

Notes of the Tenant Panel Meeting

Held on 20 January 2022 at 10.00 am held virtually

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

Apologies – David, Charlie

Declarations of Interest – There were none.

Work Programme and Review of Group Contract – This was noted.

	Item
1	<p>To Approve November notes, to note the Matters Arising Report</p> <p>The Tenant Panel approved the notes of the November meeting and noted matters arising.</p> <p>The Tenant Panel approved representation of David on the Repairs Task and Finish Group unanimously.</p> <p>There would be an additional meeting on 17th February regarding engagement on the Regulator Survey about the new Tenant Satisfaction Measures.</p>
2	<p>Ground Maintenance and Cleaning Contracts</p> <p>The Community Safety Manager and Placeshaping Manager attended to share information regarding the Grounds Maintenance and Cleaning Contracts.</p> <p>The Community Safety Manager shared that there was a new cleaning contract with Hi Spec Facilities which combined all areas that require cleaning across the business. The Director of Customer and Communities shared that this contractor was really open to customer feedback was keen to create a relationship on schemes where performance issues could be raised directly. She added that the team will routinely review the contract. He made the following responses to questions and comments were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Contract started on 1st February 2022• Comment that it was a lot more specific than previous, and good to hear that community bins were to be covered.• Looks promising.• Drop-in sessions arranged on schemes with the contractor and Support Manager will be present. <p>The Placeshaping Manager provided a presentation regarding Grounds Maintenance, which slides would be shared with the Tenant Panel outside the meeting by the Governance Coordinator. She shared that the contract was out to tender and whilst the process continues through to appointment, they will keep relevant leaseholders and tenants informed by written communication. The contract had been formed following a 10-month review of all areas, listening to feedback and over 400 locations had been added. The contract would start from 1st April 2022 and would now also include the garden assistance scheme which as a result of the review would benefit an additional 40 tenants.</p> <p>The Placeshaping Manager responded to the following queries, and comments were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There were dykes on Freebridge land which they were responsible for clearing.• After April roles and responsibilities of Estate teams will be reviewed regarding fly tipping and the cleaning of blocks.• There was a gritting plan for places Freebridge was responsible.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Contract is monitored by using Key Performance Indicators, monthly meetings, and estate teams out on sites. <p>The Placeshaping advised that they would update the Tenant Panel in two months' time, the Governance Coordinator would note this.</p> <p>The Tenant Panel thanked the managers for their updates and information, and they left the meeting.</p>
3	<p>Customer Charter</p> <p>The current version of this document had been shared with the Tenant Panel prior to the meeting and the Customer Voice Lead provided the following responses to queries and comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The document would be A3 folded to A4. Digital version translation in other languages would be possible as well as a spoken copy being made available on the Freebridge website. Accessibility of some of the writing with green or blue backgrounds would be reviewed with the communications team as noted it was difficult to read. It was noted that a larger font should be considered.
4	<p>Quarter 3 Performance and Complaints Review and Update</p> <p>The Customer Complaints Manager attended the meeting at this point to share the quarter 3 overview. She highlighted that new Customer Complaints Co-ordinators had been recruited and they would investigate and monitor complaints within each service area and because of this change the process had been more efficient. The following responses and noted comments were provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most compliments were received on the phone which provided an opportunity at that point to thank the Tenants, but when a written compliment was received, the tenant was responded to with thanks. The Complaint Coordinator follows up on repairs which are connected to a complaint with the team involved until it is resolved. There was a report on the Housing Ombudsman website called 'Insight Report' which was interesting to note, the Governance Coordinator agreed to circulate a link to the location to the Tenant Panel. <p>The Director of Customer and Communities shared that the performance figures demonstrated that it was possible to cross reference around the business the areas that required improvement. She added that the next quarter figures should show improvement with a new structure of team leader roles in place at Property Services. She added that in the last two quarters ASB had seen a decline in satisfaction because of the type of cases and the length of time it had taken to resolve, but this issue was being reviewed and resolutions identified to improve it.</p> <p>The Tenant Panel confirmed that the report with an amended display of the information showing direction of the KPIs was clear and understandable.</p>
5	<p>Repairs Update</p> <p>The Tenant Panel welcomed a Team Leader from Property Services to the meeting who provided them with an update regarding the processes and data around the project to resolve the repairs backlog. He shared the following, some of which were responses to queries from the Panel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new team had been set up to deal with the backlog with its own pool of various types of trades. A top up contractor would be recruited to compliment specialist work required.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • . Some repairs may be work that was to be followed up from a previous repair not completed at that time. • The new team was separate to the main work force so that they could focus purely on the backlog. <p>As a result of discussion, the Tenant Panel requested that the Repairs Task and Finish Group consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns regarding the overall timescale to resolve the backlog with a preferred deadline of six months (by June 2022) to avoid a further rise in complaints and negative publicity. • Rethink the approach to tackling the backlog at the same time as new responsive repairs. <p>The Panel thanked the Team Leader for their attendance, and they left the meeting.</p>
6	<p>Sheltered Scheme Improvements</p> <p>The Support Manager attended to share improvements on schemes as follows and answered queries from the Panel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement of community engagement on schemes • New Cleaning contract and New Grounds Maintenance Contract were discussed with tenants at schemes. • Discussed fuel poverty with tenants on schemes. • Invested in lots of training for staff working on schemes and awareness of the signs that a tenant may need to be sign posted to financial or other assistance. • Refurbishment of schemes – gardens and communal rooms in future. • Seasonal events on schemes in coordination with the Placeshaping team being considered. • Regular meetings with contractors and ‘walk throughs’ with them such as the cleaning contract. • Tree surveys on schemes. • Making tenants more part of the process when we are looking to review services on schemes. • Scheme Advisors had four schemes each, one day each on each scheme a week. There were drop-in sessions and contact by phone and email available. <p>The Tenant Panel thanked the Support Manager for their attendance, and he advised that he would be happy to return in the summer to provide an update and left the meeting.</p>
7	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Anne had attended a meeting with HQN online in December, 170 attended on Zoom and it was about mending the relationship between tenants, the regulator, and the housing ombudsman.</p> <p>Feedback on Damp and Mould Protocol:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Governance Coordinator agreed to seek the answer and email to the Tenant Panel outside the meeting. <p>The Tenant Panel noted the Housing Ombudsman Code of Complaint Handling self-assessment renewal.</p>
8	<p>What did we do well – Feedback from the Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interesting meeting and impressed with the Customer Charter. • Enjoyable, well captured information and got some answers today.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interesting. • Exchange of information and some of the debates were quite thought provoking and will look forward to feedback from the Board regarding the Panel's points on the repairs backlog. Freebridge were doing very well to try and improve services for tenants. • Action speaker louder than words and will await feedback from Freebridge on reconsidering the way the backlog of repairs is dealt with but there are certain aspects which I agree the approach Freebridge are taking is right. The role of the Tenant Panel is to portray what tenants see and to present that in the meeting.
9	Date of Next Meeting
	Thursday 10 February from 12 – 1.45 pm, via Zoom. Meeting Closed at 1.45 pm