

Resident Board Meeting

Wednesday 29th November 2023

Hybrid meeting - Meeting Room 4.1, Colindale

Main Meeting 6:30pm until 8:30pm

Present:

Calista Massia	(CM)	Resident Involvement Apprentice
Carly Williamson	(CW)	Complaints and Information Manager (joined via teams)
Carol Douet	(CD)	Board Member (joined via teams)
Declan Feenan	(DF)	Head of Business Intelligence
Eamon McGoldrick	(EM)	The Barnet Group Board Chair
Eileen Langan	(EL)	Board Member
Geraldine Haren	(GH)	Observer
Greg Terefenko	(GT)	Head of Housing Management
Jennifer Lyle	(JL)	Board Member
Kate Laffan	(KL)	Director of Resident Services
Laura Davison	(LD)	Head of Customer Experience
Marielle Molette	(MM)	Observer (Future Board Member)
Patricia Nimo	(PN)	Resident Involvement Officer
Rachel Ozoemena	(RO)	Board Member
Ryan Bolton	(RB)	Head of Repairs
Sian Gentle	(SG)	Board Member
Stuart Bishop	(SB)	Head of Property Services
Tatiana Jose	(TJ)	Chair
Tim Blanc	(TB)	Head of Community Engagement
Tim Mulvenna	(TM)	CEO of The Barnet Group
Tina Philippou	(TP)	Board Member

Item	Title	Action
1	<p>Welcome & Apologies</p> <p>Welcome by TB. Apologies received from Deborah Beckford and Angela Shine. Introductions made by all present.</p>	
2	<p>All members agreed with minutes from the previous meeting.</p>	
3	<p>Q2 Complaints</p> <p>CW gave update on complaints. Had some concerns about Stage 2 complaints – seems to be a trend, however, target achieved for Stage 2 responses this quarter. There has been a decrease in how complaints had been handled but there is some work being carried out with DF and other teams to understand the reasons why.</p> <p>TJ asked about the number of stage 2 complaints being upheld. Does this mean we're not getting it right the first time?</p> <p>CW stated that this is correct. The reason we escalate is because we have said we would do something at Stage 1 that has not been done. We have to uphold at Stage 2 because of this reason.</p> <p>LD advised that there is an allocated resource to deal with Stage 2 complaints which was shared at the last meeting. CW is correct in saying that we are not doing what was promised at Stage 1, although it is not the case for every Stage 2 complaint. It is something we need to work on.</p> <p>TJ – What is being done about this? Is it the Contact Centre?</p> <p>LD – It's Repairs and Gas complaints.</p> <p>KL- It's where jobs have been committed to at Stage 1, but they haven't happened - rescheduled and cancelled appointments. This will be covered in Performance update but links into the drivers that RB and LD will cover in more depth.</p>	
4	<p>Q2 Performance</p> <p>RB – RP01 (proportion of homes that do not meet Decent Homes standard). This number jumped up significantly during Q1 as Savills were completing our stock condition surveys. There were a high proportion of properties reported back to us – a small proportion being what they considered severe failings. These were worked on during Q1 through to Q2. Successfully completed the vast majority, so this dropped from 5% to 0.5% of properties failing the decent homes standard. We now have 37 homes to access (which equates to the 5%). We are struggling with access for 32 of these properties and 5 are 'works in progress'.</p> <p>The target is to get it down to 0% before the end of Q3, although there may not be many organisations who are able to achieve this. Next round of stock condition surveys will be carried out in the next</p>	

financial year, which will generate more coming in and we will deal with those as and when they arise.

RP02 (proportion of non-emergency repairs completed within the Landlord’s target time frames). We have seen a marginal improvement from Q1 but still below 80% target. This links to backlog of orders and resourcing challenges which we have been through before. Total number of ‘works in progress’ in the system has come down significantly (number of orders have halved) which is an achievement. Legacy jobs that are already out of date are what are coming through in this performance indicator. Repairs team are focussed on clearing down the overdue jobs, once done, we will see a decline.

