



REST Tenant Scrutiny Group Review

2021



1. Introduction

Thenue are fully committed to delivering good outcomes for tenants and customers and have a culture of striving for continual improvement across the whole organisation.

Recognising that tenants know Thenue's services best and have first-hand experience of how strategies and policies directly affect them, The REST Scrutiny group was formed in 2013. The aim was to further involve Thenue's tenants in monitoring and reviewing Thenue's performance to help drive improvements in service delivery.

Thenue made a firm commitment to ensure that the REST Scrutiny group were adequately supported by providing administrative and officer support. This support could be provided by a Thenue Lead officer or by an organisation appointed by Thenue, in consultation with REST, or by a combination of these methods.

The Lead officer appointed to support the group was the Chief Executive with TIS (tenants information service) being appointed to help get the REST Scrutiny Group established. Both the Chief Executive and TIS have continued to provide expertise and support to the group ever since.

2. Background

Since 2013 the REST Scrutiny group have been instrumental in reviewing a full range of Thenue Services and have made service improvement recommendations to the Thenue Board which have been adopted and implemented. They have been instrumental in bringing about positive changes to the organisation for the benefit of tenants, customers, staff, Board and stakeholders.

Given Thenue's original commitment to supporting the REST Scrutiny group and appointing a support organisation in consultation with them, it was felt that it was important to let the group have its say in choosing which organisation support them going forward.

As part of Thenue Housing's commitment to continual development and improvement, a review of the REST Scrutiny Group was agreed so as to look at any other areas that the group felt that they wanted further support with or improvements made.

The Chief Executive suggested to the REST Scrutiny group that the Community Development Worker within Thenue Communities be tasked with conducting a review with the group. As the worker was known to several of the group members, they agreed to this worker conducting the review with them.

3. Methodology

It was agreed with the REST Scrutiny Group members that we would use the 'Place Standard' model of review by:

- Conducting one to one interviews using a questionnaire with both qualitative and quantitative information being gathered
- Coming together as a group to discuss individual scores and findings and agreeing a collective consensus
- Separate interview with TIS

Each member was sent a copy of the questionnaire as well as a copy of the REST Scrutiny Group remit document in advance to help facilitate good conversations.

One to One Interviews

All 7 members of the REST Scrutiny Group agreed to take part. Each member was given a choice of interview locations and dates. The meetings took place during the day.

2 interviews were conducted via Zoom

1 interview was conducted in the member's back garden

1 interview was conducted in Netherholm Community Hall

1 interview was conducted in Calton Heritage and Learning Centre

2 interviews were conducted in West Brewery Restaurant

Group Discussion

All 7 members of the REST Scrutiny Group agreed that Zoom would be the best and safest way of meeting due to ongoing COVID restrictions. An evening meeting was agreed.

On the evening of the meeting, only 5 members took part, with 2 giving their apologies: one due to ill health and the other due to unforeseen circumstances.

The agreed purpose of the meeting was:

- to discuss the survey finding and people's individual responses
- group to agree on a consensus score of out 10 for each question
- provide narrative as to why this score was agreed.

Interview with TIS

Interview conducted over a Zoom call

4. Scope of the Review

The review centred around picking out the main points from the REST Scrutiny Group Remit document and evaluating how the group felt about each section.

The main headings being:

- Support and Value for Money provided to the group
- Effectiveness
- Recruitment of new members
- Scope of Work
- Learning, Development & Best Practice

5. Findings – Sessions carried out with REST members by Linda Allan, Community Development Officer

Individual & Group Scores and Answers (Blue being individual scores & Purple being group consensus scores).

Section 1 – Support and Value for Money provided to the Group

Q1. TIS (Tenants Information Service) was appointed to support the work of the Thenue REST group – how well do you feel supported by TIS?

1 being not supported at all and 10 being the support is excellent

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
						1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	1 1 1 1 (57%)
									100%

The individual interviews gave evidence of the fact that the group feel exceptionally well supported by TIS.

Individual comments:

What is good?

- TIS do a great job of chairing the meetings – they are good at keeping us on task. They are very knowledgeable and are able to give us advice and information on what other groups are doing and how they go about things. They are good at coming up with suggestions on things we can look at based on their experience of what other groups are doing. We would be lost without someone to help guide the group and give us the information we need.
- The knowledge that TIS has is great – whatever subject we raise or are looking at TIS are always able to bring us information and examples of how other organisations or groups work. She never takes sides but is able to point out the pros and cons of each example. She is really good at getting the group to really think about things and will often try to be the devil's advocate to make sure we have thought of every possible consequence to our suggestions or thoughts.

- The fact that TIS is independent of Thenue is great. Anything we ask TIS for such as information is sent out to all the members of the group – TIS are brilliant.
- TIS help facilitate good discussions. They are a great fountain of knowledge - they give excellent examples of pieces of work and methodologies.
- They always make sure that any decision we make is our decision.
- TIS are very informative and very knowledgeable. They bring a great deal of experience to the group. The TIS staff are very friendly and easy to talk to.
- Having TIS support the scrutiny group was the best decision that Thenue made! We learn lots from TIS and the groups and people they put us in touch with. TIS brings lots of knowledge and experience to the group.
- TIS leave all the decisions to the group – they are only there to give us information and advice.
- I like the fact that TIS have a Scotland wide remit and have a huge amount of experience in working with other housing associations and scrutiny groups across the country. They have a wealth of information to share with us when we ask for it. We can ask for examples of good practice as well as the methodology others have used to scrutinise pieces of work. They give us the information we ask for and sometimes we use these methods and sometimes we don't. It's always our choice as to how we do things. Having their knowledge and expertise helps us to make informed decisions.
- We have also benefited from being able to visit other scrutiny groups thanks to TIS.

What is not so good?

- Nothing I can think of
- No – everything is good
- Nothing
- Occasionally some of the paperwork gets muddled and there are pages missing.
- Nothing
- Nothing – everything is good
- Nothing I can think of.

Is there anything you feel could be done to make it better?

- No, thanks to TIS and their support the group works very well together.
- Nothing as yet
- No – they are great
- Slightly more attention to detail – no missing paperwork.
- No – anything we ask for is produced - we get all the info that we need.
- A little more contact in between meetings might be useful just to check that we understand what we are doing and if there is any gap in our knowledge or understanding – particularly for newer members.
- No, the support we get is great. There is nothing that we have asked for that they haven't been able to give us or do for us.

How would you describe your relationship with TIS? (Balance of power / agenda setting ect)

- TIS bring their knowledge to the group – but we are the ones that make all the decisions. I feel that they are there to support us, they may also give us ideas and suggestions, but its always our choice whether to use these ideas and suggestions or not. They give us

examples of what other groups have done, but only to give us as much information as possible before we discuss things and make our minds up.

