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| <p>2.</p> | <p>Repairs and Maintenance Update</p> <p>ML distributed an update to those present regarding the repairs and maintenance service.</p> <p>Fleet of vans: BFH are dealing with this through a company called Arvil (used to be done by BFBC in house) and this appears to be running smoothly. HBO as a trademan reported that is fine from a servicing point of view but not if a repair is needed and this is where clarity is needed. ML to deal with this.</p> <p>Complaints will be dealt with centrally and a different officer will deal with repairs complaints.</p> <p>Apprentices: 3 have now become fully fledged tradesmen and are staying with BFH.</p> <p>Call Centre: 2 new staff are starting next week. ML asked if there were any comments about the call centre? DS said he was told that work would be done in 7 days. ML said certain repairs have certain targets for times in which to be done. Most customers like to know how long it will take to do. If it can be arranged earlier with mutual consent, this will be done. CL confirmed that tradesmen would not knock on the door without prior notice. ML said this practice is being phased out. DS was concerned that 7 days was not acceptable, especially for older people. ML said these are the Government's Right to Repair Priorities for councils and BFH did not want to change too much on transfer. LW said the computer system also is not capable of a full appointments system but the new system will be.</p> <p>ML distributed the Customer Satisfaction Questionnaire which the Customer Involvement have commented on, but the Panel are also welcome to do so. ML asked for feedback on this via PM.</p> <p>RG asked about gas fires in Priestwood – do Gas Service Engineers report back defects? ML said yes, the Gas Service Report Form reports any defects. If these are significant the unit would have to be condemned.</p> <p>BM said that a customer had reported that the repairs complaints system had worked well and praised the officer who took the complaints. NW asked if there was any way of flagging officers like this who are undertaking good practice. AR said that there is a Compliments system as well as Complaints. LW said there will be staff training so that a good 'customer care' culture is embedded into the organisation.</p> <p>Information Technology – ML said there is a new system in place for IT, which is an Access database. The Depot's system was 23 years old and crashed regularly in March. Some information still needs to be retrieved. The Access system is an interim solution. The staff are happy with it – it went live on Wednesday and so far is working well. The properties were transferred onto the system electronically. Some historical information will need to be manually inputted and this will be done by call centre operatives who understand the issues.</p> | <p>ML</p> <p>ML</p> <p>ALL</p> |
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| | <p>RG asked about older properties. What records will be kept? ML said that this information will be archived. Costs per property per week on average can be calculated but this is more difficult although probably possible. LW said property attributes are available, information from the Savills Stock Condition Survey and the surveys which are done before the major improvements are also recorded.</p> <p>PM asked about the 3 apprentices – are they multi-skilled? ML said they are single trade. There are other tradesmen that are multi-skilled and it seems to be going well. LW said there is still a lot of work to do to get a multi-skilled workforce and that multi-skilled apprenticeship may also be offered in future.</p> <p>CL asked if there are wage differentials in the multi-skilled? AR said this is being reviewed in conjunction with the union and the response to the issue can be brought back to a future meeting.</p> | AR |
| <p>3.</p> | <p>Bracknell Forest Homes Update</p> <p>LW said that the Lease on the new office accommodation has been signed – Berkshire Court in Western Road. It is hoped in time to bring some of the technical team over. Time Square staff have to vacate by 31 May. The accommodation is currently being fitted out. There will be a Board Room where tenants meetings can be held and a good reception area.</p> <p>The other work going on is the Corporate Plan. JF distributed a document outlining how the priorities in the plan have been influenced by customers' views. If anyone has any comments on this please let JF know by 2nd May 2008.</p> <p>Procurement Sub Group – Tenders have now been received and are being evaluated, a lot of hard work has been put into this. DS asked about BM who is now a Board member and Arthur Appleyard has been unable to attend a couple of meetings. PM said that Arthur Appleyard has contacted him and at the moment he feels it's too much for him because of his health. LW said it is important to have consistency at this stage, but at the next stage two people from the T&LP could step in for the site visits and interviews. There would need to be a briefing session for a new people before the interviews. CL moved that this was taken forward and NW seconded this. The people would be needed during the day and will be involved in monitoring the contractors once work starts. There was a question about whether a leaseholder would do this, LW said it was about internal works. When communal areas are worked on leaseholders could be involved. RG, TR & SL all volunteered - 2 will be needed for interviews. TR asked if it was okay if they are due to stand down from the panel in May. JF said that Arthur Appleyard was not a Panel member and the important issue was that it was tenants other than Board members.</p> <p>TR asked if thorough financial checks are undertaken on the companies. AR said there is a pre-tendering qualification questionnaire which looks at their financial standing – every step has been taken to ensure that the companies are solid.</p> | |

