

**Resident Board Meeting**

## 

**Thursday 16 September**

**Video Conference Meeting**

**Main Meeting 6:30pm until 8:00pm**

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**Present:**

(AB)

(CY)

(CD)

(DB)

(DBe)

(EL)

(GT)

(JG)

(KL)

(LD)

(LG)

(RB)

(TB)

(ZG)

Chair

Customer Involvement and Social Value Officer

Member

Member

Customer Engagement Co-Ordinator

Member

Head of Housing Management

Member

Director of Customer Experience

Head of Customer Experience

Member

Head of Repairs & Estates

Head of Community Engagement

Member

Aruna Bhatt

Camille Yerles

Carol Douet

Darwin Bernardo

Deborah Beckford

Eileen Langan

Greg Terefenko

Jennifer Gentle

Kate Laffan

Laura Davison

Linda Graham

Ryan Bolton

Tim Blanc

Zac Gonis

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| Item | Title | Action |
| **1** | **Welcome & Apologies**  Apologies received from:  Angela Shine  Jade Lam  Laura Giles  Stuart Bishop  Tatiana Jose |  |
| **2** | **Minutes from previous meeting**  All members agreed with minutes from the previous meeting. |  |
| **3** | **Action Log**  GT presented a brief verbal update on income collection and our current position around evictions.  At this moment in time, we have carried zero eviction for rent arrears. GT provided an overview of benchmarking against peers on evictions. Camden has the highest level with 2 evictions and all other London boroughs have one or zero. But there is a concern over an explosion of evictions. After benchmarking, the largest expected eviction rate across boroughs is about 15 until year-end, and for Barnet Homes the rate is 10.  GT shared that he received authorisation to carry out the first eviction on Wednesday. GT provided a summary of the reasons behind the eviction to provide members with an in-depth understanding of why it was authorised.  GT explained that each eviction case will be reviewed by the senior income manager, GT and ES before the final decision is approved. | GT will provide the Board with a report on evictions via email at the end of the month / early Oct |
| **5** | **Q1 Performance Report**  EL and ZGexpressed concern over the decline in satisfaction across all tenures (secure tenant, non-secure tenant, and leaseholder). They asked about the satisfaction monitoring process, as well as how we are communicating improvements to residents  LD highlighted that commentary on reports shows themes that affected satisfaction. She talked about patterns across indicators, the main one being ‘How easy Barnet Homes is to deal with’. The main problem is still for our customers to be able to get through someone that can help with their enquiry. There is also a problem with enquiry follow up across services. She explained that the Customer Experience team is currently running a mini project on improvement focused on closer monitoring of what happens when customer enquiries are passed on to other teams. Our goal is to improve communication, ensure customers are aware of time frames and that they are being met. We will also focus on email and call handling performance.  JG asked what the monitoring process look like?  LD explained that the Customer Contact Team is doing listening in and quality ensuring checks. LD shared that they also use a housing management system to look at enquiries, identify patterns and create a report to identify gaps and actions for improvements. They are particularly looking at finding the right time frames to meet customer expectations.  DB highlighted that reports have been repeating the same things, and this is why The Board has limited questions. He asked what specific improvement has happened since February, and also how do we actually communicate improvements to customers?  LD explained the direction of travel in the latest satisfaction (Q2) survey is getting better across secure and non-secure tenants, as well as leaseholders. However, not all issues have been tackled efficiently such as ‘ease of communication’. With ‘ease of access' we have improved, and at the moment we are on target for picking up 90% of calls. We set up a new team to improve the management of email enquiries, they went live in August.  DB pointed out that informing residents on projects and improvements plays a major role in satisfaction. DB requested a detailed plan on how we are communicating, what channels are we using, how often are we informing customers on improvements, and how are we involving customers in that journey.  LD agreed with DB’s request, especially since customers have been surveyed for over a year now. LD agreed it is time to update our customers on our plan of action.  RB provided information on gas and repairs performance and satisfaction. RB informed the Board that an honest update about challenges encountered by the service will be published in the next AtHome. He highlighted that they are four ongoing challenges affecting the service at the moment:   1. Backlog from lockdown restrictions only allowing us to conduct essentials repairs 2. Shortage in the labour market for skilled tradesmen due to Covid and Brexit 3. Shortage in sourcing specific materials 4. 30% of work is being outsourced with sub-contractors who are facing similar challenges in terms of labour and materials.   We have provided an honest assessment of the situation and acknowledging the challenging environment we are operating in at the moment.  DB asked when can we envision to see improvements? Is there a timeline?  LD explained that the mini project mentioned earlier is focusing on improving timelines and speeding up the time to reply to the request.  EL shared a recent complaint she raised against Barnet Homes’ Gas services in relation to cancellation of appointments, delays and lack of communication. After having a conversation with other residents, EL identified patterns in terms of repairs handling. She did an ask around on her estate and others and heard about similar stories tenants about last-minute cancellation of appointments, operators not showing up on time, no communication.  