



Notes of Meeting			
Subject:	Tenant and Leaseholder Committee		
Date:	28th July 2022	Time: 6:30pm	7:55pm
Location:	MS Teams		
Attendees:	<p>Chair – Cllr Gbola Adeleke</p> <p>Staff – Cllr Margaret Griffiths (Portfolio-Holder) Jenny Dickerson (Improvement & Engagement Officer), Daniel French (Improvement & Engagement Co-ordinator), Natasha Beresford (Assistant Director – Strategic Housing), Ricky Lang (Compliance Team Leader, Property & Place), Brian O'Mara (Head of Asset Management, Strategic Housing), Ada Terry (Improvement & Engagement Team Leader), Tracey Smith (Improvement & Engagement Projects Lead Officer), Sue Prowse (Improvement & Engagement Projects Lead Officer)</p> <p>Committee members – Paulette Reed (PR), Mavis Cook (MCoo), Tracey Halls (TH), Mutsa Cornish (MCor), Charlotte Palmer (CP), Paul McMahon (PM), Andy Forbes (AF)</p> <p>Apologies – Cllr Isy Imarni, Max Sengul, Andrea Maloney, Michelle Mitchell</p>		

Item	Subject	Actionee
1	Welcome, apologies and notes from the last meeting.	Chair
	<p>Cllr GA welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>PM introduced himself to the rest of the group & the rest of the group introduced themselves.</p> <p>Everyone agreed that the minutes from the last meeting were an accurate record.</p>	
2	Housing Transformation & Improvement Plan	NB
	<p>NB shared a presentation which is available upon request.</p> <p>CP – Thank you for your presentation, I have one question regarding diversity, inclusion and asylum seekers. I know at the moment we are dealing with some of the Ukrainian refugees. How are you going to address the language barrier issue for some refugees?</p>	