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| | <p>RG asked about paying rent in Easthampstead House – he was told that there is going to be a review on this in July. BFH are able to use the Cash Office until December but we will have to await the outcome of the review.</p> <p>BB asked about windows for Binfield House and applying for English Heritage listed building planning permission. LW to check on this.</p> <p>CL said that the Cash Office were not able to help with queries and could someone from BFH be there to answer questions. LW said this has been looked into but the Council are not happy for BFH to access their information systems in a public area. However solutions are being looked at e.g. a Housing Officer with a phone who can take details and get back to tenants or phone the main office. RG highlighted that there is a need for confidentiality for tenants also. LW said that the Council have agreed for BFH to have a desk in the Look In for people to come in with queries. – this will be in place from end of May when the office moves. There will not be a reception for BFH in Time Square after the end of May. DS asked about the Town Centre presence and will this be the main office? LW said the main office will be in Western Road, there will be a Look In or an Officer will visit the customer at home. The Look In area will be as confidential as possible and e.g. rent balances can be given on a piece of paper.</p> <p>DS asked about young people going into the Look In. LW said that people can be visited in their homes if they do not wish to visit the Look In. the town centre visits will be monitored – when the Town Centre is regenerated the Look In will move and BFH will need to consider what to do. NW suggested that cashiers have a phone number for people to call or a freephone for people to use.</p> <p>NW asked if there will be a central point that people could call – LW said there will be and people will give out their direct dial number also.</p> <p>PM asked if wooden frame windows should have been done? LW said not yet but the programme is set for this.</p> | LW |
| <p>4.</p> | <p>IT and Finance Update</p> <p>AR said some computer systems came with the Council and some did not. The Financial system and HR system did not transfer, nor the GIS mapping system.</p> <p>The office move is on target.</p> <p>There is a basic finance system which tracks expenditure although it cannot yet raise invoices. It is very important to correctly code so that VAT can be reclaimed.</p> <p>The HR system needs to be developed and this will be looked at.</p> <p>Once the office has moved, the Repairs & Maintenance system will be looked at. An OJEU (European journals) Notice has been put out for this. There is a requirement for the system to do a lot of work that is currently done manually. It needs to also integrate with the Housing & Finance</p> | |

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| | <p>systems.</p> <p>The other main parts of AR's role is the budget and Business Plan. BFH have a very good banking deal, the major works costs are a variable that is awaited.</p> <p>PM said that regarding the integration of the software – this was an issue in the past, and needs to be watertight. He asked if there was a software consultant looking at this? AR said, yes there are IT Advisors because there is not the expertise in-house and they will check specifications, the IT Strategy etc. AR said it is important to look at the whole of commerce for a solution. There are also products that are sold as more integrated.</p> <p>RG asked about the budget for the financial year – with energy prices rising etc, how will BFH ensure that it can meet these costs? AR said that a margin of 4% was allowed. With gas and electric, prices are fixed through the Council's contract so figures should not change for the rest of the year.</p> | |
| <p>5.</p> | <p><u>Compact Review</u></p> <p>DS asked if we still need the Compact? JF said that it was a promise in the offer document that this would be honoured and also Housing Associations are expected to produce a Resident Involvement Statement which the compact could also function as.</p> <p>CL said that every tenant should be consulted on the new document rather than just the Housing Sounding Board.</p> <p>BM felt that there was a lot of history in the current compact and the new compact needs to start from scratch.</p> <p>It was suggested that a group come together with members from different customer groups - BM, BP, MG, CL, MB, BB and MB put themselves forward.</p> <p>JF suggested that work starts on the Compact once the Panel constitution has been agreed. There was some discussion about the constitution and the key changes will be voted on at the next meeting. The amendments suggested by Panel members at the special meeting in March were distributed.</p> | |