- TIS make it very clear to us that all of the decisions have to be our decisions.
- We feel ownership of the group – TIS is there to serve / support us. TIS make it very clear to us that it is the members of the group who must decide on things – not anyone else. The group are very much in control – we are not led by anyone else’s agenda – we are just supported.
- They support the group - they don’t tell us what to do. They help the group come up with a plan but it is absolutely the groups decision what t work on and how to go about the work. The group are always in charge.
- The Group have the power – TIS encourages the group to make their own decisions – they won’t make the decisions for the group.
- The group hold all the power – both TIS and Thenue support us, but we are the ones to make all the decisions. We decide what to work on and how to go about examining something.
- If the group didn’t work this way - I wouldn’t be back!
- TIS really listen to us as a group. We are able to ask them questions and get information from them. They are good at supporting us to make sure that we have understood what the papers say for each meeting and make sure we have enough guidance and understanding about the work we are doing.
- The group make all the all the decisions – TIS and Thenue are there to support us – but they don’t dominate or tell us what to do.
- The Scrutiny group are very much in charge with TIS and Thenue there to support us. The group set their own agenda based on what we are working on and what we need to do to get a project completed. We always feel in control. We never feel that anyone is telling us what to do or how to do it.

Group Discussion

A discussion took place as to the support that TIS provide the group. Those who had scored slightly lower than others explained that that was due to being new to the group and not feeling that they could answer that as fully as others.

The group discussed the individual answers in full and agreed on a score of 10 to be put forward as the group consensus.

There was no doubt as to how well the group feel supported by TIS, especially in terms of the knowledge and expertise they bring to the table and the wide range of examples they can show the group.

Despite Ilene (TIS) chairing the group (which they enjoy), they feel absolutely in control and were clear that they see TIS as supporting the group not leading it. They like TIS chairing as they feel that they help keep them on track.

There were a few very minor areas for TIS to work on such as checking papers before they go out to ensure all the pages are there. It was acknowledged though that this can happen to anyone.

Q 2. Given that TIS were pre-selected before your time on the group – would you like the opportunity to explore alternative organisations to provide support? Yes or no?

Yes - 0

No – 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 (100%)

Yes - 0

No - 100%

There was no question of the groups stance on this subject. They do not want to look at alternative support. Their answers included:

- TIs know us and we know them, their level of knowledge is brilliant. There is a trust and very good working relationship with them. They know they are there to support us not run us. This is not about not wanting or liking change - it's an informed choice. I have a bit of knowledge about the other organisations who provide a similar service and this type of support and in my opinion, they are not nearly as good as TIS in terms of knowledge, expertise and quality of support.
- To start with a new organisation would put us back years as we would be starting again from scratch as we do not know them and they would not know us and I don't believe they could provide the expertise and knowledge TIS have.
- I am very happy with the relationship we have with TIS – they are doing a great job in supporting us. Any other support orgs are not going to offer us anything different - so why look elsewhere when TIS are doing such a great job?
- Would not want to tender unless TIS were getting far too much money for what they do, which I can't see being the case. My preference is to stick with what is working – TIS.
- We have a good balance of power and a good working relationship with TIS - there is real trust on both sides. We enjoy working with TIS – there is real likability in the TIS staff team.
- We get everything we need from them and more – no need to look elsewhere.
- We have a very good relationship with TIS – they know how we work as a group and supports that process. There is real trust between the group and TIS. They could not do any more for us – I honestly don't think anyone could do a better job – it would change the dynamics too much.
- I don't see the need whatsoever. What TIS bring in terms of the quality of the information is great.
- There is nothing about TIS that gives me any doubts as to how well they support the group (other than the odd missing paperwork).
- Having attended training by some of the other support organisations similar to TIS, I know that the quality of the support we get from TIS is what we need and that they are the best ones to continue to support the group.
- We are very happy with TIS – we have a great relationship with them. There is a good, shared knowledge base with the Group and TIS – we are in a very good place in that we know what we are doing and how to do it.
- I am very happy with the support that TIS give us.

Group Discussion

During the group session all members reiterated that they do not want to look at alternative support. The group are very happy with the support that they get from TIS. They feel that everything is very trusting and positive in their relationship with them. They report that TIS are very approachable, willing to take things on board and deal with any issues that arise.

Q 3. How well do you feel supported by Thenue staff to enable the group to run? (ie admin, meeting support ect)

1 being not supported at all and 10 being the support is excellent

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
					1 (14.3%)		1 (14.3%)		1 1 1 1 1 (71.4%)
									100%

The individual comments were reflective of the support not just from the Lead Officer, but also of any of the staff that the Lead officer involved in providing information and support to the group. They acknowledged the Lead Officers willingness to give them any information asked for and for being on hand to support in any way.

There were some who felt that having the odd meeting without any Thenue staff being present might be useful. This was in the context of perhaps wanting to discuss something and fearing that they may cause offence.

Individual Comments:

What is good?

- Thenue staff always provide all of the information, staff input or support we need. We have a very good working relationship with Thenue and feel that we understand each other well. The staff share information with us readily.
- Everything has been good so far – I haven't been to enough meetings to be able to fully answer this.
- All the information we ask for is very forthcoming and is always on time.
- We get all the support we need – anything we ask for we get – even the presentations are brilliant!
- Thenue are willing to help with anything that the group ask for. They acknowledge the work of the REST group and see the importance of the work that we do.
- The anti -social behaviour piece of work is a good example of the support we had from Thenue staff and management.
- Thenue always give us all the support and information that we need. Anything we ask for they provide. They are always helpful and they bring anyone we feel that we need to or would like to speak to in to see us. this includes outside contractors or other agencies. They are always on hand to support us.
- Thenue really listen to us and answer any questions we have.

What is not so good?

- Nothing – the Thenue staff provide us with all that we ask for or need.
- N/A
- We would like to determine when we meet – not anyone else.
- Nothing – everything has been very good
- Nothing – I have never had any difficulties
- Nothing – they give us all the support that we need.
- Sometimes getting information back could be quicker, but I understand that has to do with the timings of Board meetings.

Is there anything you feel could be done to make it better?

- Not as yet.
- At times it might be nice for the group to meet without Thenue Staff being present so as to enable a good honest discussion and ask questions you might not want to ask in front of staff (and also without offending anyone.)
- I would like a few more meetings without any Thenue staff there so that we can discuss things more fully at times without causing offence.
- No – the support we have had has been very good – everyone at Thenue has been good at supporting us.
- No – they do everything they can to support the group.
- No.
- Nothing that I can think of.

