

**Freebridge Tenant Panel Meeting Notes  
Friday 10 January 2020 at 10.00 am in the Barn**

<b>Present</b>	Richard Maun (Tenant Panel Facilitator); Governance Coordinator; Anne Manning, Sandy Peckover, David Harrison, Charlotte Beck, Mick Harpley, Inge Martin, David Wheeler. Frances Fox, Annette McGivern and Zana Balcuiniene.
<b>1</b>	<b>Welcome &amp; Introductions and Apologies for absence</b> There were apologies from Hazel Raisbury and Stephen Lamprell was arriving around 12 pm. Welcome to David Harrison to the Panel.
<b>2</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b> – None.
<b>3</b>	<b>Minutes of last meeting</b> – December 2019 – Were agreed as a true record.  The Tenant Panel reviewed the group contract and confirmed that any extra queries following a meeting could be sent to the Governance Coordinator.  <b>Matters arising</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Governance Coordinator in answer to a query about multiple vans at properties being maintained, that sometimes it was necessary to have multi tradespersons working on property at the same time.</li><li>• GDPR would be provided as a development item at the next meeting.</li></ul>
<b>4</b>	<b>Work Programme 2020</b>  The work programme for 2020 was noted.  The Governance Coordinator agreed to discuss with the Chief Executive how any Director of Property topics could be covered with the Tenant Panel.
<b>5</b>	<b>Director of Housing – Various</b>  The Tenant Panel Facilitator welcomed the Director of Housing to the meeting for various items: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Freebridge Involvement: Homelessness</li><li>• Service Charges Update: (Consultation)</li><li>• Freebridge Approach in Supporting Vulnerable Tenants (e.g. Universal Credit)</li><li>• Freebridge’s Policy on Mobility Scooter Storage and Permissions</li><li>• Development slot – Tenancy Standard (Regulation) which the Tenant Panel had received in their pack.</li></ul> Director of Housing shared that the Panel were looking over various standards during the year and this was the first one. The regulator was called the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH), and previous regulators had set the same standards for housing associations and key aspects in that topic area a housing association needed to demonstrate. In this standard the following was covered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Tenancies</li><li>- Choice based lettings system</li><li>- How we let properties</li></ul>

The Director of Housing agreed that the Customer Service Committee gave more of a customer voice in the organisation. The Panel agreed that it wished to understand more about the self-assessment against the regulatory standards and agreed discuss it at a later date, the Governance Coordinator agreed to arrange.

### **Mobility Scooters**

Director of Housing in response to a query advised that electric cables should not be put through windows and to report to Freebridge for inspection. There were storage in some locations for scooters and the next safest place was within the home.

Following a query about locations where there were no facilities to store scooters, the Director of Housing advised that Freebridge needed to deal with requests on a case by case basis as properties were different.

Following a query about a tenant not previously needing mobility aids and then coming forward requesting storage, the Director of Housing advised that they would work with Care and Repair.

The Director of Housing advised following a query that where there was no other solution for electric to charge a scooter, Freebridge would work with the tenant on solutions.

The Director of Housing confirmed that social services were unable to assist with scooter storage and charging. Occupational Therapists assessed needs of those tenants who needed aids and adaptations.

### **Homelessness**

The Director of Housing shared that Freebridge had trialled available housing stock leased to the Purfleet Trust for those who would be otherwise be homeless. The only consideration in the risk of leasing empty properties in this way is that some of the customers need a lot of support to sustain tenancies, and this is where the Purfleet Trust work with Freebridge to cover this aspect.

Following a query the Director of Housing shared that empty works regarding safety had been completed.

A Panel Member recalled that Freebridge had provided funding to the Night Shelter through the Freebridge community fund.

### **Approach in Supporting Vulnerable Tenants (Universal Credit)**

A Panel Member asked what structure Freebridge had to support vulnerable tenants particularly those who receive Universal Credit. The Director of Housing shared that there was a support team which provided support to vulnerable tenants financially and from a welfare point of view, and made referrals for them to partner organisations where needed. There were three universal credit advisors and month on month the claims were increasing.

	<p>There was a lot of support for customers where they need it, and Freebridge was continually reviewing it.</p> <p><b>Service Charge Update (Consultation)</b></p> <p>Director of Housing shared that there had been an update on the roll out of the final service charges and the letter to tenants. The Director of Housing shared that the Income Manager was finalising the letter with comments from the Tenant Panel and any further recommendations we can take forward next year.</p> <p>In terms of the consultation, the roll out of the service charges has begun, and those in blocks of flats will start to receive request for payment where they haven't paid anything previously, and the Board had agreed to incremental amounts of an increase for these customers. This was the same way that charges had been rolled out to sheltered schemes in previous years.</p> <p>A Panel Member shared that main entrances needed improvement, the Director of Housing advised that the property team were working on this.</p> <p>The Director of Housing wished to share that there would be a change in the payment network provider from April, but Freebridge were still working on the timeline and all would receive a letter about the change. She assured the Panel that the same method of payment would be available, but a new card would be issued and changes to direct debits put in place. She shared that she would welcome any feedback.</p> <p>The Tenant Panel thanked the Director of Housing for their attendance and they left the meeting.</p>
<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b>Quarterly Report to Board – Key Messages</b></p> <p>The Tenant Panel had received the draft quarterly report to the board in their pack.</p> <p>Key messages and key questions which the Panel wished to invite the board to consider were included in their quarterly report.</p>
<p><b>7</b></p>	<p><b>Tenant Panel Reflection Time</b></p> <p>The Tenant Panel Facilitator reminded the Panel that this section gave the Panel free time to discuss anything that it wished to and provided over run time if needed. The Panel were welcome to suggest anything for the slot pre the meetings and email the Governance Coordinator if it wished.</p> <p>The Tenant Panel had agreed to discuss further external garden area maintenance, and the comments were noted from Panel members to be provided to managers responsible.</p> <p>A Tenant Panel Member reminded the Panel of the Tenant Promises Survey where the outside of properties had been a top priority identified. So those who are paid to keep those</p>

	<p>areas must be tasked to reporting back to Freebridge areas that require repair or improvement. A Tenant Panel Member suggested evergreens were a way to cheaply plant them up and needed very little maintenance.</p> <p>The Tenant Panel Facilitator agreed that the points and with the results of the tenant priorities survey should be raised with the Director of Housing, Support Manager and Placeshaping Manager for a response.</p>
<b>8</b>	<p><b>Forward Planning – February</b>  Tenant Panel Facilitator shared the items on the agenda. To be aware of what coming up and if any questions in advance let the Panel know, the Vice Chair of the Board Simon Smith will include framing around the questions from the Panel.</p>
<b>9</b>	<p><b>Meeting Review – What did we do well?</b>  Questioning.  Very informative.  Contributing quite a lot.  Interesting.  Talkative.  Alright.  Interesting  Listening.  Informative.  The Tenant Panel Facilitator shared that there had been lots of contributions across the meeting and good for the first meeting of the year.</p>
<b>10</b>	<p><b>Next Meeting Date</b>  Friday 14 February from 9.45 am to 1.45 pm. It was also the day of ‘Love West Norfolk’, the communications team would be in attendance for photos to mark the day.  Close 1.25 pm</p>