Damp and Mould – wrote to around 1500 residents who had reported slight or moderate damp and mould. This generated another wave of demand, however, we either didn’t have the resource or haven’t been able to recruit. Sub-contractors were approached, we have 2 surveyors working through back log, and have appointed a damp and mould supervisor. Anything reported as severe, we have been attending within the 10 day time frame.

TM asked how long it usually takes to respond to a report of moderate damp and mould?

RB stated that he will have this information shortly as a member of staff is running a report on this.

Repairs Actions Overview

This has been the most challenging year in repairs, we are not where we want to be, and we are not delivering the level of service that we thought we would be when we set up in the in-house repairs service three years ago.

Because of the resourcing issues, we implemented a market supplement, retention bonus, and are developing recruitment campaign to onboard the right people which is really challenging. We have a heavy reliance on agency staff.

Recruitment has been split into 3 stages. We had a target date but this might stretch in to the New Year until we have these positions filled. 37 filled by agency staff and 15 vacancies in the service.

KL- we had the Customer Voice on interview panels for operatives which is important to getting the right people with the right attitude.

RB – there is a review needed with a number of different processes in the repairs service. Senior Repairs Manager is leading on a full suite of process reviews. 6 have been set up, 3 have been completed to date. Target completion date is end of January 2024. Customer Experience team have been included to look at some of the process flows around planning and scheduling. Workshop around follow on, no access, audit and visit checking (making sure works have been done by supervisors).

RB to find out response time to moderate damp and mould report

KL – Customer Resolution Manager dealing with repairs and gas complaints feeding in through what she is hearing from complaints. Want to make sure that the issues that customers are experiencing are designed out. Would like to involve residents in Q4.

RO – asked if there is a process involved with measuring the work carried out by contractors?

RB – there is a post inspection regime for responsive repairs, we check around about 13% of completed works orders. Sub-contractors deliver over 1000 job per month for us, so we check above 10% of works delivered.

RO – is it a public record? And can we get access to this?

RB – its contained within our systems. We can extract some data.

RO – work is poor. It seems as though, because its council, they can get away with delivering a really poor service when they're getting paid equally to the market value out there.

RB – sub-contractors tendered a competitive rate back in March so we hope to get the best value for money. Those rates have been going up due to a number of different reasons. Disappointing to hear that, we could look at increasing the number of post inspections done.

RO – Should also be done for in-house contractors as well. Seems to be a culture of not doing things correctly because it's the local authority, which doesn't seem right.

RB – We have a metric on the post inspections we do, and we have a pass rate of about 90%.

RO- Are they adhering to this? Is there a system in place to check against it and not just checking boxes?

EL – When subcontractors come into our homes, they treat them like building sites and there is always an issue when asked to put on shoe coverings. They don't seem to care.

RO – The Playfield/ Watling estate resembles an estate from the 1970's, there is no improvement. Housing associations are maintained to different standard. From my experience, the way Barnet Homes maintains their properties is shocking.

JL – Nobody is held accountable. When you do these audits, do you go from flat to flat to check consistency? Or go from one in Hendon to one in Edgware and the next? Agree that the quality of the work is not good.

RO – Is Barnet Homes underfunded or are you pocketing the money?

RB to extract the data/run report and find out how to make this available to Resident Board.

GT – 10% - 13% is quite high, that's another resource going out to check the work. What about a Resident Board member going out on occasion to inspect? That would mean we don't have to increase resources to do post inspection works but still provide the board with the assurance that we are doing our jobs correctly.

RO – That would be great. There's a lot of elderly people who don't have the strength to fight this. I do, and if I'm feeling like this, what more can they do if they are calling up to resolve an issue?

TJ – moved into Grahame Park in 2015 with a brand-new kitchen. Kitchen was re-done last summer, haven't changed any washing habits but it's already peeling. So, you can see the quality of the materials is completely different. A mistake was made in the bathroom that Barnet Homes had to fix, which I don't think is fair because they were paid to do a job. The only thing with the checks is that they should not be done immediately as it looks beautiful.

LD – how long after do we inspect kitchens and bathrooms?