EL shared with the Board that some tenants even admitted paying a handyman to deal with small repairs.  RB explained that he was made aware of the situation and admitted that it is very unfortunate to hear that because the feedback they get about Gas service is generally positive and are achieving above 90% satisfaction at the moment. I think in the EL’s sickness it was the case of an engineer being off sick, however, EL should have had a phone call to be informed of the situation. RB explained that he is working with LD on how to improve communication and enable operators to make phone calls to inform tenants about appointments directly.  Kate Laffan and Laura Davison will add a column to the report to highlight actions and solutions  In light of the previous conversations around the performance sections, DB requested that future performance reports include an additional column that clearly highlights the actions and solutions being taken to address performance issues. LD agreed, and this will be taken on board for the next Resident Board meeting.  JG inquired about poor performance around re-let time for routine lettings.  RB explained that compare to other organisations Barnet Homes was a top performer around re-let time. However, Covid has had a big impact. Social distancing and other restrictions around hygiene protocol (e.g., leaving the property empty for a certain number of days) created significant delays. Additionally, recent challenges around labour and supply shortages created another step back. However, looking at Q2 targets, our average re-let time last month was 16.5 days which is a considerable improvement.  KL added that the indicators include the day that Barnet Homes get keys to the property and it ends when the new tenant is moving in. Additionally, it has been a more elaborating process doing virtual lettings, some prospective tenants being more reluctant to come out to do viewings. What gets included in this, and that we are holding property for up to six weeks for people in decanting or another situation. Realistically for this financial year, we will struggle to achieve our targets. What we can show moving forward are steps to improve performance. | Laura Davison will look at how to improve communications on projects and improvements to residents and particularly the ones that have been surveyed |
| **6** | **Q1 Complaints Report**  DB asked whether this complaints report reflect more what we are usually used to? Is this a true reflection of how we operate day-to-day? This is in relation to the previous report which showed a low level of complaints as a result of lockdown.  KL explained that we are seeing a significant increase in complaints compared to the same time last year, but this is because during Q1 last year we were in lockdown. We are getting back to the normal level of complaints day-to-day. But gas services have received the lowest level of complaints we have ever seen in Q1 and Q2  KL highlighted that they have set up a new team with existing resources to deal with the high volume of complaints and members enquiries. They have developed a more proactive approach to be able to better follow up with residents after raising a complaint or repair. The focus is on checking if complaints and enquiries have been resolved to the expected level of standard. We want customers to be able to hold us accountable and we want to evidence it through this work and treat mistakes to the level of respect it deserves.  EL asked a question in relation to previous conversations about challenges faced by the repairs service. EL asked if we could develop our own team with apprenticeships and training to grow a new workforce internally.  RB explained that apprenticeships are sometimes 2 to 3 years long, but it is our hope to use them. He further explained that on the back of all vans we put an ad to recruit. An apprenticeship programme is a long-term solution for us, and it is our area of focus.  DB encouraged Heads of Services to consider how we currently recruiting and highlighted the need for competitive employee packages and adapting to new ways of recruitment |  |
| **7** | **Resident Consultation schedule discussion**  TB presented slides about the consultation schedule. Talked about a number of strategies policies and service reviews that will need customer involvement/ consultation because it impacts them directly. Resident Board is on top of the list followed by the Resident Support Group to be involved in consultations.  TB pulled together a schedule of what this will look like for the coming financial year. There are 18 consultations planned across the 2021/2022 financial year.  TB resented consultations options:  1 - Read documents and members provide direct comments/approval  2 - Read and provide feedback via an online survey  3- Run Focus Groups  4 – Invite chair and vice-chair for approval  TB presented consultation routes:  BH RB  BH RSG  ODH involvement group  ODH resident scrutiny group  Based on consultations groups the options are we can either invite the Resident Board to take part in all consultations or invite both The Resident Board and The Resident Support Group.    Members of the Resident Board will receive a survey link and they will need to select which consultation should be carried by either the Resident Board or both The Resident Board and The Resident Support Group. Additionally, they will receive recommendations from the Community Engagement team as guidance. |  |
| **8** | **AOB**   * Communication and emphasis on replying to emails. Add to code of conduct |  |
| **9** | **DOMN**  Date of next meeting Thursday 2 December 2021 6.30pm -8pm |  |