

Notes of the Tenant Panel Meeting

Held on 14 May 2021 at 10.00 am held virtually

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

The Tenant Panel had a moment of reflection to remember David Wheeler who had sadly passed away. A card with messages would be collated by the Governance Coordinator to be sent to his family.

Apologies – Annette and David H

Declarations of Interest – There were none.

Work Programme – This was noted

	Item
1	Notes of the Last Meeting held in March 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.</p> <p>Tenant panel Recruitment Update and Discussion re Future Meetings Interviews were due to take place on 21 May.</p> <p>The Governance Coordinator noted that a further discussion would be held on meeting days of the Tenant Panel in June.</p>
2	Matters Arising from April Discussions
	<p>The Director of Customer and Communities advised that with the Director of Assets, they were going to provide a response to the Ombudsman's review on Damp and Mould issues and in future there would be updates on the work in this area from the 5 year strategy. The Governance Coordinator noted for the future work programme.</p> <p>The Director of Customer and Communities shared that it would be helpful keep the issue of communications with tenants on the agenda for discussion. The Governance Coordinator agreed to email the Panel before the June meeting to remind to bring examples of non-communication from staff in order to find resolutions where possible. A Panel Member shared that she had pointed out a communal repair to staff who had advised that it was a repair that tenants should report and not them. The Director of Customer and Communities agreed to investigate as this was not the expectation.</p>
3	Various Items with Director of Customer and Communities
	<p>Housing Ombudsman Residents Panel</p> <p>Great feedback had been received from Anne who as a new member of the Housing Ombudsman Residents Panel had attended the first meeting. Anne shared the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The first meeting had been very interesting.• There was lots of information from the Ombudsman team and their expectations.• Real examples of complaints would be discussed by the residents panel.• There were 600 members and at each quarterly meeting 100 people would take part, but all 600 could join the meeting virtually.• Everything discussed will be on the website.• They want to raise service levels and cooperation between landlords and tenants.• Those on the panel would receive surveys, as group meetings of interest.• Meetings may be in person in time but there was no information as of yet.

The next meeting was in July and Anne would update the Panel in September and with a written report in advance. The Governance Coordinator agreed to add to the agenda for that meeting.

Self-assessment of the Customer Charter

As part of the Charter for Social Housing Residents, amongst other things the Government were going to require landlords to report on a national set of Key Performance Indicators in future that were not available yet, however a self-assessment against all of the criteria in the Charter had taken place and had been circulated to the Panel for information. Following a query from a Panel member the Director of Customer and Communities shared that the 'responsible and accountable persons' mentioned in the Government charter could be a role already in the business or one that requires creation but Freebridge were awaiting more information on this aspect from Government guidance before deciding. The assessment would continue to be shared with the Tenant Panel as it evolved and there were links to the new five-year strategy. The Governance Coordinator agreed to note on the work programme.

The Panel welcomed Anita Jones, Chief Executive to the meeting.

Research into Customer Self-Referrals

The Tenant Panel had spent time since the last meeting to research accessibility of Freebridge guidance and support, the Panel shared the following:

- The website was good and they could find lots of information.
- The Tenant Panel section needed more up to date information on recruitment.
- A section on engagement mentioned focus groups and workshops but this was not something Freebridge did currently.
- The Tenant Portal option was good but it needed to be in a more prominent position on the home page of the website.
- The website needed to be updated more regularly as two weeks ago the news feed was still as at January 21st.
- Information on assistance with foodbanks, activities for children, welfare calls and extra staff that have been taken on for those who had lost their jobs was all there. Help with budgeting, disability, domestic violence and other things was easily found on the website.

A Panel Member commented the notes of the Tenant Panel could get more publicity and a link to the kind of issues that the Panel Members discuss may encourage others to get involved. The Director of Customer and Communities shared that the page needed a redesign to be more appealing. It was agreed to bring back some thoughts to the next meeting to discuss information about what the Panel has been doing to be more appealing in Streets Ahead and on the website. The Governance Coordinator agreed to add to the work programme.

Customer Service Committee Pilot Update

The Director of Customer and Communities advised that the Board and Leadership Team were addressing feedback from a recent review on Board Effectiveness and there would be considerations around the Terms of Reference for the Committees. The Governance Coordinator agreed to circulate the latest minutes from the Customer Services Committee. The Governance Coordinator agreed to arrange that feedback be provided at the Tenant Panel meeting in July in regard to review of Committee Term of References.

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Quarter 4 Performance and Introduction to New KPIs (Key Performance Indicators)

The Communications Business Partner joined the meeting to share the New Key Performance Indicators which linked to the strategy, and the Director of Customer and Communities and the Chief Executive continued in the meeting. The Tenant Panel were invited to consider if there were other areas that needed to be included or how it could best be presented.

A Panel member stated that it did not seem a true and fair indication of performance in reviewing the data of the past 12 months with the impact that the pandemic has brought and that the organisation should spend more time looking forward than back.

A Panel Member commented that they felt that Freebridge had managed the business well in their own view over the past 12 months under the circumstances of the pandemic.

The Chief Executive shared that the KPIs had come as a second indicator over the past 12 months as we had looked more for evidence that we had been operating well as a landlord during covid.

Following a comment the Director of Customer and Communities shared that the feedback received in a recent text survey to tenants had aligned with what had been known from previous work four years ago on tenant priorities. In addition, this survey enabled Freebridge to reach many tenants, which had been a quick and easy process, compared to other methods of surveying.

