



CUSTOMER PANEL MEETING

20th May 2024

Meeting:-	Customer Panel Meeting
Date / Time:-	4.00pm, Monday 20 th May 2024
Location:-	Minto Centre – Large meeting room
Present:-	Helena Evans (WHA), Debbie Fox (WHA), Andrea Sharp (WHA), Marilyn Allison, Andrew Hardcastle, Cheryl McGraffin , Lynn Hodgson, Bill Reville Celia Tibble for part of meeting
Apologies:-	John Burrow, Susan Duxbury (WHA), Julie Armstrong (WHA)
Not present:-	Olive Timney, Amanda Cook
Note Taker:-	Andrea Sharp
Chair:	Andrew Hardcastle

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>NOTES</u>	<u>ACTIONS</u>
<u>1)</u>	<p><u>Apologies</u> Apologies received from John Burrow</p> <p>Not present (apologies not received) - Olive Timney and Amanda Cook</p>	
<u>2)</u>	<p><u>Minutes and matter arising</u> Minutes agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.</p> <p>ASB app – Cheryl and Marilyn have used or tried to use the app. Cheryl did not think it was very user friendly. Marilyn could not get on but she did not ring the help line number. Andrew said he struggled to upload anything to it.</p> <p>Request from Lynn to not use acronyms as he sometimes does not know what they are.</p>	

<p>3)</p>	<p><u>Q4 Performance Information</u></p> <p>Performance discussed.</p> <p>Arrears discussed – Andrea advised we have seen a rise in the arrears figures. Some tenants are moving from the legacy benefits over to Universal Credit which can cause a delay in payments. Several debt relief orders / bankruptcy have been awarded which will write off some debts. Applications have been made to the local authority for Discretionary Housing Payments however a couple have been rejected. Waiting for an application from Vicars Relief Fund again through the local authority.</p> <p>Improved performance in repairs. Andrew gave his own example of good service with a repair.</p> <p>Relet performance has been an issue – one property there was a delay with getting a new meter installed. We have also taken the opportunity to carry out Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) work in properties when they became void.</p>	
<p>4)</p>	<p><u>Neighbourhood Investment Fund</u></p> <p>During the period April 2023 – April 2024 there was a total of £9700.38 out of a £20,000 budget.</p> <p>(There is a separate budget of £10,000 for the Tenant Enablement Fund)</p> <p>We are running the trips again this year – Blackpool, Beamish and York Christmas markets.</p> <p>We need to look at how we can promote the fund.</p> <p>Andrea advised that he had been discussing with Bill how we could support local charities as small local charities don't have the staff to chase funding.</p> <p>If we promote then we need to be clear on the criteria. Suggestion that we could go back to who we have donated money to and ask for feedback.</p> <p>We could also do a cheque presentation to a recipient of funding to promote the fund.</p>	

	Debbie will pull together a procedure.	<u>DF</u>
5)	<p><u>Tenant Satisfaction Measures</u></p> <p>Tenant satisfaction measure report was circulated – all panel members advised that they had not looked at the report prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Debbie advised that the regulator sets out a number of questions we have to use – last year some of our questions were invalid due to there not being a ‘not applicable’ option.</p> <p>The report provided is from information collected from January 2024 which Acuity have analysed. The report will go to board on Wednesday.</p> <p>The report shows a high level of satisfaction and increases from previous reports.</p> <p>Staff ask the questions for the survey but have to be clear on what an actual complaint is – this has been confused in the past.</p> <p>There are recommendations at the end of the report. We are also benchmarked against other similar organisations.</p> <p>Debbie pointed out an issue that had been raised regarding the cleanliness of the communal areas so from that staff are inspecting the communal areas after a clean has been carried out. Cleaning is usually monthly however during Covid this was increased to fortnightly so the negative comments may stem from this reverting to monthly cleans.</p> <p>The information is also collected as part of the annual tenancy visits (ATV) - we aim to see every tenant once every three years. At the point that the information is brought back to be entered onto the system then any dissatisfaction is dealt with then.</p> <p>Cheryl advised that it may be an idea to explain more about what the service charge covers as there have been comments made about this cost.</p> <p>The report will be published to tenants.</p> <p>The panel agreed to take the report away and pass on any comments.</p>	<u>Panel Members</u>

