



Response & Repairs Service User Group
Housing Forum

MINUTES

Meeting	Date	Time	Location
Response & Repairs SUG	25/01/2024	10:00	Zoom
Attendees			
Residents	Councillors	Staff	
Ben Boycee (B) Carrie (C) Chris Evans (CE) Christophe Eneyi Pemu Janet Browning Jeremy Fennell (JF) Jo Carter Michael Foley Mirka Novakova Nigel Varley (NV) Pat Robinson (PR) Adelaja Fakoya (AF) Tim De La Rew (TDLR) Clive Hangero Waltraud		Mayowa Ademuyewo (MA) David Maggs (DM) Ilona Marciniak (IL) Henry Murray Jim Rickerty (JR) Ryan Kelsey (RK)	
Apologies		Minutes	
		Henry Murray	

Agenda items

- 1. Welcome and Housekeeping**
- 2. Actions from previous meeting**
- 3. Safety (Fire Safety Update) – Mayowa Ademuyewo**
- 4. Live chat presentation**
- 5. Agree items for forward plan**
- 6. Any other business**
- 7. Date of next meeting (28th of March) and close**

Agenda Item	Discussion Points/ Outcomes & Actions	Actions
1	<p>Welcome (Housekeeping/ code of conduct)</p> <p>TDLR: Interjected during code of conduct and expressed belief that presenting code of conduct is an act of control by chair of meeting and the council.</p> <p>MA: Acknowledged TDLR’s point and explained that for some who cannot see the codes of conduct it is helpful for them to be read out.</p> <p>NV: Expressed opinion that an agenda item missing is an explanation about what has happened to the repairs service</p> <p>IL: Explained</p>	
2	<p>Actions from previous meeting</p> <p>IL presented “You Said/We Did” - updates from November SUG</p> <p>CE: Advised they had brought up this issue before regarding height and design of windows. Explained that reaching the windows for many residents means climbing on top of sides. Raised this issue with council and asked for council to be responsible for cleaning external windows. Described the handicaps and disabilities of some residents in relation to this issue.</p> <p>MA: Advised that majority of windows have restrictors on them above a certain floor number. Advised that council does not clean certain types of windows, though they have raised this issue with heads of service to understand what additional service can be provided to residents who cannot clean their own windows. Advised team is due to come back with further information which will be brought back to the group.</p> <p>CE: Explained they have tilt and turn windows in their flat, and the only way they can access them is to stand on a step ladder which comes with risks at their age. They added that they can clean some but not all of the windows.</p>	

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	<p>MA: Expressed appreciation for those comments and reiterated they will come back with more information.</p> <p>C: Expressed surprise that windows are not the responsibility of the caretaker/council.</p> <p>MA: Agreed that external windows should be part of the caretaker's duties and will seek more information about possible changes or reasons behind it not being part of council's responsibility.</p>	MA
3	<p>Fire safety update - MA</p> <p>MA gave presentation on updates to installation program on sprinklers and fire alarms, including names of new blocks where work will soon commence.</p> <p>C: Raised issue of bathroom vent installation. Told anecdote of friend who is an engineer who expressed belief that the wrong screws have been used, which should be "sitting flat". Asked if someone could have a look.</p> <p>MA: Agreed that a visit would be best solution.</p> <p>C: Advised contractors have left rubbish outside.</p> <p>MA: Apologised and asked for more details, to be addressed after the meeting.</p> <p>JF: Raised leaflet through their door which mentioned "temporary" installation of fire alarms.</p> <p>MA: Explained that once cladding has been removed and refreshed that those temporary alarms would be removed as they are specific to the cladding.</p> <p>JF: Raised issue they have heard about fire alarms going off "all the time". Asked about sensitivity of fire alarms and what they are designed to do. Described information in leaflet as vague.</p> <p>MA: Advised alarms are for areas where cladding is near windows or an opening in the building, which would then</p>	<p>MA</p> <p>MA</p>

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	<p>go off in all areas of the building.</p> <p>JF: Asked if there is a reason why the alarms would be taken out once cladding is removed.</p> <p>MA: Advised that decision would be made via an assessment of building once cladding has been removed. Advised they would consult residents during this process.</p> <p>NV: Asked if they can raise issue around fire risk assessment (FRA). Advised they have looked at the assessment from May 2023 which they read out as saying “Gilton House fails on 47% of criteria” and is a “moderate level of risk”. Expressed belief that doors are not smoke and fire proof which is in conflict with advice that residents should stay put in event of a fire or incident. Expressed seriousness over this matter.</p> <p>MA: Advised that the appropriate team would be very familiar with this report and are working on the various issues raised. Advised that changes would have been made since FRA has been published. Advised that building safety team is specifically managing elements to ensure risks are being addressed.</p> <p>NV: Respectfully disagreed with response. Reiterated the belief that of the elements raised in the report, none have been addressed at Gilton House.</p> <p>MA: Again insisted that the elements in the report have been or are in the process of being addressed.</p> <p>NV: Repeated their disagreement with this response. Advised they are aware of the problems at Gilton House and expressed belief they have not been addressed. Reiterated belief that evacuation plan is not in place.</p> <p>MA: Advised that their team is responsible for addressing elements of FRA. Insisted that the report has been worked on since publication.</p> <p>NV: Emphatically disagreed and again expressed belief that none of FRA has been addressed. Asked if a visit</p>	