Group Discussion

The range in scores again were explained by the newer members of the group as having tried to pick something in the middle as they had not yet had enough experience of the support from Thenue yet. They did qualify this by saying that the contact they had had to date was very good. After a group discussion on the support they have had from the REST Scrutiny group inception to now, which has been excellent, they agreed unanimously that their collective score would be a 10.

They reiterated that anything that was asked from Thenue as always readily available.

The group reported that while at the very start of the REST Scrutiny Group staff were a bit suspicious of what their function was, this changed very quickly and they soon realised that REST was about improvement of services not individual staff. The group felt that staff understood what REST was about and that staff were eager to take part and present information to them.

Section 2 – Effectiveness

Q 1 – How effective do you feel as a group to help Thenue make improvements to services?
1 being almost ineffective and 10 being very effective

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
							11 (28.6%)	111 (42.8%)	11 (28.6%)
								100%	

It was very clear from the individual interviews that the group feel that Thenue take the REST Scrutiny group seriously and that it is in no way tokenistic. They feel effective and valued, being able to contribute to making improvements and can see evidence of their recommendations being taken on board and things changing for the better as a result.

The group would like to recruit more members as a way of being able to be even more effective.

Individual answers:

In what ways do you feel effective?

- I feel very much listened to - Thenue take the group seriously and take the advice on board. They are very good at being willing to talk about recommendations and have in-depth discussions about the reports we put forward.
- We have a long relationship with Thenue which means that we have a good knowledge of how things work. The group function well and there is a good understanding of what we do / don't do. Because of the longevity of the group we have a good knowledge of what changes have already been made as well as the changes we would like to make.
- The changes that we suggest are normally taken on board. The things that we get to look at are areas that improvements can be made.
- We are a solution focused group who can pinpoint problem areas and look for practical solutions and improvements to make things better for everyone.
- We look at Thenue as a whole and not just the individual areas they have housing stock in.
- We are able to look at things / issues in real detail – with the knowledge that the group have and the support from Charlie and TIS – we get lots of examples of good practice and ideas as to how to improve things. The group work well.
- We are able to put forward suggestions which are then acted upon and positive changes take place. I feel that Thenue really listen to us – we are a strong group.
- Any recommendations we have put forward to the Board have been passed barring a few minor points. Most of the suggestions for improvements that the group put forward are taken on board - things change as a result of what we say and suggest.

In what ways do you feel not so effective?

- We could do with more people on the scrutiny group – sometimes there are not too many members at meetings which limits our work and ideas.
- N/A
- In the past I felt that we didn't always have enough time – but I feel that has changed and we have the time we need.
- Sometimes it takes us a while to complete a piece of work due to the fact that there are so few of us on the group.

- None – as long as we continue to work the way we have been working and get the support from TIS and Thenue then we will get there.
- N/A
- No – we are taken seriously by Thenue for the work we are involved in.

Is there anything you feel would help you to be more effective?

- Good attendance and more members
- No - can't think of anything
- Having more people on the group would help
- Recruit more people to join the group
- Nothing I can think of. We know we get the support we need as we have a good relationship with TIS and Charlie.
- As a group no – but for me personally I am enjoying continuing to learn about the work of the group and how I can help come up with ways to improve services.
- It might be an idea for us to visit past campaigns and improvements and check that the suggestions and improvements are still happening and that standards are still being maintained; for example the mystery shopper / customer service.

Group Discussion:

The group discussed the individual scores and agreed collectively on a score of 9 – they feel effective as a group but acknowledge that there is always room for a little improvement. The fact that they see their recommendations and suggestions being taken on board, gives them evidence of their effectiveness. They recognise the skills, experience and longevity of group members has helped the group become more effective. Their ability to pin-point problems or issues to be worked on and remain very solution focused has contributed to their success.

At times it has taken a little longer than planned to complete pieces of work, but having more members join would help as they would be able to split the tasks up between more people. One group member suggested that it may be advantageous to review past campaigns and pieces of work to ensure that the positive changes that were agreed are still being implemented and standards are being maintained – all agreed that this was a good suggestion and that they will look at this at the next group meeting. The group feel that getting a list of staff leaving and joining the organisation every quarter would be helpful to them.

Section 3 - Recruitment of new members

Q1 – How successful are we as a group in recruiting new members?

1 being not at all successful and 10 being very successful

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11 (28.6%)	111 (42.8%)	1 (14.3%)		1 (14.3%)					
	100%								

A general theme emerged from individual members where almost all recognised that we have not been very successful in attracting new members.

The personal touch, whether that be from existing members or from staff seemed to be the most successful in getting people to come along and join.

There was a general feeling that the recruitment process could be improved, and a real willingness to look at a partnership approach with other Thanet departments to recruit more members.

Individual Comments:

What works well?

- I think that the personal touch works – when you know someone, and you are able to give them information on the group and explain what it is all about. That way they don't feel intimidated or shy about getting involved.
- Having the scrutiny group go out to talk to area associations and other community groups has helped in the past. Some events have been good at attracting new members.
- Nothing we try appears to be working unfortunately
- Big events where the scrutiny group members were on hand to tell people about the group and what they do. All the scrutiny group members sent out invites to try to get people along.
- I think people need to be told before hand what to expect so that they don't feel intimidated to join. I knew what I was getting involved with and wanted to join for that reason.
- For me it was the personal touch - my housing officer suggested getting involved and told me all about it. I felt better about getting involved as I had a little information from her about what goes on and how the group works. I then got a letter from TIS with the meeting dates.
- Some of the open days have worked in terms of getting new members and word of mouth works too. Sometimes knowing someone and personally inviting them to take part works as they can ask all about the group and what it involves.

What does not work so well?

- Events don't seem to work – people might say yes at the event as they feel pressured but then they don't turn up at the actual meetings.

- When people come forward showing an interest they don't always turn up at meetings – we need to look at ways of giving the person enough encouragement and support to make them want to attend. Our current recruitment process is not working.
- The 9 year rule is not going to work for the scrutiny group – its not fair to existing members who have given a lot of time and effort and who are dedicated to helping Thenue to improve. These effective members could be replaced with others who are not as interested in making improvements – ie just doing it for their CV but not really contributing.
- There are articles in the newsletter – but they don't seem to bring in any new members. The events haven't worked either
- I don't think our current process is great – we need to make it better – people come to one meeting and don't come back – I don't think they are prepared enough
- Not much of our recruitment efforts have worked well so far
- Articles / events and gala days haven't given us many members as yet – not sure if this really works for us
- If I had just had a letter I don't think that would have worked – it was the personal touch that worked for me.
- The articles in the newsletter don't work as well as having someone tell you about it or ask you to come along. If I read an advert for the group I would not have replied as I would not have know what it involved.
- It's not always clear what the process is for recruiting new members.

