



Tenant Participation
Housing Forum

MINUTES

<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Location</i>
Housing Forum	07/09/2023	13:00	Zoom
Attendees			
Residents	Councillors	Staff	
Amy Smart (AS) Amran Arab Carol Croft (CR) Chris Evans Chris Sweetham Ian Page Jan Heaton John Whitman Pete Daw (PD) Nigel Varley (NV) Michael Foley Karen Richards Lorraine M Robert Walters Nia Gruffudd (NG)	Cllr Don Alexander	Lesha W Fiona L Hilary W Alison Scott Ben Korn Ellie Howard Anthea Tziorta David M Ilona M Henry M	
Apologies		Minutes	
		Henry Murray	

Agenda items

- 1. Welcome and Housekeeping**
- 2. Fire Safety Resident engagement - Presentation and discussion**
- 3. Improvement to communal council housing areas - Presentation and discussion**
- 4. Future 'hot topic' ideas**
- 5. Standards for social housing consultation**
- 6. Date of next meeting Winter 2023 and close**

Agenda Item	Discussion Points/ Outcomes & Actions	Actions
1	Welcome (Housekeeping/ code of conduct)	
2	<p>Fire Safety Resident engagement - Presentation and discussion by Lesha Wilson</p> <p>NV – Expressed opinion that policy is fine but that they believe it does not work in practise. Cited Gilton house cladding planning and management. Expressed belief that residents are at risk due to insulation removal being phased during winter. Expressed belief that this is in breach of the law.</p> <p>LW – Advised that the point of developing engagement strategy is to get to a point where we can be honest and transparent with residents about building safety issues.</p> <p>NV – Expressed belief that the council shuts down any critical discussion. Raised incident in which he had a rude response from a council employee to a problem he raised.</p> <p>FL – Thanked Nigel for points raised. Stated that there is no excuse for rudeness from the council. Asked Nigel to provide any specific details of rudeness from council officers which they mentioned. Agreed it is important to get a response from council with regards to delays and phasing of cladding removal. Asked Craig to provide a response.</p> <p>LW – Agreed that council needs to be much more open and honest with residents. Advised that part of developing strategy is knowing how best to listen to residents. Advised they cannot comment on breach of the law which NV mentioned. Advised that their team is currently writing up policy regarding mobility scooters and other electronic devices. Advised that a consultation with residents will happen.</p> <p>NV – Raised timescale as an issue, expressed belief that the problem has been known and yet council doesn't have a policy.</p>	CC

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	<p>Question asked in chat regarding RAAC in council properties.</p> <p>FL – Expressed confidence that council has no known issues with RAAC in council homes. Advised that property team is preparing a response that can be shared with residents following the meeting.</p> <p>P – Agreed with Nigel’s point of fire safety and lithium batteries. Agreed there has been a failing on part of the council in this area due to the risk they pose, cited death that occurred because of batteries. Suggested that a tenancy audit takes place asking which residents use batteries. Expressed fear that batteries in combination of residents with mobility issues poses a serious risk.</p> <p>LW – Advised that the policy around scooters needs to work with residents, the law and in practise. Point acknowledged that council haven’t asked residents if they own lithium batteries.</p> <p>Chris – Raised issue of scaffolding on their building two years ago. Raised issue of dogs in high rise blocks posing a risk in event of a fire. Asked why he has been ignored regarding this and the lithium-ion batteries, cited raising of this issue over a year ago. Cited letter from house of lords that states it is not a breach of human rights to ban dogs in a building.</p> <p>LW – Advised they can’t comment on historical issues though acknowledges point. Advised council is reviewing fire safety policy. Can make a commitment for guidance around pets in emergency situations.</p> <p>CS – Raised belief that council tried to have dogs removed, but stopped due to human rights act</p> <p>LW – Advised can’t comment on ongoing issue, but working on fire safety policy which will include guidance on pets.</p> <p>NG – Raised issue of cladding removal and expressed belief that work only happening because of media attention. Asked when fire safety issues will be resolved.</p>	

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	<p>Cited an £8million figure relating to Grenfell. Asked about sprinklers timeline and expressed concern with Wake and Watch as an expense.</p> <p>LW – Advised will get an update for their particular building. Advised that Wake and Watch do have ability to call fire services. Could not confirm the £8million figure but will come back with more information.</p> <p>Advised that procurement for sprinklers is currently in process and first batch of blocks will have installation program rolled out this year. Assured that it is definitely on the way.</p> <p>NV – Re raised issue of scaffolding coming down that NG had mentioned.</p> <p>FL – Advised they can't give an answer about scaffolding, but can find more information and come back.</p> <p>Responded to NG regarding sprinkler systems, agreed the speed with which work takes is frustration. Cited lengthy procurement process and contractors.</p> <p>Advised that council didn't know that cladding at the time was deemed unacceptable, and it's now to be deemed dangerous after review. Expressed understanding and frustration with this issue given Grenfell.</p> <p>NG – Expressed belief that scaffolding came down because of media attention dying down.</p> <p>FL – Assured that the work will be done, citing current state of process.</p> <p>NG – Asked why there isn't another fire escape for those on top floors.</p> <p>FL – Advised that the Fire Service did not deem this to be acceptable.</p> <p>NG – Cited examples of other fire escapes.</p> <p>FL – Advised that current commitment is to retrofit sprinklers.</p>	<p>LW</p> <p>LW</p> <p>FL</p>