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	<p>from MA's team can take place so residents can go through items with someone from team.</p> <p>MA: Agreed with this proposal.</p> <p>NV: Raised issue around increased heating costs while cladding removal over the winter.</p> <p>MA: Advised council is addressing this issue with residents individual case by case basis.</p> <p>NV: Asked if this means residents should individually contact council about this issue.</p> <p>MA: Advised they will go away and come back with more information</p> <p>NV: Advised that councillor has previously told residents that a blanket compensation scheme would take place for those residents.</p> <p>B: Raised letter JF had mentioned. Cited process of temporary installation and removal of fire safety during cladding removal as a waste of money. Asked for clarification.</p> <p>MA: Advised again that each block would be assessed and agreed that removal of already installed fire safety systems should be about efficiency and cost saving.</p> <p>B: Expressed belief that spending "thousands of pounds" to install and remove fire safety systems is a waste of time and resources.</p> <p>MA: Expressed appreciation for those concerns and advised they will consult team over wording of letter and get back to the group.</p> <p>CE: Expressed agreement with B's points. Expressed importance of preventing fires in the first instance, citing problem of lithium-ion batteries. Expressed distrust of funding around fire safety.</p> <p>MA: Advised that policy around electric vehicles is still</p>	<p>MA</p> <p>MA</p> <p>MA</p>

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	<p>being addressed. Advised they are most likely going along with CE's line of thinking on this issue in terms of highlighting the seriousness of batteries.</p> <p>NV: Advised CE that they should get a copy of their building's FRA.</p> <p>CE: Commented that they have written to council asking for their building's FRA.</p> <p>MA: Advised that residents can request FRA on BCC website and they will share the link after the meeting.</p> <p>NV: Asked why they are marked "private & confidential"</p> <p>MA: Advised they will find out and come back with answer</p> <p>AF Asked about cost for maintenance of lifts in their building. Asked for review of this issue.</p> <p>MA: Advised they will take this issue away. Advised that the building would have been designed with three but perhaps shutting one down for the use of just two would be an advantage to save costs.</p> <p>AF: Raised additional details regarding issue raised.</p> <p>MA: Advised on new additions to program of sprinkler and fire alarm systems, that process is underway in specific list of blocks.</p> <p>JR: Asked about timescale of details of Brookridge House which was mentioned.</p> <p>MA: Advised work would start February/March to be completed in October. Advised on slippage and time allocated to work with Thames Water which is often a longer process.</p>	<p>MA</p> <p>MA</p>
4	<p>Live chat presentation – RK & JR</p> <p>Presentation on new ways for tenants to contact customer service.</p>	

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	<p>PR: Asked how many people are going to be on the line for any one tenant that gets in contact.</p> <p>RK: Advised it will be a maximum of three interactions at any one time. Advised that during the trial this will be evaluated, and this will include feedback.</p> <p>PR: Asked about how many reports they have had from other organisations about effectiveness of this system. Advised that in their experience it isn't effective when customer service members must deal with multiple issues at once, expressed belief that workers are easily distracted.</p> <p>KR: Advised this will be taken into consideration and that there is still trailing to be done.</p> <p>B: Asked how many people will be operating behind chats at any one time. Cited backlog of repairs and both washing machines being broken and leaking in their block. Expressed concern that the chat would be inundated with messages because of backlog.</p> <p>KR: Advised that chat had been in development prior to the current backlog. Advised that number of agents in operation would be reviewed daily to ensure correct number to deal with traffic. Advised they want to make sure that it works and that tenants trust it to provide timely answers to their enquiries.</p> <p>B: Asked if all the phone operators will be trained on new system or just a select few. Asked if the roll out will eventually include all phone staff to be trained on system.</p> <p>KR: Advised they eventually want all staff to be able to field inquiries across multiple channels but this will be continually evaluated. Advised over time they would want to grow it depending on use of chat system.</p> <p>JF: Cited a call they received from Brighton asking how they felt about BCC. Asked if the agents using the chat would be based in Bristol and therefore familiar with the city/council.</p>	