SB – probably whilst the contract is going on. We don't have the facility to go back to a contractor at the end of the contract if something has gone wrong. But makes sense to do inspections sometime after.

JL – could you put a caveat in to say they are not to expect any more work from us if a negative report comes back?

SB – for that type of contract we would hold money back until we were entirely satisfied that everything had been done according to specification.

JL – that will increase the quality of the work generally if they know they won't get that money.

RO – I think it's a culture issue. I think there needs to be training for those who go out to inspect - not just a tick box exercise. I've had work done and taken it to the Ombudsman because it was poor, and it was only at that stage that it was agreed that the work was poor. Not everyone is robust as that (nor should they be). There should be a cultural shift and some training in that area.

SG – are there apprenticeship/internship schemes available with regards to recruitment?

RB – there are currently two Gas Engineer Apprentices. We offer Gas Apprenticeships because we can offer the full range from servicing, breakdowns to insulations. They must have the full range of experience to be able to complete their portfolio and progress. On the repairs side, it's more difficult. If we were to offer plumbing/carpentry, we can't give the full range of experience. We've spoken to BOOST about what others we can offer but it's about being able to give the full range of experience.

EL – with regards to caretaking, how do caretakers report repairs? There seems to be issues externally that haven't been fixed for months.

RB – they absolutely should be reporting them.

EL – but they don't, and neighbours have suggested fixing bulbs themselves. They shouldn't have to.

GT- There is a process where caretakers can report to admin in repairs. We are giving caretakers more ownership and accountability for their estates. It's incumbent on them to raise repairs and any concerns. Managers do quality checks, so I'd be surprised if they are not reporting repairs.

EL – when they do report repairs, what are the timescales for things like broken windows?

GT – Will work with RB's team to find out.

LD – we are in the process of recruiting someone so that we have more capacity to focus on estates issues. We need to work on communication.

KL – The point of what EL has raised is how do we communicate back that the repair that you've logged has been raised? And what the target time is.

TM – In terms of the overall look of the estates, the question around funding is a real issue. There is a gap between what's needed and what's available to do it. It would be useful to Resident Board to understand the overall process. E.g., Major Works; what it does and does not include, what's funded and what isn't.

RO – There will always be a funding issue, but the issue here is how Barnet Homes are spending and wasting money unnecessarily.

TM – Not to defend that but there is a difference between a lightbulb that needs fixing and the overall estate.

RO – so it would either come under planned or major works. But even under planned or major works, you don't see much difference when they have their cyclical programs.

TJ – With regards to resourcing, have contracts all been sorted?

RB – Yes.

TJ – You mentioned a delay with adverts. What was the reason for this?

RB – There was a huge amount of paperwork to get through, we advertised internally, then externally for a period of time so it has taken a while to get through the process. It is our number one priority at the moment.

GT and RB to work together to find out timescales for reported repairs.

<p>We are doing a deep dive analysis on repairs time frames. We are also looking at responsive repairs from now and over the past five years, looking at the demand prior to the in-house service.</p> <p>We did some work with the consultancy firm 'Vantage', and we've invited them back in to do a statement piece on where we are now compared to where we thought we'd be.</p> <p>We're hoping this would provide an overview. Meeting with Customer Experience colleagues to identify any potential waste in the service. Interviews with key members of the team have been set up.</p> <p>We're putting together a Repairs Improvement Plan – this is an overarching plan with regards to service delivery. I'll be happy to share that with the Resident Board.</p> <p>EL – what happens if 'Acuity red flag alert' is not responded to in 5 to 10 working days?</p> <p>LD – there are two types of flags with Acuity. Customer Resolution team are responsible for responding to the most urgent ones that comes through to TalkToUs, and we are going to check to see how they are handled.</p> <p>There are also ones that go direct to the Damp and Mould team because we are using surveys as an opportunity to ask about damp and mould.</p> <p>EL – This was in response to a Stage 2 complaint. The email that I received was the 'Acuity red flag alert' to be responded to between 5 to 10 working days. We are now on day 15 and no response so is there a consequence?</p> <p>LD – if it has gone to TalkToUs, we are struggling to manage at the moment due to resourcing issues and staff sickness levels. As of this week, we have more people on TalkToUs. We can attach alerts on some things, but I don't believe we did that on this occasion. Did you speak to Acuity about this?</p> <p>EL – No, I just received this email, and it says I would be contacted. It was with regards to the lack of light in the car park.</p> <p>LD – Apologised. This had nothing to do with TalkToUs.</p> <p>TJ – on behalf of AS who could not join tonight, what happens when someone is not contacted within the timeframe?</p> <p>LD – we have put a message out to manage this. The numbers have come down.</p> <p>KL – It's a combination of increased volume (driven through chasing around repairs), resourcing and staff sickness but it's fair to say it's going in the right direction.</p> <p>RO – Is there a place we can measure our TSM performance against our peers?</p>	<p>RB to provide Repairs Improvement Plan to resident board.</p>
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LD – where we have benchmarking we have included this in the report.