Is there anything that we can do to improve?

- I think that an information pack should be produced – explaining what the REST group do and what to expect when they come to a meeting.
- We should have a proper recruitment process in place so that everyone knows how to get more information or how to join. A group members should be the link person to make sure that any possible new members have all the info they need and they hear form someone who is on the group so that they hear first hand what to expect.
- A letter should be sent to all tenants telling them about the REST group and what we do, and clear instructions on how to find out more or join the group.
- Better partnership with housing and regen staff to help recruit new members.
- We need a welcome pack or information pack to tell people what we do and tell them what to expect if they join the group or come to a meeting.
- Re look at the 9 year rule and work out if it needs to apply to this group.
- We need to re-examine our recruitment process - it makes no sense that the longest serving member would need to stand down if we had more applicants than spaces – we should be looking at a skills audit – the group needs to be effective and we need people on who want to help improve things and who are willing to put in the work to make that happen. Any new members should be adding something to the group – not just be there to make up the numbers.
- Make sure that potential new recruits to the scrutiny group know that any barrier they have to be able to attend can be looked at. (equalities)
- It would be good to have tenants who are not on any of our other groups take an interest in the scrutiny group to widen participation.
- We need an information pack - something to explain what we do, why we do it and how we do it.
- We need a better process in place for recruiting new members – the group could take on more of a role to talk to potential new members and tell them all about what goes on.

- I think we could work better with the housing and community staff in getting them to help us identify possible new members.
- We need to advertise for new members consistently and constantly. We need a proper recruitment drive with a better process in place to get new members involved.
- We need an updated information pack and code of conduct so that potential new members know what we do and what is expected of them.
- Ideally we should be involving the housing staff and the community regen staff who know the tenants and could make referrals to us on potential new members. The staff could give the information packs out to tenants.
- We need to produce an information pack to make people understand what the scrutiny group actually do. There is a lot of misunderstanding about what the group do – with some thinking we scrutinise individual tenants.
- I think we need an information booklet that would tell people what we do and all the ins and outs we need to know before starting a new group.
- I think we should have a better process for recruiting new members – we need an information pack for people who may be interested. It would be good if a current group member could be the contact person to tell anyone interested all about the group and what to expect.
- The group could try to go and visit other groups such as area associations and other community organisations to try to recruit new members. We could also take part in events that Thenue run to try to get people interested.
- More partnership working with housing and community regen staff to identify possible new members would be good. Once people are identified it should be the group members who contact them.

Group discussion:

There was a lively discussion about what has and has not worked in terms of recruitment up until now. There was a general consensus from the group that they have, in the main, not been very successful in recruiting new REST Scrutiny Group Members.

There was an acknowledgement of the efforts that have been taken to try to recruit, but this has not proven to provide the group with the number of members they need.

The last 18 months of lockdown due to COVID have stopped any progress the group had been making.

There is a need for an information pack, explaining what the REST Scrutiny group do, how to join and what is expected of new members. The group feel that potential new members should be contacted by a current member of the REST Scrutiny group so that they can give them some background and make them feel less nervous about attending a meeting.

Newer members gave their experience of joining, the positives being having had that personal contact with a group member prior to attending.

The Thenue Newsletter should continue to include information about the REST Scrutiny Group. Giving examples of past pieces of work might help people understand more about what the group do.

There was an agreement about the value of partnership working with the wider Thenue staff teams to try to identify and recruit potential new members.

Q2 – Do you feel that there is adequate representation from each of the communities that Thenue operate in to ensure no single community dominate the membership of REST?

1 being not nearly enough representation and 10 being excellent representation

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1 (14.3%)			1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)		1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)
							100%		

There were a wide range of scores from individual group members, who all agreed that getting adequate representation from each area that Thenue operate in was very important. Although recognising the need for equity, it was very evident from their answers that every current member of the group understood the importance of working as a group for a whole system approach. They described the need for seeing the bigger picture and ensuring that they worked as a group to make improvements for everyone, regardless of where people live.

Individual comments:

What works well in making sure each community has a voice?

- We make sure that all areas have the chance to have their say at the meetings – and have their voice heard. We know that there is a difference in numbers from each area and we make sure we are mindful of that.
- So far we have been able to recruit the right people - people who want and are willing to be a voice for their area.
- We work well as a group to try to always see the bigger picture – not just a little area.
- Making sure we have enough people from each area – that way everyone / every area gets a say. The group are all about what is best for tenants in all areas – not just their own area.
- The current mix of people help to make sure that we take a whole system approach - we have a good mix of people right now and given there are only 7 of us - each area is represented as much as is possible.
- We always make sure that when we are working on something that it is about everyone and not just one area.
- We work well as a group to make improvements – we see the bigger picture – its about the greater good - not individual areas.
- Making sure there are enough members from each area on the group. Just now we have a good mix.
- As a group we are all interested in making things better for all tenants, not just tenants in our own area. We are all here for one reason – to help make things better. It shouldn't matter where someone comes from. We work well as a group and make sure that we think of every community.
- Although there are some Thenue communities that have no representation on the R.E.S.T group we ensure that any decisions or recommendations we as a group make are inclusive of all communities we serve and fair across them all.

What does not work so well?

- We need more members from other areas – we haven't been that good at recruitment as yet.
- We don't have enough members coming forward.

- We haven't been able to recruit members from every area that Thenue have houses in - not for the want of trying.
- We don't have anyone from Blackhill or Scotstoun – we have not been able to attract anyone from these areas to join us.
- Recruiting enough people
- We need more members as some areas only have 1 rep.
- Our ability to get new members from some of the other communities such as Blackhill and Scotstoun.

Is there anything that could be done to improve representation and make sure each community's voice is heard?

- We need a recruitment pack for potential new members and a proper induction process for them to understand what we do and how we do it. If we had a proper induction process, then new members could feel that they could contribute more at the start rather than learning as they go about how we do things.
- As above - re-examine our recruitment process to make sure we get enough members and that they are the right fit for what we need.
- Ideally, we should have 2 from each area and then add more spaces for areas with more houses. Make sure every area has a rep.
- Recruit more members and ideally in areas that are underrepresented.
- Recruiting more members from each area
- We need to keep trying to recruit more members from each area and make sure it's a good mix of ages and backgrounds – generally a good mix of people.
- Have the group more involved in the recruitment of new members.

Group Discussion:

Following a thorough group discussion, it was agreed by the group that their collective score would be an 8. This was primarily in recognition of the fact that every current group member is fully committed to ensuring that improvements made, benefit every tenant and every area. There was full agreement about the fact that all members recognise this is a real strength of the current group, and they fully understand their collective responsibility.