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	<p>LW – Asked attendees how else council should be communicating fire safety to residents.</p> <p>NV – Advised that screens in their building’s foyer have never been used but could be good forms of communication and notification.</p> <p>LW – Responded that they will look at screens.</p> <p>AS – Expressed feeling of safety around gas but fear around electrical.</p> <p>LW – Advised that new regulations will address electrical safety. Unsure of how frequent checks will be.</p> <p>Pete – Advised that current review period for gas is annual, and electricity is once a decade. Advised that Bristol council does meet this.</p> <p>LW – Asked if everyone is comfortable with how best to report electrical safety issues.</p> <p>CR – Responded that they would not know what to do.</p> <p>FL – Advised it would be useful to share safety team’s contact details.</p> <p>NG – Raised issue of burning smell coming from electricity meter and being advised to wait by flat, expressed concern that they were not taking seriously.</p> <p>IL – Responded that they will look into this.</p> <p>LW – Agreed that the out of hours service needs to be as responsive as the regular hours service. Raised point that council should be letting residents know what to expect, what is deemed to be an emergency and what response they should respect.</p>	<p>LW</p> <p>IL</p>

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3	<p>Improvement to communal council housing areas - Presentation and discussion by Hilary Waldron</p> <p>PD – Expressed belief that there used to be a link between neighbourhoods and where money was spent. Expressed belief that more centralisation has lost that link and that funds are unevenly spent. Cited Westbury estate as being left out. Cited issues of being cut off from main village area due to lack of footpath development around their estate and that there are no bins or benches. Expressed belief of inequality for improvement of communal areas around Bristol.</p> <p>Hilary – Agreed and said that this echoes concerns their team has.</p> <p>AS – Expressed enthusiasm for the environment and desire to get more involved.</p> <p>Hilary – Agreed with spending money so tenants can have a positive outcome focussed around communal areas.</p> <p>AS – Expressed opinion that those who are not on blocks and estates should be included and cites their desire for more green space and how it improves one’s mental health.</p> <p>HW – Expressed desire to get more residents together.</p> <p>NV – Expressed belief that more-organised tenants are more able to maintain areas and come up with new ideas.</p> <p>HW – Responded that it’s the council’s responsibility to make it more accessible and for residents to have more influence over it.</p> <p>NV – Expressed opinion that too much responsibility falls on Housing Officers. Doesn’t believe it’s fair to give them primary responsibility because of lack of capacity.</p> <p>NG – Aspen House in Redcliffe. Raised issue of their block not having a gate unlike surrounding estates,</p>	

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	<p>making it unsafe for children playing near a road. Has asked council for gate or fence but has been denied by council.</p> <p>HW – Advised that council will ask your housing officer to speak to you.</p> <p>NG – Advised they have attempted contact but no reply for several months.</p> <p>HW – Advised will ask HO to contact you</p> <p>Cllr Don Alexander – Asked if council could circulate an example of options for charging rooms to residents.</p> <p>HW – Agreed that a process of showing residents options would be useful.</p> <p>NV – Expressed belief that charging rooms are not part of environmental improvement.</p> <p>AS – Emphasised importance for good green spaces to improve resident’s mental health, gave examples of different types of improvement. Agreed with Nigel that fund should not be used for non-environmental improvement issues. Shared examples of third-party organisations that are keen to help out with green spaces and environmental improvement.</p> <p>HW – Advised their team will come back to residents with details of where money is being spent and timescales. Advised ideas from residents will be pooled and more guidance to be issued.</p> <p>LF – Advised that there are other budgets that can be tapped into with residents. Cites gardening budgets and how residents might be brought on to share the budget out equally across city. Expressed desire for those not in high rise blocks or estates to also feel benefit of environmental improvement.</p>	<p>IL</p>

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4	<p>Future 'hot topic' ideas</p> <p>NV – IT services. Cites issue with regards to extra charges relating to their direct debit. Raises issue of bankruptcy in Birmingham</p> <p>FL – Advised Bristol does not have the same issues as Birmingham. Acknowledges problem with direct debit.</p> <p>NV – Asked if information can be found out about how new IT system will effect users/customers.</p> <p>PD – Raised food inequality strategy. Advised that strategy does not mention non-family entities and is too family focussed. Expressed frustration that community kitchens and disabled, elderly people are left out of strategy. Cited community kitchens that are not being used.</p> <p>Ami – Raised ASB. Suggested a topic around where council chooses to place residents, and empathy around resident's needs. Cited issues of ASB in their area.</p> <p>CR – Asked for a way to get in touch with finance. Cited letter they received saying they are in debt.</p> <p>FL – We will share details of leaseholder team. Management of payments was previously managed outside of HRA.</p>	<p>FL</p> <p>FL</p>
5	<p>Consultation on new Consumer Standards from Regulator for Social Housing presentation by David Maggs</p> <p>PD – Advised on new requirements for board members. Asked if David has more details.</p> <p>DM – Will find out more details and get back to Pete.</p> <p>LF – Unaware of new statutory requirements. Thanked David for their work.</p>	<p>DM</p>
6	<p>End of meeting</p>	

