

**Freebridge Tenant Panel Meeting Notes
Friday 6 December 2019 at 9.45 am in the Barn**

Present	Richard Maun (Tenant Panel Facilitator); Governance Coordinator; Anne Manning, Frances Fox, Sandy Peckover, Charlotte Beck, Annette McGivern, Mick Harpley, David Harrison, Stephen Lamprell, Zana Balcuiniene, Hazel Raisbury and Inge Martin.
1	<p>Welcome & Introductions and Apologies for absence There were no apologies as all members were present. Welcome to Andy Walder Chair and Simon Smith Vice Chair of the Board attended to observe. Brian Long Board Member had sent apologies.</p> <p>The Panel welcomed Inge as a returning Tenant Member. Another member was joining the Panel in January rising strength up to the maximum number of 12 members, first time in four years. The Tenant Panel thanked the Panel in their efforts to get to this point. Brian Long had sent apologies.</p>
2	<p>Declarations of Interest There was none.</p>
3	<p>Minutes of last meeting – November 2019 – The minutes were read and agreed as a true record. The Tenant Panel Facilitator confirmed that if there were questions from any member following a meeting that they should contact the Governance Coordinator to follow up.</p>
4	<p>Work Programme and Confirm Meeting Dates 2020 The work programme for 2020 was noted and the dates for the year were approved.</p>
5	<p>Tenant Panel Development Plan 2020 The draft development plan was on the agenda for approval.</p>
6	<p>Any Other Business Items A Panel member wished to understand more about the Director the Property's departure from the business. The Governance Coordinator agreed to follow up with the Chief Executive on an update by the next meeting.</p>
7	<p>Quarterly Update from the Board, Vice Chair Simon Smith</p> <p>The Vice Chair shared that it was good to see a higher number of panel members present bringing it up to the full strength of 12 members. He shared that the Customer Service Committee and Property Services were the main topic areas he wished to highlight.</p> <p>The Chair shared that the Board were committed to having a stronger tenant voice within the organisation and it needed the Tenant Panel's support.</p> <p>The Vice Chair shared that there had been some fantastic work around compliance of health and safety, which the Panel and Board had seen in terms of a dashboard.</p> <p>The Vice Chair shared that Hillington Square had been entered into numerous awards in recent months, and the Board were committed to finishing the project.</p> <p>The Vice Chair shared that Financial Performance within Freebridge remained strong and there were no concerns in this area at this time. The Board had approved the review of the Value for Money Strategy and the Procurement Strategy. He added that there had also been a good report on Placeshaping at the last Board meeting, which the Tenant Panel had also received a copy of for information.</p>

	<p>The Vice Chair shared that the Board had continued to have meetings with other housing associations to share best practice.</p> <p>The Tenant Panel thanked the Vice Chair for his presentation and he continued in the meeting.</p>
<p>8</p>	<p>Update on Customer Services</p> <p>The Communications Business Partner attended to provide an update, and circulated a document called 'How we performed' based on the second quarter, July to September 2019. He shared that the Panel had usually received the quarterly performance information that appeared in the Board Performance pack. He shared that the Panel had asked for more in-depth information, which he was sharing with comparative data from the previous year to current year.</p> <p>The Tenant Panel Facilitator thanked the Communications Business Partner for taking on the Tenant Panel's feedback in providing the year on year comparison data.</p> <p>The Communications Business Partner shared that in the next Streets Ahead issue would include information about the Customer Service Committee and how tenants would be able to apply by 10th January.</p> <p>The Facilitator thanked the Communications Business Partner for his attendance and information shared and he left the meeting.</p>
<p>9</p>	<p>Annual Income Update</p> <p>The Director of Housing and Income Manager attended to provide an annual Income Update to the Panel prior to the rent changes from 1st April 2020.</p> <p>The Director of Housing wished to provide an overview of the annual rent review and the Board decision on rent from 1st April 2020</p> <p>The Director of Housing advised that there had been lots of debate at the Board meeting in November on how far the organisation should go with the tolerances allowed for rent increases, with a balance of affordability and what the Board wished to progress within the organisation.</p> <p>The Director of Housing advised that the process for informing tenants of the rent changes would take place in February. The Income Manager shared that he managed the Income Team and wished for the Panel's comments on the draft rent and service-charging letter due to be sent to tenants in February. A copy of the draft letter had been circulated to the Tenant Panel in the agenda prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Panel Members individually shared suggestions and amendments were noted by the Income Manager.</p>