That being said, they are fully committed to ensuring that every area has a voice and will continue to try to recruit in areas where people have been reluctant to get involved.

Section 4 - Scope of Work

Q1 – is the current process of agreeing/ deciding on which Thenue service to scrutinise working well?

1 being its not working well to 10 it is excellent

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
							1 1 (28.6%)	1 1 (28.6%)	1 1 1 (42.8%)
									100%

There was a huge amount of positivity about the scope and process of agreeing which Thenue service to scrutinise. The value of being able to discuss different subjects and have both Thenue and TIS give examples of scrutiny techniques for each area was recognised by every member. The group very much feel in control and want to ensure that this remains the case.

Individual Comments:

What works well with the current process of process of agreeing/ deciding on which Thenue service to scrutinise working well?

- There are good ideas coming from Thenue and from TIS. We get the chance to discuss and agree as a group what we want to work on.
- I think the fact that Thenue sometimes ask us to look at different areas is great because it shows the trust that they have in our work.
- I am happy with the amount of ideas and suggestions we get from Thenue and TIS
- Because we all want to make improvements, we are able to discuss things and look at areas we feel we could make the biggest positive impact with.
- The group have an excellent process that they follow for agreeing work. We meet together to discuss ideas, suggestions, options and topics to scrutinise. We are able to ask both TIS and Thenue for further information if we need it to help us make up our minds what subject to scrutinise next. TIS help by giving us examples of work and methodologies that others have used to scrutinise pieces of work. Group members also check with area association and other community members on their opinions. Charlie and Gary help with the discussions.
- The group have a full discussion and consider each suggestion before we make up our minds.
- The fact that we come together to discuss all of the ideas and suggestions - it's not about individual problems – we agree as a group what to look at and take forward.
- The fact that we discuss suggestions and ideas so well. TIS and the other group members make sure that we all understand each of the ideas and suggestions of what to scrutinise so that when we make our decision, we are all in agreement and all understand what is involved.
- The group are good at pulling all the information together before making a decision.
- There is a genuine trust between Thenue and the scrutiny group. Thenue staff trust that the group want to help to make things better and that their role as a group is to suggest improvements. They know it's not about individuals it's about the wider service.
- There are always plenty of suggestions for the group to choose from. Thenue provide suggestions and we as a group can look to see if there have been any complaints / issues that could do with being examined to see if we can make suggestions for improvements.

- We are able to ask TIS for examples of best practice or the way other scrutiny groups have examined something before we make our decision on what to scrutinise.
- The group discuss things at length before making their final decision.
- When we have picked something to scrutinise, Thenue have never said no.

What does not work well?

- Sometimes we have so many good ideas that it is hard to decide on what piece of work we should work on next.
- Lack of time on occasions
- Sometimes we put off starting a piece of work to try to recruit new members first – which doesn't end up happening.
- Nothing – we have a great process that works.
- Nothing – because everyone is involved in the discussions
- Sometimes more established group members can have more of a say because of the experience they bring – this can be both good and not so good.
- Nothing that I can think of

Is there anything that could be done better?

- Forward plan with a list of things we want to scrutinise
- We need to continue to make sure that despite Thenue giving us suggestions as to what to scrutinise that we remain open minded and listen to what people in our communities tell us – they might have things that they would like to see improved.
- If we don't remain open minded then we may ruin our chance of having our own voice.
- We should just get on with the work instead of waiting for new members.
- No – I don't think so, its very professionally done – very much a partnership approach.
- No – because we all sit round the table to discuss things - it's a group decision.
- Nothing as yet.
- No.

Group discussion:

The group were very much in agreement that their collective score was a 10. They highlighted some of the many positives about the process including the fact that everyone can contribute. They enjoy the way the way they look at ideas put forward as well as discuss any patterns in complaints, always making an informed decision on what to examine next.

The group feel that there is mutual trust with Thenue and that they can request to look at any area of service. They have never been told that they were not allowed to scrutinise any area of work.

Some of the group feel that it may be helpful to have pieces of work in the pipeline to be able to start as soon as they complete projects.

Q2 – Do you feel as a group in control of deciding what services to scrutinise?

1 being no control to 10 being complete control

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
					1 (14.3%)		1 1 (28.6%)	1 (14.3%)	1 1 1 (42.8%)
									100%

The individual interview answers showed how much the group feel in control of the decision on what to scrutinise. They value the advice and suggestions on what to look at as well as the various methodologies that could be applied. They were split in term of creating an action plan, some in favour and some thought it may stifle their ability to be reactive to opportunities that may arise.

Individual comments:

Does Thenue provide relevant and appropriate suggestions/ ideas for the group to pick work from?

- We get lots of suggestions and advice from Thenue and TIS but its our decision on what we work on. TIS give us lots of information and examples of pieces of work and methodology on how other groups have went about scrutinising projects and services.
- It's always our decision though.
- Yes- Thenue provide enough suggestions for us to look at. The group are still very much in control – we pick the work that we want to scrutinise.
- We never want to be dictated to – we will always want to be the ones to decide.
- Yes – they provide us with lots of ideas and we get the chance to discuss and prioritise the work we want to do.
- It's the group who decide.
- Absolutely – it is very much our decision
- Thenue provide us with lots of ideas, but we are in control of what we take forward.
- Yes - we get plenty of scope and suggestions.
- Yes – they provide lots of suggestions and let us look at any pattern with complaints. They are very open to suggestions too.

Would a more formal action plan set at the beginning of each year help or hinder the group?

- Yes – it would help keep us on track
- Not sure – but probably not. I like that we can respond to things that come up quickly without having to wait a whole year to put it on an action plan – but we do want to make sure that we are effective enough too.
- No – a formal action plan would hinder – we want to be able to go on to more urgent pieces of work if they come up without being tied to an action plan.
- I think it would help the group – an action plan could be our guide but as long as we understood that it was not written in tablets of stone. We can choose to amend it anytime we need to or when other more pressing pieces of work come up.
- It would help us with planning.
- I think it would hinder us – we want to take time to complete each piece of work without worrying about time scales.
- I think it would help the group – an action plan would be good.

- I think it would hinder the group as we are able to work as long as we need to on each subject matter without worrying about a time scale. We have the time to really examine each issue and put forward recommendations.

If so, what would that look like?