	<p>NB – You may or may not be aware that we have a dedicated Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Lead Officer called Cybele. We work closely with Cybele to ensure that any new strategy or policy has a robust community impact assessment. In relation to the dispersal programme, we will be working with the East of England and the Home Office to respond to the national ask, which is in relation to dispersing asylum seekers within the country.</p> <p>You may be familiar with Community Action Dacorum. We work closely with them as one of our key stakeholders to ensure that we are providing interpreting services and support to those that require it. We are able to access British Sign Language interpreters and a good range of non-English speaking interpreters to support delivery and engagement with residents where needed.</p> <p>We have experience in supporting the resettlement of refugees in Dacorum. Most recently, we have resettled people who have fled Afghanistan and in the past we have also resettled Syrian refugees. We have dedicated staff within our service, who have supported that resettlement activity.</p> <p>I am really pleased to say we have got some dedicated British Sign Language interpreters within our service. We also have members of staff within the housing service who speak a number of languages and are able to provide focused support and engagement with our residents.</p> <p>PR – You referenced sheltered housing schemes and the regeneration proposals that were put into place two years ago. There are some sheltered housing schemes where you have individual bungalows, so what are you actually thinking of doing to them? Are the sheltered housing schemes going to be open to people outside of the normal parameters?</p> <p>NB – We have two types of sheltered housing provision. We have our dispersed schemes which you are referring too, and we also have scheme-based properties. The sheltered housing review that was undertaken previously was relatively light touch, and focused on some high-level options that could be considered when looking at the stock.</p> <p>We’re now in a situation where we need to look at that stock in a bit more detail, both the scheme-based properties and the dispersed stock. We need to understand what our residents’ need, so part of this work is undertaking an up-to-date needs assessment and an up-to-date market assessment.</p> <p>We need to look much more closely at the demographic of our residents and their needs. We then need to compare that with the current stock offering. We need to determine whether or not the stock we have is meeting that need and this will enable us to formulate a plan.</p>	
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	<p>The other important element is understanding the condition of the stock. The stock condition survey will help inform us whether or not the stock can be adapted to deliver what we need or if it needs to be regenerated.</p> <p>At this stage, it is too early to say what we will be changing as that will be led by the information that comes through these assessments and will be focussed on the needs of our residents.</p> <p>PR – When you say regenerated, does that mean removing the stock and rebuilding it?</p> <p>NB – Regeneration refers to the regeneration of the stock. For example, we may identify a site that provides us with an opportunity. A site could contain a small number of properties, but it is neighbouring a piece of community land such as a disused parking area or a garage forecourt.</p> <p>That may provide us with an opportunity to regenerate the site and increase the options that site provides for community provision. This could be in the form of accommodation but also in the respect of greenspace. We have done that very successfully in the past, with other sites that our Housing Development Team have worked on.</p> <p>PR – Has there been any lifting of the planning moratorium or is that still in place?</p> <p>NB – The planning moratorium is still in place, but our Place directorate are proactively working very closely with Natural England to implement the mitigation strategy.</p> <p>PM – Thank you for the presentation, I just have a quick question regarding complex needs and the vulnerable tenants that we look after within the borough. It could be an incredibly cold winter, so are we making any provisions to reach out to our vulnerable groups and advertise help? With the current issues in Ukraine and fuel shortages that may happen throughout the winter months, it would be good to give due diligence now.</p> <p>NB – I am part of a number of key forums. I will try to be as brief as I can, but will also be happy to share some extra information with you outside of the meeting.</p> <p>I'm part of a broad forum, called the Herts Complex Needs Strategy. Hertfordshire County Council are the umbrella organisation but we work in partnership with all ten districts to provide robust support to those with complex needs. Earlier today, I met with colleagues from Hertfordshire County Council and voluntary sector services. This was to prepare for robust work that</p>	
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	<p>we will be undertaking to ensure that those who have complex are supported.</p> <p>In respect of warm homes and fuel poverty, I am engaged with Community Action Dacorum and other organisations to lead a multiagency symposium. This which will bring together all organisations to tackle fuel poverty, improve awareness and signpost them to services to support their service users.</p> <p>We provide signposting to the Hertfordshire warmer homes grant, and we have seen a 95% increase in applications for this. As part of the stock condition survey, we are also looking at how we can prioritise thermal efficiency and retrofitting to improve the energy performance of our homes.</p> <p>I am confident we have got robust support in place for our vulnerable communities and those with complex needs. In Dacorum, we are lucky to have an excellent voluntary sector who work closely with the council to deliver services for residents.</p> <p>MC – You spoke about user friendly services. How are you going to be implementing this?</p> <p>NB – I think the best answer I can give is that this is not for me to define. We can scope how we would like our services to look, but ultimately we cannot determine if our services are user friendly. This has to be determined by the end user. We will be developing our services with engagement and support from residents, and we will need to test any new systems or processes with our tenants and residents.</p> <p>We will be identifying any inefficiencies that we need to change within our processes. We also need to review the current systems that we use. At the moment we have a number of systems in place, but some of those systems don't talk to each other. This means that as an organisation we are not as efficient as we would like to be.</p> <p>Improving our systems will enable us to improve our knowledge of our residents and enables us to respond more quickly to your queries, questions and requests for support. Ultimately, the test of whether or not they are user friendly is defined by our residents, so we will be seeking your input in terms of shaping those services.</p> <p>MC – You also mentioned about residents having a voice. How are you going to give the residents a voice?</p> <p>NB – I am working very closely with Ada, and you may be aware that we have the new tenant satisfaction measures. We are reviewing our resident engagement strategy and approach, to ensure that it is aligned with the new tenant satisfaction measures. We will be present proposals to our senior leadership team that</p>	
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	<p>outline a refreshed approach to annual stakeholder engagement and a more robust engagement programme.</p> <p>I think that the engagement programme we currently have is great, but it is not as robust as it could be. It doesn't enable you to have as much detailed scrutiny over aspects of the housing service as you could. I am very keen to engage and involve you much more than you have been previously.</p> <p>We will start to see a more detailed forward plan that will enable you to influence and shape the future of the housing service. We will also be looking at the representation of our engagement committees, and reviewing and refreshing these committees to ensure that they are representative of the wider community.</p> <p>MC – You spoke about housing options tailored to individuals. How are you going to tailor this individually?</p> <p>NB – We do that currently. This is through personalised housing planning, dedicated housing advice surgeries and meetings with our residents on demand.</p> <p>We are currently working with an external provider and a systems provider to develop our housing options toolkit. This will enable our residents to self-serve and not just rely on seeing a face. The toolkit will enable a resident to enter their own set of circumstances, and then it will provide a range of options that are affordable and bespoke to their circumstances. What we are aiming for is a 'Rightmove' feel so that our tenants have more detailed information.</p> <p>MC - What do you mean by a toolkit?</p> <p>NB – The toolkit will be an application that can be used on a mobile phone or in the library. We refer to it as a toolkit, but you may commonly refer to it as a system application.</p> <p>CIlr GA – Are you going to get the Tenant & Leaseholder Committee involved with the customer charter?</p> <p>NB – Absolutely, we will be aligning the charter with the Chartered Institute of Housing's standards and the customer satisfaction measures. Before it's signed off and implemented it will be coming before this forum.</p> <p>AT – The customer charter did also come here a few months ago, and you were all very helpful with the wording we used.</p>	
3	Building Safety Act 2022	RL
	RL shared his screen to show the TLC Building Safety Act 2022 front sheet and spoke through it.	