	<p>The Director of Housing added that they were also engaging with a company who worked on changing communications into pictures for those who had language or learning difficulties and they were drafting a version for Freebridge to consider.</p> <p>The Tenant Panel Facilitator asked them Panel to send any queries in via the Governance Coordinator as the usual route. The Tenant Panel Facilitator shared that if a Panel wished to share their questions with the rest of the panel or as an individual.</p>
10	<p>Annual Update from the Chair of the Board Andy Walder</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Tenant Panel for the invite to the meeting to provide an annual update, and reflected that he had first come to the Panel three years before. He shared that over the three years the Panel had development with its contributions, thinking, and what it was learning was a quantum leap from three years ago and a tribute to everyone around the table.</p> <p>The Chair wished to thank the Tenant Panel Facilitator for his facilitation of the Panel. The Chair shared that there were areas that he wished to take away, such as the invitation of line management to learn about their service and to show what they were doing would be useful for the Board too. He shared that it was useful to test out communications with the Tenant Panel, such as test running the Streets Ahead magazine and this was something he had learnt in the meeting as good practice in the organisation for the Tenant Panel to cover this work.</p> <p>The Chair shared that regarding the Customer Service Committee, and clearly, because of what the Tenant Panel's views were, they had been listened to and changes had been made as a result.</p> <p>The Chair shared that he had been elected again as Chair, which he was very proud of and he was proud to have a Tenant Panel in the organisation.</p> <p>He shared that the year had been a year of two halves, there had been some excellent news from the regulator visit with a V1/G1 award showing that it was a financial viable and well governed organisation. He added that as we have progressed through the year there had been issues at Property Services, scheduling, communications, culture, skills etc. and it was the area that really needed to be a focus for improvement.</p> <p>He had reflected on the three strategic goals, in that Freebridge would not be able to to deliver as many homes as it had set out to do. Another strategic goal was empowering people to the best they can be, focus had been in North Lynn and the Discovery Centre, he was delighted to see how the project had progressed over the past year and it had been a massive success.</p> <p>The third one was being a high performing housing association. The Chair shared that Freebridge did a great job with their work on Placeshaping and in having their own trades team and depot, which was held as good practice, but there were areas to work through such as customer engagement.</p> <p>Comments and queries were received from Panel Members.</p>

	<p>A Panel Member commented that they felt assured of the Chair's statement that he continued to be proud to be part of Freebridge and there will always be areas for improvement in all organisations.</p> <p>The Chair summarised that Freebridge was V1 G1, and Freebridge was a good organisation but not yet excellent and that is where we want to be.</p> <p>The Tenant Panel Facilitator thanked the Chair for their attendance and his presentation, as did the Panel.</p>
<p>11</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>A Panel Member shared that a communal guidance leaflet to tenants had been received at the scheme where they lived, Helen agreed to ask the Director of Housing to cover queries on the leaflet when they were due to attend in January.</p> <p>The Tenant Panel thanked the Governance Coordinator for her work with the Panel during the year.</p>
<p>12</p>	<p>Meeting Review – What did we do well?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informative. • Stimulating. • Concerns laid to rest. • Great and happy Christmas to all. • Very interesting and so glad to be back. • Grateful something being done at Property Services. • Satisfying. • Andy Walder. • Busy. • Interesting. • Positive. • Enthusiasm. • Inspiring. • Brilliant.
<p>13</p>	<p>Next Meeting Date</p> <p>Friday 10 January 2020 from 9.45-1.45 pm in the Barn. Hazel gave apologies for the next meeting.</p>