- List of ideas and have TIS come back with information and methods of scrutiny. That way we could start a new project as soon as one ends as we would have already had the discussions when we made the list.
- N/A
- Actually – possibly a semi action plan – showing big pieces of work – ie plan the big pieces but leave space for the smaller pieces
- We want to be able to be reactive to any work we want to be involved in
- It would be a rough guide on what we want to look at along with a rough time scale to fit in with board meeting dates.
- It should allow for big ticket items as well as smaller pieces of work.
- N/A
- A plan of what we could be looking at and the dates of the meetings in advance.
- N/A

Group Discussion:

The group collectively agreed a score of 10 after discussing the question of control. They discussed the merits of being able to respond to issues or subjects that come up such as the way Thenue consult on rent increases. This was an opportunistic opportunity rather than a planned project, but it was one that the group felt was very worthwhile. They welcome the fact that Thenue will suggest services that new legislation or new policies may affect, thus putting tenants needs at the heart of the decision making process. There was some debate about whether it's a strong group that retains control or if its due to being a strong group that Thenue feel able to make suggestions knowing the group will decide. While they feel in control right now, some feel that they need to stay on top of the decision-making process to that this does not slip. TIS contribute by reminding the group that while they (TIS) bring expertise and advice to the group – that it is up to the group to make the decisions. The only area the group feel less in control with is when it comes to setting the dates that they meet.

Q3 How satisfied are you with the communication from the Board on their decision as to whether they are able to adopt the Scrutiny group recommendations? (eg. length of time and detail)

1 being not satisfied and 10 being extremely satisfied

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
						1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	1 1 (28.6%)	1 1 1 (42.8%)
									100%

There was no doubt from the individual comments that the group feel they get very detailed information from the board as to whether they are able to adopt the REST Scrutiny Group suggestions. They value the detailed discussion sessions once the report from the board has been received by them and feel that they get a good explanation and understanding of why certain suggestions can't be taken on board.

Individual comments:

What works?

- A good level of information comes back from the board on their decisions. They take our ideas and things that we suggest for improvements on board.
- Anything they can't uphold they give a good explanation as to why they can't, and there is always room to be able to discuss this.
- The level of detail is very good!
- The fact that we get the chance to discuss the report coming from the board in such detail is excellent. We like getting to know the reason and thinking around their decisions – getting that level of detail adds to our groups knowledge and understanding of how things work.
- The level of detail is good and it's not often that the Board don't take things on board. If they don't take something on board we get all the reasons why not and the chance of a good discussion about it.
- The level of detail that we get back from the board is great. It forms the basis of our very grown up discussion on areas that they were not able to take on suggestions for improvement. There is plenty of time given for discussions and finding ways of coming to an agreement on the final recommendations and areas for implementation.
- Everything that we get from the Board is very detailed with a full explanation of what can be adopted and what can't.
- We come together with Thenue to discuss the reports in full and collectively we are able to come to a conclusion and agreement.
- The level of detail is great and the fact that it is written detail. Getting the feedback in writing means that I can take my time to read it and make sure I understand it all.
- The feedback from the board is always very detailed and we get plenty of time to discuss their feedback in full.

What doesn't work?

- Sometimes due to the meeting dates it can take a while – but that is just about the timing of meetings.
- Nothing at the moment
- Nothing

- N/A – it works very well
- Nothing
- Nothing – it all works well
- Nothing I can think of at the moment.

What could be better?

- A forward plan that takes into account the board meeting dates could help.
- Can't think of anything
- Nothing I can think of
- Nothing really – the discussions are a really important part of the whole process and we are getting this right.
- It would be great if the time scales were quicker – but that's all to do with the Board meeting dates – so we fully understand why it can take a while depending on the dates of their next meetings.
- Nothing.
- It would be great if a few scrutiny group members could go along to the board meeting when our report is being presented to them so that we could answer any questions they had there and then. After the presentation and questions we could leave to allow the board to discuss the paper in detail.

Group Discussion

The group reiterated their appreciation for the level of detail and the discussion sessions that follow a board report on whether their suggestions for improvement can be taken on board.

They unanimously agreed a collective score of 10.

The REST Scrutiny group came up with a suggestion to continue to strengthen the relationship and partnership working with Thenue and the Board.

It was suggested that when a report from the REST Scrutiny Group is ready to go to the Board, that a few reps from the Scrutiny Group attend the Board meeting while their suggestions are being presented. They feel that hearing it from them would be good practice and enable them to answer any questions or points of clarification right away. They feel that it would enhance the understanding and thinking behind recommendations and decisions for both REST and the Board.

The group also came up with the idea of being able to go back over past campaigns and recommendations to review how successful the implementation has gone and look at how successful the improvements have been.

Section 5 – Learning, Development & Best Practice

Q1 Do you feel that you have benefited from being able to attend conferences or other learning opportunities?

1 being no benefit to 10 being greatly benefited

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
				1 (14.3%)		1 (14.3%)			1 1 1 1 1 (71.4%)
									100%

The two lower scores were down to new members not having experienced conferences or many learning opportunities yet, so felt that they could not comment fully.

The members that had been able to attend conferences and training events felt strongly that these had been beneficial to the upskilling of the group. One member felt that the cost of the conferences should not come from tenants' rents, but that outside funding should be sought where possible. They did however see the merit in the learning gained at such events.

Individual Comments:

What do you feel you have learned most from? (conferences / visits to other scrutiny groups / training etc?)

- I have not had the chance to attend anything as yet, but the feedback I have heard from others is good. The information we get from TIS is very good on what others do.
- Yes – I have visited other housing associations and it gives me ideas as to how different organisations work and pick up on areas of best practice.
- The conferences have been so helpful to learn and meet people to hear about what they are doing. Visits to other groups have been great to hear about best practice elsewhere.
- Meeting other scrutiny groups has also been very useful – seeing how they do things and the things they have suggested.
- Thenue are very good at providing opportunities for us to learn for example going to conferences and being able to learn from other groups and organisations. Visiting other scrutiny groups has been really useful to see how they operate and pick up any useful tips or areas of good practice. It has been really useful to have some of these groups come up to us as much as it has been useful for us to go to them.
- Attending the conferences and visiting other groups has been very helpful in learning about best practice. Some of the workshops have been great – looking at ways of scrutinising things.
- I enjoy learning from others and seeing examples of best practice.
- The conferences and visits to other groups and associations has enabled us to be able to learn about best practice and also allowed us to share our best practice with others.
- It gives us a good perspective as we see all types of housing organisations and groups, including council and community housing associations.
- The workshops have been great to hear other people's ideas and how we could use those ideas in Thenue.
- The catering is also great.

What hasn't been as helpful?

- N/A
- I feel the money spent on conferences' has been unfair as it is tenants rents that is paying for us to attend. It can be very costly.
- Nothing
- There has been the odd external course where the quality has not been as good as other courses.
- Nothing
- nothing
- N/A

Are there other types of learning opportunities you feel would be useful?