<p><u>6)</u></p>	<p><u>Tenant Participation Advisory Service training (TPAS)</u></p> <p>Debbie has asked for a price for a trainer to come in and carry out some complaints training for staff and panel members.</p> <p>A board panel member needs to have an oversight of this and will also need training.</p> <p>Debbie would like feedback from everyone as to what they would be interested in. If this information can be sent to Debbie by 31st May 2024.</p> <p>Panel agreed that face to face training would be more beneficial.</p> <p>One suggestion would be for everyone to complete the Introduction to Scrutiny course.</p>	<p><u>Panel members by 31/5/24</u></p>
<p><u>7)</u></p>	<p><u>Update on Grounds Maintenance Contract</u></p> <p>Bill brought up some issues with the contract. The larger areas they cut with the mower are OK but the smaller areas are not great. The raised beds look disgusting. Debbie advised that the raised beds had been missed off the contract but this has now been added on and they will come back to tidy those up.</p> <p>Andrew also raised an issue with how the contractors manage their work. There is no routine on how they work each area.</p> <p>The panel agreed however that the quality of work is a lot better.</p> <p>Debbie advised that the manager is happy to come to these meetings or the residents meeting. The panel asked if he could be invited to the next meeting.</p>	<p><u>DF</u></p>
<p><u>8</u></p>	<p><u>Strengthening Links with the Board</u></p> <p>Helena advised that following on from previous conversations re the customer panel becoming a sub committee of the board. This would provide a more formal link with the board and a way of the panel being involved with the board without having to sit through a full board meeting,</p> <p>Other associations are also going down this route.</p>	

	<p>We also need to evidence to the regulator that we do have strategic involvement from tenants / customers and this would evidence that. Board members would attend the customer panel meeting.</p> <p>Celia advised that it would be good for board members to have a direct input from tenants / customers and it could be different board members that attend each time. We need to agree what the customer panel wants from the board and what the board wants from the customer panel.</p> <p>Andrew advised that we do need a better relationship with the board.</p> <p>The panel agreed that they were happy to progress with this.</p> <p>Helena advised that this would be discussed at the board meeting on Wednesday evening.</p> <p>Subject to board agreeing then we need to think what items would be discussed at the sub committee – the starting point could be items from the management.</p> <p>Helena / Debbie will feedback to the panel after the board meeting.</p>	<p><u>HE / DF</u></p>
<p><u>9</u></p>	<p><u>National Housing Federation (NATFED) Together with Tenants</u></p> <p>Helena advised that The National Housing Federation act on behalf of housing associations nationally and the have close links with government. They carry out consultations on line and feed into government.</p> <p>We are a member of the National Housing Federation.</p> <p>Helena has made enquiries on our behalf with regards to signing up to the Together with Tenants Charter.</p> <p>We would need to tie together the Charter, The terms of reference for this panel and the sub committee.</p> <p>Westfield would provide the admin support for this if we join up to the Charter and the sub committee meetings.</p> <p>Helena advised that she has just been made chair of a National Housing Federation meeting of smaller housing associations.</p>	

<p><u>10</u></p>	<p><u>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</u></p> <p><u>Charity</u> Lynn Hodgson asked about which charity we would be supporting this year as she had nominated the Autism Group.</p> <p>There was a thought that we had agreed on Andys Man Club – Andrew advised that any funding raised for this does not stay locally.</p> <p>Debbie will update on this.</p> <p><u>Dates of Community Housing Associations North West (CHANW) Meetings / conference</u> Susan will confirm the dates for the tenants conference and tenants panel meeting. Think that this could be</p> <p>Conference 10/7/24 Tenants panel meeting 28/5/24 (Teams meeting in office)</p> <p><u>Customer Panel email</u> The panel asked if this could be set up so that tenants could email into the customer panel and they can then reply. Debbie to check on this.</p>	<p><u>DF</u></p> <p><u>SD</u></p> <p><u>DF</u></p>
<p><u>13</u></p>	<p><u>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</u></p> <p>This will possibly be 22nd July 2024 but is subject to change depending on the outcome from board regarding this panel becoming a sub committee.</p> <p>Marilyn advised that she would have to give apologies if it is on 22nd July.</p>	