

**Residents' Panel Virtual Zoom Meeting
Tuesday 22nd November 2022**



Minutes and Actions

Attendees

Members	Role
James Wilson (JW)	Tenant of Leaseholder (Chair)
Corry Blades (CB)	Leaseholder
Daniele Lamarche (DL)	Leaseholder
Saleha Jafrin (SJ)	Leaseholder
Gibran Afzal (GA)	Tenant
Yasmin Begum (YB)	Tenant
Saida Begum (SB)	Tenant
THH	
Ann Lucas (AL)	Chair of Tower Hamlets Homes Board
Staff	
Gulam Hussain (GH)	Head of Regulatory Assurance and Neighbourhoods
Lesley Owen (LO)	Business Development Manager
Nojmul Hussain (NH)	Senior Resident Scrutiny Officer
Nasser Patel (NP)	ALMO Client Monitoring Officer

Actions	Action Owner		Status/ Date
1. Provide update in regards to logging emergency calls during transitional period	GH		
2. Send link for the online complaint handling process in iconography	NH		
3. Share letter from the government to local authorities regarding their obligation to comply with the Electric Communication Code.	NP		
4. Organise a joint Panel sub- group meeting with LBTH and THH to discuss how to strengthen communication with residents before phone masts are erected	NH		
5. Feedback on working with partners to support vulnerable residents with financial hardship.	GH		
6. Refer concerns regarding the caretaking standards on SJ's block.	GH		
7. Invite Simon James to the January 2023 meeting	NH		
8. Send annual Christmas dinner invitation	NH		

Item No	Description	Action	Status/ Date
1.	Introduction and Welcome		
1.1	JW welcomed members to the meeting. Apologies was received from Chris Weavers and Sahra Mire.		
1.2	The Chair agreed for item 4 (phone mast consultation) to be presented before item 3 (Board update).		

2.	Minutes from the previous meeting and matters arising		
2.1	Minutes from the July meeting was agreed as accurate. Members were reminded that the September business meeting was replaced by the scrutiny best practice workshop.		
2.2	<p>GH reported progress of actions. In regards to investigating why emergency calls are not being logged during the transitional period (between out of hours and day time centre) has been raised with staff. However, due to recent changes in the organisation, i.e. changes in in the HSC, we are awaiting further update. GH will report progress in due course.</p> <p>JW requested for the complaint handling process iconography link to be sent to members.</p> <p>ACTION: GH to provide update in regards to logging emergency calls during transitional period</p> <p>ACTION: NH to send link for the online complaint handling process in iconography</p>		

3.	Phone mast consultation		
3.1	NP provided explained that under the Digital Economy Act (2017) all local authorities are required to provide access to telecommunication providers to erect phone masts in Council managed blocks.		
3.2	The telecoms agreement, between Council and providers, is governed by the new Electric Communications Code (part of the Digital Economy Act). The new Code gives telecommunications operators statutory rights to build sites & access land to build new sites and impose agreements on landowners. Importantly, if a consensual agreement cannot be reached with a landowner, the operator has the right to apply to the courts for a new agreement to be imposed. If the landowner does not have any immediate plans for redevelopment, the Upper Tribunal will award in the operator's favour, as evidenced by very recent decisions.		

3.3	<p>In August 2020, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sports and Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government sent a letter to all Council senior leadership teams advising them of their obligations in regards to the above. NP said he would share this letter with Panel.</p> <p>ACTION: NP to share letter from the government to local authorities regarding their obligation to comply with the Electric Communication Code.</p>		
3.4	<p>NP informed Panel that LBTH is advised by external consultants, Lambert Smith Hampton on procedure and processes. LBTH also inform THH Health and Safety if there are any concerns or risks identified.</p>		
3.5	<p>DL felt there was a lack of communication with residents regarding the process and in identifying risk. It was proposed that the different bodies, i.e. LBTH, THH and the external consultant meet separately to discuss how to address the current communication gaps.</p> <p>ACTION: NH to organise a joint Panel sub- group meeting with LBTH and THH to discuss how to strengthen communication with residents before phone masts are erected.</p>		