- I think being able to attend the conferences and other groups to pick up new ideas will be very useful.
- Continue to visit other housing associations and scrutiny groups to share our best practice and see some examples of others best practice. It's great to see what other people are doing as it gives you lots of ideas as to what we could implement.
- Not sure - but always open to new ideas
- More visits to other groups.
- No – we have access to any learning we need.
- No – all the ones on offer are great.
- No – if we felt we wanted to take on a project that we needed more information on – we have no problem in asking for training.

Group Discussion:

The group reiterated their individual comments, reporting on how beneficial and worthwhile the conferences and learning opportunities have been. They all agreed that the knowledge gained was important so as to ensure that group members kept up to date with areas of best practice. There was also an acknowledgement that often the Thenue REST Scrutiny Group members are feeding back at conferences on their own examples of best practice for others to learn from them.

All members agreed to give this section a score of 10.

There was a suggestion that we scope out the possibility of external funding to pay for conferences, so that it does not come out of tenants rents.

Q2 How keen are you to take part in future conferences and learning opportunities?

1 being not keen to 10 being extremely keen

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
									1 1 1 1 1 1 1 (100%)
									100%

All members are keen to take part in future conferences and / or learning opportunities. There were very few barriers to being able to attend, with members reporting that these were always looked at prior to signing up, such as travel or dietary requirements.

One member has both child care and other caring responsibilities which present a slight barrier. Having as much advanced notice of learning opportunities would allow the member to explore possible supports to allow them to attend.

July is a difficult month for some due to holidays and prior commitments, so avoiding July would be beneficial.

Individual Comments:

Are there any issues / barriers that would make taking part difficult?

(eg travel, health, child care, other caring responsibilities, communication difficulties)

- No issues
- No I don't have any barriers – but I wouldn't want to use tenants rents to pay for conferences
- No barriers or issues
- None - apart from the fact it would be great to avoid meetings in July due to family commitments.
- I don't have any barriers or issues in attending
- I have both child care and caring responsibilities so any help with this would be great.
- N/A

If so, what would help to remove these barriers for you?

- N/A
- N/A
- Everything is always well taken care of
- No meetings in July
- N/A
- Having advance notice of training or meetings would be good and some support with arranging additional child care or help with caring responsibilities would be great.
- N/A

Group Discussion:

All group members are very keen to take part in future learning and development events, including conferences. There was a suggestion from one member that conference fees should not come out of tenants' rents and outside funding should be pursued where possible.

Any other comments / Information?

Individual Comments:

- The scrutiny group should have a bigger profile on the Thenue website so that more people know what we do and how to get involved.
- Bigger profile in other Thenue publications.
- I am pleased in the way this is taking place – pleased with the process that we are following (one to ones & group discussion)
- I think revisiting a code of conduct and group rules on how we should attend meetings on zoom would be good - if we are going to keep using zoom for our meetings. Just a wee reminder of what to do and what not to do.
- Going over group rules every once in a while is worthwhile especially when new members join.
- The help we get from Charlie and TIS is great – we have very trusting relationships with them.
- The route that we are going in is going really well – but it's a shame we as a group couldn't meet up in person due to COVID.
- It would be beneficial to ensure that all new staff are given information by their line manager about the REST Scrutiny Group as part of the staff induction process. It may also be good to make sure that all new staff members are aware of all changes and updates recommended and passed by the board.

Group Discussion:

The REST Scrutiny Group members are very concerned about the negative impact that the 9 year rule could have on the effectiveness of the group if they lost very skilled committed members.

Looking at the current make up of the group, if the 9 year rule were to take effect, almost none of the existing members would be part of the group.

They would like to explore with Thenue the possibility of a compromise around the 9 year rule and have something more flexible written into the group remit and rules.

6. Feedback from Ilene Campbell of TIS - 26.8.2021

Interview by Ruth Adam, Community Regeneration Manager.

Section 1 – Support and Value for Money provided to the Group

One of the key commitments from Thenue to the REST Group is:

Thenue will provide help to REST to carry out its activities by providing administrative and officer support. That support may be provided by a Thenue staff member or by an organisation appointed by Thenue (in consultation with REST) for this purpose, or by a combination of these methods. In either case, the officer(s) will be directly accountable to REST when carrying out REST's activities.

Q1. TIS (Tenants Information Service) was appointed to support the work of the Thenue REST group – how well do you feel supported by TIS?

1 being not supported at all and 10 being the support is excellent

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Not relevant for TIS to score this question.

Feedback

- TIS hasn't done much work over the past 2 years (due to Covid and the gap when Thenue were seeking to recruit new REST members. In addition, there were changes in the SMT)
- Quite unusual to have the CEO as lead officer. It is usually a TP Officer or Manager with the CEO and the Board being involved at the scrutiny report stage. The Board make recommendations and CEO would lead on delivery of the action plan.
- With the gap in meetings there has been a disconnection between Thenue and the Scrutiny group.
- New person joining can be difficult partly due to it being a well-established group.
- Thenue should have a Link Officer for the REST group. The person could possibly come from the Community Regeneration Team or Community Housing.
- Independent support is important
- Workplan is important. Currently no workplan- no momentum – need new members

Q 2. Given that TIS were pre-selected before your time on the group – would you like the opportunity to explore alternative organisations to provide support? Yes or no?

N/A

Q 3. How well do you feel supported by Thenue staff to enable the group to run? (ie admin, meeting support ect)

1 being not supported at all and 10 being the support is excellent

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Feedback

- Thenue provide great support and provide all the necessary information.
- They are accessible, open to share information, take things on board
- Thenue is very good to work with.
- CEO is very accessible and involved.
- TIS acts as a critical friend

Section 2 – Effectiveness

The remit of the REST group was identified as:

REST will identify specific areas of Thenue’s services and will review how these services are delivered and how they can be improved.

When the review is complete REST will make a report to the Board, which, as part of its considerations will decide on any action that requires its approval before it can be taken.

The Board will always respond to a report from REST by explaining how it intends to address any recommendations made and resolve any issues identified.

Q 1 – How effective do you feel as a group to help Thenue make improvements to services?

1 being almost ineffective and 10 being very effective

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Feedback

- TIS feels that the REST is very effective
- Response from the Board are well received by the group
- There are time pressures when working with a group of volunteers. We need to be more realistic in timescales. More members in the group are needed.
- Workplan to be produced.

Section 3 - Recruitment of new members

The recruitment of new members is important as identified in the REST remit document, especially as no member can serve for more than 9 years.

Any resident living in Thenue’s communities and who is receiving Thenue’s services can volunteer to join REST. So that the Panel can operate effectively, the total number of members at any one time will not exceed fifteen, with a minimum of two-thirds at any one time being association tenants.

