

Tenants' and Leaseholders' Panel Meeting 20th November 2008

Present: Nick Westlake (NW) (Chair)
Ron Godfrey (RG) (Vice Chair)
Henry Bone (HBo)
Derek Sullivan (DS)
Michael Marsh (MM)
Margaret Firth (MF)
Muriel Rawsthorne (MR)
Tim Rawsthorne (TR)
Herbie Barlow (HBa)
Chick Lavender (CL) (Treasurer)
Bill Potts (BP)
Bob Begbie (BB)
Marcella Begbie (MB)
Robert Gristwood (RG)

Officers: Caroline Titley (CT) – Chief Executive
Ruth Edminson (RE) – Interim Resident Involvement Officer
Emma Martin (EM) – Resident Involvement Assistant
Justine Thompson (JT) – Head of Policy and Community Involvement

Observers: Sue Cleaver (SC)

Apologies: Mark Hickson
Linda Wells
Maurice Grant
Phil Jones
Sheila Lambourne
Barbara McMinnies (Secretary)
George McMinnies
Cllr Shelagh Pile

Introductions, apologies and correspondence:

- 1.1 MM and MF had correspondence with NW in regards to leaseholder issues.
TR had correspondence with NW in regards to the new format of the minutes.

Agree and sign the minutes:

- 2.1 The minutes were agreed and signed. TR could not accept the minutes as a true record as a question he raised at the previous meeting concerning voids was missing but this will be added to the actions list of this meeting.

National Housing Federation code of service delivery and accountability:

- 3.1 The National Housing Federation code of service delivery and accountability was discussed by the Tenant and Leaseholder Panel. CT read out a draft response to be taken to the Board. CT said if anyone has any changes they would like to suggest then to please contact her by the 8th December.

Bracknell Forest Homes update from CT:

- 4.1 There were three parts to the update, improving core services, void properties and ICT. CT also gave a brief overview of events since the transfer in February.

- 4.2 This included, moving to Berkshire Court, recruitment, improvements to repairs and maintenance, customer involvement and the website.
- 4.3 Improving core services – inspectors came to Berkshire Court to judge the organisation against the audit commission. Bracknell Forest Homes received ten excellent points, seven good, four fair and four poor. CT said this was positive feedback considering how new Bracknell Forest Homes is. CT went on to say that a full report will be given to the Tenant and Leaseholder Panel to look at.
- 4.4 Voids – CT said the departments involved in voids are looking to improve the turnaround time that properties are re-let. Routine voids are dealt with by repairs and maintenance and some will be included in the Major Works programme. Mitie started work on the 15th September and have completed 41 properties in Priestwood 1. Mears started on the 8th September in Priestwood 2 and have completed 36 properties. Waites started in Great Hollands on the 8th September and have completed new heating systems for 30 properties. Anglian are ahead of schedule for the new windows programme. They are being re-rendered for the doors and external features.
- 4.5 Customer satisfaction surveys are being given out after repairs have been made to a property, so far eight have come back and seven out of eight customers gave the service a ten out of ten. One person gave eight out of ten. Contractors will be stopping during the Christmas period so as not to cause any disruption to customers.
- 4.6 ICT – Procuring a new housing management system. It will have the ability to book appointments; it will be quicker and easier to use, so a lot more efficient. Two recommendations will be going to the Board to decide.
- 4.7 BB asked how customers receive questionnaires. EM said that when tradesmen have completed any repairs in a property, they should give out a questionnaire to be filled in and sent back to Berkshire Court. MR said she had not received a questionnaire for some work recently completed. JT said Bracknell Forest Homes is currently looking at different ways these questionnaires can be given to customers. HBa said some people may feel pressured to give positive feedback if a tradesman is present when the questionnaire is filled out. DS asked what the response time on a repair is. CT said it is usually 28-30days. Bracknell Forest Homes is currently on 93% for the response rate, the target is 95%. CT suggested Martin Thomas come to a Tenant and Leaseholder Panel meeting. JT will send an email to DS in regards to target percentages for repairs and maintenance.
- 4.8 NW asked where Bracknell Forest Homes are on the national average of rent arrears. CT said we are round the middle, average but we will be aiming for the top quartile. TR wanted to make sure all customers are treated as individuals, CT confirmed this.

Choice Based Lettings:

- 5.1 Simon Hendy (SH) and Clare Dorning (CD) gave a brief overview of Choice Based Lettings.
- 5.2 RGr asked why the process has taken so long to get to this point when it was first discussed back in 2006. Bracknell Forest Council waited for the transfer of the housing stock and once Bracknell Forest Homes had been established the Council put forward this process.
- 5.3 CD said the government expects all local authorities to have Choice Based Lettings in place by 2010. SH said local people always come first. SH said the policy is due to be agreed by April/May and the process will go live in July/August.
- 5.4 The Tenant and Leaseholder Panel will invite SH and CD back in April to discuss the policy in further detail.

