

Notes of the Tenant Panel Meeting

Held on 18 June 2021 at 9.45 am held virtually

Attendance – Tenant Panel Facilitator, Governance Coordinator, Director of Customer and Communities, Anne, Frances, Sandy, Charlotte, Charmaine, David and Roger.

Apologies – Annette

Declarations of Interest – There were none.

Work Programme – This was noted

	Item
1	To Receive an Update from Anita Jones, Chief Executive
	Anita provided a general update to the Tenant Panel.
2	Quarterly Update form the Board
	<p>Simon Smith Vice Chair and Gill Rejzl Board Member joined the meeting to provide an update from the Board following the latest report from the Panel in May.</p> <p>The following questions had been included in the Tenant Panel's Board report in May, including a memoriam for David Wheeler who had sadly passed away.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Members are frustrated that communication continues to be a major issue. The Panel would like to know what the Board (Exec Team) are doing about communications between teams and between Freebridge and tenants, so that systems have the correct information and tenants are kept informed of survey outcomes, repair timescales and planned actions?• Fencing is a key issue for tenants, as high quality fencing promotes safety, security and privacy. What is being done to make this a priority issue?• What is being done about the condition of the housing stock, with regards to age and condition, damp, mould and condensation? Are the Board aware of the scale of the issues? <p>The Vice Chair shared that for these questions they were on the whole about whether the Board were providing sufficient challenge to management, and he felt that the Board did. He added that in regard to communications there was ongoing discussions around this issue.</p> <p>Gill Rejzl had joined the Board as a full Board Member earlier in the year and was a member of the Audit and Risk Committee. She shared that she had retired from full time work recently and had a background in education and had been involved with Freebridge as part of the original project team, which took the Council through large-scale voluntary transfer in 2006. As well as a background in audit and had been an independent Member of the Audit and Risk Committee at Freebridge for 12 months prior to becoming a full Board Member.</p> <p>She shared information about the Audit and Risk Committee function such as the ability to approve independent audits, which provide an external independent level of assurance. She shared that they will work to triangulate what they hear from tenants, and together with the new Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee Donald McKenzie, they will lead the Committee to hold the executives to account. She added that the Board had Strategy Afternoons, which enabled it to focus on sector issues such as the Social Housing White paper, health and safety and effective tenant engagement.</p>

	<p>The Vice Chair shared that he would pick up on the questions that are escalated to the Board within the Tenant Panel’s quarterly report and he would respond every time when he attends.</p> <p>Following discussion the Tenant Panel Facilitator clarified that the questions the Tenant Panel put directly to the Board were to ensure that this was passed up to the Board so they were able to challenge through to the Executives from the role that the Board plays.</p> <p>The Tenant Panel thanked Simon and Gill for their attendance and they left the meeting. The Director of Customer and Communities left the meeting this point but would return later.</p>
3	Repairs and Maintenance update
	<p>The Head of Service Delivery attended the meeting to provide a quarterly update as requested by the Tenant Panel.</p> <p>The Head of Service Delivery shared the following update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repairs can be categorised three ways being 4hrs for emergency repairs, urgent within 7 days and a routine repair was to be resolved within 28 days. • He reviewed new jobs on a weekly basis with the internal and external teams to assess what the current resources were to get them resolved. • The team structure at Property Services was under review. • Reviews were underway to look at how jobs could be diagnosed better; that operatives had the right skills and that vans were stocked as best as they could be. • The Empty Property process and standards of work was under review. <p>He added that covid unlocking nationally had been pushed out by a further four weeks to 19 July, and testing in the work place, PPE and any other checks regarding covid would continue until further notice and it was hoped that further along in the recovery it will be possible to increase the momentum of the service and report to the Tenant Panel on the key service deliverables.</p> <p>The Tenant Panel shared the following queries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Panel Member queried whether there were procedures in place for providing information such as health and safety to tenants who do not speak English as their first language to ensure that there was a good level of understanding. The Head of Service Delivery shared that operatives were required to phone ahead of any appointment in order to carry out health and safety checks and to save travel time if there were issues that the appointment may then not be possible as a result. If it was clear that there was issues with communication, the operatives would feedback and use translation lines available. • A Panel member commented that there needed to be improved communication with tenants when a repair is reported to know when it is going to be carried out. • A Panel Member commented that the in-house team had resolved a drainage issue at their home and this had been done more thoroughly than the external contractor in a long time. • A Tenant Panel member shared that the word ‘adequate’ had been used to describe an issue that she had with her metal fencing, as it was spilling mud onto a nearby public footpath from her front garden <p>It was agreed to ask the Director of Asset Management when they are due to attend in September to cover a discussion on the issue of mould and damp with the Panel. The Governance Coordinator agreed to arrange.</p> <p>The Head of Service Delivery thanked the Tenant Panel for their honest feedback and he left the meeting at this point.</p>
4	Notes of the Last Meeting held in May 2021 and Matters Arising