TJ – with regards to mould, the report states you are working with London Borough of Barnet to pilot a new Environmental Health Officer to look at private rented properties. Does this mean we are going to provide resources?

KL – This is specific for housing applicants who approach our Housing options service. They have somewhere to live but it may be unsuitable due to damp and mould. Historically, we would have signposted residents in the private rented sector to Environmental Health services if they had any repairs issue. They would join a big queue and it would take a long time. So, we lobbied with our colleagues in the private sector team within Environmental Health and we got funding for an officer based in their team, specifically for those approaching us for issues with damp and mould. This resource has been in place since June. So, it is jointly working with the landlord and the officer to see if the homelessness can be prevented.

TJ – has the publication for tenants to know how to use their heating systems effectively been done?

RB – gathering content on that at the moment. The gas team are putting together an overview of the most effective way to use different systems, i.e., combi boiler systems, electric heating systems for residents to use. Due to have this information by this Friday and will go out in the next AtHome magazine.

TM – with regards to the Repairs Review, is there an opportunity to run a workshop with a few board members or involved residents before we come up with the answers?

KL- we have discussed having a focus group and have picked up on this from what has been articulated.

TJ –some colleagues may not understand risk implication score so can we request an overview instead.

TP – I live in a block of flats which is well taken care of by residents. I'd like to see the report on my road for the external estate inspection. With regards to Talk To Us, the service is so bad that we have to pick and choose which jobs to report that you want done. You don't get any updates as to when a job is done or not. Sometimes we clean our own hallways because the cleaners do not come.

GT - invited TP to carry out an estate inspection.

TB – should not be just one Resident Board member. Years ago, we used to do what is called 'reality checks' where Heads of Services would be invited to go out on estate inspections. We want to offer this to Resident Board Members. There will be a schedule where you go out, unbeknown to our services, and carry out an inspection of an

estate. All systems are in place to do this, but it will be something that you will be invited to do next year.

TP – Just an example; I got some post for a neighbour because the door was broken. There were things blocking fire exits, rubbish, broken bikes, both inside and outside looked equally poor. The level of care varies but it goes back to my point that you have to choose which job to report to Talk To Us.

LD – If it's going to be carried out by an in-house resource and it's a communal repair, then I believe a text is sent to the person who reported it. It gets passed to planners Team so Talk To Us are not responsible for the job. We can look at making sure whoever reported it gets a message.

TP – I don't know which ones are in-house and which ones are outsourced.

LD – giving everyone in the block visibility of what is happening is easier to do when its in-house, but with a sub-contractor, we can see what we can do about updating the person who has reported it.

TP – Was there some talk about an online tool to input your job number and see where it was on the system? Once you report something to Barnet Homes, you get a number and you can go onto a portal, input your job number, and you can see the journey of your repair?

SG – What about the text or email following a repair to give feedback? Do you get that?

TP – No I don't get that.

RB - You should get a text message or an email.

JL – I remember a couple of years ago when there were big jobs being done, somebody rang me for weeks in a row to ask if I was happy about how the jobs that had done.

LD – If the repair was completed by a contractor, there is a lady called Christiana who calls about 15% of people. But maybe we should be pushing out something via text to reach a wider audience. If the repair was done by our in-house team and we have a mobile number on our system, you should get a text to complete a repairs survey. This applies to communal repairs too.

