

Tenants' and Leaseholders' Panel Meeting
17th February 2010

Present:

Sheila Lambourne (SL) – Chair	George McMinnies (GM)
Barbara McMinnies (BM) Secretary	John Stevens (JS)
Chick Lavender (CL) Treasurer	Margery Franklin (MF)
Shelagh Pile (SP)	Robert Gristwood (RG)
Bob Begbie (BB)	Muriel Rawsthorne (MR)
Marcella Begbie (MB)	Ian MacDonald (IM)

Staff:

Linda Wells (LW) – Housing and Community Director
 Justine Thompson (JT) – Head of Policy and Community Involvement
 Charles Shaw (CS) – Head of Development Services
 Steph Verstraeten (SV) – Resident Involvement and Policy Officer
 Emma Martin (EM) – Resident Involvement Assistant

Observers: Tim Rawsthorne (TR), Sue Cleaver (SC), Margaret Firth (MFi), Joyce Barnes (JB)

Apologies: Neville Campling, Michael Marsh, Derek Sullivan, Bill Potts, Michael Skinner

1.0	<u>Introductions, apologies and correspondence:</u>	
1.1	SL welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced CS. The list of apologies was read.	
2.0	<u>Agree and sign the minutes:</u>	
2.1	RG asked why the Tenant and Leaseholder Panel do not receive regular updates from the Board. BM offered to do this, but explained that most of the topics discussed at Board LW includes in her monthly update. BM said, if something has been missed out of the update, she can update the Panel.	
2.2	RG also asked why Board members do not attend Panel meetings. It was suggested that if Panel members wish to invite Board members to the meetings they are more than welcome to do so. CL said he felt an update from LW was sufficient.	
2.3	The actions table was discussed. BB said the weekend working at sheltered schemes would be changing, so the item could be removed.	
2.4	SL proposed the minutes, IM seconded. The minutes were agreed and signed.	
3.0	<u>Charles Shaw – Asbestos Policy:</u>	
3.1	CS had prepared a presentation about the Asbestos Policy to present to the Panel. CS said there is not a lot of asbestos in Bracknell Forest Homes' stock and where there is, it is very low level. CS' presentation included why there needs to be a policy in place, what the roles and responsibilities of Bracknell Forest Homes are, asbestos surveys and checks, options for dealing with it, how the data is collected and training for operatives on how to deal with it.	
3.2	RG suggested carrying out annual surveys similar to the gas checks.	
3.3	BM asked if operatives would be going out to properties within hours rather than days when a customer is in the middle of any DIY and discovers asbestos. CS said he would have to check with Technical Services if that was possible.	CS
3.4	SP asked if asbestos can be brittle, especially on garage roofs. CS said yes it can be and a garage strategy is currently being put together and will be presented to the Panel at a later date.	

3.5	TR asked why customers are not informed of the asbestos checks that are carried out as part of the major works. CS said it is very new and is unsure how it has been communicated, if at all. CS said he would check this.	CS
3.6	SL thanked CS for his presentation and SP said what an excellent presentation it was, very easy to understand on such a complex topic.	
4.0	<u>Justine Thompson – Vulnerability Policy:</u>	
4.1	JT explained that the CIG had agreed the best definition of Vulnerability is the definition put together by Bracknell Forest Homes and should be included in the policy.	
4.2	JT mentioned that abuse and neglect would be included within the policy. SP asked if Bracknell Forest Homes will be providing any activities for vulnerable people. JT said that the Community Development Strategy will include activities around involving vulnerable people so they do not feel isolated from the community. BB said that the sheltered scheme party has been organised for the beginning of May.	
4.3	RG asked of the 400k for adaptations was still available. LW said there will be 400k every year for the first 5 years. Although, an extra 100k has been spent due to major works picking up on adaptations needed. RG suggested surveyors taking a note of the personal circumstances of customers when carrying out major works.	
4.4	It was asked if Bracknell Forest Council have Occupational Therapists. LW said yes, they are part of Social Services.	
5.0	<u>Linda Wells Bracknell Forest Homes Update, Promises Tracking and Choice Based Lettings:</u>	LW
5.1	Promises Doc - LW said that there are 161 promises and 126 are currently compliant. A lot of the promises that are still in progress are to do with the 5 year major works programme. BB asked what an LSVT is – Large Scale Voluntary Transfer.	
5.2	BM mentioned that on Page 8, C20 the Leaseholder Handbook would be compliant at the next update as this has been sent out. Page 12, E9 RG asked if anti-social behaviour is high. LW said not compared to some areas there are odd incidents in various locations and we have recently had 2 evictions due to ASB. LW said we would be pooling resources with the Council to target hotspots.	
5.3	RG also asked if Priestwood 1 would be getting hard wired smoke detectors as Priestwood 2 have got them when the major works started in that area. LW will look into this.	
5.4	Performance – LW said that rent arrears are currently above target. Tenant advisors are currently carrying out arrears blitzes and focussing on customers who are in arrears to make sure they are receiving all the benefits they are entitled to.	
5.5	BB asked if housing benefit is paid directly to Bracknell Forest Homes. LW said in most cases yes, however customers can choose to have the benefit paid to them directly. SP mentioned a customer with direct debit issues. LW asked SP to provide details after the meeting and will look into the case.	
5.6	LW said that the void turnaround time was below average because a particular sheltered bedsit took a long time to let and has skewed the figures.	
5.7	Complaints are also below target because one particular department were unable to reach target in responding to them.	
5.8	Choice Based Lettings – LW said this caused problems in the beginning but now customers are very interested in the process. There is a lot of information about the service at Bracknell Forest Council if anyone would like more. LW said one of the negatives, is that it allows	

