted that if bedroom tax also applies the higher of the two deductions applies. Federation asked Riverside to ensure they inform new tenants. Noted that using current occupancy details, around 10,450 households would be affected, however if Riverside assumed full occupancy this would drop significantly to around 6,300. LHA does not apply in Scotland.

Federation asked to be kept fully informed of Riverside's intelligence/data gathering on the impact of the 1% rent reduction and Local Housing Allowance.

Agreed to support Riverside with the ongoing intense and high profile lobbying of ministers and MP's and to be available for consultation.

- Proposal for a joint 2016 Annual Report to Tenants – discussed the recommendation put forward by Riverside and supported by Federation Officers to run a one year pilot to produce a joint Annual Report to Tenants. Concern was expressed by several members about the Federation losing its identity and credibility and also being restricted on content. Noted that an article by Carol Mathews, Riverside’s Chief Executive was included to demonstrate Co-Regulation. Noted that the Federation had budgeted for an Annual Report to Tenants for the next 3 years.

Decided not to progress the one year pilot for a joint Annual Report to Tenants and to continue with the Federation Annual Report to tenants. Agreed to investigate ways of monitoring readership effectively and ensuring the 2016 report was available on different platforms.

- Advocacy within Riverside’s Complaints Process – noted that the Customer Service Best Practice Group had recently reviewed Riverside’s Complaints Process in line with the Housing Quality Network best practice toolkit. Noted that an area of difference was identified where no facility existed for internal and/or independent support or advocacy for Riverside customers who need it.

Agreed that Riverside should offer independent advocacy as it would make it easier for tenants to get help and that Federation members should be called upon to provide support and advocacy. Agreed that 3 Federation members would work with Anna Bishop to move this proposal forward.

WHAT ELSE THE FED IS WORKING ON AT THE MOMENT

- Chin Wag – Federation members to encourage staff and tenants to use Chin Wag and to advertise it as widely as possible. Noted there are 9 bookings covering 33 days up to 20 May 2016.
- External Funding opportunities for Federation Activities – Riverside’s Fund Raising Manager to run a fund raising training session for members.
- Joint meeting with the National Scrutiny Committee on 19 May 2016 – business part of the meeting to be dedicated to drafting the Terms of Reference for the Federation’s Representation Working group.