4.	THH Board update		
4.1	<p>AL provided the following updates;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board agreed the re-tendering of THH satisfaction survey service as the existing contract with KWEST Research expires in May 2023. LO mentioned the government’s new Tenants Satisfaction Measures which THH is required to report against. • A self- assessment was undertaken against the Housing Ombudsman’s code of conduct for dealing with complaints. This informed an action plan which Board approved • Board met new Cabinet members, this included a discussion with the lead Member for housing • A consultation meeting took place with LBTH in order to get Board member’s feedback on the future of housing management • LBTH wants residents to continue influencing decision making. However, members were informed that this is challenging under the Council’s governance model • The refresh of THH’s draft business plan was agreed • Cost of living crisis was discussed; members emphasised having measures in place to support residents under significant difficulties. AL said this will involve working in partnership with external bodies. 		
4.2	<p>Discussion ensued around how THH is supporting vulnerable residents during the living cost crisis, i.e. residents struggling to pay rent, service charge etc. AL explained that in addition to the Financial Health Centre, the Board is exploring additional support. This would consist of signposting residents to external partners.</p> <p>GH agreed to report back on how residents are being supported.</p>		

4.3	<p>ACTION: GH to feedback on working with partners to support vulnerable residents with financial hardship.</p> <p>There were concerns around the standard of caretaking and how to challenge high leasehold service charges. AL explained how service charge is determined, block by block estimates against actuals. Communal repairs is the most variable factor in leasehold service charge due to difficulty in forecasting repairs needed on blocks. Also, the Council sets out the leasehold service charge. AL stated that when there is a rise in service charge, leaseholders should receive an explanation.</p>		
4.4	<p>SJ was concerned about caretaking on her block. GH agreed to refer her concerns to the relevant service area.</p> <p>ACTION: GH to refer concerns regarding the caretaking standards on SJ's block.</p>		

5.	Complaints		
5.1	<p>GH reported the target for responding within the 10 day has fallen this quarter. This is largely in relation to repairs issues ranging from leaks/plumbing and bin removals. This is also due to staff sickness and shortage of staff in responding within timescales.</p> <p>THH is on target around responding within the 20 day framework (above 90% on target) and managing stage 2 complaints.</p>		
5.2	<p>GH reported 5 new temporary housing officers will be recruited to backfill the current shortage of staff. However, there has been difficulty in recruiting staff with the right skillset and due to the uncertain future management of THH; some recent recruits who were offered a position have opted for alternative opportunities.</p>		
5.3	<p>Following the Ombudsman's spotlight review on how THH responds to mould/damp and condensation, THH is undertaking work to implement the Ombudsman's expectation, this includes addressing noise nuisance and ensuring homes have hygienic carpets and to retain carpets in void properties. However, GH stated the difficulty in meeting the latter two expectations.</p>		
5.4	<p>Members mentioned that there have been companies knocking on doors claiming to be tenant support groups. They are offering residents support for making disrepair claims.</p> <p>GH said THH is aware of this and will issue communication to residents.</p>		
5.5	<p>DL requested that Simon James be invited to the next Panel meeting to provide an update on the roll out of Traffic Management Orders.</p> <p>ACTION: NH to invite Simon James to the January 2023 meeting.</p>		

6.	Performance update					
6.1	LO provided an update on performance for October 2022.					
6.2	Table 1: Status October 2022 – monthly indicators					
	Trend	Red	Amber	Green	All	
No. of indicators: October 22	6 60%	3 30%	1 10%	10 100%		
6.3	Table 2: Status September 2022 – quarterly indicators					
	Trend	Red	Amber	Green	All	
No. of indicators: September 22	3 50%	1 17%	2 33%	6 100%		
6.4	Table 3: Direction of Travel from the previous period – all indicators					
	Trend	Weakened	No change	Improved	All	
No. of indicators: Q2/October 22	8 50%	0	8 50%	16 100%		
6.5	Table 4: Direction of Travel from Q2/October 2021 – all indicators					
	Trend	Weakened	No change	Improved	N/a*	All
No. of indicators: Q2/October 22	10 63%	0	5 31%	1 6%	16 100%	
6.6	<p>LO explained why the repairs performance target has dropped. This was due to various reason; this includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knock on effect from last year's supply issues and staff sickness absence • the mobilisation of the seven new contracts and integration of IT systems, to clear the backlog, impacted performance 					

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explosion at Bentworth Court meant staff had to be deployed for a dedicated support line, this had an impact on the call handling time for responding to general enquiries. <p>LO reported there has been some performance issues with the contractor which THH is addressing with the contractor.</p>		
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7	Any other business		
7.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GH reported that Fire and Building Safety Group will discontinue, therefore its related work activity will be reported to Panel instead NH will send details for this year's annual Christmas dinner <p>ACTION: NH to send annual Christmas dinner invitation</p>		

8	Date of next meeting		
8.1	Tuesday 17 th January 2023, 6pm – 8pm		