	<p>The notes were approved as a correct record, and the matters arising report was noted which contained updates from the Governance Coordinator on follow up work agreed at the last meeting. The work programme was noted. It was noted that the April meeting had been cancelled.</p> <p>Tenant Panel Recruitment Update</p> <p>Charmaine had joined her first meeting and the Panel had welcomed her aboard, Charlie was attending his first meeting from July. Once the two new members were settled into the group, the team would re-advertise.</p>
5	Revisit of New Key Performance Indicators (KPI)
	<p>The Communications Business Partner and Director of Customer and Communities joined the meeting to revisit with the Panel new Key Performance Indicators that linked back to the five-year strategy. There was discussion previously about what we should measure, how it is presented and communicated to the wider tenant base. The Tenant Panel were presented with four different options for presenting KPIs to wider tenants and most felt that the info graphic with four coloured boxes was best as the most simple and clearest version. The Communications Business Partner thanked the Tenant Panel for their input and he left the meeting</p>
6	Communications with Tenants
	<p>The Director of Customer and Communities recapped that at the last meeting the Tenant Panel discussed communication as a re-occurring theme and it was agreed to discuss examples to try and identify trends or opportunities for improvements in processes. The Director of Customer and Communities explained that it might be possible to create a link to KPIs that the Tenant Panel could use to monitor whether Freebridge is improving.</p> <p>The Panel gave examples of their own personal experiences of customer service issues at Freebridge.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Director of Customer and Communities said that one way of monitoring Freebridge and if its services are improving is to look at appointments made, and how many have been appointed, and then by default see how many are in a loop and are not progressing. The Tenant Panel felt this would help them to track it and agreed to receive this information. <p>The Director of Customer and Communities shared that there needed to be a clear procedure and if nothing else, employees needed to understand the inconvenience and impact non-communication might cause. The Director of Customer and Communities shared that at the next meeting she would come back to the meeting to provide updates on closing the gap in communication.</p>
7	Discussing Regarding Future Meetings
	<p>The Tenant Panel agreed that in bad weather Zoom could be a backstop option in future and have the meeting rather than cancel it. It noted that it would be trialling some Thursday meetings going forward from September.</p> <p>Following discussion, the Director of Customer and Communities summarised that Zoom was working well for the Panel at this time and until we get to a point, where everyone is more comfortable there was no immediate rush to continue with meeting in that way for now. The Tenant Panel Facilitator shared that in future there could be a mix of in person and zoom meetings or some online virtually and some in the room, but it was good to note that as we have staff that will need to work in person and at home there may have to be a blend in future, so the flexibility from the Panel will be helpful. He added that we would carry on meeting via Zoom for now and keep monitoring.</p>

	A Panel member pointed out that they are entitled to cover expenses from mileage and parking, and this was a saving for Freebridge if the Panel did meet online.
8	Any Other Business
	<p>The Panel thanked to the Tenant Panel Facilitator and the Governance Coordinator for their continued work with the panel and particularly how all their comments and questions were put forward into Freebridge on their behalf.</p> <p>The Tenant Panel Facilitator shared that the work of the Panel was excellent and its work always remained with good working together.</p>
9	Meeting how did it go
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informative, insightful and interesting. • Usefulness. • Honesty and feedback from Freebridge and commitment for improvement. • Good meeting and enjoyed it, lots of useful information and looking forward to the next meeting. • Way in which presented the feedback that the Director of Customer and Communities requested. • Really enjoyed it, lovely introduction and nice to meet everyone. Today was engaging, understandable and attentive. <p>The Director of Customer and Communities shared that she was impressed with how the panel answers the right questions to get the assurance needed.</p> <p>The Governance Coordinator reflected that the Panel had been consistency professional and had un-wavering energy and enthusiasm.</p>
10	Date of Next Meeting
	Friday 16 July 2021, 9.45 am – 1.45 pm, via Zoom. Meeting Closed at 1.45 pm