	<p>PM – When you say that buildings over a certain height within the borough have to comply with the Building Safety Act, does that include buildings that are operated by Housing Associations?</p> <p>RL – The focus of what I do is solely on the Dacorum Borough Council stock, but I know that the Private Sector Housing Team will be having that conversation with our housing associations within the borough.</p> <p>NB – The Private Sector Housing Team are responsible for regulating non-Dacorum Borough Council homes, so this includes housing association homes. We are working closely with the Fire Service and our Asset Management team, in relation to those building owners who have registered under the Building Safety Fund. We want to ensure that they are compliant and improving the fabric of any properties that fall within the requirements.</p> <p>PM – Quite often, it is our tenants on the housing register that win these properties with housing associations. Is there any legal obligation that you have with these tenants in terms of their safety when they move into a housing association property?</p> <p>NB – The legal requirement is for the landlord and building owner to ensure that the site is safe. If it isn't safe, they need to make this known to the relevant statutory bodies. We have seven sites in the borough registered with the Building Safety Fund. We are engaging proactively with the Surveyors to identify if any improvements are required for these buildings.</p> <p>MC – It would be interesting to know what the responsibilities of the Block Champions are. Instead of having a separate Building Safety Champion, we could just make it part of being a Block champion, so that there is no duplication.</p> <p>RL – Dwain Daniel leads on Block Champions, so I will pick this up with him so that I can understand the role of Block Champions more. I will find out how Building Safety can be incorporated into the Block Champions scheme.</p>	
4	Recommendation & Action Register	JD
	<p>JD – There are no updates on the recommendation & action register.</p> <p>MC – There are a couple of points on the Recommendation & Action Register that have been on hold for a very long time. How can we move forward with these?</p> <p>NB – I'm due to be meeting with Ada about this and we will then be able to provide you with some detailed timelines. We should be able to get this out to you within the next fortnight.</p>	
5	Close / AOB	Chair

	<p><u>Chairing of the next meeting</u></p> <p>JD – Would anybody be interested in chairing the next meeting? Cllr II is unable to attend unfortunately.</p> <p>PM – I’m happy to chair a meeting if needed. I’m used to chairing, and I am experienced in the role for a lot of different bodies. If you need some interim help, I’m quite prepared to do that role.</p> <p><u>AOB</u></p> <p>AT – I would like to say a very quick thank you to Sue because this is her last meeting as part of my team. Also, Tracey is moving on to a new opportunity, so this is her last meeting as well. Thank you so much, I will miss you both.</p> <p>Cllr MG – I would also like to add my thanks to both of them. Thank you for the support you have both given to the Tenant & Leaseholder Committee.</p>	
6	Next meeting is on Thursday 29th September 2022 and it is a hybrid meeting.	Chair