| <p>6.</p> | <p><u>Treasurers Report</u></p> <p>CL gave a report. There is £925.08 in the bank account. An invoice is outstanding for the Board.</p> <p>DS asked about audit. JF said that this would be done by BFH who award the grant. The 2008/9 grant can be awarded whenever the panel wish to apply.</p> | |

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| 7. | <p><u>Feedback from other meetings</u></p> <p>PM had attended a Resident Inspection meeting with other Resident Involvement Officers from the 6 Landlords involved – Wycombe, Wokingham, James Butcher, Sovereign, Windsor Housing and Bracknell Forest Homes. The work is spread across the organisations. Two Inspectors are needed to go on training. All organisations will follow the same recruitment process. The Inspectors from each organisation will not input but will observe when the inspection is for their landlord. BFH will go last in the inspection – Sovereign will go first. There will be a Lead Inspector for each inspection.</p> <p>DS asked if Inspectors would be able to go anywhere in the organisation. PM said that the inspection would be limited to subjects e.g. this time it will be repairs and maintenance.</p> | |
| 8. | <p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p>CL asked about eligibility for garden maintenance – these criteria were bought in April 2006 when the Council had tightened budgets – is BFH now able to review these criteria? LW said yes, there is a need to review the Policy and customers can be involved in this, taking into account the demand for the service and the budgets available.</p> <p>CL said that there are issues in his area e.g. his grass front is not longer cut but owner occupiers are getting their fronts cut.</p> <p>There was discussion about land that belongs to BFH now and how this is communicated to tenants.</p> <p>LW said that the Garden Assistance Scheme is for older and vulnerable people and their front/back gardens and hedges are maintained. The Council also used to cut the frontages and it was easier to take the mower across the whole front. Now BFH will maintain the land in their ownership. Dave Cullis is reviewing the issue for CL's area. LW said there may be other issues that need looking into and it is possible that errors may be made while the two organisations are getting used to the new set up.</p> <p>DS said he has spoken to a couple of older people who need assistance with bushes to be cut back down and has had 2 different answers – LW said there is a need to establish consistency with the service. Doing work for people has a cost and it needs to be prioritised. The capacity of the current workforce needs to be calculated. One off requests can be very big e.g. if it's Leylandii and these could be considered. The standards for the estates also need to be looked at.</p> <p>TR asked if grass cutting is an appropriate expenditure from the rent account. LW said it is a discretionary service which BFBC chose to provide – it has been very popular with tenants and a promise has been made in the Offer Document to continue the service. LW said it is a legitimate cost as it enables people to remain independent in their own home and not cause nuisance to their neighbours with unkempt gardens.</p> | |

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| | <p>RG asked about RSLs who also operate in the Borough and did they have issues with involving their tenants? JF said that she networks regularly with neighbouring landlords and all experience similar issues with involving certain groups such as younger people. BFH does have good active customer groups such as the Panel.</p> <p>HBo asked about the Tenant Census – he did not agree with National Insurance numbers being requested. JF said that tenants did not have to answer questions if they did not wish to. National Insurance numbers were requested to prevent fraud and also in case there was a need to liaise with Housing Benefits.</p> <p>BM asked if there could be a way of Panel members seeing how items get onto the Panel agenda. NW suggested that an e-mail went round letting people know when the Officers Meeting is and people could suggest items to be discussed at this.</p> <p>There was a request for the Board Minutes to be sent to the T&LP. AR said that Part 1 Minutes are a public record. Part 2 may be sensitive / confidential.</p> <p>There was discussion about Board feedback and how Tenant Board Members can feedback to the Panel. NW said that some guidance is sometimes useful as what cannot be released yet / what is confidential.</p> <p>NW asked about Board agendas being distributed to the Panel. AR needed to check on this.</p> <p>PM encouraged members to attend the Equality and Diversity training.</p> <p>PM congratulated the Editorial Team on the new Spotlight Newsletter.</p> | <p>PM</p> <p>AR</p> <p>AR</p> |
| <p>9.</p> | <p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>21st June 2008, Easthampstead Baptist Church, 7-9pm.</p> | |