<p>5.9</p> <p>5.10</p>	<p>customers to multi-bid. LW gave the example of one lady who bid on 6 properties and was top for all of them. The lady had to be contacted and asked to choose.</p> <p>RG asked about homelessness and choice based lettings. LW said customers would need to be assessed and put into the appropriate band by Bracknell Forest Council. BM mentioned how she found the site very easy to use.</p> <p>LW said there are a lot of policies and strategies coming up which will need to be brought to the Panel and suggested holding an extra meeting. Policies would include Access and Customer Care, Service Standards and the garage and financial inclusion strategy. The Panel agreed with this. GM proposed and CL seconded. It was agreed to hold the extra meeting in March..</p>	
<p>6.0</p> <p>6.1</p> <p>6.2</p>	<p><u>Chicks Presentation of the Tenants and Leaseholders Website:</u></p> <p>CL presented the Tenants and Leaseholders website to the Panel and asked if anyone had comments then to please let him know. CL said he had made some changes thanks to a friend of BM and GM. The group were shown the Panel members page, useful links, how to change the text size and the comments page. CL showed how chairs of other groups can register so they can create posts on the comments page. CL showed the Panel a short film about landscaping in Bracknell.</p> <p>The group thanked CL for his presentation.</p>	
<p>7.0</p> <p>7.1</p>	<p><u>Ratify Constitution, Election of Chair and Feedback from Other Meetings:</u></p> <p>Amendments to the constitution were highlighted in Bold. There was some discussion about the election of panel members and how elections could be brought forward to all be done at the same time. RG disagreed with this.</p> <p>CL proposed the constitution be agreed and signed, IM seconded with one amendment to 8.1 to read an officer 'of Bracknell Forest Homes'</p> <p>SL said that as there is currently no Chair of the Panel, elections will be held at the March meeting. If anyone would like to stand then please contact BM.</p> <p>CIG – IM said that Joanna Flaxman (JF) had attended the last meeting to discuss service standards, tenancy management, major works, anti-social behaviour and equality and diversity. JF also spoke of leaflets around condensation, asbestos, gas safety, harassment and domestic abuse. SV gave feedback on the rent pre-tenancy information leaflet and internet health check questionnaire.</p> <p>SSRA – BB said that David Allen from Bracknell Forest Council had attended to discuss Choice Based Lettings and how this affected sheltered schemes. There was praise and gratitude from residents at Winkfield Manor for the installation of a new stair lift. There were compliments from residents at Swan House for the good work, cleanliness and kind and polite manner of the MITIE operatives working on the new kitchens and bathrooms. To top it all off, the group were served with delicious cake baked by Christine, the Scheme Manager at Winkfield Manor.</p> <p>BM said that the landscape forum has so far held 2 meetings with good attendance. There is currently a project being set up by Bay House whereby tenants can apply for 75% of a tree grant when applying to the Big Lottery Fund. MB spoke of the older persons playground that was suggested at Binfield House, however residents felt it was a breach of security with other residents of Binfield being allowed access. Peter Joyce, Landscape Manager is now looking for an alternative location.</p>	
<p>8.0</p> <p>8.1</p>	<p><u>Referrals and Any Other Business:</u></p> <p>SL said she would like to declare herself as a nomination for the position of Chair on the</p>	

<p>Panel. As SL is standing for Chair, the position of Vice Chair will also be up for election, RG and MF expressed an interest in standing for this position. Expressions of interest should be sent to BM</p> <p>SV spoke of the upcoming customer involvement events. The Inspection training session will be held on 4th March, the Value For Money workshop will be held on 1st March and the Involved Customers event will be held on the 25th February.</p> <p>SV asked the Panel when they would like to discuss elections to the vacant positions on the Panel. BM suggested adding this to the agenda for the next meeting. The consensus of the group was that all elections should be held in May, RG disagreed with this and it will be discussed further at the next meeting in march.</p> <p>CL said as it is nearing the end of the financial year, could all expenses be submitted before the end of March.</p> <p>SP discussed an issue she raised at an estate meeting with a disabled tenant and their parking situation in Harmans Water. The Housing Officer present at the meeting will be looking into this.</p> <p>It was suggested for members of other groups to fill in a form for feedback from other meetings. This method has been used in the past. BB said this was stopped due to members not being able to read each others handwriting.</p>	BM
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Date of meeting	Issue	Action	Progress	Lead
17/06/09	Review the Compact	JF & SV to conduct review.	Ongoing – due for completion March 2010	JF and SV