Customer Leaflets/ Tenants Handbook/ Voids Standards:

- 6.1 MR was concerned about the lack of Customer Involvement Group meetings this year and felt that one meeting a month was not enough to discuss important issues.
- 6.2 There was some confusion as to what documents needed to be signed off. A vote was cast to see if the voids document should be signed off that night or at a later date. The document was signed off.

Feedback from other meetings:

- 7.1 MR said she had recently been to a talk given by Mary Purnal from the East Berkshire Primary Care Trust. It was how plans are progressing, and how blue badges for cars are now being given to parents with disabled children, which has never happened before.
- 7.2 CT has been attending coffee mornings at all of the sheltered schemes; Steve Taylor-Edwards has also been attending to answer questions in relation to repairs and maintenance.

Any Other Business:

- 8.1 NW handed out a processes document, and asked Tenant and Leaseholder Panel members to read this and give feedback at the next meeting.
- 8.2 DS asked what the fundamental differences were between the Customer Involvement Group and the Tenant and Leaseholder Panel. NW explained.
- 8.3 JT said in the next few weeks members of the Housing Sounding Board will receive a questionnaire regarding access to services and rent payment, to complete. A copy of the questionnaire was available for Tenant and Leaseholder Panel members to look at on the night.

Decisions taken

Issue	Decision taken	Voting details
Voids document, should this be signed off?	A vote was cast, NW proposed, BB seconded.	8 votes for, 2 against, 3 abstain.

Actions

Date of meeting	Issue	Action	Progress
20/11/08	BB was concerned about the amount of time it had taken for the new windows to be installed at Binfield House due to the planning application. BB would like to know who to contact to get an update.	CT said some applications take quite some time. She will speak to Julie Rose and chase this.	Julie Rose will contact BB with an update.
20/11/08	TR was questioning that there is no money available at present for major structural repairs.	TR has taken this up with LW.	TR will contact LW.

Date of meeting	Issue	Action	Who responsible	Progress
29/10/08	T.V. aerial problem at Rothwell House.	LW advised this was now fixed and RACE communications contract with Bracknell Forest Homes is being reviewed.	LW	LW to feedback to BB and MB of the outcome of the contract review. There are no longer aerial issues with the sheltered schemes. All aerials in the borough will be reviewed for the digital switchover in 2012. Completed
29/10/08	Resident Inspectors to attend a meeting on the 12 th Nov, to discuss the outcome of the inspection at Berkshire Court.	LW advised that as soon as the report was approved it would be passed to the Tenant and leaseholder Panel to look through.	LW	Ongoing. Completed
29/10/08	Windows at Dennis Pilcher House have still not been done.	LW will pass this onto surveyors.	LW	LW has passed to surveyors and contacted BB and MB. Julie Rose has confirmed the order has been placed for the windows to be completed. Completed
29/10/08	Birch Hill School invoice still outstanding for CL.	EM will contact BH School and request another invoice.	EM	EM has contacted BH School who will resend the invoice from 17 th April 2008. Completed
29/10/08	SP said Simon Hendy from BFC would like to attend a Panel meeting.	RE to invite Simon Hendy to next meeting.	RE	Ongoing Completed
29/10/08	SP discussed a constituent who was nominated for a	NW suggested the Panel looking into the nominations process and policies and procedures for this.	NW to discuss with LW/RE	Ongoing

	property in July, and has only just been able to move in.			
29/10/08	New referrals process.	NW explained to the Panel that they were going to introduce a new referrals process.	NW	Ongoing Completed
29/10/08	HBo read out a letter of complaint from a resident regarding no heating in her property.	EM took a copy; LW apologised and will pass the letter onto Mike Jones to investigate. Copies of the letter have also been sent to Andrew McKay, Caroline Titley and the Bracknell News.	LW/ Mike Jones	LW will follow this up with Mike Jones. Completed
29/10/08	SP discussed a T.V. aerial issue at Dennis Pilcher House.	LW said this will be RACE communications and as previously mentioned their contract is being reviewed.	LW	LW to feedback to BB and MB of the outcome of the contract review. There are no longer aerial issues with the sheltered schemes. All aerials in the borough will be reviewed for the digital switchover in 2012. Completed
29/10/08	The Panel discussed the TPAS Landlords Accreditation proposal.	NW concluded it was too expensive and it is not urgent, so will be discussed at a later date.	All Panel members	Ongoing.
29/10/08	As there were transport issues, a contact number should be given in case any difficulties arise in future.	It was agreed that RE's work mobile number should be put into the minutes, so all Panel members have a point of contact.	EM	RE's work mobile number – 07768 036535 Completed