The Panel agreed to share any examples they find of performance to inform a style that best suited them for their regular review.

The Tenant Panel thanked Anita for her attendance and she left the meeting at this point. The Director of Customer and Communities left the meeting at this point.

5 Update on Placeshaping

The Placeshaping Manager joined the meeting to provide an update since the last meeting with the Panel in February.

- Community centres had been closed throughout the pandemic apart from leaseholders who rent spaces. There was reintroduction of groups and youth groups at Providence Street and Discovery Centre as of 12 April.
- Over the past two months work had been undertaken to ensure the centres were covid compliant.
- They continued to ensure that tenants and the wider community were supported via the food bank and community caterer food parcels, wellbeing packs and calls to higher risk tenants, which would continue to be a Placeshaping Service.
- There had been a two-week Easter programme online. There was 200 Easter eggs donated by Kinnerton, which were given away to communities in Kings Lynn, Downham, Outwell and Hunstanton.
- They hoped to put in bids going forward for the centre to run and there was funding from the Borough Council for the Discovery Centre already received on an annual basis for youth provision.
- The team were hoping to launch a community garden at the Discovery Centre on the bank holiday weekend.

A Panel Member commented that the team had been very busy, and all the work undertaken had been positive and congratulations to them.

The Placeshaping Manager shared a summer programme of activities at the Discovery Centre would be taking place. A Panel member welcomed something different as they felt there was more of the wider community attending previous events like fetes.

A Panel Member wondered if there was an opportunity to hand out any literature regarding the Tenant Panel at events. The Placeshaping Manager shared that the team would use it as an opportunity to provide Freebridge related guidance and information.

A Panel Member felt it was a good idea to hold activities over the summer, but they were concerned that there were other communities not just the Discovery Centre further afield in

villages where people cannot drive and have limited bus services and who are isolated. A Panel Member shared that the villages have been double isolated with lockdown compared to town and instead of putting effort only in Kings Lynn Freebridge should go further afield. They added that the towns maybe the main bases but they are in town where people have more opportunities than what there are in villages where they are more isolated.

Another Panel Member shared that some villages are linked together so if you advertise events really well like putting flyers through doors and not just in Streets Ahead, people should respond and hold something in a central village.

A Panel Member shared that they did not know about the Easter events and the advertisement of these needs to be considered again to reach as many tenants as possible.

A Panel Member commented that there were so many isolated people in the villages and there was no reason why there could not be a coffee morning arranged.

A Panel Member shared that you could travel around villages and take the programme with you, where there are many playing fields and village halls and it was about time that tenants in villages had this benefit as they may feel ignored.

A Panel Member shared that there would be a cost to this but perhaps Freebridge could team up with other charities who want to do similar things.

A Panel Member shared that they felt that all tenants pay their rent and they should receive the same services wherever they lived in the borough, in town or in the rural areas. They added that they felt that funding should be taken from King's Lynn and distributed back out to be of benefit to other tenants in rural areas.

The Placeshaping Manager thanked the Panel for their comments, and shared that there was work to do to ensure that the team were incorporating villages and the isolated areas.

The Tenant Panel thanked the Placeshaping Manager for their attendance and listening to the tenant's views and they left the meeting at this point

6 Update on Health and Safety Compliance

The Assets Manager joined the meeting to provide the Tenant Panel with an update on Health and Safety Compliance. The Director of Customer and Communities also re-joined the meeting at this point. The Panel had received information regarding the self-assessment against the regulator's standards at the end of 2020 and had requested an update on compliance with Health and Safety as a result.

The Assets Manager explained the processes and meetings that take place on the reporting of health and safety compliance on a daily and weekly basis.

A Panel Member shared that they felt more focus should be included around sheds or outhouses that are connected to kitchens, as they often can suffer with mould, which may result in the walls and ceiling breaking up.

A Panel Member shared that customers needed to have follow ups and be listened to when there are problems reported. They added that there is often a lack of knowledge and communication from staff with conflicting resolutions proposed sometimes by different managers. The Assets Manager shared that if Freebridge were not providing the right information to tenants they would need to look into that.

A Panel member shared that they lived in a scheme for the past 11 years and they had received no guidance on asbestos and this was information that tenants did need to have.

	<p>The Assets Manager shared that as part of compliance we to try to empower our tenants with information and cover what our responsibilities are.</p> <p>The Assets Manager shared that he was more than happy to attend the Panel in future if needed.</p>
7	Any Other Business
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following a comment about fire alarm and care alarm systems the Director of Customer and Communities agreed to follow up with them after the meeting. • The Director of Customer and Communities agreed to investigate an issue reported about the enquiries email address.
8	Meeting how did it go
	<p>The Facilitator shared that in over a year a meeting had not been missed which was a tremendous effort with covid difficulties</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talked and listened well. • It was a good interesting meeting and meeting the Assets Manager. • Very informative and learnt many new things today. • Consistently informative. • Challenging and open, as well as Freebridge being open to suggestions of the Panel. <p>The Governance Coordinator felt it was constructively passionate. The Director of Customer and Communities shared that the feedback had been helpful and there had been many good questions from members, which has helped shape things and lead improvements in future. The Tenant Panel Facilitator felt that there was very even contribution from members across the board, and he had been impressed with variety of subjects and that the meeting had finished on time.</p>
9	Date of Next Meeting
	Friday 18 June 2021, 9.45 am – 1.45 pm, via Zoom. Meeting Closed at 1.45 pm