*Membership of REST should reflect the communities where Thenue is a landlord. If there are more volunteers to join REST than there are vacancies, priority will be given to tenants from communities that are not already represented. Where this happens, it may, occasionally, be necessary to ask someone to stand down but only where there is already more than one tenant from the same community. If this happens, it will be for REST to decide who should stand down; normally based on length of service (i.e. the longest serving member would be asked to stand down). No single community should dominate the membership of REST. Current Board members are not eligible to serve on REST....
It is REST's responsibility to ensure that its membership is representative of Thenue's communities.*

Q1 – How successful are we as a group in recruiting new members?

1 being not at all successful and 10 being very successful

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

- Current recruitment is not working very well.
- Important to revisit/ review the terms of reference. The difficulty in the lack of detailed guidance / rules causes problems
- A detailed terms of reference or a constituted group is required to help with the governance issues. This could include issues such as:
 - Number of Reps per area
 - Recruitment process
 - Advertisement across all areas
 - Support for new members
 - Collective agreement
- Common/ collective agreement will be required to amend the Terms of References.

Q2 – Do you feel that there is adequate representation from each of the communities that Thenue operate in to ensure no single community dominate the membership of REST?

1 being not nearly enough representation and 10 being excellent representation

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

- Need to understand the rationale for the Terms of References
- These ground rules are important for ensuring good governance and to help develop a strong Scrutiny Group.
- Need representation across all areas
- The group are well established (and this may hinder new members joining. 1-1 training could support new members / induction.
- No Blackhill or Scotstoun reps
- Important to refresh Group with tenants reps.

Section 4 - Scope of Work

The reviews that REST carry out will help the Board to improve the services that tenants feel are most important: that is why REST itself decides which areas of Thenue's services it will review. For example, if a new policy has been agreed by the Board, REST may review how well it operates and whether it delivers its planned objectives. Or REST may identify an existing aspect of Thenue's services that it wants to review – perhaps because members of REST are concerned about performance or have ideas about how a service could be developed or improved. ...

The Board will also consult REST about specific issues as part of its duty to consult with tenants e.g. changes to service delivery arrangements, rent increase proposals, changes to service standards. In other words, issues that affect all Thenue tenants, rather than issues that affect a specific community or area.

Q1 – is the current process of agreeing/ deciding on which Thenue service to scrutinise working well?

1 being it's not working well to 10 it is excellent

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

- The REST team decide the topic that they wish to scrutinise. Thenue provide an overview of the key issues that they see need developed and this is taken in to account by the REST team in deciding their next task.
- Thenue is always supportive of REST in conducting its scrutiny tasks.
- Important to always consult/ communicate with the group (e.g. Mystery shopping introduced by Thenue which was a great idea) however it could have benefited from better communication and timing.

Q2 – Do you feel as a group in control of deciding what services to scrutinise?

1 being no control to 10 being complete control

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

- REST always determine the scrutiny task and take into account background information provided by Thenue.
- It works well
- Great data and stats provided by Thenue
- Thenue has never said no! Usually a reason if it can't be done.
- For every scrutiny task there is a work plan – how to gather evidence, who to speak to and how to analysis it.
- Annual work plan is needed.

Q3 How satisfied are you with the communication from the Board on their decision as to whether they are able to adopt the Scrutiny group recommendations? (eg. length of time and detail)

1 being not satisfied and 10 being extremely satisfied

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

- Board is very good and communicate well.
- Charlie comes to the meeting to explain
- There is an Action Plan with every task.
- Would be good for REST to present their findings to the Board and have more contact with the Board (learning from previous experience)

Section 5 – Learning, Development & Best Practice

Thenue will ensure that members of REST have access to relevant training, learning and development opportunities. Thenue will meet the costs associated with attendance at relevant events and conferences throughout the year.

Q1 Do you feel that you have benefited from being able to attend conferences or other learning opportunities?

1 being no benefit to 10 being greatly benefited

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

- Majority of the group is very enthusiastic about learning
- Keen to learn and attend conferences.
- REST group are great ambassadors for Thenue
- Group are more keen on conferences than training. This may be a confidence thing.

Q2 How keen are you to take part in future conferences and learning opportunities?

1 being not keen to 10 being extremely keen

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

- The group is very well supported and encouraged by Thenue.

7. Overall Summary & Key Recommendations

Summary

- The REST Scrutiny Group, individually and collectively feel very much supported by TIS and by Thenue. They feel in control of the group and they are the ones that make the decisions.
- They value not only the Lead officers input from Thenue, but also the staff that he assigns to the group depending on the piece of work they are undertaking.
- The group do not wish to explore any other support organisations and do not wish to tender this service.
- Thenue take the REST Scrutiny group seriously and that it is in no way tokenistic. They feel effective and valued, being able to contribute to making improvements and can see evidence of their recommendations being taken on board and things changing for the better as a result.
- A general theme emerged from individual members where almost all recognised that they have not been very successful in attracting new members.
- There was a general feeling that the recruitment process could be improved, and there was a real willingness to look at a partnership approach with other Thenue departments to recruit more members.
- Although recognising the need for equality of representation across all of the areas that Thenue operate in, it was evident that every current member of the group understood the importance of working as a group for a whole system approach.
- There was a huge amount of positivity about the scope and process of agreeing which Thenue service to scrutinise. The group very much feel in control of this process and want to ensure that this remains the case.
- The group were split in term of creating an action plan for the scope of works, some in favour and some thought it may stifle their ability to be reactive to opportunities that may arise.
- The REST members that had been able to attend conferences and training events felt strongly that these had been beneficial to the upskilling of the group.
- The group have enjoyed a wide range of learning and training events including conferences, visits to other groups, visits to other housing providers and external courses. All members are keen to take part in future conferences and / or learning opportunities.
- TIS, also have a very positive take on the relationship between then, REST and Thenue.
- TIS highlight recruitment as an area of concern that needs to be addressed. This includes recruiting to areas currently with no representation.
- Terms of reference and clarity on this 9 year rule is something that TIS would like to see and whether this means revisiting the Terms.
- TIS are keen to see an Action Plan to allow a programme of works to be set out for the REST group.

Key Recommendations

- Continuation of agreement with TIS to provide support to the REST group.
- Agreement of Workplan is required (12 months)
- Terms of Reference to be reviewed to provide a better framework for good governance of the group
- Consideration as to who should be the Lead officer for Thenue (unusual for it to be CEO) – recommend change to the Head of Housing?
- Recruitment of new members is required. REST best placed lead on this (with support)
- Timing of joining the Scrutiny Group is important. Difficult to be effective if someone joins at the end of a piece of work.
- Induction and handbook for new members