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	<p>RK: Responded that yes it would be teams inside BCC that would be working in the live chat.</p> <p>NV: Asked how many people would be initially running the service.</p> <p>RK: Advised that they don't have specific numbers but it will depend on volumes of inquiries.</p> <p>NV: Expressed belief that initial volumes of inquiries will be astronomical. Asked if they have the budget to realistically employ enough people to make the service viable.</p> <p>RK: Advised that they would ideally have a budget to go out and recruit more people but this is not the case. Advised that it is how they manage the volumes and employ resources on a daily basis. Emphasised this would be reviewed regularly and they would not wish to set something up to fail which would further erode trust.</p> <p>JR: Explained they are a test analyst for the live chat. Went on to demonstrate use of live chat.</p> <p>NV: Remarked that the bubble is not big enough.</p> <p>JR: Thanked Nigel and took a note.</p> <p>PR: Expressed happiness with saving money not phoning in. Expressed belief that the chat will take the same amount of time as phoning in, and expressed opinion that there is no benefit to a live chat over a phone call.</p> <p>JR: Advised that the system is not costing anything extra or taking away from budgets as it is part of the system already purchased.</p> <p>PR: Asked about details of agents working behind chat, the resourcing and allocation of agents between live chat and phone. Asked about extra funding.</p> <p>KR: Explained there is no extra budget. Gave details</p>	

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	<p>around how it fits on with current system.</p> <p>PR: Expressed scepticism around success of system. Expressed concern that those using web chat won't be able to express themselves as well as over the phone.</p> <p>JR: Advised that translation and language converters could be used inside the live chat in the future.</p> <p>PR: Expressed concern that once you've filled in all the forms through the chat that you're still waiting a similar amount of time as phone calls.</p> <p>NV: Asked if there could be a system of logging rather than needing a chat with someone with something like "my heating doesn't work". Expressed opinion that a chat isn't always necessary, and instead being able to log an issue with a case number could be a lot more efficient.</p> <p>KR: Expressed desire for an integrated system that would include a portal for logging problems. Advised they will take that on board.</p> <p>JR went back to live chat demonstration.</p> <p>DM: Asked if operator would be able to see a history of a customer's live chats.</p> <p>JR: Advised that yes, a history would be available for the operator to see.</p> <p>B: Asked about features they saw on the operator end being demonstrated. Asked if the questions being filled out by customer would filter them into the correct department once they are in contact with an operator. Asked if once a customer is transferred to correct department if they would be the back of a new queue for that department.</p> <p>JR: Advised that yes you would end up in a new queue but that you should end up in the right department early on in the contact process.</p> <p>B: Asked if email could be left in chat for questions to be</p>	

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	<p>sent after the group.</p> <p>IL: Advised TPU@bristol.gov.uk inbox is always available to field questions about any presentations.</p> <p>PR: Asked for timescale of new IT systems, which they have heard have been coming for some time.</p> <p>JR: Advised they can't give timescales right now as they are not part of housing services.</p> <p>DM: Advised they will get an answer to you.</p>	DM
5	<p>Future items</p> <p>NV: Expressed desire for a review of planning of installation of cladding removal and reinstallation. Expressed belief that the program has gone wrong.</p> <p>MA: Advised this has been noted.</p> <p>NV: Raised issue of council pro-actively providing information – such as FRAs – to tenants.</p> <p>MA: Advised this will be raised with building safety team and agreed. Reminded NV that their teams are regularly audited by regulated, but still they agreed on being pro active.</p> <p>IL: Advised on memberships for panels open to everybody.</p> <p>TDLR: Asked if it is open to everybody as they were denied a place on panel as they are a leaseholder.</p> <p>DM: Advised this new panel is open to everyone.</p> <p>B: Asked how often new panel will meet and details.</p> <p>IL: Eventually it would be for those in high rises but initially to shape the group it is open to everyone.</p> <p>B & NV asked to be put down for membership of panel.</p>	

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6	<p>AOB</p> <p>C: Asked if officers could learn how to write letters properly as their previous letters were not grammatically correct.</p> <p>MA: Advised they are more than happy to look into this.</p> <p>C: Advised the letter was around electrical safety checks.</p> <p>MA: Asked to have more details to look at the letter as it has come from their team.</p> <p>IL: Shared invite to spring housing forums.</p> <p>MA: Thanked attendees and expressed understanding of the problems and frustrations caused at the moment.</p> <p>C: Raised issue of communication with a friend where council did not inform them that a visit had been cancelled.</p> <p>B: Advised they were on a TPAS call in which they were told Barton House residents are being moved back in, and asked if this is the case why is there still a backlog.</p> <p>MA: Advised this information is not quite accurate, and that there is still a lot of maintenance and surveying to do at Barton House. Advised that the green light for tenants moving back in hasn't been given just yet.</p> <p>DM: Advised B that 21st February is the date for moving back in to Barton House.</p> <p>MA: Thanked attendees for their time.</p> <p>End of Meeting.</p>	MA