TJ – Would an online tool help?

RB – We've been talking for a while now about an online repairs portal. The first phase was simply to book a repair, the 2nd phase to track the status. We've got there in terms of development, the issue was, I didn't want it to go live when we knew we were struggling to meet the appointments. There simply would have been no availability. We agreed to push that back to next year when we're fully resourced and have everything in place.

LD to find out how residents can be kept updated on work that is carried out by sub-contractors.

	<p>KL – The second phase would be a further phase of development to get to the point of tracking. I know there’s been quite a subscription of resident volunteers to trial the portal once its ready to go live but tracking is something to aspire to.</p>	
<p>5</p>	<p>Housing Management – Abandoned vehicle</p> <p>Recap from last meeting of abandoned car issue.</p> <p>GT - confirmed we do not have the authority to remove a vehicle. So if someone reports a car on one of our properties we will then work with our colleagues in the London Borough of Barnet to get it removed. There is a process.</p> <p>JL – There is another one there now since last time.</p> <p>GT – Remember that if we can identify who it is, we can work with the community safety team to take proper action. If we can’t identify who the car belongs to, there is nothing we can do. But if we can, it is a very straight forward process.</p> <p>JT – In the report, it mentioned resourcing issues?</p> <p>GT – It has been quite a considerate challenge for the housing Management service. This is a sector-wide challenge but for the first time in 18 months, from the 4th December, we will be fully staffed.</p> <p>JT – What system do you use to track cases? As I have had one going on since August and I’m trying not to escalate it because I want to see how long it will take. I did get a reply to say someone will be in contact with me. So, whoever I in post will be able to see just pick it up? Or will I have to escalate?</p> <p>GT – There is a system in place but escalate it to me.</p>	<p>GT to look into case raised by TJ that has been ongoing.</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>Building and Fire Safety</p> <p>SB – One of the key things coming out of Grenfell was making sure that residents have a voice when it comes to building and fire safety. A lot of the legislation references that desire to increase the ‘voice’. We’ve now got a Building Safety and Fire Safety Resident Engagement Manager who is dedicated to supporting the Building Safety Managers, exclusively involved in building safety issues. This is a direct result of the recommendations coming out of Grenfell.</p> <p>Templewood Point is above 18m. We’ve installed a video screen in the lobby, which gives background to the building, building safety issues and what we are doing on an ongoing basis. We’re looking to roll this out to all ‘in-scope’ buildings to evidence what we are doing.</p> <p>KL – This can be updated and refreshed remotely.</p>	

	<p>SB – If you're in an 'in scope' building of 18m plus, you will definitely see the Engagement Manager around.</p> <p>TB – Will we need to involve the Resident Board to be a part the resident engagement strategy?</p> <p>SB – Yes, this would be ideal. The Engagement Manager will be looking at how to increase engagement around these areas, so we need to make sure we have lots of opportunities for people to feed in on the engagement side. And as Tim said, this will link to the engagement strategy.</p> <p>We have an internal audit for Fire Safety to assess where we are and how we should be getting on. This will begin on Friday and I am confident that this will go well.</p> <p>Update on RAAC – Reinforced aerated concrete</p> <p>SB – we were asked to look at all our buildings as a result of the roof that collapsed some months ago. This material is mainly found in large span, low level buildings, so it was unlikely it would have been found anywhere in our housing stock. A specialist consultant was engaged to do a desktop exercise to identify if there might be RAAC present. This exercise has been done, they identified 10 blocks which warrant a visual inspection, and these are being carried out now. We are hoping to get a report before Christmas, but we remain confident that RAAC won't be an issue within our housing stock.</p> <p>JL – with regards to balcony cladding, was there anything coming in legislation to replace the combustible materials?</p> <p>SB – we have done some replacements on some of our blocks that had some combustible materials. Not on 18m + blocks but on multi-storey blocks.</p> <p>TJ – providing up to date building plans to local fire and rescue service. Is this not something that was regularly done?</p> <p>SB – we are still ahead in terms of fire and building safety compared to our peers. We attend a lot of forums and discussion groups, and we are confident that we are where we need to be. Hopefully the impending audit will reinforce that position.</p>	<p>SB/Engagement manager to invite Resident Board to help shape Building Safety engagement strategy</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>Tenant Satisfaction Q2</p> <p>LD – We have shared the key drivers within the papers and some 'suggested' focus areas. We have had some of the updates from repairs and housing management resourcing, telephony. We can't have recurring telephony issues so we will look at our alternative option. We need to resource this properly from IT and have a Project Manager which we will look to do in April.</p> <p>TJ - asked for a copy of slides. There was a lot more detail in the last report and preferred this method of presentation.</p>	

