

## Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum Action and Decision Log

22<sup>nd</sup> March 2018

**Forum members present:** Wendy Biddles (Chair), Joe Carroll (Vice Chair), Gwen Clifford, Redvers Forryan, May Jones, Philip Allen.

**Also attended:** Dipesh Joshi, Kevin Wheeler and Justin Haywood.

**Apologies:** Peter Hookway, Janet Statham, Jean Williams, Ann Green, Jamal Abdulla and Paresh Shah.

No.	Action item	Progress
1.	Welcome and Action Log feedback.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Members of the forum reviewed the last set of notes recorded on the action log and have asked that the following statement is amended;<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Following the Housing Scrutiny Commission meeting at the City Hall in December 2017. Both Cllr Cank and Cllr Alfonzo (Chair and Vice-Chair) had expressed an interest to attend all future T&amp;L meetings. Members attending today's meeting agreed, that they are happy to invite them, but only when it is necessary. It was also agreed that they will have no influence over any decision making, will be present as an observer and can only be asked for any comments based on the meeting's agenda.</li><li>2. Philip Allen has raised concerns surrounding the ongoing roof leak at his block. It was noted that the operatives have now laid down a new felt roof, but the leak is still imminent and still not resolved the issue. Josh has agreed to look into this again and arrange for Paul Marson (Repairs Team Leader) to go out and inspect.</li></ol></li></ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was noted that our catering provider has supplied us with a 'non-fair trade' brand of coffee today. Josh has agreed to feed this back to them and ensure that it doesn't happen again.</li> </ul>
2.	Local Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was felt that members should be given clarity surrounding future discussions led on the standard agenda item 'local issues'. It was made clear that the focus should be around specific issues relating to their local areas and not about their own personal gripes. Issues raised could be related too; the community, estates, security, crime level, anti-social behaviour, communal cleaning etc.</li> </ul> <p>It was re-iterated to the group, that a forum member living in our estates would be most suitable to tell us honestly how they see things working in their areas (weaknesses and strengths). Too often, are members using this time to bring their own personal issues to the table to seek a resolution.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phil commended the team at the St Marks office, for making key improvements with the car parking issues in the area. Josh to provide Phil with Neighbourhood Housing Team Leader contact number.</li> <li>• Gwen provided some photos to share with the forum members and get their views regarding the poor workmanship of a recent repair that was carried out at her neighbour's property. She feels that this should be escalated to a Repairs Team Leader to go out and inspect the quality of the repair. Josh to arrange with a Repair Team Leader.</li> <li>• May also shared a photo with the group, which showed the new</li> </ul>

		<p>look of a bin shelter which has been installed in her estate. She wanted to express her appreciation for the work done in the short time that it took to get it completed and the positive image it has given in the estate.</p> <p>May also raised a concern about the Pork Pie library not accepting keys at reception when terminating a tenancy. She also brought to our attention that the 3 door buzzers outside the Saffron Neighbourhood Housing Office is not working, and has asked that these issues be raised to Chris Burgin. Josh said he will be happy to look into these matters and provide May with a response.</p>
3.	Universal Credit – support for vulnerable tenants	<p>Josh briefed the forum about what the council is going to do to support vulnerable people when claiming Universal Credit.</p> <p>The following provision has been put in place;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Digital support</b> - to provide digital support to people with low or no IT skills, or do not have access to a PC and/or internet at home. 18 new PCs are also to be placed in the Customer Services Centre for people to access and make their on-line claims for Universal Credit.</li> <li>- <b>Staff resources</b> - 4 management officers recruited to help deal with more complex Universal Credit cases, especially where tenants need support to apply on line and manage their on-line journals.</li> <li>- <b>Welfare visits</b> - we will be contacting tenants over the next 2-3 months to check whether they have bank accounts, e mail addresses, on line access and facilities, identify support needs and advise them of their responsibility to pay the rent</li> </ul>

		<p>themselves. This is so they are prepared for any change in their benefit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Co-location in job centres</b> - as a pilot, we will be trialling the co-location of an Income Management Team officer in each of the job centres, so they can meet with council tenants after their first appointment with their work coach.</li> <li>- <b>Personal Budgeting Support</b> - this will support claimants who need help to manage their money and pay their bills on time. This is especially important because benefit payments will be paid monthly and not fortnightly, so some people may need support to help them manage their money for the whole month.</li> <li>- <b>Alternative payment arrangements</b> – where we know that a tenant may struggle to pay the rent themselves or they are already in rent arrears, we have the option to apply to the DWP for an alternative payment arrangement of their housing costs.</li> </ul>
4.	Update on Channel Shift	<p>Kevin Wheeler, the Programme Manager for the Northgate system, gave a presentation on 'Channel Shift'. The focus of this presentation was to give a summary regarding the new features offered on the new Self-Serve system and the benefits it will bring to our tenants. It was made clear, that this new system is not to replace our existing Customer Service Centre, but to offer another option of accessing our services. Kevin demonstrated the navigation of this system and the services that can be accessed (Rent accounts and future Repairs reporting). The group welcomed the new system, but has asked that we still consider that there are tenants who are not I.T. literate, and will require support to accessing our services. Comments have been acknowledged.</p>

5.	Homelessness	<p>Justin Haywood (Business Change Manager) delivered a short presentation on the Homelessness Reduction Act, which included;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- providing an update of the key changes in legislation</li> <li>- our role as an authority to act early to help people those who are at risk of homelessness</li> <li>- the introduction of the new mobile application</li> <li>- the new prevention and relieve duties</li> <li>- the comprehensive assessment - which will help determine the household's circumstances, housing and support needs</li> <li>- the personal housing plan</li> <li>- customer co-operation</li> <li>- duty to refer by public bodies</li> </ul> <p>The presentation was welcomed by forum members.</p>
6.	Annual T & L planning and questions	<p>Josh informed the forum that it is time to plan a programme for this year. Members were asked to have a think about who they want to invite and why. It was also agreed that before we invite any guest speaker/ service area representative in future, we should plan a set of questions beforehand.</p> <p>The forum would like to invite the Head of Service for Repairs at the next meeting.</p> <p>As we did not have much time to complete this task today, it was agreed that Josh will contact all members individually after the meeting and work with them to develop their list of questions. These will then be sent onto the relevant section to consider, in view of providing a response to the forum.</p>
7.	T&L expenses	<p>Following concerns raised by members last year, regarding the high-costs charged to us by local taxi companies (for collecting and</p>

		dropping T&L members to these meetings). Josh has been able to make finance arrangements set up a small petty cash float. This will help reduce the high costs charged to housing and enable us to make quicker payments to forum members, avoiding them having to wait for their reimbursements.
8.	Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP); annual review	Members are required to complete the annual PEEP. Josh to complete with all members at the next meeting.
9.	Any Other Business & Close	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No other business.</li> </ul>
<b>Next meeting date:</b>		<b>Date: 22th May 2018</b> <b>Venue: Town Hall Meeting Room (1.24)</b>