	<p>RO – do we have access to online balance checks?</p> <p>LD – launch date should be early January. Should have been mid-October but we have had delays. Testing will be quite quick.</p> <p>TP – Is it the same layout as the book version? As I find it quite confusing and hard to read. Is the online version going to be any different?</p> <p>RO – Is the online balance checking just for leaseholders? Or for tenants as well? And how would that look? Will 'rent free weeks' be included as an easy format?</p> <p>LD – Layout would look similar to the previous but we need to check how much we can change. Part of the testing should be to find out if it is clear.</p> <p>TB – There was an email that went out about three weeks ago inviting the board to be part of this, you can email PN tomorrow.</p> <p>TP – I received a confusing letter with regards to an increase in Leasehold insurance. Although I was informed that a change is coming, I was not advised of what the new monetary value will be.</p> <p>SB – Can investigate. Zurich withdrew from social housing market and we have had to go with someone else.</p> <p>TM – surprised TP had not received letter as we have had a few people come back to say they are not happy with the new charges. Hope that this would have been a one-off.</p> <p>LD – apologised for confusing letter – this information had to be sent out but went out without a cover letter to explain the change.</p> <p>With regards to layout of information, will add more detail for next time.</p>	<p>PN to send slides to Resident Board members.</p> <p>RB to email PN if they did not receive email regarding testing online balances.</p> <p>LD to revert back to previous format of Performance information for next meeting.</p>
<p>8</p>	<p>AOB – Sensitive information</p> <p>RO – generally, when sending sensitive information sent via email, it is not encrypted properly. For example, as part of a Freedom Of Information request, Barnet will ask for ID to be sent but its not secure. In terms of GDPR, how would I know sensitive data is safe?</p> <p>CW – We are exploring how get this sent via a secure link. We can do it all adhoc at the moment but we do want a system that is used every time. Will speak to Data Protection Officer and get some more information on this.</p> <p>TB – We sometimes have to do this for finance for new vendors. We had to do this for one of the resident board members and I believe it</p>	<p>CW to discuss further with DPO</p>

	<p>was this request that has prompted that we should be doing this as a matter of course.</p> <p>EM – On behalf of The Board, thank you for what you do in representing residents. Lots of really good ideas, keep going. I've met with TB and DB and we're trying to get resident engagement to the best place possible, as it's the right thing to do and Regulators will be watching us. We have TJ on The Board who we will support.</p> <p>A couple of suggestions; if you want to change some of this you can. For example, 22 TSM's have to be collected, but the rest are yours. Areas of scrutinising is your choice, if you want to dig into certain aspects, I'm sure staff will help. I believe in getting out there, getting on a bus to go somewhere to have a look is powerful.</p> <p>Finally, don't forget the Leaseholders voice – Regulators are not responsible for Leaseholders so it's up to residents to make sure that voice is heard.</p> <p>TB – End of the year review for Resident Board Members. We will ask you questions about your experience being on the Resident Board. We want to measure success of the Board and there's a plan in place. We've decided to move the away day to 2 evening slots covering governance arrangements, improvements, inductions, option for resident scrutiny. We will invite the Independent Tenant Advisor we used when transitioning this group. We have done a demographic check, there is still some work to do but we are looking to review this group over the next couple of months.</p>	
<p>9</p>	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>Tuesday 12th March 2024. 6.30pm – 8.00pm via MS Teams.</p>	